

Football Clubs and Civic Associations: Influential Men, Barrios and Football
In Buenos Aires between the Two World Wars

Joel Horowitz

Professor of History
Department of History
St. Bonaventure University
St. Bonaventure, NY 14778
USA
jhorowit@sbu.edu

©

Not for citation or quotation without the permission of the author

Football has since the first decades in the twentieth century played a crucial role in the way many Argentines see themselves. When Argentines are trying to figure out who people or politicians are, they frequently ask what team they root for. In the twenty first century, Buenos Aires has 79 stadiums where professional football is played.¹ The choices that people make frequently reflect neighborhood identifications since historically almost all clubs' support was neighborhood based.

A number of important recent studies have examined football's role in the development of masculine identities and of nationalism but this work will examine the role of football clubs in the inter-war period in the emerging electoral politics and their role in helping create a sense of neighborhood. John Bale has pointed out: 'Sport has become perhaps the main medium of collective identification in an era when bonding is more frequently a result of achievement.'²

Football clubs developed in the first decades of the twentieth century as part of a burgeoning civic culture that existed in greater Buenos Aires. Its citizens displayed a remarkable ability to create organizations with popular participation by forming hundreds

of membership organizations from neighborhood development groups (sociedades de fomento) to libraries, mutual aid associations and unions.³

The growth of membership organizations has received a good deal of attention. However, the football club has largely been ignored in this context, despite having arguably the most impact of all such associations with the exception of unions. Successful football clubs, despite being created to permit the playing of the game and controlled by the members, rapidly became complex organizations dominated by 'influential' men and intimately connected to the political and social world of the barrios. Football clubs and other membership organizations helped create a sense of neighborhood identity which is crucial to understanding the culture of Buenos Aires. Unlike most other countries, football was based primarily in one city and for decades much of the fan support for almost all teams came from particular barrios.

In the first decades of the twentieth century, more and more inhabitants of Buenos Aires had the time, wealth and inclination to engage in leisure activities, especially football. Football clubs were founded in order to play the game, though with time football became a spectator sport. The growing demand for places to play, stadiums and other expenses forced successful clubs to turn to those who could provide ties to the state or to other sources of power or wealth. In many ways this parallels the path followed by unions after 1916 where unions, despite ideological scorn for bourgeois politics, found that they needed ties to the government if they were going to be able to deal with employers.⁴

Serious examinations of civic organizations in Buenos Aires began in the 1980s as Argentine historians grappled with what parts of their political traditions seemed worth

saving in the wake of the horrific military regime of the 1970s and 1980s.⁵ A historic and vigorous civic culture seemed to prove that there existed a real democratic (or proto-democratic) tradition. As Hilda Sabato has shown, in the first decades of the second half of the nineteenth century, a relatively dense net of such associations existed in Buenos Aires. This permitted the citizenry to have a voice despite the lack of fair voting.⁶

Leandro Gutiérrez and Luis Alberto Romero and many of their students have pointed out that during the first opening towards democracy—the so-called Radical period, 1916-1930—and during the subsequent period of Neo-Conservative domination, 1930-1943—extremely dense networks of membership organizations existed in Buenos Aires. They could continue to flourish in the capital after the 1930 coup because after 1932 politics within the city was democratic. Unions, popular libraries, neighborhood development groups, mutual aid associations, and political organizations were extraordinarily common.⁷

The Buenos Aires of the inter-war period resembled in many ways the one so brilliantly described by Hilda Sabato. The ties between these organizations and politics were clear. According to the Socialist paper *La Vanguardia*, ‘Buenos Aires, especially Sundays, offers a magnificent spectacle: Anarchists, Communists, Socialists, militants of the bourgeois parties including political adventurers ... Catholics, Protestants, Spiritists, Salvationists, temporary groups organized for immediate and local ends, place their rostrums in the plazas and on the street corners and they say to the people what seems best. Dozens and hundreds of meetings in the open air happen methodically, without violence, without disturbing the normal life of the citizen... This custom... is the materialization and the symbol of our democratic spirit.’⁸

What *La Vanguardia* ignored was the much larger number of people playing and watching football. Football clubs in Buenos Aires were just as much member organizations as were popular libraries. Football had by the 1920s become a part of urban life and stoked the imagination of much of the population. Loyalty to clubs was frequently fierce. In the wake of professionalization of football in 1931, attendance at games soared.⁹ Membership in clubs climbed sharply. For example, Huracán had 1,641 members in 1926, 9,000 in 1938 and some 21,500 in 1941. Even a small club like Temperley had 354 members in 1923, 997 in 1930 and 1,860 in 1939. According to Julio Frydenburg in 1930 the large clubs had between five and fifteen thousand members while the small ones had one or two hundred.¹⁰ In part this reflected the legal establishment of a longer weekend, the addition of Saturday afternoon, in the capital in 1932.

Football teams were and are fielded by clubs which are really that. Members elect the governing board. These are membership organizations at their best and worst. A characteristic of Argentine football leagues, which they share with much of the rest of the world, is that teams are not permanently in the first division. Teams ascend to a higher level by winning or descend to a lower level after doing badly. Even the so-called important football clubs became that by winning matches and ascending to the next level.

The situation for football clubs in the early twentieth century was extraordinarily fluid. Most existed for a brief time and then disappeared for a myriad of reasons. Boys or young men who wanted to play football founded a club in their neighborhood. Their club's success depended upon prowess on the field and an ability to lure good players to join them. Other factors were crucial. Clubs needed to achieve some type of organizational stability. Many splintered over disagreements of all types. Successful

clubs also needed to attract powerful patronage. Ultimately, to be successful as a club, it was not enough to win games. Expenses had to be met; a field on which to play had to be acquired and, as teams climbed the ladder of success, stadiums had to be built.

Membership dues and ticket sales could not match the expenses. Most clubs founded in the first decades of the twentieth century have long ago disappeared and we can learn little about them, except perhaps their name and results of long-ago matches. Those that we do know something about were successful on the field and organizationally.¹¹

The initial neighborhood basis of most important clubs and their creation prior to 1916 helped shape the nature of football compared to other Latin American countries. Unlike Vasco da Gama in Rio de Janeiro, Palestra Itália (today Palmeiras) in São Paulo or Alianza Lima, the Buenos Aires inter-war clubs tended to reflect the mixed ethnicity of the city's neighborhoods. Unlike in Santiago de Chile unions played an insignificant role because the teams were founded prior to the formation of solid unions. The clubs were formed slightly earlier than the reform of the political system that opened up politics. In other words the development of football clubs was prior to or parallel to the creation of other types of popular structures. Even when the clubs were controlled by politicians or wealthy men rarely were they members of the elite, perhaps because elites embraced rugby.¹²

The Beginnings

Not surprisingly football first came to Argentina with British citizens who worked for British owned railroads or other companies. By the last decades of the nineteenth century, Britons and their Argentine descendents had established a number of clubs that played football. Almost all the players of the first dominant team, Alumni, had British

surnames. However, by 1913 Alumni had withdrawn from competition and teams with British ties had been surpassed by those whose players were predominantly native-born Argentines or came from other immigrant communities.

Almost all of the so called important clubs and many of the minor ones in greater Buenos Aires were formed in the first decades of the twentieth century. With the partial exception of some of the clubs founded by the British, the playing of football was the primary reason for the formation of almost all clubs.¹³ As early as 1907, there were around 350 clubs in greater Buenos Aires. By 1912 there were 482 clubs.¹⁴ How were they formed? All existing information comes from the clubs that survived, though the early record keeping was vague and therefore based on what became club mythology. Almost all have tales of a group of boys or young men getting together in a public place, in someone's house or a café to start a football club. In 1976, one of the founders of the Club Atlético Atlanta, Emilio Bolinches, told a newspaper this about Atlanta's founding: "One day I got together with some friends and we founded a club." He and other young men met in the house of a local businessman and when there were not enough chairs, adjourned to a nearby plaza. They wanted to play football, which Bolinches did for a number of years at a high level.¹⁵ Founders of clubs elected officers and chose the team colors. Although there are tales about difficulties raising even piddling sums of money, many of the founders were middle class. For example, many original members of the Boca Juniors and River Plate, both started in the predominantly working class district of La Boca, were middle class since they were or had attended secondary school.¹⁶

By the 1920s, the fluidity had lessened. Newer clubs found it harder to meet the increasingly stringent requirements for fields and stadiums, and independent leagues that

were not part of the formal football structures had begun to disappear. Also, the tremendous popularity of football as a spectator sport meant that some clubs drew large paying crowds and thus ensured their future success. In 1928 the team that received the largest sum from the gate, Boca Juniors, took in 23.5 times more money than the team in the first division that received the least, Porteño. This was a time of sham amateurism. Although players were technically amateurs, good players received compensation in various fashions, meaning the more successful clubs were the popular ones, since they had the resources to draw players from poorer teams. In 1931 openly professional football was introduced. Some previously important teams tried to remain amateur but lost any wide base of support. The so-called big five (Boca Juniors, River Plate, San Lorenzo de Almagro, Racing and Independiente) dominated the first division because their greater popularity gave them a sizeable revenue flow and thus the ability to acquire the best players.¹⁷

Embedded in the Population

The population of the city of Buenos Aires almost doubled between 1909 and 1936.¹⁸ It spread across the city's landscape and away from its historic center at an even faster rate because of the growth of public transportation, principally street cars and then by the 1930s motor vehicles. As the city grew, a sense of neighborhood developed around the scattered shopping areas and locations of dense employment and residence. People became strongly attached to these barrios.¹⁹

Football clubs became crucial to the identity of many barrios. The importance of football clubs for barrio identification was a trait shared with at least Santiago and Lima.²⁰ In Buenos Aires, as the sense of neighborhood was in many cases just forming,

one can hypothesize that at times football clubs helped form that identification. A recent quote makes the tie between clubs and neighborhoods clear. 'Atlanta is not Villa Crespo but Villa Crespo would not be Villa Crespo without Atlanta.'²¹ Historically only two teams developed city-wide and in fact national popularity, Boca Juniors and River Plate. After its move out of the largely working class barrio of La Boca into the wealthier northern sector of Buenos Aires, River Plate became identified with more comfortable sectors and their arch rivals with the poorer.²²

The identification of a neighborhood with a club does not mean, however, that that was where the club was founded. Because of the difficulties in locating places to play, almost all clubs spent at least some time playing away from where their founders lived or worked. Many came to be identified with different neighborhoods than that of their founding, but the tie between the team and a barrio was often extraordinarily strong.²³

Clubs helped create a sense of community in their barrio; they came to be more than just a place to play or watch football. They provided a 'respectable' location for entertainment. Important tango groups performed there and people danced to the music. Clubs held carnival celebrations and tango dance contests.²⁴ Football clubs became important places for people of a barrio to gather. You could meet your future spouse there.

The sense of community that the clubs helped to generate can be seen in part through tangos. As early as 1916 the Boca Juniors had a tango dedicated to it which was recorded that year. In the next decades, other clubs received similar songs. For example, after San Lorenzo de Almagro 1927 championship season a tango was written honoring

its victory and dedicated to Eduardo Larrandart and Pedro Bidegain, the club's president and vice president and active politicians. A tango named for Larrandart was presented at a San Lorenzo carnival celebration in 1931. Ernesto Ziperstein lists 25 tangos connected to San Lorenzo. Other large clubs also had numerous songs dedicated to them.²⁵

Clubs also served other function, binding the community to them. A good example is Atlanta which was founded in 1904. As early as 1910, it had a library which received a large number of books from the newspaper *La Nación*. In 1936 it built a basketball court and had one for tennis. In 1942 when it opened its new headquarters, it had a roller skating ring which was also used for dances. Before 1943 boxing, basketball, tennis, track, bocce, handball, chess and ping-pong were all practiced at Atlanta.²⁶ Platense in 1934 installed bocce courts and illumination for the celebration of carnival. In 1939 it built a boxing ring that held 2,500 spectators and two years later the first velodrome in Buenos Aires. In 1943 it began playing basketball. In 1941 when El Porvenir lacked its own stadium and was forbidden temporarily from playing professional football, it had other activities to keep its members somewhat content. It had basketball, bocce, billiards, boxing, and held 'famous' festivals.²⁷

The football clubs' ability to attract popular support in the 1920s helped push both the Communist and the Socialist parties to create their own leagues, despite continued suspicion of football. In 1930 the Socialist leader Alicia Moreau de Justo in an article published in the party paper referred to football as the new opiate and as not a sport. Still, the desire to play football could be used to attract party sympathizers or to try to protect them from the bourgeois world. These efforts were extensive. Hernán Camarero counted 57 teams belonging to the Communist sports organization in greater Buenos

Aires between 1923 and 1930. According to Cristina Mateu more than 70 such clubs existed. The Socialist efforts were somewhat less successful. The left-wing parties also had ties to several established clubs such as Barracas Central, Atlanta and Nueva Chicago.²⁸

Connections to the Influential

Why did politicians and wealthy individuals play such a large role in football clubs? That politicians would want to become identified with football clubs or provide them with favors is not surprising. Leaving aside interest in football, politicians desired to create a clientele and where that was not practical, at least build ties to voters. After the passage in 1912 of a voting reform law that assured cleaner elections, grass roots politics necessitated the mobilization of campaign workers.²⁹ Football clubs provided bases to cultivate that support.

The use by politicians of young men who formed football clubs as the basis for establishing a local political committee-- the heart of a political organization-- was even made into a short story by Bernardo Verbitsky. Although the story is set just after the period discussed in this work, it fits nicely into the argument. A group of young men had created a club in order to play football. They are approached by a young dentist who offers to finance a clubhouse for them. The offer is not altruistic but rather the dentist wants to use this club as a political committee, which will allow him to run for the city council.³⁰ Fiction appears very close to reality.

The desire to be identified with a particular team started very early. In 1914, eight years after its founding, Defensores de Belgrano reached the first division and a triumphant march took place. Among the participants was José P. Tamborini, who

became an important Radical politician. Tamborini was born and built his political base in Belgrano; elected to congress in 1918, he later became minister of interior, a senator and in 1946 a presidential candidate.³¹

Sometimes the desire to cultivate football fans was most obvious. In 1924, Virglio Tedín Uriburu, who sat on the city council for the Progressive Democrats and was a leader of the Chacarita Juniors (he became its president the following year), offered a proposal to the council that the city build a stadium for important matches. A recent game against the Uruguayan Olympic team had to be halted because the stands of Sportivo Barracas, where such games were frequently held, overflowed.³²

A former leader of Racing Club, Carlos Boloque, said in 1965: 'A football club has a tremendous social importance. If we measure only from the point of view of politics, the members and sympathizers used to mean hundreds of thousands of votes that no party is in the position to disdain.'³³ This was also true in the 1920s and 1930s, though the number of voters who could be swayed was smaller.

For businessmen, the clubs were a way of expanding their influence within the political system. It enabled them to widen their contacts and gave them publicity and prestige. In describing a similar situation in Brazil, Janet Lever hypothesizes that the holding of club posts is part of a career pattern of holding more than one job. The additional jobs serve as a spring board to more lucrative opportunities and alliance building is crucial. James Brennan and Marcelo Rougier make a similar observation about Argentine business associations.³⁴ The importance of the identification between barrios and their clubs cannot be discounted. A local business owner might feel a great

love for his club and barrio but a club leadership role would engender barrio loyalty to his business.

The Need for a Place to Play

Buenos Aires had few public parks and these could not be used to set up stands. In the more built up areas but still peripheral barrios, such as La Boca, the only vacant land was in the port area which was controlled by either the state or large companies. How were groups of young men, going to obtain the use of that land? This was possible only through influential intermediaries. Obtaining a field and hopefully later a stadium was not a one-time event. River Plate played in six locations between its founding and the building of its current stadium in 1938. Boca played in five locations before securing its present home. Teams often had to travel long distances from their home district. In their early years, Boca, River, and San Lorenzo de Almagro all played briefly outside of the city proper. When between 1912 and 1914 Boca played in suburban Wilde, it lost 1,200 of its 1,500 members.³⁵

In the central areas of the city finding a place to play was close to impossible. For example, Independiente had been formed by young men who worked in a downtown department store Ciudad de Londres and were joined by employees from other downtown stores. In the first three years of its existence it moved three times inside the city of Buenos Aires, before it relocated to the industrial suburb of Avellaneda, directly south of the city, where it quickly became a fixture.³⁶

Even clubs created in not fully developed neighborhoods, where land might be available, needed help of politicians or influential individuals to obtain places to play. When clubs became successful and wanted to advance to the first division, the football

authorities forced them to build stands and other facilities. Frequently clubs needed monetary or political help to create them. As clubs increased in scope and became more complex to administer, obtaining good leadership became difficult because leaders were not usually paid.³⁷ Only wealthy individuals or others, such as politicians whose efforts were compensated in other areas, frequently had the time and ability to preside over the larger clubs.

From early on, politics and influence mattered. For example, in 1911, three years after its founding, Huracán faced a dilemma. It needed a field and one that was properly equipped, if it were going to be admitted to the official football league. It had been playing and winning in independent leagues. Through the good offices of Jorge Newbery, a well known 'sportsman' who had adopted the team after the club started using a picture of his hot air balloon as the team's symbol, the club received the loan of a field from the Buenos Aires city government. It still needed to build the required facilities, for which it lacked the funds. According to legend, the club was approached by a Conservative Party boss named Cantón, who gave it the money to buy wood for the facilities in return for two hundred voting documents, many more than the eighty members possessed. These would allow Cantón to control two hundred votes. Huracán successfully collected the documents and completed the facilities.³⁸

The role of wealthy individuals in helping to secure fields is well illustrated by events in the 1930s for the Argentinos Juniors. In the 1920s, the team played in the first division and rented land from the Ferrocarril Oeste on which it built a stadium that held more than 10,000 people. After the adoption of professionalism in 1931, the club had trouble meeting financial obligations, and the railroad expelled it from the land and

seized the material that composed the stands. The team was also relegated to the second division. Membership had shrunk from more than a thousand to a hundred, when in 1939 the team's treasurer suggested the election as president of Gastón García Miramón who was not a member of the club and was out of the country. Upon his return and with his own money, García Miramón rented land for a stadium, settled with Ferrocarril Oeste and began the process of rebuilding the stands. The new stadium opened in the 1940.

Vélez Sársfield suffered a similar problem. In 1941 when the club owed over 39,000 pesos, had lost its field and had descended to the second division, José Amalfitani took over as president. He paid the debt himself; the club returned to the first division, and he was to remain its president until his death in 1969. Amalfitani's actions were far from unique in the history of Vélez, though the amount of money was. Almost from its founding, Vélez depended upon subsidies. For example, in 1911 one of its leaders, Antonio Marín Moreno, had a brother who worked for the Librería del Colegio and convinced the bookstore to give the club a monthly subvention of 30 pesos in return for allowing some of its employees to play. On several occasions, club leaders or their family members either loaned or gave significant sums.³⁹

Despite the continued amateur status of football, as early as 1916 the Socialist Party paper lamented the paying of players or their being given employment. Vicente Locaso admitted that as a youth in the 1920s and playing in the fourth division for River Plate, he received forty pesos a month. Politicians or wealthy business men found employment for players where frequently they did not really work. Therefore, contacts with politicians, who provided patronage jobs or with wealthy businessmen was a necessity.⁴⁰

Nueva Chicago and a Web of Community

The formation of a well-established civic culture, including football clubs, in the first forty years of the twentieth century can be seen in the Buenos Aires barrio of Mataderos (often called Nueva Chicago).⁴¹ In 1900 it was a new neighborhood. In that year, the municipal slaughterhouse opened there and along with it the market where cattle were sold. Already developers had begun to sell lots for housing. The first real social organization, Centro Social Nueva Chicago, was founded in 1902 with the help of the first director of the national stockyards (1904-1925) and Conservative politician, Alejandro Mohr. Mohr was elected to the city council in the first open contest in 1918 and reelected in 1920; he became vice president of the council. He also served on the local school board. In a recent study of the neighborhood, María Teresa Sirvent interviewed members of twenty-five still existing neighborhood organizations that had been founded prior to 1940. Many other civic organizations also had existed. These included numerous development societies, popular libraries, and athletic clubs.

The most famous and largest of the latter is the Club Atlético Nueva Chicago, which a group of young men founded in 1911 in order to play football. Nueva Chicago rapidly became a key local institution and remains so, though it has largely been confined to the second division. Mohr played a key role in its establishment. One of its first fields was obtained with his help, as was the wood for the first goal posts. The second president of the club, Roberto Grillo, 1912-1915, came to the organization at Mohr's suggestion. In 1913 when an honorary commission was established to aid the directors, its president was Mohr. Honorary commissions had some influence, as at least three

future club presidents served on honorary commissions. In 1932 his son José L. Mohr served a term as the club's president.⁴²

The other crucial political connection was to the Socialist Party through Fernando Ghío. He was born in Genoa, Italy in 1880. In 1885 his family emigrated to La Boca. Shortly thereafter they moved to Mataderos where they were among the early inhabitants and his father was a foreman at a tannery. The son became active in the Centro Social Nueva Chicago and in other social clubs. Besides editing two local newspapers, he helped found the local section of the Socialist Party. He was active in several development societies and in 1917 presided over a national congress of such associations. After 1910 Ghío made a living owning a bar usually referred to as Los Payadores, which was famous for its traditional gaucho singers, as well as cultural discussions attended by well known intellectuals close to the Socialist Party. Ghío also reputedly taught people to read and lent people books from his large private library. He assisted the founding of Nueva Chicago and was elected president three times in the 1920s but was active in the organization for a longer time. Ghío won election to the Buenos Aires city council in 1932 on the Socialist Party list. When the Socialist Party split in the 1936 he joined the left wing splinter and apparently because of further political problems committed suicide in 1938.⁴³ What appears to make the coexistence of very different political tendencies possible was the clubs importance to the community and the sense of identity that Mataderos had. The team's first shirts were given by Carlos Peretti an owner of a large store in the barrio. The situation in Nueva Chicago is similar to that of the Unión Ferroviaria in the 1930s. Railroad workers voted for the Radicals in elections while supporting labor leaders with other beliefs because they were good for the organization.⁴⁴

Some of the presidents of Nueva Chicago were influential local citizens. Fernando Gacio Mastache owned a food store, published a local newspaper that claimed to 'defend the interests, moral and material, of Nueva Chicago [the barrio]', had served on the honorary commission for the club and had been active in the Centro Social Nueva Chicago.⁴⁵ Amadeo Cozza was a doctor who previous to his time as president had served pro bono as the team doctor.⁴⁶ The influential Radical and provider of meat to markets, Juan Bidegain, was a member of the honorary commission. Juan's brother Pedro was a prominent political boss in another part of the city and played an important role in San Lorenzo de Almagro.⁴⁷ The neighborhood's loyalty to the club may explain some of the local elites' relationship to the club. A store owner went to a match against Huarcán and rooted for that team and as a result faced a boycott that forced him to leave the neighborhood. Simón Bruchstein, who opened the barrio's second pharmacy around 1930, donated the club's first bocce court.⁴⁸ He did this as a way of cultivating his customers or possibly as a result of loyalty to the club or some combination thereof.

The need for a club to have important connections is illustrated by a crisis in 1940 when the land where matches had been played since 1920 was requisitioned for a hospital. Nueva Chicago received a new site from the city, where it still plays, after Edmundo Kelly, the longtime director of the national stockyards, intervened to help get the new land. He had the honor of the ceremonial first kick at its inauguration. Why would politicians feel the need to help the club? The first game played on its new field was attended by five thousand spectators and the club had 800 members.⁴⁹

A Suburb and the Role of its Key Football Clubs

In Avellaneda, an industrial suburb that lies directly to the south of Buenos Aires, two clubs-- Racing and Independiente-- rapidly embedded themselves, becoming two of the largest and most popular clubs in the country.

Racing had tight ties to Alberto Barceló, a Conservative political boss, who controlled Avellaneda during almost the entire inter-war period and therefore Racing was controlled by the local elite. Barceló was a product of his century and had a populist side. He encouraged the establishment of big industry and favored public works. He regularly received friends, followers and favor seekers in his large house. He permitted, or more, prostitution and gambling which undoubtedly paid the costs of his political machine. He had close relations with the legendary tango singer Carlos Gardel. Racing was identified with Barceló and its rapid success undoubtedly enhanced his popularity.⁵⁰

The club's roots and supporters lay among the middle class of Avellaneda. A direct predecessor of Racing was created by Argentine employees of the Ferrocarril Sud. Another predecessor was formed after a meeting at the house of Emilio Barceló, in all probability Alberto's brother of that name. A member of that club, Leandro Boloque who was to go on to lead Racing for three years, was Alberto's brother-in-law.⁵¹ After a number of twists and turns, Racing was formed in 1903; its founders were mostly under 20 and were all Argentine born. By January 1909, Racing had 251 members and received economic assistance from the Barceló family. This connection caused some founding members to leave Racing and play for Independiente. Independiente had just moved to Avellaneda from central Buenos Aires and was to be the eternal rival of Racing.⁵²

Racing dominated Argentine football from 1913 to 1919. This era saw the end of British hegemony and for some marked the beginning of a new distinctive style of play. In 1919 Racing was a sizeable entity, claiming 1,407 members. By the beginning of the 1920s basketball, swimming, track and Basque paddle ball were being played at Racing. In 1926 the national football federation stated that Racing had 2,624 members, which made it the third largest club after River Plate and Boca Juniors and just ahead of Independiente. By 1931 it claimed slightly over seven thousand members, while Independiente had somewhat over five thousand.⁵³

In a study made of the twenty-eight most influential followers of Barceló, ten belonged to Racing and one to Independiente.⁵⁴ The leaders of Racing, according to Juan Corradi, discussed the affairs of the club with Barceló at his home. The club's political connections are made obvious by an incident in 1916 when Barceló and a number of his followers were indicted for using their official positions to influence elections. Three of those indicted, Leopoldo Siri, Luis Carbone and Pedro Groppo, had been or were to be presidents of Racing and were together to hold that office for thirteen years. All were absolved. Other presidents such as Arturo Giro and Leandro Boloque were among the regular attendees at the house of Barceló. In 1908, Pedro Werner served briefly as secretary of the city, just three years after serving as the club's third president. Other presidents, such as Julio Planisi and Ernesto Malbec, were part of Barceló's inner circle. It is important to note that elections were at times contested and the dominant group not always victorious.⁵⁵

Many of these men were people of substance. The president of Racing in 1922-23 and in 1925, Groppo, was a doctor who became director of the Hospital Fiorito, which

was built by Barceló. He served as president of Avellaneda's city council in 1919 and 1920 and from 1922 through 1927. This overlapped with his presidency of Racing. He was appointed by the military government in 1930 to run the city. Groppo also served in both houses of the Buenos Aires provincial legislature and in the national Chamber of Deputies. He was the national Finance Minister between 1938 and 1940.⁵⁶ Malbec had been a player for Racing and was a distinguished plastic surgeon. Luis Carbone served as president of Racing for nine years and was a municipal functionary.⁵⁷ When Racing opened a new headquarters in 1934, it celebrated with a banquet in honor of the nation's president, the governor of Buenos Aires and Barceló. However, the base of Racing went further than the elite. In the 1940 gubernatorial election in which Barceló was the candidate and which was annulled because of fraud, one of the more successful Conservative ward heelers was Juan Perinetti, a former star of Racing.⁵⁸

Both Racing and Independiente stirred deep passions in Avellaneda. There were two funeral homes in the city; one owned by the Peruihl family who were fans of Independiente and that of the Corradi family who supported Racing and not incidentally were close to Barceló. When the two teams played, the victor's followers would go to "their" funeral home, borrow coffins and parade them by their opponents.⁵⁹

The men who dominated Independiente from 1911 until 1933 also had political ties, but not to the Barceló machine. Juan R. Mignaburu, a lawyer, had been intendente of what became Avellaneda in 1899 and served on the city council as late as 1902. In 1894 he had founded a newspaper that defended the political positions of Bartolomé Mitre. His successor as the dominant figure was Pedro Canaveri, a Radical who served two years on the city council while president of the club.⁶⁰

Community and Politics

The leaders of San Lorenzo de Almagro during the 1920s were tightly tied to the Radical Party, and the club's internal conflicts at least partially reflected problems within the party. However, the barrio where the club was based was a bastion of the Radicals and their dominance arose in part because of the political leaders' ties to the community.

San Lorenzo was founded by a group of boys who according to legend were playing football in the street when one was almost hit by a trolley. A Salesian priest, Father Lorenzo Massa, then offered them a place to play, and became their advisor and supporter. When in 1908 the club was formally organized, Massa suggested that the name the boys had selected was unsuitable and the club was then named San Lorenzo de Almagro, the first part chosen presumably in Massa's honor and the latter in honor of the barrio where the club was based. Massa also bought their first shirts. Sponsorship by a priest makes San Lorenzo unique, at least among the clubs that became successful.

The club's early history was difficult. In 1912 and 1913, the club ceased to really exist and when it was reconstituted it had to wander far from Almagro. For a short time it played its games in the distant northern suburb of Martínez with the players having to walk eighteen blocks from the train station. When they rented a field closer to Almagro, the league said it was inadequate, but the club needed to pay what it owed for the field and a sizeable contribution came from Massa. The long term solution was his as well. He found a location held by a religious high school and some private individuals, which could be rented and developed into a place where football could be played. Massa, as well as several other individuals including the club's president Antonio Scaramusso,

contributed relatively large sums to make the field playable. After this period, Massa was transferred to other parts of the country.⁶¹

As it became a mass based party, the Radical Party developed political machines in the electoral wards of Buenos Aires. Pedro Bidegain became the dominant Radical operative in the sixth ward, the home of San Lorenzo. Bidegain used the club as a popular base, but not an uncontested one. Bidegain was born, married and lived in the ward. At an early age he went to work for the Ferrocarril Oeste and joined La Fraternidad, the engineers' and fireman's union. He later resigned from the railroad. As early as 1906 Pedro Bidegain held a position within the ward party structure. By 1920 he headed it and in 1923 the newspaper *Crítica* used him as an example of the local barons of the party. In 1921 he won election to the city council and in 1926 to congress.

In 1918 Bidegain became vice-president of San Lorenzo; the president was Antonio Scaramusso, who had been the team's first president and had served in that role almost continuously. In addition, the son of Bidegain's older sister, Eduardo Larrandart, was secretary and one of Pedro Bidegain's brothers, José, was on the board of directors. Both José and Larrandart were Radical Party activists. Larrandart was employed by customs, which was considered a prime site for patronage jobs. Between 1920 and 1928 Larrandart was president with Pedro Bidegain as vice president.

San Lorenzo was very much part of the community. Bidegain and Larrandart spent large amounts of time in the Café Dante talking with the club's players, with members of the community and the many literary figures who identified with that section of the city (Boedo). The first four decades of the century saw clubs of all types created in

the barrio and Bidegain helped found a social club that survived until 2003 and the Universidad Popular de Boedo.

The sense of community did not mean that the political machine functioned smoothly. When the Radical Party splintered over the role of Hipólito Yrigoyen during the presidency of Marcelo T. de Alvear, it led to conflict within San Lorenzo in 1924. Larrandart was an Anti-Personalist, while Bidegain supported Yrigoyen. Larrandart's ability to hold on to the presidency may not have reflected approval for his national political faction, as in 1923, 1924 and 1927 San Lorenzo won its league title. Friction between the two remained.

Despite the failure of his faction to dominate, in March 1926 Bidegain used the rolls of San Lorenzo to ask for support for his successful candidacy for congress. The flier that was distributed said in part 'If until now San Lorenzo de Almagro had in Mr. Bidegain one of its best collaborators, what cannot be hoped for if the porteño electorate sends him to occupy a seat in the Chamber of Deputies...?' According to the Socialist paper *La Vanguardia*, some were displeased that members' addresses were taken from club records, but Bidegain claimed that it was not a big issue and that he had done a lot for the club, including obtaining a subsidy for it. In later accounts, he did do a lot for San Lorenzo. According to one story, his political influence helped force a rival club, Huracán, from a stadium just blocks from that of San Lorenzo, thus aiding his club to consolidate its neighborhood base.

Any modus vivendi between San Lorenzo's two factions broke down in 1928, purportedly in a squabble over who should have represented the football federation on a trip to Europe. However, 1928 saw heated national presidential elections with the two

Radical factions as the prime contenders, and this was likely the real reason for the conflict. Problems between Larrandart and Bidegain led to the latter's resignation from the club's vice presidency. Still, because of his good connections to the Church, Bidegain played a crucial role in the purchase of the rented land that Father Massa had found for the club.

The power struggle was nasty. According to *La Vanguardia*, Bidegain even threatened the government employment of players and board members. In the wake of Yrigoyen's lopsided victory in the presidential election, in early 1929 Bidegain faced his nephew in heated club elections. He had considerable outside help. Two bus companies had posters in the vehicles' windows supporting him. The newspaper *Ultima Hora* wrote: 'San Lorenzo without Bidegain is not San Lorenzo—Never will the club San Lorenzo de Almagro be in better hands than those of señor Pedro Bidegain—Now more than ever the club *santo* needs don Pedro to place it at the level to which it justifiably corresponds.' The assembly was heated and despite the presence of police and government officials some fights broke out but Bidegain won 597 to 482.⁶²

Bidegain's short time in the presidency was extremely active. The playing of basketball and tennis began. Membership grew from 3,612 to 13,638. This is a large increase given the onset of the depression but is not out of line with that of other big clubs. The stadium was expanded—to become the largest in the capital—seating 73,400. According to one account, municipal workers were used. Bidegain had political help. The club's vice president in 1930 was Pedro Villemur, an Almagro resident who had been elected to the city council in 1926 and became its president in 1929, while being an active club member. The two were preparing a city council measure which would help

the club build a cement stadium, when the 1930 coup closed the city council. Bidegain went into exile and on his return he was jailed. Other prominent Radicals were forced from office and an interim president was in charge. In early 1931 elections took place with the factions from 1929 still in place. The supporters of Larrandart campaigned claiming that they would remove politics from the club and would restore good administration to an organization that was in bad financial shape. With many more voters than two years before, Larrandart won 2052 to 1411. His success was not surprisingly given the Anti-Personalist support for the coup. Bidegain's followers were to remain out of power.⁶³ The Radicals still retained influence with the club. When in the late 1930s it wanted to build a social center with a gym and a library among other features, two Radical city councilors, Villemur and Luis Boffi, who had been on governing council of San Lorenzo presented the project. It never passed.⁶⁴

A Political Entity

A striking example of the politicalization is Almagro (not to be confused with San Lorenzo de Almagro), which has usually played in the second division. It was definitively founded in 1916 after a split in a club between Radical and Conservative members.

One of Almagro's founders and president between 1919 and 1927 was Miguel Ortiz de Zárate, who won election to the Chamber of Deputies in 1928 and 1938 as a Radical. In 1924, according to the sports magazine *El Gráfico*, almost all Almagro's members were Radicals when it was founded and the party's influence expanded. When '... Almagro makes felt its four hundred members in the internal elections of the committee [the Radical Party organization in a ward] it is to make them tremble...Win the

election! Mr. Ortiz de Zárate has an extraordinary platform, being president of that committee.' His base for controlling the local Radical organization was Almagro. Ortiz de Zárate was famous for tying the loyalty of Buenos Aires's newspaper vendors (canillitas) to the club, partly through sponsoring a football championship for teams of canillitas. The club, like the Radical Party, distributed clothes and toys to children on New Year's and Three Kings Day.

Ortiz de Zárate was succeeded as president of Almagro by Rómulo Trucco, who was the official first member of the club and who had represented the Radical Party on the city council and in congress. Trucco, while serving as a city councilor, denied that the club had used city equipment on its field as another councilor had charged. It is unlikely that the handover of the club from Ortiz de Zárate to Trucco was done willingly, since Trucco joined the Anti-Personalist faction, while Ortiz de Zárate did not. The latter had influence in the club even in the late 1930s. Two early club presidents, José M. Paglieri, 1913-1915, and Arturo G. Costa, 1916-1918, were Radical Party activists. Arturo Frondizi, the future Radical president of Argentina, played in the youth divisions of the club in the 1920s. Raúl H. Colombo, who was president between 1936 and 1938 and for most of the 1940s, was active in the Radical Party, in large part because of his friendship with Frondizi. Tamborini, an influential Radical officeholder for many years, also participated in the club. Almagro was of considerable size, claiming some 400 members in 1924 and 1,053 in 1926. In 1930 it had the sixth largest stadium in Buenos Aires.⁶⁵

Escaping the Barrio

River Plate, one of the two teams that have long had a national fan base, has the reputation of being the team of the wealthy. However, its origins lay in the working class waterfront neighborhood La Boca, which had been heavily populated by Genoese immigrants, but by the time of River's founding in 1901 or 1904 had become much less so. The club was formed by fusing two existing clubs. One, La Rosales, was considered middle class. The direct predecessor of La Rosales was formed by a group of high school students. The club that merged with La Rosales, Santa Rosa, was founded by young men who met at the house of a Mr. Jacobs, a vice manager of the Wilson Coal Yards, in order to have tea, dance, and practice English. One attendee, Isodoro Kitzler, had been born in Bombay and attended the school of Alejandro Watson Hutton, who is considered the 'founder' of football in Argentina. Two others, Leopoldo Bard and Livio Ratto, both future presidents of River and players on the team, were to become medical school students and Radicals. Bard, despite being born in Austro-Hungary and arriving in Argentina as a boy, became an important politician, serving as the majority leader in the Chamber of Deputies. Bard's presidency of River occurred before he became important and before the club became important.⁶⁶ Undoubtedly his ties to the club did not hurt his political career.

In 1916, five clubs based in La Boca belonged to the major association, making the search for support difficult. In a popularity contest conducted by a newspaper, the Boca Juniors with 2,067 votes was the most popular and River followed with 1,629. The other three lagged far behind.⁶⁷

For River Plate, the key to observing the importance of politics and influential men is the search for a place to play. River's first field was near the docks in La Boca.

However, in 1906 the Ministry of Agriculture forced the club off the land. The club was offered the use of land in the suburb of Sarandí by José Bernasconi, an executive of the naval store company Dresco. He became president of River in 1909.⁶⁸

After one year, the team moved back to the same field that it had previously occupied and stayed until 1913 when the government agency that oversaw the ports definitively threw it off the land. In 1912 the new president of River, Antonio Zolezzi, had obtained a 3,000 peso subsidy from the municipal government, which River used to build stands for spectators. Zolezzi was serving on the city council and made the motion in favor of the subsidy. When objections were raised, Zolezzi countered that a club from the northern sector of the city had received 15,000 pesos and that some 3,000 people attended River's games. Who was Zolezzi? Born in the Liguria region of Italy, and coming to Argentina at a young age, he subsequently opened a store. He clearly did very well, as he supported mutual aid societies and popular education, and founded several institutions for orphans. He also became an honorary member of the Boca Juniors, an unusual step for a man who had been president of River. Clearly he was a figure of considerable importance in La Boca and had strong attachment to the barrio.⁶⁹

In 1914 River played on the field of the athletic club Ferrocarril Oeste, which was far from its home base. The following year River rented land in the port area in order to build a stadium. In the early 1920s, River moved out of La Boca and into the richer northern sector of the city where they rented land. Its then president José Bacigaluppi explained the move by saying: 'River is not a club for a barrio but for a city.' This vision is not surprising, since his family's real estate business subdivided lots throughout the city, helping the city expand into new areas. The move enabled River to build a stadium

holding 58,000 and a basketball court, four tennis courts and three of bocce, a swimming pool, an equipped gymnasium and a place for kids to play.⁷⁰ In the 1930s under the presidency of Antonio Vespucio Liberti, River made the great leap to the far north in what was then a practically deserted sector of the city. Liberti, who began his career with the club by carrying the players' bags and who was either a cinema owner or a producer and distributor of alcoholic drinks depending on the source, received significant assistance from the government. The city ceded a significant percentage of the land and the national government loaned the club \$2,500,000 pesos. The loan was facilitated by a presidential decree that made money available to build stadiums. The two clubs that took advantage of it were the most popular, River and Boca Juniors.⁷¹ By leaving La Boca, River cut its ties to its barrio but made itself more attractive to the wealthy who tended to live in the northern barrios.

Conclusions

Football clubs were founded at a crucial moment in the history of greater Buenos Aires. It was a time of great change. As the population of the city increased rapidly and it spread away from the traditional center of the city, a real sense of neighborhood began to develop. Simultaneously, we see an increased politicalization after the passage of a law in 1912 which encouraged fair voting for Argentine males. Also Buenos Aires saw the creation of literally thousands of civic associations, from libraries to unions. The founding of football clubs was very much part of the ability of porteños to create the institutions that they felt that they needed. The popular classes were creating their own world, much as Gareth Stedman Jones has described the working class doing in late

Victorian and Edwardian London, even if in London soccer was not as important as in Buenos Aires.⁷²

Most of the football clubs have long since disappeared but others have survived. These were clubs that were successful on the field but as importantly as institutions. They acquired good players but as importantly they received outside help. Carlos Forment has argued that only in the twenty first century did football clubs play a key role in municipal politics.⁷³ However during the inter-war period politicians and football clubs were intertwined. Politicians helped the clubs obtain places to play and provided other favors and in return received support. This was very much part of the clientelistic nature of politics but also of the inability of even large groups of citizens to successfully approach the government.

The clubs also became central to the identity of the barrios in which they developed. In many cases the barrio and the club developed almost simultaneously. Loyalties were intertwined. This helps explain, in part, why many businessmen gave so much of their time and money to these institutions.

In recent years some of those who inspired the study of civic associations in Argentina have begun to question the direct link to democratic practices derived from the works of first Alexis de Tocqueville and more recently Robert Putnam. They posit, however, that the problems began with the regime of Juan Perón.⁷⁴ An examination of football clubs makes clear that much earlier the powerful came to 'colonize' many of them.⁷⁵ By colonize I mean come to dominate because of what they offered in real terms but also because of what Robert Michels called the iron law of oligarchy. Many football clubs turned to those who could solve their immediate problems, even if they were really

not one of them. Institutions looked to individuals as saviors rather than to the collective membership. This is very much part of the experience of the society as a whole. Patronage and clientelism came to play an ever increasing role. Even labor unions, which ideologically rejected ties to the state and had much more immediate leverage than did football clubs, began turning to the state for help during the second decade of the twentieth century.

The examination of football clubs says something about the political culture of Argentina. Even large and in most ways successful organizations perceived a need to turn to politicians or to the wealthy to receive the help that they needed to survive. The ordinary citizen, even if backed by a sizeable organization, lacked the clout to obtain the needed aid.

¹ Christopher T. Gaffney, *Temples of the Earthbound Gods* (Austin, 2008), 131.

² For examples of discussions of masculinity and national identity, see Eduardo P. Archetti, *Masculinities: Football, Polo and the Tango in Argentina* (Oxford, 1999) and Matthew B. Karush, 'National Identity in the Sports Pages: Football and the Mass Media in 1920s Buenos Aires', *The Americas*, 60,1 (July 2003), pp.11-32. John Bale, *Sports Geography* 2 nd. Ed. (New York, 2003), p.14.

³ For examples of the many studies, Leandro Gutiérrez and Luis Alberto Romero, *Sectores populares, cultura y política: Buenos Aires en la entreguerra* (Buenos Aires, 1995); Luciano de Privitellio, *Vecinos y ciudadanos: Política y sociedad en la Buenos Aires de entreguerras* (Buenos Aires, 2003). See also Joel Horowitz, *Argentina's Radical Party and Popular Mobilization, 1916-1930* (University Park, 2008); Fernando J. Devoto and Eduardo J. Míguez, eds. *Asociacionismo, trabajo e identidad étnica: Los italianos en América Latina en una perspectiva comparada* (Buenos Aires, 1992).

⁴ See Horowitz, *Argentina's Radical Party and Argentine Unions, the State and the Rise of Perón, 1930-1945* (Berkeley, 1990).

⁵ PEHESA, '¿Donde anida la democracia?' *Punta de Vista*, 15 (1982), pp. 6–10.

⁶ Sabato, *The Many and the Few*, pp. 29-51.

⁷ See footnote 3.

⁸ *La Vanguardia*, 10 October 1929 as cited in De Privitellio, *Vecinos y ciudadanos*, pp. 85-6.

⁹ Ariel Scher and Héctor Palomino, *Fútbol: Pasión de multitudes y de elites: Un estudio de la Asociación de Fútbol Argentino (1934-1986)* (Buenos Aires, 1988), pp. 46, 49.

¹⁰ Jorge Iwanczuk, *Historia de fútbol amateur en la Argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1992), p.243; Jorge Newton, *Historia del Club Atlético Huracán, 1908-1968* (Buenos Aires,

1968), pp. 60, 68; Marcelo Horacio Ventieri, *Historia del Club Atlético Temperley: De centenario football club a la primera división (1912-1982)* (Buenos Aires, 2006), pp. 28, 39, 43; Julio D. Frydenburg, 'La profesionalización del fútbol argentino: Entre una huelga de jugadores y la reestructuración del espectáculo,' *Entrepasados*, 27 (principios de 2005), p. 89 ft. 13.

¹¹ Small neighborhood clubs existed throughout the twentieth century. Most are unknown to those from outside their barrios. See for example, Angel Oscar Prigano, 'Seis clubes de fútbol del Bajo Flores,' *San José de Flores: Las instituciones del barrio 1880-1990*, ed. Eduardo Mario Favier-Dubois (Buenos Aires, 1993), pp. 26-36.

¹² Gaffney, *Temples of the Earthbound Gods*, esp. pp.62-4; Gregg P. Bocketti, 'Italian Immigrants, Brazilian Football, and the Dilemma of National Identity,' *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 40, 2 (May 2008), pp.275-302; Brenda Elsey, 'The Independent Republic of Football: The Politics of Neighborhood Clubs in Santiago, Chile, 1948-1960' *Journal of Social History* (Spring 2009), pp.605-630; Aldo Panfichi and Jorge Theroldt, 'Identity and Rivalry: The Football Clubs and *Barras Bravas* of Peru' *Football in the Americas: Fútbol, Futebol, Soccer*, eds. Rory M. Miller and Liz Crolley (London, 2007), pp.143-9.

¹³ For example, Iwanczuk, *Historia de fútbol amateur*; Ricardo Lorenzo (Borocotó) et al, *Historia del fútbol argentino*, 3 vols. (Buenos Aires, 1955); Julio David Frydenburg, 'Espacio urbano y practica del fútbol, Buenos Aires 1900-1915' *Educación Física y Deportes, Revista Digital*, www.efdeportes.com/efd13/juliof.htm, 31/1/07; Julio D. Frydenburg, 'Practicas y valores en el proceso de popularización de fútbol, Buenos Aires 1900-1910,' *Entrepasados*, 12, (principios de 1997), pp. 7-29; Scher and Palamino,

Fútbol, pp.237-39. The literature on early football is vast and this footnote is not intended to be comprehensive.

¹⁴ Frydenberg, 'Espacio urbana,'; Julio D. Frydenberg, 'Redefinición del fútbol aficionado y del fútbol oficial. Buenos Aires 1912,' *Deporte y sociedad*, Pablo Alabarces, et al. (Buenos Aires, 1998), p. 51.

¹⁵ See 'El último patriarca bohemio,' *Sentimiento Bohemio*, año IV, 10, 8 July 2003, www.sentimientoboheio.com.ar/produccion_bolinches.htm, 9/6/09. See also Club Atlético Atlanta, Sitio Oficial, 'Historia--Fundación y amateurismo,' www.caatlanta.com.ar/institucional/historia.htm, 29/8/08.

¹⁶ For the founding of clubs, see Alejandro Fabbri, *El nacimiento de una pasión: Historia de los clubes de fútbol* (Buenos Aires, 2006) and club websites in the footnotes. For the middle class nature of River Plate, see below and for Boca Juniors, Horacio Rosatti, *Cien años de multitud: Historia de Boca Juniors, una pasión argentina (1. El período amateur (1905-1930))* (Buenos Aires, 2008), pp.41-47.

¹⁷ *La Vanguardia*, 22 Feb. 1929; Frydenberg, 'Redefinición del fútbol,' p.52; Iwanczuk, *Historia de fútbol amateur* esp. pp. 206, 224-6; Gustavo Veiga, *Fútbol limpio, negocios turbios* (Buenos Aires, 2002), p. 3.

¹⁸ Richard J. Walter, *Politics and Urban Growth in Buenos Aires: 1910-1942* (Cambridge, 1993), appendix A1.

¹⁹ For example James R. Scobie, *Buenos Aires: Plaza to Suburb, 1870-1910* (New York, 1974); Adrián Gorelik, *La grilla y el parque: Espacio público y cultura urbana en Buenos Aires, 1887-1936* (Bernal, 2004). For the outlying barrios in the mid-1930s, see

Nicolás Iñigo Carrera, *La estrategia de la clase obrera 1936* (Buenos Aires, 2000), esp. pp. 59-121.

²⁰ Elsey, 'The Independent Republic of Football, pp.605-630; Steve J. Stein, 'The Case of Soccer in Early Twentieth-Century Lima' *Sport in Latin America and the Caribbean*, eds. Joseph L. Arbeno and David G. LaFrance (Wilmington, 2002), pp.9-31.

²¹ *Revista Villa Crespo-Atlanta*,

<http://villacrespoenradio.iespana.es/atlanta.html?2&weborama=-1>, 11/7/09. The quote was found in Raanan Rein, 'On the Trail of Buenos Aires' Atlanta Soccer Club: Jewish Argentine Popular Cultural,' paper presented Conference on Latin American History Conference, 2009. I would like to thank the author for sending it to me. Villa Crespo is a neighborhood and Atlanta is a club. For identification between barrio and football clubs, see Archetti, *Masculinities*, pp. esp. 6, 121.

²² In recent decades the sense of barrio identification has weakened and support for teams has become less geographically centered.

²³ Frydenberg, 'Espacio urbano y práctica del fútbol'.

²⁴ Eduardo Gálvez, 'El tango en su época de gloria: Ni prostibulario, ni orillero. Los bailes en los clubes sociales y deportivos de Buenos Aires 1938-1959,' *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*, Debates 2009, <http://nuevomundo.revues.org>, 3/4/09; Sylvia Saíta, *Recuerdos de tinta: El diario Crítica en la década de 1920* (Buenos Aires, 1998), p. 151. For lists of clubs' carnival celebrations, see for examples *La Prensa*, 20 Feb. 1926; *La Vanguardia*, 7 Feb. 1932.

²⁵ ‘El fútbol,’ www.eldiariodeltango.com/especiales/El%20Futbol.htm, 24/1/07; Ernesto Zipstein, *Tango y fútbol: Dos pasiones argentinas* (Buenos Aires, 2006), esp. pp. 81-88.

²⁶ ‘Reinauguración de la sede social,’ *Sentimiento Bohemio*,” VII, 193, 21 May 2007, <http://guia-collado.com.ar/pages-39106.html>, 9/6/09; ‘15 años después,’ *Sentimiento Bohemio*, VII, 175, 6 Jan. 2007, www.sentimientobohemio.com.ar/175sed_historia.htm, 19/1/07; Club Atlético Atlanta, ‘Historia--Fundación y amateurismo.’

²⁷ ‘Historia del C.A. Platense,’ www.platensesosmivida.com.ar/htms/Sociales/Historia.htm, 19/1/07; ‘La historia: Desde 1931 hasta 1943,’ www.clubelporvenir.com.ar/lahistoria3143.htm, 19/1/07. For other examples Vicente Osvaldo Cutolo, *Historia de los barrios de Buenos Aires* (2nd. ed., Buenos Aires, 1998), I, pp.16, 110.

²⁸ *La Vanguardia*, 24 Aug. 1930; Hernán Camarero, *A la conquista obrera: Los comunistas y el mundo del trabajo en la Argentina, 1920-1935* (Buenos Aires, 2007), pp. 241-53; Cristina Mateu, “Política e ideología de la Federación Deportiva Obrera, 1924-1929,” *Deporte y sociedad*, p. 67; Dora Barrancos, *Educación, cultura y trabajadores (1890-1930)* (Buenos Aires, 1991), pp. 115-117 and below.

²⁹ See Horowitz, *Argentina’s Radical Party*.

³⁰ Bernardo Verbitsky, ‘Grandeza y decadencia de “Estrella del Sur”’ *El fútbol*, Jean Cau et al (Buenos Aires, 1967), pp. 65-87, esp. 77, 80.

³¹ ‘La historia del C.A.D.B.’, www.defe.com.ar/historia3.htm, 16/6/09; *Crítica*, 28 Aug. 1923; Robert A. Potash, *The Army and Politics in Argentina, 1945-1962* (Stanford, 1980), p. 27; Cutolo, *Historia de los barrios*, I, p. 185.

³² *La Prensa*, 21 Nov. 1924 and Club Atlético Chacarita Juniors-Sitio Oficial, 'Historia del Club Atlético Chacarita Juniors,' www.chacaritajuniors.org.ar/historia2.php, 17/1/07.

For the chaos, Mason, *Passion of the People*, pp. 34-5.

³³ Dante Panzeri, *Burguesía y 'gangsterismo' en el deporte* (Buenos Aires, 1974), p. 187.

³⁴ Janet Lever, *Soccer Madness* (Chicago, 1983), p. 57; James P. Brennan and Marcelo Rougier, *The Politics of National Capitalism: Peronism and the Argentine Bourgeoisie, 1946-1976* (University Park, 2009), p.112.

³⁵ Frydenberg, 'Espacio urbano'; 'Historia de Boca Juniors,'

www.informexeneize.com.ar/historia_1.htm, 29/1/07.

³⁶ Frydenberg, 'Espacio urbano'; "Historia del Club Atlético Independiente,"

www.independiente1905.com.ar/historia/index.html, 16/2/07.

³⁷ Scher and Palamino, *Fútbol*, p. 20.

³⁸ 'Historia 1 and 2' *Semanario Quemero*, www.semanarioquemero.com.ar/historia1

and 2.htm, 29/8/08. For Jorge Newbery, see Richard J. Walter, *Politics and Urban*

Growth, pp. 26-8; Newton, *Historia del Club Atlético Huracán*, p. 28.

³⁹ Asociación Atlético Argentinos Juniors, Sitio oficial, 'Historia',

www.argentinosjuniors.com.ar/secciones/historia03.html, 19/1/07. Pedro Urquiza, 'Tu

nombre me sabe a hierba,' *Clarín*, 3 Mar. 1998, [http://edant.clarin.com/diario/](http://edant.clarin.com/diario/1998/03/14/r-01001d.htm)

1998/03/14/r-01001d.htm, 29/8/08; Cutolo, *Historia de los barrios*, I, p. 508; Fabbri, *El*

nacimiento de una pasión, pp. 128-30; Comisión de Asuntos Históricos, Club Atlético

Vélez Sársfield. *La historia de Vélez Sársfield (1910-1980)* (Buenos Aires, 1980), pp. 16-

143; www.velezsarsfield.com.ar/autoridades.asp, 24/12/06. For less spectacular

examples, see C.A. Allboys, 'Historia del Albo,' www.albocapo.com.ar/historia,

22/1/07; and for Dock Sud 'Un poco de historia,'

<http://members.tripod.com/ezedoke/historia.html>, 22/1/07.

⁴⁰ *La Vanguardia*, 5 Apr. 1916, 26 Oct. 1930; Miguel Angel Bertolotto, *River: El campeón del siglo* (Buenos Aires, 2000), p. 87; Iwanczuk, *Historia de fútbol amateur*, pp. 206, 223-26.

⁴¹ It was not a legal entity and therefore its population is difficult to calculate. One source claimed that in 1914 it had more than 3,000 houses. "Club Atlético Nueva Chicago,' www.taringa.net/posts/info/2483814/Club-Altletico-Nueva-Chicago-%5BMegapost%5D---1ra-Parte.html, 13/2/10. However, more than most barrios, Mataderos had a distinct sense of place. Probably this was due to its economic role (sale and slaughter of cattle and the industries that went with it, tanning etc.).

⁴² See María Teresa Sirvent, *Cultura popular y participación social: Una investigación en el barrio de Mataderos* (Buenos Aires, 1999), esp. pp. 19-49, 89, 289-290; Ofelio Vecchio, *Mataderos mi barrio* (Buenos Aires, 1981), esp. pp. 74, 282-3, 299-30, 334-335 and *Aquí entre nosotros* (Buenos Aires, 1994), pp.64-65, 202-5; www.pueblochicago.com.ar/mercado_liniers.htm, 25/1/11; 'Historia del Club Atlético Nueva Chicago,' www.chicagopassion.com.ar/historia.htm, 17/2/09; 'Aquí Mataderos-Revista Social, Cultural y Deportiva de Mataderos,' www.r-aquimataderos.com.ar/nueva_chicago, 7/6/09; Ismael Bucich Escobar, *Buenos Aires ciudad* (Buenos Aires, 1936), pp. 215-217; Cutolo, *Historia de los barrios*, I, p.541; 'Pueblo de Nueva Chicago-Presentación,' www.pueblodechicago.com.ar/presentacion.htm, 13/2/10.

⁴³ Vecchio, *Mataderos mi barrio*, esp. pp. 58, 149, 177, 190-201; ‘Aquí Mataderos-Revista Social, Cultural y Deportiva de Mataderos,’; Bucich Escobar, *Buenos Aires ciudad*, pp. 219-21; ‘Sitios de Interés Cultural, Bar “Oviedo”,’ www.bibleduc.gov.ar/areas/cultura/cpphc/sitios/detalle.php?id=102, 16/2/07; ‘Don Fernando Ghio,’ *Foro de la Memoria de Mataderos*, 4 Feb. 2008, www.forommataderos.blogspot.com/2008/02/don-fernando-ghio.html, 11/2/10; Nicolás Iñigo Carrera, ‘Formas de lucha de la clase obrera y organizaciones políticas en la Argentina de los ’30,’ Documento de Trabajo No. 12 (Programa de Investigación sobre el Movimiento de la Sociedad Argentina), p. 11; Cutolo, *Historia de los barrios*, I, p. 522. Some sources spell the name with an accent while others do not.

⁴⁴ www.taringa.net/posts/deportes/5427140/mi-querido-Nueva-Chicago---megapost.html, 24/5/11; www.r-aquimataderos.com.ar/historia_barrial1911.htm. See for example, Joel Horowitz, ‘El movimiento obrero’ *Nueva historia argentina*, V. VII *Crisis económica, avance del estado e incertidumbre política (1930-1943)* (Buenos Aires, 2001), 275.

⁴⁵ Vecchio, *Mataderos mi barrio*, pp. 203, 335.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁴⁷ ‘Aquí Mataderos-Revista Social, Cultural y Deportiva de Mataderos,’; Eduardo Bernal, ‘Pedro Bidegain, un hombre de Boedo,’ *Desmemoria*, 4, 13/14 (1997), p. 86; see also below.

⁴⁸ Vecchio, *Mataderos mi barrio*, pp. 207,104. The dates when both events occurred are not given.

⁴⁹ ‘Aquí Mataderos-Revista Social, Cultural y Deportiva de Mataderos,’ www.r-aquimataderos.com.ar/historia_barrial_1931.htm, 25/1/11; ‘Historia del Club Atlético Nueva Chicago,’ www.chicagopasion.com.ar/historia.htm, 17/2/09; Vecchio, *Mataderos mi barrio*, p. 303; ‘Mercado de Hacienda de Liniers’ www.pueblodechicago.com.ar/mercado_liniers.htm, 25/1/11.

⁵⁰ Norberto Folino, *Barceló, Ruggierito y el populismo oligárquico* (Buenos Aires, 1983); Adrián Pignatelli, *Ruggierito: Política y negocios sucios en la Avellaneda violenta de 1920 y 1930* (Buenos Aires, 2005); Gerardo Brá, ‘Barceló, el ultimo caudillo,’ *Todo es Historia*, Aug. 1976, pp. 74-92; Richard J. Walter, *The Province of Buenos Aires and Argentine Politics, 1912-1943* (Cambridge, 1985).

⁵¹ Fabbri, *El nacimiento de una pasión*, pp. 88-90; Folino, *Barceló*, pp. 96-7. The president of this organization was a Pedro Werner, probably related to the woman who married Alberto Barceló’s secretary Nicanor Salas Chavez. Folino, *Barceló*, 66; Luís Paso Viola, ‘Como era la Ciudad de Buenos Aires y su entorno en los albores del siglo XX,’ 2 Jan. 2004, www.culteducaavellaneda.com.ar/noticias/wmview.php?ArtID=66, 15/2/10. For the club’s presidents, ‘Racing Club,’ www.rsssf.com/tables/racingclub.html, 9/1/07.

⁵² ‘Historia,’ www.racingclub.com/paginas/club/Historia/historia.asp, 9/1/07; Fabbri, *El nacimiento de una pasión*, pp. 98-9.

⁵³ Archetti, *Masculinities*, pp. 54-61; ‘Historia,’ www.racingclub.com/paginas/club/Historia/historia.asp, 9/1/07; Luis Fernán Cisneros, et al. *Historia de la Ciudad de Avellaneda* (Buenos Aires, 1926), p. 249; Iwanczuk, *Historia de fútbol amateur*, p. 243.

⁵⁴ Folino, *Barceló*, 98. How this information was gathered and from where is unclear.

⁵⁵ Folino, *Barceló*, pp. 73-4, 193 ft. 3; Cisneros, *Historia de la Ciudad de Avellaneda*, p. 135; Personal communication from Juan Corradi, 21/4/07; *La Vanguardia*, 12, 18 Jan. 1932.

⁵⁶ Cisneros, *Historia de la Ciudad de Avellaneda*, pp. 133, 177-8; Folino, *Barceló*, p. 57; *Quien es quien en la Argentina* (2nd ed.; Buenos Aires, 1941), p. 312; Diego Abad de Santillán, *Gran enciclopedia argentina* (Buenos Aires, 1956), vol. 3, p. 629.

⁵⁷ Scher and Palomino, *Fútbol*, p. 216; Cisneros, *Historia de la Ciudad de Avellaneda*, p. 189.

⁵⁸ *La Vanguardia*, 5 Dec. 1934; Folino, *Barceló*, p.169 and 'Historia' www.racingclub.com/historia.php, 16/6/09.

⁵⁹ Personal communication from Corradi.

⁶⁰ "Los presidentes que forjaron al historia del Club Atlético Independiente," www.listarojadelcai.com.ar/articulo/47/los_presidentes_que_forjaraon_la_historia_del_club_atletico_independiente.html, 4/8/09; 'Los presidentes rojos' www.somosdiablos.com.ar/un_poco_de_historia-itemap-16868-1.htm, 26/5/11; Cisneros, *Historia de la Ciudad de Avellaneda*, pp. 127, 134, 138, 257; Rudi Varela, '¿Qué periódicos leía la gente de Avellaneda y Lanús? 1822-1994,' *La Ciudad*, 7 June 2006, www.laciudadavellaneda.com.ar , 4/8/09; Scher and Palomino, *Fútbol*, p. 220. The lists of presidents are not exactly the same.

⁶¹ 'La Conquista de Avenida La Plata,' <http://gloriosociclon.webcindario.com/vgasometro.htm>, 7/2/07; Lorenzo, *Historia del fútbol*, I, pp. 245-247; Alberto Deán, *San Lorenzo querido: 100 años de pasión* (Buenos

Aires, 2008), pp. 11-30; Ana di Cesare and Gerónimo Rombolá, “Para futuras memorias—Lorenzo Massa,” 7 May 2009,

www.parafuturasmemorias.blogspot.com/2009/05/lorenzo.massa.html, 2/7/09

⁶² *La Internacional*, 22 Nov. 1924; *La Vanguardia*, 27 Apr. 1926, 23 Jan.-4 Feb. 1929; *Crítica*, 28 Aug. 1923, 24 Jan., 3-4 Feb. 1929; *La Nación*, 27 Jan., 4 Feb. 1929; *La Prensa*, 28 Jan. - 4 Feb. 1929; Bernal, ‘Pedro Bidegain,’ pp. 82-101; Pedro Bidegain, *Mi radicalismo* (Buenos Aires, 1929); ‘Presidentes,’

www.mundoazulgrana.com.ar/casla/presidentes.php, 30/6/09; Agenda San Lorenzo, ‘Pedro Bidegain “El propulsor de la grandeza

azulgrana”’ www.agendaasanlorenzo.com.ar/comment.php?comment.news.455,

25/1/11; Ricardo M. Llanes, *El barrio de Almagro* (Buenos Aires, 1968), 79-86;

‘Restitución histórica para el Club Atlético San Lorenzo de Almagro’,

www.volveavenidalaplata.com.ar, 25/1/11; Deán, *San Lorenzo*, 30; *Ultima Hora*, 24 Jan.

1929 as cited in Guillermo Gasió, *Yrigoyen: El mandato extraordinario 1928/1930*

(Buenos Aires, 2005), p. 516.

⁶³ Concejo Deliberante, *Actas*, 1 Jan. 1929, p.7; Bucich Escobar, *Buenos Aires ciudad*, p. 219; *La Prensa*, 1 Feb. 1926; *La Vanguardia*, 20 Jan., 30 Dec. 1930, 23-27 Jan. 1931, 29 Jan., 3 Feb. 1932; Bernal, ‘Pedro Bidegain’; Iwanczuk, *Historia de fútbol amateur*, p. 243.

⁶⁴ ‘La sede que no fue’

www.debodeovengo.com/2009/detalle_noticia.php?id_noticia=1902, 25/1/2011.

⁶⁵ Sitio Oficial Club Almagro, ‘Historia en tres colores,’

www.calmagro.com.ar/historia.htm, 2/2/07; ‘Almagro-Historia-Apéndice: Presidentes del

Club’, <http://cablemodem.fibertel.co.ar/almagro/historia/apenpres.html>, 26/1/07; ‘Cuando Almagro estuvo en Parque Chas’ www.parquechasweb.com.ar/parquechas/notas/Nota_almagropch.htm, 29/1/07; *La Epoca*, 30 Aug 1920; Scher and Palomino, *Fútbol*, p. 106; Iwanczuk, *Historia de fútbol amateur*, p. 243; Concejo Deliberante, *Actas*, 13 May 1921, pp. 644-45; *La Prensa*, 3 Nov. 1924; Bucich Escobar, *Buenos Aires ciudad*, p. 215; H. Cámara de Diputados de la Nación, *Nomina de Diputados de la Nación por distrito electoral: Periodo 1854-1991* (Buenos Aires, 1991), pp. 103, 112.

⁶⁶ ‘Fundación del Club Atlético River Plate,’ Centro para la Investigación de la Historia del Fútbol, *Boletín CIHF*, año II, no. 21, 13/05/04, <http://cihf.webcindario.com/trabajos/RiverPlate100.pdf>, 19/1/07; Miguel Angel Bertolott, ‘Mientras viva tu bandera,’ *Clarín*, 25 May 2001, <http://edant.clarin.com/diario/2001/05/25/d-274436.htm>, 29/1/07; Bertolotto, *River, el campeón del siglo*, 25-29. Amílcar Romero, ‘Madero vs Huergo,’ <http://superclasico.blogspot.com>, 3/7/09 argues that the founders were largely Radicals and Masons but gives no proof.

⁶⁷ Antonio J. Bucich, *La Boca del Riachuelo en la historia* (Buenos Aires, 1971), p. 357.

⁶⁸ ‘Los estadios,’ www.sitioriverplatense.com.ar/estadios-ant.htm, 19/1/07; ‘Club Atlético River Plate,’ www.rssf.com/tablesriverplate.html, 5/7/09.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; ‘Fundación del Club Atlético River Plate,’ Centro para la Investigación de la Historia del Fútbol; Abad de Santillán, *Gran enciclopedia*, VIII, pp. 532-3.

⁷⁰ Lorenzo, *Historia del Fútbol*, I, pp. 212—214; ‘Los estadios,’ www.sitioriverplatense.com.ar/estadios-ant.htm, 29/1/07; ‘José Bacigaluppi en la historia

riverplatense,' www.agbacigaluppi.com.ar/bacigia.htm, 29/1/07. For the Bacigaluppi family business see the real estate advertisements in *La Prensa* in the 1920s.

⁷¹ 'Historia del Monumental,'

www.cariverplate.com.ar/tpl.php?cat=es&url=monumental.php , 22/1/07; 'Antonio Vespucio Liberti,'

www.futbolfactory.futbolweb.net/index.php?ff=personajes&f2=00001&idpersonaje=37, 2/2/07; 'Estadio,' [http://arikah.net/enciclopedia-](http://arikah.net/enciclopedia-espanola/Club_Atl%C3%A9tico_River_Plate)

[espanola/Club_Atl%C3%A9tico_River_Plate](http://arikah.net/enciclopedia-espanola/Club_Atl%C3%A9tico_River_Plate), 2/2/07; 'Historia del Estadio Antonio Vespucio Liberti,' www.geocities.com/Colosseum/Ring/3814/Estadio.htm?200729,

29/1/07; Bertolotto, *River, el campeón del siglo*, pp. 80-84; Scher and Palomino, *Fútbol*, pp. 99-100; Ariel Scher, *La patria deportista* (Buenos Aires, 1996), p. 129; *La Prensa*, 23 Jan. 1926.

⁷² Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983), esp. p. 215.

⁷³ Carlos A. Forment, 'The Democratic Dribbler: Football Clubs, Neo-liberal Globalization, and Buenos Aires' Municipal Election of 2003,' *Public Culture* 19:1 (Winter 2007), 89.

⁷⁴ Luciano de Privitellio and Luis Alberto Romero, 'Organizaciones de la sociedad civil, tradiciones cívicas y cultura política democrática: el caso de Buenos Aires, 1912-1976,' *Revisa de Historia* (Mar del Plata), 1,1 (inicios de 2005), 1-34.

⁷⁵ See Carlos A. Forment, *Democracy in Latin America 1760-1900: Volume I, Civic Selfhood and Public Life in Mexico and Peru* (Chicago, 2003) for the idea of colonizing.