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ReVista

HARVARD REVIEW OF LATIN AMERICA

SPORTS!



A Sports Confession

I hate sports. As a little girl, I was always stuck on the softball outfield—the practical way of including a chubby, clumsy kid in the mandatory physical education class. I'd rather have been inside reading my favorite poet Edna St. Vincent Millay.

I didn't watch sports because I didn't understand them and I didn't understand them because I didn't watch them. Still don't.

I found some recent comfort that I was not alone. My friend James N. Green from Brown University had his own confession, telling me in an e-mail, "I am still traumatized for having been chosen eighth or ninth when we made up baseball teams in elementary school and I always prayed that the ball did not come my way." Even so, Green, a Brazil expert, made half a dozen suggestions, some of which have found their way into this issue.

And so it went. I'd mention a *ReVista* on sports and a torrent of suggestions would follow. Have you thought about rugby, polo, *tejo*, skiing, American football, lucha libre, cycling, volleyball, zumba, basketball, jujitsu, capoeira, Xavante wrestling, Jamaican bobsledding, they would ask.

Then there were those who got excited about sports and race, sports and gender, sports diplomacy, not to mention sports as violence prevention, as a way of resolving conflicts, as a way of understanding history. It seemed to be the only conversation that managed to integrate friends, acquaintances and colleagues who were sociologists, historians, political scientists, journalists, anthropologists and even a computer geek or two.

I suddenly realized that for the first time in my life I was talking sports.

And the stories began to flow. Not the stories I had imagined about who had beat out whom in what game, but intimate stories of sports and life. Many of those tales are in these pages. Journalist Stephen Kinzer recounts his first trip to Cuba carrying a suitcase to the family of Red Sox player Luis Tiant. Mariano Siskind from Harvard's Romance Languages and Literatures Department explains in an intimate fashion how soccer loyalty is formed early and passed on through the generations. Harvard anthropologist David Carrasco, who holds a joint appointment with the Divinity School, recounts the powerful saga of his father, a man from the borderlands, who became a sports diplomat during the 1968 Mexico Olympics.

Historian Peter Winn from Tufts University told me that, on a recent trip to Hawaii, he approached a crowd on the edge of Waikiki Beach surrounding an informal show. The performance turned out not to be Polynesian ritual, as he had been expecting, but Brazilian capoeira.

Suddenly Latin American and Latino sports seemed to be everywhere.

This January, on my first trip to the Middle East, I was sitting with some Colombian friends in an open-air park in Abu Dhabi. It was a balmy evening. Families, including veiled women and hordes of children, sat eating appetizers of Middle Eastern *mezzes* and enjoying water pipes known as *shisha*. A large screen displayed an ongoing soccer game. I don't speak Arabic, but listened to the murmuring sounds as I conversed with my friends. All of a sudden I heard a word I thought I recognized: Maradona. I looked quizzically at my friend Federico, who teaches at Zayed University. Yes, he said, reading my look, Maradona is training in Dubai. So there we had it. Sports and globalization.

I (may) still hate sports. I sure love the idea of them.



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SPORTS!

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ON THE COVER

The collage represents many sports in Latin America, including baseball, soccer, boxing, *lucha libre* and even American football in Mexico. Latino players like David "Papi" Ortiz (originally from the Dominican Republic) have influenced sports in the United States and beyond. Photo credits (clockwise): courtesy of Boston Red Sox, courtesy of Istock photo, *Historia Gráfica de Fútbol Americano en México*; Andrés Sanín; Carin Zissis.

Sports Diplomacy

David L. Carrasco, From Borderlands to Bridges **BY DAVID CARRASCO**

THE WASHINGTON STAR SPORTS EDITOR OPENED the letter from far-off Caracas, Venezuela, that had just arrived by diplomatic pouch. Entitled “A Very Sad Day,” the piece was penned by my father David L. Carrasco, the American University basketball coach who was touring Latin America as a sports diplomat for the U.S. State Department that summer.

The letter soon appeared in the newspaper under the headline, “Carrasco Has Compassion for Caracas Youngsters.” His poignant story of a Venezuelan playground scene ties coaching youth to international diplomacy, sports in Latin America to poverty, sadness, compassion and perhaps even social change.

“Today I call it a ‘Very Sad Day,’” Carrasco wrote. “When I arrived at one of the recreation centers in Caracas, there were about 75 kids waiting for me to start the class in basketball. Keep in mind that these recreation centers are not like the ones in Washington D.C. or Montgomery County with good facilities and plenty of equipment and sufficient instructors. Here, these kids are real poor and they wear very old clothes that are dirty and torn and many of them have holes in their shoes or no shoes at all. These kids come from shacks with dirt floors and leaky roofs and no water or lights. Just nothing. They need these recreation centers because at least they can wash and bathe.”

The letter stated there was only one old rubber basketball and the boys were having fun playing and learning some athletic drills Carrasco was teaching. Then the ball went over the fence, hit a sharp stone and flattened out. The Venezuelan kids turned to look at the coach.

“...the kids just stood and stared at me with big, wondering eyes. I called them together and said,

‘I’ll be back tomorrow and I’ll have a new basketball with me.’

If you could have seen the looks on their faces when the ball collapsed you would have agreed with me that it was ‘a very sad day’. Tomorrow, I promise, will be happier. Coach Carrasco.”

From his work as a sports diplomat in Latin America, Dave Carrasco came to think of sports as an “international language.” Sports were played all over the globe and enabled kids to reshape their aggressions into exercise and games. But for this Mexican-American from the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, sports were more than just exercises in competition. Sports were a means through which social equality could be played out. When he was interviewed for a 1968 essay on the Mexico City Olympics in the *New Yorker*, Carrasco said,

“The United States should get more involved in youth programs abroad. Sports are very important for Latin America—for developing leadership. They are about the only field here where the opportunities are the same for all growing youngsters, regardless of their heritage. Furthermore, they bring people from isolated parts of a country together so they unify that country” (P. 80, “Letter From Mexico.”)

Sports are, in his words, “opportunities.” With good coaches, adequate equipment and a decent place to play, sports could level the social playing field and help people make positive connections. In Latin America, he also experienced at first hand that sports were connected with culture, politics, national identity and friendships. Sometimes, as he learned the hard way, sports were overwhelmed by local rivalries and international/Cold War political agendas. What

he did with this knowledge was to develop a moral vision that sports should be used to help people excel in competitive situations—and especially for those who had been denied practice fields where they could develop stronger bodies and more competitive minds.

MAN FROM THE BORDERLANDS

Carrasco’s ability to connect with people from different classes, races and places came from growing up in an international setting, but not one that people value as a training ground for sports, diplomacy and cultural richness. He was a “Tex-Mex,” a “border man” from the Segundo Barrio of El Paso, Texas, literally within a stone’s throw of the Chamizal, that piece of Mexican land that had moved to the U.S. side of the border when the Rio Bravo changed its course in the 19th century. He took his toughness from the streets of south El Paso, where he was a feared boxer and all-star basketball player, to Mexico where, before he was 20 years old, he starred for the national Mexican basketball team, the “Chihuahua Dorados,” in the 1938 Central American Games. His 6’4” size—along with his shooting ability and play around the rim—led to his nickname *El Cocotero*—“the Coconut Tree Jumper.”

After World War II, we moved to Maryland, where he became a championship basketball coach at the high school and college level. Reflecting his growing vision of sports as a leveler of race and social stratification, his American University basketball teams were the first college teams in the nation’s capital to be racially integrated. His example and message were that sports and education, athletics and social justice, games and race were intertwined. But he never left



Top: Coach Carrasco with Afro-Guatemalan youth; young Carrasco playing in Mexico with the Chihuahua Dorados. Middle row: Mural in El Paso honors Coach Carrasco; the coach with his wife, Marjorie, and the author. Bottom: U.S. Vice President Hubert Humphrey tosses a ball as Carrasco looks on; Carrasco's return to Mexico as sports diplomat.

Mexico Again Lures Carrasco

By Byron Roberts
Staff Reporter

DAVE CARRASCO is about to set a record. This, despite the fact that his playing and coaching days are over.


The athletic director at American University will be the first sports representative to make four trips out of the country as part of the State Department's American Specialist Program.

Carrasco, and his pretty wife, Marge, are packing for a 90-day trip to Mexico on June 15.

It will be Carrasco's third trip to that country. His first was to Central America, the second to Mexico, Panama and Venezuela. Last year he went only to Mexico.

Carrasco's job is two-fold. He will help select and train the Mexican national basketball team for the Tokyo Olympics and he will travel to the major cities of Mexico giving clinics.

Carrasco was a successful basketball coach at Montgomery Blair High School and American University before taking the AU athletic director's job.



Dave Carrasco



Left: Front page of the sports section of *Diario de México* shows Carrasco with Mexican coaches; **right:** U.S. postage stamp in commemoration of the 1968 Mexico Olympics.

his U.S.-Mexico border past behind and the U.S. State Department, learning of his coaching credentials, language abilities and cultural knowledge, sent him to Latin America to conduct clinics aimed at helping Latin American coaches improve their skills. He toured Guatemala, Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Argentina and Mexico, spending longer periods in Mexico and Ecuador.

EL PÍCARO JUGADOR MEXICANO
When the Confederación Deportiva Mexicana invited Carrasco to help improve the country's coaching staffs beginning in 1963, he ran a series of coaching clinics in Mexico City and formed strong friendships with successful Mexican coaches Carlos Bru and Constancio Córdova. The growing Mexican teams' enthusiasm to improve their basketball coaching techniques was evident in a photograph that appeared on the front page of the sports section of the *Diario de México* on July 4, 1963, five years before the Olympic Games. The photo shows the very tall, smiling Carrasco holding a basketball tightly in his hands, surrounded by some of the 57 Mexican coaches who had been brought into Mexico City from towns and cities throughout the republic to train for a month with him.

One of the Mexican coaches is also gripping the ball as though Carrasco is either handing it off or the two are in contention for it. They are staring approvingly into each other's eyes. The other coaches are crowded together like a team, leaning into the center of the picture—smiling or looking intently at the scene. Their hunger to learn and his ability to teach are well stated in the accompanying article.

“De todos los entrenadores que nos han visitado, con el fin de impartir sus conocimientos a los manejadores mexicanos, él que ha dejado una fructífera semilla es sin duda, David Carrasco.

“De ascendencia mexicana, él lleva sangre nuestra en sus venas y la facilidad de entenderse. Fueron factores determinantes, para poder apreciar en todos los sentidos, los amplios conocimientos que posee y poder captar dichos conocimientos para ser aplicados a nuestros basketballistas.

“Carrasco, conocedor de nuestro medio, ya que fue integrante de los Dorados de Chihuahua, puso el dedo en el renglón, respecto a las fallas y falta de progreso del mismo.” (*Diario de México*, June 1963).

Instead of receiving the usual norteño team-erican to impart superior knowledge to Mexican basketball coaches, they now welcomed a Mexican-American who

shared their language and blood, which enabled them to grasp and apply what he was teaching. Another full-page newspaper spread entitled “Un Gran Coach David L. Carrasco Un Enamorado del Baloncesto Mexicano” has him telling the coaches that “El Jugador Mexicano es muy ‘pícaro’ pero sin fundamentos.” Carrasco praises the hustle and craftiness of the athletes he was training but pulled no punches in challenging them to practice intensively if they wanted to compete internationally—especially for the Olympic Games.

MEXICO '68: SPORTS OLYMPICS, CULTURAL OLYMPICS

The 1968 Olympics marked a glamorous achievement for Mexico in what was called *El año de México*. Even though that triumph was overshadowed by the tragic and unforgettable events of the October 2 Tlatelolco massacre, Mexico staged a very successful Olympics games and Carrasco played a notable role on both the athletic and cultural sides as the U.S. Olympic Games Attaché. Mexicans put enormous effort in hosting the 19th Olympiad, making it a return to Greek ideals (of celebrating body and soul together) and an innovative international cultural and sports event.

There were many “firsts” in the Mexico City Olympics: the games took place at the highest altitude of any games in history; it was the first time a so-called developing country hosted the Games; they were the first games held by a Spanish-speaking country; first games ever held in Latin America, to be only now followed by Brazil in 2016; first games at which there was a significant African presence in men’s distance running, which they came to dominate; first time El Salvador, Guinea, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay and British Honduras (now Belize) participated; and a first when a powerful living symbol for Mexico appeared for the first time in Olympic history, when a woman, Norma Enriqueta Basilio de Sotelo of Mexico, ran the Olympic flame into the Olympic stadium and up a long stairway to light the Olympic cauldron and inaugurate the 19th Olympiad. For the first time in Olympic history, a Cultural Olympics were held. As U.S. ambassador to Mexico Fulton Freeman said at the time, “Mexico has reached back into history and paralleled the athletics with culture in the Cultural Olympics.”

Carrasco’s assistant attaché at the U.S. Embassy, Malcolm Butler, noted that “Mexico used the Olympics to put itself on three maps—the sports map, the cultural map and the geo-political map as an international destination. They used the Olympics to show the world that their entire culture was rich and thousands of years old.”

But it was a Mexican genius, the architect Pedro Ramírez Vázquez who, as president of Mexico’s Olympic Organizing Committee, was the visionary force linking the Cultural Olympics to the Sports Olympics and thereby put another face of Mexico on the extravaganza. Mexican officials correctly understood that Mexico would not be a leading competitor in the sports competition and therefore added the Cultural Olympics to help the country stand out as a successful host of the Games. In spite of Mexico’s vigorous attempts to make the Cultural Olympics a major part of the Games, a

number of countries were slow to respond and contribute their best cultural representatives. Ramírez Vázquez asked the U.S. Embassy to use its influence to help motivate a stronger international participation. Carrasco’s language skills and cultural knowledge were called upon and his efforts resulted in a decisive improvement in cultural contributions.

Outstanding among the twenty events of the Cultural Olympics were the International Festival of the Arts (U.S. participants included Van Cliburn, Alexander Calder, Martha Graham, members of the Newport Jazz Festival, Merce Cunningham, Duke Ellington and Orchestra, the Tijuana Brass). David Alfaro Siqueiros’s gigantic stone mural at the National University (UNAM) was refurbished, as well as a mural by Diego Rivera on the façade of a movie theatre on a major thoroughfare, Insurgentes Sur, which became the site of the weight lifting competition. One “event” that left an enduring mark on Mexico was the International Meeting of Sculptures which placed 21 major sculptures in prominent places throughout Mexico City including Alexander Calder’s 70-foot-high “Red Sun” which greeted visitors to the Olympic Stadium. The stadium also had a mammoth mural by Diego Rivera constructed on its side.

DIPLOMACY, SPIES, DIALOGUE

But all was not culture and friendship in the months leading up to the Olympics because Cold War politics had infiltrated Mexico’s greatest sports festival from both the Soviet and U.S. sides. Carrasco was deeply troubled when, after accepting in 1967 the position as cultural attaché for the Olympics, he learned that a C.I.A. agent named Phillip Agee was to be assigned as one of his assistants. When he realized that his own credentials as a legitimate sports figure were going to be used, in part, as a “cover” for Agee’s clandestine activities in Mexico City, Carrasco struggled with whether he should resign the job. In 1968, only a few in the United States understood just how destructive the CIA had been to politi-

cal movements in Latin America. When Agee later wrote his highly controversial exposé *Inside the Company: CIA Diary*, he both praised Carrasco’s leadership during the Olympics and made an extra effort to state that Carrasco “had no connection whatsoever with the Agency.” The Agency justified Agee’s assignment because, in part, Soviet coaches (clandestinely accompanied by Soviet intelligence operatives) had been welcomed by the Mexican sports agencies to help coach some of the Mexican athletes and teams believing it would improve Mexico’s medal count. Partly to counter these influences the United States had also supplied coaches and a kind of spying competition went on alongside the sports training programs.

Race and politics infiltrated at least two public events during the Mexico City Games. In the months leading up to the Games, the Mexican Olympic Committee was troubled by the rumor that African-American athletes might boycott the Games to protest human rights abuses in the United States. Carrasco investigated the rumor and learned that some African-American athletes were politicized about the long history of racial abuses inside and outside of American sports practices but that they were planning to compete. The meaning of the rumor became clear when Tommie Smith and John Carlos, the gold and bronze medalists in the men’s 200-meter race, took their places on the podium for the medal ceremony wearing civil rights badges and black socks without shoes. As the Star Spangled Banner played they lowered their heads and each defiantly raised a black-glove fist. Assistant attaché Butler happened to be sitting about 40 yards away and remembers the scene.

“This act left many of us in the stadium breathless. I remember thinking that these people are really putting it on the line and will likely get thrown out of the games. Many Mexicans felt the same way about their courage and the punishment that was to come.”

Another tie between sports and political diplomacy was made evident at

the Olympic Village where the athletes from the different countries lived. Malcolm Butler summarizes the scene he witnessed.

"You see, Mexican athletes were proud that the Cuban athletes were part of the Mexico City games even as the U.S. was in a powerful Cold War conflict with Cuba. But their pride was not because they wanted to defy the U.S. as some people thought. Mexicans saw the Olympics as the setting where Americans and Cubans could get to know each other, talk and compete fairly against each other. I remember one day at the Olympic Village that some U.S. athletes went out of their way to greet and talk with the remarkable young Cuban runner Alberto Juantorena. This amiable exchange attracted onlookers and we could see and feel, in a palpable way, the pride and satisfaction that some Mexican athletes felt at the opening of this friendly dialogue between Cubans and U.S. athletes."

Here was a Mexican moment when sports and Cold War politics were beaten out, if only momentarily, by athletes in dialogue.

GUNS AND BASKETBALL IN ECUADOR'S GEO-POLITICS OF SPORTS

Not all sports involve athletes in dialogue though. My father learned this two years before the Olympic Games when he became director of the Peace Corps' Physical Education program in Ecuador. He always took a disciplined approach of combining craftiness and physical conditioning with his teams, but the first time he refereed a game between teams from rival parts of the country, he found this approach was not quite enough. In the dressing room following a wild first half of verbal attacks on players and referees, Carrasco asked the Ecuadoran referee about a plan of escape if things got worse. Unzipping a concealed pants pocket, the Ecuadoran reached in, taking out a handgun, and told Carrasco "aquí lo arreglamos"—we can fix it all with this.

Another sports event reveals how intense basketball rivalries got in Ecuador.

In 1966, the Peace Corps worked with high schools throughout the country to organize the first national high school basketball tournament. The tournament was held in the port city of Guayaquil with teams coming from all over the country for the three day tournament. National television and radio stations emphasized the intense rivalries between coastal and sierra peoples. As fate would have it, the championship game was played by teams from the coast and the interior—Guayas from Guayaquil and Pinchincha from Quito. Right before tip off, the local referees became intimidated by the crowd's insults and jeers and fled the stadium. Carrasco and one of the Peace Corps volunteers ended up refereeing the game. A company of Ecuadoran soldiers came into the building and circled the lower section of seats with rifles strapped to their shoulders. When the visiting school, Pinchincha, won by a single point, the losing hometown crowd flew into a rage and the Guayas officials who sponsored the tournament fled the stadium.

It was left to the Peace Corps representatives, to the delighted players and fans who had stayed behind, to hand out the trophies. Good intentions and good sportsmanship, as Carrasco learned, are sometimes trumped by geopolitical realities of rivalries and distrust. Yet my father never stopped trying to be an effective sports diplomat and a catalyst for social change through sports.

PLAYGROUND MAN

When my father was inducted into the Sports Hall of Fame at American University in 1994, I learned more about the results of his compassion for playground kids. A number of speakers at the Hall of Fame banquet described how they first met him and how he changed their lives.

One multi-sport all-star stood up and said, "My first memory of Coach Carrasco was at a playground at Sligo Jr. High. He was the biggest, strongest looking man I ever saw and he organized us into teams and taught us how to play together." Another star player, now a successful

coach, reminisced, "We were a bunch of kids running around at Pine Crest playground one summer when this big man showed up with baseball equipment and organized us into a game. After that first day, he was our coach and we had the best summer playing ever." An All American basketball player recounted, "We were black high school kids playing 'make-it-take-it' over in the neighborhood and here comes this *big* man, who didn't look black or white, over to the sidelines to check us out. At the break he called us over and told us that if we wanted to play college ball in the area and stay near our families, he would help us out. And he did!"

Others followed and the theme was the same. Playground ball with Carrasco started them on the path to becoming competitive athletes. As did those kids in Venezuela, they had all met him as boys on poor or working-class playgrounds. Looking back over his life that night it was clear to me that these shared achievements were rooted in those *fructíferas semillas* and *pícaro* lives in the borderlands of Latin America. And it became clear to me that as a man from the borderlands, he embodied the best of sports diplomacy—the ability of sports to create bridges between people and cultures and foster social change.

David Carrasco is the Neil L. Rudenstine Professor of the Study of Latin America at the Harvard Divinity School, with a joint appointment with the Department of Anthropology in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. A Mexican American historian of religions with a particular interest in religious dimensions in human experience, Mesoamerican cities as symbols, immigration, and the Mexican-American borderlands, his recent collaborative publications include Breaking Through Mexico's Past: Digging the Aztecs With Eduardo Matos Moctezuma (2007) and Cave, City, and Eagle's Nest: An Interpretive Journey Through the Mapa de Cuauhtinchan No. 2 (2007) and The Aztecs: A Very Short Introduction (2011).



SOCCER NATIONS

Soccer is often thought of as the Latin American sport or, as in the words of Franklin Foer, “soccer explains the world.” Here, authors look at soccer from a variety of perspectives.

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Sentimental Soccer

River Plate and the Depth of My Sorrow **BY MARIANO SISKIND**

BETWEEN WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22, AND SUNDAY, June 26, 2011, River Plate, the team I've been a fan of my entire life, was relegated to the second division of Argentina's soccer league. The depth of my sadness during those days took me by surprise. Soccer has always been an important part of my life, and some of my first childhood memories are tied to River—my father taking me to the stadium, the lights, the greenest grass I had ever seen, the red and white waving flags, the whole place shaking when our team came out to the field. The news of River's demotion—the winningest team in Argentina's league history, and ninth in the historical rating of the International Federation of Soccer History & Statistics—startled fans throughout the world, and the incessant front page news about everything around it proved that interest extended well beyond the strict realm of sports. Even though it occurred to me that it might be interesting to tease out the significance of the signifiers around River's decline (the national resonance of management's corrupt practices, the crisis of cultural institutions at the core of popular imaginaries, the end of soccer as a tale of heroism unthinkable in other social spheres), but during those days when River could not beat Belgrano de Córdoba, this intellectual agenda seemed like a grandiloquent, pompous and trivial exercise compared to the narcissistic intensity of my sorrow.

The fact was I was very sad. Too sad. Suspiciously sad for someone passionate about soccer, but nevertheless cerebral and rational (most of the time). An episode involving sports—no matter how traumatic—should not set off such deep sadness, I kept telling myself. But in this slightly demented interior dialogue, I could make no argument that could dissipate my sadness. And when I no longer wanted to—or no longer

could—keep wallowing in the complacent mud of this excessive melancholy, I sat down and wrote a number of ideas, hypotheses, reasons to explain what I felt during those days' declines, defeats and demotions.

I've lived in the United States for more than ten years, and since the birth of my two sons (Valentín and Bruno, both of them huge fans of River like myself and my father), I have developed a decidedly schizophrenic relationship with the identity-forming rituals of progressive *Argentinidad* and, most of all, with the practices and modalities of my own childhood in Buenos Aires, that my memory distorts over the double gaps of time and

diations that make up our (masculine for the most part) subjective identities, and the relations we form with our fathers, our sons, our friends. It's not just soccer; there's also politics, music, school, yes, but soccer is particularly effective as a way of invoking the sentimental universe of Buenos Aires that I would like to preserve here in the United States.

Soccer is not just soccer. Soccer is the emotional world that contains it and determines the weight of its social and subjective significance. So, for me, soccer is the name of vertical and horizontal forms of affect: in 1975 my father took me to the stadium for the first time to watch River win a championship after 18

Soccer is not just soccer. Soccer is the emotional world that contains it and determines the weight of its social and subjective significance.

diasporic space. I pay close attention to what goes on in Argentina, I refer to current-day affairs of Argentine politics and cultural life with sharp cosmopolitan irony, but at the same time, I exhaust myself with vain attempts to reproduce for my sons a series of everyday routines and modalities (food, music, sports, movies, jokes and word games, overwhelmingly intimate physical closeness) that I imagine they would have if they were growing up in Buenos Aires.

To me, soccer is one of the most effective ways of bridging my family's diasporic gap, but this is not specific to my relationship with my sons; the socio-affective significance of soccer is a proven global fact. Throughout the world, like very few other cultural phenomena, soccer is one of the names of the sentimental me-

years of defeat; and I was four when my dad took a picture of me in Hacoaj, with my first River jersey and soccer ball, posing as a professional player (I've taken similar pictures of my two boys in both Cambridge and Buenos Aires); beyond the hand of God and the most beautiful moves in the history of the game, my memory of Maradona's goal against England in the 1986 World Cup is marked by the way my grandfather Juan and I celebrated and embraced for an eternity; the endurance and power of the liturgies of friendship depends, at least partially, on the convoluted shapes of love inscribed in the ways my Boca Juniors friends and I tease each other like kids. And as a mechanism of identification, River gave me an excuse to avoid participating in the disagreeable chauvinistic



Four-year-old Mariano Siskind poses in his first River jersey.

side of Argentines' love of the national team (I'm a River fan, not of Argentina: I never cheered for a goal of a Boca player in *la selección*—Maradona doesn't count, of course: he is universal patrimony).

That's why the sadness I experienced in late June 2011 had very little to do with the demotion of River to the second division. Its strict sports meaning gets lost, indeed dissolved, in its overflowing socio-affective significance. If "River" is the way in which I work through my relationship to Buenos Aires and its cultural universe, then what was in play between

Wednesday, June 22, and Sunday, June 26, was not the horror of having to play in the second division with teams like Defensa y Justicia, Patronato, Atlanta and Deportivo Merlo, but the literal degradation of one of the signifiers of that name my sentimental life. The exasperated and impatient response of those who don't hear any emotional echoes in the deafening noises of soccer (my wife, for example) bothers me precisely because I am perfectly capable of seeing how ridiculous my over-investment in soccer is (so masculine, so Argentine, so idiotic).

Thinking it through, perhaps it is this re-proaching gaze (which is my own, most certainly) that leads me to intellectualize those days of River-Belgrano, and thus redeem my sorrow from its sports specificity and its apparent triviality.

The soccer fan in me tells me that I am unbearably pretentious in writing this essay. This inner voice tells me that the sadness of those days in June was (and is still) strictly sports-related because it was (and is) unimaginable that River has fallen so low, betraying its history, its colors, its stadium—and my own fresh memory of having felt, not so long ago, unbeatable, the best. But I have a twofold existence: the other part of me, the one that writes these lines midway between mourning and melancholy, shares space with the suffering sports fan. But if my sorrow can be explained through the evidence of affective relations and degraded childhood memories, the strictly sporting hypothesis carries some weight as well. Otherwise, I would stop caring about wins and losses, scores and rankings, rosters and injuries, for the year River will spend in the second division, and I would throw myself wholeheartedly to the process of mourning. But that's not the case. I insist on the tortuous ceremony of watching River every Saturday over the Internet. Valentín and Bruno sit down and watch with me, they sing soccer songs they understand partially, we hug each other with every goal and at every step of the ritual that perhaps redeems the socio-affective charge that River's demotion and my own diasporic status have degraded. And perhaps, through magical thinking, wishing Cavenaghi scores again, the three of us can will River into becoming champions once again.

Mariano Siskind is an Assistant Professor of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University.



Great Players, Bad Business

Soccer in South America **BY RORY MILLER**

JUST AS MY FINAL UNDERGRADUATE EXAMS finished in June 1970, the World Cup finals started in Mexico, and I settled down to three weeks of watching soccer. Across the world, fans of my age remember those finals—the first we saw on color television—for the unforgettable third World Cup victory with Brazil’s “Beautiful Team,” the magical squad that included Pelé, Gerson, Rivelino and Jairzinho. Since I was hoping my exam results would be good enough to obtain a postgraduate grant for research on Peruvian history, one match particularly enthralled me—Brazil’s brilliant 4-2 victory over a strong Peru side in the quarter-

finals. I looked forward to seeing Peruvian stars like Teófilo Cubillas and Ramón Miffilín playing for Alianza and Sporting Cristal in Lima.

It would not be the same today. Of the 66 players in the Brazilian, Peruvian and Uruguayan squads in 1970, just one played for a club outside his home country (an Uruguayan who had crossed to Buenos Aires to play for River Plate). Compare that with the 2010 World Cup finals in South Africa. Just three of Brazil’s squad of 23 still played for a Brazilian team; twelve for clubs in Italy or Spain. The Uruguayan squad contained only two who represented

teams in Montevideo; six played elsewhere in South America while the remaining fifteen were spread around seven European countries.

Why do so few South American fans manage to see the stars of their national team playing, except on television? Since 1995, when the European Court of Justice issued the so-called Bosman Judgment, which relaxed restrictions on foreign players in European leagues, star soccer players have effectively gained the freedom to play for whichever club they want, and, not surprisingly, they have flocked to the wealthiest teams in Europe. In 2010-11 the CIES Football

Merchandise for the Millionarios team on sale at a Bogotá stadium.

Observatory counted 132 Brazilian and 111 Argentine players in the top five European leagues, as well as 93 from other South American countries. Lionel Messi, an Argentine who won the Ballon d'Or, FIFA's award for the Best Player in the World, for the third successive year in 2011, moved to FC Barcelona at the age of 13 and made his first-team debut four years later. However, legal changes provide only part of the reason. Generally, the soccer business in South America has lagged behind the enormous commercialization of Western European soccer that has occurred over the last twenty years, even though countries like Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina continue to produce some of the best and most valuable players in the world.

Conventionally, in Europe, we divide the revenues of leading clubs into three income streams: matchday (the money earned from spectators attending the game), media (mainly television, but also the Internet and mobile platforms), and commercial (mainly jersey and kit sponsorship, commercial partnerships and merchandising). In Western Europe, all three revenue streams have grown enormously since the early 1990s. According to Deloitte's Annual Review of Football Finance, the English Premier League clubs earned \$3.3 billion in 2009/10, with roughly half coming from media income and the remainder split between matchday and commercial income. The total earnings of the top five leagues in Western Europe reached just over \$11 billion, \$7.2 billion of which went for player salaries.

The clubs participating in the Brazilian Campeonato, in contrast, earned just over \$1 billion in 2010 (helped considerably by the appreciation of the *real*). The previous year, according to figures compiled by Brazilian financial expert Amir Samoggi, just over a quarter of Brazilian clubs' revenues came from their broadcasting deal with the Globo TV network. About a quarter came from tickets and

membership subscriptions—all major clubs in Brazil, as elsewhere in South America, are member-owned social clubs, often offering other sporting activities and social facilities as well. Just 15 percent came from commercial revenue sources such as sponsorship and merchandising. Much of the rest, between 20 and 40 percent of Brazilian clubs' income in the last five years, has come from selling players, especially to Europe.

And Brazil is the richest league in South America... Reliable financial details for clubs in other leagues are scarce, but a couple of examples help to illustrate the gaps with Europe. In late 2011, Boca Juniors and River Plate, the best-supported clubs in Argentina, both signed sponsorship contracts with BBVA Francés, worth \$4.5 million and \$3.5 million a year respectively. Compare this with the \$30 million that Liverpool claims to earn annually from Standard Chartered Bank, which has extensive interests in Asia, or Manchester United from AON, a U.S. insurance broker. In Chile, the 21 teams in the top division together generated total revenues of only \$40 million in 2007. The leading Chilean club, Colo-Colo, currently earns roughly half its income from player sales. Throughout South America clubs have to operate with much lower revenues than in Western Europe. The result is that they have to transfer their best footballers to Europe, often fail to pay the players that remain, and still incur increasing debts. Why have South American clubs failed to keep pace?

Matchday income is poor, due to lower ticket prices and declining attendances. In the case of Estudiantes, a leading Argentine club, a monthly subscription of \$9 buys entry to all home matches, while the normal entrance ticket costs \$12. Moreover, in contrast to the well-filled, comfortable stadiums in England or Germany, clubs in South America only ever fill their grounds for the big matches against local rivals. A report on the Brazilian Campeonato for 2011 suggests that average attendances amounted to just under 15,000, down 20 percent

since 2007, and average gross revenues 300,000 reais a match (\$180,000), compared with the \$750,000 that a mid-table English Premier League club like Everton generates, let alone the \$4 million that Arsenal, with a large new stadium in north London, obtains from each home match. Ticket prices obviously have to reflect local incomes and demand for seats. However, football has to compete with many other leisure activities, and attendance has suffered too from a growth in spectator violence. Starting in Argentina in the 1950s and 1960s, groups of noisy and often violent young men, *barras bravas*, have come to dominate soccer grounds, often fighting amongst themselves for prestige and spoils. In the 1990s, especially, similar *barras* also began to grow in Brazil, Peru, and Chile. Going to a match in a country like Colombia can be reminiscent of the worst days of soccer hooliganism in England in the 1980s, not just in terms of the threatening atmosphere outside the ground, but also the body searches and other barriers the fan has to cross in order to gain admission. The outcome is to deter many, especially families, from attending, as well as increasing the security costs that clubs have to meet.

Media income has also suffered. The armchair fan in South America who has access to cable television or, now, the Internet, can watch a bewildering variety of soccer, especially at weekends when matches from all the major European leagues are transmitted, or during the week when many prefer to watch their favorite players representing teams like Barcelona or Inter-Milan in the UEFA Champions League rather than South American competitions such as the Copa Libertadores. The accident of geography and time zones does not help: European matches are shown during the day or early evening in South America while South American matches transmitted to Europe would fall in the late evening or the middle of the night. Attempts to televise delayed highlights of the Argentine or Brazilian leagues in Europe have

generally failed, much to the chagrin of aficionados of South American football. Problems also arise from the dominance of particular television networks, often part of larger business groups, which reduces the value of media rights for domestic competitions. Between 2009 and 2011, TV Globo, which dominates programming in Brazil, paid only \$250 million a season for the rights for the Brazilian league. Furthermore, Globo places much more value on the advertising gen-

Peru, in January 2012, the debt to players reached almost \$4 million. FIFPRO, the international professional soccer players' union, reported similar problems in Colombia, where nine of the eighteen clubs in the top division had failed to pay players, while in Bolivia players refused to turn out for the national team until their clubs paid them. Brazilian soccer players have hundreds of cases pending against their employers in the labor courts. In a country where the legal system is notori-

ously slow, this offers impecunious clubs one way to delay payments they cannot afford. For good players, on the other hand, the prospects in Europe seem ever more attractive.

Yet perhaps there are signs of hope. The appreciation of the *real* and economic growth are leading some Brazilian soccer players to return home, improving the quality of the Campeonato. Chilean clubs have recovered their media rights and generate much more income by controlling their own television channel. Some clubs have made serious attempts to understand their fans and modernize their businesses. Boca Juniors is a rare example of an international brand originating in Argentina. Other clubs, like Santos or Internacional-RS, have realized that there is commercial potential in a high-quality youth system that develops players for the international market. For all said and done, whatever the problems with the business, South American football still produces some of the most skillful and iconic footballers in the world.

Rory Miller's professional career took an abrupt turn in 1997 when he was asked to become the founding program director of Liverpool University's MBA specializing in Football Industries. Since then he has pursued research on football finance and the football business in Britain and Latin America, co-editing Football in the Americas (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2007) with his colleague, Liz Crolley. At the same time he has continued to do research on Latin American business history, publishing Empresas británicas, economía y política en el Perú, 1850-1934 (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2011) and jointly editing the Journal of Latin American Studies for Cambridge University Press.

Poor management, in a continent where its three representatives on the FIFA Executive Committee have all faced serious allegations of corruption, is rife.

erated by its world-famous telenovelas than on soccer, with the result that mid-week matches kick off after 10 p.m. when the telenovelas finish, depressing both attendances and TV audiences.

Poor television audiences for domestic soccer, especially when it is confined to Pay-TV, also have an impact on sponsorship income, because the potential partners for clubs or sponsors for competitions gain much less exposure. International firms may also be deterred from backing a sport marked by violence and corruption, though this is clearly not true of some of the banks and oil companies, as well as Pepsi and Coke. As noted already, the clubs' sponsorship revenues are only a fraction of the levels seen in Western European markets. Other forms of commercial income, such as merchandising, also suffer from weak legal protection of brands and trademarks. How many people are going to buy a new official team shirt at \$25 or more when pirated merchandise is available at a fraction of the price?

This all makes for poverty-stricken clubs and discontented soccer players, who are frequently left unpaid for months. In Argentina, it was claimed in 2009 that clubs in the top division owed players \$8 million in unpaid salaries. In

Peru, in January 2012, the debt to players reached almost \$4 million. FIFPRO, the international professional soccer players' union, reported similar problems in Colombia, where nine of the eighteen clubs in the top division had failed to pay players, while in Bolivia players refused to turn out for the national team until their clubs paid them. Brazilian soccer players have hundreds of cases pending against their employers in the labor courts. In a country where the legal system is notori-

ously slow, this offers impecunious clubs one way to delay payments they cannot afford. For good players, on the other hand, the prospects in Europe seem ever more attractive.

Financial difficulties also lead to clubs incurring large debts to the state for unpaid taxes and social security. The Argentine government claimed in August 2009 that the clubs owed \$80 million in unpaid taxes. In Brazil the Lula government established a new soccer lottery, Timemania, in 2007, in an attempt to recoup some of the tax payments due from the clubs, an initiative that has so far failed to generate anything like the revenues anticipated. Amir Samoggi's report on Brazilian club finances in 2010 estimated that the debts of the leading 25 teams totalled \$2.1 billion, 40 percent of which was owed by four clubs in Rio de Janeiro, where reform of club management has advanced more slowly than in São Paulo or Rio Grande do Sul.

Poor management, in a continent whose three representatives on the FIFA Executive Committee have all faced serious allegations of corruption, is rife. In part this is due to the fact that most professional teams still legally belong to social clubs, run by their members in their

The Ball and the Blackboard

Soccer in the Classroom **BRUNO CARVALHO**

AS AN UNDERGRADUATE, I HAD A CLASSICS professor who sometimes spoke of the humanities' task as the search for the strange in the familiar, and the familiar in the strange. The idea stuck with me, and in my own classes I have attempted to create an environment in which students re-evaluate their preconceived notions, and simultaneously establish connections to what may seem remote or exotic. Since most of my courses revolve around the cultural histories of cities, normally this is a rather safe exercise. How might a 19th-century urban dweller find our sartorial habits unusual? How might we draw parallels between Brasília's development and that of more traditional capitals?

In fall 2010, however, this pedagogical effort became quite personal and tricky. I had developed a Freshman Seminar called Soccer and Latin America: History, Politics, and Popular Culture. It was now time to face fifteen bright and eager Princeton students, as well as my own obsessive relationship to the sport. While not out of place in Brazil (where I am from), my unrestrained passion of soccer would certainly reduce me to the stereotype of the fiery Latin American. All of a sudden I feared that my immigration status as a "non-resident alien" would actually be confirmed in the classroom.

In my many years studying and then working in North American universities, I had mostly retained an adolescent attitude to soccer. Comparisons to the experience of sports like baseball and football were readily dismissed. To be sure, I recognized the existence of rabid fans north of the Rio Grande, but someone from a country with a flag on the moon could never understand the extent to which past World Cup victories defined my sense of national identity as a child



in the 1980s. A game could be tense, heart-wrenching or cathartic. It was seldom entertainment. My sense of national belonging, meanwhile, was easily surpassed by the role the soccer club Vasco da Gama played in early memories, family ties and friendships. Few things are less conceivable in Brazil than the idea of an individual switching allegiance from one team to another. "Of all the loves I have ever had, you are the oldest," one of the chants sung at Vasco's games begins. A cross-town rival's anthem asserts how this first-love lasts "until death."

I could never think of a stadium being renamed after a bank, of a team having an owner, or of a club treated as a "franchise" that could even move to a different city. Now I would have to lead a seminar with students who found all of these aberrations to be normal. At the same time, I had been living away from Brazil—and working as an academic—for long enough to recognize myself as an outlier when it came to soccer. My initial concern that others at Princeton would not find the topic serious enough was quickly proven unfounded. At the

university, I only encountered support and encouragement. But what if my stadium instincts kicked in during seminar discussions, reverting the tweed-jacket intellectual back to the jersey-wearing aficionado?

Suffice it to say that at least the majority of the time, I was able to fake it. The students turned out to share my enthusiasm, and class discussions were productive and vibrant. Since the seminar had around thirty applicants, I could assemble a diverse group that included first-year students from Singapore, Ireland, El Salvador, England and several corners of the United States. Some came to the course because of soccer, others had an interest in Latin America and no prior relationship to the sport. It was an effective combination, and as intended, the course provided a window into the study of the region's political, social, and cultural histories since the early 20th century.

Between clips of Maradona and Garrincha in action, the seminar focused

Fans at a soccer game in Brazil.

on topics not unlike those that might arise in more orthodox courses. Discussions involved a variety of issues like the relationship between intellectuals and popular culture, representations of national identity, and the dynamics of globalization. We investigated interplays between soccer and the state, discussing the sport's use and co-optation by dictatorial regimes of the 1960s and 70s, as well as its role in different countries' self-assertions on the world stage. We read narratives of prominent chroniclers who elevated soccer to "epic" status, projecting national teams as the embodiment of a collective identity. In the process, we explored how some authors, like the Brazilian playwright Nelson Rodrigues, utilized soccer as a vehicle through which to confront broader racial issues.

Reflections over the place of soccer in the social landscape inevitably led to questions of how, in a region of deep economic inequalities, the sport can function both as a congregator and as the proverbial "opium of the masses." Throughout the semester, students grappled with how soccer captivates the imaginaries of so many, and began to view its popularization in the context of developments like radio, technology to build massive stadiums, and immigration. Those who were up to date on the latest results from the world's major leagues never allowed us to forget about the game's more "spectacular" or aesthetic aspects. Intersections between soccer, religion, dance and theater came up often.

Our readings included social scientists, poets, journalists, cultural critics, and even soccer players—they could not have been more interdisciplinary. The conversations too sometimes proved to be eclectic. On at least one occasion, we made an incursion into the differences between Heraclitus' and Parmenides' conception of time. Often, we debated the implications of Johan Huizinga's notion that "play [...] lies outside morals" (*Homo Ludens*). As the semester progressed, it became apparent that the students frequently ascribed more importance to the game than I did. It

is easy to lose your sense of proportion when so much seems to be riding on a World Cup semi-final. But no matter how incensed one might feel about Luis Suárez using his hand to prevent a game-decisive Ghanaian goal against Uruguay, our indignation would be best directed towards more far-reaching and consequential injustices.

Over time, I began to get a sense that my intense, lifelong relationship to soccer—both as a veteran of the stands and as a player—actually served a purpose in the classroom. And not just in this particular course. I began to worry less that the moments when we were enjoying footage from a great match might be unbecoming of an academic setting. We even decided to have a class-wide pickup game (a promise on which I have not yet delivered). Just like serious pursuits can coexist with pleasure, critical thought and physical engagement need not be antithetic. *Mens sana in corpore sano* should adorn our academic halls as much as our gyms.

The soccer fanatic, after all, could be compatible with the scholar. In this sense it was not just I who had changed, but Latin America itself. The notion of soccer players' performances as an expression of national characteristics seems to have been greatly diminished. This has partly to do with how many of the best athletes sign up to play for European teams. It also has much to do, I suspect, with the extent to which civil society and democracy have matured in several of the region's countries. In the 1960s and 70s, soccer had been both a tool of authoritarian regimes, and a space of resistance against them. It might not be clear where things are going now, but we know that they have changed direction.

The Italian filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini once claimed that "there are two types of football, prose and poetry. European teams are prose, tough, premeditated, systematic, collective. Latin American ones are poetry, ductile, spontaneous, individual, erotic." That too would appear to be an outdated view, when most of the region's profession-

als remain mired in a false equivalence between beauty and failure. Since the 1990s, soccer strategists have mostly agreed that to achieve successful results, one must play defensively, prizing physical force over creativity. That myth has been shattered by today's wildly victorious Barcelona, led by Lionel Messi, the pale and brilliant Argentine.

If Latin America is to have a return of its soccer golden age, this time accompanied by progress in other areas, the moment seems propitious. As Brazil prepares to host the 2014 World Cup, however, all signs point towards ambivalence. Much of what has been promised in terms of infrastructural investment will likely not be delivered. And stadium construction is already leaving a legacy of wasted resources. We discussed in class José Miguel Wisnik's wonderful recent essay of national interpretation, *Veneno Remédio: O Futebol e o Brasil* (Poison-Cure: Soccer and Brazil), that interprets soccer as a *pharmakon*, containing at once the possibilities of curing and poisoning. In a cruder way, the category also applies to the flow of capital tied to the upcoming mega-sporting event. Rio de Janeiro's Maracanã Stadium, for example, is undergoing a massive billion-dollar reconstruction. While updating the "temple of soccer" to meet safety norms, the intervention has also entailed drastic changes to its design. This includes an unnecessary roof replacement, forever altering what used to be an exceptional acoustic space. The veteran of the stands already mourns the loss of a familiar place. In this case, I do not much care what the academic in me thinks. But maybe, I think, my students will understand.

Bruno Carvalho is an Assistant Professor of Luso-Brazilian literatures and cultures at Princeton University, where he also teaches urban studies and film. Currently, he is completing a book tentatively entitled *Porous City: Rio de Janeiro's 'Little Africa,' Jewish Neighborhood, and the Formation of Brazilian Culture (1808-1945)*. He wishes to be buried with a Vasco flag.

¡Goooooal!

Soccer and Study Abroad **BY JOHANNA DAMGAARD LIANDER**

THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO BE INTRODUCED TO soccer. You can play when you're young (or not so young), you can listen or watch the media, or you can be a spectator right there at the stadium or at the field. All three were part of my experience, and happily, all three became the experience of my students last summer during Harvard Summer School in Buenos Aires, as part of our linguistic and cultural immersion.

What a privilege as an American growing up in the 1960s to play soccer in Central Park as part of my curriculum, or at least as part of Eleanor Borg's intent for her second and third graders at a New York elementary school. The game was coed and the coach, our gym teacher, a middle-aged energetic Swedish woman who taught us soccer, gymnastics and poetry.

My home kitchen was filled with the aromas of my father's cooking and the soccer broadcasts over the tiny television, which accompanied us in those years. My father, from rural Denmark, who had sailed the high seas eventually to settle in New York and catch the eye of a young Finnish girl in Harlem, was bored with all American sports. He cried for joy when professional soccer finally arrived in the United States, when he was well beyond middle age, and he became glued to the TV for all games ever since. Whether it was croissants, plates of crème caramel, roast goose or oxtail ragout that emerged from his kitchen, they were always prepared to the accompaniment of "gooooool," generally hollered in a faint *porteño* accent.

Then there were Sundays, familiar to many as church and soccer. For me, too, they were spent traveling from some enclave of Protestantism in Manhattan to

the then hardly fashionable Brooklyn, riding the subway, again with my father, to watch immigrant soccer leagues on the playing fields of Bay Ridge. Like most youngsters, never really focusing on the rules, I caught the passion of soccer while watching the European immigrants of the time, from the north and south alike, taking a day off from the (generally manual) workweek to continue the tradition and the joy of soccer on a new continent. The rituals were followed, of course, by a family Sunday lunch.

So what could be more thrilling, along with sharing a city and a language that I loved, than to witness my students' reliving my soccer days in all their dimensions, over our summer/winter months together in Argentina. And we thrived.

Soccer was the pastime when the group could no longer study grammar or read Borges or Sarmiento. Soccer was a way to run off all that *bife*, ice cream and *dulce de leche*, and soccer was a most effective distraction when our bus broke down in the middle of northern wetlands (while alligators and capybaras roamed

the surrounding high grass) or while we waited anxiously in the jungle to take our trip to Iguazú falls. Soccer was another way to meet as a group, create a spectacle for *porteños*, *cordobeses*, or *correntinos* in the parks, or wherever we were...and soccer was a way to socialize, to improve linguistic competence and cultural awareness, reinforcing the good feelings within the group, inviting Argentine friends and family, and accepting comments and advice from rather surprised and amused onlookers.

Nothing was more satisfying than to hear my students say "*cháke*" ("careful," in Guaraní, used while playing soccer) or to hear them comment on what Homero Manzi meant when he wrote "*si el alma está en orsaí*" ("if your soul is offside") in "Che, Bandoneón." For just as there is a language of tango, there too is a lexicon of soccer, usually learned spontaneously, and which, not surprisingly, has borrowings from other tongues.

Soccer in Argentina, as in the United States, is intimately associated with immigration. Along with the railroads,



Students in Buenos Aires

the English brought several sports to Argentina in the 19th century, and soccer, by 1912, finally could be called *criollo*, as a winning team (Racing Club de Avellaneda) had more sons of Italians and Spaniards than Englishmen. Neighborhoods in cities began to have clubs, especially places with large immigrant populations, and the soccer club created the identity of the neighborhood. One played soccer for distraction from the hard lot of the immigrant. The rest of the week's poverty and nostalgia disappeared temporarily, and dreams were played and won on the soccer field, thus providing a form of egalitarian theater and recreation, dependent on *el azar* (chance) directly related to the nimbleness of one's feet. As Mariano Gruschetsky points out in "La sociología del fútbol" (July 18, 2011, Harvard Summer School in Buenos Aires), current sociology of soccer contends that chance plays a far greater role in soccer than in basketball, for example, played with one's hands, generally more dexterous than one's feet. The *gambeta* or dribbling—a term from Gaucho literature, referring to the running of an ostrich—was, of course, individual and unpredictable.

For many Argentines, the classic Sunday was church and/or the soccer club, and of course, the *asado*, the traditional

family meal. Fito Páez is one of many to recall:

*Todas las mañanas que viví
todas las calles donde me escondí
el encantamiento de un amor, el sacrificio
de mis padres
los zapatos de charol...
los domingos en el club
salvo que Cristo sigue allá en la cruz
las columnas de la catedral
y la tribuna grita gol el lunes por la capital...*

—Fito Páez, "Mariposa Technicolor",
Circo Beat, 1994.

*[Each morning that I lived,
each street where I hid,
the spell of a love, my parents' sacrifice,
patent leather shoes...
Sundays at the club
even though Christ is still there on
the cross
the columns of the cathedral
and the stand (of the soccer stadium)
shouts "goal" Monday in the pages of La
capital (newspaper from Rosario)]*

Last summer in Argentina, we experienced all of this, even the Sunday *asado* with host families. Outside of the classroom, we cheered for Argentina at the Monumental, the largest stadium in Buenos Aires, home to River Plate. We went to the immense open-air public

screenings of several matches of the Copa América at the Plaza San Martín, the loveliest of Buenos Aires' parks, where I believe Borges still strolls. Together in Córdoba, we almost missed our overnight bus back to a mourning Buenos Aires, because of the jubilant crowds in the street gathered after a Córdoba team (Belgrano) defeated the River Plate team from the capital earlier that day. Together, in fact, we had listened to that fateful match on our bus driver's radio, as we drove through the magnificent Sierras Chicas of Córdoba province.

So wherever we were, like Christopher Robin and Pooh, the soccer ball was there as well. And at any free moment, we—or most of us—played. The soccer moms we had left in the United States would have been pleased, and the non-Americans in my group just joined in, as they would have done back home. And naturally the Argentine audiences emerged to watch and comment, whether in the Bosques de Palermo, the province of Misiones, on the banks of the Paraná River, or at the seemingly infinite *estancia* of one of our host families, among sheep, buffaloes, horses, cows, and most gracious gauchos.

In the classroom we did not play soccer. Yet we certainly referred to it as we read and commented moments of Argentine history or the past week's news.



In reference to both, we inevitably mentioned Maradona, as well.

Soccer, though never a neutral topic, often became a focus of dinner conversations at the students' local homes. One of the first bits of information about the families was usually whose *hinchas* (fans) they were. A convinced or polite homestay student would promptly appear in class, wearing the appropriate *remera* (t-shirt). Several students went one step further. They were invited for an entire evening—a male evening—out to the *pampa* to play soccer, cards (*truco*) and eat *mondongo* (no definition needed), providing testimonies in class (too early) the next morning and in their written diaries.

Each session of Harvard Summer School in Buenos Aires has had its own character—dancing tango, looking for history, art, shopping and *boliches* (clubs, in this case) or simply, eating beef (“at least once a day”). Certainly the last two years will be remembered as the soccer summers.

Anibal Troilo used to say to the uninitiated that “*el tango te espera*.” (“Tango will wait for you.”) Likewise my father always hoped that the sport of his childhood would catch on in his adopted new land. He is, I believe, being granted his wish. And perhaps I am, too, for what is more rewarding than to transform one's own experiences and knowledge—with a dose of nostalgia—into a history worth sharing?

And what better place to be nostalgic, in Spanish, than Buenos Aires?

Johanna Damgaard Liander, Harvard '78, Ph.D. '87, has been Senior Preceptor of Romance Languages and Literatures since 1988 and has directed and taught the Harvard Summer School in Buenos Aires since 2007.

Practicing soccer in Brazil... a sport that unites Latin America (and divides it too)

Soccer Clubs

Kicking Off Democracy in Latin America

BY ALDO PANFICHI

ON JUNE 25, 1978, ARGENTINA AND HOLLAND were playing the World Cup final. General Jorge Rafael Videla's dictatorship had spent millions to organize the Cup; the Montanera guerrilla had decreed a unilateral truce, and all of Latin America stirred with euphoria for Argentina's sky-blue flag in hopes of a victory. At the same hour, we—a group of college freshmen—were taking an exam on the subject of democracy. Our professor, a well-known political scientist, had adamantly refused to postpone the test when we timidly suggested he do so. So there we were, working in anguish and silence while every once in a while the enthusiastic shouts of workers from a nearby construction site penetrated the classroom. We shot glances at each other, unable to concentrate, with the wall clock ticking away the minutes left in the game. And suddenly, there came a huge roar from the street that shook us: Argentina Champion! Argentina Champion! We couldn't stand it any more—test or not—and we got up and ran to the nearest radios and televisions, and in the scramble, someone mumbled, “to hell with democracy.”

Soccer is much more than a sport. As we sociologists like to say, it is a “complete social occurrence,” able to capture the complexity and dilemmas of any given era. For this reason, at a time when dissatisfaction with democracy is so extended throughout the hemisphere that even new forms of citizen participation have not been able to legitimize it again, it is necessary to question those social practices that accompany the performance of political institutions. It is thus worthwhile to take a look at the relationship between soccer clubs and democracy, since these clubs are privileged spaces in which to observe the associa-

tive life and political culture dominant within a society.

It is true that some clubs emblematic of the region have been transformed into corporations (S.A.) to participate in the globalized soccer industry, but a large number of professional clubs have not done so. Moreover, most clubs in the region are purely local in nature rather than professional, with different levels of institutionalization, but with great impact on the life of the community. In practically any corner of the continent, clubs compete on the soccer field, whether to settle local rivalries or to experience the politics of everyday life.

In their original form, the clubs are voluntary associations of individuals who get together from time to time to play soccer. These clubs are part of the organizational fabric of civil society, although not often recognized as such. As Alexis de Tocqueville points out in his classic *Democracy in America* (1835 and 1840), the civic associations citizens create, for whatever reasons, have an enormous impact on the development of a democratic culture capable of sustaining and giving legitimacy to political institutions. Focusing more on citizens' social practices than on the bureaucratic operation of political institutions, Tocqueville makes the argument that civic associations encourage the free participation of citizens in matters of collective interest (in this case, sports), develop habits of sociability based on discussion and respect for agreements, and strengthen learning about democratic electoral procedures and rules. Following this line of argument, Robert Putnam and Sidney Verba argue that the civic traditions that are nurtured in these civic associations have a formative impact on the attitude



of citizens towards the political system. In other words, civic associations can be spaces for democratic practice—as these authors suggest—as well as spaces that reflect the participants’ limitations and challenges.

The concept of the club as a sports association began in Europe in the 20th century. As sociologist Norbert Elías notes, it is quite significant that the term “club” was adopted by French revolutionaries in the 18th century, when they desired to claim the political right to free association, a right absent in the previous feudal and autocratic regimes. The modern sports clubs also played an important role in the transformation of soccer from a series of leisure activities or games to the sport it is today, particu-

larly in the creation of rules and institutions that regulate its practice and abide by the democratic principle of competing on equal terms.

At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, soccer clubs began to proliferate in the ports and poor neighborhoods of the principal Latin American cities, giving a sense of belonging and identity to immigrants, factory and dock workers, students and enthusiastic neighbors. Historian Brenda Elsey describes how, for example, between 1948 and 1960, some soccer clubs were means of politicization and radicalization in Santiago’s working-class neighborhoods. Members and players of these clubs criticized class inequality and constructed an ideal of “more honor-

able” masculinity that combined physical strength, solidarity with fellow workers and militancy in the socialist and communist parties (Brenda Elsey, “The Independent Republic of Football: The Politics of Neighborhood Clubs in Santiago, Chile, 1948-1960,” *Journal of Social History*, Spring 2009).

At the present time, the most important soccer clubs in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay have thousands of members; they are institutions that offer a wide range of services and are considered to be very important economic and social actors. In the recently published “The Democratic Dribbler: Football Clubs, Neoliberal Globalization, and Buenos Aires’ Municipal Election of 2003” (*Public Culture* 19, Duke University Press),



Far left: Comando Sur fans of Club Alianza Lima, Archivo Don Balon, Lima 1998; this page (left), Players from Club Atlético Chalaco del Puerto del Callao, 1918; (right) Don Adelfo Magallanes of Club Alianza Lima, leader of the so-called Rodillo Negro (Black Knee) in Camarin, preparing for a game, Lima 1933

sociologist Carlos Forment shows that in Argentina soccer clubs are the largest and most widespread civil associations in the country, providing elements of identification and social differentiation to the majority of the population. These clubs play two contradictory roles, however. On the one hand, they promote civic and democratic practices among their many members by electing club leaders through electoral processes in which several lists compete. But, on the other hand, their internal disputes legitimate an authoritarian and strongman—*caudillo*—culture. These disputes are often violent, and the clubs use free tickets to manipulate violent fans, the so-called *barras bravas*—organized groups of vocal supporters.

The situation is equally disheartening in Colombia, Perú, Paraguay and Bolivia, where the clubs with the greatest number of followers can hardly be considered spaces or “schools” to learn about democracy. On the contrary, they are institutionally weak associations with little incentive to stimulate the associative life; *caudillo* politics, secrecy and arbitrariness

dominate in the administration of resources and in the decision-making process. At the same time, these clubs are facing economic bankruptcy while accusations of corruption and tax evasion are aired from time to time in the media. In other words, in the internal life of the principal soccer clubs, anti-democratic values and behavior are actually fomenting a type of “uncivil society”—values that unfortunately are also present in the wider society, political parties and the state.

Dramatic examples of this situation are the Peruvian soccer clubs Alianza Lima and Universitario. Both boast millions of followers, but have only a little more than a thousand members; of these only a minority participated in the last elections. The small number of members in relation to its popular backing results in a closed club, with very high entrance fees that put off fans in spite of the fact that both clubs are associated with the grassroots. This leads to a vicious cycle, in which well-intentioned fans or reformers avoided greater participation due to existing corruption and lack of incentives.

Clearly, there is not much interest in democratizing the clubs or expanding their membership base, since this would put an end to the small groups or clans. The scant institutional life, moreover, is dominated by a factionalism that impedes the construction of horizontal bonds that would result in a democratic outcome. Instead, conflictive relations, imposition, and the arbitrary and untransparent use of power predominate. In this context, clubs often are seen by some adventurers as the means to gain celebrity, be recognized by public opinion and eventually move into a political career or business success. This is the case of club leaders transformed into congressmen and mayors. Instead of being spaces to practice and learn democracy, these clubs have reproduced social authoritarianism and archaic strongmen.

If this has happened within soccer clubs and other associations of civil society, perhaps it is not strange that democracy is fragile and does not count on citizen loyalty, as polls and studies show, such as those done by the United Nations Development Programme. Democracy is not just a group of institutions and rules, but above all, habits, practices and values that have been firmly internalized. To the degree to which citizens lack spaces in which to learn and practice democratic ideals, democracy will be more of an aspiration than a reality. Soccer clubs, above all other local organizations, can help create the practices and habits that build strong citizens to nourish our democracies.

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Soccer and Literature

A Look at Roberto “El Negro” Fontanarrosa **BY MICHEL DI CAPUA**

THE WOMAN IN THE BOOKSTORE IN ROSARIO, Argentina, could tell I wasn’t a native. She asked me what I was doing in the city. I told her I was trying my luck as a freelance writer. Writing about what?

“About Argentine soccer leagues,” I told her.

“Ok. Fontanarrosa’s books are over there,” she said.

“Whose?”

“Fontanarrosa’s. El Negro.”

She was surprised I had never heard of the man. You can call him, she told me. Why would I call him? “You’ll see,” she said, as she gave me El Negro’s phone number.

I had been traveling across Argen-

tina for several months before happening upon Rosario, a city four hours away from Buenos Aires on bus, where the tourist traffic was so incidental that I was the sole guest at the town hostel the nights I stayed there. Though Rosario had been billed as one of the country’s loveliest cities, it was unappealing. Its river is dirty, and its prized flag museum grandiose. And yet, in the days I spent there, I became attached to the city—not because of anything it offered, but because, quite by accident, I found myself in a gratifying daily routine. I’d bicycle along the river, eat ice cream in the late afternoon, and go to the local dance hall at night. The theme at the hall

would change (tango on Monday nights, salsa on Tuesdays, student bands on Wednesdays), but the crowd hardly did. During that stint in Rosario, I matured as a traveler. I learned how satisfying it is, in the middle of a long trip, to drop your pack in an unassuming place, commit to it, commit to routine and to not seeing much at all. But undoubtedly the memories of Rosario abide because of my having met El Negro.

I soon discovered that everyone in Argentina knew who El Negro was; he was a soccer journalist, novelist, short story writer, and, above all, the country’s

An Argentine street scene

comedian: a cartoonist famous for his “Inodoro Pereyra” comic strips about a gaucho, his talking dog, and his fat, petulant wife, Eulogia. He was also something of a local hero in Rosario, where he had grown up and had pledged his very public, very immoderate loyalty to a local soccer team. I was able to reach El Negro by telephone the day after meeting the woman in the bookstore, and he agreed to let me interview him several days later.

In anticipation of my meeting with El Negro, I bought a tape recorder. I had not done much interviewing before then. I spent a long time drafting questions. I remember my nervousness as the hour before our encounter approached; I found his house and sat outside for the remaining minutes testing and re-testing the recorder. And then I rang the bell; his wife, Gaby, ushered me in, and I found El Negro, bearded, sharp-eyed, gaunt... and immobile. For three years, he had been suffering from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig’s disease, a neurodegenerative disease that causes muscle weakness and eventually results in loss of control of voluntary muscle movements. Because of his illness, El Negro had finally been forced to stop drawing his own cartoons, and had now resorted to dictating his writings.

Our conversation began. He was excited to learn that I was originally from Colombia; he had just returned from the Hay Festival in Cartagena (a literature festival once described by Bill Clinton as a “Woodstock of the mind”) where he had received the annual grand award given to a Latin American author. As it is a prize ordinarily given to “serious” writers, Fontanarrosa’s selection had come as a surprise. The applause from the crowd of fellow writers lasted three minutes, and his recognition speech, “In Defense of Vulgar Words,” was emblematic. (“I want to take note of the word *mierda* [shit],” he said, “which is a word that is irreplaceable, whose secret is in the letter *r*, which the Cubans pronounce much more weakly... and there lies the fundamental problem with the Cuban Revolution, in that it is limited by its expressive possibili-

ties...” We talked about Cartagena, and about my travels in Argentina, for a bit. Then, I opened my notebook and began to scan through my list of questions that I wanted to ask him, and then—I closed the book and invited him to just tell me stories about soccer.

“Yyyyyyyyyyyyyy, *que sé yo?*” [What do I know?] he said, in that typical Argentine expression of feigned ignorance. And then without pause, the storytelling started. He talked about the rivalry between Buenos Aires’ two famous soccer franchises: Boca Juniors, long associated with the city’s poorest neighborhood, and River Plate, founded by wealthy Englishmen and linked to the city’s aristocracy. At La Bombonera, Boca’s home stadium, fans sing elaborate, profanity-laced chants about the murdering the “rich chickens” from River. At River Plate Stadium, River fans mock the “second-class” citizens that constitute Boca’s fan base by unveiling large banners that read “Welcome to Argentina.”

El Negro, however, is most famous for his allegiance to his home soccer team, Rosario Central. In Rosario, the most jingoistic city in an already proud country, hordes of townspeople gather in the local stadium every December 19 to commemorate *and re-enact* a legendary goal by Rosario Central that had occurred on

match in which the proceeds would benefit a local leprosy hospital. Rosario Central refused the offer and branded Newell’s fans “lepers,” as if sympathy for and contraction of the disease were indivisible. In exchange, Newell’s fans referred to Rosario’s as “*canallas*” (scoundrels). The names have endured. Men holler *leproso* and *canalla* at each other in the city’s streets, and a Rosario café is host to regular meetings of a secret, black-clad group named O.C.A.L. (Organización Canalla Anti-Leprosa).

The hour I spent listening to Fontanarrosa’s soccer stories is a treasured memory. At the end, we talked with Gaby, we exchanged e-mail addresses, and he prepared me for another upcoming interview, this time with Daniel Passarella, the River Plate coach. Afterwards, during the rest of my travels, one Argentine after another would tell me about their own fascination with El Negro. No one, it seems, could better articulate how Argentines see themselves than he could with his irreverent jabs. No one was funnier. (A man goes hunting for hares with Inodoro, the central character in Fontanarrosa’s comic strip. Inodoro cautions him that hares are guided by their sense of smell, so it’s necessary to coat oneself with cow manure to cover human scent. “But it’s disgusting,” says the hunter. In-

No one could better articulate how Argentines see themselves than he could with his irreverent jabs. No one was funnier.

that date more than thirty years ago. One of Fontanarrosa’s most celebrated fictional stories, titled “19 de diciembre de 1971,” is about the effort of young fans to force an old man to come to the stadium during the game, because the team had never lost with the old man present. He went on to describe the rivalry between Rosario Central and Newell’s Old Boys. In the 1920s, Newell’s offered to play Rosario Central in a no-stakes charity

odoro responds, “That’s why we cover it with cow manure.” “And you don’t wear any?” says the hunter. “*Con uno alcanza*,” replies Inodoro. [If one of us wears it, it’s enough.]

I watched a performance of Les Luthiers, an ingenious Buenos Aires-based comic troupe, for whom Fontanarrosa is a chief scriptwriter. In April 2006, the Argentine Senate honored him for his contribution to the country’s

culture. When I returned to Argentina months later, this time during the 2006 World Cup, he was writing soccer-related humor articles for *Clarín*, Argentina's largest newspaper, just as he had done in previous World Cups.

With the bewitching, salacious Hermana Rosa as his clairvoyant protagonist, the articles were rich in knowledge and passion for soccer, unfailingly droll, and sometimes, somehow, also profound. In one article, he claims to have found an epic poem, "*Veintisiete toques y una flor*" (twenty-seven touches and a flower), about Argentina's sensational goal in the second game of the World Cup (he even gives us the final verses of this fictive poem).

El Negro's health worsened. I had remained in touch with Gaby, who publishes a wedding magazine in Rosario, and when I called to wish them a happy new year in 2007, she sounded discouraged, even as she informed me that they were trying new treatments. But El Negro spoke of his disease as "*este quilombo de mi salud*" (this mess with my health), as if it were principally an aggravation. I didn't know enough to gauge how well he was coping, but I do know the line every reader of Inodoro Pereyra knows. Each new storyline in the comic strip unfolds with a character asking Inodoro how he's doing, to which Inodoro responds, "*Mal, pero acostumbrau.*" ("Bad, but used to it.")

Roberto "El Negro" Fontanarrosa passed away in July 2007 from respiratory failure. He was 62.

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The Cradle of Brazilian Soccer

Working-class History and the *Futebol de Várzea* in São Paulo **BY PAULO FONTES**

THOUSANDS OF FANS DRIVE TO A SOCCER stadium, a very common scene every Sunday in soccer-mad São Paulo. Brazilians are proud to be five-time World Champions, to be the home of Pelé, Garrincha, Romário, Ronaldo and many other skillful players, who earned Brazil the epithet as the land of the kings of the "beautiful game."

However, the soccer scene that Sunday, November 13, 2011, looked far from glorious. It was not a match gathering Corinthians, São Paulo F.C. or Palmeiras, the best-known professional soccer clubs in the city. Distant from the glamorous, rich and comfortable world of top professional players, two modest neighborhood clubs were disputing that day the final of the municipal amateur championship, considered to be the largest in Brazil. Despite the humbleness, enthusiasm and spirits were high. For many, the fervor

of the fans and the sense of attachment between the local clubs and their communities make amateur soccer, the *real* soccer, the heir of the best of Brazilian soccer tradition.

In the last decades, the scarcity of playing fields due to state speculation, changes in popular leisure activities and even urban violence made amateur football less visible in the major cities. Nevertheless, after many years of decline and ostracism, amateur football seems to be back in fashion again. Popular major championships, films on the topic and Internet and television coverage are helping to recover, little by little, the lost prestige of this leisure practice, especially in São Paulo.

During the Brazilian soccer golden age between the 1950s and '70s, the widespread workouts of amateurs in the main cities of the country spread the



familiar idea that amateur football was the cradle of Brazilian soccer. In fact, the majority of professional players started their careers in humble local clubs. In places such as Rio and São Paulo, experts from professional clubs used to pick the best amateurs and hire them in a constant flow from city lots to fame. Since the professionalization of the sport in the 1920s and '30s, soccer was one of the forms of upward mobility for working-class youngsters in Brazil.

In cities such as São Paulo, amateur football has a very long history that strongly merges with the trajectory of civil society organization and working-class activism. Introduced through the interaction of the English community with the local population, and cultivated in aristocratic sports clubs of Brazilian/English elites, soccer quickly spread through the city's neighborhoods. The sport was soon mastered by the working class, which included the sport in its recreational menu. The move to professionalism in the early 1930s even boosted soccer's popularity, both as a spectator sport and as a leisure activity. Analysts conservatively calculate there were around 3,000 football amateur popular clubs in São Paulo, involving a very significant part of the working-class population during that decade.

Many of these clubs were related to the new factories and workplaces of the city. Indeed, textile industrialists promoted the creation of company clubs as part of a broader paternalistic industrial relations policy, seeking to discipline and to control the leisure time of the workers. However, it was the working-class neighborhoods that became the locus par excellence for the practice and creation of popular football clubs. In the first half of the century, thousands of these clubs were created in the industrial districts of the city, such as Brás, Mooca, Belenzinho, Bom Retiro and Lapa, among others. This first industrial belt of São Paulo was located near the main rivers

and rail lines of the city, with plenty of low and flat land alongside the watercourses. It was in these spaces that the working-class practice of soccer proliferated. These peculiar conditions helped to popularize the term *futebol de várzea* (lea or field football) for amateur soccer.

Frequently stigmatized by the ruling classes and the police as a space for disorder and violence, this *lea football* became the most popular leisure activity in the districts of the city and, by the 1930s and 1940s, gained some recognition and legitimization. Until the 1970s, amateur soccer was widely reported on in the popular and sports press. Impressive crowds gathered at many of these amateur games.

After World War II, amateur soccer accompanied the growth of the city, spreading out around the new working-

the social conformation of the older and more central industrial areas.

Although football was a predominantly male recreation, women could also explore the clubs as a leisure space. The sport itself was restricted to men, but women were eager spectators, sometimes bringing along the whole family for picnics and parties on the side of the fields. Moreover, the clubs often expanded their activities beyond soccer itself by promoting balls, parties and beauty contests. At best they worked as real centers of working-class leisure and integration, but they also gave rise to varied forms of conflicts and antagonism.

Almost every district and new concentration of people had its own club and soccer team—important for the reinforcement of local identity. The residents frequently considered the teams

The residents frequently considered the teams a sort of representation of their “space,” their “area,” a representation of the place where they lived and shared difficulties but also of solidarity with their neighbors and friends.

class districts on the outskirts. In every neighborhood, dozens of different clubs and teams were created and constituted a fundamental aspect of working-class leisure and associational practice.

The number of soccer playing fields in São Paulo during the 1950s is a clear indicator of the widespread diffusion of the sport. However, while in the original industrial belt of the city real estate speculation and the canalization of the main central rivers destroyed hundreds of fields, the new outskirts areas had plenty of space for practice. As Afonso José da Silva, an old resident of the outskirts of the city, recalls, “Every new neighborhood had to leave a space, a specific area for a soccer field.” Progressively, a geographical dislocation of working-class sociability was taking place, altering

a sort of representation of their “space,” their “area,” a representation of the place where they lived and shared difficulties but also of solidarity with their neighbors and friends. Therefore, the clubs were also important for the constitution and reinforcement of ties and bonds among specific working-class communities.

The rivalry between clubs from different districts could be fierce. It is not surprising, for instance, to note the huge participation and enthusiasm of the fans and supporters (including women and children) during the local tournaments. The general climate was partisan, and violence and conflicts could frequently break out.

Beyond the localities, the clubs could express ethnic and racial identities or other working-class cleavages.

Amateur soccer clubs existed specifically for blacks, international migrants' groups such as Italians, Spaniards, Hungarians or Portuguese, or internal migrants' groups from different areas in Brazil. Clubs could even be composed of individuals from specific cities or regions within these countries and states. However, the clubs' identity exclusiveness could vary a lot. The neighborhood, friendship relations and ties seemed to be more important for club association than other criteria. In this sense the clubs were important forms of popular organization to integrate residents of the same locality. But they achieved more than that.

The so-called football festivals (a sort of championship tournament in which clubs from various districts could play against each other) integrated residents from different neighborhoods, allowed them to get to know the city space and landscape and also stimulated experience exchanges. As early as 1921, neighborhood tournaments were taking place. The District Championship, for instance, gathered together teams representing the main neighborhoods of the city. These clubs and tournaments integrated the São Paulo working class in a communication network that connected the different areas and spaces of the popular city.

The amateur soccer clubs are interesting examples of a network of local and voluntary associations that proliferated in the working-class districts of São Paulo in the years following the World War II. These neighborhood organizations, the *Sociedades Amigos de Bairro* (Neighborhood Friends Society), were the most vocal in demanding infrastructure improvements and social equipment, such as schools and hospitals, for the deprived working-class districts. This neighborhood associationism is a fundamental feature of the working-class culture and political action in São Paulo. In the late '50s and early '60s, neighborhood associations, trade unions and popular political parties joined forces in demands against inflation, agitating for urban improve-

ments and deep social reforms. During the 1950s trade unions and neighborhood organizations grew increasingly close, including joint participation in local sports clubs. Trade unions used soccer as an instrument to recruit support from its working-class audience, promoting championships and trade-union clubs. During a 1957 general strike in the city, for instance, many meetings and picket lines were organized at amateur football clubs in the neighborhoods.

The supposed borders between the world of labor and the world of residence were frequently crossed by these organizations, reflecting an inclusive class perspective, which took into consideration the diverse dimensions of the workers' lives.

The supposed borders between the world of labor and the world of residence were frequently crossed by these organizations, reflecting an inclusive class perspective, which took into consideration the diverse dimensions of the workers' lives. Based on informal relations and on diverse social networks, these local associations were not necessarily permanent entities. Actually, organizational discontinuity was one of the features of these social movements, although this rarely meant absence of struggles for rights. Often leisure activities could be the basis for demanding movements. The longtime trade unionist Waldomiro Macedo, for instance, affirms that "many recreational associations themselves used to claim benefits for their neighborhoods." Through these clubs, many local politicians got information about the residents and their problems and established fundamental network contacts during the electoral period. It helped them to reinforce their claims of belonging to specific localities, communities or even to the working class as whole.

Amateur soccer clubs were key elements of working-class culture and po-

litical action during the 1950s. They were deeply connected with the process of fast industrialization and urbanization in São Paulo and interacted with both the formal and informal world of the workers during that period, helping us to understand the varied facets of working-class lives, including their solidarity and conflict aspects. The creation of new football clubs and teams by informal groups in the different districts and streets of the city also opened a space of relative au-

tonomy for workers facing control by the companies, the entrepreneur organizations concerned with working-class leisure, and the state. Football as a leisure activity was very much part of a clash of aspirations and values among social classes in the Brazilian society—a representation struggle—which helps us to understand not only working-class culture, its sociability and cleavages, but also the classes' relations at a vital moment of the histories of the city and country.

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Women's Soccer in Brazil

Invisible But Under Pressure **BY CARMEN RIAL**

"NO ONE KNOWS, NO ONE SAW," READS THE headline in an important Brazilian newspaper announcing the conclusion of the main women's soccer championship on the continent—the Taça Libertadores da América—accompanied by a photograph of an empty stadium. The team from Santos won the Cup for the second time with six victories in six matches, scoring 25 goals and suffering none. Brazil's national champions dominated the other teams, even Chile's Everton and Argentina's Boca Juniors. The tournament finished with an average audience of 300 people per game, in other words, all of the games were played in nearly empty stadiums.

By comparison, the men's D Series championship (the fourth from the top in the country) averaged 2,700 paying viewers per game, nine times as many.

The paucity of fans can be interpreted as a lack of interest in women's soccer in Brazil, a sport which is new in the country. But in 2009, 15,000 people went to Pacaembú Stadium to watch the final

of the women's Liberators Cup, largely because the game was broadcast on television and Marta was playing for Santos.

Marta Vieira da Silva, or simply Marta, is a midfielder who has played for Sweden's Umeå IK, Santos, L.A. Sol, FC Gold Pride and Western New York Flash and was a member of the Brazilian national team that won the silver medal at the 2004 and 2008 Summer Olympics. Marta was voted FIFA's Women's World Player four times. During the 2009 final, the fans chanted, "Marta is better than Kaká," referring to Brazil's internationally famous male star. Still, her fame does not compare to that of male players.

Santos was not able to hire Marta in 2010 because of the higher salary (\$400,000-\$500,000 annually) she commands at the L.A. Sol. Without Marta on the field, games were only broadcast on pay television.

The way the few television broadcasts narrate women's games points out the great gap between men's and women's soccer. The players are regularly charac-

terized with formulas such as "Cristiane, who is on the Brazilian national team," and the recent history of women's soccer needs to be explained—"women's soccer became an Olympic Sport in 1996, when Brazil was in fourth place." It is difficult to imagine having to inform viewers of men's soccer that Maycon, Robinho or Neymar is on the Brazilian national team or that Brazil is a five-time world champion.

In 2010, the press barely covered the women's Liberators Cup, preferring to use the space for the coverage of unimportant international matches of the "seleção," the Brazilian national team, and the national league in male soccer. A study conducted of the leading Brazilian news magazines, *Época*, *Isto* and *Veja*, and the leading sports magazine, *Placar*, showed that in the past four years there were only 11 articles about women's soccer (Almeida, Caroline. *Boas de Bola*.

A woman soccer player prepares for a big match.

Projeto de dissertação. PPGAS/UFSC, 2011). In other sports, differences exist in coverage between genders, but not nearly as sharp as those in soccer.

A BIT OF HISTORY

When soccer came to Brazil from Europe in the mid-19th century, it did not totally exclude a female presence. In fact, the name that designates a fan in Brazil, *torcedor*, comes from women squeezing white handkerchiefs (*torcer* in Portuguese) at the peak of their demonstration of passion for one of the teams. The throng of women at the games was encouraged as a form of sociability between the genders, creating another location to meet a “good partner,” a white husband from the elite. The women were there to make the location more attractive, not to learn to play a new sport.

As workers gradually took up the space previously reserved for aristocrats on the teams, women also shifted their role from fans to players. These transitions met with strong resistance, strongest and longer-lasting against women's soccer. In men's soccer, professionalism was once prohibited as an indirect way to exclude the lower classes, and blacks and mulattos were not allowed on the teams. These interdictions died at the beginning of the 20th century with the gradual inclusion of blacks on the teams and the institution of the so-called “brown amateurism” in which players were paid on the side (Mario Filho, *O Negro no Futebol Brasileiro*. RJ: Mauad, 2003).

Historians differ about the date of the first women's soccer game played in Brazil. For the first decades of the 20th century, there are records of women's teams playing soccer in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Historian Fábio Franzini, in the article “Futebol é coisa ‘para macho’?” points to the existence of at least 10 women's teams, including Cassino Realengo and the Eva Futebol Clube, competing in tournaments in Rio de Janeiro by the 1940s, when Brazil was under the control of dictator Getúlio Vargas.

The number of women's soccer teams increased with time, according to Franzini,

and reached about 40 in Rio de Janeiro in the mid-1940s. But then women's soccer suffered a tremendous blow, with a ban that would last decades.

A letter from a Mr. José Fuzeira to President Vargas, which helped trigger the law, asks for “the clairvoyant attention of your Honor to avoid a calamity that is about to fall upon female youth in Brazil.” He explained:

“I refer, Mr. President, to the enthusiastic movement that is inspiring hundreds of girls, attracting them to become soccer players, without considering that a woman cannot practice this violent sport without seriously affecting the physiological equilibrium of her organic functions, due to the nature that disposes her to be a mother... The newspapers say that in Rio there are nothing less than ten women's teams. In São Paulo and Belo Horizonte others are being formed. And, with this growth, within a year it is probable that throughout Brazil there will be 200 organized women's soccer clubs, or, in other words, 200 centers to destroy the health of 2,200 future mothers, who, moreover, will be caught in a depressive mentality and given to rude and extravagant exhibitions... It would not be surprising that the feminine movement to which we are referring is just a beginning, for, over time, the daughters of Eve will also present themselves in

women's bodies by pretending to protect their maternal functions, and forwarded the letter to the Minister of Education and Health, who, in turn, corroborated the writer's thesis, raising scientific and medical arguments that supported the drafting of article 54 of the decree of April 14, 1941 by the National Sports Council, stating that

“Women will not be allowed to practice sports incompatible with the conditions of their nature, and for this reason, the National Sports Council should issue the necessary instructions to sports entities in the country.”

The medical reports that supported excluding women from soccer sought to protect their procreative capacities, which would supposedly be placed at risk. The argument is a corollary to eugenic ideologies influential in the country since the 18th century, which preached the importance of protecting women's bodies so that they could breed healthy children and thus improve the white race in Brazil. The theory is highly refutable because of the simple fact that women's reproductive organs are internal, unlike men's, which are outside the body, objectively at greater risk when playing soccer.

Behind this supposed protection, we find the *mise-en-joux* of a biological-social image of woman: that of the mother, conforming to an ideal corporal model of

Prohibited since the 1940s, women's soccer continued to exist in the shape of sporadic transgressions against the order of male domination.

wrestling matches and even in the “noble art” whose nobility consists of two opponents hitting each other until they drool blood (Franzini, Fábio, “Futebol é ‘coisa pra macho’? Pequeno esboço para uma história das mulheres no país do futebol.” *Revista Brasileira de História*. n. 50, vol. 25. São Paulo. 2005. p. 316–328).

Vargas gave heed to the clamor for maintaining male domination over

a plump body, without visible muscles, with rounded forms and limited mobility. This model corresponds to socially prescribed feminine behavior: passive and submissive, without agency.

THE LONG EXCLUSION

Prohibited since the 1940s, women's soccer continued to exist in the shape of sporadic transgressions against the

order of male domination. Luiz Carlos Rigo's article, "*Notas acerca do futebol feminino pelotense em 1950: um estudo genealógico*" [Notes on Women's Soccer in Pelotas in 1950: a genealogical study], documents the organization of two women's soccer teams in the city of Pelotas in southern Brazil, the Vila Hilda F.C. and the Corinthians F.C., which challenged the legislation and functioned until banned by the Regional Sports Council. Most of the players were young, ages 13-18, came from the lower middle class, and lived in the neighborhoods where the clubs were located. Some of the athletes stood out, such as the striker Gelsi, described in a local newspaper as an "element of great quality," who "controls the ball with precision, with the opportunity to translate her qualities as the play-maker of the Sunday match." The respect offered in this brief newspaper article, however, was not enough to change the position of sporting authorities, and, unfortunately, the teams had short lives.

There were other cases similar to those in Pelotas, but only a few, and when they gained notoriety they were systematically stopped by the Regional Sports Councils. What is surprising is precisely the rarity of the transgressions.

The 1941 law remained in force and was affirmed by the military dictatorship in 1965. Thus during the 1970s, a time of great transformation in gender relations in the Western world, Brazil reinforced the exclusion of women from the sport that occupied (and still occupies) a central place in the Brazilian imagination. Banning women from soccer, which articulated nationalism and modernity, excluded them from a greater collective and a broad spectrum of social practices. Incapable of symbolically representing the nation, they were not only passive, silent and submissive, but also second-class citizens. To keep them from playing soccer was to exclude them from full participation in the nation.

The prohibition of women in Brazilian soccer was revoked in 1979, after the country's political opening, following heated debates in the field of physical



education which were stimulated by the feminist movement. In the same year, an Amnesty Law was passed which allowed the return to the country of women who fought the dictatorship and went into exile, mostly in France. The feminism that began during the 1970s and was linked to the struggle against the dictatorship raised questions at the end of the decade related to the body and to sexual and

reproductive rights (Grossi, Miriam P. 1996. "Feminismes et Generations Politiques des Années 90 au Brésil." *Cahiers du Cedref (Politique et Recherches Feministes)*, Paris, v. 6, p. 169-190). In the end feminists linked to the field of physical education gained a great victory: the end

Brazil's Marta Vieira da Silva, or simply Marta, was voted FIFA's Women's World Player four times.

of the prohibition of women's participation in soccer (and in other sports) as spelled out in Deliberation no.10 of the National Sports Council.

MARTA AND THE EXCEPTION THAT IS THE RULE.

According to Fábio Franzini in his 2005 article "Futebol é 'coisa para macho'? Pequeno esboço para uma história das mulheres no país do futebol," various women's soccer teams sprung up around the country beginning in the 1980s, linked to both traditional clubs and independent businesses, with games in the 1970s organized by gay bars, if we believe a *Veja* magazine report. The National Sports Council maintained ridiculous rules for bodily protection such as breast shields and shorter game time. Women's soccer began to organize local and regional competitions, but the first Brazilian championship wasn't held until 1994.

The re-initiation was led by Radar in Rio de Janeiro, which had the leading athletes. While Radar enjoyed a series of victories in international competitions, it was only with the Olympic Games of 1996 that we can speak of a significant return of Brazilian women to the soccer fields.

Despite the strong performance of Brazilian women in international competitions, activity within the country is far below that in other countries. Although gender relations have been transformed in recent decades, the famous line of the former coach of the Brazilian men's team, João Saldanha, still rings true for most Brazilian men: "Can you imagine your son coming home with his girlfriend saying: 'she's the defender for Bangú'? No way, huh."

The women who enter the universe of soccer must be capable of attracting male eyes not because of their athletic performance, but for their quite specific physical attributes. Without any embarrassment, the São Paulo Soccer Federation indicated that "feminine" beauty is a fundamental requirement for selecting the girls who would play in the competition. In the words of Federation Presi-

dent Eduardo Farah, "We have to try to combine the image of soccer and femininity." Another director of the FPF, Renato Duprat, was even more categorical: "No one plays here with short hair. It's in the regulations" (Arruda, Eduardo, "FPF institui jogadora-objeto no Paulista" at <http://listas.cev.org.br/cev-mkt/2001-09/msg00216.html>.2001).

Thus, although permitted, women's soccer continues to be limited by a macho perspective of gender, which only accepts the presence of women on the field by

Although permitted, women's soccer continues to be limited by a macho perspective of gender.

controlling their bodies: now, however, it is not mothers that they want, but sensual models. Those who may think that this view is limited to Brazil have never seen the websites of the most important sports media in the world.

In this situation, the chant "Marta is better than Kaká" truly seems to be an exception. And it's true: to get where they are, the Martas of Brazil need to overcome much tougher obstacles than the Kakás.

THE INTERNATIONAL CIRCULATION OF ATHLETES

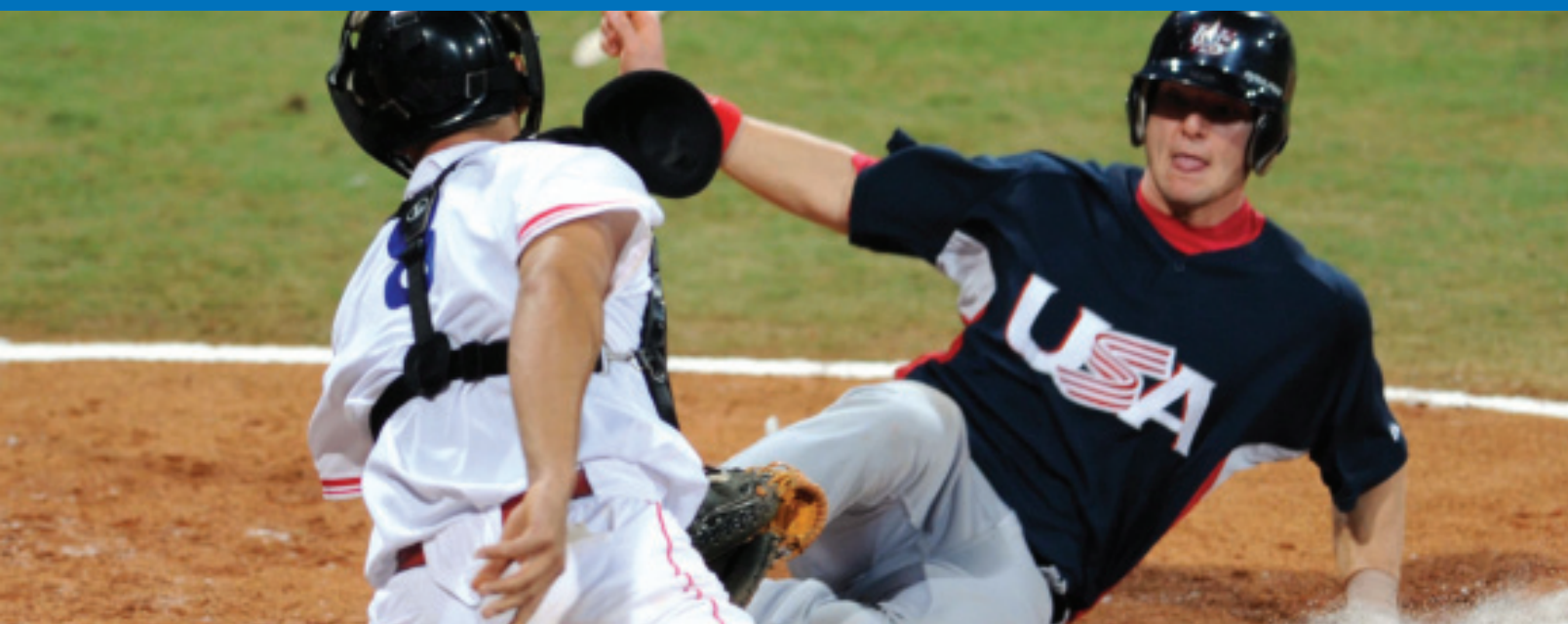
With limited space in Brazil, few clubs, and poor salaries, some women soccer players have sought other places to play. In Brazil, most professional women players earn about R\$500 (200 euros) a month. In the large clubs, the salaries range from R\$1,500 to R\$5,000 (600-2,000 euros) a month. In the United States, a typical salary among the top players is US\$500,000 a year (Frutoso, Suzane G. "A bola está com elas. O futebol feminino começa a ganhar espaço com salários melhores e campeonatos importantes, como a Libertadores." *Época* n. 2082 de 07. Out. 2009). In Sweden, it is estimated that Marta earned about US\$8,000 a month.

The export of players to countries in the North has gone on for years. Pretinha, one of the precursors in this movement, played 3 seasons in the United States, and later in Japan. Kátia Cilene and Simone Jatobá went to France, Elaine and Marta went to Sweden and the United States, Cristiane went to Germany, Sweden, and the United States and Rosana to Austria. Of the 11 starters on the Brazilian women's team, 8 play abroad. But this flow is far less than that of male athletes, and the women obviously do not

have the same visibility as the men. The Brazilian Football Federation (CBF), an entity linked to FIFA, has records of the departure from 2004 to 2009 of only 46 women from the country, compared with 3,000 men. The United States led the importation of Brazilian women with 14, followed by Spain with 10.

On November 18, 2010, the main sports program on Brazilian television concluded with a report on two games the night before. Argentina had defeated Brazil 1 to 0 in a friendly in Qatar. In a second light-hearted commentary, the report noted the 4-0 victory of the Brazilian women over Argentina. Nevertheless, unlike the avalanche of images of the men's defeat, the television showed only a few photos of the women's victory. It was an official game of the South American championship, which Marta and her colleagues won a few days later. Although theoretically such a match was more important than the friendly, there was no televised transmission, and few images to show. Once again, no one knew, and no one saw.

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PLAY BALL

Ancient Mesoamerica played ball. Baseball is a favorite game in parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Latin Americans have shaped the sport in the United States.

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Religion, Politics and Plenty of Betting

The Old Ball Game in Ancient Mesoamerica **BY BARBARA W. FASH AND WILLIAM L. FASH**

“WHILE THE REST OF THE WORLD WAS CAUGHT up in contests of individual athletic skills such as jousting, footraces, swimming and wrestling, New World cultures were fielding teams of ballplayers who competed against each other on specially designed courts” (Paul Kirchhoff, *Mesoamérica, sus límites Geográficos, Composición Etnica y Caracteres Culturales*, Acta Americana 1:92-107, 1943).

There were in fact many different kinds of rubber-ball games in ancient Mesoamerica, including stickball, hand-

ball and hip-ball (the one played in the masonry courts; Figures 1 and 2). After years of exhaustive research on the courts where the hip-ball game was played, Eric Taladoire succinctly summarized the rules of that game as follows:

“Two teams, consisting of between two and seven players each, faced off, separated by a centerline in the ball-court.... The best players took positions along the alley, while others worked the end zones. They prevented the ball from going dead by deflecting it and sending

it back to the other team. The ball was struck with particular parts of the body, such as the arms, shoulders, or buttocks. Players were prohibited from using their hands, feet, or head to hit the ball. This was probably a matter of safety, since a single blow from the heavy ball could injure or even kill a player. To protect themselves from the impact of the ball and the rigors of play, the almost naked players wore protective belts, gloves, and sometimes kneepads and sandals. Scoring was mainly the result of faults, as in



Photos: p. 30, Figure 1. A view of the court; this page: (top left): Figure 2. View of the masonry ballcourt at Uxmal, Yucatan, Mexico; (bottom left): Figure 3. Maya Hip-ball game, Monument 171, Tonina, Mexico

tennis: touching the ball with a prohibited part of the body; failing to catch or to return it; or sending the ball outside the court. Due to the complex scoring method, games could last for long periods—sometimes the entire day” (Eric Talladoire, “The Architectural Background of the Pre-Hispanic Ballgame: An Evolutionary Perspective.” In *The Sport of Life and Death: The Mesoamerican Ballgame*, edited by E. M. Whittington, pp. 96-115. Thames and Hudson, London, 2001).

The longevity of the rubber ball game played in stone masonry courts was one of the diagnostic features of the Mesoamerican culture area that German-Mexican anthropologist Paul Kirchhoff defined. Although a variety of ball games were played throughout the region, the hip-ball game holds the greatest fascination today (Figure 3). This is due in large measure to the rediscovery of the pertinent 15th and 16th Mexican manuscripts in libraries and other collections during the 19th century, which relay a wealth of

ethnohistoric data on the subject of the hip-ball game (*ollamalitzli*, in Nahuatl) that was played in stone masonry courts (*tlachtli*). These accounts concentrate almost exclusively on the practical aspects of the game, such as the manner in which it was played, the high stakes of heavy gambling that accompanied it, and famous cases of Aztec disputes resolved—or not—on the playing alleys of ball courts.

Yet the deep-seated importance of religion and politics associated with the game also emerge from analysis of the Aztec accounts and other earlier sources, such as those from the Maya area. The sacrificial aspects of the ancient games are often sensationalized. This emphasis overlooks the archaeological evidence and historical accounts that indicate how ball games crossed social, ethnic and gender divisions, and sustained diverse ritual economies, constituting much more than “mere sport” for everyone in ancient Mesoamerica.

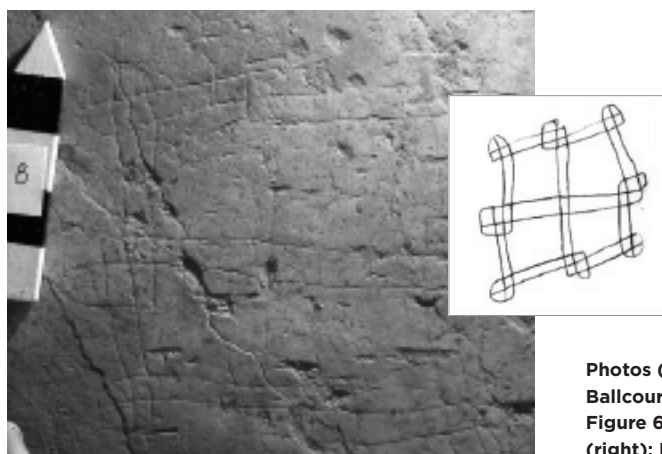
The imagery carved or painted onto the temples and playing alleys of the ballcourts suggests they served as the stage in which the players re-enacted cosmic dramas. Scholars agree that the movement of the rubber ball symbolized the movements of the sun and moon and thus tied the game to rituals promoting fertility and abundant harvests.

From major sites to small communities, the spectacle of the sport was a climax to festivals timed to both the calendar and politically charged events. People made pilgrimages to large sites with storied courts to be entertained and enthralled by the pageantry of mythological tales reenacted amidst a backdrop of these lively architectural settings.

The “cosmic” backdrop was appropriate because ballcourts were also often the setting for dispute resolution and war-related activities. Beyond reinforcing social status and rivalries, the games and courts in Mesoamerica also served as a means of maintaining political boundaries and settling disputes between communities.

The playing of the game and the wagers that accompanied it apparently served to resolve conflicts of various sorts among the Aztecs. Diego Durán reported in detail on the great stakes of the gambling surrounding the games in the Aztec Triple Alliance. This perceived “sin” was one of the principal reasons—along with the numerous injuries resulting from the game—that the Spanish friars outlawed it after the conquest (Fray Diego Durán, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e Islas de la Tierra Firme*, vol. I: 208-209, México, D. F. Editorial Porrúa, 1967).

The most famous tales of ball-game wagers that have survived also revolve around Mexica rulers. The Emperor Axayacatl tried to secure gardens in Xochimilco from its lord, Xihuilmoc, betting his own market and the lake around it. Upon losing the game, he had his



Photos (left): Figure 4. Gameboards: Codex Borgia after Seler (b) and (c) Copan, Ballcourt I; (right): Figure 5. Line drawing of Copan ballcourt marker; p. 33 (left): Figure 6. Ballplayer figurines, Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City; (right): Figure 7. Tzompantli at Tenochtitlan, Mexico City, Mexico.

Xochimilcan counterpart strangled to death rather than lose such a treasure to a lower-ranking lord. When the Texcocan sage and ruler Nezahualpilli interpreted the appearance of a comet as a harbinger of the end of the Triple Alliance, his Mexico counterpart Moctezuma dared him to test his prophecy on the ballcourt. The Texcocan won the day and Moctezuma lost both the game and, eventually, his empire.

Significant wagering clearly had an impact on the exchange and manufacture of goods, and much of what drove styles of dress (such as feathers, jewelry, belts and sandals) was no doubt reinforced by the ballgame events and the dramatization of the costumes and paraphernalia associated with the game. The sheer amounts of goods needed to satisfy bets alone accounted for increased productions of textiles, featherwork, jewelry, and vessels, keeping the economy rich and many employed. Tribute lists recorded in manuscripts like the Codex Mendoza often show rubber balls and reflect these payments to some degree.

Offerings and sacrifices associated with the ballgame were a means of imbuing objects with value and sacredness. Durán also mentions the numerous shrines and offerings left to patrons of both the ballgame and board games. Copal, flowers, candles, and blood sacrifices were left at these spots frequently in efforts to ensure a favorable outcome.

The *patolli* board game, a form of gambling played by the Aztecs, has antecedents in the Maya area, in the eastern third of Mesoamerica (Figure 4a). Our recent discovery of a series of *patolli*-like game boards scratched into the east structure's floor of the earliest ball court at Copan attests to the important function this board game had as a ritual activity linked to the ballgame (Figures 4b, c). Likewise, among the Aztecs, the god *Macuilxochitl* ("Five Flower") was the supernatural patron of both the ballgame and *patolli*. Both are associated with divination, yet both were the focus of heavy gambling. On the central playing alley floor marker of Ballcourt IIb (715 A.D.), we have identified the right-hand

figure as the then-living king Waxaklajun U'baah K'awiil (Ruler 13 in the Copan dynasty of 16 sovereigns) dressed in the guise of an earlier, Maya version of the deity the Aztecs called *Macuilxochitl*, complete with the hand painted over the jaw that his later Aztec counterpart always bore (Figure 5). This identification suggests that Ruler 13 was identified not just as the patron of the hip-ball games, but of the divination and gambling that took place in association with them, in the very heart of the city's sacred precinct.

For commoners and nobility alike, wagers ranged from jewelry to slaves to land. Indeed, even the personal liberty of the family and the gambler himself could be lost in a bet upon the outcome of a game. Much of the wagering has been likened by Vernon L. Scarborough to the kind of displays of status rivalry documented by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz in modern Bali cockfighting. Thus the acquisition and consumption of objects surrounding the game may have had an important "leveling" function in



many Mesoamerican communities, from rural villages to the Aztec “Triple Alliance” empire.

Ceramic figurines depicting ballplayers throughout Mesoamerica show that the ballgame was a wildly popular pastime and likely played by both women and men as early as 1800-1000 B.C. (Figure 6; see Suzanna Eckholm, “Ceramic Figurines and the Mesoamerican Ballgame” in *The Mesoamerican Ballgame*, ed. Vernon L. Scarborough and David R. Wilcox, pp. 241-250, Tuscon, University of Arizona Press, 1991, and Douglas E. Bradley, “Gender, Power, and Fertility in the Olme Ritual Ballgame” in *The Sport of Life and Death: The Mesoamerican Ballgame*, ed. E. Michael Whittington, pp. 32-39, London, Thames and Hudson, 2001).

Fray Bartholomé de las Casas saw games played by women, possibly at Hispaniola. Classic Maya reliefs at Yaxchilan show royal women with the ball in one hand, indicating they indeed played the game, or put the ball into play. The popularity of the game across both gender and social divisions highlights the degree of exchange of locally manufactured ballgame-related goods and “souvenirs” which likely took place at every major contest.

It is clear that in addition to the highly visible ballcourts in the center of the sacred precincts of the larger cities, there were courts in the *barrios* and at the major markets as well. Large marketplaces at many ancient sites are often found in

close proximity to ballcourt architecture for practical reasons. The two activities went hand in hand. Whenever there was a major ballgame, the festivities and consumption that accompanied it were important market events as well.

Harvard PhD John G. Fox made the important point that a great deal of feasting also took place in association with the games and the courts. He suggests that feasting fulfilled significant connective functions, both within and between communities (John G. Fox, “Playing with Power: Ballcourts and Political Ritual in Southern Mesoamerica,” *Current Anthropology*, 37(3): 483-509, 1996). The games staged by Aztec kings and nobles often ended with music and dance, according to both Durán and Bernardino de Sahagún in *The Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain*. 13 vols., trans. Arthur J. O. Anderson and C. E. Dibble, Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1950-82 [Vol. IX: 299].

While the great public games carried on at the main courts of the largest kingdoms of Mesoamerica served to showcase the power and beneficence of the rulers who sponsored them (not unlike the Roman caesars and their “bread and circus”), these same integrative aspects functioned at much smaller sites, throughout ancient Mesoamerica. Virtually every community of any size in highland Guatemala had a functioning ballcourt in the Postclassic period (900-1519 A.D.), a testimony to its importance

in that place and time.

For the Aztec era, the Spanish chroniclers document that many rulers had professional players in their employ and made arrangements for them to face off on important occasions. But the professional players were not well looked upon by everyone, because it was considered a vice to play ball for the purpose of betting. Despite this supposed shunning, depictions of the ballplayers in Sahagún’s masterwork show them in the company of different social classes, indicating the game was played and enjoyed by persons of all social positions.

Although the games played in the courts in the *barrios*, and next to the marketplaces, never ended in sacrifices, those in the great public contests that ended in death surely captured the imagination of the ancients as much as they do the sensationalist writers of our own place and time. There are numerous scenes of human sacrifice in post-game rituals depicted on ballcourt reliefs, most notably at Chichén Itzá, and in abundance throughout the Peripheral Coastal Lowlands of the southern Maya area, and at Tajín. It seems clear that by staging games that resulted in such sacrifices, the rulers of ancient Mesoamerican towns were intent on demonstrating their power over life and death. This power was clearly exercised both on their enemies and their own subjects alike. Indeed, at both Tula and Tenochtitlán, the skull rack for the heads of sacrificial victims (*tzompantli*) was constructed next

to the principal ball court (Figure 7). This particularly graphic aspect of the architecture of the ball game stands as grim testimony of the duality of life and death associated with it. The public spectacles and the imagery that documented their denouements remind us that this form of ritualized combat, and the ideologies associated with both the public ball games and with warfare, had gripping and occasionally fatal consequences in the quotidian lives of people throughout ancient Mesoamerica.

Just as sporting events today continue to draw masses of spectators and are sources of economic enrichment for many segments of society, in ancient times any community—be it major city, aspiring town, or humble village—that hosted the event received an economic boost. Religious underpinnings of the ancient games were a driving force in the production, acquisition, and consumption of a wide variety of goods that satisfied the sacred and secular functions of the grand spectacles. Today's contemporary ball games perpetuate these traditions established 3,500 years ago in the New World and their shops and stalls echo the lively ancient marketplaces and the vigorous economies associated with the ritual of sport, which satisfies the emotional and physical needs of people from all walks of life (see also Jane Stevenson Day, "Performing on the Court," in *The Sport of Life and Death: The Mesoamerican Ballgame*, ed. E. Michael Whittington, pp. 64–77, Thames and Hudson, London, 2001).

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Caribbean Baseball

At a Crossroads **BY ROB RUCK**

WHEN SAMMY SOSA, A SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD shoeshine boy from San Pedro de Macorís, signed his first baseball contract in 1985, he took part of his \$3,500 bonus and splurged—on a used bicycle. I'm not sure what sort of ride fellow Dominican Michael Ynoa bought when he signed with the Oakland A's for \$4.25 million in 2008, but it likely had more than two wheels.

Despite his modest bonus, Sammy did okay. At Sammy's 38th birthday party in 2006, a line of statuesque Venezuelan and Dominican models greeted guests to his home in Casa de Campo. They walked through his residence, passing by fish tanks as big as SUVs, and emerged into a backyard along the water's edge. The celebration comfortably hosted 500 guests, including Salma Hayek, Julio Iglesias, and Dominican President Leonel Fernández. Sosa could, by then, indulge whatever whims he fancied. His final multi-year contract with the Chicago Cubs had paid him about \$18 million a season; endorsements brought even more. Horatio Alger could not have imagined a more unlikely tale.

But the difference between Sosa's \$3,500 bonus in 1985 and Ynoa's \$4.25 million deal in 2008 underscores how much the business of baseball in the Caribbean has changed. And Major League Baseball (MLB) doesn't like that one bit. No longer able to sign bushels of Caribbean prospects for a few thousand dollars apiece in hopes that a couple of them will make it in the majors, MLB has launched a campaign to control costs.

Caribbean baseball has never mattered more to MLB's brand and bottom line. After Jackie Robinson vaulted the color line in 1947, darker-skinned Latinos began following the pigeon-toed Brooklyn Dodger on to major league diamonds. The best cohort of talent in

the game today, Latinos won half of the Silver Slugger Awards given to the top offensive player at each position in the American and National Leagues in 2010 and 2011 and routinely dominate All Star line-ups.

MLB needs them more than ever, especially because the black community has turned its back on the game. African Americans, who contributed more than 27 percent of all major leaguers in the late 1970s, now make up a little over eight percent. Despite what baseball once meant—during segregation when African Americans built their own baseball world (the Negro Leagues) or during the fight to integrate the majors—a victory that eased the way for Brown v. Board of Education—the game elicits little more than a collective shrug these days in most black neighborhoods.

Caribbean baseball, however, has become the cornerstone of MLB's player procurement system, and factors increasingly into its marketing and profitability.

The recently negotiated collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between MLB and the Players Association addresses the industry's angst over escalating player development costs. It does so by sacrificing the interests of the next generation of Latino ballplayers to the clubs' bottom lines. The Players Association, meanwhile, conceded these cost-cutting measures—which do not affect them directly—in the agreement in order to preserve the current members' own generous pay scale.

The new contract, by imposing a tax on any club that spends more than a total of \$2.9 million for signees from the Caribbean basin next season, will lower player development expenses. The tax will be set high enough to discourage the multi-million dollar signing bonuses that have rewarded top prospects

in recent years.

More ominously, the new CBA set up a player-management committee tasked with developing a proposal to bring Latin America into MLB's annual player draft, which now includes only the United States, Canada, and Puerto Rico. That change would eliminate the best thing that a Latino prospect has going for himself—the opportunity to begin his professional career as a free agent and thus shop his services to the highest bidder. But if the committee decides to include the Caribbean in the draft, a boy would be able to negotiate only with the club that selects him. Signing bonuses would drop accordingly.

Though a few Latinos, mostly Cubans, played for major league ballclubs in the first half of the twentieth century, few men from the Caribbean basin could pass through MLB's color line. Some played in their own countries during the winter and joined Negro League clubs in the United States each summer; others forsook the racial hazards of segregated baseball and spent their careers in the Caribbean circuit.

Baseball in the Caribbean was more *simpático*—a multi-racial and multi-national game since its origins in Cuba in the 1860s. And as Cubans—the apostles of baseball—spread the game around the basin, integrated play was adopted as an article of faith. Baseball was perceived, as Cuban *independista* Benjamin de Cespedes called it in 1899, “a rehearsal for democracy.”

Not so in the United States, where racial barriers stained the game during the 1890s when the nation abandoned the vestiges of progressive reconstruction. Given the other setbacks at the turn of the century—lynchings, Plessy v. Ferguson, sharecropping, and segregation—exclusion from major league baseball was hardly African-Americans' most pressing concern. But there was a cost. Baseball had become an arena in which citizenship and U.S. identity were defined for generations of European immigrant boys. In that context, the exclusion of African Americans suggested that

they were unworthy of attaining their birthright.

Darker-skinned people from the Caribbean basin were similarly dismissed in baseball until Jackie Robinson's triumphant debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947 re-integrated MLB and allowed them in. Cuba's Orestes Sauturino ‘Minnie’ Minoso, Puerto Rico's Roberto Walker Clemente, and the Dominican Republic's Felipe Rojas Alou led the first wave of Latin talent. By the mid-1980s, when I started traveling to the Dominican Republic, Latinos comprised a tenth of all major leaguers. Half were Dominican.

Those mind-boggling numbers soon exploded. Latinos, not including Hispanic Americans born in the United States, make up over a quarter of all major leaguers today and well over forty percent of those in the minors. The Do-

more Latin minor leaguers than they had visas to bring them to the States. The solution was to create Dominican academies where players could be trained and evaluated without visas. It was also much cheaper than bringing these players to the United States.

Epy Guerrero built the first academy in Villa Mella on the outskirts of Santo Domingo for the Toronto Blue Jays. A spare, utilitarian facility featuring two well-manicured ballfields, the complex cultivated a crop of future major league All-Stars. I got lost after visiting there in the 1980s and wound up driving through the nearby Santo Domingo dump where an army of scavengers, rags covering their mouths and noses, picked through refuse. Given the alternatives—working in the dying sugarcane industry or the growing tourist trade, much less living in the dump—it's no wonder that the boys

Latinos, not including Hispanic Americans born in the United States, make up over a quarter of all major leaguers today and well over forty percent of those in the minors.

minican Republic's ten million people currently account for over a tenth of all major leaguers.

Now baseball is a multi-billion dollar business in the Dominican Republic and important elsewhere in the region. Its foundation is the Dominican Summer League—the entry league for most Latinos—which has more than a thousand players. It's the largest professional baseball league in the sport's history.

The Latin workforce in baseball ramped up considerably after major league organizations started building training academies in the Dominican Republic in the 1980s. Congressional limits on foreign minor leaguers in baseball had capped the number of available visas. Although major leaguers were exempt from the visa limit, many clubs had

who trained at the academy took their sport seriously.

The Dodgers saw the talented cohort of ballplayers making their way from Villa Mella to Toronto and opened their own, state-of-the-art, academy, Campo Las Palmas, in 1987. This first-world facility caught baseball's attention as the Dodgers began producing an even greater number of talented ballplayers than Toronto and did so at a minimal cost. In the years since, every major league organization has opened an academy where they house, feed, and train their youngest players. A boy usually gets two or three years there to prove he is worthy of being sent to the United States to play. He eats well, receives better medical attention than ever before, and plays ball. At more progressive academies, he will learn

rudimentary English and perhaps make progress on his education while lifting weights and training the rest of the day.

Most of the academies are now clustered near Boca Chica and San Pedro, near the Santo Domingo airport, convenient for front office personnel who fly in for a few days to evaluate their employees' progress. They are rarely forced to leave their comfort zone as they watch the players compete in the Dominican Summer League.

The fruits of these investments can be seen on major and minor league diamonds across North America. Over the last twenty years, Dominicans, and to a lesser extent, Venezuelans, have made a disproportionate mark on the game. Pedro Martinez, Vladimir Guerrero, Albert Pujols, Robinson Cano, José Reyes, and Alex Rodríguez could each end their careers by joining Juan Marichal, the only Dominican Hall of Famer, in Cooperstown. And Pedro, Manny, and Big Papi (David Ortiz) even brought the Boston Red Sox to baseball's promised land, not once but twice.

Until recently, Latinos signed for far less money than boys in the United States. In 1990, major league clubs signed about 300 Dominican boys to contracts for a total of \$750,000. Most received bonuses of between \$2,000 and \$5,000; not one of them received nearly as much as top prospects in the United States. By 2005, however, the average signing bonus for the 407 young players who signed that year had risen to about \$33,000. And then, at least from MLB's perspective, matters got out of hand. In the first four months of 2011, the 188 boys signed by major league organizations received bonuses averaging almost \$131,000. Multi-million dollar signing bonuses had become commonplace.

By then, Latinos did not only better understand the system, they had figured out how to take advantage of it. MLB never intended it to be that way.

When MLB instituted its annual player draft in 1965, Latinos were left out of the process. Only boys in the United States who were of the age at which

their high school class would graduate were eligible for the draft. As with the NFL and NBA drafts, once a player is selected, he can negotiate only with the organization that drafted him. Canadian and Puerto Rican youth were added to the draft later. But as long as signing bonuses for boys in the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Nicaragua, and elsewhere in the Caribbean remained far below the U.S. market, major league scouts prospected for players at rock-bottom prices. Their largely unregulated, bargain basement approach soon produced the best wave of talent the game had ever seen.

This mother lode of young ballplayers, however, spurred the emergence of a lucrative market in juvenile talent that at its worst is little more than the trafficking of children. The boys, mostly from poor backgrounds, often equipped with little more than an eighth-grade education, and made vulnerable by their desire to become *peloteros* and take care of their families, nevertheless benefit from two MLB policies. The first is that because they are exempt from the draft,



they begin their careers as free agents. That means they can sign with whatever club they chose, presumably the one that makes the most attractive offer.

A second policy is the “Jimmy Kelly” rule. After the Toronto Blue Jays were chided for signing a 13-year-old Dominican boy, Jimmy Kelly, in 1984, MLB passed a rule that prevents a club from signing a boy until the summer of the year he turns 17.

That prohibition spawned an industry of self-styled agents known as *buscones* (from the verb *buscar*—to search) who approach boys as young as 13 and offer assistance in developing their baseball talents. The boy often moves in with his *buscón* or to a facility he owns. There, the boy is fed, housed, and trained. When he approaches his seventeenth birthday, the *buscón* attempts to create a market for his services by taking him to tryouts at the academies that each of the 30 MLB clubs operate year-round in the Dominican Republic. A smaller number of clubs maintain Venezuelan academies and all organizations scour the Caribbean basin for kids who often end up at a Dominican academy.

In return for his speculative investment in a boy, the *buscón* takes about thirty percent of his signing bonus and sometimes his salary, too. *Buscones* run the gamut from freelance operations housing boys in ramshackle accommodations to the multi-million dollar International Academy of Professional Baseball that former Yankees executives Steve Swindal and Abel Guerra set up with former U.S. Ambassador to the Dominican Republic Hans Hertell. Boys obviously prefer the living conditions and amenities at the better-heeled operations but most will take whatever they can get. Some *buscones* are honest and well-in-

tentioned; others are thieves who abuse their charges in hopes of a pay-off when and if they sign professionally.

Some encourage their boys to take vitamins that turn out to be steroids (often veterinary steroids); others persuade them to lie about their age. When clubs gauge a boy’s potential, they reason that the younger he is, the higher his upside is likely to be. But clubs have been made the fool when the seventeen-year-old they sign turns out to be several years older. The Washington Nationals were a laughingstock when their \$1.4 million, 17-year-old signee Esmailyn ‘Smiley’ González turned out to be neither seventeen nor Esmailyn González. He was 21-year-old Carlos Álvarez Lugo using the identification of a relative whose disabilities prevented him from venturing from his home in a small rural town. Those who knew of the deception were either bought off or gladly cooperated to benefit the families involved. Making matters worse, drug testing after boys sign has found a high incidence of the use of performance enhancing drugs (PEDS). Once boys stop juicing, their hard hit balls don’t travel so far and their sizzling fastballs slow down.

This wild West scene, replete with MLB employees and *buscones* caught skimming bonuses, age and identity fraud, and PED abuse, led MLB to send the sheriff to town in 2010. MLB dispatched long-time baseball executive Sandy Alderson to the Dominican Republic to clean up Dodge. Alderson spoke of instituting MLB-run youth leagues for Dominicans under the age of 17 to displace the *buscones*, as well as drug-testing and finger-printing prospects as young as age 15 to create a database to verify age and identity.

But Alderson encountered resistance from Dominicans both because of his imperial swagger and the realization that MLB was trying to cut the *buscones* out of the picture. He soon resigned his position and took on an even more daunting task—as the New York Mets general manager. But MLB is serious about regaining the upper hand in the Caribbean

talent market. The new contract will cause signing bonuses to fall, and the prospect of extending the draft to the Caribbean is now on the table.

Caribbean baseball is at a crossroads. MLB has long profited from the region and wants to ensure that its escalating player development costs will drop in future seasons. An international draft would be a boon for Baseball Inc. but take millions off the table for boys in the region. MLB spokesmen have cast their efforts with a patina of reform—that they are a means of cleaning up the game.

But many in the region distrust MLB imposing a tax on signing bonuses as a self-serving solution and consider an international draft even more objectionable. Those who seek to speak for baseball and youth in the Caribbean must be bolder in challenging MLB and the Players Association on these matters. They need to take greater ownership of the game in their nations, protecting their young countrymen from MLB’s drive for profit and reducing their manipulation by *buscones*.

There are win-win reforms, especially ones that could better equip the overwhelming majority of signees who never reach the majors and find the best years of their lives over before they turn twenty-one. MLB could set aside some of its lucre to better prepare boys vocationally and academically. They could give something back to the region that defines the game today with its impassioned virtuosity. Baseball has become the pan-Caribbean pastime; it’s where the game has retained much of it dwindling soul. But that soul is endangered by the dynamics of baseball as business. It doesn’t have to be that way.

Rob Ruck, a member of the Department of History at the University of Pittsburgh, is the author of *Raceball: How the Major Leagues Colonized the Black and Latin Game* and *The Tropic of Baseball. He and Dan Manatt made the documentary “The Republic of Baseball: Dominican Giants of the American Game,” which aired on PBS.*

Photos (top left): Barefoot boys play ball in the cane fields at Batey 59; **(top right):** boys sit in the dugout of a ball field in Consuelo, a sugar mill community near San Pedro de Macoris; **(bottom right):** Johnnie Cuevas, an Atlanta Braves minor leaguer, during a workout at Tetelo Vargas Stadium in San Pedro de Macoris in 1989; **(bottom left):** a boy in San Pedro de Macoris shows what might well be the national stance.

Searching for Burt Reynolds

A Dominican Plays in Western New York **BY JACK SPENCE**

WHILE TRAVELING FROM MICHIGAN TO BOSTON in July 2010, my family stopped for the night in Batavia, NY, and discovered a baseball game was about to begin. My 16-year-old daughter Darcy and I hustled over to Dwyer Stadium to catch the Batavia Muckdogs play the Hudson Valley Renegades, from Wapsinger Falls, NY.

This was the New York-Penn Class A Short Season League, the lowest level of the minor leagues. The players had been signed and paid for by Major League teams: the St. Louis Cardinals (Muckdogs) and the Tampa Bay Rays (Renegades).

A balmy night brought out a lively crowd of about a thousand fans. Front row seats were \$7. Corn dogs, pizza, and beer were on offer; a bizarre-looking mascot cavorted. Between innings were contests, public service awards, raffle winners, and promotions—all animated by a boisterous announcer.

Most of the players on the field appeared to be white kids just past high school age. But a substantial number did not. Our program revealed that both shortstops came from the Dominican Republic; both catchers were Latino (DR and Venezuela), both third basemen were Puerto Ricans; the two first basemen were from California (Sánchez and Tinoco), and a Renegade relief pitcher was Venezuelan. The right fielder was named Burt Reynolds. We initially failed to notice that the program said he was Dominican.

That changed when Reynolds, with a laser beam throw to third base, caught Muckdog slugger Bergman trying to turn a double into a triple. Three innings later Reynolds drove in two runs with a rocket homerun over the right center field fence. Nonetheless, the Muckdogs defeated the Renegades 9-3.

We wondered after the game about the story behind that movie star name.

When I returned to work at the University of Massachusetts Boston, I asked my Dominican friend, maintenance man, and sage, Milton Mejias: “How weird is it that a Dominican not only gets two Anglo names but even gets to be a movie star’s namesake?”

Milton pointed out that Burt Reynolds was from San Pedro de Macorís—a small city near Santo Domingo now legendary for its production of major and minor league players. San Pedro, Milton told me, had been a sugar-producing center going back to the 19th century. The plantation owners had imported workers from English-speaking Caribbean islands. So, Milton explained, in San Pedro, not only are English names frequent but it remains common to hear people speaking English.

Still, I wondered about the movie star name. And I had been curious about why the Dominican Republic, a country of only ten million, and San Pedro de Macorís in particular, had so many major and minor league players.

The Renegades had released Burt Reynolds at the end of the 2010 season. This was his fourth year in the minors. He had shown some power hitting and speed, but his strikeouts were many; his walks few. We might have seen him on his best night.

I could not find him on 2011 minor league rosters. Nor was he listed on any of the Dominican professional league teams that play during the winter. I wrote and called the Renegades to locate him, but without results. So I tried a sportswriter for the *Poughkeepsie Journal* who suggested I get in touch with Robinson Canó, the superstar New York Yankee second baseman, because Reynolds is his cousin. (Canó won the homerun derby at

the All-Star Game last summer, as his father José pitched to him. José had had a brief Major League pitching career, and ran a baseball academy.) But I could not find a website or telephone number, so I paused in the Burt Reynolds search.

Why so many Dominicans? The proportions are astounding. The DR, with a current population of ten million, has had 543 players appear in at least one Major League game. That’s more than the next two Latin sources combined: Venezuela, with 270, and Puerto Rico, with 233. But the DR did not get its first player into the big leagues until 1956, decades after Cuba, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Venezuela. (Panama, Nicaragua, and Colombia have been smaller sources.) Though baseball’s origins differ by country, it will not be lost on *ReVista* readers that the list corresponds to places invaded by U.S. troops.

Of players who debuted in the majors since 2000, the DR with 252 has far more than climate-friendly Florida (163), a state nearly twice its size, and 75 percent as many as California, a state nearly 4 times its size.

San Pedro de Macorís, a city of 220,000, has had 86 players make it to the majors, surpassed in the DR only by Santo Domingo, with 125 players, a city 10 times its size. Is it the water?

A combination of international politics, economics and Major League baseball rules partly explains the Dominican, if not the San Pedro de Macorís, phenomenon. Cuba had long been the dominant Latin baseball power. The first Dominican Major League player, Ozzie Virgil, did not debut until 1956. By contrast, the first Cuban player came in 1911, and players came from Mexico, Venezuela and Puerto Rico between 1933 and 1942.

By 1947, Cuba had sent 39 more to the

Majors. But they had to be fair-skinned Cubans. Jackie Robinson broke the color line in 1947 with the Brooklyn Dodgers and Larry Doby joined the Cleveland Indians two months later. In 1949 Cuban-born Saturnino “Minnie” Minoso became the first Black Latin in the majors, a boyhood favorite of mine when he played for the Chicago White Sox. In the ten years following the Cuban Revolution, three dozen Cuban-born men came to the majors (twice as many as Dominicans), almost all of them previously U.S. residents. But in the next 30 years only two dozen Cubans made the majors, compared to 276 Dominicans.

Dominican (and Venezuelan) players came to have an advantage over Puerto Ricans because Major League Baseball applied U.S. rules for drafting young players to Puerto Rico, but not to other Latin sources. This made it possible for teams to sign Dominicans at younger ages and lower prices. In the last ten years Major League debuts from Puerto Rico declined 25 percent. They expanded 50 percent from Venezuela and the DR.

Relative to other Latin sources, baseball culture has “thickened” in the DR due to several factors. The Dominican players have filled a vacuum left by Cuba and to a lesser extent Puerto Rico. Compared to Venezuela, its baseball talent is geographically compressed. Its population is nearly 40 percent that of Venezuela; its land size is but 5 percent that of Venezuela. Its economic resources and diversity are far less than Venezuela’s, so opportunities are fewer for young men.

Following the 1956 debut of Ozzie Virgil, through 1965 only seventeen Dominicans made it to the majors. Six were from San Pedro. San Pedro’s historic sugar economy had only seasonal work. After the harvest, they played baseball on teams organized around sugar mills. San Pedro was primed for the Dominican leap to the majors.

Success and numbers contributed to this “thickening.” Of the first seventeen players, eight had very long Major



Baseball Hall of Famer Juan Marichal



League careers (ranging from 13 to 21 years), and six became stars (the three Alou brothers, Manny Mota, Rico Carty, and the incomparable Juan Marichal, a Hall of Famer), making for an amazing record of success. With legends in their midst, baseball became a way out for young men. Even though minor league wages are quite low, they are considerably more than what young men with limited education can make in the Dominican Republic. And Major League salaries exploded after the 1970s.

But minor league wages last only for a few months during the season. In sharp contrast to the DR's first decade of success, the vast majority never makes it to the majors. And life can be difficult for Latin Americans in the minor leagues—as illustrated in the poignant film *Sugar* (2008).

A Dominican player, Miguel “Sugar” Santos (Algenis Pérez Soto), is assigned to a lower-level minor league team in a small city in rural Iowa. His English is limited. He lives with a local family, well-meaning but with little background in things Latin American. His coach

speaks to him as if Sugar understood English. After some early-season pitching success, Sugar runs into a rough patch and some hostility. He bolts from the team, finds his way to New York, and, with his visa expired, gets a job washing dishes. He finds some redemption, playing ball in pickup games in Central Park with other Latinos.

This story is not overdramatized. Sugar could call home on his cell. The Dominican great Pedro Martínez was assigned to the wilderness of Great Falls, Montana, in the pre-cell days of 1990. Visas for minor league players expire at the end of the season and some, like Sugar, who have not had enough success disappear into the big cities.

I wondered if this might have been the case with Burt Reynolds. Then I discovered through another web search that Burt played last summer for the Newark Bears in the independent Canadian-American league. Independent teams have no affiliation with Major League teams, so they have to pay their players out of ticket sales (perhaps \$800 to \$2,000 a month, more if they have Ma-

jor League experience). Rosters are filled with players hoping to get into the minor leagues, to be late bloomers, and a few former major leaguers hoping for one last shot.

I called the Bears—a team that began in Newark in 1917—and was directed to Buddy Caruso, Business Manager, Concessions Director and jack-of-all-trades. He gave me Burt's e-mail address and speculated that he was home working out with his cousin Robinson. The Bears plan to sign him for this season. So far, Burt Reynolds has not responded to my e-mails.

Jack Spence played first base for the Fenton High School Bisons. He later became Associate Professor of Political Science, with a research focus on war-torn Central America, and Associate Dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Massachusetts Boston. He retired in 2010.

Baseball players David Ortiz and Pedro Martínez, formerly of the Boston Red Sox

“Baseball in Our Blood”

A Nicaraguan Plays for the Yankees

IN ITS COLD WAR ZEAL, THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION relentlessly sought to portray the Sandinista revolution as a projection of Soviet-Cuban power in “our backyard.” It once used intelligence photos of ubiquitous baseball fields to show that baseball loving Cubans were all over Nicaragua. It was, for the equally baseball-crazed Nicaraguans, one of the few laughs enjoyed by all sides to the 1980s conflict.

Baseball in Nicaragua did not stop during those war-torn years, but it was severely damaged by military service and the overall economic catastrophe of the war. One of the baseball casualties was Eduardo Holmann, a promising outfielder who had played in the Nicaraguan professional league for four years in the 1970s. He put baseball aside to join the revolt against Somoza, and then became a Sandinista agrarian reform official—a position that took him into war zones where the U.S.-backed “contras” attacked farm cooperatives and ambushed government officials.

In 1984 Susan Meiselas, the preeminent photographer of the Nicaraguan revolution, and Alfred Guzzetti, now Harvard’s Osgood Hooker Professor of Visual Arts, created *Living at Risk*, a film that portrays the mother and five children of the historically prominent but politically divided Barrios family. The film shows the siblings participating in the revolution. One of the siblings, Martisabel, was married to Eduardo Holmann, who has a prominent part in the film. At one point, we see him playing catch with a young son.

In 2010, Meiselas and Guzzetti made *The Barrios Family 25 Years Later*, the second part of a two-DVD collection called *A Family in History*. We meet again the protagonists of *Living at Risk*, and also their children, who were the toddlers in *Living at Risk*. Eduardo

and Martisabel have divorced, and their daughter and two sons have grown up.

Each son had taken up baseball and had been signed by Major League teams. In an interview in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua, last November, Eduardo told me that young Carlos Eduardo, signed up by the LA Dodgers, had his career cut short by an injury. Mario had played three years in the NY Yankees farm system. He was their most adept second baseman at fielding—but had not hit well enough to make it to the majors.

Carlos Eduardo tells us that his father dreamed his sons could play ball. He says, “Baseball is in our blood.” And it teaches valuable skills: discipline, dedication, and punctuality that carry over into one’s professional life. Carlos Eduardo studied engineering and manages a pharmaceutical chain in Managua.

In the DVD, Mario is seen playing for the Boers, Nicaragua’s most famous team with a history going back to the 1920s. We see Eduardo urging Mario—now that his career with the Yankees is over—to continue his studies. Mario’s response: no problem—baseball practice in the morning; classes in the afternoon. Mario completed an engineering degree from the University of Managua.

When I called Eduardo for an inter-

view, he suggested that my friend Judy Butler, a long time resident and translator in Nicaragua, and I meet him in the evening in San Juan del Sur’s central park. Eduardo, who had been mayor of San Juan del Sur (1995-1999), greeted us and took us to a small outdoor sandwich shop in the park. As it happened, the sandwich shop’s small television set was showing a baseball game. And, as it happened, Mario was playing. The irony that Mario had played for the Yankees was not lost on Eduardo. When Mario hit a towering drive he attempted to stretch the hit into a double, a dangerous gamble considering that the Boers by this time were far behind. He was thrown out at second base, much to the amusement of his cheering father.

The next morning, on our way out of town to visit the wind farm of Miguel Barrios, another one of the siblings, we spotted a live game—Las Aguilas were playing Los Delfines in the Gran Final Del Beisbol Infantil. Baseball lives on in Nicaragua.

Jack Spence

A Nicaraguan baseball scene from *The Barrios Family Twenty Five Years Later*, a DVD of interviews by Susan Meiselas and Alfred Guzzetti.



Speaking of Baseball

A Trip to Vuelta Abajo (Cuba)

BY FÉLIX JULIO ALFONSO LÓPEZ

AS THE OLD SAYING GOES, THERE'S NOTHING better than baseball except for talking about it. And so, with this in mind, we set off with Yasel Porto, a young sports journalist, and Martín Socarrás, an expert researcher and writer about 19th century baseball, to the westernmost province of Cuba, Pinar del Río. Waiting for us was yet another fan and expert on everything baseball, the amiable Juan Antonio Martínez de Osaba, author of several biographies about the region's most distinguished baseball players in the last half century, outfielder Luis Giraldo Casanova; third baseman Omar Linares, and the right-handed pitcher Pedro Luis Lazo. It's well known that Casanova was a versatile ballplayer, nicknamed "Mr. Baseball Player" by commentator Bobby Salamanca; "Kid" ("El Niño") Linares was a superstar when he had hardly reached adolescence and still holds the batting average record in the Cuban national series (368 in 20 seasons); and the giant Lazo is the king of the pitchers, with 257 victories.

It's not odd that a person should write so many baseball biographies or that an entire road trip in Cuba be dedicated to baseball. Baseball has been part of the fabric of Cuban life since the 1840s, and Cuban players have helped popularize the game throughout Latin America and the United States. The challenge—as we found in this excursion to Vuelta Abajo—is if it can keep its status and image in a changing baseball world.

Throughout the trip, we chatted about the upcoming National Series, a competition frankly in decline from the viewpoint of the game's quality. To make things even worse, this year there will be one more team since the old Havana Province team has divided into two

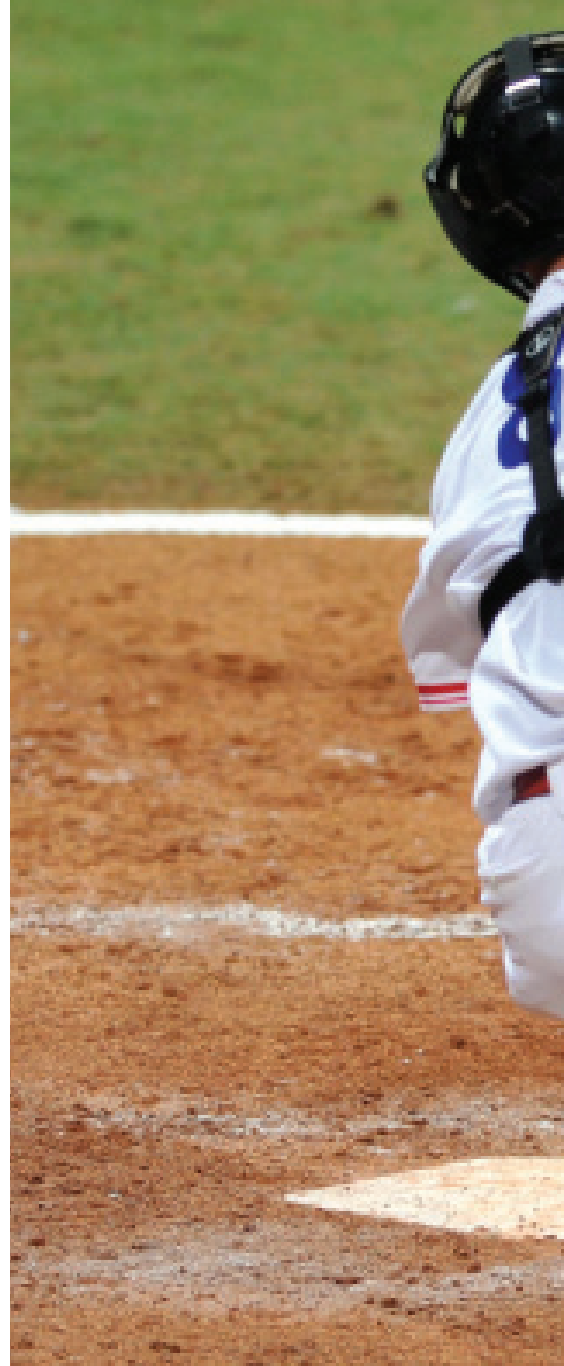
new groups, Artemisa and Mayabeque, at the same time that the anachronistic and weak Metropolitanos team survives as a branch of Industriales, without any possibility of reaching a championship ever. The former Havana teams suffer from a dangerous imbalance, because one (Artemisa) has great pitchers and weak offensive players, while Huracanes de Mayabeque has exactly the reverse. And we ought to add that this year, the ball itself will be less "alive"—the Mizuno 200—and the pitcher's mound will be higher, theoretically to protect the pitchers from the furies of the batters.

Of course, we also talked about the most recent setbacks of the national team in the World Cup and the Pan American games, where it lost to teams that didn't have nearly the history and tradition of Cuba in baseball—such as Holland—and barely beat out unlikely rivals such as Germany. All this has to do, obviously, with deficiencies of our players in their technical and tactical approaches, such as: a lousy pitching rotation; the lack of pitchers who—rather than pitch complete games—would appear in relatively short innings (the so-called opening-preparing-closing system now used in the major leagues and other international baseball circuits); our players' lack of international experience; and the impossibility of becoming familiar with more advanced versions of the sport by inserting themselves in other area federations such as Venezuela, the Dominican Republic or Mexico's two leagues, and even a few outside the region such as South Korea and Japan.

As we approached Pinar del Río, the topic turned to another danger for Cuban baseball, fomented by the media. We talked about incessant broadcast-

ing of professional Latin American and European soccer and the scant programming of major league baseball or other professional games. As a result, children and youth are getting interested in playing soccer, leaving baseball aside and becoming fans of great European clubs like Real Madrid, Barcelona, Milan or Manchester United, which bear absolutely no relationship with Cuban soccer and certainly not with the cultural tradition of the island, which has been tied to baseball since the 19th century.

Upon arriving at the Pearl of the West—as Pinar del Río is known—and after partaking of a delicious meal along the riverbanks, we went off to Osaba's





cultural get-together at the Hermanos Loynaz Center, not far from where the great painter Pedro Pablo Oliva has his studio workshop. We kept talking about baseball and we listened with rapt attention to the mentor laureate of *Vuelta Abajo*, the man who has conquered the most titles in Cuban baseball, a charismatic figure with a special sensitivity to our national pastime of baseball. Jorge, a friend of ours, told us that when homerunner Hank Aaron hosted the Cubans in his home during the Olympic Games in Atlanta, the great black slugger spoke with great admiration and deference of the Cuban ballplayers.

Certainly, Tony Oliva was likewise a topic of conversation, since the Cuban three-time batting champion in the major leagues with the Minnesota Twins team was visiting his homeland right then. It's a source of pride that he is a candidate for the Coopertown Hall of Fame, a hard-earned honor he has deserved for a long time now. Without a doubt, Tony is one of the greatest Cuban baseball players of all time, and his qualities as a player are coupled with a legendary simplicity, even though the majority of Cubans are not aware of his outstanding sports trajectory.

Hopefully, some day this injustice will be remedied, and the stadium in

Cuban catcher Ariel Pestano "El Veterano" on the field with a U.S. player

his hometown of Consolación del Sur or even one of the small baseball diamonds for children that are scattered over the island will be named after him so that kids will be inspired to imitate his brilliant career. As Osaba told me, Tony Oliva does wish to live and die in Cuba, the country where he was born, and where he is, as an irony of destiny, an illustrious unknown person.

Félix Julio Alfonso López is a Cuban historian who writes frequently about baseball.

Baseball Dreams

A Cuban Suitcase Saga **BY STEPHEN KINZER**

NOT MANY VISITORS TO HAVANA MAKE THEIR way to the back streets of Marianao, but when I took my first trip to Cuba in 1974, it was high on my list. I was carrying gifts from Red Sox pitcher Luis Tiant to his parents, whom he had not seen in years.

It was exceedingly difficult for Americans to travel to Cuba in those days. My campaign for a visa took several years. When it finally succeeded, I called my old Spanish teacher from Brookline High School in Massachusetts to tell him the news.

My teacher, Felix Fernández, was born in Cuba and had been involved in Castro's revolution before becoming disillusioned and moving to the United States. He had played baseball in those early days, and while living in Brookline, he picked up extra cash by working as a batting practice pitcher for the Red Sox. Naturally he was friendly with Tiant, the only Cuban on the team.

Not long after I gave Felix the news of my visa, he called back with an unexpected proposition. He had mentioned my planned trip to Tiant, and Tiant wondered whether I might take a suitcase to his aging parents.

Naturally I was thrilled with the prospect of a connection to this Boston icon at the peak of his popularity. We met one evening at his home in Milton, shared a drink or two, and played a bit of billiards. Then Tiant brought out the suitcase. To assure me that my mission would be innocent, he opened it for me and showed me what was inside. There was a leisure suit, a couple of shirts, and a few trinkets.

Tiant told me that he missed his parents, and lamented that political trouble had made it impossible for his family to reunite. I said I'd be happy to serve as his messenger and courier.

After arriving in Cuba, I checked into

the Rivera Hotel, built by the gangster Meyer Lansky as part of his plan to turn Havana into the Sin City of the Western hemisphere. On one of my first evenings there, I found a taxi and told the driver I wanted to go to Marianao, formerly a suburb but now absorbed into Havana. He assumed I was on my way to the Tropicana nightclub, the neighborhood's only tourist attraction. I pulled out the piece of paper on which Tiant had written the address of his parents. The driver was surprised but agreed to take me.

We made our way through the twilight and found our destination. The elderly couple was surprised to see me, and even more so to hear why I had come. They received the suitcase, looked briefly inside, then asked me to sit and share a fruit drink.

When he threw the ceremonial first pitch that day, a baseball story that had extended across nations and decades finally came to a happy end.

Tiant's father, also named Luis, had been one of Cuba's baseball heroes. From the 1920s to the 1940s he spent winters pitching for Cienfuegos and summers with the New York Cubans of the Negro League. His son took up baseball at an early age and emerged as a Little League star in the 1950s. The young man then played in the Mexican League, arriving in the United States under contract to the Cleveland Indians in 1961. That year's Bay of Pigs invasion sharply increased tensions between Havana and Washington, and he did not return home because he feared the Cuban government might not let him go back to the United

States. I was eager to hear stories about the elder Tiant's career, for he had been a huge star in a baseball-mad country. He spoke reluctantly, under prodding from his wife. They wanted to hear about their son.

To my surprise, they did not ask a single question about his accomplishments on the field. They were only interested in his character and reputation. Did he behave himself, or was he sometimes in trouble? Did fans respect him? Did he treat other people well? I assured them that he was a model citizen much beloved in Boston.

As I rode back to the Riviera, I wondered if my visit might be the last contact this famous son would ever have with his parents. A few months later I was thrilled to read that, through the intercession of Senator George McGovern, Fidel Castro

had agreed to allow the parents to fly to Boston. They made the trip. On August 26, 1975, the old man was given a huge ovation as he strolled out to the pitcher's mound at Fenway Park. When he threw the ceremonial first pitch that day, a baseball story that had extended across nations and decades finally came to a happy end.

Stephen Kinzer is the author of books about Guatemala and Nicaragua, both published by DRCLAS and distributed by Harvard University Press. He is writing a biography of John Foster Dulles and Allen Dulles.



THE SPORTING LIFE

Soccer and baseball may form a core of Latin American sports, but the sporting life in Latin America includes a variety of sports and unusual trends. Here are just a few.

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To Dance or to Box

The Struggle of San Basilio de Palenque **BY ANDRÉS SANÍN**

IT'S SUNDAY, THE STREETS ARE DUSTY AND THE only arrivals to San Basilio de Palenque are some motorcycle-taxis and an old bus from the village of La María. Peddlers descend from the taxis with hand-made sweets, tropical fruits or cheap Chinese sunglasses to sell on the beaches of Cartagena. The colorful bus often carries a group of tourists who come to see a *mapalé* dance show. Public buses drive by without taking the unpaved road that leads to the heart of San Basilio in northern Colombia. In the central plaza three things stand out: a chapel painted in pastel colors, a soccer field and the sculpture of a figure that stretches its manacled hands out to the sky. It is Benkos Biohó, a runaway slave who established this maroon community. In San Basilio, just about every *palenquero* (blacks of Bantú, Kikongo or Kimbundú ancestry) knows his name, yet he is virtually unknown to most Colombians.

What is known to most Colombians and in the world beyond is that this village of 3,500 has produced at least three world champion boxers, the most famous probably being Antonio Cervantes—Kid Pambelé. But the story of San Basilio as a cradle of champions is inextricably intertwined with its struggle with freedom.

That history of struggle began when Benkos, the Prince of Guinea Bissau, was kidnapped by Portuguese slave traffickers and sold to Alonso del Campo in 1596. On the way to Cartagena the boat sank in the Magdalena River. He escaped to Montes de María and became the leader of the Cimarron resistance movement, whose members would settle in San Basilio de Palenque. Many consider Palenque as the first freed territory of America, one that UNESCO crowned with the flamboyant title of “Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity” in 2005. However, neither

Palenque nor Biohó received much attention during the commemoration of the Latin American bicentennial of independence. Few people remembered how Benkos died heroically as a martyr when the Spanish governor of Cartagena betrayed the terms of the peace treaty that he had signed. That's why the tourists still ask who is that nude black man in bronze and chains reaching for the sky.

Despite the town's deficiencies (there is no sewer system, for example), the population keeps expanding because of the arrival of displaced peasants from Montes de María—victims of a long and never ending conflict among paramilitaries, guerrillas and the state. The *palenqueros* don't want to be involved in politics. In San Basilio the atmosphere is peaceful and the only sound is that of *champeta*, beating a catchy rhythm that animates the streets. San Basilio—often called just “Palenque”—carries a long history of oppression, misery and colonial violence, but the town receives the foreign tourists with the festive music of the *picos* (mobile speakers) and the joyful dancing of a mother lulling her little twins. Behind a fence, in the public school grounds, boys and girls play soccer. Some pose for the camera, showing their fists in boxing positions. The youthful boxing tradition arose from the military society that the villagers had to develop to fend off the Spaniards (a fact immortalized in Marlon Brando's film *Burn!*). The community became a kind of Afro-American Sparta. As soon as they could walk, boys and girls were trained in the martial arts.

On the other side of the soccer field is a boxing gym that Coldeportes, the national sports agency, inaugurated in 2007, practically a palace among poor houses and only comparable to the new cultural center constructed by the Min-

istry of Culture. Inside hangs a large portrait of Kid Pambelé, a *palenquero* who went from being a bootblack to becoming the most famous black boxer of Colombia, when on October 28, 1978 in Panama City he knocked out Peppermint Frazer and won the world championship title in the light welterweight category (140 pounds).

In the 1970s, two other world boxing champions from Palenque also brought national attention and pride to San Basilio: the Cardona brothers, Ricardo and Prudencio, in the divisions of bantamweight and flyweight, respectively. Palenque's Rodrigo “Rocky” Valdes also held both the WBC and WBA middleweight crowns at various times between 1974 and 1978. Nevertheless, Kid Pambelé alone kept the world championship for eight years, defending the title in 21 fights. He became a close friend of President Misael Pastrana Borrero, whom he brought to San Basilio for a historic visit, along with the public electricity and water supply its residents had been awaiting for so long. On Christmas of that year the saint of devotion was no longer San Basilio (the same San Nicholas who inspired Christmas), but San Kid Pambelé, delivering the greatest gift the town had ever received. According to Colombian journalist Juan Gossaín, the cult of the Kid is explained by the fact that he taught Colombians that winning was possible in a country of losers, where people often celebrated failure because of near victories.

This was that same frightened, insecure and weak boxer whom his first trainer had called the Black Threat. This fighter once placed a bet against himself in a fight with such bad luck that his opponent had done the same thing, so he threw himself to the ground first without having received the slightest scratch. After the discredit following such a loser

Children learn to box from an early age in San Basilio de Palenque.

trick, the iron discipline and even the hard words of his trainer were fruitful. According to journalist Eugenio Baena, trainer Ramiro Machado, seeing that his pupil was not reacting during a fight, used to insult him with racial epithets, adding “You will always be a slave if you don’t win this fight.” Pambelé says the cursing from his *mulato* trainer didn’t bother him, but rather spurred him on. Nevertheless, we have to wonder if such insults, used again and again since colonial times to destroy self-confidence and self-esteem, were what threw him from glory to the obscurity of drugs and addiction.

Today our Kid struggles between an image of himself as Antonio Cervantes, former world champion and father of at least 11 children, and a hallucinated version of “The Black Threat” who harms himself and his family. In the national imaginary and the archives of YouTube and the electronic media, the images of some of his 44 knockouts coexist with those in which you can see him punching the wind. A man of very few words, he coined a phrase that ended up as part of the national popular wisdom: “It is always better to be rich than to be poor.” The sentence competes only with one that Francisco Maturana, former trainer of the Colombian national soccer team, offered after one more defeat: “Losing is winning a little.” Both have been the object of general mockery and scorn, but they are maxims that suggest why the portrait of Kid Pambelé remains as lonely as the boxing ring of San Basilio and the man who inspired the painting. He still wanders in search of his past glory, while his family would give all they have to bring him back, even though he sold all the properties he had in Cartagena and Caracas, including the house he had bought for his mother.





The music that flows through San Basilio in the form of *bullerengue*, *son palenquero*, *chalupa*, *chalusonga*, *lumbalú*, *mapalé* and *champeta* and the extremely erotic, expressive, skillful and challenging dances that *palenqueros* perform makes us wonder if the *palenquero* boxer has something like the *jogo de cintura* of a Ronaldinho who seems to dance samba while he plays soccer. But in San Basilio there is no clear bridge between combat and dance. The punches that led Pambelé to his glory and fall had more force and violence than the power of congregation, bonding, cultural reaffirmation or erotic seduction of dances like *mapalé*. In his fight against poverty and the meanness of a world in which you “hit or you are hit” (“te chingas o te chingan,” in Mexican terms), the Kid had moved far away from his own people into an environment where the wealthy and privileged class adopted him as a trophy of national success, but abandoned him when he turned into a falling idol lost in a limbo of cocaine.

Later on Sunday a heavy rain begins to fall. The lonely boxing trainer closes the doors of the gymnasium and says he is this close to throwing the towel. He complains because there are few youngsters ready to dedicate their lives to boxing and embrace the hard discipline required to have a new *palenquero* world champion. Most of them run away from punches and prefer to go in search of glory as singers. They play *champeta*, a growing rhythm of Cartagena, similar to reggaeton. During October’s drums annual festivity, this Cimarron enclave turns into a cosmopolitan center. Tourists from all around the world come and gather with the *palenqueros*, this time not to see a black man knocking down another man in exchange for a golden belt in the Madison Square Garden, but to celebrate a rebirth of the same power that led the fists of Biohó towards freedom. Imagine the people, all dressed in white, gathered to chant a *lumbalú* to honor the life of their dear Antonio Cervantes, Kid Pambelé, son of Benkos

Extremely erotic, expressive and skillful dances permeate San Basilio de Palenque.

Biohó and San Basilio de Palenque in the language of the village:

*“Chi ma nkongo,
chi ma luango,
chi ma ri Luango di Angola e;
Huan Gungú me ñamo yo;
Huan Gungú me a de nyamá, ee.”*

*“De los congos (soy),
De los loangos (soy),
De los de Loango de Angola (soy), eh;
Juan Gungú me llamo yo;
Juan Gungú me han de llamar, eeh.”*
(translation by Armin Schwegler in
“Chi ma “kongo”: Lengua y ritos ancestrales en El Palenque de San Basilio (Colombia)

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Indeed, It Is about History

Soccer, Football and Baseball in Mexico **BY SERGIO SILVA CASTAÑEDA**

MEXICO DOESN'T HAVE THE HISTORY NEEDED TO win the World Cup. At least that's what you would hear from various Mexican sports commentators during the last World Cup (South Africa, 2010). As a historian, the idea that history might help us to understand the tragic downward spiral of Mexican sports was not something I could let pass unnoticed, even if the role these commentators assigned to history is not exactly what I had in mind. The point I'd like to make is that a history of team sports in Mexico *can* aid in our understanding of why—contrary to what so many people (and especially those in the United States) would have you believe—Mexico has never even been remotely close to winning the World Cup.

What I suggest is that the key to understanding the difference in development of professional soccer in Mexico and its expansion in other Latin American countries is that at least two other sports have always competed for the attention of the Mexican masses: American football and baseball. In his book *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization*, Franklin Foer argues that one of the reasons for the United States' distinctly underwhelming presence in the realm of the world's most popular sport is that the social role filled by soccer in other parts of the world (such as Europe or Latin America) is occupied by other sports in the United States, especially basketball. In Mexico today, soccer enjoys a popularity to rival that in Europe or South America—yet this is a relatively new stage. For decades soccer was only one of many organized sports played in Mexico, fighting for popularity. For nearly all of the 20th century soccer had been forced to share the spotlight with American football and baseball. Both of these rival sports had long histories in Mexico,

and even today they outstrip soccer in terms of popularity and fandom in certain parts of country, as well as in certain social sectors.

Although soccer in Mexico has been slowly moving up the long road toward public loyalty, its history as a professional sport is relatively short. The Mexican Professional Soccer League was founded in 1943 and, at the time, included teams from only three states—Jalisco, Distrito Federal and Veracruz. Later on, more teams would join the league, including additional teams from the center of the country (Morelos, Guanajuato and others). Teams from the northwestern portion of the country beyond Jalisco wouldn't occupy a division-one spot in

States as the ones who brought south their beloved pastime. According to the Mexican Baseball League's website, the first baseball game played in Mexico took place in the port of Guaymas, Sonora, in 1877. While resolving this controversy would not, in all likelihood, prove insurmountable, the truth is that each of these three theories is probably correct, and that baseball arrived to Mexico by each of the routes suggested independently of one another. What we know for certain is that multiple Mexican baseball teams were already in existence during the last decade of the 19th century.

At the time Mexican soccer was organizing a professional league, baseball had already been present in the country as a

Although soccer has lately monopolized the royalty of the Mexican population, its history as a professional sport is relatively short.

the professional first division until the 1990s. This is because just as soccer was beginning to take off in the center of the country, the northwest was seized with a very different passion—a passion for baseball. The same argument would apply to the southeast portion of the country or to the state of Oaxaca.

While the topic is one to which that professional historians have dedicated but little time, at least three theories exist regarding the arrival of baseball to Mexico. Two of them agree that the sport arrived to Mexico by way of Cuba, but differ as to whether it came first to Veracruz or the Yucatán Peninsula. The third theory places the arrival of baseball at the northern frontiers of the country, citing railroad workers from the United

professional sport for two decades and was beginning to extend its influence in the rest of the country. This occurred through the inclusion of teams from more distant states, such as Monterrey, and—as the game grew in popularity—through discussions of the potential for international competition with the United States. In 1945, a second professional league was founded, this one for the winter months, known in the United States as the Mex Pac, or Liga Mexicana del Pacífico. During the latter half of the 20th century, especially during the 1950s and 60s, the expansion of both leagues would make it so there were teams in practically every region of the country.

The period of the 1930s and 1940s is pivotal to our understanding about the



historical importance of baseball in Mexico. For this was the time when businessman Jorge Pasquel attempted to convert the Mexican league into an international league large enough in stature to compete with the Majors. John Virtue tells a good chunk of this story in *South of the Color Barrier: How Jorge Pasquel and the Mexican League Pushed Baseball Toward Racial Integration*. Pasquel's plan was a simple one: he would recruit players from Cuba or from the Negro leagues (places the Major leagues were not looking for new players) and place them in the Liga Mexicana de Beisbol. As the Liga grew, even players from the Major Leagues would make the move to play in Mexico. In 1947, having retired from professional play, Babe Ruth visited Mexico on Pasquel's invitation. In answer to a direct question by the *New York Times*, Ruth said that he would refuse any offer to work as commissioner for the Mexican League, but also praised Pasquel's project, saying "Anyway, the Pasquels deserve a lot of credit. Baseball is a game that should be played all over the world. It keeps kids out of trouble and develops them into better citizens" (*New York Times*, May 16, 1946). Ruth's statements are particularly interesting if we take into consideration the fact that they coincided directly with a lawsuit filed by the New York Yankees against Pasquel and the Mexican Baseball League. According to the Yankees, Pasquel and his agents had violated the law when they invited Yankee players to leave New York to play in Mexico. Setting aside the means by which players were convinced to depart, the truth is that during this period many players, from the Yankees and other professional teams, left the United States to play in Mexico under the patronage of Pasquel (*New York Times*, May 5, 1946).

At the end of the day, Pasquel's experiment failed and baseball—at least on a national level—lost some of its popularity in Mexico during the following decades. Still, if we are to understand the relative historical delay of Mexican soccer compared to other Latin American countries, we must bear in mind that in 1950, while Uruguay and Brazil were battling it out in one of the most famous World Cup finals in the history of the tournament, a vast majority of the population of Mexico was far more concerned with the victory of the Algodoneros de Unión Laguna over the Charros de Jalisco in the series final of the Liga Mexicana de Beisbol. The Uruguayan upset, the now famous "Maracanazo," had little effect on fans of these Liga teams, who were more concerned with outs and innings than goals and halves.

In Mexico today, despite the obvious domination of soccer at a national level, there are still some areas (notably the northern and southeastern regions of the country) where baseball continues with a popularity similar to the one it enjoyed in its heyday. Mexico also continues to send a significant number of players to Major League baseball teams each year, a number far larger than that of players sent to compete in European soccer leagues. Soccer may hold the hegemony in Mexico, but it is not alone.

Yet baseball is not the only sport in Mexico's history to

distract the public, as well as sports officials and sporting goods companies, from soccer on a national scale. It was another sport with a little-known history, one whose presence preceded the success of other sports, that would steal the scene: American football.

As in the case of baseball, accounts differ as to how and when American football arrived in Mexico. What *is* well known is that, while baseball came to Mexico via the working classes, American football was transmitted from one elite to another. Each version of the story of football's crossing into Mexico involves the elite, Porfirian or post-revolutionary, that sent its sons away to the United States to study. These young men, upon returning to Mexico, began the necessary steps to continue practicing the sport they had picked up abroad. We also know that, by the end of the 1920s, the sport had been integrated into institutions of higher learning, and by the end of the 1930s, it had quickly become the most important collegiate sport in the country.

Little known in the United States is the fact that, since 1936, the most important student sporting event of the year in Mexico City is what is known as *El Clásico*: the game between the UNAM Pumas and the Burros Blancos of the IPN, playing not soccer but American football. These matchups were so popular they filled the most important stadiums in Mexico City before professional soccer even existed.

Yet more interesting than the importance of *El Clásico* among the student contingent of the two largest universities in Mexico is the quick expansion of the sport to practically every institute of higher learning in the country. This even includes the Universidad Obrera ("Worker's University") founded by Vicente Lombardo Toledano. What was it about American football that even openly Marxist universities would make it an integral part of student life? A complete investigation is still lacking, but one hypothesis would be that members of the Mexican elite—those that had either constructed or strengthened many different institutions of higher education in Mexico during the thirties or forties—had a concept of what a modern university should be, and this idea overrode any ideological differences among them. Whether it was Garza Sada in Monterrey or Vicente Lombardo Toledano in Distrito Federal, they agreed that each modern university should have an American football team.

The effect of American football on the expansion of soccer in Mexico seems to be more ambiguous, however. American football distracted resources and interest but, at the same time, its promoters shared infrastructure, traditions and identities. After all, American football competed with soccer only for the interest of the middle and upper classes—those who were attending university—and never became a professional sport in Mexico. Still, American football has, even today, a clear niche among the loyalties of Mexican society.



Photos (top left): Football training at the Politécnico; (bottom left): "Cerillo" Mariscal is intercepted by UNAM's Guillermo Castilleja; (above left): The first of the pumas nicknamed "Casti" in honor of the great university football player Guillermo Castilleja; (above right): Guillermo Castilleja.

It should also be mentioned that in some of the lower-class neighborhoods (and in terms of profitability for sporting-goods businesses), boxing and wrestling were for decades another source of intense competition for soccer in Mexico. Despite not being team sports, their potential effect on soccer's slow diffusion and rise to popularity in Mexico is not to be overlooked. It is a paradox of soccer's presence in Mexico that in telling its history we must make room for several other sports as well.

There can be no doubt that today the national sport of Mexico is soccer. But we should bear in mind that this is a fairly recent development. During a significant portion of the twentieth century, several other sports were competing for the public's attention, resources and fanaticism. Even today, despite its prominence on a national level, soccer in Mexico must still share the public's loyalties with baseball in certain regions, and—in areas such as Tabasco—is still in an obvious second place. In university environments, soccer is omnipresent, but collegiate American football leagues still seem to be the more efficient and better-financed of the two organizations.

With this history of sports in mind, Mexico gives us a picture of a recreational and professional sports scene far more diverse than we usually expect. This historical diversity allows Mexican tourists to the United States to be able to visit Fenway Park and enjoy a sporting event that is in no way exotic. Mexicans do not usually need explanations of any of football's complex rules during the Super Bowl. In exchange for this familiarity with various sports, however, Mexico may be forced to wait longer before it can claim one of those World Cup trophies we have coveted for so long—from Argentines, Brazilians, and now from Spaniards as well.

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Santo and *Lucha Libre*

Three Falls **BY GABRIEL GUZMÁN**

FIRST FALL: THEY WILL FIGHT
TWO OF THE THREE FALLS
WITHOUT A TIME LIMIT!

One of my earliest childhood memories is of sitting in front of a small black-and-white television in my parents' store in a working-class neighborhood in Mexico City. With a bunch of kids my own age, we sprawled out on the floor almost every night to enjoy the movies featuring Santo: the Mexican wrestler and superhero who—through his films—transcended the borders of fiction and reality. An impressionable child, I was afraid to go to sleep right after watching images of vampires and monsters terrorizing populations. Luckily, I would then think of Santo, who always arrived in the nick of time at the end of the movie to get rid of those horrible specters. Then I would drift off to sleep. A short while later, I began to understand that wrestling—*lucha libre*, the kind of acrobatic fighting that Santo engaged in—was also a sport. Our neighbors were an athletic family that included a wrestler who fought under the electrifying name of 5,000 Volts. He had a worn-out tarpaulin in his patio where my friends and I could practice beginning wrestling moves after school. It was at my neighbor's house that I discovered the fascinating world of wrestling. Over time, I began to understand that perhaps no other sport in Mexico personified so well the actual lives of Mexicans: their suffering, pain and desperation, but also their enjoyment, happiness and urge to overcome life's adversities.

When I turned seven, my family moved from Mexico City to the then-small city of Huajuapán in the state of Oaxaca. It was there that I first had the luck to see a live wrestling spectacle for the first time, which took place in honor of the feast day of the local patron saint in the nearby village of San Miguel Pa-

palutla. Unlike the *lucha libre* stars that I was used to seeing in Santo's films, these wrestlers came from the state capital. I don't remember any of their names, but their movements, their physical appearance and the tremendous emotion I felt as I watched the match have stuck with me until now. The match took place on a hot night in the village's dusty plaza in a ring so precarious that I thought it might collapse at any moment. The slightly overweight wrestlers tried to please the crowd—in the hundreds—that had gathered to watch them fight and shouted none-too-polite profanities at the rough fighters and the referee. But once the match was over, the townspeople received the wrestlers with warm hospitality, and the exhausted fighters in turn

the air despite his corpulence, would hold a match in Huajuapán. With a solid and well-lit ring, a delirious audience and a Sports Center filled to capacity, the show fulfilled all expectations. After the match was over, I returned home on foot, wandering through the city's poorly lit streets, certain that I would always remember the moves and masks of that magical night.

SECOND FALL: THE SILVER
LEGEND

Rodolfo Guzmán Huerta (1917-1984), better known as el Santo, has been the top star in *lucha libre* in and beyond the ring. His fights against rivals such as the powerful Blue Demon, Black Shadow or Cavernario Galindo are legendary at home,

Town and wrestlers came together: the insults had vanished and there was only genuine gratitude on all sides.

gave their hosts their sweaty masks as a gift. Town and wrestlers came together: the insults had vanished and there was only genuine gratitude on all sides.

Life went on at a slow pace. While I developed my incipient interest in music, I also followed the latest events in Mexican wrestling as best I could through television, specialized magazines such as *Box* and *Lucha*, or better yet, going to *lucha libre* matches. When I was in junior high, I discovered with great joy that star wrestlers from the AAA company, with its impeccable production and superb wrestlers such as Mano Negra and Abdullah Tamba, a bald and stocky fighter also known as "the fighting elephant" for his ability to perform pirouettes in

and his films crossed beyond the borders of Mexico, making him a cult figure that over time consolidated into an authentic legend. Yet the more than 50 films that Santo made between 1959 and 1980 were subject to ridicule by film critics because of their unlikely scripts. The movies also confused Santo's followers abroad, who sometimes weren't sure if the films should be taken seriously or not. Townspeople enjoyed watching the films and commented on every single detail: they argued whether you could see the strings on the little vampires that held them up so they appeared to be flying; others said

The author poses masked as el Santo; *lucha libre* in the ring in Oaxaca





that the vampires were incredibly good looking; that the monsters provoked more laughter than fear; that el Santo was very chubby, etc. For anyone who has not seen a Santo film, they usually play out a variation of a single plot: in a secret hiding place, a crazy scientist—preferably an ex-Nazi—has figured out a way to destroy the earth with atomic bombs or bloody monsters, sometimes for motives the plot never clarifies. For example, in the movie “Santo contra los Asesinos de otros Mundos” (1971), the scientist creates a loathsome monster that eats people alive but upon closer look, the spectator will realize that the heinous monster is just a bunch of people under a grey sheet, that Santo chases across the rooftops of the ever-grayer Mexico City. By the end of the film—and in general, all of his films—Santo emerges victorious over the crazed scientist and his horrible creatures, saying farewell as he drives away in his 1965 Aston Martin auto to some far off corner of Mexico where his help is needed. Despite all the criticism, the Santo films—as David Wilt, one of the most knowledgeable experts on Mexican film, points out—were a launching pad for serious Mexican actors such as Claudio Brook, who starred in the 1963 “Santo en el Museo de Cera” and two years later earned the leading role in Luis Buñuel’s mythical “Simón del Desierto.”

Without a doubt, Santo’s movies today provoke a nostalgia in fans of the genre for a Mexico that no longer exists, where there was room for innocence and for a superhero of flesh and bones who, in addition to combating zombies, fought every Sunday in a humble gym in some town or other rather than in the elegant arenas of the big city. Moreover, with the crisis of violence in Mexico, more than a few long to watch the films in which Santo arrives to defend the population against soulless criminals and even—why not?—against the corrupt politicians that plague the country.

Top: Gabriel Guzmán, a musician and teacher in real life, poses as el Santo; bottom: fanciful lucha libre masks are for sale.

THIRD FALL: WRESTLING AND LUCHA LIBRE!

When I moved to New York to continue my music studies, it was hard for me to follow Mexican *lucha libre* because of lack of time, but also because this region of the United States was not exactly overflowing with live matches or even television broadcasts. I was left remembering Santo movies, reading Carlos Monsiváis' essays on the theme and once in a while watching U.S. wrestling. But this type of wrestling left me with the impression that most of it took place down on the mat; that the sport was much more "muscular" and lacking in a sense of humor, although quite spectacular. In contrast, Mexican *lucha libre* is celebrated up in the air; it is much more agile and has a natural tendency to provoke an excess of emotion—"desmadre," as we Mexicans call it; a type of humor that any Mexican can understand quite readily, in which chaos and absurdity easily mingle. For example, during one of the presentations of the always charismatic wrestler Rayo de Jalisco, he got into the ring accompanied by a mariachi group that got the crowd all worked up in the Arena Mexico. Everything went really well and el Rayo let himself be adored by the fans and be lulled by the musical group when all of a sudden an opposing wrestler grabbed a precious large guitar from one of the mariachis and smashed it against Rayo's broad back, provoking the mariachis to flee, leaving more than one sombrero dancing over the ring. What a way to begin a fight!

Hollywood also scored good points when it paid homage to *lucha libre* films in the movie "Nacho Libre," starring Jack Black. Filmed in Oaxaca and inspired by Fray Tormenta, a real priest who participated in wrestling matches to earn money to maintain an orphanage, the film managed to celebrate the innocent, extravagant and joyful world of wrestling.

The last time I attended a *lucha libre* match in Mexico was the day after my wedding in Oaxaca City. The atmosphere in the Alcántara Arena de Oaxaca was

something I had not experienced since my adolescence. The arena filled with entire families with children proudly carrying their favorite wrestler's mask; young couples who were out on dates; artisans who sold excellent-quality masks at really accessible prices, as well as all the paraphernalia associated with wrestling matches. On arriving at the arena with my wife and wedding guests, most of them from the United States, people be-

ences about *lucha libre*; Santo's films have been shown in festivals both in Mexico and abroad with great fanfare. Society in general has revalued *lucha libre* and the sport has influenced Mexican popular culture. Among those who have contributed to the new appreciation of the sport is the Mexican rock group Botellita de Jeréz and its song "Guacar-rock del Santo." The theme joins the rock rhythm, with a bit of "avocado," as the

From afar, one hears the steady noise of the multitude in the arena who cheer their favorite wrestler and who feel, suffer and live in their own flesh and blood the emotions of the wrestling ring.

gan to ask me out of pure curiosity why I was there. I answered proudly that I had just gotten married. The master of ceremonies almost immediately announced over the microphone the presence of a newly wed couple in the audience and we received a great ovation. The match began and, on this occasion, and different from the wrestlers of my childhood, the athletes were young and determined to put on a good show. Instead of the usual bell, an old car muffler blurted an odd noise to start the fight. The fight went on in an entertaining fashion until we had to leave the arena and practically flee the City of Oaxaca because of an impending transport strike that was to start at midnight and block highways—which would have ruined our honeymoon. So we left the wrestlers and the masks and the enthusiastic crowd and headed off to the beach on the last bus out.

Once on the way to the beaches of Oaxaca State, I began to think again about *lucha libre* and realized that from my childhood and through adolescence, wrestling matches were considered to be for "plebs" or uncultured folks. Fortunately, things have changed and it's now common to find brainy articles in magazines and books, as well as confer-

band observes, and an entertaining chorus that turns "pleb" (*naco*) into *chido* (cool). "Santo was like a sturdy tree, he was a great champion that fought on and on," sang band members Arau, Vega and Mastuerzo. And as reinforcement there were the magnificent photos by Lourdes Groubet, who has made portraits of Mexican wrestlers for decades both in the intimacy of their homes and in the ring, as well as the writers, promoters, and the wrestlers themselves who have dedicated their lives to the sport.

After a match—as we would have seen if we didn't have to run off to our honeymoon—the lights go off in the arena and people return home. From afar, one hears the steady noise of the multitude in the arena who cheer their favorite wrestler and who feel, suffer and live in their own flesh and blood the emotions of the wrestling ring.

The master of ceremonies in the ring cries out: Mexican *lucha libre*, the best in the world.

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Bullfights

A Special Art **BY DANIEL SAMPER PIZANO**

SPAIN'S HISTORY IS NOT WRITTEN IN INK, BUT IN bull's blood. The shadow of the black beast with sharpened horns has spread over the Iberian peninsula for thousands of years and extended to Latin America.

Anyone who goes to see the Altamira cave paintings in northern Spain will note the presence of a figure that looks tranquil in some poses and aggressive in others. These images depict—dating back to some 1,500 years ago—the ancestors of the protagonists of bullfighting.

According to some historians, the Roman conquerors brought their circus celebrations to Spain 23 centuries ago. These public spectacles quite often could be cruel. The genesis of bullfights can be traced back to these events, which immediately became hugely popular.

In the 11th century, the epic poem of Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar (Mio Cid) recounts

a famous episode in which the hero, enemy of the invading Arabs, speared a bull from his horse. Seven centuries later, the painter Francisco de Goya depicted this scene in one of his drawings.

The poetry of the Siglo de Oro—the Spanish Golden Age that spans the 16th and 17th centuries—frequently makes reference to kings who confronted bulls, and celebrations that were only complete if they were accompanied by the threat of angry bulls.

But one thing is the sport of killing bulls, which can be compared to fishing or hunting, and quite another thing is *tauromaquia*, the art of taking on a bull that weighs a half a ton or so with only a small piece of cloth (the cape and the *muleta*, the stick that the red cloth hangs from) and an anachronistic sword called *estoque*. These are the bullfighter's scanty

tools, as well as the help of a lancer on horseback (*picador*) and banderilleros, who test the bull for ferocity and diminish its strength by stabbing a mound of muscle on the animal's neck. The bullfighter must make the bull respond to the orders of the piece of cloth, to have it run at a specified speed and bow its head to facilitate its death by sword, all before half an hour has gone by.

Spanish bullfighting fans do not permit this spectacle to be called a sport; for them, it is an art. It is as if one measured the beauty of a painting by the size of the biceps of the artist or a dancer's talent by the ability to stand on tiptoe. Indeed, fans like to compare bullfighting to ballet. For them, the blood in a bullfight is only an inevitable accident. What is at stake in this game is more than just blood: it is life and death.



Bullfighting in Bogotá

provoked. But the bull used for bullfights is different. It is the product of dozens of generations in which the crossbreeding of races and breeds has produced a hefty animal with sharp horns and irrepressible fierceness that charges at human beings because the instinct has now been genetically inscribed. Bulls nowadays know no cowardice; they become more and more aggressive the more they are hurt and they keep on attacking until the last moment of their lives.

These specimens are not sold at an ordinary cattle market. "The bull used for bullfights," says the historian Federico Carlos Sáinz de Robles, "is an artificial zoological type, created exclusively for the *fiesta*." Bulls for bullfighting are raised in only a few countries—Spain, France, Portugal and a few Latin American countries. In other spots on the planet, one can find temperamental bulls (how about the the irascible bucks of North American rodeos?). But not fierce bulls. Thus the crucial paradox that surrounds the debate about whether to ban bullfights or tolerate them: if fierce bulls were banned from fighting to protect them from death by sword-thrusting, this race of bulls would disappear.

WHEN THE PRIEST DIES

The bulls are the product of a slow and careful selection of lineages, but the *fiesta* in which they confront the bullfighters is clearly part of popular culture. Unlike many sports that attract crowds, it was not born in a palace garden nor in club meetings. It was born in the grass-roots, in the poverty of peasant festivities and patron saint celebrations. The bulls have lived in the Spanish soul from even before Spain existed. They are integrated in its language; they are a unique symbol and awaken a curious and ancient passion.

In many ways, the bullfights represent a religious metaphor that, like the Christian mass, demands a central sacrifice, consecrated priests, some ceremonial

garments, some secular rites, the offering of a victim and an atmosphere shrouded by death.

But, unlike in most religions, the priest puts his life at risk in the ritual of sacrifice. Juan José de Bonifaz, the historian who keeps the most meticulous count of bullfighting casualties, talks of "hundreds of deaths." Between 1771 and 1991, about 500 bullfighters have been gored to death. That is, one every semester. Two centuries ago, there were more victims, but penicillin—celebrated with a monument in Madrid's celebrated bullfight ring Plaza de Las Ventas—has prevented casualties that could have spiralled easily into the thousands.

Nevertheless, many famous bullfighters have lost their lives in the rings. Among them are several of the art's founders and a significant number of modern bullfighters. Among the dead figure Pepe Hillo, Pepete, Espartero, Gallito, Joselito, Paquirri and the most famous of all: Manuel Rodríguez Sánchez, Manolete. When he was mortally wounded in the small Spanish city of Linares in 1947, there was international consternation. It was as if Muhammad Ali had died from a right hook in the boxing ring. Manolete was 30 years old.

Unlike many other animals who unavoidably must die in the service of humankind, the bullfighting bull, if it is fierce enough, is pardoned its life and returns to the countryside as a stud bull. Not bad...

REJECTING THE BULLFIGHTS; LOVING THE BULLS

The "national *fiesta*," as bullfights are called in Spain, travelled to its Spanish colonies along with the viceroys, soldiers, wine and ham. During several centuries, bullfights were staged in almost all the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America. Argentina and Uruguay, famous for their cattle, also had bullfight rings, and some bullfighters met death in Montevideo.

Now only Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador and Peru host bullfights. In Europe, in addition to Spain, there's

A UNIQUE ANIMAL

For centuries, bullfighting was a form of combat in which a horseback rider attacked a bull with spears. But, the story goes, at the beginning of the 18th century, a man by the name of Francisco Romero got off his horse, took up a cape and a sword and confronted the bull, face-to-face, body-to-body, inch-by-inch in a battle to the death and in clearly disadvantageous conditions. Romero was a young carpenter from Ronda, the legendary Spanish city where Ernest Hemingway wrote novels and Rainer Maria Rilke poetry. Orson Welles is buried there. And it was there that the Romero family established bullfighting as it is known today.

From then until now—for almost 300 years—bulls have evolved a lot more than bullfighters. Everywhere, even in Switzerland, there are bulls that charge if



France and—in a more sporting than artistic manner, Portugal.

In the case of Colombia—or at least of Bogotá—one wonders for how long. Newly elected mayor Gustavo Petro announced on January 13, 2012, that he would begin negotiations with Bogotá's bullfighting entity to put a stop to bullfights, which are a "spectacle of death."

For about 20 to 30 years now, bullfighting has faced two great enemies: the high price of the spectacle and the opposition of increasingly aggressive anti-bullfighting groups—many of them animal rights groups. Two distinct Spains have begun to emerge: the bullfighting Spain, mostly Andalucía, Valencia and Madrid—where the bullfighting *fiesta* has been declared "cultural patrimony"—and the anti-bullfighting Spain, led by Catalonia, where bullfighting was prohibited this year.

With *fiesta* or without *fiesta*, the black and corpulent bull will keep on being Spain's millennial shadow. As it happens, billboards are prohibited on Spanish highways—except for one featuring a defiant bull. After the flag, it is the best-known symbol, in a land where the king is the most enthusiastic bullfighting fan.

Daniel Samper, a 1981 Nieman Fellow, is a Colombian journalist who has resided in Madrid for many years. A columnist for *El Tiempo* of Bogotá, he is the author of many books, including *No es porque sea mi hijo*, *Piedad con este pobre huérfano* and *El huevo es un traidor*.

Sports and Political Imagination in Colombia

Some Unanswered Questions **BY INGRID BOLÍVAR**

A SPECIAL EXHIBIT ENTITLED "A COUNTRY MADE of Soccer" at Colombia's National Museum features press photos, radio narratives, uniforms and other objects associated with the sport. Inaugurated last December 3, the exhibition told the story of this sport in Colombia and, in particular, the Colombian National Soccer Team (see <http://www.museonacional.gov.co/sites/futbol/exposicion.html>).

The exhibit shows the history of soccer and the history of the country as entwined, especially during the years 1989-1990. In May 1989, Medellín's National Athletic team won the Copa Libertadores de América (Liberators of America Cup) for the first time for Colombia. In the second semester of 1989, this team was the core of the national team, which qualified for the World Cup in Italy in 1990. During this same period, three presidential candidates were assassinated (Luis Carlos Galán, Bernardo Jaramillo and Carlos Pizarro). The museum exhibit includes some front pages of one of the national newspapers. Images of a crowd at Galán's funeral share the page with images from the national team's triumph. How can one make sense of this "coincidence"?

In an interview for the documentary film *Los Dos Escobar*, directed by Jeff and Michael Zimbalist for ESPN's 2010 "30 for 30" collection, Francisco Maturana, the then-technical director of Medellín's National Athletic team and of the national team, referred to this period of the history of soccer and the country itself as follows: "When people see the team winning, they identify with us, they say, 'That's our team, that's our identity'... people embrace us; they adopt us. We were the extension of an illusion; we were joy and idiosyncrasy... enough already!"

But when we saw what was happening in Colombia, for us it was motivation to defend our country, make more of an effort, play better" (<http://www.the2escobars.com/lapelicula.html>). Afterwards, referring to the assassination of player Andrés Escobar in June 1994, Maturana adds, "Soccer did not kill Andrés; he and soccer were the same thing, and the society killed him." In a similar fashion, other players also tried to show how soccer history and other social processes were related: Leonel Álvarez, Alexis García, Luis Fernando "El Chonto" Herrera, among other national team players, comment on their own path to becoming top players in a city where they did not have access to playing fields or soccer schools.

Stories are told about how regional drug-trafficking networks with headquarters in Medellín, Cali and Bogotá infiltrated the teams and bought equipment and players to "launder drug money." These accounts underestimate not only the deep-rootedness of these networks, but also the importance of sports as a social practice, its regional and institutional role in the country. Moreover, this narrative ignores the players themselves and their experiences, the social struggles of some of their communities of origin, as well as the achievement of competence and sports triumphs as reasons for pride and collective celebration. The images of drug lord Pablo Escobar inaugurating playing fields for microsoccer, for example, tend to elicit comments focused on "manipulation" by the head of the Medellín cartel of the working-class sectors from which he also recruited his army. Escobar's closeness with certain players is seen only as an expression of power on his part or of "lack of values," "lack of education and morals"

on the part of the players. Very little attention has been paid to the history of public spaces in poor or working-class city neighborhoods and how they got to be used for sports and leisure in these communities. The importance of competitions and of the playing fields for youth like Leonel, Alexis and Chonto has simply been ignored. Perhaps the playing fields and soccer balls were indeed donated by Pablo Escobar. Perhaps this is true. However, this should not stop us from appreciating what different communities have constructed in these spaces, the great enjoyment different generations have enjoyed with soccer practice, the memories of the youth and the pride of the neighbors in seeing one of their kids turn into a professional player and join the national team.

Thinking about the sport thus provides an opportunity to explore how players themselves have experienced not only their professional formation, but also other processes such as political violence that is one of the characteristics of national society. We need to ask, for example, how the residents of a zone like Urabá—the venue of many massacres in the middle and late 1980s—experienced the rise to professionalism of players such as John Jairo Trellez, Luis Carlos Perea and Luis Hernando Gaviria. They must represent a great deal to those neighbors as they watch their boys triumph, win the title in Medellín, travel abroad. Colombian social scientists have not studied the social history of sports and sports players. The general understanding is that these sports players—at least in soccer and cycling—come (or came) from the so-called popular sectors. Much has been speculated about the regional origins of the players, who put places on the map with their talent. So, for instance, one renowned soccer historian comments:

“Colombians should play in their own style, essentially a short-passing game based on the individual ball control of the players, but he [Maturana] also insisted on the importance of teamwork, maximizing the regional characteristic of

the players. So in midfield the need was for hard workers and well-disciplined players, provided by Alvarez and Gómez from Antioquia region where such qualities are commonplace, while the fantasy was left to Valderrama, Asprilla and Rincón, people from Cali and the Coast who were harder to discipline but more creative” (Tony Mason, *Passion of the People? Football in South America*, London: Verso. 1995, p.140).

The quote brings out a soccer-oriented new kind of geography. As in other areas of Colombia’s social life, people from Antioquia are represented as hard-working and disciplined, while the inhabitants of the Caribbean and the Pacific Coast, especially Afro-Colombians, are seen as “difficult to discipline, but creative.” The attribution of a specific psychology and abilities to racial or regional groups has been very extensive and quite well studied in Colombia. However, the geography that is imagined through soccer players, their origins, physical capa-

the year Colombia exploded into a period known simply as the Violence after the assassination of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan—and who were the regional leaders behind the different departmental leagues. I’d also like to know how the competition among the different leagues from different cities was set up and maintained during the 1920s and 1930s, who the businessmen were behind the so-called Soccer of El Dorado, and how, at the height of the era of the Violence, various clubs could pay internationally famous soccer players such as Adolfo Pedernera, Alfredo Di Stefano, Nestor Rossi and Valeriano López.

We ought to know more about the interaction of the members of the cycling competition known as the *vuelta a Colombia*, which began in 1951, with social movements, peasant resistance and political violences in far-flung municipalities. In his lovely book *Reyes de las Montañas*, Matt Rendell recounts how in 1964 the newspaper *El Tiempo*

The attribution of a specific psychology and abilities to racial or regional groups has been very extensive and quite well studied in Colombia.

bilities and career trajectories has not yet been analyzed; neither has the bond between the state and forms of popular culture expressed in the social origins of many of the players and spectators, and the ties that are created among them through sports practice.

Perhaps our lack of curiosity about these subjects has to do with the idea that there are more pressing social problems or that soccer is prone to manipulation and lacks autonomy. Yet there is much to learn about the relationship between state and sports in Colombia, especially those sports that have fostered popular culture in the country, such as soccer, cycling and boxing. I’d like to know, for example, why the professional soccer championship began precisely in 1948—

published a front page story about the national government’s declaration of war against the independent republics and about the bombing of Marquetalia. At the same time, it published photos of all the phases of *la vuelta a Colombia* and the immense public acclaim for the cyclists (See Rendell, Matt. *Reyes de las Montañas. Cómo los Héroes del ciclismo colombiano incidieron en la historia de su país*. Grupo Editorial Norma. Colección Biografía y Documentos, 2004, also in English: *Kings of the Mountains*, Aurum Press, 2002). In June 1964, the war against Marquetalia was reported almost literally alongside the new victory by Antioquia cyclist Martín “El Cochise” Rodríguez, who had been cycling in the *vuelta* since 1961. En 1970, El Cochise

participated in the so-called *Marca de la Hora* thanks to the sponsorship of a bicycle manufacturer, because the Colombian sports authorities did not recognize the *vuelta* as a championship contest. However, when Cochise became the champion and people enthusiastically hailed his victory, Colombian authorities—and particularly President Misael Pastrana Borrero—decided that the occasion did indeed have merit. Rendell tells how the day after Cochise's victory, his photo appeared in an ad alongside the director of Proexport, the state agency that promotes exports. The ad extended an invitation to peasants and other sectors to take up the challenge like Cochise had done and to produce more to export more. Under the photo was a caption that thanked "the voluntary cooperation of Martin Emilio Cochise Rodríguez (...) as a patriotic gesture in the benefit of national development" (Rendell, 166). At the end of 1999, Cochise Rodríguez was honored as Sportsman of the Century in Colombia, but we do not know how he, now a national figure, his colleagues, the fans of cycling and of other sports had felt about the war against the Independent Republics and the other wars that were taking place throughout the country. As in 1970, many sports players needed to find their own sponsors because the state did not consider sports one of its priorities. And as in 1970, the authorities and other sectors waited for victories to acclaim sports as a form of patriotism. And when there were no victories, well, then it was just the fault of the players.

Ingrid J. Bolívar is an Assistant Professor in the Political Science Department, Universidad de Los Andes, Bogotá. She is a doctoral student in History at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Her research focuses on state formation, political violence, and popular culture in Colombia (beauty contests and sports).

Women and Sports in Peru

Playing for a Place in the Nation **BY DAVID WOOD**

ONE OF THE MANY VIVID MEMORIES OF MY FIRST stay in Peru involved listening to a radio commentary of the national women's volleyball team as they played against the Soviet Union in the final of the 1988 Olympic Games. The commentary was playing on a series of buses I took on my way home from downtown Lima, and the passengers were living the drama of every point, bound up in the efforts of these women to bring glory to the nation. After five closely-fought sets, the Soviet team prevailed, but above and beyond the silver medal the Peruvian team won (the country's only medal of the 1988 Games), the women who played had achieved the rare feat of becoming female representatives of the nation on an international stage. Volleyball has continued to be an arena in which Peruvian women gain a national profile, but since the turn of the new millennium other female athletes have come to prominence in the country, especially through surfing and, most recently, boxing. Sofia Mulánovich became a household name in Peru after being crowned women's surfing world champion in 2004, and when I found myself confronted with images of her on roadside advertising hoardings, in shopping malls and local newspapers, shortly afterwards it struck me that something had changed in the representation and public presence of women in the country. The success of sportswomen seemed to be playing a key role in this process and I began to study the presence of women in Peruvian sports as part of a broader project to explore shifts in the country's cultural identity.

Archival research in Lima has revealed that the practice of sports by Peruvian women can be traced back to the late nineteenth century, when gymnastics and callisthenic exercises were part of the curriculum in schools for

girls such as the *colegio Rodó* and the *liceo Fanning*. The founder of the latter, Teresa González de Fanning, published in 1898 a series of articles entitled *Educación femenina*, in which she advocated physical education for girls as an important means of engaging with the latest scientific trends and of preparing them for the rigors of life. In line with the Lamarckian thinking that was prevalent at the time—which claimed that acquired characteristics could be passed to one's children—physical education was also seen as a way of improving the national character, and González de Fanning embraced this as another reason for the participation of girls in physical exercise. Her contribution to national efforts to address what was seen as the national ailment of *molicie* (softness) and forge *hombres de acción* (men of action) has to be understood in the context of Peru's catastrophic loss to Chile in the War of the Pacific (1879-83), in which González de Fanning lost her husband during the battle of Miraflores (1881). In her excellent 2001 study *Diversiones públicas en Lima 1890-1920 (Public Entertainments in Lima 1890-1920)* Fanni Muñoz Cabrejo devotes some consideration to the presence of women in sport during this period, finding that it was largely restricted to women of the socio-economic elite, and to women from the expatriate communities, who typically enjoyed golf, tennis and horse racing.

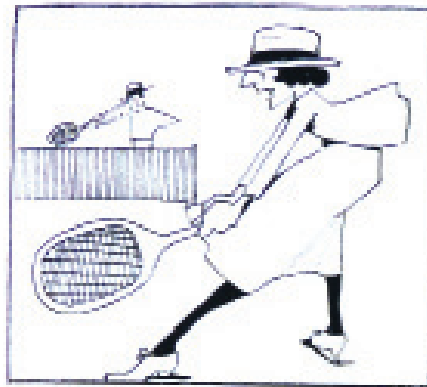
The first decades of the twentieth century were crucial in the development of sports in Peru and saw the beginnings of mass participation, notably in soccer, in which the early presence of women's teams was short-lived. Articles in the Peruvian press began to discuss the importance of physical exercise for women from the turn of the century, albeit with certain limitations: the transcript of a

lecture given in San Marcos University, published over two numbers of *El Sport* in September-October 1899, advocates regular exercise for women, but recommends that tennis, cycling, rowing, moderate walking and gymnastic exercises are “most suited to women’s structure and character.” Needless to say, all of these sporting practices—with the exception of walking—require equipment and a locale that were beyond the reach of the great majority of women. In addition to these practical obstacles to widespread presence of women in sports, there were also a series of objections from traditionalists, who saw in the practice of sport risks to women’s reproductive function and the danger of their becoming masculinized. The strength of feeling was such that some parents withdrew their daughters from schools that introduced physical education to the curriculum around the turn of the century, and the cartoon reproduced here, from 1920, suggests that public attitudes to women in sports had not changed significantly over the following two decades.

By juxtaposing the “natural sport” of motherhood with a series of sporting practices that are portrayed as unnatural, explicitly in visual form and implicitly by textual contrast with the final caption, traditional notions of a woman’s physicality were forcefully expressed. The view among influential sectors of society that sports were not the way to achieve physical health for women is reinforced by a series of advertisements in the same issue of *Variedades* that offer a variety of medical treatments to improve women’s wellbeing. Indeed, the page facing the cartoon offers an exaggeratedly outmoded vision of elegant domesticity, recommending aspirin and caffeine tablets as the remedy to combat constitutional frailty: “The woman’s nervous system is so sensitive and her organism so delicate that daily domestic chores and social commitments cause her constant health problems.” Other advertisements in the same number offer means of improving women’s appearance or attractiveness to men, such as the antiperspirant

LA SEMANA COMICA

Deportes femeninos.



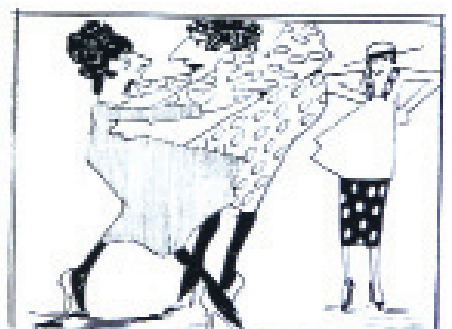
TENNIS



NATACION



EQUITACION



BOX



EL REBO



Y EL SPORT NATURAL

‘Feminine Sports,’ *Variedades* (a weekly illustrated magazine), 27 March 1920.

Odo-ro-no, marketed under the headline that “You will not be charming until you are free from perspiring armpits.” Women were to be admired for their beauty, helped to overcome their weakness, and mocked when they sought to express

their physicality through means other than motherhood.

The 1920s in particular saw the expansion of sport in Peru beyond the socio-economic elite: soccer became hugely popular among men of all classes,

and by the early 1930s Alianza Lima, a team built around black players from the working-class neighborhood of La Victoria, had established itself as the best in the country. For women, volleyball emerged as a widely practiced sport in the 1920s. In contrast to the mocking representation of sporting women in the edition of 1920 discussed above, *Variedades* in September 1928 carried a page of photographs that describe the sporting action in terms comparable to those used for football matches on preceding pages in the same edition.

The establishment of volleyball as *the* sport of Peru's women is a curious phenomenon, dating back to soon after a 1910 YMCA delegation introduced the sport to the country. According to a series of special supplements published in *El Comercio* between July and September 1986 (entitled *The Wonderful World of Volleyball*), volleyball was soon played in private girls' schools—a welcome addition to the gymnastic exercise routines that formed the basis of physical education. In a process that parallels what happened in soccer, volleyball was quickly appropriated by female domestic servants who would play the game in Lima's parks and open spaces by the 1930s, leading to the sport being commonly known at that time as “the sport of cooks.” Following the creation of a league in 1933 and a national federation in 1942, Peruvian women's volleyball claimed its first major international success in 1964, when the national team won the South American championships, going on to defend its title in 1967. Since then, Peru's women have been at the forefront of international volleyball, and the introduction to the *El Comercio* supplements (which ran alongside a similar series produced for the 1986 Soccer World Cup) acknowledges that women's volleyball “has written into the annals of national sport the greatest number of victories and honors” (July 1986, p.4). While this success has no doubt helped to break down traditional perceptions of women, especially those from less privileged backgrounds, the acceptance and celebration of vol-

leyball as the sport for Peruvian women *par excellence* simultaneously betrays enduring conservatism: volleyball's initial acceptance can be explained in good measure because it conformed to the perceptions of early twentieth-century society as to what constituted appropriate types of physical exercise for women. Muñoz Cabrejo sums this up as forms of exercise that “developed flexibility and agility” (p.208), both characteristic features of volleyball; moreover, the lack of men's volleyball teams means that the women's success was not seen in terms of a direct comparison—or threat—to an otherwise male-dominated sporting environment.

Volleyball is far from the only sport in which Peruvian women have excelled. Peru's 1,500 miles of Pacific coastline make it an ideal surfing location, and the

Hall of Fame, the same year seeing her finish as runner up in the world championships. Her consistent success and recognition beyond Peru (most recently, she won gold in the International Surfing Association World Surfing Games held in China in January 2012) feeds back directly into national pride at her achievements in a country that continues to occupy a complicated position in relation to the modern and the traditional, the local and the global. Mulánovich, known simply as *la gringa*, finds herself at the point of convergence of various strands in this ongoing process of cultural realignment: as a blonde woman from a surfing family of Croatian descent she embodies traditional notions of femininity while simultaneously challenging long-held assumptions regarding the position and visibility of women in society. Alongside Mulánov-

Volleyball's initial acceptance can be explained in good measure because it conformed to the perceptions of early twentieth-century society as to what constituted appropriate types of physical exercise for women.

sport has proved increasingly popular since its introduction in the early 1940s, initially among the white elites of coastal cities, but more recently among other sectors of society, particularly the middle classes and women. Although Peru has had previous world champions from the ranks of its male surfers, Sofía Mulánovich's overall triumph on the Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP) world tour series in 2004 brought her a public and media profile in Peru that were unprecedented for a sportswoman. Electronic media in particular (Mulánovich has her own website) have ensured that this profile has been international as well as national: from 2005–08 she was voted the most popular female surfer in the annual poll conducted by *Surfer Magazine*, and in 2007 she became the first South American to be inducted into the Surfers'

ich in the Peruvian team that won the ISA World Surfing Games in October 2010 was Analí Gómez, and the two women featured prominently with their male teammates in a rare display of Peruvian team supremacy beyond women's volleyball. Gómez, known simply as *la negra*, is a multiple South American champion, and was runner-up in the World Junior Championships in 2007. Her position as a mixed-race woman surfer from humble socio-economic origins provides a more significant challenge to the established norms of Peruvian identity than Mulánovich. It is difficult to gauge whether her lesser public profile in the country can be explained in purely sporting terms—her achievements are outstanding, but not quite at the level of Mulánovich's—or by factors that owe more to social and cultural issues.



Photos (top): Girls playing volleyball on Taquile island, Lake Titicaca; (bottom left): Women's volleyball championship held in the National Stadium, Lima; (bottom right): Sofía Mulánovich, front cover of sport supplement of El Comercio from December 24, 2007 celebrating "The best of the best" from the previous year.

Mulánovich was beaten to the title of Peruvian women's champion in 1996 by Kina Malpartida, her main rival as a teenager, who shares her surfing family history and upper middle class (partly) European descent: Malpartida's father was a Peruvian surfing champion and her mother an English supermodel. While studying at college in Australia, Malpartida took up boxing, which she pursued by moving to Los Angeles in 2006. In 2009, she became world champion in the women's WBA super-featherweight category. Surfing's emphasis on aesthetics and on flow may share some of the "feminine" characteristics identified in sports appropriate for women in the early 20th century, such as flexibility and agility, helping to explain why this—alongside volleyball—has become a sport in which women's success enjoys such public recognition, but Malpartida's move into boxing placed her squarely outside the parameters of Peru's normative femininity. Nonetheless, it has brought her a public profile that places her on a par with Mulánovich: she was voted Peru's most popular athlete (male or female) in a 2009 poll conducted by Ipsos Apoyo, and the same year saw her receive a global leadership award from the Latin Business Association, in recognition of her position as a role model for women and children.

During campaigning for the presidential elections in April 2011, Malpartida joined Keiko Fujimori for a photoshoot in a gym, where she gave the presidential hopeful a pair of pink boxing gloves, a fitting symbol perhaps of the shifts in the balance of power and modes of public presence for Peruvian women to which sports have made a significant contribution. Malpartida was clearly acting in a supporting role here to the aspirations of another woman, but the role of sport in the acquisition of political agency has gone beyond gender politics and cultural politics to be assumed more directly by other sportswomen. Cecilia Tait, captain of the volleyball team that won the silver medal at the 1988 Olympic Games, is widely recognized as one of Peru's out-

standing athletes: she was named the world's best player after the 1988 Olympic Games, received the Pierre de Coubertin medal and the Women in Sport trophy from the IOC in 2003. She was the first South American to be inducted (in 2005) into the Volleyball Hall of Fame. In the national elections of 2000, Tait's profile as an outstanding sportswoman, alongside experience gained as a councillor in one of Lima's poorer districts, served as the basis for her election to Peru's Congress, becoming the first Afro-Peruvian to serve as an elected representative at this level. Her popularity as a *congresista* was confirmed in the 2011 elections, when she headed the list of candidates for Alejandro Toledo's Perú Posible party and was re-elected to Con-

which—despite securing a commendable third place in the 2011 Copa América—is renowned in recent times for a series of power struggles, pre-match parties and player peccadilloes. Sports have provided a space within which women have been able to demonstrate their abilities and prove their international excellence, all of which has seen them increasingly recognized as a significant factor in the construction of a sense of modern nationhood. The achievements of female volleyball players, surfers and boxers have played an important part in breaking down barriers that are not just about gender, but also ethnicity, evident in the appointment in July 2011 of Susana Baca as Minister of Culture in the government of President Humala, thus making

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gress with the ninth-highest vote count among the 468 candidates to stand in the capital. Also elected to Peru's Congress in 2011 were Gaby Pérez del Solar and Cenaida Uribe, both part of the team at the 1988 Olympic Games (Pérez del Solar had previously served during the 2006-11 Congressional term), as well as Leyla Chihuán, captain of the national women's volleyball team from 2006-10.

Women are no longer cooks who play volleyball in their spare time, but can be internationally successful athletes whose discipline, endeavour and commitment enable them to be recognized as valued members of the national community and to go on to gain public office. These attributes compare favorably with the headlines around Peruvian soccer,

her the country's first black government minister. Baca's long career as a singer reminds us that sport is not the only sphere in which women have achieved public recognition, and that it is one—significant—aspect of broader social, cultural and political change in the country, change that it still being played out in the sporting arena and beyond.

David Wood is Professor of Latin American Studies at the University of Sheffield, England, where his work centers on various forms of cultural production, particularly literary texts, cinema, and sports in Peru, Cuba and Mexico. A keen birder, his time in Latin America has also helped him achieve two childhood ambitions: to see a Bee Hummingbird and an Andean Condor.



SOCIAL CHANGE AND RIGHTS

Sports—long considered a catalyst for social change—also should be conceived of as a right like health or education.

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Sports and Recreation

Just a Tool or a Social Right? **BY MARIO ROITTER**

SPORTS AS A SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PHENOMENON have notably grown worldwide. Latin America is no exception to this expansion. This is in part because of the large industry built around sports through mass media, apparel manufacturing and the organization of major sports events. As a result of this growth, world-class athletes have become very popular figures, appealing especially to children and youth, who try to emulate their heroes' feats in their own games.

Because sports and recreation have a strong educational impact on children and adolescents, we do not consider these activities as a means to an end, but rather as citizens' rights. This is especial-

ly true for youths from low-income communities who engage in sports activities; they should be entitled to fun and play as a social right.

Sports have developed principally as a popular expression. In some cases, they are linked to classic civil society institutions such as the characteristic neighborhood club ("club de barrio") typical of Argentina, Uruguay and to a lesser extent Chile and Peru. In other cases, non-governmental organizations provide sports activities with a focus on children and youth. And finally, either independently or institutionally, initiatives taken or financed by public organizations massively spread the practice of sports.

Furthermore, in a more informal manner, public places such as squares, village commons, parks, vacant lots, beaches or streets turn into arenas for all sorts of games, especially soccer—activities that spontaneously engage every social class, again involving mainly children and youth.

To summarize, the social actors that promote sports practice in communities with a high poverty rate make up a very complex and diverse group. They include, among others, well-known sport players (active or retired) and community leaders, international organizations as well as non-government organizations, business enterprises and state institutions. In all



these cases the word “sports” is usually accompanied by the word “social,” but the meaning and action embodied in this concept may differ widely.

I would like to challenge the widespread assumption that sports and recreation for poor people must provide a moral lesson, or an added value, whereas sports recreation for middle-class youth carries no further objective aside from fun and practice.

Popular beliefs and mass media images convey the remarkable convening power of sports and the values usually attributed to it, converting sports in general and the so-called “social sports” into one of the many remedies for a variety of ailments of modern societies: sedentary lifestyle, lack of alternate spheres for socialization, school dropout levels, and youths in “situations of social risk.” This last euphemism is one of the many coined to allude, in a politically correct manner, to the youth population that

lives in poverty, consumes illegal drugs, has conflicts with the law or suffers a high level of teenage pregnancy.

From this socially consecrated standpoint springs the idea, which is repeated mantra-like in most fields, that sport is always praised as a good way of conveying “values,” a term seldom defined, as if the challenges that young people face could be reduced to a question of mere lack of “values.” In other social spheres sports are praised because they exalt the notion of effort, competitiveness, self-improvement and team work—traits usually evoked by the business sector as basic conditions to access to the labor market. But it seems that these virtues, which compose one of the corner stones of middle class “common sense,” are not guaranteed to emerge as a consequence of the mere practice of sports.

Sports activities do not operate in a void but rather in highly complex social contexts with the exasperating social

inequalities that are embedded in Latin America and in societies where the desired lifestyle is plagued with a strong individualism, esteem for competition against another person, fear of other people and also, even though “well intentioned discourse” claims otherwise, discrimination against people who are perceived as different.

Nevertheless, several countries in Latin America provide examples of how sports and recreation may help in the development of a whole community, strengthening its abilities to organize itself in a way that influences relevant public issues such as transportation, sanitation, education and health.

This relative optimism about the usefulness of sports arises from the analysis of a quite long initiative in sports and

Photos (left): Children explore a playground that they helped design themselves in Argentina; (right) street space provides a venue for informal recreational activity.

recreation, developed in the Civil Society, Culture and Development Department of CEDES, for the promotion of social participation and local development of youth, supported by the WK Kellogg Foundation in some Latin American countries between 2002 and 2010.

These programs were envisaged from a mainly educative perspective that prioritized the development of recreational, physical and sporting activities in a framework of integral formative proposals. These efforts tried to move away from focusing on the organization of tournaments, on the recruiting of young talents for professionalized sport practices, and on the promotion of one specific sport.

If we are in agreement that sports are a citizens' right, and that such right is very often denied even by socio-community projects, either because access to recreation is not a priority and/or because it is linked in an exclusive way with success-oriented, superficial, commodified messages and practices, we should also concur that sports do not need to be justified on the grounds that, for example, they help reduce the use of drugs and alcohol. We should emphasize, above all, the opportunities that sports provide for building relationships with others and for taking care of themselves and the place where they live.

These experiences on the playing fields are privileged opportunities to teach and learn about solidarity and to put in practice collective accomplishments that are also important in terms of critical thinking, mobilization and social involvement. That is to say, sports may have the power to transform when, as with the arts, they involve relevant experiences both at individual and group levels, resulting from high-quality programs and well-thought-out points of view.

The efforts of CEDES take account of the transmission and revaluation of ideas, practices and traditional games particular to each different local culture, so our actions have been geared to recover public spaces in specific localities and to offer hundreds of youths the opportunity to gain access to recreation, leisure,

enjoyment and personal and collective strengthening.

At the same time, to bring our programs to fruition requires a collective effort on all fronts in the areas where a project is to be launched.

That is why our intervention has emphasized new ways of observation and new social practices that confront stereotypes and preconceived ideas that are embedded in the world of sports. As long as these preconceptions are not challenged, they weaken the rights of individuals or groups—particularly of women, disabled youths, poor people and immigrants, among others.

Our approach acknowledges contributions from non-formal education and from recreation as a field of pedagogical

ed to widen and diversify the available choices of non-formal education as well as recreation and sports. In addition, we seek the expansion and consolidation of networking at the local and regional levels, starting or deepening relationships with institutions or organizations with related objectives (for example, art and culture) both in governmental and non-governmental areas.

The work and the initiatives that CEDES endorses are focused outside the context of the educational system. Nevertheless, the principles, the strategies themselves and the scope of our proposals are relevant and provide a meaningful contribution to reevaluate and participate in the sphere of formal education.

The experiences that we have gathered

We aim to create or strengthen groups that could collectively participate through their commitment and interest in social transforming processes.

work. It differs from standard approaches that usually focus on the provision of some material resources and/or big tournaments that are often designed to foster the prestige of mayors and other authorities. That is to say, we favor arrangements with community organizations, other civil society organizations and, sometimes, local authorities and schools.

The concepts, skills training and technical assistance for civil society organizations in Latin America that we have promoted try to capacitate key actors in the organization and development of local sporting and recreational activities. We aim to create or strengthen groups that could collectively participate through their commitment and interest in social transforming processes.

The objectives of our intervention focus on strengthening of groups of young people active in their communities, offering them alternatives and broadening the field of participation in their own community context. We have also attempt-

as a result of our programs allow us to ascertain that an integral vision of sports, i.e. as embedded in a wider social context, is a powerful tool to encourage juvenile leadership, to promote cooperation and solidarity, to boost integration and permanence of children and youths in formal educational programs (achieved through cooperation between schools and grass roots organizations), to discuss the sources of violence, intolerance, marginalization and discrimination, to foster horizontal and democratic relations and the interaction and integration of gender issues, to stimulate healthy lifestyles—in short, to contribute to the effective exercise of citizens' rights and to trigger the social transformations that are much needed in Latin America.

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Fútbol con Corazón

Changing the World, One Goal at a Time **BY SAMUEL AZOUT**

Fútbol con Corazón, a Colombian initiative, is a social change model that uses soccer's calling power to transmit basic human values and life skills.

PICTURE A SOCCER FIELD WHERE THE RULES OF the game are re-written; where boys and girls play *together* and re-invent themselves as agents of change. Where matches are won not by the team scoring the most goals, but by the squad that best adheres to fair play agreements. This is Fútbol con Corazón.

When children join Fútbol con Corazón in their neighborhood, they know they won't be playing "soccer as usual." The "soccer for peace" methodology calls for mixed girl-boy teams in various age categories, a practice that is unthinkable in the social context in which the children are growing up. Before the match begins, the children themselves negotiate the behaviors to be displayed on the field, and after the game, each team evaluates peer and self-compliance with these agreements. The girls play a vital role, as they *must be the ones* to score the first goal in the match. No girls, no match.

Fútbol con Corazón began in 2008 in Barranquilla's most vulnerable neighborhoods, where excessive free time—a result of half-day school schedules—threatens the very fabric of society. Children and youth are prey to recruitment by gangs and irregular armed groups, and into drug traffic and consumption, prostitution and petty crime. The young also must play multiple social roles, including parenting, housekeeping, and other unofficial forms of labor. Fútbol con Corazón is a safe extra-curricular space for more than 2,000 girls, boys and youth in Colombia, where they receive extra nutrition, practice soccer skills, and



participate in workshops targeting the development of core life skills in four areas: critical thinking and cognitive skills; coping and self-control; social and moral skills; and communication skills. These life skills are believed to help promote well-being, positive health outcomes, and productive development (Jacobs Foundation, 2011).

The program staff includes physical education and soccer specialists who adapt all training to the program's core values and methodology. In addition, a group of psychologists uses an experience-based curriculum to reinforce the themes and topics in workshops. Notably, these staff members are not coaches—they are *asesores* and *asesoras* ("advisors"); that is, facilitators of learning rather than coaches or teachers. They

are consistent role models who develop strong bonds with program beneficiaries and their families.

Our developmentally appropriate model also incorporates workshops on sexual and reproductive health, HIV prevention education, non-violent conflict resolution, substance-free living, and planning for the future. These thematic units aim at defeating myths and gender biases, and empowering participants to make healthy decisions about their own lives. Fútbol con Corazón has worked closely with organizations such as the Jacobs Foundation, Compartamos con Colombia, Beyond Sport, Soccer for Peace Foundation, MEXFAM, International Planned Parenthood Federation, *Fe y*

A child in the Fútbol con Corazón program



Alegría, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, the Colombian government, and others to continually monitor and strengthen our programs and

from corporate sponsors, grants from international development organizations, and individual donations. The group's work has been recognized by Beyond

Teammates—boys and girls—are active participants in Fútbol con Corazón.

The group's work has been recognized by Beyond Sport as the "best organization in sport for social inclusion."

our team's skills. Fútbol con Corazón is often a springboard for employment and higher education, as our "graduates" have attained unique skills and habits that make them attractive to these sectors.

Today, Fútbol con Corazón has operated in nine different locations in the Caribbean region, as well as in pilot programs in conjunction with Colombia's *Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar* (Department of Family Welfare) in Bogotá. Funding comes primarily

Sport as the "best organization in sport for social inclusion" (2010) and received the International Prize for Solidarity in Sport by Asociación Deporte, Cultura y Desarrollo, Madrid, 2010. This prize included an all-expenses-paid trip to Spain for seven girls and seven boys from our beneficiary pool.

Currently Fútbol con Corazón leads the Colombian National Network for Soccer and Peace, composed of 12 organizations nationwide committed to social

change through soccer, and supported by organizations such as the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF and the German Development Agency GIZ. More than ever, today's social, public and government sectors have recognized the need to work in tandem to address some of the social ills of our great nation: intractable inequalities, internal strife, and the breakdown of family structures. Fútbol con Corazón can and does "play" a role: our young people come to us to exercise their right to play in peace, learn with peace, and work for peace.

Samuel R. Azout is a Colombian economist and entrepreneur dedicated to non-profit work in poverty alleviation and social inclusion. He is a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School (MPA 2007).

Sports Diplomacy

A Dominican Adventure **BY BOB MORRIS**

I TRIED NOT TO HAVE MY PERSONAL INTERESTS in sports and languages collide, but some things just can't be avoided.

In the mid-1970s, after graduating with a business degree, I decided to apply to the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps tries to do its best to match the skills of potential volunteers with program needs. As I had played two sports in college and had coached youth programs, the Peace Corps recruiter suggested I might be a good fit for a sports administration program in Africa.

"No thanks," I said. "I would much prefer to put my business degree, not my sports acumen, to good use, and I would really like to become fluent in a language that I could use in the future, preferably Spanish."

"Well, we have a program in the management of savings & loan cooperatives in the Dominican Republic," said the recruiter.

"Sounds great to me," I replied.

Today, the Peace Corps requires that volunteers have a certain level of fluency in the relevant language *before* they begin their service. In the 1970s, volunteers like me with no language experience studied in an intensive language immersion program six to eight hours a day for three months. If you did not meet a certain level of Spanish proficiency after the three months, you were not permitted to start your volunteer service and were sent home. I trained in the capital of the Dominican Republic, Santo Domingo. One weekend, early in the training period, we took trips to our respective sites to familiarize ourselves with what would eventually become our home for the next two years. My site was a town of 3,000 in the northwestern part of the country. No one in the town spoke English.

Looking back, it is amusing how shaky my Spanish was. The deepest conver-

sations I could have with my host family that weekend ran from "How many children do you have?" to "Your house is nice." That was pretty much the full extent of my fluency.

On Sunday, when it came time to make the five and a half hour return trip to Santo Domingo, I took a *carro público*—a freelance taxi driven by a man whose main goal seemed to be to squeeze as many passengers as he could into his ancient car. He drove a rusty Datsun whose shock absorbers were but a distant memory.

I gave the driver a slip of paper with the Peace Corps office address in Santo Domingo, and we were off—that is me, three *campesinos*, a baby goat and a couple of chickens—all stuffed in a car seemingly held together by rubber bands and chewing gum.

Despite my near complete lack of Spanish, my fellow travelers insisted on conversing with me. I did what I've seen others do in a situation like that: when they asked me a question, I would smile, nod my head and say "Sí."

During this conversation, which seemed endless, the single word I could discern with my "considerable" fluency was *volibol* (volleyball), since it sounds similar in Spanish and English. I just kept smiling and nodding.

The car finally arrived in Santo Domingo and, to my surprise, made its way to the sports arena erected for the Central American and Caribbean Games, a sort of regional Olympics. It pulled up to the volleyball venue and my companions (except the chickens) looked at me expectantly.

Suddenly, the conversation that had taken place on the ride took a new shape in my mind:

"Hey, you're tall. Are you a volleyball player?"



Bob Morris as Peace Corps volunteer.

"Yes, yes."

"Are you playing in that big tournament?"

"Yes, yes."

"It is going on right now, correct?"

"Yes, yes."

"Do you want to go directly to the stadium?"

"Yes, yes."

What could I do? I was not exactly in a position to explain where I really wanted to go and that I was not an international athlete. I did the only thing I could. I shook their hands, said *adios* and walked down the pathway to the stadium. My new friends were waving furiously from the car. I could only assume they were wishing me good luck.

Once the car was safely away, I came out of the stadium and made my way to the Peace Corps office, a two-mile walk.

On that long walk I continued that imaginary conversation, which veered to more dire scenarios:

"Hey, can you get us all free tickets for tonight's match and leave them at the ticket window?"

"Yes, yes..."

Bob Morris is the President of Foresight Strategy, a corporate social responsibility consultancy. He received a Master's in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School in 1983.

Beyond Soccer

Building Community **BY RYAN GUILMARTIN**

"IT'S LIKE BEING PART OF A REAL FAMILY. I don't want to get into what I was like before I got on the team because I'm not proud of it. Lots of gang stuff. I don't know why I was into that, but I didn't have a lot when I got to the U.S. I guess I needed to belong, and people from my country were in a gang so I joined to feel like home for me. But I'm proud of myself now, ever since I started playing. I got out of the gang and got on the soccer team." It is not entirely unusual for us to hear similar stories from boys around Somerville High School.

The Somerville High School boys' soccer team has become used to success. We consistently make deep runs into the state tournament. We are always at or near the top of the Greater Boston League. We are used to having college and club coaches come to our games to watch our student-athletes. The things that make us proudest, however, are our accomplishments off of the field. The team's motto is "gentlemen first, scholars second, athletes third." As a coaching staff, we do our best to instill these values into our players. What head coach George Scarpelli and the coaching staff try to create is a family atmosphere. It's important to give the kids a safe place where they feel like they belong. Most of them come from families that have been broken up by immigration or have parents that work long hours, and they need the feeling of a family. In fact, "family" is the word that comes up most when talking to members of the team.

The growth of soccer in Somerville mirrors the changes that have taken place in the city. What used to be considered a predominantly white, working class Massachusetts city has become home to many immigrants, especially from Brazil, Haiti and El Salvador, where

soccer is popular. Many of the athletes on the soccer team are immigrants trying to adjust to life in the United States. We try to provide them with the things that they need, whether it is support, help finding a job, or in some cases a place to live. Many of them have gone through difficult times, and most still do not have an easy life now. They talk about their lives once in a while, and they have the most powerful stories about life in the home countries, and of their journeys here.

While winning soccer games is great, it is not our most important job. We

"I don't know what I'd do without the team. It's a part of me. I get better grades now. I go to bed on time. I come to school. The coaches and players showed me how to do things the right way. It could be different for me, but I made the right choices. It's all because of the team."

want to give our student-athletes a foundation that will enable them to do great things later in life. Our work does not end when the state tournament is over. We meet nearly every week to discuss volunteer options, jobs, and, most importantly for our seniors, college applications. Our main goal is to ensure that the best years in the lives of our boys are not the high school years; that they are in a position for better things to come. When Scarpelli learned that one of his student-athletes had won an award from his teachers for overall improvement in class, he said "That's better than winning a state tournament."

Each and every coach, and there are many of them, has an important additional role to play in the program. Some help with jobs, others with community outreach. My main job on the team is to keep track of grades and discipline within the school. The real secret to the success of the team is the boys themselves. They provide each other with support, guidance, and, most importantly, friendship and family feeling. The results of our efforts show up in many ways: by the growing number of the boys who attend college, by the attendance of former players at games, by the e-mails and phone

calls from coaches and parents from opposing teams.

One player told me, "I don't know what I'd do without the team. It's a part of me. I get better grades now. I go to bed on time. I come to school. The coaches and players showed me how to do things the right way. It could be different for me, but I made the right choices. It's all because of the team." Another student-athlete put it much more succinctly: "We're a family on the field."

***Ryan Guilmartin** is a Somerville High School history teacher and soccer coach.*



PREPARING FOR RIO

Rio de Janeiro will host the Olympics and the World Cup. Preparations are underway and challenges lie ahead.

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Hosting the Olympics and the World Cup

What Price Prestige? **BY STANLEY ENGERMAN**

TWO MAJOR INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS

attract wide audiences in many countries—three if we treat separately, as do the Olympic Committee (IOC) and television networks since 1994, the Winter Olympics and the Summer Olympics. Then there's the World Cup of soccer, or as called outside of the United States, football. These events have certain things in common. They occur every four years; they have huge television and international audiences; the location of the event is different each time; there is some discussion of bribery in choosing the location (generally because such bribery exists); and much controversy about the outcome of particular sporting events is certain to occur. Each event is the property of a private organization, which is responsible for choosing the location, overseeing the nature of local arrangements and the rules regarding participants and selling the international television contracts. This private organization also does everything it can to protect the monopoly of the event's logo, apparel and related goods.

In 2014, the World Cup will be held in Brazil, and then in 2016, Rio de Janeiro will host the Summer Olympics. Many in Brazil are anticipating profits and transformations of the country's infrastructure. Yet, are those expectations realistic?

One thing is certain: every time, the competition to become the location of these events has recently become rather fierce, with a number of cities or countries competing heavily for the rights to host the event, cities for the Olympics, countries for the World Cup. The nature of the bidding is the first step in what often becomes a financial disaster. It is required that the hosts provide an extended infrastructure for the games, including facilities for the actual events as well as housing for Olympic participants.

The hope, seldom if ever realized, is that the stadia and arenas for sporting events will serve a useful purpose in future years for the city's population, while the Olympic Village will be sold to provide housing for residents. There are often other problems that serve to limit gains (or, more likely, to increase losses). The principal argument for benefit is the hoped-for expectation of attracting customers from outside the city, who would provide revenues for hotels, restaurants and ticket sales. These expectations, however, are not often met, and revenue generally falls short of the amount projected at the time of competing for the event. Also, rather traditionally, the several years that lag between the competition for hosting the events and the actual event see an increase in the costs above projections, costs which must be met by the hosts in fulfillment of their obligations.

It is the general shortfall of revenues and the over-run of costs that account for the major financial problems confronted by the host. But, also important, is the nature of the commitments made to obtain the events, and the failure of the post-event expectations about the use of constructed facilities to be realized, meaning that much of the construction is usually never utilized to the anticipated extent.

With only several exceptions, the Olympics and World Cup had meant severe financial losses for the hosts. Yet, given this knowledge, the competitions to hold these events are highly sought after, whether due to excessive optimism or the belief that international prestige is worth the cost. To which the basic question would be—what price prestige, or international stature? Only the 1984 summer Olympics in Los Angeles showed a profit. All other sum-

mer and winter Olympics experienced losses—despite the frequently lucrative television contracts which have apparently become the primary financial supporter of the Olympics. Although there had been knowledge of corruption and also some complaints of the manner in which the IOC operated, no real important attacks occurred that threatened to change the nature of the selection procedure.

The first modern summer Olympics took place in Athens in 1896, with 14 nations participating. They have since taken place every four years, except during World Wars I and II, the most recent being the Beijing Olympics in 2008, with more than 200 nations participating. The winter Olympics began in 1924 and, except during World War II, took place every four years (until 1992) in the same year as the summer Olympics. Then, due to the benefits to the IOC of splitting the two Olympics, and thus gaining from favorable television contracts, the next winter Olympics was held in 1994, and it has since taken place every four years. The World Cup, now presided over by the soccer organization, FIFA, held its first event in 1930, and then it has taken place every four years except for the WW II years. The summer Olympics had, after 1900, included a soccer competition, and this has continued except for 1932, but this event has lost its prestige value relative to the World Cup.

Little is known about the financial aspects of the early Olympics, although it is believed that the 1984 Los Angeles summer Olympics was the first (and probably the last) of the games to show a positive profit. There have been a number of financial horror stories, of the host city losing large sums of money, with costs exceeding expectations while revenue fell below what had been expected.

The Montreal summer Olympics cost \$1.2 billion, leaving a debt of \$750 million that was not fully paid off until about two years ago. The 1992 Barcelona Olympics cost about \$10.7 billion and left a debt for the government of \$6.1 billion. The 2004 Athens Olympics cost about \$9 to 10 billion, a figure equal to about 5 percent of Greece's GNP, leaving a net debt of about \$11.5 billion. Costs were only part of the problems faced by Athens, as the demand was unexpectedly small. Only an estimated two-thirds of the tickets were sold, and the number of visitors to Greece fell by about 12 percent from the previous year.

The 2008 Beijing Olympics cost about \$43 billion. In the cases of Athens and Beijing, much of the financial difficulty was due to the requirements for building infrastructure for the games, which generally meant new stadiums and arenas for their events. In Athens, 21 of the 22 built stadiums have been left underutilized, and these often have some continued costs of maintenance. A similar outcome occurred in China, where, despite the \$43 billion cost, many of the new facilities have no use. No permanent use was found for the very expensive (\$500 million) new stadium. It now appears that it will be made into a shopping mall while other smaller stadiums are to be demolished. The Olympic Park built for Sydney, for the 2000 games, has not been utilized. And after the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, new stadiums remained empty, the residue of a cost of \$5.4 billion. The winter Olympics of 2010 in Vancouver has similarly led to financial difficulties. The early expectation that the Olympic Village would cover its costs by being sold for housing has not been fulfilled: fewer than half of the apartments have been sold, the shortfall contributing to the overall debt from the games of \$743 million. This was, however, considerably less than the loss in the 1998 winter Olympics in Japan, where a cost of \$13-14 billion ended with a debt of \$11 billion.

Important in creating loss for the host city of Olympics and the World

Cup are the regional requirements for infrastructure. As part of the bill for the 2002 World Cup, Japan was required to build seven new stadiums and refurbish three more, at a cost of \$4.5 billion, while South Korea built ten new stadiums at a cost of \$2 billion. These are now generally referred to as "white elephants." The largest of the Japanese stadiums, 64,000 seats, cost \$667 million to build. After the World Cup the city paid \$6 million per year to maintain a facility for a local team that barely drew 20,000 fans.

The Montreal Olympic Stadium was initially budgeted at \$150 million, but when it was completed it cost \$1.47 billion including repairs, charges, and interest. This made a substantial contri-

frastructure. London put in a bid for the 2012 summer Olympics at the time at an estimated cost of \$2.4 billion. Last heard, the estimated cost was about \$9 billion, most to be provided by a public subsidy. It is probable that the subsidy will be in the 80-90 percent range of some early Olympics—90 percent (Montreal 1976) and 82 percent (Munich 1972).

By now the main source of revenues for the Olympics has been the sale of TV broadcasting rights, mainly via sales to the U.S. networks. These rights belong to the IOC, and the organization controls the distribution to local committees, a share that was about 30 percent in 2000. After several decades of rapid rise in fees paid, this increase has recently been slowed. In the post-1980 period, the demands of

Brazil's 12 host cities have been slow in completing the twelve stadiums and thirteen airports, (plus 50 transportation projects) it promised FIFA, and there is presently talk of a lawsuit by FIFA to encourage Brazil to complete these pieces of infrastructure. At present the estimated cost is about \$11.2 billion.

bution to Montreal's debt of \$1 billion. The home of the money-losing Montreal Expos of the National League until they left for Washington in 2004, the stadium now has limited uses for sporting and other events. It has no main tenant and is now called "The Big One," a reference to its financial position.

The expectations of continued deficit expenditures are seen for both the 2012 Olympics to be held in London, and the 2014 World Cup to be held in Brazil. Brazil's 12 host cities have been slow in completing the twelve stadiums and thirteen airports (plus 50 transportation projects) it promised FIFA, and there is presently talk of a lawsuit by FIFA to encourage Brazil to complete these pieces of infrastructure. At present the estimated cost is about \$11.2 billion, most for in-

television led to a fundamental change in the rules of eligibility, permitting professionals as well as amateurs to participate, and allowing participants to receive cash rewards for performances. The most dramatic shift to professionalism in the Olympics came when the 1992 U.S. basketball team shifted from completely college and amateur players to National Basketball Association All-Stars, the so-called Dream Team. This shift was made for two reasons—one, to make things more appealing to television, but also as a response to failure to win in earlier years, and as a nationalistic desire to reassert U.S. supremacy in this sport.

What may seem puzzling, given the near certainty of a loss of substantial magnitude, is the increased desire of

more cities to obtain rights to hold these events. In 1984 only one city, Los Angeles, was bidding for the Olympics, successfully. By 2012 it was up to nine cities, and for 2016 it was 12.

In the United States, cities frequently provide some subsidies to their professional sports franchises through the building of stadiums and arenas. It is well established that these cities do not cover costs. The justification involves some non-pecuniary or non-financial explanations—such as municipal pride—how can you regard yourself as a major city without an NFL franchise, prestige of having a major league team, of improving city spirits, of gaining attention from others. These are some of the explanations for undertaking an activity that is expected to lose money. These explanations are, of course, the rationale for seeking an Olympics or a World Cup, although on a greater scale given their greater costs. Thus expecting financial losses, based on the past record, is not itself a deterrent from bidding for these events.

The combination of the World Cup in 2014 and the Summer Olympics in 2016 promises to have a negative impact on Brazil's financial position. Brazil's construction of the necessary infrastructure is currently behind the projected schedule due to poor planning and financial constraints and it is not clear if they will be able to complete their commitments as to the number and quality of airports, stadiums, and ground transportation. How the issue will be resolved if Brazil does keep its promises remains to be seen, although the Brazilian officials claim that all will be completed by the start of the World Cup.

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Preparing Rio

Breaking the Cycle of Violence **BY CLAUDIO BEATO**

WHAT HAVE WE BRAZILIANS BEEN DOING TO break the ongoing cycle of violence plaguing the country over the past three decades? Can we offer a safe environment to foreign visitors before we host the World Cup in two years? And in the Olympic Games in 2016? You may have seen some of the violent scenes on the streets of Rio de Janeiro or in the northeast: helicopters shot down by heavily armed drug traffickers, gunfights in luxury hotel lobbies, mass murders and judges assassinated by police officers. This looks like an environment of urban warfare.

A visit to one of the areas controlled by gangs involved in drug trafficking is an eye-opening experience, with younger boys and girls serving as lookouts to alert gang members about the possible intrusion of enemies and/or police. At the same time, on the broader, surrounding streets of the *favela*, another set of armed boys and girls keep watch from wooden benches or crates—also equipped with handheld radio communicators. Drug

transactions openly take place with other boys and girls delivering large plastic bags—all the while in contact with the armed lookouts. The entire *favela* has taken on the look of actual military operations. All of this translates into an ever-present sense of insecurity for the people living in large urban centers.

However, the boys and girls on the lookout are only tangential protagonists of the organized crime threatening the order and power of the Rio de Janeiro state. Those who have kept a trained eye on the situation have discerned a worrisome rising criminal profile with very distinct traits and an even more organized design. Criminal activity has been structured with the logic of large urban centers. Crime begins with gang activity in impoverished neighborhoods with high unemployment and unfavorable economic and social conditions. Jailing gang members has led to a new level of organization initially developed within prison walls in the form of coalitions that serve originally for protection but



Views of Rio and its favelas: is it possible to turn things around before the World Cup and the Olympics?

rapidly degenerate into criminal activity. The main Brazilian criminal factions today originated in the slums and organized in jail. Groups compete intensely, using both and increasing mechanisms of corruption to win fierce competition for territory.

As the situation seems to evolve from laissez-faire gangs to organized crime, is it possible to turn things around before the World Cup and the Olympics? What is being done—and what are the results that are being registered in major cities around the country? A few states, such as São Paulo and Minas Gerais, have managed to achieve important milestones, while other states like Bahia and Alagoas have witnessed a dramatic decline in public safety conditions. Large to medium-size urban centers around the country have all suffered urban violence. Rio de Janeiro has used police occupation operations in extremely violent areas to re-establish order in the communities bordering tourist attractions, and such strategies may be implemented in other parts of the city over the short term.

But is this enough to ensure public safety and improve the institutions in charge of security? Let's take a moment to recall some of the specific characteristics of crime in Brazil. First, crime does not

occur in the same way and to the same degree throughout the entire country. In some regions, highly organized groups tightly control the areas they dominate. In a large portion of more populated urban centers, youth gangs fight each other in poorer, underprivileged areas. But now, they are being replaced by more organized groups that have a different logic, more structured and rational.

All violence—independently of its level of organization—is usually spatially concentrated and tends to contaminate surrounding areas and neighboring communities. Violent communities continue to perpetuate the crime pattern that has been present over many years and open the doors to organized crime as fertile grounds for recruiting and sales.

It is known that concentrated socioeconomic disadvantages are inseparable from the presence and ills of concentrated violence. On the other hand, not all underprivileged areas have elevated violence. Many neighborhoods, communities and *favelas* are relatively peaceful; conversely, we have yet to find a violent area that is not classified as underprivileged. However, organized crime—often originating in poor communities—manifests itself in wealthier communities through public insecurity, money laundering, corruption and extortion.

One of the most emblematic scenes for Brazil in the fight against crime in underprivileged communities was the occupation of the Vila Cruzeiro neighborhood by Rio de Janeiro's police force. After a number of successive criminal attacks against the population, the police stormed and overtook two of the main strongholds. It was the beginning of the attack on "the heart of evil," as the state's public safety chief termed it. Television viewers saw amazing images of a horde of Vila Cruzeiro drug traffickers scrambling from police into the neighboring Complexo do Alemão—the next area to be raided and taken by the Army and police. Viewers saw a crew of rag-tag young men that did not seem to fit the image of organized crime thought to rule over Rio de Janeiro's *favelas*. Rather than looking like an irresistible fortress, the scene suggested more a symbolic decline of an era of organized crime if it was represented by that particular group of young men. At any rate, the state's simple territorial occupation of the community was an important moment in the area's public safety policy.

Lately, iron-fisted governmental strategies have been pushing out traditional criminals. Instead, they stimulated the growth of, and competition between, organized crime groups that tend to take

a business approach and have more efficient criminal patterns. The aim of these groups has increasingly turned toward making political connections, sometimes getting representatives from the groups elected into office in legislative assemblies and on municipal boards.

As a result, “militias” are developing within Rio de Janeiro’s criminal scene. Police and military officer involvement with these illegally formed groups within *favelas* has long been said to be common. However, over the last few years, we have seen these militias become stronger, reorganizing their activities on an entirely new level. Because the state is not capable of restoring order in these communities, criminal activities take on an informal, however no less illegal, shape through militia groups. The key factor to minimize the conflict between groups tends to be through radical methods of controlling the market—which, in turn, includes the imprisonment of, or even elimination of competitors. In addition, commercial activities have begun to branch out into other areas beyond those of drug trafficking, again no less illegal, in the form of informal access to public services, illegal connection to the electric power system, goods and services such as gas, transportation and public safety and even prostitution rings. Because conflict is costly and time-consuming, cooperation among groups and reaching an understanding with police offers a better alternative to warring with local factions. As groups have developed a sharper business sense through the expansion of mechanisms of control and monopoly of local markets, excessive violence is seen as less necessary.

Both social and institutional factors perpetuate this situation. Communities made up of families lacking structure, wracked by teenage pregnancy, truancy, poor schooling and informal employment, in addition to high rates of alcoholism and drug-addiction, provide fertile grounds for producing a generation of youths with little to no supervision, and whose family members have limited control over their behavior.

However, the leap from the conditions that breed crime to new, organized criminal levels has more to do with the institutional incapacity to deal with more complex criminal structures. The modernization of the criminal justice system, focusing on particularly intense police reform, is one of the most important priorities.

The ability to establish control and cohesion mechanisms in communities riddled with violence—known in the literature as collective efficiency—in truth depends heavily on the strength of institutions. One of the most important aspects in the control of crime pivotally depends on the active participation of the Brazilian criminal justice system.

Brazilian court proceedings are slow, resulting in incredibly low conviction rates. Fewer than one of ten homicides result in some sort of punishment; only 23 percent of cases reaching the courts are ruled on by judges. We have penal laws created in the 1940s for a completely different scenario than the one currently being faced.

Our police force is poorly managed; it is frequently lax in carrying out essential duties and, to bring back a recurring theme, often involved in serious cases of human rights violations, police abuse and brutality. Some states have seen record highs in victim fatality in police actions. Over the last ten years, the Rio de Janeiro police force has been responsible for more than 11,000 violent deaths—a figure that accounts for 20 percent of overall homicides in the same city. Corruption levels and police involvement in organized crime have reached fever pitch.

How has this come about? A succession of poorly run governments have lacked the political mettle required to take on serious public safety issues and to allocate the necessary financial resources and institutional re-engineering. If we add to the equation the constantly acute situation of the *favelas* and housing issues in Brazil, the processes of spatial segregation and socio-economic decay in the population of large urban centers, informality, disorder and disorder

organization, we have a recipe for the same disasters we have witnessed in other Latin American countries. Lethargic and inefficient justice departments prevail, while government administrations fail to introduce incremental mechanisms of effective management, as well as the appropriate legislative infrastructure.

Nevertheless, it is also a fact that many states in Brazil have shown exceptional results in the fight against crime. Over the past 20 years, the relative absence of the federal government in addressing public safety issues has forced governors to take matters into their own hands in the search for effective solutions.

With its declining homicide rate, São Paulo is an intriguing case study to analyze. The city has attempted to restructure investigative precincts by increasing staff and providing training. In addition, police officers on the street have focused on confiscating weapons wherever and whenever possible. Coupled with a proper, modernized information system and high arrest rates, the effort has resulted in a direct decrease in crime indicators. Similar investment in modern police management methods, decentralization and integration of the public safety sector taken by the state of Minas Gerais has now led to a 50 percent reduction in violent crimes in its large urban centers.

The enormous events that Brazil will host have also served as a catalyst for solutions that may come together to provide positive results in public safety. Even if the initial purpose may be to construct pockets of safety for visitors of these events, they may result in creating ever-expanding safe havens that may one day end up as an entire continent of safety.

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My Goalsetters

Finding Hope in Pirituba **BY PRESTON SO**

AS I STOOD IN AN UNKEMPT BRAZILIAN PARK, seemingly landscaped as an afterthought, trucks and buses careened left and right on the thoroughfare behind me. Their cacophony was accentuated by a squeaking highway sign, detached from its post and swinging carelessly in the wind, perpetually in danger of tumbling, scythe-like, to the asphalt below. It was in this setting that ten-year-old Caio, bursting with energy, told me about the day he nearly lost a finger.

In Pirituba, a peripheral suburb of São Paulo, breathless talk of the impending *Olimpiadas* and *Copa do Mundo* fills the air, but there is a sense of unease—amid the optimism—about Brazil's readiness for the one-two punch in less immediately visible ways. The convergence of these mammoth undertakings formed an intriguing backdrop for my internship teaching English at a city-funded program linking athletic achievement with social dividends. Many of the metropolis' community centers now have these initiatives, *Clubes Escola* ("School Clubs"), that provide afterschool sports programs for children and teenagers.

The tension surrounding Brazil's increasing exposure on the world stage was certainly reflected in Caio's experience. Amid a welcome peppering of questions to me about America ("Have you met Michael Jackson? Have you met Barack Obama?"), he related his close brush with death.

"This place is too dangerous," he told me authoritatively, and I was pleased he was teaching *me* for a change. He gestured at my backpack, the placement of my wallet, and my overall demeanor. "You have to be on the lookout all the time."

He was right. In São Paulo, a friend commented about a loss of "our culture." The famous friendliness of Brazilians

seemed to wane there, and *paulistanos* were sheltering themselves—quite understandably—in the vast apartment buildings that ten percent of Brazilians now call home. Caio pointed at an area behind my workplace, where a steep hillside separates the community center from a few dilapidated tenements and his public primary school. "It was over there," he said expressionlessly. "This is why you can never walk on that road that goes by the hillside. One day, at seven in the morning, I walked it to get to my school. Right as I got to the top, a man ran out, reached for my backpack, and threatened to stab me."

He gripped his fingers anxiously. "I didn't know what to do. I let him take my backpack, but he almost cut my finger off anyway." With that, he showed me his hand, where an inch-long scar ravaged his pointer finger, and pursed his lips in frustration.

"I couldn't go to school anymore after that," he said. "The Clube Escola will kick me out because I dropped out, but *futebol*'s the only thing I've got left."

Professor Tatá, as he is affectionately known, is one of the head soccer coaches, and while I watched a pickup soccer

cer field, laid only weeks before my arrival. I peered at the students, uniformed in matching white Clube Escola T-shirts and blue shin guards. I noticed on-lookers, young and old, cheering the athletes on.

The Clube Escola program is unrivaled in its penetration of the most disadvantaged neighborhoods of São Paulo. Scarcely five blocks from the community center, the ramshackle roofs of corrugated steel and signature symbols of *favela* life starkly belie the rapid development Pirituba pursues today. Yet the Clube Escola and the Pirituba community center enjoy high attendance at their programs in youth soccer and judo—with more than a hundred participants—building on high esteem for established opportunities in yoga and other initiatives for adults. Children at the Clube Escola are admitted solely on proof of enrollment at school, and they must continue to keep up academically in order to stay in the program.

My project was to offer the students a comprehensive curriculum in English that immersed them in the language, but that they could relate to. Relying on educational materials that I had written,

"My goal is not to create soccer players," he said. "It's to create citizens."

game from the sidelines, he described his ambitious vision between pep talks and demonstrations. "My goal is not to create soccer players," he said. "It's to create citizens."

At Clube Escola Liderança, the fruits of his labor were omnipresent. Before me, I saw the new synthetic grass that adorned the formerly sand-only soc-

I managed to weave the formidable difficulty of English into a course that incorporated elements of citizenship, leadership and *futebol* to inspire my students. But given the state of Brazilian public education today, I found that many pupils already "exposed" to English were subjected to frequent teacher absenteeism and an unsatisfactory curriculum,



compounded by a paucity of teaching materials and infrastructure.

As one of my most driven students, Luis, told me, he and his brother suffered from a curriculum too advanced for their ability and too limited in its approach. Every day, he said, they would relearn numbers and the verb *to be*, and no progress was made in grammar or vocabulary. “[Our teacher] talks so fast that the only words I can understand are ‘boys and girls,’” he lamented.

These disadvantages were striking. In my first week of classes, I taught basic greetings and games to forty students, ages eight to seventeen, irrespective of their prior credentials. By the end of my internship my class enrollment had dwindled to eight motivated learners, only half of whom presented final projects about their career aspirations. They stunned me with their newfound fluency with each successive poster: I want to be a veterinarian. A pilot. A teacher.

Nonetheless, my biggest shock was with Marcos, a struggling youngster whose English had not improved since

day one. Each time I drilled conjugations of *to have*, I attempted to involve him. He merely shook his head and remained silent. “He doesn’t know the answer because he can’t read,” his classmates eventually informed me. “And he’s in the fifth grade.” I then realized that he had simply been emulating his classmates’ responses and repeating my spoken words. I bordered on despair as I sent him home, pained that there was nothing more I could do.

For all its incredible progress in the last several decades, Brazil still has work to do before it can fend off accusations of unpreparedness for the two most important sporting events on earth. Hope is on the horizon with programs like Clube Escola; through playing soccer and extolling teamwork and sportsmanship, these young athletes will grasp what it means to exercise citizenship and command self-discipline. *These* are Olympic qualities.

On one breezy evening, one of my last before I would leave São Paulo, I left a co-worker’s birthday party and walked

The first group of the day kicks off on recently sodded synthetic grass at Clube Escola Liderança.

to the Coração de Bugre bus stop. During the day, it is a bustling place evocative of a forward-looking Brazil. Casual commuters eagerly brandish smartphones and music players, as newfangled LED screens list the next arriving buses. At night, the stop becomes silent, with people looking furtively about them, warily keeping hands—and fingers—safe in pockets. Even so, amidst the insecure darkness, there is a brilliant beacon of possibility in the distance: the newly installed stadium lights at Clube Escola Liderança, where a brightly illuminated team of teenagers kick and lunge on into the night.

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Preparing for the Olympics

A Tale of Two *Favelas* **BY JAKE CUMMINGS**

THIS IS A TALE OF TWO FAVELAS: UNITED IN scarcity, divided by provision.

Favelas—“informal settlements” to the academic, “illegal slums” to the antipathetic—are spontaneous, grassroots communities found throughout Brazil. In Rio de Janeiro, host to the upcoming World Cup and Olympics events, these settlements are marbled throughout the wildly protruding landscape, clinging to hillsides and diving under viaducts. About one out of every five of Rio’s citizens calls a *favela* home. Much of what the outside world understands about Rio’s *favelas* is shaped by popular representations of savagery, criminality, and despair, such as the film *Cidade de Deus* (“City of God”). But in the peaceful spots, there is no organized crime or drug trade. People go to work, help their kids with homework, and enjoy a barbecue on the holidays. They exist outside the city’s networks of services, and not much ink is spilled about them. Now that the Olympics are coming to town, however, the world is beginning to take note.

Around the bend from the real *Cidade de Deus*—which is not technically a *favela*, but originally a social housing project built for *favela* evictees—are Asa Branca and Vila Autódromo. Separated by little more than half a mile, today these two *favela* communities have proximate geographies but divergent destinies. While the Summer Olympic Games are set to kick off in London later this year, the Rio 2016 Olympic juggernaut is already deciding winners and losers at home. So far, Asa Branca appears to be a winner, while Vila Autódromo’s fate hangs in limbo.

Both neighborhoods open up to the thoroughfare Avenida Salvador Allende, four lanes of traffic split by a broad, shrubby median, and a world apart from the rugged grandeur of the *cidade*

maravilhosa. On this flat plain in Jacarepaguá—an indigenous name meaning “shallow alligator pond”—you are less likely to see alligators than unfenced horses, their heads languidly bent to lap water from puddles along the avenue. In Chile, the name “Salvador Allende” brings to mind the Marxist president who led the nation down *La vía chilena al socialismo*—“the Chilean path to socialism.” But in Rio, Salvador Allende leads to the Barra mega-development

surface road to one of Rio’s major transit corridors. In the face of this project, Bezerra is working to keep as many displaced residents within the community as possible. He is pragmatic in his dealings with the city: strategically combative when he thinks he can get concessions; cooperative when he is resigned to their position.

But while the introduction of a mass transit artery is set to shave off part of the village, new investments are also in

The Avenida is, in many ways, a living spectacle of the unfolding clash between a mega-scale coalition of corporate and government elites and the micro-scale sensibilities of favela life.

cluster for the Olympic Games—that is to say, in quite the opposite direction of its ideological namesake.

The Avenida is, in many ways, a living spectacle of the unfolding clash between a mega-scale coalition of corporate and government elites and the micro-scale sensibilities of *favela* life. The self-built, self-contained Asa Branca is on the far northeast end, where most days Carlos Alberto “Bezerra” Costa can be found manning his hot dog stand in a row of local businesses facing the thoroughfare. As president of Asa Branca’s residents’ association, Bezerra is also the captain of a ship rocked by the first waves of the Olympics’ turbulent waters.

The city has informed the community of its plans to condemn approximately thirty residences for demolition in order to make way for the TransOlimpica Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line, which will transform the Avenida from a quiet

the works. Because of its visibility to the Olympics Barra cluster, and therefore to international visitors, the community has been prioritized for urbanization through the Morar Carioca program. The latest incarnation of Rio’s *favela* upgrading efforts, Morar Carioca represents an R\$8 billion investment in city services and public space improvements for *favelas*, expressly favoring the communities within Olympics venue perimeters. Slated for Asa Branca are health clinics, land titling, and improvements to the sewerage system. So far, the community has had little input into the formulation of these projects, and Bezerra’s stance has had to be mainly reactive.

At face value, Morar Carioca will improve the quality of life in Asa Branca, but these improvements could be a mixed blessing. With urbanization and better services, the community becomes more conducive for formal development. With



nearby sports venues and transportation infrastructure, it becomes attractive to middle-class households. And with land titling, it becomes commodified for property owners to sell on the open market. Together these ingredients constitute a recipe for gentrification, the displacement of lower-income households, and the breakdown of community cohesion and character. Tall condominium towers rising on land surrounding the community contribute to the sense of besiegement.

Despite their anxiety about rising real estate speculation and alterations to the urban fabric, Bezerra and his neighbors have made out reasonably well for the time being. But a short walk past the speeding cars and banana trees of Avenida Salvador Allende takes you to a village in far more precarious straits. Here, wedged in the interstitial space between the Avenida, a race track, and a large lagoon—the Lagoa de Jacarepaguá—is the fishing village of Vila Autódromo. Almost from the moment the International Olympic Committee announced

that the 2016 Games would be awarded to Rio, this sleepy settlement has been embroiled in a battle with Rio's city government over its future.

The Olympic Park, the focal point of the Barra Olympics cluster, is slated for this pie slice of land jutting out into the lagoon. While most of the site's land area is taken up by the racetrack and is thus unpopulated, the city and the Brazilian Olympic Committee insist that the village (population 4,000) cannot remain as part of the redevelopment program, and they have begun the process of forced eviction. Vila Autódromo residents, who have endured this threat before and obtained right-to-use title in 1994, are fighting the action in court and in the hearts and minds of the international community.

One resident activist who has helped the community withstand pressures to relocate through the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, as well as the Pan-American Games in 2007, is 54-year-old Jane Nascimento de Oliveira. "The city government even went so far as to put a trac-

tor by the entrance to the community to topple the houses," she told community journalists last year. "So, the people closed the community and did not let anyone enter." Today the community entrance has a welcome sign with a banner stretched beneath reading: *Não remove meu sonho-Urbanize*. "Don't remove my dream—Urbanize."

As it stands, the fate of Vila Autódromo is suspended over a gap that routinely opens up between policy and politics in Brazil. The intent of policy and law is clear: the community supposedly has secure tenure; squatters' right to possession is granted after five years; and land takings are not legal except in certain circumstances, such as in areas of environmental risk. But despite this progressive policy environment, public officials often try to manipulate and intimidate their politically unsophisticated constituents, use divide-and-conquer tactics, or make transparently insincere claims such as the environmental risk gambit. Each of these justifications has been used at one time or another against Vila Autódromo.



Photos (far left): A residential street in Asa Branca; (top and bottom middle): What remains of evicted favela Recreio II; (right): Context map of the planned Olympics developments..

Follow Avenida Salvador Allende further southwest to its end and you join up with a second planned BRT line, the TransOeste, which stretches across the Barra neighborhood on its way to Rio's outer suburbs. In the wake of construction for this bit of infrastructure lie the remains of the demolished *favelas* of Restinga, Recreio II, and Vila Harmonia, the hollowed-out shells of the remaining structures a foreshadow of one possible future for Vila Autódromo. Here some of Rio's most marginal residents, who may have lacked the political savvy of Bezerra or Jane, have been relocated to social housing projects even more remote from their long-time homes, jobs, and social networks. The legacy of Cidade de Deus lives on, in other words, and it emanates in ever more remote reaches of the urban periphery.

Every four years, cities with Olympic glory in their hearts vie to host the Games. Then the debates rage, as inevitable as they are familiar. Are the Games a catalyst for investment and fame or a

recipe for debt and corruption? Does the effort required expand access to jobs and public amenities or does it channel benefits mainly to the already wealthy and privileged? Indeed, the effect of the many exigencies and vast urban reshaping that comes with hosting the Games is complex and multi-faceted. But a place where the Olympics Games falls particularly short is in the area of spatial equity. From Seoul to Barcelona to Atlanta to Beijing, the Games have meant eviction, dispersal, worsened segregation, and diminished affordable housing in urban centers.

It doesn't have to be this way. In the topsy-turvy logic of Rio's Olympics planning, some communities are awarded long-needed improvements and services, while others get intimidation and deceit. The idea of social sustainability—that healthy societies depend on respect for community, civic participation, and organically formed connections to urban space—does not yet command the same purchase as sustainability in strictly

economic or environmental terms. Tellingly, in the brief for the design for the Olympic Park, the section on ecological sustainability goes on for ten pages, while a short paragraph regarding “social inclusion” remains unheeded. Today Asa Branca comes out ahead, but tomorrow the urban growth machine could reverse course and decide that it, too, needs to go. Such is the predicament of what *favela* scholar Janice Perlman calls “living on the edge”.

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Complexo do Alemão

Rio de Janeiro FIELD NOTES BY GSD RIOSTUDIO



Harvard GSD RioStudio members arrive in Rio de Janeiro for a week's intensive field work in one of the city's largest groups of informal settlements, Complexo de Alemão, home to about 80,000 people. Government initiatives have been developed to improve basic infrastructure, accessibility (including the teleférico system, above), environmental quality and violence prevention. RioStudio's work this semester entails the investigation of possibilities for the insertion of new schools and community social services into the Complexo's tightly-knit urban fabric.



On-site planning session. Prior to commencing the field work, studio leaders, Harvard Graduate School of Design Professors Jorge Silvetti and Paul Nakazawa, together with studio members; Lemann Fellow Pedro Henriques de Cristo and DRCLAS' Tomás Amorim, met with community volunteers who acted as guides through the labyrinth of the Complexo's narrow streets and passageways.



The support of local community leaders enabled students to penetrate into the least accessible areas to acquire a first-hand understanding of the process of change various communities within the Complexo are experiencing. Recognizing the present social identity and memory of each community is a fundamental part of the investigation that will inform the design process.



The Municipality of Rio de Janeiro, in joint venture with the Office of the President's Secretary for Strategic Affairs, is engaged in a long-term research initiative to improve public policies concerning Early Childhood Development (ECD). One of GSD RioStudio's challenges is to address the presently ill-defined criteria for spatial qualities that would best support the educational mission for younger children within the specific context of the Complexo.



Left to right, front to back: Adriano (community guide), Christin To, Caroline Shannon, Tristie Tajima, Liwen Zhang, Lucia, Raquel Gutierrez, Amy Fung, Paul Nakazawa (instructor), Karl Landsteiner, Zhou Wu, Tomás Amorim (DRCLAS-Brazil Office), Francisco Izquierdo (research assistant), Pedro Henriques de Cristo (special advisor), Luciano (community guide), Jorge Silvetti (instructor), Danish Kurani, Marina Correia (TA), Alexandr Nizhikhovskiy.



With base maps of the Complexo's terrain provided by the Municipality of Rio de Janeiro, the studio deployed three teams of students with local community guides to develop a detailed map of buildings and landmarks important to the residents. Over the course of a week, the team members walked more than 100 kilometers in the Complexo.



Now back in Cambridge, the studio is generating concepts and designs for new schools and community social services for the Complexo do Alemão. We see the World Cup and Olympics as potentially useful catalysts for the more sustainable efforts being made in Rio and Brazil toward addressing social, economic and environmental issues. that are the foundations for improving the lives of citizens well into the future.

Jobs for the Boys: The Politics of Public Sector Reform

A REVIEW BY BARBARA NUNBERG

Merilee Grindle, *Jobs for the Boys: The Politics of Public Sector Reform* (Harvard University Press, 2012)

"Party government isn't organized for efficiency, nor to serve the people. It is organized to provide jobs for the boys."

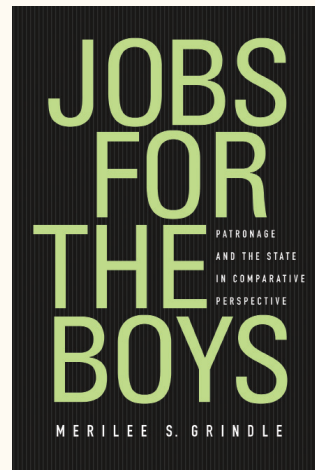
Merilee Grindle begins her remarkable book with this lament from a 1913 edition of the *Syracuse Herald*. It's a familiar refrain, especially to the international agencies pouring aid dollars into promoting civil service reform in developing countries. Patronage in the public sector—doling out positions, promotions and perquisites for personal or political purposes—corrupts government and tarnishes public sector performance. Do away with "jobs for the boys" and you'll find the holy grail of good governance: probity, accountability and effectiveness, right?

Not exactly, writes Grindle in this sweeping, amazingly readable account of the varied uses of patronage and the efforts to curtail it over the centuries. The book traces the experience of six historical cases—France, Britain, Germany, Japan, Spain, and the United States—to show the distinctive ways in which

patronage has been employed by rulers to achieve political objectives. It then documents the ongoing struggle to reduce the role of patronage in public administration through the introduction of Weberian bureaucracies or, more recently, of market-friendly New Public Management. These developed-country reform narratives provide a backdrop for the analysis of four important Latin American cases—Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico. Each has waged its own war—with varying degrees of success—to promote merit-based civil services.

The work is an ambitious undertaking. But Grindle pulls it off masterfully. She persuades us that it's only through this grand historical excursion that we can fully grasp both the drivers of patronage and the dynamics of reform and counter-reform that play out over much longer time frames than today's "reform-mongers" and their international development financiers would like to believe.

Without fanfare, Grindle's painstaking review upends a catalog of received wisdom. She shows, for example, that patronage is not all bad. It's been vital to stabilizing states



in Japan, Prussia and France by rewarding local elites while consolidating centralized power at the national level. In Mexico, Chile and Argentina, patronage appointments allowed leaders to mount bold policy reforms by recruiting specialized technocratic competence into high-level reform teams. Nor is patronage an inevitable source of corruption. The U.S. founding fathers targeted patronage appointments on "gentlemanly" character traits of integrity and honor in an effort to cherry-pick the best and the brightest for government service.

Grindle also shows that reforms of patronage systems aren't all good. For instance, patronage reduction hasn't always leveled the playing field. In Britain, Japan and France, the introduction of recruitment linked to examination and credentials served to reinforce class privilege, as only elites had access to the educational institutions that prepared them to compete for public positions along newly meritocratic criteria.

The author is no mindless booster of patronage systems, though. Throughout the volume, she reminds us that the flexibility that patronage affords government to achieve its goals can also be viewed as capriciousness. As such, it's an appropriate target of reform.

Jobs for the Boys scores perhaps its best points in discussing the "process" of reform. Experience suggests that reforms commonly originate in crisis. The revolution that spawned Japan's Meiji restoration, the egalitarian impulse of the French revolution, Britain's dismal performance in the Crimean War, the assassination of President William Garfield by a disgruntled office-seeker, each triggered a reform "moment." Just as Argentina's early 1990s fiscal crisis spurred a cost containment policy that in turn incorporated merit-based civil service reforms.

But Grindle also underscores significant differences among reforms, some of which have not been well recognized. She argues that the role of the "demand" side of these reforms—public opinion and civic mobilization—may have been overestimated. Only in the United States were the combined voice of a vociferous press and an angry citizenry pivotal in advancing civil service reform. In contrast, Weberian civil services of Prussia, Japan and France were initiated by authoritarian regimes in the course of consolidating state authority. Even in the United Kingdom,

reforms emanated from government insiders and were negotiated internally, with little uproar from the public. The Latin American experiences confirm the closed nature of reforms; most of the bargaining was among inside actors who stood to lose from broadening the basis of civil service recruitment and leadership.

Reforms don't necessarily require a charismatic leader. French reforms lacked a galvanizing figure but progressed apace, Grindle shows. She also draws important lessons about reform time frames. Some reforms, such as the Cortes that Napoleonic rule brought to Spain, took root quickly and lasted for generations. Others, such as the U.S. Pendleton Act or the Brazilian Administrative Department of Public Service (DASP), took decades to be fully adopted. The rubber meets the road in implementation, Grindle finds. She renders a fascinating, case-by-case picture of the political pulling and hauling that characterizes reform construction, deconstruction and reconstruction, often over many years. These reforms are anything but monotonic, and unreformed patronage systems frequently cohabit with more modern meritocracies, sometimes stabilizing a fragile social pact. Pristine merit systems are elusive, even today. And then, the objectives of reform may themselves be transformed by new ideals, just as reformers in the United Kingdom, Chile or Brazil sought to replace Weberian bureaucracy with the New Public Management.

If Grindle is right, a good deal of what international development experts thought (and think) about current civil service reform programs is wrong: that you can achieve reform in bite-size time-frames of five to ten years; that merit reforms need to deliver a knock-out punch to old patronage practices in order to be deemed "successful;" that aid donors must identify a charismatic aid darling to shepherd through reforms; that there is a single window of opportunity for reform that can be identified in advance.

Grindle's methodology tilts towards historical institutionalism but embraces rational choice and democratic theory, where appropriate. She is about detecting patterns in a rich narrative tapestry, rather than testing theorems. This may leave those seeking the rigor of randomized trials or large-sample studies dissatisfied. For the rest of us, it provides a most welcome—indeed, way overdue—reality check on the not-well-understood history of public sector reform in comparative perspective. Scholars and practitioners seeking to improve the policy record on civil service reform will find this book both riveting and essential reading.

Barbara Nunberg teaches public management and governance issues in development at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. She previously served as head of the World Bank's program on public sector reform and governance for the East Asia and Pacific Region.

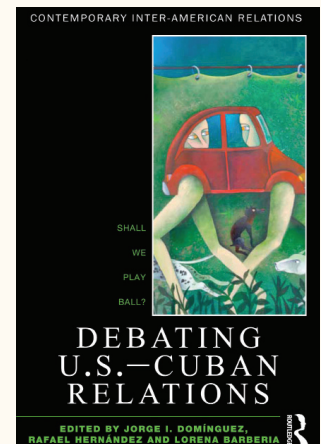
Playing with Cuba, Really?

A REVIEW BY JOHN H. COATSWORTH

Debating U.S.-Cuban Relations: Shall We Play Ball, edited by Jorge I.

Domínguez, Rafael Hernández and Lorena Barbería
(New York and London: Routledge, 2012)

Here we go again—yet another moment in history when the U.S.-Cuban relationship, frozen (more or less) since early 1961, could be lurching toward sanity. What makes this moment special, even hopeful, are simultaneously promising changes in both countries, identified in each case with a new leader: Barack Obama in the United States and Raúl Castro in Cuba. How relations might change, at what speed, and with what effects on the two countries is the subject



exchanges between Soviet and U.S. scholars in the Cold War era, one could scramble the names of the authors of the chapters in this book and few who did not know them would notice. Cubans and their U.S. counterparts (plus two Canadians and a German working in Spain)

Cubans and their U.S. counterparts look at the same evidence, assess it with identical analytical tools, and come to remarkably similar conclusions.

of this remarkable book. Remarkable, because like its 1989 predecessor, *U.S.-Cuba Relations in the 1990s*, Cubans from Cuba contribute a lot to the conversation.

Remarkable also because, unlike the often awkward

look at the same evidence, assess it with identical analytical tools, and come to remarkably similar conclusions: that normalization of relations would benefit both countries, that policymakers in Cuba as well

as the United States would need to overcome domestic political constraints to move ahead, and that fundamental asymmetries in power and resources complicate matters enormously.

There *are* differences of perspective and goals, barely visible at times and possibly crucial. However, the fact that issues of policy and context can be *discussed* (despite

tioned above. The remaining chapters assess state-to-state relations, national security and terrorism (three chapters on this), the role of the European Union in U.S.-Cuban relations, the potential economic impact of ending the embargo, emigration/immigration issues, and academic and cultural exchange.

Rafael Hernández, Cuba's best-known political scientist,

Hernández points to "favorable circumstances" in which "an apparently small step can unleash a march that exceeds all expectations." Domínguez argues that with so much human capital (partly due to the Revolution's successes in education and health), "Cubans should not fear the future" (p. 49).

The three essays on security issues complement each other well. Peter Kornbluh's short piece provides a fascinating glimpse into the 1960s and 1970s when "Castro-hater" Richard Nixon sought the cooperation of the Cuban government to end an epidemic of airline hijackings. The 1973 agreement took only a few weeks to negotiate. Terrorism, of course, remains an issue in U.S.-Cuban relations, but as both Carlos Alzugaray Treto and Hal Klepak point out, this is not because Cuba engages in it. It is an issue because the U.S. State Department refuses, against all evidence to the contrary, to stop including Cuba in its list of "State Sponsors of Terrorism." Both essays point to potential areas of future collaboration.

The European Union speaks with many voices and for that reason, according to Eduardo Perera Gómez, "lack[s] significant capacity to influence U.S.-Cuban relations..." (p. 100). Both Perera and German scholar Susanne Gratius analyze the special role that Spain has played both in its bilateral relations with Cuba and in setting the tone for EU-Cuban relations. As Cuba embarks on significant internal changes, the EU is poised to play a key role in encouraging and even aid-

ing the Cuban government to stay the course. The Obama administration, unlike its predecessor, has not intervened to discourage the EU's opening to Cuba, despite multiple pressures to do so.

Canadian Archibald Ritter and Cuban Jorge Mario Sánchez Egozcue analyze the potential impact of a "normalization" of economic relations between the United States and Cuba. Both countries would benefit economically, of course, but in Sánchez's words, "what happens in the future of bilateral economic relations depends largely on Cuba's capacity to change itself and on how the United States reacts to those changes" (p. 162). Ritter looks at the impact of ending the embargo on Cuba as it is now (modest, but positive) and on a Cuba where economic reforms have gone much deeper (huge, as in China or Vietnam). Sánchez's brilliant essay reaches a similar but more nuanced conclusion, worth quoting at length: "Cuba's prosperity does not depend on having economic relations—good or bad—with the United States. It depends on Cubans' capacity to reinvent their country," adding that good economic relations would be a "welcome complement, and the negative side could be managed without recourse to extraordinary sacrifices..." (p. 177).

The excellent essays by Lorena Barbería and Antonio Aja Díaz on U.S. immigration policies provide two perspectives on the history of alternating conflict and cooperation, trends in population and emigration, and prospects for better cooperation in

There are differences of perspective and goals, barely visible at times and possibly crucial.

the title, there's not much *debating* here) in the detached language of modern social science and policy analysis is testimony to the deep cultural and intellectual ties that a half century of relative economic and diplomatic isolation has failed to break. The structure of the book—mostly paired essays on the same topic, one by a Cuban, the other by a U.S. or other non-Cuban scholar—is ideally suited to reinforcing this point. Two of the heroes (heroines, actually) of the struggle to maintain scholarly and academic exchanges despite the often frustrating obstacles—Milagros Martínez Reinoso (University of Havana) and Sheryl Lutjens (California State University, San Marcos)—contribute lucid chapters to the volume.

The book begins with a brief introduction that deftly frames the volume, written by Jorge Domínguez and Rafael Hernández, who together edited the 1989 volume men-

tributes an opening chapter of uncommon sophistication and analytical power. He argues that in the U.S.-Cuban relationship, "*confrontation and cooperation* [are] not incompatible phenomena or successive stages but... coexistent and, to some degree, mutually consistent" dimensions (p. 9). He then addresses, head on, the key issues: what is preventing normalization, what political changes in the United States and in Cuba would be needed for relations to improve, what about the democracy and freedom issues, what areas of cooperation are possible. The paired essay by Jorge Domínguez contributes a penetrating review of the history of past efforts to improve relations and sketches five possible but not equally plausible "scenarios" that could lead toward normalization in the 2010s.

The two chapters conclude in fascinating parallel.

the future.

All the chapters focus on how closer and more harmonious relations might emerge from the current stalemate. The editors' strategy for the volume mirrors the approach both countries would need to take to improve relations: ignore the various elephants in the room and try to get something positive accomplished before any of them wake up. The editors have succeeded admirably, though in nearly every essay one can hear the great beasts stirring in their sleep.

Cuba's political system shields the country from U.S. economic and political dominance and for that reason is unlikely to change soon. Is the United States ready to deal with Cuba in the same way that it does with China or Vietnam? Perhaps, but as Hernández observes, "Nothing indicates that the U.S. government would be content with a form of market socialism; it seeks nothing less than a capitalist restoration" (p. 11). Unhappily for the U.S. government, normalization of diplomatic, economic, migratory, and cultural relations is not likely to bring regime change in Cuba. But it could be good therapy for U.S. politicians and policymakers, who still have trouble seeing the small countries of the Caribbean and Central America as independent.

John H. Coatsworth is the Provost of Columbia University. He served as the Director of the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies from its founding in 1994 until 2006.

Argentina: Press and Power

A REVIEW BY MARYSA NAVARRO

Graciela Mochkofsky,
Pecado Original: Clarín, los
Kirchner y la lucha por el
poder, (Buenos Aires:
Planeta, 2011)

Graciela Mochkofsky is a young Argentine journalist who has worked for two major newspapers in her country, authored several books, and is presently co-founder and co-editor of a digital magazine, *el puercoespín*. She was also a Nieman Fellow at Harvard in 2009.

For much of the past decade, Mochkofsky has been part of a group of Argentine journalists interested in examining the role of the press in their country. Their concern has been prompted by the transformation of newspaper publishing in Argentina, including the rise of large multimedia groups, technological changes, the role of the press during a brutal military dictatorship (1976-1983) and in the subsequent return to democracy.

Mochkofsky has already made a substantial contribution to the discussion. In 2003, she published an excellent biography of Jacobo Timerman, *Timerman. El periodista que quiso ser parte del poder* (*The journalist who wanted to be part of power*). Timerman, the man who created modern journalism in Argentina, also gained international attention because

of his abduction, imprisonment and torture by the military government headed by General Rafael Videla in 1977. Mochkofsky's book is centered on the journalist, revealing his financial dealings and close political connections with the military, how he acquired wealth and influence, and his impact on successive military dictatorships, including his cooperation in the demise of an elected democratic government.

Pecado original is another attempt by Mochkofsky to contextualize the debate about the role of the press in a democracy. Since much of the present discussion has been prompted by the confrontation between the Grupo Clarín and Presidents Néstor (2007-2011) and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2011-), this book is largely a detailed history of how the owner of the tabloid *Clarín*, became the head of the Grupo Clarín, Argentina's major multimedia group, and one of the largest in the Spanish-speaking world. It also follows its dealings with successive governments and offers a rich account of its confrontations with President Carlos Saúl Menem (1989-1995 and 1995-1999) and the Kirchner presidencies.

This complex story begins in 1957 when Ernestina Herrera, a beautiful 25-year-old woman of lower middle-



class background, became the mistress of Roberto Noble, the lawyer and politician who had founded *Clarín* in 1945. In 1958, he fathered a daughter by another woman. The child, known as Lupita, was registered as Guadalupe Noble and became his heir. However, in July 1967, when he was 63, he finally married Ernestina, who was 42. He died two years later. Lupita was to inherit *Clarín* but until she reached legal age, Ernestina would direct the paper with the help and advice of a man Noble trusted and admired, Rogelio Frigerio, an economist, politician and businessman. Ten years later, she had severed her ties with Frigerio, became the owner of *Clarín* after a bitter legal fight with Lupita and created a succession of her own. At the suggestion of Frigerio, she had adopted a boy and a girl, Felipe and Marcela, in 1976. She managed

to give them the last name of her dead husband and have the final adoption papers in an extraordinarily rapid process.

Throughout the years of military rule, *Clarín* continued publishing, growing steadily, silent on human rights violations and disappearances, though while Frigerio was on board, it criticized the economic policies of the finance minister J. A. Martínez de Hoz. When the military dictatorship ended, Ernestina's trusted collaborator Héctor Magnetto tried to influence President Raúl Ricardo Alfonsín (1983-1989) to pass legislation that would permit *Clarín* to acquire other media, especially television stations—a decision that involved much more than *Clarín* because it meant setting the media policies for the entire nation. He failed, though he managed to buy his first radio station, Radio Mitre, through a third party. The election of Peronist Carlos Saúl Menem got him what he wanted. Despite confrontations with his government, those were the golden years of *Clarín*. In 1999, it became the Grupo Clarín, presided by Ernestina Herrera de Noble with Magnetto as its CEO, an Argentine owned company until Goldman Sachs joined it bringing in 500 million dollars. Grupo Clarín was composed of several newspapers and radio stations, Fibertel (an internet provider), Cablevision (a television cable provider), several channels in Buenos Aires, TN (a cable news channel), Artear (production and broadcast channels) and TC, a television sports

channel that included exclusive rights to transmit soccer games, the favorite Argentine sport.

Despite the substantial profits reaped by the Grupo Clarín from the Menem government, relations between the two were far from smooth. They became even more dif-

He saw Clarín as an economic group fundamentally interested in accumulating more wealth and more power, not in providing information to the public.

ficult during the devastating political and economic crisis of 2001, when Argentina had 5 presidents in 10 days, and after the 2003 election of Nestor Kirchner.

A largely unknown 43-year-old three-time Peronist former governor of Santa Cruz province, who won with 22 percent of the vote, Kirchner brought back some measure of economic stability, democratized and diversified the Supreme Court and developed a vigorous human rights policy. In 2003, a law annulled the so-called impunity laws, including the pardon granted by Menem, which prevented the trial of lower rank officers accused of crimes against humanity committed during the military dictatorship.

The President's press policy was an extension of what he had done in Santa Cruz. "He drew a line between allies and enemies, granted access and exclusives to some, paid back others with an absolute news

silence and a public confrontation that identified them as political opponents." He saw *Clarín* as an economic group fundamentally interested in accumulating more wealth and more power, not in providing information to the public. *La Nación* and *Clarín* took turns at being the enemy

gentina. The acquired company had previously been owned by David Graiver, a banker whose family members were subsequently imprisoned and tortured and his wife raped in jail. Mochkofsky discusses this issue at length, providing new information and questions the legitimacy of the versions offered by the two newspapers.

An additional issue between the Kirchner governments and the Grupo Clarín concerned the origin of Ernestina Herrera de Noble's children, adopted during the years of military rule. The question was whether they were among the hundreds of babies born to disappeared young women and given to members of the armed forces. It was a painful, drawn-out confrontation that began in the 1990s. The final decision was that they were not children of abducted mothers.

Pecado original is a fascinating, meticulously researched cautionary tale and it is also an excellent example of investigative journalism, though Argentines will be able to follow more easily than foreigners the layers of its complexity.

Marysa Navarro-Aranguren is the Charles Collis Professor of History Emerita at Dartmouth College and the DRCLAS Resident Scholar. She has written and edited several books, including *Evita*. Her current project is entitled "The Inter-American Commission of Women, the Pan American Union and Women's Suffrage in the Americas, 1928-1948."

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Asociación Civil Lapacho

BY DIANA MCKEAGE

I spent a summer volunteering at a Grameen microcredit bank in Resistencia, Chaco, Argentina, called Asociación Civil Lapacho, thanks to the student organization A Drop in the Ocean (ADITO) and grants from DRCLAS. Lapacho was founded in 2001 in response to the economic crash in Argentina, which had serious ramifications nationwide but which devastated especially areas already affected by poverty; Chaco is Argentina's poorest province.

For the past eight years ADITO has been sending at least two Harvard students to spend a summer working for the bank. Lapacho's founders and current operators are local academics and professionals, who work there in their spare time; the bank runs entirely on volunteer work and donations from religious groups, government institutions and individuals. As an institution, Lapacho benefits from the diversity of knowledge and professions of its board members as well as its status as a non-profit institution operated by volunteers. That the life-blood of the bank flows entirely from the good hearts of its founders and managers is evident in close personal relationships that the managers formed with the women who receive loans—the *prestatarías*—and is ultimately a very wise way to

run a bank which offers loans without any collateral besides the promise and honor of each *prestataria*.

While Lapacho's main office is in Resistencia, the bank has six centers in poor towns in the vicinity of Resistencia. In each center approximately forty women receive loans from Lapacho to engage in "productive enterprises and projects." According to its website, Lapacho "holds the unique distinction of being the first Grameen replica in the Chaco province and, further, as being the first microcredit institution in Argentina to employ the Rural Grameen model," in which loan recipients—in the case of Lapacho, always women—form team-like groups of three to five women to keep the networks of support and fiscal accountability among friends, rather than leave these responsibilities to the bank.

A detail I loved was that each group gave itself a name, always very uplifting, such as Esperanza (hope) or Nueva Vida (A New Life). The ingenuity of the Grameen system lies in how it brings women together, giving them confidence in their own work at the same time as creating a friendly system of accountability.

Every week, all the groups in each center have meetings. Loans are paid and minutes



Diana McKeage with colleagues (sitting far left); Woman with her business in Fontana



are taken while successes, grievances, concerns and questions are all aired among the women. Current and future events are discussed while *mate* is passed around. If there is a new woman joining the bank, she reads out the pledge in front of the other women, who applaud and welcome her into the fold. Often, the meetings end with a prayer circle of thanksgiving.

My work involved attending meetings, talking to the women, and arranging to visit their homes and businesses (which were often in the same building)—an incredibly fun and life-changing experience for me. The ostensible purpose of the visits was to

take pictures of the women with their businesses for the website, but the deeper benefit came from talking to the women about their lives, their concerns and hopes in the present and for the future. We drank *mate*; they let me play with their children, dogs, and cats; bakers fed me delicious pastries; seamstresses dressed me in intricate sweaters; the sound of *fútbol* and chickens in the background mingled with laughs and tears.

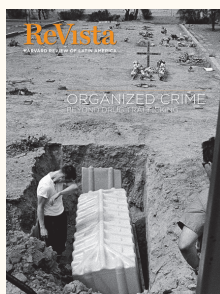
At first I had no idea what to expect from my time with Lapacho. I worried that I might be number crunching in a corner and not really making a difference. I soon learned that the most impor-

tant way in which I could help was to listen to the women. I was only there for nine weeks; it would have been foolish to think that I could implement some incredible project with everlasting effects. While I may not have effected a meaningful change for the women, I will never forget their stories and the faces I encountered that summer; they did leave an everlasting effect on me, and have inspired me to pursue development economics and international affairs. More importantly, however, the spirit of community I felt among the women—for each other, and for the managers of the bank—gave me a great deal of hope for microcredit as a means of rural development.

Women with Fontana businesses.

Any institution that creates meaningful change on a local level through the sole mechanisms of trust and hope foreshadows a promising future indeed.

Diana McKeage is a senior in Cabot House, concentrating in Literature with a secondary field in Government. Currently, she is pursuing a Certificate in Latin American Studies and writing a thesis on magic realism in novels by Miguel Angel Asturias and Alejo Carpentier. After graduating, she hopes to return to Argentina (Salta and Resistencia) and spend time in Brazil.



CORRECTIONS

In the table of contents and on page 15, author Noel Maurer is identified incorrectly as Noel Mauer. Our apologies for the editing error.

The photo on page 5 should be credited to Edu Ponces.

The photo on page 37 should be credited to Stephen Ferry.

Amy Chazkel's book *Laws of Chance* was published in 2011, not 2010.





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