"Todos somos la seleccion/All of us are the national team"

Football as political tool and defining nationalisms and identities in Ecuador and Latin America.

Author
Juan Sebastian Jaramillo Salazar

Advisor
Doc. Malvina Hladka PhD.

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Faculty of Social Sciences

Charles University in Prague

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To the most amazing human beings in this planet and most important source of support: my parents and family, the ones who are, were, and will be.

Also to, those teachers there and here, who became an inspiration to me, all the people who made possible, my arrival to this beautiful country and, the successful end of this period of my life, Malvina Hladka., Marketa Zidkova, Mr. Cyril Simsa, Dr. Borivoj Hnizdo among many others. And of course, to all the ones whose heart beats through the unexplainable and sublime footballer passion.
Declaration:

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been given due reference.

Juan Sebastian Jaramillo Salazar
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<td>Arg.</td>
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<td>Bol.</td>
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<td>DF</td>
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<td>ESMIL</td>
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Abstract.

Since long ago, Latin America have been suffering a loss of references, in matters of what has been usually called the nation-state, and with this, identities, nationalism among others. This problem has been studied by many people, and among the causes of it we can mention: corruption, poverty and the lack, of a government understood as such among many others. The nation seems to be losing referential points and elements to be called so, and what is worse, it seems like there is no commitment, not at least in short term, to create common policies of national scope, to gather the people under one national speech.

These problems among others such as populism, and a useless political class, have driven us to question ourselves, and our identities: Who are we?, What are we?, And what can define us as Latin Americans, or members of any other country?, Where does our identity lie? and on which bases it is, or it has to be constructed upon? and using what means?.

Most of these questions have been not answered, but nowadays, football, the most popular sport in the region, has provided many lights. It seems like this sport, more than any other thing, has become nowadays in Latin America the only space were the nationalistic epic can be created, and more than that, seems to be the only turf in which all the peple gathers under a feeling we can call “national.” Unfortunately also the effects in the long term seem to be not long lasting, and they are linked to many other factors, such as the team performance and good results.

In the following pages I will take a look at this interesting topic, trying to find more answers and to define the very important role, of soccer in Latin America, as far as defining and redefining identities and nationalisms from the political an social point of view, labor that has ben very hard specially if we notice that this region still struggling to find itself, after the colony, and a mixture proces that is still not complete .
“Todos somos la Selección/All of us are the national soccer team“
Football as political tool and defining nationalisms and identities in Ecuador and Latin America.

“...is not only the result of the creation of a State, sometimes it helps to create the nation as well” (Boniface, 1999)

1. Introduction.

Football is one of the most important social practices of collective identification; it is a phenomenon which goes beyond the characteristics of a game and becomes a total activity, extending beyond social aspects to the political, economic and even cultural spheres. It has been elevated from its status as a mere leisure activity linked to a particular territory and social group (The Londoner Elites), to become a global activity. (Carrion, 2005) This feature of football as a generator of “inclusive dynamics” represents and, at the same time makes room for, the dueling conceptions of nationality/nationalism.

For many years, but specifically during the last few World Cup championships, football has been an important element in studying and discovering relationships between sport and national identities. Mass media, society, economics and politics, among others, play a fundamental role in this activity. This game is often seen as a cultural part of elements that favor and stimulate these kinds of relations. The organization of regional competitions like the America Cup, Bolivarian Games, Pan-American Games, the World Cup, the Olympic Games and so on, reinforce this because, in them, “national representations” clash, “creating different dynamics like differentiation and ownership which gives soccer space as an element of geopolitical reflection”(Boniface, 1999).

In this paper, it is my intention to analyze how this sport and its relation to the mass media, culture, and politics has become a fundamental element in the Ecuadorian and Latin-American nationalistic feelings and identities, blending with complex elements of our identity, such as racial and class differences, among many
others. The sport is also seen as an element which helps to unify peoples, usually in a positive way, but also antagonistically; “soccer and its diffusion has helped several cultures and nations to construct particular identity forms by interpretation, practice and diffusion of the game” (Giulianotti, 1997).

In Argentina and Brazil, two of the most important countries in the Latin-American context, and two of the so called “Regional Leaders,” for example, soccer has worked since its early years as a strong nucleus of nationalistic representation: a group of “international successes, plus a group of ‘football heroes,’ produced an epic narrative where soccer contributed in a very important way, to the ‘invention’ of a nation” (Alabarces, Rodriguez, 1997). In Argentina, after the experience of the first regime of General Juan Domingo Peron “Peronismo” in the 40s, the relation between football (sports) and nationalism became indissoluble, with an obvious climax between the 80s and 90s with the appearance of the “Maradonian saga”. Nowadays, the globalization of the footballer scene coincides with the representation crisis of “what is national” through Argentinean football: at this moment, what seems to be an infinite expansion of football in the daily Argentinean public agenda (intersecting genders and social classes) is happening, next to the fracture in the social imaginary representation, recalled by its national team. Football appears as the only turf on which we can display a nationalistic epic, in conservative neo-populist times, but at the same time it seems unable to produce it. (Alabarces, Rodriguez, 1997)

Since the beginning of the last century in Brazil, as well, football has been decisive in relation to nationalism, politics and society; in the 30s, for example, soccer as a political-cultural phenomenon started to define conceptions about “what is national.” Football’s popularity was increased by the development of the radio “as a means of mass media communication, as well as the profesionalization of the players, a fact that transformed the game into a job. In this way, it turned into a means to achieve integration and social-economic ascent in the historically forsaken popular sectors of society, as well as an element which will characterize the Brazilian national identity” (Franzini, 1997)

In the last few World Cups and qualification matches, the unusual success and upsets of “non-traditional” teams such as Colombia in the Italy 1990 World Cup, Costa Rica in the USA 1994 World Cup, Ecuador in the 2002 qualification rounds and 2006 World Cup, plus the already “consecrated” images of Diego Maradona
“insulting in the semifinal match the local team in that World Cup (held in Italy, where he had played most of his career), and crying with dignity and pride in the final match after his team lost against Germany, in front of the Italian public that had repudiated the Argentinean national anthem and flags, constituted the ideal turf to explore such fields” (Ramirez, 1999).

Since it came widely accepted and practiced, football, in Latin America, has become a “cultural device, which at the same time is part of the different elements, that favor and encourage, (and this not only in Latin-America or Europe, regions which have embraced soccer as a national tradition) what we call the national identities” (Ramirez, 2002). In the following thesis I will examine how the speeches and national practices found in football, “The King of Sports,” as well as the accompanying feelings of ownership, are treated and expressed from the social, cultural, political and economic points of view, and how national soccer teams in general, and even locally in Latin-America, have become an important factor in creating identity, and a central point of reference for the Nation-State. I will also examine how such identity creation is achieved, paying special attention to particular political, economical, historical, social, cultural and nationalistic contexts.

I also want to emphasize how football helps to amalgamate the very complex social structures in the region, which are characterized by big differences in aspects like social class, race (which can be taken in some cases as cultural construction more than the color of the skin itself) and region, thus making soccer, in this sense, a positive reinforcer of a united national identity as well as an element that closes gaps between groups.

It is important to understand that national and local soccer teams are a very important element in Latin-American Society given many factors, (some of them briefly mentioned above) in which, symbols, practices, speeches and actions destined to construct ways and elements to define what we would call “national” are formed.

This assumption is based on a “comprehension of a nation as a way of cultural elaboration, (as Antonio Gramsci1 used to explain them), which comes from a process

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1 Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was an Italian writer, politician and political theorist. A founding member and onetime leader of the Communist Party of Italy, he was imprisoned by Mussolini's Fascist regime. His writings are heavily concerned with the analysis of culture and political leadership and he is notable as a highly original thinker within the Marxist tradition. He is renowned for his concept of cultural hegemony as a means of maintaining the state in a capitalist society (Wikipedia.com)
of elements articulation" (Ramirez Franklin, 2002) "In the constitution of national and ethnic identities, anonymous processes and conscious projects, contingent functional structures and intentional actions of individuals and the community interact" (Barsa, 1999), and, as we know, this environment of construction and definition is full of conflicts and tensions, in which meanings can be merely partial and "establishment, and affiliation acts criss-cross with moments of exclusion, disapproval, displacement and intellectual debate. National identities are thus constructions in permanent redesign and dispute" (Bustamante, 1997).

We cannot talk about football, and all the feelings and dynamics it creates simply as "political instrument of legitimacy" (Ramirez, 2002), or in the quest for legitimacy, nor as simply mass culture and its drug-like "effect over a group of passive consumers, captured in merchandise and image games" (Bromberger, 1991), as some branches of sociology have tried to paint the sport on several occasions. On the other hand I, and many other people, think that it is necessary to re-think and review football as something much deeper, and to study the dynamics it creates on a social, political, international, and economical level, given the political, economical, social, and historical realities and moments of every country and region, as well as the paradoxes and routes in which football "circulates, is consumed and signified by the spectators," (Ibid) in a way that can allow us to re-formulate the entire footballer scene.

For this thesis I have chosen to focus on the three regional Latin-American "leaders", Brazil, Mexico and Argentina, given the natural importance they have in the region; Uruguay, because this little nation with just over three million people has achieved amazing things and was one of the very first places were soccer was developed in the region; Ecuador my home country, a place that sees football as a reference point in every sense; and Costa Rica, a small Central American nation, that has improved its level of play incredibly, and is an interesting example of how football works in that zone of the American Continent. This selection can sound arbitrary, and it may unfairly suggest that other countries do not have the same level of intense attachment to the sport, which is why I have tried to mention examples and cases from many other countries in a region whose heart beats with footballer passion. However, it would take a project much larger in scope to address every country in the region; I will do my best to include elements which we, as Latin Americans, share as a whole.
2. The fields of the game.

Football is a system of relations and representations, which produce a symbolic integration of the population around several components: It produces and attracts, from the quality of sport as well as from the spheres directly or indirectly linked to it. This symbolic integration is built through practices and messages which soccer generates in the context of changing environments. (Carrion, 2005)

2.1 Identities and nationalisms

According to Jiménez (1999), "identities come from a double situation: on one hand the condition of ownership, which represents and expresses the union to territory, gender, class generation or family, and on the other hand the functional feature assumed from us by our role as fan, player, sports manager or leader. Both of these origins can be contradictory under some circumstances, mutually exclusive or functional, depending on the place and time, and given the cultural condition they have" (Ibid). From this dual quality, several questions can be raised, for example: "How can my identity be constructed as Ecuadorian or a member of any given Latin American country (Territorial ownership) around the national football team, if I am journalist, fan, or sports leader (Function)? Or in another way: "How can identity be represented in my country, if the national team is composed by several people of different races, styles and personalities? How can we establish an identity if I am male, young and a businessman in contrast with someone who is female, middle aged and worker? (Ibid)

On one hand, what does it mean being a fan of a team such as Paraguay or Uruguay (both characterized by strength and passion), or of a team like Argentina (characterized by great technique) or Brazil (the beautiful way to play soccer, the “Jogo Bonito”), and what does it mean to be a supporter of Boca Juniors, Cerro Porteno or Penarol (teams known as “common people’s clubs” with huge strength) or River Plate, Olimpia or Liga de Quito (related with the elites and good technique)? And besides all this, there is my relationship to my national team, which gathers players from many clubs and has a style completely different from my own club (Carrion, 2005). Some sociologists like Antezana (2003) divide them into club fans,
"tifosi," and national team fans, "goal identity," and describe how the dynamics among them can create confusion and even tension between the first and the second.

In the words of Carrion (2005), football is a place where "collective and multiple" identifications are produced, because it is a symbolic and symbiotic arena. That is, it is an arena in the sense that it gathers society through different elements, and collective because the many social groups in it can be identified as one group and as a counterpart to others (multiple, given both these characteristics). It is "definitely a public space (Arena) that integrates (symbiotic) and represents (symbolic) from several elements which converge simultaneously" (Ibid).

2.2 Kinds of identities created through soccer.

The ownership and identity feelings football creates are several and from different origins. To mention just a few:

"Team’s identity coming from its origin": For example if the team was created by working class people in a sea-port area, the people will be identified with Boca Juniors (Arg.). If the team was born in a period of history in which nationalism and the army were very important, the people will identify themselves with Racing Club de Avellaneda (Arg) or El Nacional (Ecuador, a team that started as the army’s club), if a university shows its team to the world such as La Universidad de Chile (Chi) or Pumas (Mex.), most of its supporters will be middle-class people with some connection to the university.

The social connection with a team does not at all omit the original image it represented: a club can still be connected with some specific majority social group, which later on makes the people define and give the club a specific name, nickname or connection with particular word. For Example: River Plate (Arg), Millonarios (Col), “the rich teams,” while in Ecuador we have the “working classes club,” as is the case of Aucas (Ecu), or Aurora (Bol).

"The identity given the club’s playing style": Football is a team game in which each part forms a whole that plays in a specific way. Eduardo Galeano (1995) mentions that the specific way each team plays “represent and reveal the personal profile of each community, and confirm its right to be different.” This special way of playing comes from the club’s origin too, and can be real or fictitious, attracting
people who think or identify themselves with the mode of play. For example: Paraguay, or Deportivo Quito (Ecu), are both characterized by their strength and passion, Argentina is well known for great technique, and Brazil has made the colorful and pretty way of playing its main feature, thus they look for players and coaches who confirm their identity and style. As a result, we have stereotypes such as, EMELEC (Ecu), “The Blue Ballet,” so named because of the beauty and synchrony of their style, or Deportivo, Quito (Ecu), which is known for being “Puro Corazon” (Spanish slang for “playing with pure passion/strength/vehemence”) (Carrion, 2005).

“Identity by player”: Identities can also be created around players, despite that they are isolated elements in each club. Players carry with them a certain personality, style, position on the field, ethnicity and age, and transmit imaginary images to the fans through themselves. This situation can lead to several reactions. For example:

- If Maradona plays in Napoles (Ita), I will support Napoles; if he plays in Newel’s Old Boys (Arg) I will support them. In this case we can see the predominance of the player over the ownership of the team – identity goes from the player to the club.

- If Pele leaves Santos (Bra) to play in any other team, he becomes a traitor. In this case the ownership feelings towards the club are more important than the feelings for the player.

- If Ronaldinho plays using Nike equipment in Barcelona (Spa), I will buy and use Nike equipment. In this case, we can see the brand being more important that the club or the player, making us think that Ronaldinho, more than a Barcelona player, is a Nike’s worker, and more than a soccer player he is a clothing model. (Carrion, 2005)

“Uniform identity”: The team’s colors also become an element to build their identity. With the club’s particular colors, the supporter identifies himself to everybody else with pride, at the same time, the colors become inclusive, the fan starts to see himself as part of the team. This is why expressions like “today we play,” “we won,” “we are player number 12” or “the 12th player” exist.

“Membership Identity”: This refers to the purely territorial sense of the word: if my country plays another country, my nationalism will prevail. As far as clubs goes, this is not always the rule; sometimes we support foreign teams to beat the
national ones given previous rivalries. There are only a few clubs that become “national clubs” given their ability to gather supporters no matter the region; for example, Barcelona (Ecu) is a “national club,” and Barcelona (Spain) is a “local and global club,” but not a Spanish one. (Carrion, 2005)

“Identity socialization”: This facet of identity is constructed with the huge importance of legacy and the way we socialize and interact with our family and friends. A generational transmission of this element can make us identify ourselves with a specific team, and later on we can create a “Derivative Identity” to other clubs which have the same style, or come from similar conditions. For example, a fan of Universidad de Chile could also be a fan of Universitario de Deportes (Per), and a fan of San Lorenzo de Almagro (Arg) could be a fan of Cerro Porteno (Par). (Both teams share the same typical colors and uniform design (jersey with blue and red vertical stripes).

“Identity with success”: Since success and efficiency are probably the main elements in both the market and life as a whole, it has also become a very important element to gain fans in football. “Winning is not important, it is the only thing.” A champion team always has more of a chance to attract people than a team which is always in the last places of the tournaments. Playing in a nice, attractive way is not as important as it used to be; nowadays the most important is to win, to score the “Gol”2.

“Opposition identity”: The essence of football lies in confrontation, and as well the essence of nationalisms and identities. Rival and rivalry are the life of football. Encountering and confronting different groups is what gives soccer and rivals a reason to exist. “In rivalry there is a historical process of recognizing ‘the other one’ (the rival), this process gets stronger through the maximum display of confrontation, ‘El Clasico/The derby.’ It is here that poor clash against rich, Universitario de Deportes vs Alianza Lima (Peru), Nacional vs. Penarol (Uruguay), Fluminense vs Flamengo (Brazil). Regions clash with one another, Chivas (Guadalajara) vs. America (Mexico City), Barcelona (Guayaquil) vs Liga (Quito), etc. The derbies are the maximum expression of the symbolic dispute” (Carrion, 2005).

2 “The interjection Gol, comes from the English word “goal” which means the objective or plan to achieve, and the goalframe (“meta” in Spanish) is the main aim. Herein lies a big difference with American football, for instance, in which advancing on the field is the main purpose and scoring a goal is a result of this”(Carrion, 2005)
All the previously mentioned statements show the symbolic power soccer has to make people identify themselves in simultaneous and multiple ways, which is why it has become an important means of social attraction in which will, passions, feelings, and several and contradictory interests converge. Because of this, football ends up describing itself as an “encounter,” a place where the social affiliations, adhesion, ownership feelings are different but not mutually exclusive" (Carrion, 2005).

2.3 A place for everybody.

Bordieu says “the soccer field is a place independent of all economic and social conditions in a society,” so the elements of football become more or less important, according to the social and historical moment of any given society. In any case, the game always creates a group of oppositions and rivalries, as a way to express different tensions and divisions between groups, an ideal space to show several antagonisms, and on the other hand also contributes to produce a social order of different sorts. It also creates renewed social links and ownership feelings in persons of very different economic, ethnic and social conditions.

Starting from these statements, in the words of Giulianotti (1999), two principles necessary to the construction of social identities are activated. On one hand, the game creates “a binary combination of oppositions and rivalries, as a dramatic way of expression of tensions and divisions among groups,” thus is an ideal space to express different sorts of antagonisms. “Football as itself, alludes to original freedom, improvisation, capability, vital happiness, divertissements tendency, impetuosity, and imponderability, which is the origin of the game,” as well as an “opposed tendency, the rationalization, the need of submitting the game to arbitrary rules and obligations” (Medina Cano, 1996).

On the other hand, the way in which this sport “contributes to the reproduction of a social order” and, as mentioned before, the way it “generates social links and renewed ownership feelings in people of different social classes.” Such linkages are the basis of horizontal integration, and what the English historian Bennedict Anderson (1991) termed “Imaginary Communities,” a theory he used to “understand the
formation of modern nations, and the identity links of the clubs and the nations’ supporters” (Taken from Alvez de Souza, 1996).

All these factors, as well as football’s spectacular capability, its rituality, its status as a creator of symbols and strengthener of emotions, its ability to both issue and receive messages, have become bigger and stronger due to several reasons; thus, we can understand football as “a group of scenic and spoken acts, that occur inside and outside of the stadiums” (Villena, 2000).

That said, we can agree with Jaques Ramirez when he describes the sense of what we call the “nation” or “national” as being constructed both inside of and from the soccer field. And from the very beginning of the professionalization of the game in Latin-America, at the beginning of the last century, the organizational structure of the tournaments represented antagonisms in the hearts of the biggest cities and regions within the nations, which coincided with the way the politic and economic power relations were distributed at that time.³

³Even today we can see that the teams from the biggest cities, which have historically won all the tournaments, still hold on to their hegemony: Cerro Porteno and Olympia in Paraguay, Colo and, Universidad Nacional de Chile, Flamenco, Sao Paulo, Corinthians, in Brazil, Barcelona (Guayaquil), and El Nacional, in Ecuador, America and Monterrey in Mexico, Alianza Lima and Universitario de Deportes in Peru, The Strongest in Bolivia, Nacional and Penarol in Uruguay, Millonarios in Colombia, Boca Juniors, River plate, Independiente and Racing in Argentina, among many others, are all team from either the capital city area of each nation or a big center with economic power.

The phenomenon of small teams winning important tournaments is new to the sport in the region. The most popular case is the breakthrough of “Club Sportivo Cienciano” from Cuzco, Peru, a very small team, which became known after winning the “Copa Sudamericana” in 2003, defeating the powerful River Plate from Argentina, and the “Recopa Sudamericana” in 2004 defeating the almighty Boca Juniors from Argentina. Both Argentinean teams had a huge fan base, lots of money, and a rich history of international titles.
3. The beginnings of institutionalized antagonism.

Since the beginning of the institutionalization of soccer tournaments in the region, the different local tournaments at the beginning of the century, had to be played several times at the same time at the national tournaments, and despite there were already several National Football Federations created in some countries, they could not hegemonize the process as championship organizers right away.

Just after a few decades they eventually did, by organizing the National Championship of each country, and at the same time, the teams giving priority to this tournament, instead of the former regional or provincial tournament.

Many of the regional tournaments still exist in places like Brazil, and are also played at the same time as the National Championship, but the National Tournament has more importance, and recognition. This consolidation of the National Football Federations of each country represents a very important first step in the sports administration of national tendency, articulating local, regional, and provincial organizations in one national organization, and asserting that the National Tournament is the most important one and goes over all the rest of previously disputed championships.

The "uninterrupted organization of national tournaments can be seen as a propitious element to confront: linkage and recognition, regional styles of playing, and representatives of different states, regions and provinces (a way to integrate by the rivalry and symbolic enmity of the competitive game)” (Lever, taken from Davila, 2000). In this way, the formation of already professional teams in hundreds of cities was both promoted and increased.

Thus, fans activated, and still activate, intense local senses of ownership and affirmation of identities, constructed from specific “geographical, ethnical, cultural and social class representations” (Ramirez, 2002). The “clasicos” (Spanish for “soccer derbies”) of teams from the same city are in many cases much more attractive than matches between teams of different regions or provinces, and even more attractive than international games. It is quite normal to find fans (especially from the “Barras bravas” (hooligans) or other organized groups) much more interested in their local teams than in the national team.
In Ecuador, as well throughout Latin America, these attitudes of nationalism and identity constructions have become more evident since we started to participate in the World Cup Qualificatory Games and other international competitions such as the America Cup. Such competitions constitute a field to unite the entire population under patriotic speeches that reconcile and unite all the national differences in matters of regional disputes and racial issues as well, especially in regard to black or indigenous population.

In the Ecuadorian case between Quito and Guayaquil, the biggest cities, the first located in the highlands, Capital of the Republic and the political center of the country, and the second located on the coast and the economical and productive nucleus of the country.

This case is very interesting because Ecuador is one of the few countries in the region with “two heads” that control almost all the power in many senses, as well as in an equal amount. In the vast majority of Latin America only one huge city is the head of state in which both powers, economical and political are concentrated completely or almost completely, as well as population.

For example, Lima in Peru, Buenos Aires in Argentina, Santiago in Chile, Montevideo in Uruguay, Asuncion in Paraguay, among others. I don’t mean that there are no another important or relatively large cities in such countries, but, always the national decisions are usually based on what is decided in the previously mentioned places given the concentration of production factors, money, capitals of different kinds or political leadership.

Blacks and indigenous people have usually been discriminated against in several spheres around the region, but in football a specific case can be found in Ecuador. Despite the fact that blacks are only four percent of the Ecuadorian population, the vast majority of the national and other local football teams are always composed of black people. This might be the only case in the region, and one of the very few in the planet, in which such a small minority has always been, since the beginning of the practice of the game, the majority of the national delegation in every competition. In the World Cup of 2002 more than 60% of the Ecuadorian delegation was black; in the following World Cup the number rose to almost 70%.
4. Mass media

The intense regionalist and nationalistic feelings football engenders have always been spread mainly through the media, since football is always represented as a series of international rivalries and nationalist antagonisms around international competitions. Identification and elements of social solidarity have been constructed at both the national and international level. The mass media industry has been fundamentally important in this construction, especially in the last decades, given the worldwide broadcasting of events like the Soccer World Cup. Such international publicity increases the already mentioned qualities of soccer, because media is more able to create symbols, condense emotions, and receive and send messages in a massive way. In the World Cup in France, 1998, the accumulated TV audience reached more than 37 billion people, almost three times more than the 13.5 billion people of Mexico 1986; the final match in France’s World Cup was tuned in to by more than one billion people, which means one sixth of the world population watched the game! (www.fifa.com).

The invention of Ecuadorian Nationality – and to a certain point the Latin American one – through soccer, implies specific processes of production, circulation, and reception of several speeches that would not be possible on such a scale without the mass media. It is because of the amazing broadcasting we have in Ecuador and Latin America as a whole, that we have a unified communication system, letting us live simultaneously all the incidents of the games even in the most remote places of the countries. Throughout the region in general, mass media has always crystallized incidents of frustration and victory throughout the years (Ramirez, Jaques, 2001). The role of the mass media as power element is constant, and huge, several examples of which will be shown in each of the following chapters.
5. Football and nations.

It is interesting to note that, in contrast with local positions or determinations, in Latin America, mostly in the 50s and 60s, a structure of national and international character was constituted. It is precisely in these decades that many of the national soccer federations started to work at establishing equality as far as distribution of players and regions. According to the demands of FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association), decisions were made on how many players, and from where, and which club would take part in the national team. The destabilizing effects of these decisions are still reported and numerous conflicts have arisen because of them; for example, in the disputes of team leaders who struggle to get the control or presidency of the national soccer federation, or the designation of venues in which the national soccer team has to play as home for the qualificatory matches towards the World Cups.

The formation of the national football teams in this way “has also been related with the international environment of competition in which soccer has developed itself, even before its professionalization,” (Cabria, 2000). All the compulsory rules of international competition are the ones that forced the member federations to organize and structure national teams. Later on, these rules imposed and created the final nationalization and professionalization of the game. It is in this international competitive space where the national disputes in matters of race, region, politics and social class have been more or less attenuated and relieved, although there are still some hard to fix issues. In the Ecuadorian national team of the last decade, or the Brazilian team at the beginning of the last century, for example, the idea of “whitening” the National Team created a huge outcry. It may be interesting to mention the Ecuadorian example of 1999. (See foot-note number 5)

Despite FIFA’s intervention, “local and regional ownership structures have not disappeared, in the development of Ecuadorian” and Latin-American Football, and

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6 By “whitening the National team” (Revista Estadio, February, 1999), some people meant to diminish the number of black players in the national representations. According to many people, and in a purely racist statement, it was believed the reason for international failure, and specifically the one after a junior tournament in 1999, was due to the team’s majority of black players. In Ecuador, but as well as in the whole region, blacks have usually been associated with negative characteristics such as laziness, criminality, stupidity and lack of courage despite their physical strength.
even when the goals achieved by local teams surpass those achieved by the national representations, (for example "Cienciano" from Peru, a two time winner of international tournaments, Olympia, a champion several times of “Copa Libertadores de America” in Paraguay, or Colo from Chile, a finalist in the Intercontinental Cup of 1990), national tournaments of several kinds and categories have been established, and at the same time, national soccer organizations and national football teams have gained legitimacy by the “administrative and bureaucratic rationalization they have gone through” (Ramirez, 2000). However, they have also created or increased tense disputes among regional organizations, as well as the already mentioned racial and ethnic problems.

These processes of nationalization through soccer have been characterized, in most of the Latin-American Region (except the well known cases of Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil all of them world champions and rich in the old successful championship tradition), by bad results. Peru had quite a good team in the 70s, a decade in which they won the America cup in 1975 and advanced to the quarterfinals round in the World Cup of 1970. Chile, Colombia got to the America Cup in 2001, but that achievement was diminished given that most of the participant countries presented weak teams, and Argentina (the strongest South American Squad at that moment) decided not to take part in the competition, given several bomb threats by the Guerrillas and Para-military groups.

Chile, Ecuador and Paraguay, and briefly Bolivia, had some good moments in the 90s, and also as far as international amateur competitions, although no

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7 The Colombian National Team has been involved several times in serious affairs with the Colombian Mafia, guerrillas, and Drug Lords. It was well known that Pablo Escobar, the biggest drug lord in history, was a big supporter of the club “Atletico Nacional de Medallion” with money and equipment. He also started his political career as a sports leader before running for public positions. The Rodriguez Orejuela Brothers, main leaders of a rival cartel, also provided massive support the club “America de Cali”.

In 1994, the Colombian defender Andres Escobar was shot dead in Colombia, supposedly by the drug cartels, after scoring an own goal, in the game versus USA in the World Cup of the same year. The purported reason was that the cartel had lost huge bets in the competition.

Freddy Rincon, the famous Colombian defender and midfielder, was accused this year of receiving drug money and cooperating with the drug cartels. Rene Higuita, the popular Colombian goalkeeper, went to prison in 1993 because of his links with Pablo Escobar. In 2004 Alveiro Usuriaga, the famous forward, was shot death, and in 2006 Elson Becerra was gunned down. Both murders have several theories about their link to obscure politicians and drug lords.
international professional tournament has been achieved either. But this history has lately changed in some countries, positive results started to appear, in places like Costa Rica, Venezuela, Ecuador, and even Bolivia a decade years ago, the distances as far as soccer goes got shorter, and the indisputable hegemony of some teams started to shake or at least be questioned, one of the clearest examples of this was Brazil, who almost did not qualify to the Korea Japan World Cup in 2002, given the poor results, versus teams they thought weak or small.

But with both negative speech and mentality through the years, a solid and constant feeling of “failure and negativism has been instilled” (Ramirez, 2002). In the Ecuadorian case, and in others previously mentioned, this speech has been finally counter-attacked by the late positive results in international competitions. In other nations, however, the new results have increased the prevalence of such a mentality and feelings, or in some countries like Peru, Chile, Colombia and Bolivia it has promoted that desire of “glorifying” the past, creating feelings which keep disappointing the old generations and the new ones as well, with the very popular saying of “before everything used to be much better”. Mass media speeches have also promoted ambiguous stories and feelings in every nation, which tell us about the past or present “almost achieved” successes.

With such a mentality, other feelings and ideas have grown in the past as well, for example the creation of a very interesting phenomenon of constant nationalizations of foreigners (most of them Argentineans, Uruguayans and Brazilians), to make them play as locals in the different national teams in the “transcendental competitions.” “Just as in other fields, this idea of improving “what is national” based on mixtures, fusions and foreign importation emerges. Ambiguous practices and examples of national affirmation in which, images of a national handicap are melted, with images of exaltation of first world soccer” (Ramirez, 2002).

As a corollary of this we can say “the nationalization on the Ecuadorian” – and Latin-American Football – “and the progressive transformation of the national soccer

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8 In Ecuador for instance, before qualifying for the last two World Cups (2002 and 2006), the media created a sort of a hero aura over the National Team who played the qualification games towards the World Cup held in England in 1966 and almost qualified. They focused on how brave and courageous the goalkeeper, Pablo Ansaldo was, because he played almost all the definitory match with three broken ribs, “a fusion of masculinity and moral tales, which are related to the battles we fought for independence”. The sociologist Archetty has stated that stereotypes of masculinity in modern nationalisms depends on the relation between morality and corporal structure (2001).
team, in the middle of national identification, are not only a reflex of other patriotic tales, but they have also configured a place where this process crystallizes a symbolic space of fundamental importance in the formation of imaginary ambiguity and national stereotypes" (Archetti, 2001).

I would like to emphasize, and I think have mentioned before, that national soccer teams as a symbol of patriotic gathering, and demonstration, are a rising phenomenon since the time in which the teams have experienced relative success in international competitions. For example: In Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay the societies have seen successful national soccer teams for many years, in the rest of the countries in Latin-America this is something new, from the 70s in the cases of teams like Mexico or Peru. Given the international achievements, national antagonisms and the new turn media has given to soccer, and in other countries like Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Costa Rica, this is basically something seen since the late 80s and 90s and it has its roots also in the new processes of "conduction and administration of national teams, their better sports results" and the vast attention mass media and market put on them" (Ramirez Franklin, 2002).

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9 Ecuador in the 90s until the end of 2001 won 73% of all its international official and non-official matches, and in the qualifiers towards the World Cup in Korea and Japan, reaching the qualification in second place from all the South American teams, over Brazil, and just a few points under Argentina. As well, the youth 20 National Soccer Team qualified for the very first time for a World Cup of that category, in Argentina in the year 2001.
6. The Ecuadorian Case.

The national tournament was established in Ecuador only in 1968, showing for the very first time a national administrative and sports tendency to unify through rivalry and symbolic competition. At the beginning, regional and local clubs – and national teams later on – activated strong ownership feelings. It is important to mention that these kinds of feelings in Ecuador were promoted by the media, especially the written press of cities like Quito and Guayaquil mainly during the America Cups of 1941, 1942, 1955 and 1957, and in 1965, the year in which the regional confrontation promoted by the regional newspapers was ferocious.

"The substantive improvement in the Ecuadorian National Soccer Team started in a total reorganization and rationalization of the game" which started by reconforming all the national teams, junior and senior. For the very first time a players formation process began to be developed in the early stages. Dussan Draskovic, from Montenegro, started such a process in 1988 and this process layed the foundations for what we can see now in this nation. Similar things have happened lately in Venezuela with Argentinean coaches.

This process covered deep changes in "technique, tactic and psychological aspects, and overall a whole new conception of how to plan and face up to international tournaments. Many of the players formed in this cycle, which ended in 1994, were also part of the national teams in following processes under other coaches." The growing "proffesionalization, good behavior" and tactic discipline of the players marked the entrance of the Ecuadorian Soccer to the international "high competition," and at the same time its intense modernization and constant actualization of pragmatic, standardized and utilitarian norms in our postmodern football times." (Ramirez, 2002).

It is worthy to mention, as the main "Ecuadorian Football Milestones," the Olympic qualifiers of 1992 in Asuncion, Paraguay, and above all the America Cup

10 It is no longer seen or tolerated at all, undisciplined acts such as players "showing up late or drunk for training, and even in company of prostitutes, among others" (Velazquez, 2002).

11 Many sociologists have mentioned several transformations of soccer, "from the constitution of flexible and non-regulated markets of players, coaches and strategies, changes of styles and practice of the game, until the mass-mediatization and business status, as features of the new global postmodern football" (Ibid).
held in Ecuador in 1993. This particular period of time constitutes a historic beginning in “sports performance, transformations in organizative processes and mass media mobilization, which catapulted the national football team, as a clear and sharp space of affirmation in matters of patriotic exaltations and speeches” (Ramirez, 2002).

As we know, football is often figured as a “tribal, ritual and symbolic war, and given this facts offers a privileged turf for the construction of collective identities and local, national or regional antagonisms” (Bromberger, 1994). The same author also explains that it is here where we have to search, and point out, the ability to mobilize and expose loyalties, and thus the success and huge popularity of the game, which is based on “physical contact and open competitiveness.”

In the particular case of the America Cup in 1993 held in Ecuador, the concept of the National team as “Everybody’s Nation” came into use. Sixto Duran Ballen, the president of Ecuador at the time, expressed the following:

“The America Cup has proven that, if we get together we can achieve impossible things, to build the motherland, and definitely practicing sports is building motherland” (El Comercio, 12/Jun/1993). In this, as in no other period of the Ecuadorian history, it was shown that when the National Team plays, nationalistic feelings flourish, and the “notion of “motherland” reached exacerbated levels, thus creating a strong speech of ownership and identity affirmation” (Ramirez, 2002). The creation of the slogan “Ecuador todos somos la Seleccion” (Ecuador, we all are the National Team), is a corollary of this.

6.1 Ecuador vs. Perú, final round......?

It is very interesting to mention one very important element in this country’s case: After October 1998, when Ecuador finally closed and defined its borders with its southern and eastern neighbor, Peru, after more than 150 years of diplomatic, social and military tensions, in which both countries clashed several times for the biggest piece of land still in dispute in the last century (more than 300,000 sq Km located in

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12 The enterprise CEDATOS, did a survey in which the Ecuadorians answered that: “89% of the population had been keeping an eye on the National Team; that the most important event of the last times in our country had been the America Cup (58%); another 58% said that Alex Aguinaga (Capitan o f the national team, until 2002, one of the best players in America until his retirement in 2004, and also an Ecuadorian Soccer icon) was the most important figure of the country, and an impressive 52% answered that the most important thing for the country, at that moment, was to win the semifinal match against Mexico” (El Comercio, 30/Jun/1993).
the Amazon, until 1997 and after that year, more than 32,000 sq Km. in the South). Peru was blamed for invading and occupying by force almost all the area in dispute of what was considered Ecuadorian soil according to the “Battle of Tarqui Agreement,” which was later considered invalid by the other country. I mention this fact here because after the peace and final border demarcation was reached in 1998, one of the main nationalistic elements for the Ecuadorians disappeared; the tension with Peru was probably what used to unite us the most as “Ecuadorians” until 1998.

The imaginary construction and affirmation of “The National” through the idea of Ecuador as a country which deserves a bigger part of the Amazon Jungle and River, and the convergence of these ideas with other constructions against Peru as “America’s Cain,” lost symbolic importance and efficiency as a cultural element over whom all senses about ownership, membership and nationality were based upon. No more war, no more antagonism, no more military tensions with our natural born “nemesis” opened the path for soccer and its “symbolic war” status, in which many elements of the Ecuadorian Nationalism would later be redefined and reorganized.

Even after this, as the new generations seemed to forget a hazy war – though it was still alive for the older generations – the militarism is “brought back,” as many slogans used before for military purposes began to be used and linked with the national soccer team. The relationship between soccer, nationalism, politics and mass media industries became clearly evident.

In all of Ecuador we could, and can still, see examples of nationalistic rhetoric every time the National Teams play, in newspapers, magazines, TV and the rest of the media. This is especially evident every time we play against Peru: all kinds of advertisements, commercials and programs say things like “Ecuador and Peru in a war to get France this time,” “Come on Team: Not even one step back.”13 “We will be together as one fist... we all are the National Soccer Team,” “Everybody’s Team,” (El Comercio, El Universo, 1996, 2006) among many others.

“The fact that Peru is the rival gives the match special ‘flavor.’ People can accept any loss, except against Peru. The player Chiriboga14 invokes his teammates

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13 “Not even one step back” was the Ecuadorian motto used by Ecuador’s former President Sixto Duran Ballen, when asked to move back the milestones of the border in the 1995 Ecuadorian–Peruvian War, the last and probably the only “successful” one for Ecuador, in matters of wins in terms such as defended territory, human casualties, and material losses on the other side.
and the press to form a “Support Front” for the National Soccer Team” (El Universo, 24/Apr/2006).

In other political events, “Before the game the president gives the National Soccer Team the ‘Not even one step back’ Medal of Honor”...Creating this way, a patriotic symphony or polyphony always having media, politics, nationalism and soccer together.” The symbolic association between soccer and the nation is always there, and is known and popular mostly because of the media in all its forms, as well as the unconscious social and political commitment to it, expressed in evident and hidden actions (Ibid). All the initial nationalistic ideas we used to have as part of our mentality always had Peru as one of the main characters, given our historical rivalry and antagonism; nowadays these have been clearly redefined on the soccer field since peace has been achieved.

An interesting quote in the context of this essay is what the subdirectory of the Military Superior School (ESMIL) in Parcayacu, Ecuador, base and headquarters of the Ecuadorian National Team said: “In Parcayacu the players have developed a sense of patriotism because they have had as an example the Cenepa heroes. What the National Team is doing is a great example of ‘building motherland’... because they are also fighting to leave the name of our country very high” (El Universo, 08/Nov/2001).

6.2 Mass media in Ecuador.

Media, as we can see from the previous quotes, is very important, perhaps now more than ever before, particularly since their speech is changing drastically, and the

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14 Luis Chiriboga Acosta was at that time and is still today (2007) the president of the Ecuadorian Football Federation (FEF by the Spanish initials). He has never been a soccer player, and he is the most successful president of this federation ever, achieving international recognition for Ecuador and the qualification to a World Cup for the very first and second time in Ecuadorian History. He has run many times as a member of many public politic positions, representing the “Social Christian Party” (PSC in its Spanish initials). According to many people he is just another “smart guy” who, after trying several times to get into politics, got hold of one of the most important positions in the country.

15 Cenepa is the name of the Area in the south of Ecuador in which the last war between Ecuador and Peru was held. The relative military “success” in this war created that “hero aura” in some soldiers who fought there in order to defend what, according to the Army, politicians, society and media, was defined as our “National Pride and Motherland”.

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reach of it increases day by day. Before, as mentioned above, mass media used to be pessimistic about the national soccer team, but that is changing and now it is becoming a more positive, optimistic element, showing victory as a factor of national union. Sometimes even the national government has intervened by talking to TV channels so the signal of many soccer games can be open to the public, so that everybody can watch the matches on regular TV, and not on pay per view system or delayed. The symbolic importance of football and mass media to the politic life and consolidation of nations is really important, as these examples show.

The statistics spread by mass media also show and help this nationalistic strengthening. According to the enterprise specialized in statistics, “Monitor de la Opinion Publica,” in November of 2001 in a public query, in an answer to one of the questions more than 80% of the Ecuadorians talked about the qualification to the World Cup in Korea-Japan as something positive that had elevated the Ecuadorian self-esteem and national pride, and should be an example for politicians. In another question 61.56% of the people said this is the base we should use to build our national identity, and in another 77.19% said that the performance of the Ecuadorian National Team had definitely helped to unify all the Ecuadorians (See table No.1).

“Goal, gooooooooooooal of Ecuador!!!!!, Ecuador!!!, Ecuador, my country, my country, we are going to the World Cup!!!!!, thanks mother for having given me birth Ecuadorian”. These were the expressions of Omar Machado, Sports Journalist and one of the most popular faces in the Ecuadorian sports media, after Ecuador defeated Peru 2-1 in Lima, Peru, in a decisive match for both teams in the qualificatory games to the World Cup Korea-Japan 2002. This expression, just one among many other similar ones, said by many Latin-American journalists, and also said not for the first time in this context, show the ownership feelings football can create. Along with many others Machado found a sense of pride, ownership, even gratefulness towards her mother for having him in Ecuadorian soil, and all because of the national soccer team.

6.3 The “Bolillo” Gomez affair.

The super massive demonstration of civic and patriotic fervor, all over the country when the national team wins or plays well, the never seen before public
manifestations and protest after the “Bolillo Gomez incident”\(^\text{16}\) (protests, open letters to the press, all the TV channels broadcasting at the same time public messages against the attack) condemning the even, as well as the public anguish after he resigned for a short period of time (even the country’s President, sent personal letters to stop him from doing that), are among others a proof of the game’s capability group, summon, stimulate and mobilize “the deteriorated senses of loyalty to the nation nowadays, in a qualitative and quantitative way, so immense that can only be compared with the one seen, in the last Peru-Ecuador conflict of 1995”\(^{\text{16}}\)(Ramirez, 2002).

\(^{\text{16}}\) Towards the very first qualification in Ecuadorian History to the World Cup Korea Japan 2002, Hernan “El Bolillo” Gomez, Colombian coach of the national team, was attacked and shot several times while eating in a hotel, by people related to the Roldodist Ecuadorian Party (PRE), and the Bucaram family. Apparently, they were upset because he did not select one of their family members to be part of the national delegation traveling to Asia.

The Bucaram family has been in politics for decades in Ecuador, reaching their highest moment when Abdala Bucaram got hold of the Ecuadorian presidency in August of 1996. Within months his popularity and acceptance indexes plummeted and he was accused of embezzling millions of dollars of public funds, causing him to be dismissed from the Ecuadorian presidency by the congress on grounds of alleged “incapacidad mental” (mental disability) in February of 1997. His government became infamous for corrupt acts, populism, and public displays of vulgarity. It is interesting to remember that Abdala Bucaram started as a sprinter in the Olympic National Team in 1972, and, while president of the country, he assumed the presidency of “Barcelona Sporting Club” (the most popular Ecuadorian football club) simultaneously, and wanted to hire Diego Armando Maradona to play one match in the team’s presentation night for one million dollars. He never played the match. Given the political events, rumors say he received half of the money, which was requested, in advance for his appearance. The relations and dynamic between politics, football, power, and popularity are unique and evident in this example.
7. The “Garra Charrua”¹⁷ (Uruguay)

The construction of an identity and nationality, is always a long and complex project, and in the Uruguayan case we can see that as well, in this country the state has given several theories of what being “Charrua” or “Oriental”¹⁸ is. In this mission they have many times confused the people, and confuse the state itself, with some of the “symbolic creations promoted in order to justify their existence. The heroic interpretation of the national history and the action of producing an idea of “Uruguayan” Nation, despite the concrete events, which lead to the constitution of Uruguay as an independent country”(Marrero, 2005) are linked.

Both are the result of a conscious and premeditated effort of constructing a “mythical narrative” elaborated from the official history and geography, to later on create a sense of community, in a process that was confusing, brief and tinged by several interests, process which from the Original perspective of Artigas¹⁹ (“tragic hero and foundational myth of the Oriental Nation”(Pyneirua, 2005)) went wrong. Several components were part of the project of defining the “Uruguayan identity and nationalism” most of them carried on from the government, reconstructing and redefining historical facts, this plus the creation of some features part real and part fictitious, were used to re-found community feelings “lost by the breaking-off of the original links of the numerous immigrant waves that formed Uruguay. In complex ways and variable degrees, soccer, -tacitly named national sport-, in linked to each

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¹⁷ “Garra Charrua” could be translated as “Charruan strength, vehemency, force”, the name Charrua, comes from the Indigenous tribe who used to live in the current Uruguay.

¹⁸ “Charrua” as mentioned above, was the name of the indigenous tribe that populated the majority of the Uruguayan soil, they were known for being very brave and fierce, and were fundamental part in the so called “Grupo de los 33 Orientales”(Spanish for “Group of the 33 Orientals”) which started an expedition from Argentina to liberate Uruguay from Brazil in 1825. The Charruas were progressively exterminated and by 1830 there were a very few left, nowadays they have disappeared and there are just a few mixed Uruguayans that have Charrua ancestors. Oriental is just a term they adopted, Because Uruguay lies east of the Uruguay River, which opens up to the Rio de la Plata’s Delta.

¹⁹ Jose Gervacio Artigas (1764-1850) was the Uruguayan Hero and the so called “Father of the Uruguayan Independence”, is ironic that during he’s life he never saugh the absolute independence of Uruguay as a separate state, but the forging of a Federation of Provinces that would include he’s country “The Oriental Province” as it was known at the time.
one of them, "(Marrero, 2005) and is an element that covers all the different narratives that have the Uruguayan Nation as a reflection element.

7.1 “El Uruguay viene de los botes/ Uruguay comes from ships”

Every body agrees the Uruguayan state started to be formed in the last decades of the XIXth Century, with events such as the creation of the Civil Registry, consolidation of lands possession, and the conformation of a free and mandatory public educational system, which was consolidated at the beginning of the XXth Century. Under the influence of Jose Batlle y Ordonez (President from 1903-1907 and 1911-1915) Uruguay sees many transformations economically, culturally and socially speaking. In the political aspect the country gets more peace and union given the loss of the rural leaders and insurgent movements, which led to a urban hegemony that remains until today. In the Economic aspect, which was linked to industrial urban sectors, over all measures to protect and promote the industry were created. Montevideo Harbor becomes the exit for products and the entrance for thousands of new immigrants, mainly Europeans.

In the social aspect the link between state and society is reinforced and he becomes a welfare provider to the people, new legislations were promoted in order to protect the workers in several ways such as the establishment of an eight-hour day shift, mandatory vacations and compensations in case of accidents among others. Which cause many more immigrants to come from Europe, because they saw in Uruguay great work conditions never seen before by them, in 1910 Europeans were 17% of the total population. (Pyneirua, 2005), because of this, the refrain “El Uruguay viene de los botes/Uruguay comes form the ships” became a national motto. In the cultural aspect the state was separated from the church and the establishment of a secular and free educational system caused the fast integration of immigrants of different faiths.

The dissapearing of the institutionalized church of the social life as a national gathering and unity factor, generated conditions “for the appearance of another symbolic universe, composed by new gathering and collective elements in a still shapeless “national identity“...Football became sports scene, public exhibition space, and encounter, debate and reflection forum”(Marrero, 2005)
In 1891 the English workers of the Uruguayan Railways founded what later on became the “Club Atletico Penarol”, in this club people from several nationalities used to converge, Uruguayans, Germans, English among others, and eight years later and with an intention of reaffirming the “national identity” the “Club Nacional de Football” was created, using as uniform the colors of the flag Artigas wanted, as a way to reaffirm the “national pride” and the team’s pride too, in opposition to the immigrant waves recently arrived, and with a more working class twist. (Is interesting that later on with the decades, Penarol started to be known as the working class’s team and Nacional was related to the elites)

With all the welfare that was growing given the new measures, football had a great opportunity to grow up and become a sport for the mass, among the elements that promoted soccer back in the day in Uruguay, mostly in the first decades of the XXth century and are related to this increasing state of general welfare we can mention: “the economy’s expansion which offered the workers good labor conditions in the industrial and service sectors; an abundant immigrant population, mostly male, pretty well integrated to the productive system and the society; a social and work legislation that guaranteed good incomes”...... which not only allowed the people to have some money destined to leisure activities,......“but also allowed them to have some free time to be destined to them, and other shows with the resulting spent of money; and at last a self-proclaimed secular society, which saw on Sundays and holidays something more than, time to be used in religious rituals” (Marrero, 2005)

Once the first clubs appeared, several tournaments were organized, and in a city that was relatively small without big or more attractions, they became really popular. Besides of the religious ceremonies still carried by part of the population, who confessed themselves mostly catholic, there was never before a space or social event that gathered followers from all social classes, and in particular the huge medium class.

Started and promoted by the English railway workers, football was also favored because the people from the railways companies, wanted to increase the number of sold tickets and compensate with soccer somehow, the low use of their services in non working days. These among other actors explain why this period of time is so big as far as the growth of the sport, bigger than Argentina and much bigger than Brazil (Pyneirua, 2005).
7.2 The “small” Uruguay in the World Cups.

The expansion of Uruguayan football was going together with the economical expansion during the first half of the century. The national team won the 1924 and 1928 Olympics, and with that record it became the host country of the very first Soccer World Cup in 1930. “While United States of America and a big part of the world suffered the effects of the worst economical crisis until that date since the fall of the Stock Exchange in October of 1929, the little nation of the “Rio de la Plata” (Literally “River of Silver” but better known in English as “River Plate”) invested 740.000 pesos of back the day, in the construction of the main stadium for the event, the “Estadio Centenario” built in a record time of 8 months” (Marrero, 2005).

Despite all the European nations were invited only four came to play, and some people talked about the “European Boycott”, the final match was played by two South-Americans just as in 1928, Uruguay and Argentina, and in June the 18th of 1930, one century “after the first constitution of the Uruguayan State started to rule, the population celebrated the obtaining of the very first World Cup”......... “From this point the destiny of the National team, the state, and the nation would be indissolubly united, forming at the symbolic level a powerful union that would be always present in the collective representations of a common destiny”... the reduced size of the tournament (13 teams, from Europe only France, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Belgium) was not reason enough to take away the glory the people felt, as well as... “the secret certainty of the possession of a singular destiny. What is small, is not only beautiful, it can also be football world champion” (Marrero, 2005).

7.3 The “Maracanazo”

The next two world cups were not a big new in Uruguay, both were obtained by Italy and after a long break because of the World War, the world cup was again in South America, this time in Brazil, and the South-American champion Uruguay was

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20 The even took the nae of “Maracanazo” because it happened in the Stadium “Jornalista Mario Filho” better known as “Maracana Stadium” given their location in the “Maracana” neighborhood in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.
there once again. In this period of time as a result of not having to deal with the war, plus the positive effects in it's economy given the demand of agricultural and farming goods produced in the subcontinent, Uruguay has and amazing economic position: it has the highest gross product per-capita in whole Latin-America, and this case next to the ones from Argentina and New Zealand were studied by professionals.

From the footballer point of view, Uruguay lives the period before the 1950 World Cup also well. Clubs are supported by members who gave them money, the high income given the great sales in tickets, several agreements with the government were carried out the construction of gymnasiums, soccer stadiums, and locker rooms among others helped as well, is interesting that some of these incentives from the government, were understood as simple influence peddling, nepotism or power dealing. In the same period of time the political elites and the club's leaders start to interact and interconnect one another, until the moment that is obvious the relations between Penarol with the "Partido Colorado" (The Colorado Party)\(^{21}\) And the "Club Nacional de Futbol" with the "Partido Nacional" (The National Party), also known as the "White Party"(Partido Blanco)\(^{22}\) After the era when football was completely or officially amateur, it was more or less hidden the granting of important public positions and jobs to successful players or people the ruling party wanted to favor. "This relation between political power and football will be constant in the National History"(Marrero, 2005)

In this context is when one of the most epic achievements and upsets in the world soccer was achieved, the famous "Maracanazo"

The Uruguayan victory in the 1950 World Cup under this context and circumstances in the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, could have been

\(^{21}\) The "Colorado Party" founded in 1931, unites both liberal and social democratic groups. It was the dominant party of government almost without exception during the stabilization of the Uruguayan Republic. At the last 2004 National Elections, the Colorado Party won 10 seats out of 99 in the Chamber of deputies and 3 seats out of 31 in the Senate. Its presidential candidate, Guillermo Stirling, won 10.4 % of the popular vote.

\(^{22}\) The "White Party" founded in 1938, is a major liberal conservative political party, currently the major opposition party to the ruling Frente Amplio government. Together with the Colorado Party, it is one of the two traditional groupings since back to the 19th Century. At the last 2004 National Elections, the National Party won 36 seats out of 99 in the Chamber of deputies and 11 seats out of 31 in the Senate. Its presidential candidate, Jorge Larrañaga, obtained 35.1 % of the valid, popular vote. The member of the National Party who has most recently been Uruguayan President is Luis Alberto Lacalle(1990-1995). In Uruguay the Colorado Party has been in power much more often than the National Party.
seen as an heroic act, on the other hand is interesting to notice that, the Latin-American nations were not going trough an stage of post-war reconstruction, they had a very high moral and untouched teams. On the other hand this victory had such dimensions given the sizes of the countries who played that final, on one hand Brazil, home team and favorite to win, 48 times bigger than it's rival, and Uruguay, the first world champion, but at the end a small country with a bit more than two million inhabitants (Ibid).

Nevertheless and against all the odds, in front of more than 200,000 Brazilians (the equivalent of almost 10% of the Uruguayan Population in that time) and less than 100 Uruguayans, Uruguay defeated Brazil by 2 goals against 1, for the Brazilians, Friaca scored the first goal, then for the Uruguayans the first goal was scored by Juan Alberto Schiaffino and the second by Alcides Edgardo Ghiggia, Roberto Muylaert, the biographer of the Brazilian goalkeeper, compares the black and white film of this goal with “Abraham Zapruder's images of the Kennedy assassination in Dallas. The goal and the shot that killed the US President have "the same dramatic pattern... the same movement... the same precision of an unstoppable trajectory... ". They even have the dust in common that was stirred up, here by a rifle and there by Ghiggia’s left foot”.

Julio Perez a member of the epic Uruguayan Squad that defeated Brazil in the 1950 World Cup Final, in Rio de Janeiro in what is still remembered as the “Most tragic moment in Brazilian History” remembers: “The journalist were easily impressed by how Brazil hammered other teams, but they did not realize the rivals used to be intimidated by them, and that was of course understandable, but with us that is just not possible. Our team used to play well and besides of that, it was formed by men”. On the other hand and as contrast of this prove of masculinity, there were also expressions promoted by the media in order to reinforce and strengthen Brazil, for example: „Every time I touched the ball there were firecrackers exploiting all around: it was like a mined camp” Skoglund Swedish player on the 1950 World Cup.

The media of back in the day, and specially the TV showed the happiness of the players after the second goal, the hugs, the joy of the players, and the astonishment of a mute Maracana, “it was the most deafening silence in world soccer history”(Galeano, 1995), a mute stadium in front of the never expected defeat, then the short and marred awards ceremony by Jules Rimet, who after the referee indicated
the end of the game walked on the field with the trophy named after him on one hand, and a speech for the Brazilian Team on his pocket.

He remembers: "after the end of the game I was alone on the field with the trophy on my hands and without knowing what to do, I ended up finding the Uruguayan Captain, Obdulio Varela, and gave him the trophy almost secretly, then handshake him without saying a word". Varela was a symbol of that team, and later on was elected sportsman of the century in Uruguay, is well know that in the final match he became the motivator and one of the main players to win, he's job was fundamental, this plus he's representation in a heroic way on the media made of him an icon of the so called "Garra Charrua" as an example we can see what he's expressions promoted by the media after the match were:

After the first Brazilian goal I realized we had to cool the game down for a while, if we wouldn't do it that playing machine would have destroyed us, that tiger would have devoured us too fast. So I went to the goalfame and took the ball out of it, put it under my arm and walked towards the referee protesting about a non-existent off-side, while I was talking many very nervous opponents insulted me, meanwhile the 200.000 fans were roaring. That reaction from the Brazilians made me open my eyes, they were afraid of us. Then with the ball under my arm went to the center of the field and looked at the rivals, they were pale and insecure, so I turned to my teammates and told them, these ones can't never ever beat us, our initial nerves were on them now... The rest was the easiest part...

That was the second time Uruguay got the trophy, and Brazil cried because of the party that was never carried on, the Brazilian newspapers were already printed, all of them had big headlines praising the Brazilian Team, and the players received the day before golden watches each one with the inscription: "To the world champions". After that day, the Brazilian team stop wearing it's white uniform forever.

"It is impossible to overestimate the impact the "Maracanazo" have had in the construction process of the Uruguayan identity. For some people it was only the fair outcome of a match; to others the football expression of an economy in expansion, for some a blessing, and for many a curse in which we live under until today"(Marrero, 2005), the truth is that after that to Uruguay of 1950 everything seemed possible, and all the "metaphors seemed to be not enough to a country destined to go against everything with it's achievements and go beyond it's borders"(Ibid). The "Maracanazo" just like the first World Cup confirmed one of the most powerful
"foundational myths" in which the "Oriental Nation" was built upon: the vast "distance between the means and the achievements, the disproportion between the small origin and the greatness of the destiny. Because more than the superiority by one goal of the Uruguayan team in 1950, what was captured in that moment, was the heroic and perhaps magic interpretation of the symbolic struggle, which made of Maracana the milestone it is nowadays" (Pyneirua, 2005).

7.4 The new religion in a self-proclaimed secular state.

Since 1930 after Uruguay first world cup, the "monopolistic role of the state in the patriotic iconography as the only way to express a unique religion was something the Uruguays could argue about,........ but after Maracana doubts were no longer possible: the religious, which as a consequence of the secularization of the state have migrated to an almighty, paternalistic and providential state and it's symbolism, migrates again, but now to colonize the football scene, as locus of communitarian reaffirmation and supplier of a individual and collective vital sense" (Marrero, 2005).

As result of the magical, even heroic interpretation of the result, diffusion and acceptation of the events in Maracana, these ones became a part of the "common natural sense" in Uruguay, the sports success, football in particular, have had ever since problems to present himself as the result of profesionalization and performance rational strategies" (Ibid)

And later on with the economical crisis and the collapse of the welfare state in this country, the size and weight of the "magical aspects" of the sports events interpretation and its outcomes grew up, and is growing until today. These problems also increase the gap between the systematic physical and tactical formation of professional players in a developed world, and the innate skills of a few "chosen ones", whom after being "discovered" by some lucky person, can only be ready to fight, play and make the mythical "Garra Charrua" prevail. The idea and notion of a collective destiny, and the trust in the heroic skills of some exceptional people, are nowadays fundamental elements to interpret and understand that "charismatic success" of the Uruguayan sports scene.

"Why would they beat us? Who were they? We were confident, we believed in ourselves, if you go to play influenced by comments is worse...We were not going to
loose that championship....It was written, that day we would win, we were not afraid, not even by God nor the Devil.” Oscar Omar Miguez, Uruguayan striker member of the national squad of 19950, after the “Maracanazo”
8. The “Jogo Bonito”\textsuperscript{23} (Brazil)

“After president, being the coach of the national soccer team is the most important job in Brazil and that changes from time to time”, says the people from Brazil and that is totally understandable, since soccer arrived to Brazil in the last decades of the 19th Century, became popular like no other sport ever, just like in another countries this sport was passed from the English people to the local elites, from the beginning to the popularization process later on there are several particular characteristics in the Brazilian case.

In Great Britain the popularity gained by the sport and the professionalization inside of it's territory, influenced and increased the direct relations with the English elites and the local ones as far as soccer goes, some of the first matches in Brazil were played by English sailors or even workers from English companies, and were precisely people from other countries such as England, Switzerland, Germany, the ones that started the creation of clubs, is important to mention Charles Miller, son of a Brazilian woman and an English man, was the one who in 1894 brought to Sao Paulo, equipment and ideas to promote the game, and in 1988 the “Sao Paulo Athletic Club” was created. The matches and games were organized by just some people, at the end, all sorts of people from the elites used to end up playing them. Clubs became a urban space to socialize; football became a way to express an elitist life.

8.1 The amateur times in Brazil.

But even though the equipment to play soccer was not exactly the same, the people from popular class started to play soccer improvising goalframes, balls, and playing barefoot. They felt curiosity after looking at the elites playing and sometimes after going to see their games in the cheap places where they had to look the game on their feet, or by working in the soccer fields. Some of the teams had to practice in public open areas so many people used to go and watch their games, at the same time, many factories used to promote the game as a way to unite all their workers. Some teams had to include Brazilian player given the fact that they were located in

\textsuperscript{23} “Jogo Bonito” Is Portuguese for “Pretty Soccer”, the characteristic feature of the Brazilian style, nowadays this motto became popular
remote places of Brazil, as example we have the "Bangu Athletic Club" which was founded in 1904 and had among their players two Brazilians, five English, three Italians and a few more Portuguese.

With the growing number of Brazilian players also the number of workers playing soccer increased thus the number of blacks and mulattoes, in Bangu's Stadium there was no division among cheap or expensive places, which created a popular group of fans, at some point the football club was more popular that the Factory who found it (Companhia Progresso Industrial, a textile factory in the Bangu suburb) and also this had a good effect over the company, as an early "marketing".

This particular case starts to show Brazil the figure of the "worker-player" who is known for being great on the field more than great on the factory, and this one starts to enjoy some small "privileges" like the assignment of easier functions at work, and some flexibility in theirs schedule, the Brazilians knew about some European companies that promoted soccer as a way to encourage workers and to increase their ownership feelings towards their factories. (Rosenfeld, 1999)

Later on soccer was accepted as a pedagogical and institutional practice, just as it happened in many other countries, which skyrocket its popularity even more. Many companies and factories, specially the textile ones created their own teams having Bangu as reference, some of them were located in "company towns" which was even better because they all share more or less the same schedule and that give them time to play soccer together, this was very big specially in the first three decades of the last century. Many young men used to do their best playing in order to be hired as worker-players obtaining this way a stable salary and a relative well-being after their soccer years.

In 1908 English men of the "America Fabril Company" founded the "Sport Club Pau Grande" who after a few decades was very successful, defeating local teams and even another ones from bigger cities, one of the players of Pau Grande was showing in those years what he later on would do in the 1958 World Cup, Manuel Francisco dos Santos "Garrincha", one of the best players in world football history, he had many birth defects such as a right leg bent inwards and a left leg six centimeters shorter and curved outwards, plus a deformed spine, some people called him "plier legs" because of this and many said he would never play football. He was named the best player in the 1962 World Cup and achieved several national and international
tournaments, fathered at least 14 kids and died at 49 after a life full of excesses, alcohol and women.

Many of these popular teams started to allow people form low classes to share and play with the Brazilian elite. Elite teams were usually the ones who won the local tournaments, until in 1923 the “Vasco da Gama” a team from a numerous Portuguese colony became champion, on of the secrets of winning the tournament was that Vasco de Gama used to hire all the good players, regardless their skin color or social class, and kept them as “interns” in their dorms, and paying for all their living expenses.

Thus a new era in Brazilian soccer started, the same year the other clubs did not let Vasco da Gama play the national tournament because they did not have a stadium, and new regulations about amateur rules we implemented, payments and gratifications to players were more analyzed. To allow some player in the tournaments many bosses gave these players fake jobs, which were better, paid, in order to make the people think that the money they were getting was from those jobs and not from the payments as soccer players.

The new league, stop people of certain jobs to play, according to them because some made tips and that was more money that the one an amateur player should be making, for example, taxi drivers, barbers, and in other cases just because those jobs were better paid such as soldiers.

Also, all the players were forced to know how to read and write properly, the ones who could not fill up a small form in which their names and other questions were asked before each game, were not allowed to play (Caldas, 1984), some teams who used to hire people from the suburbs and thus people with literacy problems used to send them to intensive lessons of how to read and write. Some people and sociologist mention this as just away to segregate the people from working or loss class. Another example of this was what happened to Carlos Alberto a half black and half white player of Fluminense one of the oldest and most aristocratic teams in Brazil, who before each game used to put all over he's ace rice flour to give himself a lighter aspect, just like in the Ecuadorian case we can see that the whitening theory was also part of Brazil at the beginning of last century, the difference is later on Brazil constructed on the “Mulatto”(Half black and half white) a Brazilian icon. Every time Fluminense played, Flamenco their “natural born rival”, Flamenco's fans used to call them “rice flour”, and as a response, the Fluminense fans started to call the “charcoal flour“. 

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“This scene of mythical aspects shows very well the situation of blacks and mulattoes inside of Brazil, and their social inferiority as a popular idea. It also shows the burlesque effect and reconciling end, who says a lot about the stereotypes and racial prejudice in Brazil” (Leite, 1998) In 1923, a Brazilian delegation went to Montevideo, with players of popular class, in the middle of a fancy dinner a white player of the team pretended to drink the lavender which was on the table to rinse their hands after finishing the meal, as consequence, all the black and mulatto players tried to do the same because it was the very first time in their life they saw such thing, as a result, a big movement promoting the ban of blacks of international delegations alleging etiquette reasons started. (Filho, 1964)

The amateur era of Brazilian football was not easy either for white poor players or white people that just was not part of the elites, there are many cases of white players that were “hired” to play, and for them was easier to assimilate to the group given their skin color, but because of their non wealthy families they used to be accused of getting any sorts of bribes or money in order to play badly.

8.2 The end of the amateur era.

Later on with the internationalization of soccer, and more specifically with the organization of the first world cups, the amateur scene of the Brazilian football gets worse, some players saw in being amateur a problem, and the growing demand of South American players in Europe, specially in Italy. After the first world cup gained by Uruguay, and with the second one coming soon, Mussolini offered a stadium to the club that wins the national tournament, this caused a huge “hunt” for South American players, and in the “Italy of Mussolini this meant all the good players with Italian roots, in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil (specially in Sao Paulo).

The most threatened leagues were the Argentinean and Uruguayan” (Leite, 1998), in the first World Cup Italy won, three Italian goals were scored by Raimundo Orsi, and Argentinean who became Italian, among he’s goals was the first in the final match against the former Czechoslovakia, and the assist for the second goal was done by Guaita, another Argentinean who became Italian, the best solution for these endangered leagues was becoming professional, and so they did. And many other
Brazilians and players, with the help of the Italian Mafia and government adopted Italian last names in order to go and play there.

All this exportation of white players to Europe, and the difficulties for blacks to go and be part of the Italy of Mussolini or live in a country where they were minority, made them stay at home, just a few blacks went outside of Brazil in the 30's and they came back after a few years given their bad experiences abroad.

Thus the black players were destined to be the local players, the local heroes and the creators of the local success, "not for all the player soccer has the same meaning, there are good professionals able to show their talent in the world footballer scene and there are talented players that try to achieve an ethnic emancipation by the sports success, thus being deserver of recognition in their homeland. in Brazil soccer ended up being a way to emancipate blacks, which was necessary to build soccer as national sport"(Leite, 1998). "This is not just a matter of money, but also a constitution of a relation between players and fans, united by the same goal of social emancipation through soccer"(Leite Lopez & Faguer, 1994)

Once the Brazilian League became professional, this sense of nationalization grew up, the fact that teams such as Flamengo hired officially players from several social groups and races made of them symbols of Brazil as a mixed nation, by mid 30's this policy made Flamengo an icon of the Brazilian Mixture and the "Referent" of a Brazilian club, in opposition to the nucleus and elites of the Portuguese colony. Other players that came back after playing the world cups increased the popularity of the sport, many of the worker-players were set free to just play football and the headquarters of many teams changed from elite places to more working class neighborhoods.

Thus the 30's were marked by a strong professionalization of the game as far as players, assistants and coaches go, and the incorporation of a huge audience. In the 40's that process continued, and in this decade de predominance of blacks and mulattoes in the teams is evident, also popular teams such as Flamengo and Vasco da Gama support the base for the national teams. But with the growing admission of blacks and mulattoes in the teams, all of them aspiring to become athletes also brought back some stereotypes and racist figures, and directly and indirectly, conscious and unconscious discipline problems were accentuated in blacks. An ambiguous racist division is created, some black players are adored by the fans of the
team thy play in and on the other hand blacks from other teams are treated in a terrible way, a expression of "cordial racism" oriented by the personal relations in the society.

In this theory, the failure after the Maracanazo was blamed of players of an specific color, in this case blacks and mulattos, "those racial stigmata and stereotypes, used to get a fake base on social evolutionist and Darwinists theories, developed by anthropologists and authors of different backgrounds, well known an accepted by the elites"(Leite, 1998) one of the results of these evolutionist theories, which at the same time did not like mixture and usually put white race on top of all of the rest, was the progressive whitening of the team, just like in the previously mention Ecuadorian case, but n the Brazilian case this goal would be achieved by policies focusing in increasing the European migration.

These theories used to state that blacks and mixed Brazilians were emotionally unstable, and less "civilized", although such theories accepted and gave some credit to these human groups in matters of music or dance and some other physical activities, in sports these virtues would be thwarted by the emotional instability. The final score of the 1950 World Cup was used to illustrate this, "the best team of the tournament, the one who showed beauty and technique skills was defeated 2-1 in their own stadium in front of their people, by a team technically inferior but focused on doing it"(Ibid). The elimination of the 1954 World Cup in Switzerland in a match against Hungary which ended 4-2 was an opportunity in which the chief of the Brazilian delegation stated ideas based on the previously mention theories. For example:

"The Brazilian players lack, what in general the whole population of Brazil lacks. The causes...they understand the bases of the social sciences in the confrontation of the study between races, weather, alimentation, spirit, culture and life processes at individual and collective position"... "The ills afflicting us are deeper, and they go from the "state of culture" to the "state of soccer". It comes from genetics, the psychosocial level of our people is still immature, and the athletes taken out of villages cannot improvise skills and tools to overcome problems, in the middle of those sports proofs who demand more resources and organic reserves"(taken from Leita, 1998), all these statements were focused on showing a football weak because of its racial mixture.

8.3 The new Brazil.
But the World cup of 1958 destroyed all these statements. Brazil tied their second game against England and beat Austria, Russia, Wales, France and Sweden, and to confirm that this was no coincidence or chance, they won again the world cup in 1962 in Chile, defeating Mexico, Spain, England, Chile and Czechoslovakia, it was the first racially mixed team of blacks, whites and mulattoes to win the world cup in an era "in which the color of the European teams was white" (Lopez, 1998) After the "Maracanazo" in 1950 the team had better organization and a group of coaches and assistants, plus great players like Didi, Nilson Santos, and the incredible ability of Pele and Garrincha. Some of these players represent the "reversion of corporal and social stigmata, in human and sports capital, It also represent the hedonist pleasure of the worker-players while playing professional football, avoiding the daily routine", (Ibid) specially the mixed race player Garrincha, bearer of the marks and stigmata of the Brazilian popular class, who transformed all he's physical defects, in an unusual, disconcerting and unpredictable style.

The 1958 World Cup represents the return of Brazil to the international scene, and also is a good thermometer to measure it's progress and level with the Argentinean and Uruguayan Football which had the hegemony of the game in the previous decades. The massive amount of Argentinean player who went abroad and adopter Italian nationality gave the Argentineans an image of a generous football very concerned about "giving" more than other thing. Because of Argentina Italy create powerful squads and achieved two world cups, and later on the Spanish clubs, considered the best of the world back in the 50's were reinforced by players such as Di Stefano, Argentina as already mentioned had a high self esteem even though the tournaments of the 20's and 30's were not the best as afar as results goes, and the return to the world cups in the 1958 was a tragedy for the Argentineans comparable with the one the Brazilians suffered in 1950.

Brazil who took the Argentinean football as role model, never had to export it's best black and mulatto players, as we mention before, were "forced" to show their skills back home only, creating this way a sense of national style, the nice soccer, the art-football, the "jogo bonito", nevertheless the local soccer still believed they were not as god as the Argentineans or English. Blacks, mulattoes and mixed players were making in soccer a space to be part of the Brazilian society and even more "be the
Brazilian society”, constructing silently a “ethnic and social liberation” trough football, giving to soccer at the same time and unconsciously, a set of values, habits and body technique. The victory in 1958 was a surprise for all Brazil, only that international success was able to confirm the positive self-evaluation they made of their soccer, and reverse its inferiority image. (Leita, 1998)

The victories in 1958, 1962, and 1970 increased the popularity of the game, the huge amount of popular fans soccer gained and the multi-class people who start to follow it, had now a new helper, the media and the elites, all contributed to made soccer “universal” in that nation.

The Brazilian coaches since 1950 until 1966 were amateur players who were educated even at a college level (all of them except Ademar Pineda in 1938), the profesionalization of soccer also brought new job expectation to popular class players and coaches, and some of the journalists became a link between the popular classes and its soccer players and the upper levels. Saldanha born in 1917 was a journalist who had a lot of influence in soccer, he even had the chance to coach several teams and in 1970 he coached the national team, unfortunately he was a very well know communist, inside of a military regime who was getting more and more repressive, thus he had to quit days before traveling to the world cup of that year in Mexico. Mario Filho re-invented journalism in the 30’s and 40’s, he promoted journalism from non favorable political conditions, the dominant political forces persecute him after the Revolution of 1930 who ended putting in the presidency Getulio Vargas, Filho inherited a newspaper from his family and that made him an interesting target. He perceived that what was happening in his country expressed trough football was a way to access and construct the identity of Brazil, reaching more aspects that the purely political ones. Being him the main defender of the soccer profesionalization he was an icon of the struggle of the blacks trying to be part of a sport, which was until that moment played by the elites.

Among others we can mention, Ary Barroso, a successful radio journalist and promoter of the national music, Jose Lins do Rego, a writer who in 1941 in his novel “Agua-mae” had introduced some characters who were soccer players, and Nelson Rodriguez, another writer who describes and predicts thrillingly in his accounts about Brazilian football from 1956 until 1958 the reversion of the Brazilian’s soccer “inferiority” based on racial arguments promoted from the elites, into the cherish of a national playing style linked to the technique of players from popular classes.
"All this energy of unconscious social emancipation, because it was on the body and the social conflicts of inclusion not openly exposed, and present in power elites, in the end attracted a huge public of many classes" (Leita, 1998), the entry to the game of higher social classes, with the human and cultural capital they represent, promoted as well the sport among everybody. Is important to notice the relationships between the people who taught the sports and their connection with the transformations tactic wise brought from Europe, and the people who practice them creating an style they could call “their own”, this is really important nowadays since football is used as a pedagogic element in poor kids, showing them soccer as an insertion mean in the society, specially in thermos of the traditional wage-earner society. Having achieved this way in this country a national sense, football is back again in its roots, as a technique to discipline, integrate youngsters.

Soccer as we see was re-invented by the popular classes, who did this at the same time they were trying to integrate and being integrated to the working class, this trend continues today, football in Brazil represents a language people from different classes and backgrounds can speak, and even when a country like Brazil of many other Latin American ones, shown no real desire to incorporate this outcasts to the society, football looks like a mean to do it, and the politic and economic elites can get a hold of this idea and used it in their own benefit, we can see again “the old traditional means of domination and the exclusive modern neoliberalism” (Ibid) that had been disastrous in the region. “By the body language and the invention of an original style, in a universal sport,” the Brazilian society, contributed and are still contributing in a quiet way, to their own social ascent, and to reinforce an important element of national identity, reversing this way “the racist stereotypes, and elitist ethnocentrism, already present inside of the Brazilian society”
9. “With the flavor of Mate and Tango” (Argentina)

Argentinean football, several times American as well as world champions in every category and tournament, one of the most successful in the Region and planet, as well as a regional and world referent of world-class football, has constituted a symbolic and practical male and general arena for national identity, pride and disappointments, happiness and sorrow. The texts of Eduardo Archetti are without any doubts a great work in the particular case of this country, he mentions, “Argentina is an invented country. Just like all the rest of America, in the fiction and violence it suffered during its “discovery”, occupation and colony, and also this land got a nomination that makes us understand it as a “land of richness”, but only after being discovered and baptized “The River Plate”, Argentina had a hard path to become a modern state in the XIXth century, many interesting events would take place here, events and “inventions”.

The civil wars in the history of the country, between 1810-1880 are not only military clashes, they are also furious rhetoric battles in which hegemony is solved, what wars “decide at the very ends is, the ability of one sector, to impose a national sense in a definitive way”(Shumway, 1993), this is why Nicolas Shumway talks about the invention of Argentina as “the history of an idea”(1993) and not the chronology of the establishment of a state, of a geographical space, of a legal body, “Argentina is a rhetoric game”.

9.1 The foundation.

On top of that the end of the XIXth Century and the beginning of the next one made that idea less credible and made it collapse slowly, Argentina became a country of immigrants, and the huge flow of Europeans turned into “the fracture of an economic, social and narrative model. Until that moment the explanatory paradigm, talked about the triumph of civilization over savagery, the European Culture over the American Savagery”,……and the fast modernization of the Argentinean State needed to use a new rhetoric and speech……. “That at the same time would dissolve the dangers, the creation of the working urban class could bring”(Albarces, Rodriguez, 1997), (very important matter because such class would see on socialism and
anarquism very attractive theories), and also as mean to reinforce a unitarian national identity, which was on a hard spot given the modifications of it’s always changing demography, which at moments, threatened to establish particular identities, breaking the national unity.

The elites right away, started to construct (with differences and contradictions) an elitist nationalism that produced, especially from 1910 the most important unifying myths. “A group of heroes, an history narrative, official and coercive over any other speech, also the theory of the “Melting Pot” was assumed as a policy towards the growing immigration, and as result of this a myth of ethnic union, and a narrative that established the character of The “Gaucho” as Argentinean model and epic figure” (Ibid). “The Argentinean State was extremely efficient, in it's assimilationist compulsion” (Guber, 1997), and this efficiency was based on two things, on one hand, the public education as a fundamental part of the state and important element constructing the new identity in the working class, and on the other hand, and early “cultural industry” favored by the Argentinean technological modernization at the beginning of century.

The fast urbanization, social mobility and literacy caused by these factors, created a massive popular audience in the first years of the XXth Century. In this mass culture, first print, and after on radio and TV, the national identity speech founded an ideal turf to be expressed and accepted by the people, “-the Argentinean State didn’t intervene in media politics until the 40’s-” (Ibid). The mass culture was part and felt like “their own” tales of the “gaucho mythology”.

Nevertheless, in this process some things must be noticed, the producers of the new and early professionalized mass media, came from middle urban classes established in this modernization era, and their massive and heterogeneous audience had another expectations given the previous ideas that came from the nationalistic rhetoric learned in school (this rhetoric also included some elements of the daily life). (Archetti taken from Rodriguez, 2001) The growing popular classes were creating next to the nationalist archetypes such as the gauchos from the novels of Lugones and Rojas (the two main figures of the Argentinean Intellectual Nationalism) or the “Compadritos” of Jorge Luis Borges, real and popular heroes: the sportsmen. As Archetti mentions “in the national debate about national identity, the sports journalist are two times peripheral, -according to Bordieu in the sense that sports journalism is peripheral to journalism, and this one is peripheral to the intellectual
field- and they intervened building a non legitimate identity (because the legitimate place is the Literature or the essay only.),"....... "But always present in the public universe. Thus football became the “El Grafico” magazine, an hegemonic support of this since the 20's, a cultural text, and narrative used to think about the national and masculine”(Archetti, 1995).

9.2 The transformation from the foreign game to our own.

As the same author explains, this process goes through several paths, it needs “Rites of Passage“: if what is national is constructed over football, we must explain the transition from the English game to the local game and identity, “transit that founds an answer, in the Melting Pot theory and the naturalization of a process that combines cultural, economical and social elements”. An it needs a way to be different from another ones as well, that element we can use to say “this is ours”, and this was founded in the particular playing style, “more narrated and imaginary than real”, but creator of a big sense of “what is national. It also needs the sports success, to turn efficient the representation of the national” (Arbena, 1996), and there just like a gift from God the Argentineans had, the European tour of Boca Juniors in 1925, the silver medal in the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam, the second place in the 1930 World Cup in Uruguay.

That idea of “Criollo”(Creole in English), combines several tactic elements, and individual original practices, besides the foundation of certain mythical places such as “el Potrero” and popular characters such as “El Pibe/The little kid”(Archetti, 1997) But some evidence shows that imaginary construction worked as well on the urban mass, already in 1919 in the kids magazine “Billiken” shows in it’s cover the image of the “Champion of the season” a kid, dirty after the game, after a “battle”, a "pibe", the complete opposite image of a role model kid, clean and with good behavior, this way making contradictory speeches and alternative visions circulate among the people(Varela, 1994).

24 The “potrero” is a vacant piece of land, and in this context, refers to the place in which kids get together to play soccer, “potrero” is related to small towns or rural areas, not big cities. In the potrero many kids can join the game if needed when a player is missing, even if they do not know each other, the field lacks goals or boundaries, becomes a space of freedom and recreation.
And needs as well the players, now heroes to support this ideas, we can mention the Argentinean heroes from the beginning of last century. Tesorieri, Monti, Orsi, Seoane among others, “But if in this case nation was being constructed from the middle class and not only from the elites, new elements are shown, some deviations: that idea of a nation constructed from the countryside (the combination of the Gaucho Myth and the earth as main mean of production), is different from the nation constructed over football which is more urban than anything else” (Rodriguez, 1995) 

As counterpart of a nation built in the noble families and the Hispanic tradition, soccer presented a nation based on popular subjects. As counterpart of the Gaucho Archetype constructed over the working class repressed by the economical farming organization, the national heroes promoted by the football intellectuals were working class members, real, urban and recently educated, who pushed through the first Argentinean Populism 25 (Yrigoyen Radical Party) to be part of the cultural and political sphere, and was precisely there were it's efficiency was proved.

Renato Ortiz (1991) says that “the worry for constructing a national identity was present in all Latin America, because there people who was trying, to make modern States and Nation”...and was “precisely the tradition who in the end provided the symbols in which the nation ended up identifying itself, like in Brazil the samba, carnival and football”, then he continues: “I'm sure this selection of symbols was to a large extend because of the state, it needed to present itself as popular, and give new value to these very popular practices was a logic move. Finally, the formation of a nation was on a preliminary matter, the construction of its “people”” (Ibid, taken from Albarces).

Is the state the one who produces this passage from “collective memory (vivid and daily)” to “national memory (virtual and ideological)”. In Argentina the early modernization of it's educational system, it's cultural industry and massive audience,

25 Juan Hipólito del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Yrigoyen Alem (1852-1933) was twice President of Argentina (from 1916 to 1922 and again from 1928 to 1930). Pro-Yrigoyen political supporters were known as "personalistas". Argentina reached its pinnacle of world political power (in 1929, it had the world's 4th largest GDP) during the Yrigoyen years; it has not approached that level of world influence since those times. Irigoyen in 1896 became the leader of the Radical Party, putting his personal stamp on it for the next four decades. He fought electoral corruption by boycotting elections until after reforms were carried out in 1912. Four years later he was elected president. Most popular with the middle class, which for the first time felt it was part of the political process, Irigoyen kept Argentina out of World War I, allowing it to profit from the high beef prices on the world market. He was elected president by a large margin in 1928, but his inability to deal with the crisis brought on by the worldwide depression caused his removal from office by an army coup in 1930.
allowed many people from the media, to reinforce this rhetoric, specially among the working class, at the same time people from the state made another speech, different, but dominant. The appearance of the national speech was efficiently diffused in the 20's, which made of its mythology a few decades later, “a celebration ritual of the nation.”(Albarces, 1995) The Peronismo became an ideal space to see this.

9.3 Politics, populism and football.

In Argentina between 1945 and 1955 lived an interesting period to notice the dynamics between football, the mass and politic-cultural elements, the need to assimilate the popular sectors into the industrialization process required cultural mechanisms, to build a new common meaning of nation. Some authors name this period the “Official Nationalism” as a “cultural mean of a particular class, that uses the state structures to generate an communitarian idea, such as: basic, mandatory and massive education; state propaganda; a historical revision (to create a “Country's Foundation”); militarism among other actions to uphold the national identity”(Anderson, 1993)

Populism in many of the Latin American countries can be seen as a way to “re-invent the nation through the inclusion of huge popular masses in the urban culture, to be later on favored because of the income re-distribution.”(Albarces, Rodriguez, 1995) In Argentina as well as in many other places those sectors were and still are “illegitimate”, and in that populist moment they saw their participation increased and their voice and demands finally heard, and also felt better given the “massmediatic representation”, in general they saw that need of being legitimate more or less cared by somebody.

In this era, the relation between sports and nationalism relies in three main things, the sports expansion -in competitive and non competitive levels-; the peak and consolidation of the cultural industry which was quite interventionist; and the social classes finally bursting in the political class, as actor and protagonist of the state policy. The appearance of the working class and it's new status of “People”, its fundamental to understand populism as the mean to transform them in citizens and the
citizens into nation, in this period sports were placed as an efficient device in the construction of a national identity. At the same time football as a “national show” started, before this, it was something not possible to the politic elites, and football did and form the beginning it added new symbols in the communitarian repertory (Garcia, 1991). Football thus operated in civil and political consensus because in this field we are talking about emotions, needs and subjective elements related to patriotic feelings.

The footballer scene appeared for the very first time as valid element to blend the national elements repertory, and its legitimacy was established by its connection with the mass (Ibid). Sports became a help to place new representations of nation in the state, with the help of the state’s interventionist policy and the cultural industries, all of them tried to create a new society in which the “people will finally be citizens”, and by “questioning some sectors of the society, show and displace in a semantic way the “Argentinity” to a notion of future, as if there was something in the past that has to be forgotten”(Ibid). In this last part we can mention what Renan says about the oblivion as a part in the states foundation, according to him the “shared amnesia” is fundamental to create a “social imaginary” (Gellner, 1993).

Nevertheless this social imaginary was also reinforced by the state, one of it’s big fortresses was a real re-distribution of the GDP, which gave a lot of resources to welfare policies in general, such as education, women care, health, etc. Sports policies were destined to communitarian participation, but also to improve the competitive

26 The Government of Juan Domingo Peron, intervened over almost all the mass media system, he nationalized radio-electric media and some of the printed press, he also established nepotism and convenience alliances between the state and the private sector in some media in which he had front men. (Rodriguez, Albarces, 1998)

27 A Social Imaginary or Imaginary is a term created by Jacques Lacan he introduced the word in 1936. It is the set of values, institutions, laws, and symbols common to a particular group and the corresponding society. The imaginary as a lacanian term entails connotations of illusion, seduction and fascination but is by no means unnecessary or inconsequential (as something that is illusory). It defines the dual relationship between the ego and the specular image.

While not constituting an established reality, the social imaginary is nevertheless an institution considering that it represents the system of meanings that govern a given social structure. These imaginaries are to be understood as historical constructs defined by the interactions of subjects in society. In that sense, the imaginary is not necessarily "real" as it is an imagined concept contingent on the imagination of a particular social subject. (Taylor, 2006)
performance, creating for this goal, some organizations to help sports men, in a very innovative policy.

The convergence of the communitarian policies and the international competitions is important to understand the relation they have in the social imaginary. Sports were presented in a very successful way on the media, plus society was a direct or indirect participant, as player or spectator given the purchasing power that allowed them to spend money in such activities.

During a successful period for Argentinean football and sports in general, national and internationally speaking, hundreds of medals and awards are achieved in several tournaments between 1945 and 1955, the country is leaving what some people called “Sports Party”, these results were used to be placed in scene as a mechanism of nationalistic epic. “Sucesos Argentinos” a cinematographic news program, was an efficient way for this purpose, it showed achievements in sports and the progress of public works such as stadiums inauguration, or junior tournaments. On the other hand the social imaginary was present as well on the cinema, which let us understand better the relations between fiction, industries and cultural agents with the Peronismo.

Cinema and films was an ideal place to illustrate the nationalistic epic, given the solid expansion of the national autochthonous production, related at the same time with the economic growth and state support of that time (Albarces, 1995).

Nevertheless, in the populist period we are talking about, were just a small percentage the number of films who talked directly or indirectly about sports, (just above 30% (Rodriguez, 1995)), and also the sports films during the Peronismo were not propaganda films, and they were even far away from the state and its media, but the film influence was still important.

For example, in the movie “Pelota de Trapo”(Rag ball) of 1948, one of the most important because of it's quality and repercussion, the main character is a soccer player forced to retire from soccer in an early age given some heart problems, but the fans in the stands want him back in the final match of a South American tournament between Brazil and Argentina, in the locker room the coach and friend of him, refrains him and does not let him play in the last extra time, and in that moment the main character nicknamed “Comeunas” looks at the waving Argentinean Flag and insists: “There are many ways to offer your life for the motherland. And this is one of them”. After such reason to play the coach accepts and Comeunas scores the decisive goals to win and suffers from pain in the chest but does not die. (Albarces. 1995)
The motherland accept he's effort and does not accept he's dead, that attitude goes beyond melodrama, and the scene in the movie "refers for the very first time in Argentinean sports movies, an explicit link the national performances and national statements. In the populist context, the association people-nation allows popular individuals to be part in the construction of the nationality from roles, until that point, illegitimate and confused" (Rodriguez, 1995).

We have other films like "Escuela de campeones" (School of champions) in 1950, which talks about Alexander Watson Hudson, he Scottish promoter of soccer in Argentina, and is part of many other films by the enterprise Artistas Argentinos Asociados. In this company Homero Manzi was a prominent script write and intellectual figure of the Peronismo, who used to create pedagogic stories for the mass consumption (Albarces, 1998). Thus we can understand soccer as a necessary component in the nationalism narrative, there are also many other movies that flow at the same time narrating the history, as a way to mix and reinforce both. Inside of these populist films, Manzi uses statements to legitimize the conservative, historical tradition.

9.4 Supermen. (The football heroes)

Among other elements, "these audiovisual fictitious products exposed the hope of a part of the population, to whom sports (and specially professional soccer) became a road to success and fame to follow. The sports heroes, were icons of the republican concept of egalitarianism in modern societies" (Ehrenberg, 1992) as Gellner would say "popular heroes are not different from us, they just have more money", Victorio Dini mentions that the lowest the cultural level and social class the sportsman comes from, the highest will be the capacity to represent that person as a hero. And media are the mean of mass societies to capture these "epic" achievements as a "re-affirmation of the egalitarian believes" (Ibid). In this profile, Argentina has many "world sports heroes", in whom a sort of national identity lies over a high adhesion to their original communities; the main character of this is of course Diego Armando Maradona. (Ibid)

Maradona became an Argentinean hero and symbol, confirming what Bromberger, states that besides the skills, a hero in it's way to become one need a bit
of luck or even cheat, and Maradona certainly did in 1986, when he scored one goal with the hand "La Mano de Dios" (The Hand of God) in the semifinal against England and right after, the best goal in the history of football, to defeat the English team. Archetti on the other hand says that this is a contradiction because the hero status a person gets is based on he’s particularity, because he is unique, and not part of a national style. But in Argentina the heroes “are universal in a context were soccer belongs to a “world global culture” and they are perceived as historical accidents,” (Ibid) some people stands that the Argentinean Soccer Style is a myth because, the individuals in it are the ones we can call “real history”.

Maradona besides he’s amazing ability and leadership skills became also a “global hero” because he played most of he’s career outside of Argentina, and despite that after 1986, when he was the best soccer player of the world cup, he have not achieved as much as before, but has been still someone present in the media for many reasons, representing this way and image of someone that belongs to Argentina and at the same time to the world. “Maradona seems to be our best audiovisual ambassador. And this is not a sham of the postindustrial society”. (Baudrillard, 1987)

Football players become very often national heroes, according to Baczko (1991) is because they gather the essential conditions for that: an emotional context, facts that can be transformed in speech objects, and actors to give them meaning, and this grants to nations such as Argentina a place in the international context, if not an economic place based of it's goods in the global world based on trade, at least a place with “symbolic merchandises”. Which in Maradona's case was strengthened given the legitimacy he gave to Argentinean Soccer, although Argentina won the 1978 World Cup, there were some rumors about a fixed match against Peru, which ended with the victory for the Argentineans by 6-0, but all this was gone after clearly winning the 1986 World Cup and the second place in the 1990 World Cup.

The “Hand of God”, was a symbolic reinforcement to elaborate the social imaginary, the fact that it was in 1986 against England has been interpreted as a “smart Creole way” to defeat old rivals, in this case more intensely debated, given the fact that it happened after the Malvinas/Falkland War, in which England defeated Argentina, many people saw and interpreted this event as revenge, given that the nations were clashing again, but now on the soccer field. Was a more political that sports victory, the headlines and media were talking about a second war on the stadium, politics and soccer mixed up.
It is interesting that the image of Maradona became also contradictory after he's disqualification in the 1994 World Cup, people in the streets were hearing for him, and telling the president, that he should be the one having a doping test, some people asked if he is actually an image to gather the nation or just a symbol to make the status quo shake. By this the authors did not mean that this debates replaced the speeches abut nationality or Maradona's skills to gather people around soccer, but for sure the national speech circulated because of he's actions next to other simultaneous, contradictory and interesting ideas.

Maradona, Romario da Souza, Edmundo, Garrincha among others, are always in the dispute, of being portrayed as role models or just trouble makers in the mass media, and articulation very complex, they all have confront the people with a bunch of emotions, needs and subjective feelings related to a patriotic sense, they have all proved their skills “trough facts not statements” at the same time as a constant opposition to the socially accepted norms, constantly broken by them. All efforts to legitimize a social national model seemed to clash with the wandering of their behavior, they refused to be role models, which made more difficult “to articulate ideas-strength around a national identity, in an essentialist way, and at the same time pushed the people's hopes and feelings, in the direction the human (and because of this fallible) nature marked: From right to left like a unstoppable pendulum”(Albarces, 1998).

Maradona and all these sports “heroes” in Latin America offered the people the possibility of appropriate as their own some wrong ideas or sense, in these societies were the politics and it's very basic grounds are collapsing, these heroes are one or perhaps the last chance to give the nation a sense, a sense that has been debated and the center of disputes from the very beginning. Although this chance is unpredictable: in the first place because of the ambiguity in which it can come in and out of the football universe, in matters of performance, the derivation of friendships and political opinions, which make it a desirable object. And also because its fallible condition allowed the Compensatory Function of Collective Memory to work, by this meaning the revision of values considered essential for the national culture and identity, trough mechanisms that can be in disorder or confused”(Bazko, 1998). But in the end and in most of the cases, these heroes seem to put things in their advantage at least for a while, if we put on the scale history on one side and their achievements on the other. (Rodriguez, 1998)
Collective Memory is a term coined by Maurice Halbwachs, separating the notion from the individual memory. The collective memory is shared, passed on and also constructed by the group, or modern society. Baczko describes two functions of the collective memory: The Unifier Function, which guarantees and consolidates trough and specific speech about the origins, the collective identity, and the Compensatory Function which operates on “what cannot be said sincerely and openly in a political speech, and is vindicated in a oblique and perfectly understandable way”

Some sociologists mention that the success of individuals like Maradona lies in the tradition, because in this world, always more and more globalized, is hard to find national identities, on the other hand such characters reinforce myths and uphold identities, but is necessary to mention that sometimes this cannot be simple as that, for example, in the 1994 World up Maradona was expelled after using prohibited substances, and in that case the end of Maradona represents the need of Argentina, is like a person that somehow drags the whole nation in the problem, and from that point what the Argentinean had again to define themselves as that was traditional elements such as the goods they export. Suddenly the mythological tale of the Argentinean soccer, characterized by success, heroes and original styles, run out of elements to construct an identity.(Ibid)

9.5 New fractures in the post-modern times.

In the years after the continuous mistakes by Maradona made him not the national icon he was before, and that plus the demand for Argentinean players in world class teams that at moments can be small in the globalized new footballer scene, could eventually end up fracturing all the mythical narrative created so far, just like it happen in 1958 after the loss 6-1 against the former Czechoslovakia, and in this case the fracture is not only in the sports field, not only represents the failure of a tactic diagram on the field, it represents as well a fracture in the mythological foundation(Rodriguez, 1998) of soccer and nation, and the relation sports-nation in the populist stage. But this failure can be also related because it happens in the moment when the world is becoming “Global” in western capitalistic matters.

According to some studies, people says that in the new global scene is hard to place what is national in this word, in which place a local mark, a local sense in the
transnational speech flow, Argentina in words of Renato Ortiz seems not to be able to do it properly because the globalization deviates the importance of traditional speeches and merchandises, based on the social imaginary (nation-people), to a new space where a social international imaginary is constructed (international-popular).

For example, in this new world frame the traditional symbols of a nation lets say Brazil, -samba carnival, football- are displaced by new global merchandises such as advertisement for beaches, the “telenovelas”(soap operas), formula 1 etc. (Ortiz, 1991), but this new scene does not exclude the popular class even though seem to replace many of the elements this class likes, with the new massmediatic goods sports and heroism also re-appear: Ayrton Senna, three times world champion or Ronaldinho, the best and most expensive player of the planet, both national heroes, Some nations have found the way to globalizate themselves in the global markets, by producing symbolic goods with competitive advantages.(Albarces, 1998)

In Argentina on the other hand a “political neo-conservative and economically hegemonic speech that proclaims the Argentinean return to the first world, lived day by day with the daily worsening of living conditions, poverty, and inability to be part o a global market”... “Who at the same time send to Argentina some prejudices (depreciation of the merchandise's value, unemployment as a global phenomenon, drugs traffic), but no benefits. And the worse is that soccer -as exportable good, and symbolic capital-”(Ibid) seems to be getting smaller. Argentina is having difficulties creating new global heroes, “there are not much new heroes to support that and a possible epic narrative. The Post-Maradonian emptiness is to big and deep”.

As result of this what predominates now is a epic destined towards more local goals, a nationalism of low sale with some anti-imperialistic ideas, but not strong as the ones before, specially the one against England, and on the other hand the new epic seems to create some chauvinisms and “racism based on the mythical ethnic Argentinean unity, in the multi ethnic Latin America; massmediatic paranoia that mean planetary complots in every defeat”..... “The industrial outburst of the world mass media, founds Argentina in weak conditions to place “naturally” its actors”(Rodriguez, 1998), that why the media is so important in order to create them, they must solve the sports aspect with an smart marketing. Ariel Ortega for example was names at some point the new Maradona, he got the number 10 jersey, it's transfer to Spain (to Valencia, a team with an average level) was very publicized, the hits and brusque reactions from rival players also continues with him (a proof all hero must
pass), and is stressed the fact that he comes from the poor Argentinean classes, Ortega, nicknamed “Orteguita” (A diminutive way to pronounce his last name usually used on kids) becomes again a “Pibe” (Argentinean slang for Kid) a new kid who enters furtively the hyper-professional footballer scene. He was another member of Argentinean player with a similar origin.

Without the poor origin the myth would have so much success and would not be really an example of the epic social mobility. (Ibid) That social mobility that everyday is harder to reach specially when nowadays that hyper profesionalization of the world soccer “expels” the Argentinean low class, who sees it very hard to achieve given the terrible conditions in which they live.

But at the same time that football expels some sectors from it, is also able to become part of whatever it touches, In Argentina as well as in most of Latin American nations no place is beyond it's reach, its on newspapers, TV, in every aspect of the daily life, in the gutter press and tabloids, but also on the regular one, in the intellectual speeches, “the traditional representation of Argentinean soccer as a feature of popular class, has been changed by a growing multi-classicism that seem to finish will all sorts of differential appropriation.” (Albarces, 1998) Which also can be seen in the fast incorporation of women in he audiences, sports programs, and stadiums.

Despite of the invasive explosion of soccer in turf traditionally beyond it, the absence of “unifying sports myths cannot replace the weakness of classic traditional narrative. After Peronismo the constant deterioration of modern Argentinean institutions -the government, public schools, politics, syndicalism- which at first stage allowed the adoration of soccer as a national symbol of identity, seem not able to find, at least in the short term, new speeches to fill up that function. Football meanwhile is sinking in an stage of Exacerbated Tribalization”. (Maffesoli, 1990) State that reinforces local antagonisms (derbies among teams of the same city or the rivalry between Buenos Aires and the teams from small provinces), which end up going back to “primary identities” and not national ones.

The national soccer team that was before a symbol of national union is seen as something just more “tribal and the nationality is supported in partial and mutually exclusive speeches, when the unifier speech as a whole is not so important. The speech of nationality is dependent from the government and in the moment the neoconservative government retreats from the daily life, this one also becomes weaker” (Ibid). The symbols of national Unity are being promoted form the cultural
industries more than ever before, with campaigns that commit the mistake of saying that triumph will be achieved easily and promote message that have been sometime pointed as xenophobic. As prove of this in 1998 in the qualifiers towards the world cup, America TV a mega enterprise in mass media, made a giant flag, 150 meters wide at a cost over 40,000 USD, which later on was “donated” to a “group of Argentinean fans” in order to be shown in the game against Ecuador.

The giant flag had the Argentinean colors, the logo of the TV channel in the lower part and a inscription saying “Argentina es pasion” (Argentina is passion), the slogan of the channel was “America es pasion” (America is passion), and it was shown at the beginning of the match and the half time, allowing a nice shot and publicity from the cameras located in front of it. “The flag, the most important symbol of the motherland, and thus the nation, showed the national unity, at the time it became sponsor's territory. Meanwhile under the flag and using the temporary coating as a shield, dozens of thieves under it threaten and took everything they could from the fans. This way between sponsors, violence and crime the national statements flow. (Albarces, Rodriguez, 1998)
10. Syncretism, futile passion, religion or what?

The very nature of man's interaction and perception with the world around him and with other people has changed dramatically over the span of human existence. We have created evolving structures in order to achieve this, -family, religion, media, nation etc. Each person has tried to come to terms with quintessential questions such as who they are? why they are here?, and what they should be doing while they are here? etc. In doing so, we come to label ourselves in various elaborate ways, consciously and unconsciously – in terms of visible differences such as sex, gender, color, race – in ideological terms of creed, nationality, religion, family, and allegiances to others. Sport can encompass visible and ideological constructions within society. Sport can help create notions of nation, gender and belief much like that of religion. (Mulhall, 2003)

Religion has been an intense marker of identity in the Western world for many thousands of years, yet today much of today's society is disenchanted as seen by the advent of secularization. However, this disenchantment of religion has been repatriated into various structures and ideologies. People are now caught up in other structures such as the mania of music, the magic of the movies, and the spectacle of sport.

This “enchantment of various structures is not coincidental, people need what Marx called the opiate of the masses to distract them from the inequality in life, that the next life would be better.”(Mulhall, 2003) Sport is the focus in this essay, so I will explain some functions of religion to prove that this sport has become almost a religion or at least has taken on many of the aspects of it.

According to Durkheim religion can be seen as an elementary theory of the way the world and society work – similarly sport can do this to. The totem is the personification of the clan and its power. This representation enabled the clan to think about itself as well as its social and natural world – for example, the distinction between the body and soul can be seen as matching that between the sacred and the profane, the soul being the representative of the collective, of the totem or of the god in religion. In sport the collective can be seen as the players that make up the team along with the group of supporters that support the team and the totem is the individual heroes e.g. Maradona, Zidane amongst others that make up the team.
Iglesia Maradoniana (Spanish for "Maradonian Church") was created by fans of the retired Argentinean soccer player Diego Armando Maradona, one of the best players of all time. It was founded on October 30, 1998 in the city of Rosario, having their first gathering in the year 2001. They count nowadays more than 15,000 members. It could be seen as a type of syncretism or as a religion depending the view. It is clear that the passion between the different members is what glue them together, Alejandro Verón, one of the founders tells “I have a rational religion and that’s the Roman-catholic church, and I have a religion passed on my heart, passion, and that’s Diego Maradona.”

Supporters of this church, count the years since Maradona's birth in 1960. It is popular, among the followers of this religion (and also among other football fans), the use of the word D10S as one of the names of Maradona: D10S is a word which fuses 10, Maradona's shirt number, and Dios, the Spanish word for God.
11. México

Mexico has been one of the countries in the region with rich history and big importance in the constitution of Latin America as a Sub region, even though nowadays they want to blend themselves in a North America that is not treating them as their equals, but like the poor third world neighbor, in this country just like in the nations already mention soccer play a fundamental role constructing the identity and thus nationalism.

Somebody said that next to another features, characteristics and particularities “we inheritate even the soccer team”, there are many people that does not think the same, and will think study this sport is nor worthwhile given the fact there are some more important things to do, here is one of the biggest arguments of why in Mexican soccer as well as in the whole region there are many holes, many shallow analysis that indeed need to go deeper. Rowe and Schelling mention that “the concept of a popular culture is not only a particular vision of the world, but it also creates several spaces in which popular individuals with own subjectivities are created, and these ones at the same time are different from the ones in the dominant groups” and this definition is at some point appropriated to the Mexican society full of cultures and contrasts.

11.1 The popular game in the “Barrio”

“The concept of popular culture must realize that old traditions change, and that the modern can turn into tradition. Modernity not necessarily means the elimination of pre-modern traditions and remembrances, modernity comes from them, transforming them in the process too”(Zabala, 2001), thus in the Mexican reality and at some point the whole Latin American one, “the existent popular cultures have an interpretation relation with mass cultures, because of these elements, they incorporate to a unified cultural market, new ways of popular traditions in a process to make them for the masses. As example of this we can see the cinema and football.”(Ibid)

Before every match, with friends on Sunday morning or for the national tournament in the “Azteca Stadium”(The biggest in Mexico and witness of two world cups), those about to play “are going to live an specific reality, to confront the tension originated in the physical and mental devotion towards the game, and the other
tension of the time which is consumed little by little during the match” (Nuno, 2001). A way of have fun, a way to take frustrations out, a hobby among others are the ideas which have been created about this game, that if studied deeply can show us relevant things about the Latin American society.

Just like in the rest of the region soccer arrived next to modernity and foreign investments in the textile and miner industry, at some point as proves of a expanding capitalism, until the first decades of the XXth Century it was an elitist game, the players used to practice it as “a reaction of the modern spirit of body, exercise and health, as a social activity, and their wife, and friends used to enjoy it from the fancy club’s balconies in Mexico City as an impulse to the elite sports” (Zabala, 2001), maybe the main consequence of these groups was the introduction of the sport at a national level (Everaert, 2001).

The process of soccer integration in the local costumes, started a few years after the Mexican revolution of 1910, soccer grew at the same time the idea of Mexican Nationalism did, and also became stronger in the following decades in small towns and provinces all over the Mexican Republic. “In the urban scene, soccer became popular in the periphery of the Cities, in the suburban and rural areas, which until the 50’s were still considered more or less as countryside, and were a good place for the existence of urban legends and eccentric characters, which gave this place a particular personality.” (Ibid) Until the late 50’s the Mexican cities, especially Mexico DF (Distrito Federal) or Mexico City in English were very organized and had a normal volume as far as population goes “traditions were according to desires, because there were no big distances between what was wanted and the kind of life taught” (Monsivais, 1997).

In this environment the suburban life has an special meaning, the relations between family members and the community were much closer, the oldest families were the ones who passed the traditions from generation to generation, “in these micro societies the conformation of several teams was promoted, which besides promoting soccer as a recreational activity, created on the team members a sense of defenders of a local identity, in the league, leagues in which was promoted the clash between representative teams of close neighborhoods. Football was added to the activities which formed the identity of the inhabitants in the cities” (Zabala, 2001).

In comparison with Argentina, Brazil or Uruguay who were already competing at international level at the beginning of the century, in Mexico the teams were started
by some fans to reinforce the local identities in some “Barrios” (Neighborhoods), also the financial support for the team came from the players themselves and some fans, the fact that soccer is very “cheap” game to be played, helped very much in Mexico and in the whole region to increase the popularity of itself and to be later on seen as cradle for thousands of players every year. “Football’s nobility, really only demands from the person who practices it, devotion and fidelity, that’s why it is said that is a primitive game and in some way it rejects the formal teachings and richness” (Valdano, 2001) Just like in the other cases he mentions that soccer players are born with a “free soul and the spirit to dare until the genius” and the barrio is the propitious place to relief a “unorganized passion, which is far away from the urban progress and slavery.”

In some suburban areas is still very important to keep that “romantic” ownership feelings toward their own barrios, at the beginning in the local tournaments; the parties, music, barbeque, tequila and soccer were always part of the festive ritual. At the end of the game, all the friends would get together and talk about the funny things about the match, life, love, the disputes of the game etc, strengthening this way the connections among the, and on the other hand, many times the games would end in fights, which just accentuates the antagonism of different areas, identities and teams. For every single player, this confrontations represented a quest for recognition in their community, this later on will become social and psychological support through he’s life, like Albert Camus said “the poor people’s memory is less fed than the rich people’s one, it has less referents in the space because never leave the place were they live, and also less referents in a uniform and grey lifetime’s time. They have the heart’s memory, is the safest one they say, but the heart fails with sorrow and work”.

Football reaffirms ownership in the community as we can see and the best players become “celebrities” and the recognition and affect from the people, works in order to integrate even better that person in the society. “that ownership feeling exists until today, deep inside of the “barrios” of our fanciful city (Mexico City). The barrio invigorates the people that lives in it, it offers them shelter, and provides them with a sense of being.” .... in general it has been found that the Mexicans... “are people who need very much of social recognition, of social interaction.

Not only conform with having good family relations. For the people, specially the ones of lower social levels, for them the relationships with the “barrio”, the
"compadres"28, the group you belong in" (Macias taken from Zabala, 2001). Sometimes during the game and among the team the communication can be so deep that they do not even need to talk, the communication is totally “intuitive, and the understanding comes from the reciprocal knowledge. Is like a collective “I” with strength and power”... “the participation in the game increases the sense of identification among the players, and at the same time is a practice of freedom with friends. Thus, soccer team is a family where they enjoy and suffer the day-to-day existence” (Valdano, 2001)

In the field as we mention before, the players become creative, the team becomes one despite the individuals, the game “creates a parenthesis that on one side isolates the real time, and on another, the game recreates it inside of this parenthesis, with different modalities” (Nuno, 2000) inside of the rivalry which is the heart of every football game. Remembering the games and championships achieved just reinforced the links and ideas of identity of the people.

11.2 The urbanization of the game.

In Mexico just like in many other Latino Countries with the urbanization also came the creation of nice areas, and residential zones for the upper middle class and on the other side, the state became probably the main housing provider for the popular and middle class, the cities grew up, people from the countryside came to them searching for a better future, the progress politicians were talking about “the big hope of a future full of good things for the ones who wanted to work hard”, but Mexico just like many other places in Latin America forgot that next to the growing Metropolis, next to Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Bogota, there was another cities growing, the cities full of people who came from small communities with some sort of ownership feelings, who came from all the corners of the republics. They grew up in a tattered way “the candidates to become lumpen”.

The process of things becoming a product for the masses, was a symbol for the late 50’s in Mexico, the concrete and asphalt covered cities, and the middle class expanded under the shelter of the “revolutionary” governments, who were supposed

28 In Spanish language the godparents of someone’s son or daughter, becomes the “Compadres” of the kid’s parents, in English such word does not exist, in Latin America such relation of “Compadres” is very important.
to be the “stairway” to the great future, the breaking of the land to construct cities, became an element which also fracture at some point the links between man and earth, the ways of production and consumption were modified, they became more “fashionable” than the old genuine cultural expressions such as rituals and celebrations in the harvest, or to ask permission to the “mother earth” in order to farm it.

The changes in the social and population structures, the intense urbanization process throughout the second half of last century, also modified in a way soccer in the cities and the periphery. In big Mexican cities and in Latin America the urbanization, has worked in order to return soccer to a select places and social groups, it brought it to university fields and places with the necessary infrastructure to play it, although it still let the practice exist in public parks and public fields which are always smaller.

“The disappearance of green areas around the cities in Mexico has made difficult the flowrishment of soccer, like it happened until de late 60’s, the modernizator effort devastated the dusty fields in which the ball used to roll pushed by the sweat strength and the longing for glory” (Zabala, 2001). Many of these fields became shopping malls and parking lots, but on the other hand soccer schools for middle and upper-middle class kids have grown, which is far away from the “barrio’s original passion”, In these groups “coaches impose discipline, and fathers and mothers (soccer moms) join their sons and daughters, in the quest for that dream of one day wearing the national squad jersey” (Ibid).

11.3 Building a national soccer.

Organized soccer in Mexico has promoted like in other countries that sense of "Mexicanism" and nationalism, it has been very important reinforcing and upholding a “Mexican stereotype”. It is interesting to mention that among the people has always existed a rejection feeling towards Spain given the several centuries of oppression, (probably in Mexico more visible that in other places, although very inconsistent at the same time), with localist refrains that reinforce that self-determination. The revolution, and the years after it promoted by all means prototypes and symbols to
build a "national identity", mass media, cinema, radio etc adopted the "Charro" and the "China Poblana" as image of the "Mexican Scent", with that they "synthesized the multiculturalism of the Mexican society. In the cultural and educational scene concepts such as national, race and culture were promoted," (Zabala, 2001) although the concepts of what a Mexican or Latin American is, are still pretty vague and confused, that past of oppression has become more or less in every nation an element to stress our differences and promote "what is national", nowadays that struggle continues, the roles just have been changed, nowadays an anti-Yankee ideology also is used to enhance our identity as "Latinos".

Perez Montfort and famous anthropologist says that "to get more legitimacy, the group in power positions constantly mention and evoked those masses who took part in the revolutionary process, and under the composition of "the Mexican people", they incorporated urban and rural sectors, whose anonymity started to look for a definition, to make clear the elements to form the Mexican Nation".

In the Mexican Footballer Scene, a national identity was also created mainly in opposition to foreigners, specially Spain, whose teams were better back in the day, it is mentioned the "rivalry between the teams of the Spanish minorities and the ones the Mexican people choose as their heroes, Necaxa y Atlante, were representative teams of the popular feelings" (Marcos, Casarin). Other Spanish clubs such as "Espana" and "Asturias" (who came to Mexico with a big group, of European players given the Spanish civil war) represented something strange and different in the local soccer, and always had a big number of European players, on the other hands the Mexican clubs gathered the "long for victory of the local fans, and used to have players with natural talent who were the result of the games in the periphery around the city, and other players who came from junior divisions of other Mexican clubs" (Zabala, 2001)

Don Fernando Marcos a famous conductor of special TV programs mentions that in the 30's and 40's, a Mexican Way to play soccer was born, it mixed creative quality, and organized precision, according to him, both qualities were represented by

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29 Charro is the Mexican cowboy, who wears a little jacket, white shirt, boots, tight pants, and a wide-brimmed hat.

30 The ethnic Mexican dress and character of 'La China Poblana, is a woman from the countryside who wears a very colorful dress, which became synonymous of typical femininity, tradition, folklore and fashion, people agrees this dress match the features of the country or indigenous women who wear it, their exotic beauty, and yearning for their homeland.
the teams “Espana”, “Atlante” and “Necaxa” the most prominent teams of back in that
time.

The ideas and theories of the Mexican Style contrasted with the ones created
as we mention before in Argentina and Uruguay, in those decades the first
manifestation in order to create modern societies decades later happened, as
previously mentioned “in immigrant societies like the ones mentioned, the quest for
“what is national” represented more or less, the desire to find a reason “to be from
there”, or “to be there”. In comparison, in Mexico like other places, the people was
already “from there”, so the quest was directed to find a symbolism to synthesize the
huge culture diversity.”(Ibid)

Football just like in the other cases took an special meaning, the national epic
was transferred to the soccer fields, media created a intense atmosphere before the
games, specially in matches of local and Spanish teams, and in the cinema there were
also proves of this, for example the club “Atlante”, and the actors Horacio Casarin
and Joaquin Pardave in the movie “Los hijos de Don Venancio”(Don Venancio’s
sons) in 1944, which was about a rich Spanish family, and how they suffered because
one of their sons became a soccer player, in those decades were the sport was linked
to the low classes.

The clashes and their symbols were expressed in the “colors, coats of arms,
and the player’s character. The interpretation the fans gave to these symbols was
reflected in their preferences, and their decision of being part of a collective entity in
order to express their identity feelings towards an specific club, or player”.... “a
mechanism of identification and communication between individuals and groups was
created. Being part of the cheer in the bleachers was the occasion for the people to
stop being themselves, for a little while, and start to be part of an parallel
reality”(Zabala, 2001).

Even in some European countries with more legitimate elements to construct a
nationalism soccer has been important generating a national identity, for example
Germany after the end of the Second World War, that was a critical society after the
war, but “soccer provide the Germans a privileged field, in which they had the right to
strengthen their national identity, to have moments of pride and ownership, without
exposing themselves to suspects of a new nationalism or the old demons” (Sonntag,
1997), after the world cup of Germany 2006 this was clearly expressed causing from
some sides of the German society rejection.
The mass behavior, “whimsical and changing, puts societies in moments of constant instability and uncertainty, citizens’s behavior and attitudes change given the new consumption ways. From the 70’s football became a show clearly attached to media, and global businesses” (Ibid) as a result of this results and technocrats, who are in charge of the game try to planify everything, but the game resist and “continues wanting to be the “art of what is unpredictable””. In a Latin America and world were inequality and injustice rule, as Galeano say, “is essential to rescue our own expressions in the way of playing soccer, and with that, one of the symbols of collective identity”.
12. “I am “Tico” because I support the national team” (Costa Rica)

Is true, around the globe football has been presented as a place were imaginary symbols of “what is national” are shown, Costa Rica, and Mexico, the two Central American Countries with most success in official competitions, and power to group people around soccer, as well as in the other countries previously mentioned, there are some interesting characteristics to notice.

I will mention in this section the Costa Rican or “Tico” case. In this country, just like in many others the journalistic speech creates a kind of continuity among the countryside as a rural space were nationality is made, with the soccer field, just like a continuity among rural heroes and sports idols (Archetti, Albarces, Rodriguez, 1996-998). This paragraph illustrates the example of the Costa Rican soccer player Mauricio Montero Chinchilla “El Chunche”, “from the countryside to the soccer field, and from the motherland to the world”(Chaves, 1998), this reminds somehow the “Pibe” (Argentinean slang for Little kid), a mythical character in the Argentinean football, whom goes from “El Potrero” –which also evokes the Pampa- to the soccer stadium, and from here to the “world”(Archetti, 1998).

In both examples, the sports idols embody pre-existent heroes of the nationalistic mythology, which move within the journalistic speeches, looking for characters to represent their wonderful adventures to the urban masses, anxious of social mobility and nostalgic for a past supposedly idyllic. Because of the sports

31 “Yo soy Tico porque apoyo a la selección” (Spanish for “I am Tico Because I support the national team”) Is one of many popular slogans used every time the national team plays, just as in the Ecuadorian case the fans start to being spectators and start to be part of the team, which at the same time represents all and the nation. Tico is a nickname given to the people born in this country.

32 Some People debates that Mexico is a North American country (specially after joining NAFTA), others say it’s a region in between North and Central America has to be mention as such, most of South Americans mention it as a Central American nation. Once again this is not the goal of my paper, but emphasize Mexico as a Latin American country and a regional leader.

33 Montero Chinchilla is a former Costa Rican soccer player used to play for L. D. Alajunes. He was part of the national team squad, that played in the 1990 FIFA World Cup in which Costa Rica did a great job by advancing to the round of 16. The nickname ‘El Chunche’ (Costa Rican slang for ‘The thing’) comes from his answer to what he would buy with a prize he had won. He answered ‘Voy a comprarne un chunche’ (‘I will buy a thing’) meaning he would like to buy a vehicle. He is one of the most charismatic soccer players in Costa Rica.
media, "el "Concho" and the "Gaucho"(both rural characters or peasants) are one, and one also with the national landscape, with the central valley, with the Pampa, with the earth, and they both reborn in the stadium"(Urbina, 1996).

Nevertheless, despite he is just a character that's inside of the limits of what we can perceive consciously, "because he is in between the countryside and the city, between the modernity and the tradition, between the childhood and the adult life, the Chunche"(Urbina, 1996) has a characteristic that makes him very different from the Pibe, he is not an unruly, scoundrel, mischievous character that is little or not respectful towards the authority or the established order, and in this way, creates and links, he's genius with he's feet, "making statements that break the national officialist mythology "........ "Both share some features such as being childlike, as some authors mention every time they talk about he's laugh and humor"(Ibid) this only happens outside of the soccer field: In this field the “Chunche” is a real man, and maybe sometimes he can be seen as a super-man.

The Pibe on the other hand is a real child only when he’s playing, “he’s rebellious, playful, undisciplined spirit, gives him the freedom needed for creating and being a genius on the field”.... In him he’s physical strength is not admired (on the contrary this is sometimes laughed upon), he’s skills and tricks, he’s ability to dribble are (Ibid), a prototype of this is the short and chubby Maradona or the Brazilian “Plier legs” Garrincha. For them the soccer field is not a battlefield, is a playground, they do not war, they have fun, he does not sweat, he laughs.

In comparison with the “Chunche” who present he’s “moral virtues in the field, the “Pibe” shows he’s football rebelliousness in he’s private life as well,”.... creating some scandals: he is an anti-hero super-man (Ibid). The “Chunche” is admired because of he’s moral virtues, the “Pibe” for breaking the law, Maradona and Garrincha are not role models for anybody, they are “Cursed Poets”.

Football represent and play, an important role creating and promoting a huge collective imagination, football in Costa Rica as well as in the rest of Latin America, is one of the few places when the people can feel as winners, such ideas of collectivity or society are not created in other aspects, people in Central America do not say things like “we are going to establish trade” with other countries, or “we received” millions of dollars given our exportations, soccer has become the space to do this.
13. Historical context.

Like many people have already mentioned, the history textbooks and the social sciences in general owe football an explanation, a space and a special study to make us think about it, and the really important role it plays and have played throughout history, and not only a space for celebration, when it has to be as well a place for serious reflection in many matters, is amazing to see it has been almost completely forsaken, even in countries were it is a huge part of their history, pride and identity. After taking a look of the particularities and features of the process of identity affirmation through football, it is important to take a look at some of the statements over whom, the construction of national identities have been based upon, in our Region as a whole. In a region without any more wars to fight like the Ecuador-Peru example, besides the relative or apparent homogeneity in many aspects, most of the countries have suffered given the “symbolic scarcity and weakness of resources, to reconstruct the image of “The National”(Ramirez, 2002).

A big part of the XX Century, specially the last years of it, represented for most (perhaps all) of the region a catastrophic explosions of problems we have been carrying for many decades, such as inefficient and corrupt administration of private and public institutions, and funds, as well as the economy always struggling to grow and get into the neoliberal and always more cannibalistic world order, plus the huge lost of institutionalism of the Nation-State in fundamental areas of the economic regulation (banks, finances, employment, etc, etc) and social redistribution (education and public health as most important), the slope in matters of redistributive efforts gathered around oil exportations, in countries such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Mexico and Brazil, besides the inability of the political system to create stability, and even more, a basic agenda of political transformation(Ibid) (the very popular and never achieved “Government Transformation”), over which the construction of public interests are supposed to be built upon, among other factors, are the cause of one of the worst crises of the Region, and also the cause of complete loss in fields that involve legitimacy, authority and national representation (political regimes, parties, bureaucracy, government functions, etc) among other actors around the Nation-State.

At the same time this period of the region’s life has been characterized by, “emergency and/or radicalization of several political projects based on, claims and
demands that emphasize our differences... as example we have the indigenous movement all over the continent, Chiapas in Mexico, Guatemala, the Brazilian tribes, the Indigenous organizations in Ecuador, Bolivia or Peru, other organizations of several kinds organized by natural region, “the reinforcement of particular identities” (Gallegos, 2000), on one hand the ethnic condition and on the other hand an local/regional affiliation. (labor that becomes even more complex given the similarity of our past, language, ethnic origins among others), this ones have worked as fundamental elements in the questioning of the institutional bases of the nation-state.

The indigenous proposals and demands, of more autonomy and even different laws and constitutions according to their wishes in specific areas of some countries, plus the necessity of declaring multinational states as a result of this (like in Panama, Guatemala, Peru, Mexico, Ecuador or Bolivia), seem “to converge in questioning the fundamentals in which the national state is based, promoting in many places a new wave of movements that support autonomy for different provinces and states, as a new way of political ordering” (Gallegos, 2000).

The self proclamation of the regional, local and ethnic distorts and undermines by itself, all the sense, purposes and recognition from social institutions of national authority: all the government functions found themselves in an open questioning, and loss of legitimacy in the national space.

The most particular feature of this historic-historic moment consists, nevertheless, that fundamental political actors (political parties, social movements, state figures), do not show any will of political articulation at national level: the autonom ic move is an accurate metaphor of “political ghettoization” (identities and self-

34 Talking about race in this region is very broad topic and concept, in which people have devoted their whole life in the quest for an answer, what I would like to refer broadly in this part, is the process of mixture, which formed most of the Latin American population as is widely known, more exclusively the “Mestizo”, understood as product of mixture between Spanish and Native Indigenous, in the vast majority of the Spanish Speaking Latin America, and the “Mulatto”, as result of the mixture between Portuguese mostly, and blacks, in some of the Caribbean Islands and Brazil, without forgetting of course the different minorities such as black and indigenous people of many tribes.

Its not the main goal of this thesis going into detail about the ethnic processes that formed the Latin-American ethnicity, or if here race is a cultural construction or not, given the very wide spectrum of mixtures, of all kinds, caused by migration flows to the region from all over the world, until the mid last century, and in smaller number after that. Which caused several contrasts, for example the mostly “white” population in the south of South America, (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Part of Paraguay) or the French, Dutch and English influence in the formerly known “Guyanas”.

What I want to emphasize more than any other thing is that omnipresent mixture in all the Latin Americans in one way or another.
referred projects, shut in themselves) in areas and minimum political spaces, the province, region, confederation, etc (Gallegos, 2000),

Making clear this way, in the Latin-American Politics as a whole the elements of national vocation have collapsed.

The possibility of new national politic projects, to cover things up on a national level, has been stopped inside the mechanisms of national articulation, and has been reduced to the local. The affirmation of sub-national identities, inside specific areas can be describes as, the proof of the nation, loosing space as place in which negotiation and political articulation should be debated. The senses and possibilities of the new construction of what is "national" are seriously questioned, and even their support is in danger because they are not able to get as a center of them, not even one of the relevant political actors.

What is obsolete is the appropriateness of any sort of political agenda supported in the base of reconstructing the nation-state. The establishment of a base to support "what is national" and the conformation of a program to recover the national context or background, is not part of any agenda, nor any political interests of any social movement, political party, syndicate, state agency, etc. The concept of "what is national" lacks elements.

This way in our region this period of time can be seen several problems that have weakened the conventional places and elements, that reinforce nationalistic feelings35, at the same time weakening the legitimacy of the national power structures, and the following rise of identity projects at local, sub-national, ethnical, and regional level. These projects of non-national identity have as well undermined the dominant rhetoric, the institutional bases of the nation-state and became a "loss in the "monopoly" of the nation, as space of people's cohesion and representation. And it is precisely here, in this particular social-political configuration in which elements and "public-official" places lack interest and possibilities of reinvention of national identities, were a rhetoric of identity re-composition built through the national football

35 In Ecuador, the already mentioned end of the war with Peru as main component of ownership to the Nation and the political-economical crisis in the late 90's with the subsequent disappearing of the former national currency "Sucre". In Brazil and Argentina, the devaluation and convertibility on the national currencies, the freeze of bank accounts, the Fujimori corrupt period in Peru, the permanent military tensions between groups in Colombia among others.
teams\(^{36}\)(Gallegos 2000) appears, making sense and being accepted at a national level.

Another eye-catching thing in the region’s soccer is the change of speech, from the media in countries like Venezuela and Ecuador given the last good results (“we have to remember, we cannot understand football without all the speeches created around it”)(Antezana, 2000).

Trough history the local media and newspaper has always shown in the headlines, historical failures, “Ecuador has never beaten Brazil”(El Comercio, 2000), “Ecuador has lost all its away matches against Paraguay”(El Comercio, 2000), among others. This always presented an historical idea of pessimism and failure, which goes together with the feeling of suffering.

In the first stages of soccer development in the Latin Countries the people used to suffer pointlessly just to be “hammered” in the games by other teams, games were lost “in the last minutes”, and referees used to be blamed for it\(^{37}\). Pessimistic elaborations about the national performances of many countries are been and were constructed in the nations, the popular phrase of “we played like never before, but we lost as always”. But nowadays this is changing, the new media speech appeals to hope and positivism\(^{38}\), and victory as factors of national union, especially if the results on the field support them. For example this editorial from the newspaper El Comercio from Ecuador, after the defeating Brazil: “Proud of being Ecuadorians...You guys left the name of our country very high. The biggest achievements can only be reached when people from the highlands and from the coast, indigenous and mixed, blacks and whites, hold one another our hands and shout, WE ARE

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\(^{36}\) In words of Archetti: If identities are chosen from a multiple reality, as a way of arbitrary selection and thus open, is not hasty to say that, nowadays Football is the place where patriotism makes sense and nation takes its shape. This “ability of re-inventing the nation, explained as part of popular cultural fields, or on the other hand, as a certain elite’s mean of mobilization, does not weakness at all whatsoever, the ability to group the national soccer team generates”(Villena, 2000)

\(^{37}\) As a result of Presidential Decree a Bolivian referee was banned for life to come to Ecuador, and referees of many nationalities have been stopped from refereeing matches of national teams whom have felt their interested harmed by them previously.

\(^{38}\) That sense of hope in the Ecuadorian case and also in some other countries have stayed captured by the war cry “Yes we can!”(Si se puede!), which became popular in the “Olympic Stadium Atahualpa” of Quito. This one was brought to Ecuador exclusively to cheer the national team, and is not just an adaptation like many other war cries from local clubs to the national team.
ECUADORIANS!" (Pg10, 29/03/2001) or another one from the newspaper "El Universo" saying: "This is my country. The youth is proud more than ever before of being Ecuadorian. Loving Ecuador is becoming fashionable" (pg 10, 27/04/2001). The amount of these kind of articles is vast and goes from public forums to editorials and articles in TV, radio and newspapers.

All these elements of "fracture and articulation" is what Archetti mentions as, "the mixture of tragic and comic elements of the current football scene", which are recomposing the nationalistic sense through football" in Ecuador and Latin America, as example the next table, from an opinion poll in Ecuador at the end of the year 2001:

Table Number 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Completely Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Completely Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has increased the self-esteem of the Ecuadorians?</td>
<td>80,63%</td>
<td>15,63%</td>
<td>2,81%</td>
<td>0,94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the base in which we should identify our national identity?</td>
<td>61,56%</td>
<td>22,19%</td>
<td>10,94%</td>
<td>5,31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has this participation unified the Ecuadorians?</td>
<td>77,19%</td>
<td>16,88%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0,94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this participation the national pride?</td>
<td>81,56%</td>
<td>13,44%</td>
<td>3,75%</td>
<td>1,25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this a model to be followed by politicians?</td>
<td>82,50%</td>
<td>13,13%</td>
<td>3,13%</td>
<td>1,25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Its also meaningful, that in this historical moment and context given the effects of soccer, many communities as previously mentioned are being attended and integrated to the national society -as example the blacks in Ecuador-, the idea of "the black entities being represented in a diverse and non-stigmatized way from sport" (Rahier, 1999) becomes stronger around the black members of the national teams, or even the indigenous people that conforms them, as well as the areas they come from, in Peru for example we have Roberto Palacios, better known as "The Chorrillian", because he was born in Chorrillos, Peru, a small district south of Lima.

39 "Football is not, a classic inversion ritual such as carnival in which the comic elements predominate, nor a passage ritual, such as funeral in which the tragic elements predominate. Football is a set of comic and tragic elements, thus, leading us to consider the allowed and banned transitions as an analysis field" (Archetti, taken from Alabarces, 1999)
which gained more fame given the skills of this player, attracting press to cover and make documentaries about the area where the mid-fielder was born and learned his skills, or el Chota in Ecuador, a forsaken black community, which has been object of studies of bio-physic to their inhabitants and several articles and documentaries and national and international help, after being noticed that most of the professional soccer players of Ecuador, are developed here, in very rudimentary and poor conditions.

The “articulation between ethnic and classist factors is evident, besides the formulation of statements and theories directed to the current social mobility of the nation”... “Is the activation of the concept of nation from the industrial age, that still remains”(Gellner, 1993), as well the legitimacy of the idea of equalitarianism of all the citizens written in all constitutions is activated, and many players from poor areas, forsaken provinces or tribes, are represented as icons of the poor or working class men ascent, and he’s transformation into a successful person or even a pseudo-deity, as most famous examples of this we have the “Maradonian Church” devoted to Diego Armando Maradona, whom was also raised in one of the most poor areas of Buenos Aires, “Villa Fiorito”, Ivan “The Araucanian” Zamorano in Chile, whom despite not being completely Araucanian became a symbol of proud among the Mapuches, and all the players from the Brazilian slums (“Favelas” in Portuguese), that become rich and famous day by day.

All these elements and football “seem to displace to the interior of each society every classic form of subjects constitution, becoming this way the only ideology”(Albarces, 2006), and the football scene has started to be understood as a privileged stage for demonstration of public actors from political parties, for example, the negotiations by the different governments with the TV enterprises that have the rights to broadcast different matches, represent and accurate expression of the central symbolic importance of soccer, in the politic life and amalgamation of the country. “When the relation between football and nation has become strong as in the Ecuadorian case, several causal factors such as the role of governments, local media,

40 In Ecuador the conversation to have open signal to all the matches to every person in the country were promoted directly by the National Government trough the Secretary of Communications and PSN the owner of the broadcasting rights. Some arguments such as “the de-nationalization of soccer through the fast way of transnationalization and de-location of TV broadcasting, seem”(Villena, 2000) hasty and not quite realistic in the Ecuadorian case and at some point in the Latin-American case
social pressure, rejection of privatization and the national team's performance, have been the key to maintain the public interest on the National Soccer Team over the barrier of the “Pay per view” system” (Ramirez Franklin, 2001)

The analyzed images destroy or at some point question the nation’s “referential axis”, Ecuador and Latin America as a whole, and as well as in many other things, is not the way “they show it to us in the school books”, the national soccer teams appears in some “conflictive zones of our comprehension as far as country goes, restructures cultural and symbolic capitals, apparently out-of-date, from which several trajectories of identity ownership emerge” (Ramirez Franklin, 2001). Different nationalistic speeches and theories “even more the ones coming from non occidental countries- represent a very complex structure,... which is linked to external powers not allowing him to express its own will, and provisional of several layers, tongues and filaments, which take shape in their own and specific community or nation”(Parekh, 2000), getting close and daring to explore them from the soccer perspective can be accurate and appropriate in order to understand them in their particularities, “movements” and composition.

All this, in the middle of a Latin-American society which is quite similar in the lack of elements to create a sense on what is “National”, thus, we are looking nowadays a “official- nationalism“ that is collapsing, because it does not sounds attractive or appealing to anybody, inside of a region that seems incapable to create collective projects, in an historical period of time in which “mechanisms of social integration dilute systematically (the constant raise in the migration, criminality and violet rates in the recent years is only the visible part of a phenomenon of gradual decomposition of the social structures in a country)”(Ramirez Franklin, 2001), football “emerges as a renovation space of the cultural and symbolic means”.(Ibid) in which all the elements such as, ethnicity, locality, regionality, and also the ones that created migration and immigration flows can be mixed, and is precisely in these elements were the notion of “what is national” lies.

In the current moments of collective depression and anguish cause by the decomposition of the social structures, the endless quest of finding particular features that can define us as members of any particular nation, gets harder, and the frustration with concepts such as peace, institutionalism, war, capitalism, communism, corruption, politics, even religion, among others, makes the job more complex. Because of this the national soccer teams and the soccer fields become an “insulin
doses, to the diabetic body of the nation, a revitalization of vital energies, "(Ramirez Franklin, 2001) and possibilities to recover credibility in the function of the nation-state as an organism.

In Latin-American countries, relatively new in republican life, with a democracy completely beyond and unknown to us, in which the government lacks credibility, corruption reaches incredible levels, were the economic crisis and unemployment are huge, concepts such as “nation” or “motherland” do not have enough elements to be called so, specially nowadays.

Looks also, like there are very few elements to “invent a nation” or create a national project, paraphrasing Archetti, “looks like soccer is the privileged arena, in which nation takes shape and patriotism makes sense” and politics plus mass media play the role of link between all them and others. For example with manifestations such as radio and TV programs before and after the events, media, politics, and communication are really important, they become the channel that makes possible the association and results later demonstrated.

Some “institutions” such as racism mine, the power to gather soccer has, and even make us doubt about, the convergence of the several social groups, some reactionary behaviors, can prove this, there has been cases of players attacked by supporters of their own team, it had happened everywhere for several reasons, but these kind of acts in Europe have been more often and radical. This idea of “Latinos to the world” have reinforced the differences and the ostracism of a Europe, that for the very first time in history starts to receive migration flows, once again we can see the elements who despite being different are not exclusive whatsoever.

Football, politics and media are fundamental in the conformation of nationalistic feelings in countries like Ecuador, and the rest of Latin America, these elements are in a eternal union, creating a new wave that refreshes the country, all kinds of union feelings in matters of ethnicity, regional and local disputes, and other elements in which the idea of nation is built. Unfortunately this relations seems to create and idea of nationalism that is not eternal and needs or is linked to many other factors like winning, way of broadcasting the events, the national team’s performance, which makes this quite ephemeral, unstable and variable. On the other hand, it has been proved that at least in football-politics-media matters the element of the “national idea” exists and they are not always negative, specially if we consider that
from the footballer point of view, the traditional concept of a beligerant nationalism in the geo-political context disappears almost completely.

“People are interested in football because it is a benevolent religion, that has caused little or no damage. Football will exist as long as people believe in clubs and colors as symbol of identity in a society which lacks references” (Vazquez Montalvan).
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