

**INTRODUCTION:
STUDYING FOOTBALL IN THE AMERICAS**

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At the end of June 1970 Carlos Alberto, the captain of the Brazilian national team, lifted the World Cup after a stunning 4-1 victory over Italy, watched by millions across the world on colour television. With this, its third victory in four World Cups, Brazil won the Jules Rimet Trophy outright. The 1970 selection became known as the 'Beautiful Team', such was the quality of the football it played.¹ On the road to the final Brazil defeated two other leading South American teams, Peru and Uruguay, as well as England, the World Cup holders and the country most associated with the introduction of football to Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo at the end of the nineteenth century. The entire squad of 22 players played their club football in Brazil, most in the São Paulo or Rio leagues. Four years later, in the elections for the presidency of FIFA, international football's governing body, Dr João Havelange, head of the Confederação Brasileira de Desportos (CBD), ousted Sir Stanley Rous, who had been the dominant administrator in the English game and was very much a representative of the gentlemanly amateur traditions of the (English) Football Association. The New World of football, it might be said, had finally defeated the Old, especially as Havelange expanded the World Cup and launched the rapid commercialisation of international football (Sugden & Tomlinson 1998).

Since then, and despite four more World Cup triumphs, two for Argentina (1978 and 1986), and two for Brazil (1994 and 2002), football in South America, in the eyes of many observers, has descended into chaos. Most professional clubs flirt persistently with insolvency, staving it off by delaying the payment of taxes to the state, and salaries and bonuses to their players, or by transferring their young stars to clubs overseas; matches at many grounds are marked by violence among the fans, deterring families from attending; and allegations of corruption, on and off the pitch, frequently hit the news. The best, particularly the most creative, footballers have

¹ For a journalist's rediscovery of what had happened to the 'Beautiful Team', see Jenkins 1998.

reacted by emigrating to western Europe or, in the case of lesser players, to eastern Europe and Asia. At the 2006 World Cup finals only three members of the Argentine squad, two of them goalkeepers, still played in their domestic league; just two of the Brazilian players were still playing their club football in the country (World Soccer 2006). When Brazil and Argentina played a friendly match, two months later, it was indicative of the changing balance of power in the global football business that they did so at Arsenal's new Emirates Stadium in London, partly so that the European-based players in their teams did not have to take long overnight flights, but also for purely commercial reasons.

In many South American countries fans now rarely see the stars of the national team play in the flesh, other than in World Cup and Copa América qualifiers. However, this is not the case throughout the Americas. The Mexican World Cup squad of 2006, which reached the last sixteen before losing a tight match to Argentina, had only two members playing their club football elsewhere. Organisationally distinct from football in most South American countries, in that clubs are for the most part *de facto* subsidiaries of large domestic firms rather than independent social entities, Mexican football retains most of its stars. The United States squad in the 2006 competition was roughly split between those still playing in Major League Soccer (MLS), the US professional competition established after the 1994 World Cup and the first such league to succeed in North America, and those registered with clubs overseas. And while football in South America remains primarily a male sport, both in terms of the players and the spectators at matches, women's soccer has made enormous headway in the United States, particularly at international level where the US team was successful in the women's World Cup in 1991 and 1999 and the Olympic Games in 2004.

The chapters in this book derive from papers originally presented at a conference in October 2003, and explore aspects of the contemporary state of football in the Americas. They do not claim to offer a comprehensive overview, and important aspects of what would constitute such a volume have unfortunately had to be omitted here: there is nothing, for example, on the role of key individuals from the two regional federations, CONMEBOL and CONCACAF, in the governance of world

football, and nothing on the often murky internal politics of the federations or national associations themselves. Some key countries in the history of South American football, in particular Uruguay and Colombia, are also under-represented.² Instead the papers focus on two sets of issues, one of which develops themes already established in the academic literature, while the other concentrates on an area where there is little academic research. The more established theme is the meaning of football to people living in the Americas, in other words its relationship with the construction and re-creation of national, ethnic, class, and gender identities, and the role that it plays within society. The more poorly researched theme is the contemporary business of football. Given their importance in the world game several papers pay attention to Argentina and Brazil, but alongside these there are other contributions on Peru, Mexico, and the United States, as well as three essays that range more widely.

Football in South America: a Century of Evolution

While debate continues about the extent to which indigenous societies in the Americas may have played a form of football, there is general agreement that British sailors and immigrants introduced the modern game to South America in the final quarter of the nineteenth century, although in the case of Brazil, especially, Germans such as Hans Nobiling played a significant role. The standard histories of football in the region highlight the role played by pioneers such as Charles Miller, an employee of the English railway company in São Paulo, Alexander Watson Hutton, a schoolteacher in Buenos Aires, and Oscar Cox, an Anglo-Brazilian businessman who became the first president of the Fluminense club in Rio de Janeiro (Mason 1995; Santa Cruz 1996; Pereira 2000). Initially based in British clubs and schools, football quickly became organised: the first Argentine league was founded in 1893 by Watson Hutton; in Chile in the same year representative teams from Santiago and Valparaiso played each other twice. The Uruguayan league was founded in 1900, and the São Paulo league the following year. These developments were exactly contemporary

² On the rise and decline of Uruguayan football, see Giulianotti 1999.

with the spread of football in southern Europe: Juventus was founded in 1897, Barcelona in 1899, and Real Madrid in 1902 (Walvin 1975, pp. 93-7).

This early history has to be seen in the context of developments both in British sport and in Anglo-Latin American relations. Like many modern sports, the rules of (association) football had been codified by English sporting gentlemen in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the Football Association (the FA) was formed in 1863. National competitions were established soon afterwards, the FA Cup in 1871-72 and the Football League in 1888-89. Significantly, though, participation in organised sport was regarded in Victorian Britain as one of the essential elements in the education of the 'Christian gentleman', and football spread widely in independent schools while also attracting the attention of workers in the rapidly expanding industrial cities, who found it an easy and cheap sport to play in streets and parks, and on waste ground. Many graduates of the independent schools and ancient universities, in their role as clergymen, encouraged young working-class men to play sport in preference to more sinful pursuits, but elsewhere in Britain football emerged autonomously in workplaces and neighbourhoods. At precisely this time, from the late 1860s onwards, British trade and investment in Latin America was growing rapidly, in particular in Brazil and the countries of the southern cone (Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile) (Miller 1993). As a consequence thousands of young British men emigrated to South American cities to take up employment opportunities in the new railway and tramway companies and banks, the British communities grew in size and influence, and the newcomers founded their own networks of schools, clubs, and other institutions. Moreover, in the view of South American elites, while the French might symbolise European culture, the British epitomised modern business attitudes, and they were subject to admiration and imitation for that reason.

Football thus spread quickly in the South American countries most subject to British economic and cultural influence; by the second decade of the twentieth century the infrastructure of the modern game was in place, despite frequent conflicts within national associations. Regular international matches commenced, initially between Argentina and Uruguay, and CONMEBOL, the Confederación Sudamericana de Fútbol, was founded in 1916. By then the administration of football

had escaped from the hands of the British who had introduced it. The game had been 'creolised', taken over by the respectable classes of South America, and then popularised, as working-class men participated in their thousands both as players and as spectators.

The clubs that comprised the local leagues had a range of origins. First, just as many of the early British football clubs in South America began in schools and colleges, local students also formed their own teams. The most obvious example is the eponymous Estudiantes de La Plata in Argentina, founded in 1905; Nacional, which became one of the two dominant teams in twentieth-century Uruguay, had been founded by students in Montevideo six years earlier. Second, elite members of social clubs that participated in other sports began to organise football teams. While many of these amateur clubs remained exclusive, others formed teams that played at the highest level: Flamengo, now the most popular club in Brazil, was born when a group of rebel players from Fluminense joined the Clube de Regatas do Flamengo, or rowing club, in 1911 (Leite Lopes 1997, pp. 55-7). Third, workplace teams were formed, either at the owners' initiative or through the self-organisation of the firm's employees. Peñarol, Nacional's leading rival in Montevideo, was based initially in the workshops of the Central Uruguayan Railway, but it was not just railway companies – Ferrocarril Oeste and Rosario Central in Argentina are other examples – that provided workers with opportunities to join in sporting activities. One of the earliest teams in Rio was Bangu, belonging to an English-owned textile mill. As workplace-based teams developed, the owners, interested in the prestige they could bring as well as the potential of football as a means of controlling workers, might offer valuable employment opportunities to talented players. Fourth, clubs represented particular ethnicities or political groups, such as Alianza Lima (the black community of La Victoria in Lima) or Vasco da Gama (the Portuguese community in Rio).³ In Chile a club named Chile Obrero FC was formed as early as 1897; in Argentina, as Eduardo Galeano points out, both Argentinos Juniors (founded as

³ For more on the origins of Alianza Lima and its ethnic/*barrio* background, see the chapter by Panfichi and Thieroldt in this volume.

Mártires de Chicago in 1904) and Chacarita (1906) had their origins in anarchist celebrations of 1st May (Galeano 1996, p. 37). Finally, clubs represented towns or particular *barrios* or neighbourhoods in cities, a factor that might overlap, as in the case of Alianza, with ethnicity. With the formation of clubs came the development of local rivalries and the *clásicos* or 'local derby' matches that frequently attracted thousands of partisan spectators: Flamengo-Fluminense in Rio de Janeiro, Boca Juniors-River Plate in Buenos Aires, Independiente-Racing in Avellaneda, São Paulo-Corinthians in São Paulo, Alianza-Universitario in Lima, and, later, ColoColo-Universidad de Chile in Santiago.

Urban history, Pierre Lanfranchi (1994, p. 29) comments with regard to Europe, is 'a fundamental element for an understanding of the mechanisms of the spread of the game and the playing of the game', and this is as true of Latin America. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw a rapid expansion of Latin American cities as thousands of immigrants poured in, from Europe and from the interior, to service the commercial economy. While many were able to obtain formal employment, in the railways, commercial firms and banks, urban utilities, and docks, in particular, others remained informal casual workers, lacking roots and identity. Football provided a sport that was easy and cheap for young working men to play, a game with simple and adaptable rules that could take place on any piece of open ground, and an arena in which migrants could form friendships and collective identities. The improvement in rail communications allowed teams to travel for matches (between Rio and São Paulo for example, or Santiago and Valparaíso), while urban tramways and suburban railways allowed spectators to watch their teams in local games.⁴ As attendances at top matches increased, the press began to print reports that reached the literate portion of the public, although it was not until the 1930s that the advent of radio really allowed football commentary to reach illiterate fans. By then, however, literacy rates in countries like Argentina and Uruguay,

⁴ On an early Peruvian rivalry, between Alianza Lima and Atlético Chalaco, which always involved large numbers of travelling supporters coming from the nearby port of Callao, see Deustua et al. 1986, pp. 144-5.

thanks to universal primary education, had improved markedly, and specialist sports journals had begun to appear, such as *El Gráfico* in Buenos Aires.

For people in such an environment, playing for and supporting a football club provided a significant sense of identity and belonging, and, for the very talented players, real possibilities for public recognition. Above all, football was an egalitarian sport, requiring little in the way of expensive equipment but rather physical skills, endurance, and a 'football brain'. In a probably unique piece of oral history, scholars in Lima in the 1980s interviewed former players from sixty years before to ascertain why they had enjoyed the game, and found a remarkable coincidence in the responses. In the words of one informant, apart from their 'love of the [team's] shirt', they gained 'the appreciation and respect of the *barrio* and of friends. That was the satisfaction a footballer had: to attract friends, to show off to girls, and to party'. Another added that simply winning medals was an enormous source of pride to someone from a poor background (Deustua et al. 1986, pp. 137-8). But the egalitarian potential of football was also a source of conflict as 'respectable' elites struggled to maintain control of the sport. Many of the *clásicos* were centred on issues of class and race: white students and members of the middle class versus ordinary people of colour in the case of Universitario-Alianza in Lima or Fluminense-Flamengo in Rio. Race, and the fact that many of the most gifted footballers in countries like Peru or Brazil were mulatto or black, initially provided a source of tension rather than one of national pride. Indeed, in the first South American championship of 1916 the Chileans are said to have demanded the annulment of Uruguay's 4-0 victory on the grounds that the winning team had included two blacks (Galeano 1996, p. 42). In Brazil Vasco da Gama's triumph in the Rio championship in 1923, using mulatto and black players, provoked a split in the organising body and the introduction of literacy requirements to try to exclude players from the lowest social ranks (Leite Lopes 1997, pp. 62-7). The continuing racial conflicts in Brazilian football were evident also in the way in which Barbosa,

the national team's black goalkeeper, was blamed for the tragic defeat suffered at the hands of Uruguay in the 1950 World Cup Final in the Maracanã.⁵

If one of the attractions of football was that the poor could compete with the rich and win, this was also true at the international level. South American teams dominated the Olympic Games in 1924 and 1928, Uruguay winning on both occasions, with victories over Switzerland and Argentina respectively. Uruguay defeated Argentina again in 1930 in the inaugural World Cup in Montevideo. Tactically, as well as in terms of individual skills, the South American countries had advanced faster than the Europeans, and the style of football they played also helped to form a national identity, as Eduardo Archetti (1994, 1995a) has explained for the case of Argentina. From the time that Boca Juniors successfully toured Europe in 1925, Argentine journalists contrasted their skilful, individual style with the muscularity of the English teams and the brutality of the Uruguayan *charrúas*. English football, *El Gráfico* wrote in 1928, resembled a rather monotonous if powerful machine, while in the River Plate footballers 'made use of dribbling, and brave individual effort, in defence as well as attack, which resulted in a style of football that was more agile and attractive' (Archetti 1995a, p. 429).⁶ Brazilians, slightly later, came to regard their football as the sporting expression of other key elements of Brazilian popular culture, samba and capoeira, developing a style of football that was not only world-beating but also entrancing for spectators to watch (Archetti 1998, pp. 94-6; Gordon and Helal 2001, p. 146).⁷

The peak of South American football probably came between 1930 and 1970, between the first World Cup won by Uruguay and Brazil's third triumph (Uruguay

⁵ See the chapter in this volume by José Sergio Leite Lopes. On the continued suffering of Barbosa, see Bellos 2002, pp. 56-7.

⁶ On Argentines' pride in the development of an attractive and effective style of football, see also Karush 2003.

⁷ A popular chant at English football grounds in the 1990s, especially when a lower-division team was playing unexpectedly well, was 'Brazil... It's just like watching Brazil' to the tune of *Blue Moon*.

and Brazil between them won five out of nine World Cups in this period).⁸ In the 1930s and 1940s full professionalisation replaced the 'shamateurism' of the preceding era in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil; new, modern stadia were built in the major cities; domestic football was played at a high level of skill and competitiveness; and most players stayed at home, although those who did venture to Europe, such as Alfredo di Stéfano (Real Madrid) and Omar Sivori (Juventus) in the 1950s, could only enhance the reputation of South American football for producing skilful individual players. Brazil's first World Cup victory in 1958, with players such as Garrincha, Didi, and Pelé, offered further evidence.

In the last third of the twentieth century, however, some of the inherent problems of football in South America became all too evident. Again, the economic and political context within which football was being played is important. Although the individual trajectory of each differed, the countries where football had developed most became marked by unstable populist regimes, military coups, and, increasingly in the 1960s and 1970s, authoritarian governments and political repression. Economically, policies of import substitution industrialisation, which also involved a rapid expansion of the public sector, resulted in bouts of ever worsening inflation, sharp recessions as governments attempted to curb it by limiting fiscal deficits and consumption, and business instability, from which football clubs were not immune. With the possible exception of Chile, political corruption became widespread, helped by the growth of the public sector.

The domestic football of the major South American countries thus became marked by a number of characteristics which together forced it into a spiral of decline. First, the role of politicians in football, whether civilians or military, changed from that of being an ordinary spectator or honoured guest, to active intervention and interference. This did have its positive aspects in terms of public funding of major stadia, for example the completion of the Monumental (home of River Plate) in 1938 and La Bombonera (Boca Juniors) in 1940, followed by the construction of three more

⁸ Gordon and Helal (2001, p. 142) see Brazilian football's Golden Age as lasting from the onset of professionalisation in 1933 to the World Cup victory of 1970.

stadia for clubs in Greater Buenos Aires under the first presidency of Perón ((Mason 1995, pp. 62-6; Duke & Crolley, 1996a, p. 105).⁹ The Brazilian military government of the 1960s and 1970s financed the construction of several large stadia across the country. However, the increasing bitterness of politics brought national football associations into close contact with government and restricted their autonomy. World Cups, in particular, became a focus for authoritarian regimes anxious both to appease the public and to fly the nationalist flag. The best known examples are probably the military's propaganda use of Brazil's 1970 World Cup victory, and the Argentine military's investment in using the 1978 World Cup, which FIFA had awarded to the country before the military coup of 1976, to restore its international image after three years in which its savage repression of the left had attracted worldwide criticism. Domestic football could also be used as a means of social control; it is said that one reason for the frequency of televised games in Argentina in the late 1960s was to keep potential demonstrators indoors. For civilian politicians, identification with a football club was a means of increasing their public profile and support, helped by the fact that since most clubs in South America were formed as mutual clubs with periodic elections for the *socios* (members) to choose their new directors, they gained valuable campaigning experience as well as media exposure and sources of patronage. Instances of civilian politicians being closely involved with the management of football clubs abound: the best current example is probably Mauricio Macri, the president of Boca Juniors since 1995 and a potential presidential candidate in Argentina in 2007. However, football could also be used in attempts to subvert politicians and political regimes. Under authoritarian governments in particular, football stadia were frequently the only venues where large crowds could legally gather on a regular basis. Anonymity provided the opportunities for verbal attacks on the forces of order, and for political slogans, for example the Brazilian fans' chanting of '*direitas já*' at matches in 1983, as Brazil moved towards civilian rule

⁹ The president of Boca Juniors at the time La Bombonera was constructed was the son-in-law of President Justo.

(Humphrey & Tomlinson 1986: 104).¹⁰ In a few cases, too, the legitimacy conferred by fame provided professional footballers with the opportunity to intervene in politics against the established order, most noticeably in Sócrates' support of free elections and democracy in the same Brazilian transition (Shirts 1988).

A second problem was the growth of crowd violence, initially in Argentina in the 1950s and 1960s but spreading to Brazil, Peru and Chile in the final decades of the century. This has been linked directly to the status of football clubs as social organisations with periodic elections, which led candidates to make links with organised fan groups who could intimidate opponents (Duke & Crolley 1996b). In return for the support of the *barras bravas*, as the Argentine fan groups became known, the directors of clubs began to distribute tickets, merchandise, and facilities for travel to away matches.¹¹ They could also use them to intimidate players (for example those on the point of signing a new contract), coaches, and match officials, as well as in political demonstrations. This symbiotic relationship between elected club officials and the leaders of the *barras*, however, was not one that the former could necessarily control; patronage could easily turn into extortion. Violence spread within and outside stadia, not only as the *barras* of different clubs came into conflict, but also as rival *barras* of the same club fought for access to spoils. *Clarín* reported in March 2005, for example, on violent internal conflicts within the *barras* of Estudiantes, Argentinos Juniors, Racing, Newell's, and Rosario Central, quoting the head of security for Argentine football as stating: 'They're not interested in football but simply in sharing out the cake. To lead a *barra* represents the ability to manage tickets, travel, and profits' (*Clarín*, 1 March 2005). Partly because they could seek the protection of the powerful, partly because of the frequent failings of the police and criminal justice in Latin America, most members of the *barras*, with the occasional exception of leaders who overstepped the boundaries, operated with impunity. The consequence for football, however, was to deter other sectors of the population from

¹⁰ The cry was for direct elections when Brazil returned to democracy, rather than the indirect, more easily controllable, system that the military favoured.

¹¹ Increasing spectator violence in Brazil has been associated with the growth of *torcidas organizadas*, similar organisations there: see Gordon and Helal 2001, p. 149.

attending matches. Most South American domestic football has seen a steady decline in attendances over the past thirty years.¹²

Corruption in the management of clubs, and, occasionally, in the fixing of matches, also became evident. In one scandal that broke out in Brazil in 1996 the head of the refereeing committee of the Confederação Brasileira do Futebol (CBF) was taped negotiating with club officials for payments to fix matches: he later claimed that he wished to accumulate funds to finance a political career (Taylor 1998, pp. 102-4). A further refereeing scandal erupted in 2005 when São Paulo's organised crime unit accused one of Brazil's elite FIFA referees, Edilson, of agreeing to throw more than twenty domestic matches in return for payments of between R\$10,000 and R\$15,000 a time (*Veja*, 28 September 2005).¹³ Serious problems have arisen also from the fact that in most countries social clubs were not obliged to produce audited accounts. This meant that their financial dealings were far from transparent. Again, Brazil is probably the country where scandals have been most frequent, with accusations about the destination of the money that the CBF, under the presidency of Ricardo Teixeira, Havelange's son-in-law, received from its 1996 contract with Nike, followed by the disappearance of the substantial foreign investments made in Brazilian clubs between 1997 and 1999, and accusations that the coach of the national team was taking 'bungs' from agents and clubs who wished to increase the transfer value of the players they owned. These allegations resulted in two congressional enquiries into corruption in Brazilian football.¹⁴

Like football clubs in many parts of the world, therefore, those in South America have always been near to insolvency. In many cases they have relied on influential

¹² Attendance figures for matches in Latin America are often problematic because frequently the *socios* of the club are not counted in the gate. On the decline of attendances in Brazilian football, see Gordon & Helal 2001, pp. 149 and 153.

¹³ At current exchange rates, this was worth between US\$4000 and US\$6000 a match.

¹⁴ On the relationship between the CBF and Nike and the enquiry conducted by the Chamber of Deputies, see Rebelo & Torres 2001. For a British journalist's discussion of corruption in Brazilian football, see Bellos 2002, chapters 14-15. On the foreign investments of 1997-99, see Elena Landau's chapter in this volume.

politicians to guarantee their survival. There are several examples of governments, unwilling to suffer the unpopularity that would result from a failure to act, ensuring that teams avoided bankruptcy: one of the best-known cases is the legal change that allowed Racing Club to survive in Argentina at the end of the 1990s.¹⁵ For much the same reason clubs have acquired impunity for missed payments to the tax authorities: the well-known Rio club of Botafogo, for example, was said in September 2006 to owe the state US\$55 million and the total debt of football clubs to the Brazilian state apparently exceeded US\$500 million (*Soccer Investor Daily*, 7 September 2006). Another frequent device employed by clubs facing cash flow problems has been to leave players unpaid, precipitating strikes and delays to the start of seasons. Poor attendances and difficulties in generating other sources of income have therefore left clubs dependent on television revenues, together with the proceeds of player transfers, for much of their income. In the case of Brazil in 2004, broadcasting revenues and transfers each accounted for approximately 30 per cent of the US\$400 million income of the top 20 clubs (Casual Auditores 2006a). In Argentina the proceeds from transfers reached 50 per cent of the clubs' total income in 2006 (*Clarín*, 19 December 2006). While recognising that clubs in Latin America have faced problems that those in western Europe do not -- for example the impact of inflation and sudden economic crisis, the relative lack of disposable income among fans, or the lack of legal protection for trade marks and the piracy of merchandise -- the quality of business management in South American football has generally been poor.¹⁶ However, this has become more acute with the commercial revolution that has taken place in western European football which, together with the Bosman Judgment of 1995 abolishing quotas on 'foreign' players in European competition, has stimulated the migration of players to Europe and elsewhere.

Player migration to the European leagues has a long history in South America: many talented footballers have been descendants of the immigrants of the late

¹⁵ On the case of Racing, see the chapter by Liz Crolley and Vic Duke in this volume. On earlier cases, see Mason 1995, p.75.

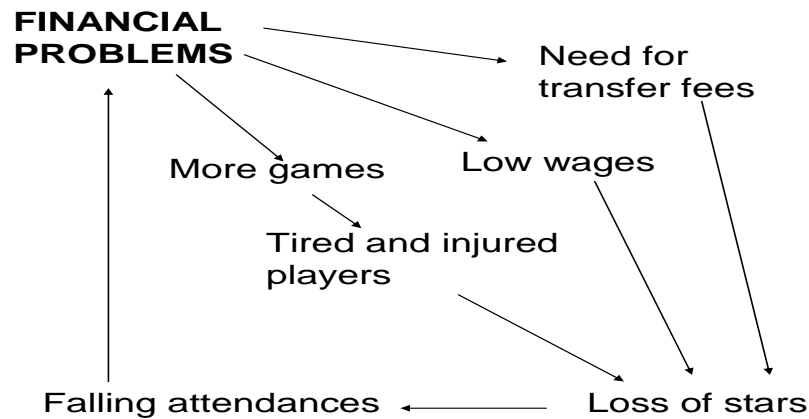
¹⁶ On the contemporary business problems of football clubs in Argentina and Brazil, see the chapter by Gideon Rachman in this volume.

nineteenth century who could claim dual nationality and had the right to European passports. The migration of the best players to Italian clubs following the 1930 World Cup was, indeed, the principal catalyst for the formal adoption of professional football in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil between 1931 and 1933 (Mason 1995, pp. 47-53). There was also considerable movement within Latin America, most notably when, on the back of booming coffee revenues in the late 1940s, several Colombian clubs recruited Argentines following a players' strike there. However, for a long period the real outflow was to southern Europe, and the most desired players were the most creative ones, the attacking midfielders and the strikers. Even before the Bosman Judgment, between 1980 and 1993 over 2000 Argentine professionals are said to have moved overseas, including every season's leading goalscorer (Mason 1995, p. 137). Since the 1998 World Cup, three years after the Bosman Judgment, over 500 Brazilians have moved abroad every season.¹⁷ Their migration thus further devalued football as a spectacle in South America, as the opportunities to watch stars of the national team in action became fewer. In addition, of course, such transfers further increased the opportunities for corruption.

To summarise the last few pages, therefore, it could be argued that over the final third of the twentieth century football in the South American countries where it had been most successfully introduced a hundred years earlier entered into the vicious circle depicted in Figure 1.1.

¹⁷ I am grateful to Oliver Seitz for this information.

Figure 1.1: The Vicious Circle of South American Football



Short-termism is prevalent in the management of football clubs throughout the world, but in South America the combination of external political and economic factors, poor internal management, and low standards of governance and behaviour has made the problems more acute. One commentator has described football as exhibiting all the features of political caudillismo, including the clientelistic ties between the *patrón* and his followers, together with the endemic violence, for which Latin America is notorious in the European imagination (Gherzi 2003, p. 41). The careers of Julio Grondona, president of the Argentine Football Association since 1979, and Ricardo Teixeira, president of the CBF since 1989 despite repeated allegations of corruption, would certainly also fit with the characterisation of South American football as being dominated by caudillos.¹⁸ Both are senior members of FIFA, and prominent in the international administration of the game. Another example would be Eurico Miranda of Vasco da Gama, who used his congressional role to protect his personal interests and forestall reform (Bellos 2002, chapter 13). The football authorities of the region have generally been unable to control the crime and

¹⁸ For a brief biography of Grondona, see http://www.conmebol.com/comunicados_ver.jsp?id=2607&slangab=S, accessed 3 October 2006; on Teixeira, see Bellos 2002, pp. 342-56.

corruption inherent in the game, and indeed have frequently been implicated in it themselves. These comments provide some clues as to who makes money from football in South America, even in a climate where the live domestic game is in a state of decay.

The beneficiaries of the contemporary football industry in South America, perhaps, might be categorised into five groups. There are two sets of business actors who are much more aware of international realities than most football clubs, and thus able to take advantage of their greater access to information vis-à-vis the amateurs who run most clubs and national associations. These are, first, the media companies, particularly the broadcasters, and, second, the marketing firms, most notoriously Nike. As long as football has fans, especially on television, it provides a vehicle for clever marketing by firms that want to reach its demographic profile.¹⁹ Third, star players and agents have opportunities to accumulate enormous personal wealth, relatively little of which flows back into South America. International agents such as Juan Figer (a Uruguayan) or Pini Zahavi (an Israeli) have the highest profile and attract the most adverse publicity, but at a lower level there are thousands of intermediaries trying to benefit from negotiating transfers and contracts on behalf of poorly educated footballers from socially deprived backgrounds.²⁰ They are helped by the system, common in South America, that frequently a player's registration is not owned in its entirety by his club, as it generally is in Europe, but shared between the club and private individuals. Their assets lie in their address books and contacts, making them indispensable to Latin American clubs short of money. The fourth group benefiting from the sport but frequently taking large amounts of money out of it are corrupt club and association officials. The problems in Brazil, thanks to two

¹⁹ One survey in 1998 estimated that 71 per cent of the Latin American population watched football regularly on television, with a high of 85 per cent in Brazil. There was little distinction in terms of class, age or gender, although there were substantial differences between countries. See 'Watching Soccer on Television in Latin America', <www.zonalatina.com/Zldata117.htm>, accessed 14 December 2006.

²⁰ On Juan Figer, see Goos 2006. On Pini Zahavi and his interests in South America, see Jackson 2006.

parliamentary inquiries, are best documented, but similar accusations of malversion of funds, albeit on a smaller scale, have been made elsewhere (Bellos 2002, chapter 14).²¹ Finally, though at a much lower level, the leaders of the *barras bravas* frequently make profits on the resale of tickets and the gifts that they have received or extorted from their club.

Football Elsewhere in the Americas: Arrival on the World Stage

Thus far this chapter has concentrated on the South American countries that became the heartlands of football in the Americas in the early twentieth century. While others have their particular histories – that of Colombia, for example, is dominated by its break with FIFA which allowed it to sign foreign players and enjoy a golden age in the early 1950s, and then by the impact of wealthy cocaine dealers on the football business – most share many of the features described here. Clubs originated in similar backgrounds, although other Latin American countries lacked the numerous southern European immigrants who arrived in the River Plate and Brazil. In most countries, however, there were small British communities associated with commerce and investments who played a significant role in introducing the sport.²² Once the final stages of the World Cup were expanded from 16 to 32 teams under the presidency of Havelange other countries were able to qualify for this lucrative festival of football, creating conditions for the construction and development of national identities linked to football similar to those that had occurred elsewhere earlier in the century.²³ Other footballing countries in South America have faced similar financial problems to clubs in Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil: inadequate income streams; an increasing dependence on television; and the increasing

²¹ On the Brazilian case, see Elena Landau's chapter in this volume.

²² In contrast, in Central America, the Hispanic Caribbean, and Venezuela, baseball became the dominant sport due to the more substantial US presence at the turn of the century.

²³ For an insightful discussion of the linkages between football and the construction of national and masculine identities in Costa Rica before and during the 2002 World Cup, see Sandoval-García 2005.

devaluation of the domestic game as the best players have moved towards wealthier countries.²⁴ However, two exceptional cases in the Americas require some further explanation.

The first of these is Mexico. As in South America, football appears to have been introduced by British immigrants, in this case miners, but it took longer to take off than further south, and due to the competition from other popular sports, in particular boxing, wrestling and baseball, it never obtained the dominance that it did in the Plate. Nonetheless, a specialised magazine called *Fútbol* was in circulation by the 1930s (Brewster 2005). The Mexican national squad qualified frequently for the World Cup finals as the representative of CONCACAF, the North and Central American and Caribbean federation, but achieved little. The growth of Mexican football really took off, however, with the advent of commercial television and the staging of the World Cup of 1970. Two organisational features of Mexican football stand out which differentiate it from South America. First, multiple ownership of clubs is permitted, as in the United States; in most leagues this is prohibited because of the danger that owners will manipulate the competition or transfer players between clubs, as needed. Second, the majority of clubs have been operated by companies or social organisations, most obviously the two major television companies, Televisa and TV Azteca, but also by manufacturing firms, financial institutions, and universities. Commercially successful, the Mexican league has historically imported footballers from elsewhere in Latin America rather than exporting them to Europe.

In the United States association football, or soccer, has never been significant in the sporting imagination since the invention of the classic US sports -- baseball, gridiron football, and basketball -- in the late nineteenth century. In different ways these sports epitomised late nineteenth-century values in the United States, it is

²⁴ Note, however, that the leading Buenos Aires clubs have often offered a staging post for players from elsewhere in South America: examples are Norberto Solano from Peru, Marcelo Salas from Chile, and Diego Forlán from Uruguay. Transfers of players to Argentina did not normally bring much reward to the clubs in other countries that had trained them.

claimed, much more closely than football did, baseball because of its speed and requirements for ingenuity and individual initiative, and gridiron because of its organisation, routine, and obsession with statistics (a sporting form of Taylorism). In keeping with US attitudes at the time, their popular adoption also reflected a rejection of Europe and the Old World. The crucial point, at the time that inter-collegiate sport was developing in the 1870s, was Harvard's refusal to join Rutgers and Princeton in playing a soccer-like game, opting instead for a version of rugby that its students had learned from McGill University in Montreal (Markovits 1990). While large numbers of schoolboys in Boston continued to play a form of football that more closely resembled the English game, and football was played widely by immigrant workers in the northern United States in the 1880s and 1890s, indeed until the First World War, no successful professional league was ever formed at this time, in contrast to baseball (Abrams 1995).²⁵

These characteristics of football in the United States -- the disjuncture between mass childhood participation (at least until the mid-teens) and an almost complete lack of interest in watching the professional game regularly, and the identification of football with immigrant communities rather than 'true Americans' -- have remained to the present day. The attempt to form a professional league in the 1970s, the North American Soccer League (NASL), failed to capture the popular imagination despite, or perhaps because of, the dominance of the teams by ageing stars from overseas. Major League Soccer (MLS), inaugurated following the 1994 World Cup, has survived despite its failure to capture a mass television audience, in part because of the refusal to allow the league to become dominated by foreign players, but also because the major entertainment groups which own teams have been able to cross-subsidise losses. The comment made by the first MLS commissioner -- '40 per cent of our audience is ethnic first or second generation American, and most Latinos' -- is in many respects symbolic of continued weaknesses (Delgado 1999, p. 50). Even though the US national men's team rose as high as fourth in the world rankings in

²⁵ On some of the problems of forming professional leagues in a country as geographically extensive as the United States, in contrast to the ease with which this could be done in England, see Cain & Haddock 2005.

April 2006, before an unsuccessful World Cup campaign pulled it down, professional soccer still falls outside the consciousness of most male working-class sports fans in the United States and is routinely attacked by mainstream sports journalists who have a profound nationalistic belief in the superiority of US sports (Collins 2006).

Thus whereas football became a source of identity formation in South American countries, dislike of soccer became a marker of identity for men of all classes once assimilated into the United States. Playing and watching football was part of the 'melting-pot' in the River Plate; it was not in the United States, precisely because of its identification with immigrants and its European origins. However, there are also contrasts between the United States and South America in terms of gender. In part because the US women's soccer team has been more successful internationally than the men's, but also because of the differing relative importance of men's and women's soccer in US college sports, soccer in the United States has also become viewed as a women's sport, whereas in South America in the early twentieth century it helped to define the essence of masculinity.²⁶ Even so, attempts to establish a professional women's soccer league in the United States foundered in 2003.²⁷ In South America, in contrast to the United States, women's football has made little headway except, perhaps, in Brazil, the beaten finalists in the 2004 Olympics.

Academic Research on Football

For a long time football was the object of academic disdain rather than research, despite its popularity in so many countries. At the time that a few social scientists and historians in the developed world were beginning to develop an interest in sport, in the 1970s, social science activity in much of South America was disrupted by political repression and exile. In such circumstances Latin American social scientists had more important subjects to study than football, and many in fact treated it as a

²⁶ It has been argued that it was precisely because it was not seen as a male sport that women's soccer in the United States has been so successful: see Markovits & Hellerman 2003, p. 14-16 and 27-29.

²⁷ On the failure of WUSA, see the chapter by Katherine Jones in this volume.

means of social control rather than an area of autonomous popular expression.²⁸ Moreover, the key disciplines where academic interest in football was growing in the developed world – history, economics, sociology, and anthropology – were preoccupied with topics that either seemed irrelevant to Latin America or relied on data that was impossible to collect there. It was only with the growth of interest in nationalism and identity, stimulated by writers such as Benedict Anderson (1983), that research themes began to appear that had clear resonance in Latin America. Yet even as late as 1998 an Argentine scholar, Eduardo Archetti, could lament that Latin American anthropologists, despite their concern with ritual and the construction of identity, still showed little interest in sport. When they did, it was viewed as a means by which elites imposed hegemonic values on the young and the poor, rather than as an arena in which participants and consumers might exercise some autonomy and indeed challenge the hegemony of elite values (Archetti 1998, p. 91).²⁹ In such circumstances the earliest serious work on football in Latin America tended to come not from academics but from journalists like Mário Filho in Brazil, Pablo Ramírez in Argentina, and Abelardo Sánchez León in Peru. The tradition of serious journalism was continued by the Uruguayan, Eduardo Galeano, who published his enormously influential collection of essays, *El fútbol a sol y sombra (Football in Sun and Shadow)* in 1996, as well as by foreign writers fascinated by Latin American football such as Jimmy Burns (1996), Chris Taylor (1998), and Alex Bellos (2002).³⁰

Against this background some of the earliest academic interest in football in Latin America, especially Brazil, came from overseas (Rachum 1978; Levine 1980). These early historical articles were followed by the attempt of a US sociologist, Janet Lever,

²⁸ On the assumption of many radicals that sport is the modern-day ‘opiate of the people’, see the chapter by Richard Giulianotti in this volume. Ironically, Antonio Gramsci and Che Guevara, two of the icons of the Latin American left in the 1970s, both loved football.

²⁹ For further discussion of the ways in which social scientists have viewed football, see Alabarces 2004, and Richard Giulianotti’s chapter in this volume.

³⁰ On Mário Filho, see Gordon and Halal 2001, pp. 144-45. Ramírez published a series of articles in the Argentine historical magazine, *Todo es Historia*. Sánchez León published a series of articles in the Peruvian journal, *Debate*.

to uncover the role that football played in Brazilian society (Lever 1983). Lever's innovative study relied heavily on the methodologies of sociology, in the form of questionnaires and interviews conducted during an extensive period of fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro, to argue that football both ritualised conflicts within Brazilian society, through the identification of football clubs with particular social groups, but also transcended them by integrating fans in support of the national team. She noted also that football was much more segregated, in terms of gender, than comparable sports in the United States.³¹ At much the same time a well-known Brazilian anthropologist, Roberto da Matta, edited a collection of academic essays which, by emphasising the ritualistic role of football in Brazilian society, made it for the first time in Brazil a subject worthy of academic attention (da Matta 1982). Yet while these works brought the study of Brazilian football into a position of acceptance within the social sciences, elsewhere the process was much slower. It was only in the 1990s that Eduardo Archetti, an Argentine anthropologist exiled in Norway, began to produce a series of articles exploring the role that football had played in the formation both of Argentine national identity and of Argentine masculinity, a trajectory that culminated in the publication of *Masculinities: Football, Polo and the Tango in Argentina* (Archetti, 1999). Elsewhere, with the exception of work on the connections between football and politics, academic studies of football were rare until the 1990s, one exception being the work of oral history in Peru undertaken in the course of a much wider project on the popular classes of Lima (Deustua et al. 1986). Since then research by historians and social scientists has become more common, although in contrast to North America and Europe, work on the economics and business side of football remains extremely rare.³²

Janet Lever's book on Brazilian football coincided with the last years of the military dictatorship, and both there, and in neighbouring Argentina, the

³¹ Interestingly, Lever's book was criticised much more heavily in reviews by scholars based in England, who had a much closer acquaintance with the sport and sociological work on it, than by her colleagues in the United States: see Cashmore 1984, and Humphrey & Tomlinson 1986.

³² The main exception to this generalisation is probably Aidar et al. (2000).

relationship between football and contemporary politics became a primary area of concern, especially for foreign scholars. In both cases World Cup successes became a particular focus for attention. In Brazil, Janet Lever notes, the military regime introduced a national sports lottery to finance welfare programmes and encouraged the CBD to introduce a national championship for the first time as a means of promoting integration. Lottery funds were used to prepare the national football team for the 1970 World Cup, and its success in Mexico resulted in an unprecedented welcome for the players in the presidential palace in Brasilia as President Médici attempted to identify the military government with the success of the 'Beautiful Team'. Several scholars commented on how the close connection between the military regime and football success was epitomised in Admiral Heleno Nunes's dual role as president of the CBD, after the departure of Havelange for FIFA, and head of the military's stooge party, ARENA, in Rio de Janeiro (Levine 1980, pp. 246-7; Lever 1988, pp. 91-3). The 1978 World Cup in Argentina has also been recognised as a prime example of a repressive military regime using football for its own political purposes, as well as providing extensive opportunities for its adherents to benefit from graft and corruption. Later research has shown how the regime coerced the domestic media into praise of its organisation of the World Cup, though commentators have noted the difficulties the junta faced in preventing the foreign press from observing the poverty resulting from Argentina's economic recession and questioning the regime's human rights record (Arbena 1990; Kuper 1996, pp. 174-7; Smith 2002). Yet football could also offer a vehicle for protest. Matthew Shirts, as already noted, has highlighted Sócrates' use of his position in football to promote democracy in Brazil, and César Luís Menotti, the left-wing coach of the Argentine national team in 1978, has claimed that he ordered the players to pay respects to the popular stands rather than the expensive seats occupied by members of the regime (Archetti 1995b, pp. 213-4).³³ Certainly, the interconnections between football and politics in Latin America became one of the main areas for comment by foreign

³³ Menotti incurred considerable criticism from the left for his tacit endorsement of the military government; he had been appointed coach of the national team after the 1974 World Cup but remained in post despite the coup.

scholars in the mid-1990s, Tony Mason devoting an entire chapter of his historical survey to the subject (Mason 1995; see also Duke & Crolley 1996b).

For sociologists and anthropologists other themes came to dominate the study of football. Issues such as national integration, social division, and violence had clear political implications, but were studied also in their own right. The work of writers such as Eduardo Archetti on the construction of nationality and masculinity in Argentina through the medium of football, of José Sergio Leite Lopes on race in Brazilian football, and of Vic Duke and others on the growth of the *barras bravas* in Argentina has already been noted. A further important theme in the study of football in Latin America, contributing to the construction of identity, has been the importance of iconic figures to football fans in Latin America, in particular those stars who represent the triumph of men from a poor background over the wealthy and powerful. Eduardo Santa Cruz comments that the football icon, in the eyes of South American fans, becomes 'the champion who will defend our honour, our history, and our collective pride, and/or the man who has arrived where we would all like to be'. The world-class footballer from a poor background thus becomes a representation of popular feelings and achievements in the face of a world that is often distant and threatening (Santa Cruz 1995, p. 85). Perhaps the classic examples are Diego Maradona, a *pibe* from one of the poorest areas of Buenos Aires, whose individual genius overcame the rigidly organised European teams of the 1980s, or Garrincha, the mulato from a poor town outside Rio who embodied the spirit of the *malandro*, and whose funeral in 1983 attracted thousands of ordinary people to mourn someone who, like them, had suffered injustice and prejudice throughout his career and died in poverty (Archetti 1997; Leite Lopes 1997, p. 72; Archetti 1999, pp. 97-9).³⁴ The social and cultural differences between football in South America and Western Europe – the interconnection with politics, the relationship between football and national and social identities, the cult of the star, and patterns of violence – thus

³⁴ A *pibe*, in Buenos Aires, is a small boy from the shanty-towns who has no sense of responsibility and confronts authority through cunning and improvisation; a *malandro* in Brazil was originally a slave trickster, and has also come to mean someone who achieves his ends through cunning.

finally gave an impetus to research on football in South America itself in the second half of the 1990s, balancing the early efforts of foreign scholars on the history of the game. It also gave research on football in the Americas a distinct agenda.³⁵ One important outcome, reflecting this surge of interest, was the publication of two volumes of collected essays by an international group of scholars coordinated by Pablo Alabarces, together with Alabarces' own book on football and the imagining of the nation in Argentina (Alabarces 2000, 2002, 2003).

Football, Identity and Society: the Contribution of this Book

David Wood's paper in this volume commences with a quotation from Aldo Panfichi, another contributor, to the effect that football is 'a central instrument in the imaginary construction of socio-cultural identities', at both local and national level, and this has been a consistent theme of studies of football in Latin America for the past twenty years. Football, in Archetti's words, created 'imagined Argentine qualities' around players, teams, and victories (Archetti 1994, p. 231). Other writers have emphasised how qualification for the final stages of the World Cup provides opportunities for the self-affirmation of small nations such as Costa Rica in 1990 or Bolivia in 1994 (Bar-On 1996, section 2.3).³⁶ But a deeper question is perhaps how defeat is interpreted, especially in those countries with high expectations of success. As Archetti has pointed out, Argentina did not defeat the English national team until 1964, and given the British pre-eminence in the country in the early twentieth century and the nationalist reaction to it, this was a crucial point of self-affirmation,

³⁵ An advantage of the unpopularity of soccer in the United States is that researchers in this field have not suffered from the attempts of the US academy, especially some of its more radical members, to impose their own agenda on Latin American studies. In this respect the study of football contrasts with many other areas of history and the social sciences.

³⁶ The expansion in the number of national teams participating in the final stages has created more opportunities for surprising success in the CONCACAF and CONMEBOL qualifiers. Other examples, which have not yet attracted academic research, would include Jamaica in 1998, or Ecuador and Trinidad/Tobago in 2006. On a later Costa Rican example, see Sandoval-García 2005.

especially after the humiliation Argentina suffered in the 1958 World Cup finals (Archetti 1995a, p. 429). However, this overwhelming desire for victory over England meant that defeat in 1966, with Rattín, the captain, sent off early in the match, could only be explained in terms of a European conspiracy.³⁷ For Brazil, as Leite Lopes explains in his chapter here, defeat to Uruguay in the Maracanã in 1950 raised questions for many Brazilians about the country's ethnic hybridity, while debate over the loss of the final to France in 1998 became much more focused on the commercial demands of sponsors and the corruption inherent in the game in an era of globalisation. At a national level, therefore, the soul-searching that follows defeat can provoke a range of reactions that may vary over time, from anger at the continued 'conspiracies' of the developed world against Latin American countries to examination of deep-rooted internal characteristics that appear to epitomise the failings of a national culture.

If football, therefore, can focus internal debate about national cultures or the relationships of particular countries with the outside world, it can also provide a window on to society in other ways. As Gary Whannel has commented, 'Sport functions as a cultural site wherein competing visions of democracy, equality, and capitalism, among other concepts, are articulated and contested' (cited in Delgado 1999, p. 41). Historically football has offered an arena where ethnic or other social groups can affirm identity, but where they can also integrate themselves, and not just on the elite's terms, into the nation. Delgado, for the contemporary United States, makes the point that television executives and the businessmen who own MLS franchises have deliberately sought out the Latino audience. At the same time Latino audiences have resisted the conglomeration of their individual national identities by the white Americans who control the league, the teams and the media (Delgado, 1999). The papers here on fans in Mexico and Peru emphasise the self-affirmation of fan groups and their questioning of contemporary structures of business and politics,

³⁷ The referee who sent off Rattín was German. The FIFA official in charge of allocating referees to matches was Ken Aston, an Englishman. Argentina's continuing economic problems have frequently been explained by populist politicians in terms of conspiracy by bankers and governments in the developed world.

for example in the Pumas' fans' rejection of Nike's association with their team or their demands for genuine democracy rather than a form of *caciquismo*.³⁸ Football can be particularly important because, at least in terms of active participation in attending games, it attracts a demographic profile – young, single, men who are frequently disaffected members of the society in which they live -- whom social scientists may find it otherwise difficult to reach. It thus provides a window on to wider aspects of male youth culture, as Pablo Alabarces' paper on Argentina indicates, as well as on what middle-aged and middle-class members of society would regard as the principal threats arising from this particular section of society, violence and crime.

There are two other important features of youth culture which are particularly evident in the studies here. First, the rapidity of change as older members leave the group and younger members adhere. This is evident in debate over styles of support, the governance of fan groups, and the wording of the particular chants and songs employed at matches. Second, the self-labelling of sub-groups in opposition to others, here seen in Panfichi and Thieroldt's discussion of the *barras* of Alianza Lima and Universitario in Peru. Most work of this kind is undertaken by anthropologists using ethnographic methods. Aidar and Taylor, in the second half of the book, also provide insights into the self-image of fans through conventional market research methods in discovering that the fans of Internacional in Porto Alegre regard themselves as 'monkeys', originally an insult thrown at them by rival Grêmio supporters, but appropriated by the Internacional fans because of its connotations of belonging to the popular classes of the city. Like earlier authors Aidar and Taylor also touch on one of the most significant aspects of Latin American fan culture, the emphasis that the fans of one club put on their own masculinity and their questioning of the opposition's (Archetti 1992, p. 225).

The Business of Football: the Contribution of this Book

³⁸ On the Pumas fans, see Roger Magazine's chapter in this volume.

Football clubs in Latin America know very little either about their fans, whether those who attend matches or those who watch on television. This is an indication both of the lack of sophisticated management in the industry and also the relative shortage of research on the business aspects of football, in contrast to historical, sociological, and anthropological approaches.³⁹ The chapters in the second half of this book thus offer important insights into the state of the South American football business, but also a counterpoint, the failure of the professional women's soccer league in the United States which, in terms of the management and marketing abilities available in the US sports industry, ought not to have fallen into the traps that it did. The overall view that emerges from Gideon Rachman's chapter, supported by the case studies of Argentina and Brazil that follow by Liz Crolley and Vic Duke, Luiz Martins do Melo, and Elena Landau, is that although football clubs in South America certainly suffer from an adverse economic environment, exacerbated by the globalisation of the football industry and the commercial success of European clubs, there are also clear failings in the transparency and quality of management. Most Latin American clubs do not publish audited accounts, and there have been continual suspicions of corruption and rake-offs on the part of club and federation officials.⁴⁰ The management of clubs has also tended to lag far behind that of clubs in western Europe, although there are beacons of good practice: Elena Landau's chapter outlines that of Atlético Paranaense in Brazil. However, most clubs in South America have failed to recognise the symbiosis apparent in western Europe between good results on the pitch and good management off it; for the most part the demands of fans for quick results at any cost have predominated, and governments and tax authorities, to whom a considerable proportion of their debt is often owed, have been

³⁹ Given the general sophistication of the sports industry in the United States, one can assume that the commercial managers of MLS clubs know rather more, though this remains to be investigated.

⁴⁰ Since 2004 Brazilian clubs playing in the national championship have been forced by law to publish their accounts, enabling Casual Auditores to publish an annual report on Brazilian club finances along the lines of Deloitte & Touche's valuable reports on European football (Casual Auditores 2006a, 2006b).

complicit in being unwilling to pursue clubs to the point of declaring them insolvent. Few clubs have taken the step towards either outsourcing management to specialist companies or altering their legal status so that they become limited companies accountable to shareholders and perhaps more financially responsible.⁴¹ Especially in the light of Latin American countries' experiences with privatisation, there are real popular fears if private companies take over the management of clubs, and past attempts to do this, as Elena Landau shows for Brazil and Liz Crolley and Vic Duke for Argentina, have been fraught with problems.⁴²

The football business in South America therefore is fragile. Even the most famous clubs operate at a much lower level of income than their European counterparts, many of them carry large historic debts, and their ability to remain solvent is handicapped by the difficulties of generating revenue streams of the same type and on the same scale as the major clubs in Europe. One of the two leading Argentine clubs, River Plate, epitomises many of these problems. Reported in mid-2006 to have an outstanding debt of US\$20-25 million and an annual operating deficit of US\$10 million, the club survives only by selling players overseas or offering shares in their contracts to individuals who wish to speculate on their eventual transfer value. Moreover, the club's president, José María Aguilar, was indicted on charges of evading taxes in order to keep River afloat during the Argentine financial crisis of

⁴¹ An exception is ColoColo in Chile, which was rescued from bankruptcy in 2005 by a restructuring that put it under the control of a limited company, Blanco y Negro SA. Blanco y Negro subsequently raised US\$32 million through a public offer of shares. In Argentina Racing Club was similarly restructured and its management put under the control of Blanquiceleste SA.

⁴² Since these chapters were written, further questions have arisen concerning the investment made by a shadowy London company, Media Sports Investments (MSI), in Corinthians of São Paulo. In August 2006 MSI transferred two Corinthians players whose registrations they owned, the Argentine internationals Javier Mascherano and Carlos Tévez, to West Ham United. Shortly afterwards it was reported that the Brazilian authorities were investigating accusations of money laundering by MSI (*Soccer Investor Daily Report*, 24 October 2006). See also *The Times*, 1 September 2006.

2001-2003 (*Soccer Investor Daily*, 28 July 2006, 24 August 2006, 3 November 2006, 24 November 2006). In Europe broadcasting contracts, sponsorship, and, in the case of England especially, stadium reconstruction and high ticket prices have brought about a rapid increase in the income of clubs. In South America, in contrast, football remains dependent on television contracts negotiated from a position of weakness vis-à-vis media companies like Torneos y Competencias in Argentina or TV Globo in Brazil, sponsorship income which, although rising, falls far short of the leading European clubs, the income from exhibition matches in the United States and the Far East, and player transfers. Ticket prices cannot be raised far without excluding large numbers of fans, and merchandising has little potential in countries with major inequalities of income and little legal protection for brand owners against piracy.

The exceptions to this general picture of business gloom in the Americas are Mexico and the United States. In Mexico the combination of high attendances, good broadcasting contracts with Televisa and TV Azteca, and the management practices introduced by the companies and entrepreneurs that own many Mexican clubs has created a thriving business that has retained its players and begun to expand into the United States (Kramer 2006). In the United States itself Major League Soccer was structured on the lines of most professional sports in the country, with a single-entity structure where clubs are franchises, salary caps were imposed, and the management developed long-term plans to lay a firm base for professional soccer before expansion could take place. Since the turn of the century several new soccer-specific stadia have been constructed, and the league has twice announced plans to expand the number of teams participating. However, MLS is still assumed to have made significant losses in its first decade, and such a structure does not guarantee success if management makes mistakes and audiences diminish, as Katharine Jones shows in her study of WUSA, the women's professional league, in this volume.

While South American football clubs are mired in debt, however, many of the star players exported to Europe are not, and it is this promise of future wealth that encourages the constant flow of talent from poor homes in Latin American cities. The attraction of professional football to much of its audience depends ultimately on skilled players and coaches, yet very few have studied the impact of the increasing

flow of footballers from South America to Europe and the Far East. Historically, South American footballers have tended to migrate to the leading footballing nations of southern Europe – Italy, Spain, and Portugal – where the problems of adaptation to language, culture, and climate have not been so great. Since the Bosman Judgment of 1995, however, which opened Western European clubs to an influx of talent from elsewhere in the world, more have gone to Northern Europe, where the problems of acclimatisation are that much greater and a poor decision, often at the behest of an agent earning commission on the deal, can wreck a player's career. For this reason Marcela Mora y Araujo's chapter in this book is all the more important, as she explores, largely on the basis of interviews with the players, the problems that they face and the shortcomings of the English clubs, especially, that have recruited them.

The consequence of poor management and the emigration of the best players means that most clubs depend upon journeymen footballers who never quite achieve the move to the riches of Europe. In terms of the quality of the football on offer watching South American players in televised matches in the major European leagues makes much more sense than going to matches locally. Alan Gilbert, at the end of his chapter here on competitive balance, laments the decline of football in cities such as Montevideo that historically were its cradle. The combination of globalisation and the problematic socio-economic environment of South America has meant that the domestic game has become extremely unattractive to many fans, even if a closely fought championship, historic rivalries, or the final stages of the Copa Libertadores can still arouse passions.

Future Directions

This book provides a step along the path to a greater understanding of the rapidly changing nature of football in the Americas, but research in the field is young. The contents, the balance, and the omissions of the book all indicate possible future directions for research. There is space here only for a handful of suggestions.

In terms of the geographical and chronological balance of research on football in the Americas, it is clear that the two most important and successful footballing

nations in South America, Argentina and Brazil, have both attracted and generated the largest volume of research, and that the history of football elsewhere is much less known. To some extent this is less serious a problem than a decade ago, thanks to the work of the research network sponsored by CLACSO and coordinated by Pablo Alabarces (Alabarces 2000, 2003). Nonetheless, the serious bibliography on countries like Peru, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico is still very sparse, and in most countries there are just one or two pioneering historians and social scientists. Moreover, even for Argentina and Brazil, more is known about the early pre-professional stages of the game than the mid-twentieth century. Few have followed the route pioneered by José Deustua and Susan Stokes in the case of Lima and used oral history techniques to recapture and re-analyse the past. Such methodologies might also contribute to another gap in historical analysis, the development of football tactics, the evolution of distinctive club and national styles of football, and the impact of South American teams and players on the world game. Along with central Europe (Austria, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia), Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil were probably the most innovative countries tactically in the middle third of the twentieth century, a fact that deserves much more exploration than it has received. In the 1950s, at international level, Brazil, along with Hungary, played the most innovative and imaginative football, and with their World Cup victory in 1958 Brazil introduced the world both to a new style of organisation on the pitch and to the benefits of proper scientific preparation of athletes. A further aspect of tactics, touched upon in academic work both on Brazil and Argentina, is the eternal conflict in South American football, more marked perhaps than elsewhere, between the desire for flair, artistry, and imagination on the one hand and the functionalist requirements of winning matches and tournaments on the other (Archetti 1995b, pp. 202 and 213-6).

This brings us back to questions of identities, and the way in which football has fed in to the construction and contestation of identity and culture in the Americas. While work on ethnicity in football has tended to concentrate on Brazil, in particular, trends towards globalisation are opening up new questions. The leading international clubs now routinely market themselves to a global fanbase whom they can reach through television and the Internet. In the case of Latin American clubs the

massive emigration of the past two decades to North America and Europe opens new possibilities, but also introduces new threats. The growing importance of exhibition games in the United States, which normally attract large attendances with a high Latino content, has already been mentioned, but other developments may also prove to be significant. One of the most interesting, corresponding with the deliberate marketing of the MLS to Latino communities, has been the entry of Chivas USA (owned by the Guadalajara club of the same name) to play in the MLS. At an international level CONMEBOL has incorporated Mexican clubs into its flagship club competition, the Copa Libertadores, and extended invitations to CONCACAF countries to compete in the Copa América. Yet there are also threats. In the United States clubs from Latin America are competing with European clubs to capture this potential international market. Since the turn of the 21st century Barcelona and Real Madrid have made enormous strides in international marketing, targeting South American markets as well as the United States and the Far East. They can build on the Latin American stars in their teams, the reputation of the Spanish league, linguistic and cultural affinities, and the extensive coverage of European leagues on cable television. All these changes have profound implications for the business of football in the Americas.

These trends also raise questions about the consumption and commodification of football. In Britain, particularly, clubs have come under attack for both the profit-taking of private individuals and the increasing alienation that many traditional working-class fans feel as the game becomes increasingly commercialised (Conn 1997, 2004). Is the sport escaping from its roots in the poorer sections of society? Some work on the growth of soccer in the United States has linked it not so much to the Latino immigrant communities as to its appeal to middle-class suburban America, which was searching for a sport for their children that was non-violent, safe, and multicultural (Andrews et al., 1997; Markovits & Hellerman 2003). In the case of Brazil, Sérgio Leite Lopes has also drawn attention to the increasing proportion of top footballers in Brazil coming from middle-class backgrounds, arguing that this, together with pride in the national team's achievements on the world stage, has created an inversion of traditional hierarchies in the sense that

working-class activities have helped to define the identity and aspirations of the middle classes (Leite Lopes 1997, pp. 76-9). Assessing the changing social basis of both professional footballers and fans, and hence the consumption of football in Latin America, demands, however, the development of much more ethnographic and longitudinal research, especially amongst key middle-class groups such as the student communities which have historically been closely linked with the development of professional football in South America.⁴³

A final question worth noting is the issue of gender and football. Janet Lever (1983) highlighted the exclusion of women from most football activity in Brazil; indeed, one reviewer asked sharply how she could argue that football integrated Brazil when her evidence indicated that half the population was marginalised by it (Corsino 1984). Women were forbidden by law to play football in Brazil until 1979, and their participation had hardly progressed at the time that Lever published (Votre and Mourão 2003). Yet the recent growth of women's football there, despite male prejudice against it, has been remarkable, undermining the notion that women's football succeeds only where men's football has not become hegemonic.⁴⁴ The contrast between the picture painted by Lever on the basis of research conducted in the late 1970s and the role of women's football a generation later thus raises new questions about changing gender relations and sport in Brazil. The growth of football on television and the increasing commercialisation of the game is also clearly having an impact on women's interest in men's football. While relatively few women attend matches in Latin America, in part because of the threat of violence and the undercurrent of macho sexuality discussed by Roger Magazine in his chapter here, the evidence of marketing surveys and the pitch of television advertisements suggest that consumer goods firms and broadcasters detect a substantial female audience for football. Recent work on Argentina has suggested that women's attendance at matches in fact began to grow in the 1990s, challenging male

⁴³ On students as fans, see the chapters by Roger Magazine and Aldo Panfichi and Jorge Thieroldt in this volume. For an interesting historical discussion of university rivalries in professional football in Chile, see Obregón 1981.

⁴⁴ For this argument, see Markovits & Hellerman 2003.

representations of the sport (Rodríguez 2005). In the United States the female interest in football, and the success of the national women's team, was sufficient to stimulate the attempt to found a professional women's league, even though it quickly failed. The relationship between gender and football in the Americas is thus one of potentially significant change, and also one which is beginning to attract some interesting academic research.

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