

Fútbol, Politics, and Corruption

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## Academic Abstract

This thesis explores how football (soccer) is used as a tool to promote corruption within political and economic institutions in Latin America and Europe. By drawing on international political and economic policies and analyzing work that theorizes how neoliberalism is not only an outside force that highly influences the state, but also shapes power relationships in society that are procreated by every day economic actions of the working class, this research aims to provide a more theoretically informed perspective on global politics. This thesis also examines how entrepreneurial endeavors can lead to relations of exploitation, extraction and economic dispossession in broader political society. More specifically, it analyses neoliberalism in Argentina and Germany through the perspective of state power, informal economies, and international migration. Lastly, this research portrays the mindset of Argentine and German politicians over the last century by analyzing the actions of the elites within the football clubs and organizations under the guise of entrepreneurship.

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General Audience Abstract

This thesis aims to understand the corrupt ways in which football (soccer) is used within Latin America and Europe to illicitly gain political and economic power. More specifically, it aims at analyzing neoliberalism in Argentina and Germany through the perspective of state power, informal economies, and international migration. The aim of this research is to understand how the footballing industry can lead to relations of manipulation, extraction, and economic impoverishment within broader society seen through the connections between politicians, club officials, and third party illicit actors.

## **Dedication**

Dedico esta tesis a quienes me han apoyado a través de los años con mis estudios y decisiones profesionales. A mis padres Rodolfo y Celina, no podría haber llegado a este punto de mi vida sin sus palabras de sabiduría, amor y entusiasmo, inspirándome a seguir adelante y a cultivar mis pasiones. A mis hermanos, Martín, Pablo y Lucas, porque sin ellos tampoco sería la persona quien soy hoy. De los tres he aprendido a través de compartir y convivir, en la similitud y en la diferencia. Parafraseando al gaucho Martín Fierro, siempre unidos “porque esa es la ley primera”.

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## Chapter 1:

### Introduction

Today in Argentina, football or “fútbol”, serves as a microcosm to understanding many issues of collusion and corruption in contemporary politics. Football within Argentina goes beyond the confines of what the world deems as a sport. It serves as a measure of understanding the issues that affect the country such as a lack of transparency and accountability in public institutions and the extensive corruption that distinguishes Argentine politics from its neighbors. Amid these issues, several interlinked connections emerge between politicians, state elites, club officials and members of mafia organizations that also populate groups known as “*barras bravas*” within the Argentine Football Association (AFA).<sup>1</sup> These linkages have contributed to an increased outcry against the way corruption is intertwined with political and economic interests, as well as a rise in social violence.

Within Argentina, state leaders have backed the increase of illicit practices through corrupt political and economic endeavors that ultimately benefit those involved. One example that demonstrates this is seen through the case of former Press Secretary of Argentina and right-wing Peronist, Juan Carlos Rousselot. He was known to have employed two *barras* who were accused and convicted for the assassination of Daniel García, during the 1995 Copa America in Uruguay.<sup>2</sup> Despite having origins since the 1930’s, Argentina’s government remains dormant on finding a resolution to the rise of illicit activities, while its citizens suffer the second-hand effects of these corrupt practices.

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<sup>1</sup> Juan José Sebreli, *La Era Del Fútbol*, 4th edition ed. (Buenos Aires: Debolsillo, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Pg. 67

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Pg. 67

This thesis aims to employ a comparative analysis of the impacts of corruption on politics and economics through the lens of soccer (or alternatively, ‘football’) associations. I define corruption as: *the abuse of public office by politicians, football club presidents, and board members, for the sake of their personal political and financial gain*. I mainly focus on Argentina and Germany, countries that have formed multibillion dollar football associations that have at one point or another established connections to politicians or political parties, and nationalist groups aiming to enact their ideal vision of political life. I examine how entities such as the Asociación del Fútbol Argentino (AFA) and Deutscher Fußball-Bund (DFB) operate at national and international levels, as well as within formal and informal economies. I also aim to demonstrate what corrupt practices football associations use as a means of building political and economic power. Doing so will allow me to explore how social and cultural ties found within the world of football impact politics and the economy within these countries.

While we do not entirely know all corrupt endeavors that members of associations such as the AFA have partaken in, there are suspicious connections between politicians, football club presidents/ officials, and barras bravas that bear mentioning. Former AFA President Julio Grondona, for instance, was kept in his position of power for 34 years where he won elections, “unanimously and maintained friendly relations with the military government as well as with left-wing and right-wing democratic governments.”<sup>3</sup> Since the 1930’s, the AFA has become increasingly less transparent with their political and economic endeavors, something also reflected in Argentine politics today.

Similarly, in a recent article published in *The New Yorker*, Sam Knight covers the economic powerhouse and driving force that is European Football. Knight not only details the

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<sup>3</sup> Eugenio Paradiso, "Football, Clientelism and Corruption in Argentina: An Anthropological Inquiry," *Soccer and Society* 4 (2014).

economic impacts football has had on countries such as Italy and Germany, but also the detrimental impacts of corruption found within the sports associations across Europe. He mentions, “Last season, according to the accounting firm Deloitte, European soccer had revenues of twenty-eight billion dollars, about the same as Major League Baseball, the National Hockey League, and the National Football League combined.”<sup>4</sup> Through an analysis of Football Leaks case studies in September of 2015 that exposed unseen illegal contracts relating to major football clubs in Europe, Knight is able to show the lack of transparency and security in European football’s economic endeavors. “Football Leaks,” he writes, “had posted confidential contracts from F.C. Porto and Benfica, Portugal’s biggest teams; Olympique Marseilles, a leading French club; and F.C. Twente, of the Netherlands. Fans learned that Jorge Jesus, the coach of Sporting Lisbon, was earning five million euros a season—an extraordinary salary for the Portuguese league—while other files confirmed rumors and disclosed hidden investors. Together, they gave a sense of seeing the business of soccer for the first time.”<sup>5</sup>

Knight’s analysis of corruption in European football and the economic capacity the industry holds is important for my study as it demonstrates that even in the football leagues found in European countries, they too experience the same problems as those found in Latin America. Perhaps these acts of corruption are more detrimental to a country’s economy than those found in Latin America, particularly considering the amount of revenue collected by European football as a whole exceeds that of Latin American football. Taking this into account, my study looks to challenge the conceptions surrounding corruption in Latin America, in that the countries that are considered part of the “Global South” are not the only ones that experience this

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<sup>4</sup> Sam Knight, "How Football Leaks Is Exposing Corruption in European Soccer," *The New Yorker* 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

phenomenon, as European states are also susceptible to the same issues. Despite this being so, we will see that corruption is manifested in different ways within Argentina than in Germany, as within the Latin American case it is conceived more so at the political level, while in the European case it is more apparent in the private economic sphere.

The influence of football on politics and economics is not a topic often visited in the field of Political Science. Most studies related to football primarily focus on the economic impacts that the sport has, especially toward the end of the 1900's and into the 2000's.<sup>6</sup> It is in this time frame that the associations that administer football clubs turn toward commercial objectives, expanding the sport into a global money making industry. Most studies that relate to football do not often focus on the political impacts the sport has and the potential consequences a country can face due to the corrupt endeavors in which politicians and club officials collaborate. This can be seen in the Knight's article mentioned above for example as he covers the corruption of football and its economic impacts, but also the political impacts of the football scandals mentioned in the article. He does not cover, however, whether or not there were any political ties to the clubs who were involved in these acts of corruption. Turning to football as a way of further understanding politics and economics is important as it offers a unique angle on why certain political and economic decisions are made, especially in Latin America and Europe where the sport and its associations have much political backing due to its revenue building capacity and cultural support.

My guiding claim is that although the actors in this linkage do not need each other to survive in society, they are nevertheless a microcosm of broader instances of collusion and corruption in contemporary politics. As the research and writing progresses throughout this

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<sup>6</sup> Udo Merkel, "The 1974 and 2006 World Cups in Germany: Commonalities, Continuities and Changes," *Soccer and Society* Vol. 7, no. No. 1 (2006).

thesis, I will demonstrate under what conditions football is able to become a tool of corruption within Argentina, and how this parallels within Germany. In the end, I claim that it is the phenomenon of migration within both countries that results in attitudes of xenophobia and hyper-nationalism and that get cultivated through football within Europe and to some extent within Latin America. I claim that it is because of migration and migration policy within both countries that perceptions of political society are impacted, and that they allow for the conditions of corruption to arise in Argentina, while in Germany it results in the push for the maintenance of transparency within governing institutions.

The corporate and political endeavors in which the football associations partake can represent how Argentine political and economic institutions lack transparency and accountability. The connections that club officials have, and their methodologies for illicitly gaining political and economic power, are identical to that of many of the corrupt politicians found within the Argentine government. By doing a comparative analysis with Germany, I also aim to determine in what ways the politics of sports association within European states compare and contrast from political and economic outcomes in Argentina. My goal is to provide more evidence that there is much for Political Scientists to learn about cultural politics from Latin America, particularly for contemporary comparative politics scholarship. I aim to demonstrate specifically that football associations reflect trends and practices of corruption, and that many of the condescending depictions of backwards Latin American football and politics often ignore the connections found between corruption and sports that are present in Europe. I engage some of the reasons why Latin America is pictured the way it is today, where its political and economic issues carry the stigma of inferiority in comparison to Europe. In contrast, will see later on how extreme right-wing political ideology is able to persist within the context of German footballing

associations. More specifically, we will observe this from the scope of radical Eastern German fan groups known as Ultras, who often engage in violent acts and who in part engage within the far right political movements that have risen in the recent years within the country.

As a basis to my theoretical approach, I use Verónica Gago's work on the neoliberal policies seen within corporative actions in Argentina, and her analysis of Argentine entrepreneurship and micro-economies, to further examine the political and economic approaches taken by elites and club officials within the football organizations.<sup>7</sup> I pair Gago's work with Wolfgang Streeck's writings on neoliberalism in Europe to draw a parallel with the ways in which illicit and corrupt behaviors in Germany have been tended to and normalized with established codes of transparency at the political or public level as well as within the private sphere.<sup>8</sup> Lastly, I draw on Benedict Anderson's observations on the migration of nationalist ideals in the nineteenth century, to understand the environment for which perceptions on political society today within Argentina and Germany are able to arise, and eventually allow for the circumstances in which corruption is able to take place within the footballing world in respective countries. I use this three-way dialogue to offer a broader understanding of political and economic actions that have been taken by elites over the past century, and understand the conditions under how corruption is able to flourish in Argentina and Germany through their relation to football.

My study is guided by the following questions:

**Question #1:** How is football used as a corrupt means of gaining political and economic power within Argentina and Germany?

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<sup>7</sup> Veronica Gago, *Neoliberalism from Below: Popular Pragmatics and Baroque Economies* (Duke University Press, 2017).

<sup>8</sup> Wolfgang Streeck, *How Will Capitalism End?* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2016).

**Question #2:** How do the political and economic outcomes found within Argentina and Germany compare and contrast?

**Question #3:** Why is it that Latin American political and economic entities are seen as politically and economically inferior to those found within Europe if they too are experiencing similar issues?

**Question #4:** Can the political and economic issues that arise with corruption and football be used as a way of negating the stigma of inferiority Latin America carries when compared to Europe or the “global north”?

### **Background of the Issue**

After the fall of the military dictatorship in Argentina in 1983, many thought the country would be on its way toward economic, political, and social prosperity. For the first time in over 60 years, a civilian president transitioned to an elected successor.<sup>9</sup> Despite this shift in governance and moments of what appeared to be the beginnings of economic prosperity, Argentina has continually suffered both politically and economically at the hands of corrupt presidents and state legislators. The reality is that Argentina has faced turmoil and crisis since before the military dictatorship, dating back to the turn of the twentieth century. As one documentary film describes, “Ever since independence, almost 200 years ago Argentina’s foreign debt has been a source of impoverishment and corruption and the biggest scandals.”<sup>10</sup>

Since the fall of the last military dictator, Reynaldo Bignone, Argentina’s high levels of corruption have followed the rise of globalization. In 1989, President Carlos Menem needed to

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<sup>9</sup> "The Tragedy of Argentina: A Century of Decline," *The Economist* 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Fernando Solanas, "Social Genocide (Memoria Del Saqueo)," (Argentina, France, Switzerland 2004).

take action in order to salvage the country from further economic turmoil seeing as the inflation rate was at 5,000%.<sup>11</sup> The answer to solving this issue was through privatization, which in the short term ended up dropping the inflation rate to 2.5% by 1995, but in the long term allowed for the rise in corruption.<sup>12</sup> With the privatization of Argentina's ten largest state-owned enterprises came the increasing desire of foreign corporations to participate in public biddings in main sectors of the economy, mostly in infrastructure and industrial power. In many instances, politicians and state elites agreed to award a contract to foreign investors if in return they received a substantial bribe.<sup>13</sup> In this way, politicians would personally benefit financially and be able to buy political influence while foreign corporations would benefit from profitable projects.

Another costly result of the implementation of neoliberal economic policies was placing too much power in the hands of the executive branch. While this trend characterized Menem's presidency, the real economic and political damage due to this concentration of power was not seen through Menem, but through the following administrations of Carlos de la Rúa (1999-2001), Nestor Kirchner (2003-2007) and Cristina Kirchner (2007-2015). Between the presidencies of Menem and Cristina Kirchner, there were no reforms on policies of checks and balances for the executive branch.<sup>14</sup> Multiple presidents and politicians have abused their positions of power, as exemplified during Cristina Kirchner's administration where many policy decisions and actions led to the stealing of millions of dollars from the Argentine government.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Luigi Manzetti Roberto Pablo Saba, "Privatization in Argentina: The Implications for Corruption. Crime, Law and Social Change," *Crime, Law & Social Change* 25, no. 4 (1996/7).

<sup>12</sup> "The Tragedy of Argentina: A Century of Decline."

<sup>13</sup> Luigi Manzetti & Roberto Pablo Saba. Pg. 354

<sup>14</sup> Diane A. Desierto Susan Rose-Ackerman, Natalia Volosin, "Hyper-Presidentialism: Separation of Powers without Checks and Balances in Argentina and Philippines," *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 29, no. 1 (2011). Pg. 300

<sup>15</sup> Taos Turner, "Testimony Links Argentine Ex-President's Late Husband with Plot to Steal Millions," *The Wall Street Journal* 2016.

Today, Argentina continues to suffer at the hands of power hungry politicians who are able to maintain their positions of authority with the help in large part by members of the Argentine Football Association and illicit actors such as the *barras bravas*. This is a group of football hooligans that are known to act like mafia, as they are involved in money laundering, drug trafficking, organized violence, and thefts.<sup>16</sup>

One example that demonstrates the suspicions of corruption within the AFA and club officials can be seen in a 2016 article in the Spanish national daily newspaper, *MARCA*. The author covers a US led investigation on the AFA where 40 business officials and executives were “accused of requesting and receiving tens of millions of dollars in bribes and commissions in a case that generated a FIFA unprecedented crisis and the fall of high hierarchies.”<sup>17</sup> More than a third of the executives accused pleaded guilty and agreed to cooperate with the US in order to reduce their sentences. Within Germany, we can see similar acts of corruption found within the Franz Beckenbauer case involving the money laundering of millions euros, and bribes of FIFA officials that contributed toward winning the bid to host the 2006 World Cup.<sup>18</sup> The examples that we will see throughout the entirety of this Master’s Thesis will be beneficial for comparative politics scholarship surrounding the study of corruption at the state and private-business level, as they will analyze the similarities and differences of this phenomenon within respective countries and how it is to materialize.

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<sup>16</sup> Sebreli. Chapter 3

<sup>17</sup> "La Justicia Estadounidense Investiga a La Afa Por Corrupción," *MARCA* 2016.

<sup>18</sup> BBC, "Franz Beckenbauer Questioned by Prosecutors in 2006 World Cup Fraud Inquiry," *BBC*, March 23, 2017 2017; *ibid*.

### **Significance of the Issue**

Argentina, like most countries of the Global South, often carries the stigma of a country in economic and political turmoil, largely because of uneven development. Germany on the other hand is seen amongst the most politically and economically developed countries or what can be considered the “Global North.” The general consensus in Political Science is that countries found within the “Global South” have much to learn from the technologically, economically, and politically superior “Global North”.<sup>19</sup> <sup>20</sup> Within the context of this study, I hope to show that despite these qualifications, countries such as Germany are no less susceptible to experiencing the issues that arise in. Moreover, much of what is considered the Global North can be better understood by the political and economic occurrences within the Global South, particularly through football associations’ involvement in economics and politics. Specifically, I intend to demonstrate that even when a country like Germany that is considered more economically or politically advanced, or “less corrupt”, they too encounter instances of political and cultural disruption, such as in Argentina.

### **How to Study Fútbol and Politics**

Football in Argentina transcends the confines of the sports world. It is a cultural phenomenon that for the last century has increasingly influenced many aspects of the population since the establishing of the AFA in 1893.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps football was at first a mere sport that

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<sup>19</sup> Jeffrey T. Jackson Annette Trefzer, Kathryn McKee and Kirsten Dellinger, "The Global South and/in the Global North: Interdisciplinary Investigations," *Indiana University Press* 8, no. 2 (2014).

<sup>20</sup> David Slater, *Geopolitics and the Post-Colonial: Rethinking North-South Relations*, (Wiley-Blackwell, 2004).

<sup>21</sup> Sergio Levinsky, *Afa. El Fútbol Pasa, Los Negocios Quedan: Una Historia Política Y Deportiva* (Autoría Editorial, 2016). Pg. 26

served solely the purposes of entertainment. However, at the turn of the nineteenth century, it started becoming a political tool used by powerful leaders. This appeared with the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe, as fascist leaders began using the sport as a way of instilling their political ideologies. In fascist Italy, for example, Benito Mussolini saw the socio-political power in football, due to how it captivated the general public, specifically the youth, and how it served as a way of ideologically uniting the population.<sup>22</sup> Internally, football was used as a way of breaking down economic class differences and uniting the populace based on a common passion or interest for the sport. Externally, football was used by Mussolini as a way of preventing the youth from being involved politically against his totalitarian rule. Sebreli claims that this tactic is a true depiction of the actual underlying goals of the football and not only in the times of fascism. In reference to the underlying goals of football he says, “Es una declaración franca de los verdaderos objetivos del deporte y no sólo en los tiempos de fascismo.”<sup>23</sup>

My central goal is to show how the world of football reflects the current state of society as a whole. From the powerful club officials, to the anonymous fans and the idolized players, the “micro-society” of football helps verify the latent or manifest tendencies of “macro-society”. Football is not only football.<sup>24</sup>

Starting in 1931, politics and the sport in Argentina have been intertwined. Similarly to fascist Italy and Germany, football was used by the Radical Party under the dictatorship of José Félix Uriburu as a way of maintaining contact with the masses. At this point, Radical Party members started entering the executive committees of the newly professionalized football

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<sup>22</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 155

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Pg. 156

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. Pg. 17

clubs.<sup>25</sup> What we see in the following decades within Argentina is a rise in politicians that become involved with the football associations as officials, and a rise in football officials that become involved in state politics. As Sebreli states, “If a football club official does not have a connection with a political president, at least it is necessary to have some support from somebody who is involved in politics.”<sup>26</sup>

Juan José Sebreli’s book, *La Era del Fútbol*, has been instrumental for understanding the political and economic impacts the sport has had in Argentina since the founding of the AFA. Sebreli presents a critique of the sport as he claims it serves as an instrument to those in power in order to manipulate the population. To build off of that, Sebreli shows how all politicians in Argentina, no matter their political and economic ideology, agree that sports, football in particular, can be used as a way of achieving political outcomes.<sup>27</sup>

As Argentina experienced the direct involvement between politics and football, corruption rates begin to rise. Both club officials and politicians began to find ways to support themselves politically and ultimately economically, many times with the backing of “*barras bravas*”. Sebreli outlines how politicians use *barras* as a way to maintain political control. There is a reciprocal action between political party committees and football clubs. The power brokers or liaisons of a committee manage to create support for political parties by gathering people and

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. Pg. 170

<sup>26</sup> Sebreli provides a list of major and minor football clubs in Argentina and their political connections over the past two decades. To name a few contemporary examples, former Governor of Tucumán, Ramón Palito Ortega, backs the clubs *San Martín* and *Unión de Tucumán*. Former Governor of Mendoza, Rodolfo Gabrieli, backs the football club *Argentinos Juniors* of the province of Mendoza. Former Radical Civic Union Party leader, Luís Changui Cáceres, backs the football club *Unión de Santa Fe*. The list is extensive and detailed not only for these clubs, but also the majority of those involved in the first division league of the AFA. See: Sebreli. Pg. 184.

<sup>27</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 167. In his words, “Todos los gobernantes, cualesquiera sean los regímenes políticos y económicos, concuerdan en la utilización del deporte, y del fútbol en particular, para sus fines políticos.”

granting them free tickets to the football matches, therefore associating them to a club. This is how *barras bravas* were originally formed. Once *barras* are formed by power brokers, they contribute to the political support of club officials and politicians with votes in managerial position elections within the football clubs. They also serve as an intimidation tool as they often engage in verbal and even physical attacks against opposing *barras*, players and political candidates.<sup>28</sup>

*Barras bravas* engage in a variety of violent acts ranging from small brawls at football stadiums to organized murders on specific targets. Sebreli covers various instances of different organized acts of violence committed by *barras*. Typically in Argentina, one football club's *barras* direct their violence toward another football club's *barras*. In 1983, for example, five *barras* of the football clubs Boca Juniors, Quilmes, Independiente, Estudiantes, and River Plate were all shot to death in separate instances.<sup>29</sup> *Barras bravas* very much act as gangs where each of them control certain territories and 'barrios' or sections of Argentina, whether it be in or out of the city of Buenos Aires. *Barras* have been around since at least 1945 and their actions by nature as organized criminal groups have not varied much since their creation.<sup>30</sup> For this reason today in Argentina we see a growing tolerance toward these groups.

In 1971, when interviewed about the violence that occurs at football stadiums, a director of the AFA Valentín Suárez admitted that the violence observed at events was the true motive of attendance of all fans, including *barras*, and not the love of the sport. He says: "When these men (*barras bravas*) are in the bleachers, they do not care about fair play. They are there to undress their passion and unload the aggressiveness they could not release during the week. So that helps

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid. Pg. 169

<sup>29</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 95

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. Pg. 51

because emotional release is healthy. Bottles will always fly above the heads of the referees and all we can do is moderate that aggressiveness.”<sup>31</sup>

In response to the political support received by *barras bravas*, a political candidate (whether already working in the AFA or having connections to a representative of the AFA) will hand out tickets to the power brokers according to the number of votes accumulated in their campaign. On top of receiving tickets for the sporting events, club officials implicitly grant impunity to them and sometimes explicit protection in response to outbreaks of violence.<sup>32</sup> This was the name of the game for years in Argentina through the rise and fall of different political regimes. Such background is important for what comes next in history and for understanding how the sport develops commercially into what it is today, not only in Latin America, but around the world and in Europe specifically.

### **Fútbol Goes Global**

In 1979, Julio Grondona, a businessman and prosperous owner of a chain of hardware stores became president of the Argentine Football Association. Previously he had founded the football club *Arsenal de Sarandí* as a way of entering the world of football in Argentina. He was later elected president of one of the biggest clubs in the country, *Independiente*. Throughout his AFA presidency, he remained in office through the rise and fall of the military dictatorships, the Union Civica Radical government, and Menem administration, even though he was known to affiliate with the radicals.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Pg. 99

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Pg. 169

<sup>33</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 179

Grondona was important for creating the influential phenomenon that football is today. He was responsible, with his business-oriented mindset, for the transformation of football clubs in Argentina into global corporations. They were no longer the local clubs of small sections of Argentina, but rather international icons gaining international interest and steadily becoming a prominent Latin American partner with the booming football enterprise in Europe. This marked the beginning of a shift in football presidencies with political motives to mainly financial and economic motives. As put by Sebreli, the old political leaders who manipulated the masses through football are replaced by businessmen on the fringes of the classical upper classes, often of shady origins, and of little culture whose only ambition is economic power, although sometimes they do not limit themselves from obtaining political power.<sup>34</sup>

A colorful example demonstrating this transition can be seen with Silvio Berlusconi, former Prime Minister of Italy, and owner of major football club A.C. Milan. Before rising to political power, Berlusconi started as a salesman and built up a media and financial empire, *Fininvest*, which included three television networks. In 1986 he became the owner of A.C. Milan, which during his presidency were League champions four separate times and won various international cups. As Semino and Masci mention, "Until he formally entered politics, Berlusconi's main connections with it had been his useful friendships with powerful Socialist politicians, in particular the now disgraced Bettino Craxi, who had promoted laws to support the tycoon's media enterprises."<sup>35</sup> With his rise to political power, Berlusconi was able to gain support by drawing on football, as his political party "*Forza Italia*" (a chant used during the Italian National Soccer Team matches) excessively used the positive connotations of the popular

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Pg. 186

<sup>35</sup> Elena Semino and Michela Masci, "Politics Is Football: Metaphor in the Discourse of Silvio Berlusconi in Italy," *Discourse & Society* 7, no. 2 (1996). Pg. 246

Italian sport, which in return attracted extensive audiences and united individuals across various social class and regional origins.

With the rise of globalization and commercialization of the football clubs comes more opportunities for politicians and club members to be involved with illicit and corrupt practices, especially money laundering and organized crime with the heightened use of *barras bravas*. This is pointed out by Sergio Levinsky's *AFA: El Fútbol Pasa, Los Negocios Quedan* (2016), and Pablo Albarces' *Fútbol y Patria* (2008), both of whom covers corruption schemes that have infiltrated the economic and social layers of Argentina. Levinsky's argument concerns the ways a space of power and its sporting consequences are constructed. His central aim is to demystify the idea of corruption within the AFA and its connections to the government and politicians as well as its moments of crisis with the corruption in its economic endeavors. He emphasizes the importance of understanding that many of the scandals seen within the last 20 or 30 years in reality had taken place decades before in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Albarces similarly illustrates potential ways in which European football can be used as a corruption tool to economically benefit all actors involved. He argues that at times of strong nationalist polarization, the centrality of football narratives decreases until it becomes a pure media commodity. However, in times of national identity crisis, the importance of football narratives grows significantly, exceeding even the masculine world where they originally unfold.<sup>36</sup> We will see later on how the themes brought up within Albarces are relatable to the points elaborated on by Wolfgang Streeck, which help us understand the underlying circumstances for the perceptions held by political society and questioned within the field of political science.

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<sup>36</sup> Pablo Albarces, *Fútbol Y Patria: El Fútbol Y Las Narrativas De La Nación En La Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Prometeo Libros, 2002). Pg. 18

### ***Corruption and Fútbol within Political Science***

As I aim to show, the political and economic implications of corruption found within the football world is underrepresented within the field of Political Science. The subject is more commonly found in sociological studies, much of which focuses on the sport's cultural influences, its economic potential and capacity to generate revenue and affect a country's economy, and the movement of the masses and the impacts on society, to name a few examples. In the present study, I borrow from these fields and incorporate a comparative angle, aiming to draw theoretical conclusions relevant to the study of politics.

Focusing comparatively on the impacts of corruption within Latin American and European politics and economies, my aim is to further understand how football is used as a tool that promotes corruption within politics and economics in Latin America. At the same time, I look at neoliberalism in Latin America (specifically Argentina) through the perspective of state power, informal economies, and international migration. By drawing on work that theorizes how neoliberalism is not only an outside force that highly influences the state, but also shapes power relationships in society that are procreated by every day economic actions of the working class, I aim provide a more theoretically informed perspective on football and politics. Understanding how entrepreneurial endeavors can lead to relations of exploitation, extraction, and economic dispossession in broader society, for example, situates the many factors at play in the study of football associations. Analyzing the actions of elites within the football clubs and organizations under the guise of entrepreneurship will help portray the mindset of Argentine politicians within the last century.

It is important at the same time to recognize how corruption within Latin America has been portrayed, more specifically in the context of Western ideology. One cannot truly

understand the conditions of where football fits in the study of corruption within political systems if they do not immerse themselves in the literature surrounding these discourses. It is pivotal to acknowledge that attitudes revolving around corruption in Latin America stem from Western ideologies surrounding early perceptions of non-Western principles.<sup>37</sup> This is to say that historically, the West has been portrayed as “enlightened” and superior in comparison to the non-west or in this case Latin America, when it comes to conceptions encompassing governance systems and political ideology.<sup>38</sup> As David Slater writes:

*“...the representation of the West went together with the erasure of some of the most disturbing and disruptive aspects of its inner structures and dispositions. Symptomatically, many of these repressed features – for example, violence, corruption, and disorder – were then externalized and projected on to the non-Western other, thus helping to stimulate the desire to penetrate, police and control, while at the same time validating a partialized, narcissistic Western identity.”<sup>39</sup>*

This mentality can date as far back as colonial times, but the conceptions held today in regards corruption within the Global South stem from the 1960’s on with the formation of modernization theory. If we try and understand when corruption becomes a concern in Latin America, it can be narrowed down to the rise in modernization theory and how it escalated “geopolitical interventions in Third World societies, with the further extension of imperialist

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<sup>37</sup> Slater, *Geopolitics and the Post-Colonial*, pg. 11

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. Pg. 10

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. Pg. 82

penetration, lending such interventions a conceptual and thematic legitimization.”<sup>40</sup> These are all factors in understanding corruption not just as a reflection of political society, most specifically in Argentina, but also in part influenced by Western narratives that often categorize states within Latin America as backwards or inferior. At the same time, as the world technologically progresses and becomes more interconnected with the ascent of globalization, Western ideologies embedded in capitalist economic policies contribute to the growing economic imbalances and tensions seen in states of the Global South when compared to those of the Global North. In other words, “Underlying these kinds of tensions and counterpoints, one can discern a deeply-rooted unevenness which is symptomatic of the process of globalization.”<sup>41</sup>

These are all important factors to take into account when moving forward with a thesis on corruption within the political and footballing worlds of Argentina and Germany. Football serves as a vessel for corruption to flourish within both countries, and the underlying geopolitical conditions allow for the consequences we see in Europe and Latin America.

### **Thesis Structure**

Each of the following chapters demonstrates the importance of the political and economic implications of corruption in football as a way of understanding broader aspects of comparative political analysis. I begin each chapter by including a background to the problem, as well as what theoretical conclusions I draw from the problems I encountered while pursuing my research.

Chapter 2 begins with a reflection on Benedict Anderson’s book *Imagined Communities*, framing the theoretical analysis I aim do in relation to the arrival of migrants and football to Argentina, and how this phenomenon cycles into thinking about issues of nationalism as a result

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. Pg. 84

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. Pg. 171

of changes in migration to Europe, the birthplace of football. I specifically talk about this relation's contribution to the study of politics and describe in what ways this could be used to further understand Latin American and European relations.

Chapter 3 covers the impacts of corruption on politics and economics through the scope of Argentine football. I will detail the background information provided within the introduction, offering separate cases on how football has been used as a way of gaining political and economic power, and covering the detrimental impacts this relation has had in Argentina. Looking at the literature provided by Sebreli, Levinsky, Albarces, and Gago, Argentina will be used as the centerpiece to provide an understanding on how football impacts politics and economics within Germany.

Lastly, in Chapter 4, I aim to show the impacts the sport of football has had on Germany's politics and economics. Specifically, I look at the origins of the Deutscher Fußball-Bund (DFB) and the evolution of football as a matter of the state during the fascist regime of Adolf Hitler. Today it appears that all connections between the football world and politics are less prominent in comparison to the DFB's foundational ideals. However, due to the revenue building capacity of the German Football League and the neoliberal transformations of the past decades, football has caught the attention of politicians. Drawing on the work of Wolfgang Streeck, I highlight how the perception of corruption in football illustrates other facets of contemporary capitalist society.

In the Conclusion, I aim to restate the purpose of my study and reiterate the findings of my research. Here I will summarize the focus of each chapter, and be able to conclude any final ideas I have on the study itself. This will be the opportunity to talk about different aspects of my

research that could be further developed, and the potential contributions it would have for political scientists.

## Chapter 2: Football, Identity, and the State

This study develops in a manner that I would not have expected when I started investigating my topic over a year ago in 2018. Many factors have contributed to this shift in pace, such as my experiences doing research overseas in Germany. What started as an analysis on corruption within Argentina and Germany has expanded into a deeper understanding of the underlying causes for the illicit actions taken within the footballing world, that often are impacted by identity and the state. There are other factors worth noting that have contributed to the different direction this study has taken, specifically in regards to the analysis on perceptions surrounding the state that I have identified thus far. In particular, a major vector is the rise of Covid-19 in the recent months of 2020, and how it has impacted the footballing world.

Since January of 2020, there have been over 153,000 deaths around the world attributed to the coronavirus.<sup>42</sup> In the United States alone, there have been 726,645 cases and 37,938 deaths (April 2020).<sup>43</sup> It has impacted every aspect of life, every government, and every sporting institution around the world. Because of the rapid spread of the virus, countries have taken preventative measures shutting down businesses and services that in turn have increased unemployment rates around the world. At the same time, many individuals are not able to receive care for the deadly virus, as there are not enough facilities or enough funds to help deal

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<sup>42</sup> Hannah Ritchie Max Roser, Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, and Joe Hasell, "Cornavirus Disease (Covid-19) - Statistics and Research," ed. Our World In Data (OurWorldInData.org2020).

<sup>43</sup> Sean O'Key Sergio Hernandez, Amanda Watts, Byron Manley and Henrik Pettersson, "Tracking Covid-19 Cases in the Us," ed. CNN (CNN.com: CNN, 2020).

with infected patients.<sup>44</sup> So in the midst of a world pandemic, how has the international football governing body we know as FIFA dealt with the challenges brought forth with Covid-19?

As a result of a world pandemic, footballing associations around the world have been struggling financially with maintaining their funds to keep their clubs running. In times when matches cannot be held, stadiums are empty, negotiations on transfers have halted, etc., clubs are at risk for losing large sums of capital. According to the New York Times, the way FIFA has responded to this is “drawing up plans to tap its \$2.7 billion cash reserve and create an emergency fund to support the ailing soccer industry.”<sup>45</sup> This fund that handles billions of dollars “would be managed independently from FIFA’s leadership to avoid the risk of being contaminated by sports political issues that have long roiled the soccer world.”<sup>46</sup> As a result, players have been taking pay cuts, and the largest clubs are donating to help support the financial stability of other teams, as seen with the four largest clubs in the Bundesliga aiding the rest of the league. The question I have is, how is it that in times of a global pandemic, a ‘non-essential’ business is able to fall back on a 2.7 billion dollar cash reserve, when there are institutions around the world that deal with public health issues, treat the coronavirus, and that cannot afford to aid all those in dire need? Throughout the following chapters, I explain the lengths state governments go to in order to assure the well-being of football associations as seen in Argentina, and the regulation measures of the Sports Committee of the Bundestag in Germany. I also

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<sup>44</sup> In an article relating to the cases in Italy, Yascha Mounk writes, “Today, Italy has 10,149 cases of the coronavirus. There are now simply too many patients for each one of them to receive adequate care. Doctors and nurses are unable to tend to everybody. They lack machines to ventilate all those gasping for air.” See: Yascha Mounk, “The Extraordinary Decisions Facing Italian Doctors,” *The Atlantic* 2020. <<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/03/who-gets-hospital-bed/607807/>>

<sup>45</sup> The New York Times, “Fifa Plans Huge Emergency Fund to Support Ailing Soccer Industry,” *The New York Times* (2020).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

engage the perceptions of corruption revolving around the footballing world in both countries. However, in times of a global health crisis, how do these perceptions on the footballing industry compare, and what do they mean within the broader perceptions of political society within these countries? These are questions that will be touched upon within my analysis in the following chapter.

As we have seen thus, football can be used as a tool to understand both historical and contemporary issues within a state such as lack of transparency and the accountability in public institutions, more specifically in Argentina and Germany. While both the Latin American and the European cases I analyze vary in reference to how the sport interacts with the political world and vice versa, it is important to further conceptualize and understand what is at the root of the variances in political behaviors, and why these developments have occurred over the course of the last century.

Understanding one country as more corrupt or less transparent than the other does not fully satisfy the objectives of the research I have completed. Perhaps on the surface and through the cases I analyze, Argentina appears to be in a position that is more reflective of corruption at the political level than Germany. However, this should not take away from the murky dealings that take place within Germany as seen through the Beckenbauer case. It is important to understand that Germany too does experience this phenomenon, however the way in which it is treated within the country varies from the way it is resolved within Argentina. This being said, variance in response can be attributed to the role of the state and how it controls the discourses and perceptions on corruption not just within the legal sense, but also within a cultural one as I express in later chapters.

The purpose of this chapter moving forward is to comprehend how football changes and reflects bigger political alterations in Argentina and Germany. For these reasons I aim to answer the following questions:

1. How can we use changes in football over last century to think about the changes in Argentine and German political society broadly conceived?
2. How does the composition of two relatively racially and ethnically homogeneous societies with very different histories (both at the level of classes but also level of migration) reflect working class backgrounds that feel they do not get represented by political elites of the state?
3. How does the response of *Barras Bravas* to the Argentine government compare to the narrow reaction from Ultras that feel the German state does not represent their interests?

Within this chapter, I will be using Benedict Anderson's book *Imagined Communities*, specifically his analysis of what he calls "Creole Pioneers", for theorizing the arrival of migrants and football to Argentina, and how this phenomenon cycles into thinking about issues of nationalism as a result of changes in migration to Europe, the birthplace of football. Despite my narrative having revolved around corruption in the footballing world in Argentina, and how it aimed at understanding the same phenomenon within the German context, it is xenophobia and hyper nationalism within Europe (and to some extent within Argentina) that gets cultivated through football. We will see that instead of football being a venue for corruption to take place, the sport becomes a substitute for intolerant attitudes toward migration that ultimately impacts perceptions within political society.

### **Football and Identity - A Theoretical Application of Benedict Anderson**

Within the chapter “Creole Pioneers” in Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, the author aims at understanding why Creole communities, specifically those found within Latin America that fought against European colonizers, developed a premature notion of their “nation-ness” prior to many European states.<sup>47</sup> Out of all the possible reasons, Anderson identifies six different factors that caused this. The first is the heightened control of Madrid on its colonies; the second is the dispersion of the Enlightenment and its ideals of liberalization; the third is the enhancement of trans-Atlantic communication; the fourth is the disposition of the racially higher class or “comfortable classes” to fight for freedom; the fifth is the community brought together by religion; the sixth is the creation of the printing press which allowed for the rise of the newspaper and spread of ideals.<sup>48</sup> He writes:

*“Neither economic interest, Liberalism, nor Enlightenment could, or did, create in themselves the kind, or shape, of imagined community to be defended from these regimes’ depredations; to put it another way, none provided the framework of a new consciousness — the scarcely-seen periphery of its vision - as opposed to centre-field objects of its admiration or disgust. In accomplishing this specific task, pilgrim Creole functionaries and provincial Creole printmen played the decisive historic role.”<sup>49</sup>*

This quote emphasizes the importance of the combination of all the factors mentioned above and not each of them individually, as together they helped form the perfect storm which

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<sup>47</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). Pg. 68

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. Pg. 52

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. Pg. 65

would end up resulting in a sense of nationhood, that would ultimately end in the revolt against their colonial oppressors. Why is this all important? What does matter in regards to my study?

If we want to understand the conditions for how football is able to mirror perceptions of political society within Argentina and Germany, we need to look back at what attitudes revolved around the state and the concept of nationality within both countries historically. Anderson gives us insight on the nationalistic views that were created in Latin America for the six reasons mentioned above, and while I am not directly forming my arguments around those points, they are pivotal to understanding my analysis around perceptions of the state, perceptions of political society, and how migration serves as indicator of both moving forward.

Anderson expresses the gradual resentment of the state, or in this case Spain, within the Creole communities of Latin America. If we observe the relation between the Spanish monarchy or “the state” and its territories, we understand the relation to have been incrementally more abusive in the demands that were required of the communities found within the Americas. Anderson writes, “In what has sometimes sardonically been called the second conquest of the Americas, Madrid imposed new taxes, made their collection more efficient, enforced metropolitan commercial monopolies, restricted intra-hemispheric trade to its own advantage, centralized administrative hierarchies, and promoted a heavy immigration of *peninsulares*.<sup>50</sup> In this scenario, we see two important elements that are pivotal for the future perceptions of political society. One is the high restriction coming from the state, and the other is seen through migration, specifically of *peninsulares*, who would later birth future generations of creoles, or individuals of pure Spanish blood that are not considered Spaniards or merit the title ‘peninsular’ due to the location of their birth being in the Americas.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid. Pg. 50

To add onto this point, Anderson writes: “Even if he was born within one week of his father’s migration, the accident of birth in the Americas consigned him to subordination - even though in terms of language, religion, ancestry, or manners he was largely indistinguishable from the Spain-born Spaniard.”<sup>51</sup> This is a factor worth noting toward the contributed tension and separation between the forming national community in Latin American states and Spanish empire, as Anderson pointed out.

Why is this information relevant for the sake of my study? One cannot understand football and its ties to politics and corruption (or lack of corruption), if one does not understand the underlying attitudes toward political society within a state. In the cases I analyze and the historical analysis provided by Anderson, we understand the perceptions of governance within Latin America, or specifically Argentina, being characterized by the impact of changes rates in migration. In Latin America, this is seen as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, where settler attitudes continually become more resentful toward the overarching governance of the Spanish monarchy, as sentiments of “nation-ness” increased within these given territories. Perhaps it is one of the reasons why today within Argentina, as seen through my personal experience, there continues to be a skepticism revolving around political society, and if you were to ask someone on the street their views of the government, they would be more inclined to respond in a way that resembles dissatisfaction or corruption. This is something I experienced in the years I lived in Buenos Aires between 2008 and 2010, where I witnessed the impact of a failing economy on a struggling middle class, and experienced the devastating realities of inflation. I was present when democracy took the form of an entire city of 8 million residents expressing their dissatisfaction with an unpopular government by banging their pots and pans immediately following every

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid. Pg. 58

presidential speech. Perhaps this is something that can be attributed toward the limited role of the government controlling discourses on corruption, or as we have seen in previous cases, the corruption of politicians within separate administrations.<sup>52</sup> Despite this being so, in the years that I have spent traveling the land of Diego Maradona and Lionel Messi, the country and its people remain united by an unbreakable bond and share a common sentiment or nation-ness, as Anderson recounts, that continues to grow every day.

Understanding the impacts of migration within Argentina and how it revolves around football, a sport that I have argued is reflective of political society, is something that will be covered within the next section of this chapter. However, what is important to take away from this theoretical analysis is that migration is a phenomenon that has taken place within Argentina and Latin America long before it did in Germany and Europe, as seen with middle eastern migrants throughout the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>53</sup> Migration in Argentina as we understand from Anderson is a factor that can be attributed to the growing sentiments revolving around nationhood and nationalism, as well as declining attitudes toward government and political society, despite the existence of policy that is restrictionist against migrants. In Germany, for example, migration is a phenomenon that receives an opposite effect to that of Argentina. On top of it being a more recent occurrence, migration is often not received well as characterized by the actions of Ultras and the footballing world. More on this to come in the next segment.

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<sup>52</sup> Turner.

<sup>53</sup> Erik Vollman Tim Griebel, "We Can('T) Do This: A Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis of Migration in Germany," *Journal of Language & Politics* 19, no. 5 (2019).

### **Migration in Argentina**

Migration within Argentina is a phenomenon that, as pointed out by Benedict Anderson, has continually taken place since the colonial period, through the twentieth century, and into present times. As my theoretical section aimed to explain, migration is a phenomenon within Argentina that can be credited for the growing sense of community within the country, as well as skepticism within perceptions of the state, as seen with the growing tensions between creole communities and the Spanish empire. This next section will aim to show how these sentiments of nationalism and nationhood continued to persist throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as seen with the Italian and Spanish waves of migration. Following this, I will cover its impacts through the context of *Barras Bravas*, and demonstrate how this phenomenon impacts actors within the footballing world, reflecting sectors of the country that actively show disapproving attitudes toward political society.

### **20th Century Migration & Nationhood in Argentina**

One would not think that the measures taken by Argentine elites over the past 150 years of migration would have resulted in a way that has seemingly united its population under a common identity. If we observe the original intentions of the Argentine government's policies revolving around migration, we would understand that initially it was rather strict and racist as the goal of political elites was to promote a “white” society and attract northern European immigrants.<sup>54</sup> The goal was to “promote the immigration of ‘white’ Anglo-Saxon immigrants from Northern Europe, or at least Basques and migrants from Piedmont, both of whom were

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<sup>54</sup> Tanja Bastia and Matthias vom Hau, "Migration, Race and Nationhood in Argentina," *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies* 40, no. 3 (2014).

associated with hard work and respect for authority.”<sup>55</sup> However, as history dictates, what ended up resulting was the doubling of the population in numbers from 4 to 7.9 million in between the years 1895 and 1914, consisting primarily of Italian and Spanish immigrants who were “not considered fully white by Argentinian elites.”<sup>56</sup> While they were not prevented from immigrating based on race, there were certain obstacles instilled by the Argentine government, such as medical certificates, in order to prevent these groups of people from settling.

There came a point where political society and migration policy were more concerned with redefining “official conceptions of race and nationhood”, rather than worrying about the incoming Italian and Spanish migrants. There was more focus on how to “transform such a heterogeneous society into a ‘homogeneous nation’ with a distinct Argentinian identity.”<sup>57</sup> This would then be done through the symbol of the *gaucho* as it “provided a convenient way to maintain the idea of Argentina as a white nation while rejecting contemporary European migration as the only path towards whiteness and cultural progress.”<sup>58</sup>

As the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed, despite Argentina initially being concerned with immigration from neighboring Latin American countries affecting homogeneous white European status, these native migrants became more accepted by political society. During the time of Peronism from 1946-1955, politicians “envisioned migrant workers from the interior, often of darker skin colour, as an integral part of the national community.”<sup>59</sup> This would only last until the election of Alfonsín in 1983. In the time between Perón and Alfonsín, many of these migrant communities had become reestablished within low-income neighborhoods known as *villas*

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid. Pg. 478

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. Pg. 479

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. Pg. 481

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. Pg. 482

*miserias* or *villas*, which became stigmatized as centers of crime, drugs, and violence.<sup>60</sup> By the time of Alfonsín's presidency, immigration policies became highly discriminative against neighboring country's migrants especially from locations such as Peru, as seen within Decree 1434/87, where the only way that one could enter was if they were considered professionals or if they possessed "technical qualifications."<sup>61</sup> This would be short lived with a globalizing world and growing global multiculturalism that emphasized equality, inclusiveness, and lack of discrimination.

The purpose of this historical background has been to demonstrate the constant tension found between the Argentine state and new migrants within the country. It appears that despite the government aiming to target white migrants over the course of history, for the most part, many individuals migrating to Argentina ended up being of other racial classifications that did not resemble the groups of Europeans the state pursued. Football in Argentina, as I will analyze in Chapter 3, served as a tool that united the different migrant classes within the country. This being said, as tensions sored between the state and people, and perceptions of political governance and society became more skeptical, the Argentine nation continued to form through sport. Despite migration policy at times restricting this phenomenon, communities connected through football persisted in becoming more united. Throughout this thesis, we have examined the impact of football and migration in the context of unification amongst migrant communities. However, we have not looked into the deeper significance of its impact within the footballing world between illicit actors, more specifically Barras Bravas, and what this means in regards to perceptions of political society within Argentina moving forward.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid. Pg. 483

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. Pg. 482

### Barras Bravas, Migration, and Political Society

I have so far explored what *Barras Bravas* represent in the context of corruption within Argentina, and how they are utilized as a tool to gain political and even economic power within the footballing and political world. We know about their origins, their history involving ties with politicians, club officials and presidents; however, I have not analyzed much on their significance in the scope of broader attitudes toward political society within Argentina. Specifically, how has state intolerance toward migration, separate from the nation and community within Argentina, impacted these groups of people? How do *Barras Bravas* continue notions of growing skepticism toward political society?

In Chapter 3, I discussed various reasons behind individuals joining *Barras Bravas* groups, typically revolving around economic incentives. Despite this being so, motivations for being part of these mafia-like groups run deeper than the pursuit of a better financial life. In a study of *Barras* in Latin America, Maria Galindo writes,

*"A real complement to the lives of young recruits, is that they find a family in a Barra, a commitment to encourage and shout out their love for a team. These young men seek belonging to a certain group in which they share the same tastes. There are certain characteristics within barras bravas groups that are attractive to future recruits. Among these are nationalism, aggressiveness, sense of honor, endurance and the appropriation of territory."*<sup>62</sup>

Why is this important? Because *Barras* are more than just a job or members within a

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<sup>62</sup> Maria Alejandra Zarate Galindo, "Barras Bravas, Familia Y Territorio Dinamicas De Las Familias De Los Jovenes Integrantes De Barras Bravas En Cuatro Barrios De La Ciudad De Bogotá" (Universidad Externado de Colombia, 2018). Pg. v

group, they embody a lifestyle that young men within Argentina literally live and die by.

However, where does this desire to be part of something bigger than themselves stem from? This can be seen through the communities where *Barras* recruit new members.

Many of the intercontinental immigrants within Argentina over the past fifty years have settled in *villas*, where quality of life is known to be poor and full of drugs and violence. It is in these locations where *Barras* recruit, as they know individuals within these areas often struggle financially, and have historically been in a sense rejected by the state. Presidents Alfonsín and Menem, for example, often put these Latin American immigrants in low quality state provided houses on the outskirts of Buenos Aires.<sup>63</sup> Taking this into account, *Barras* use this to their advantage and are able to often bring belonging to the young men within these immigrant families. As Francisco Olaso writes, “The *barras bravas* recruit soldiers in the slums. They take them for free to football matches, even abroad, or to dinners with the players, in exchange for putting their body on the line at the time of a fight or theft.”<sup>64</sup> When the author mentions fights and thefts, he is referencing an implied sense of membership for these young individuals, who at that point are already members of the *Barras*.

At the same time, it is important to understand the role that migration and migrants play within the Argentine football context. In the case of individuals that get recruited by *Barras Bravas*, we have young men that are a representation of the broader political picture within Argentina, as they demonstrate a rejection of the well-being of migrants by the state for being placed into run down *villas*, but at the same time indicate an integrated group within the Argentine nation as seen in their involvement within the footballing world. This is so in that football is a pivotal part of what it means to be Argentine, and despite the actions of *Barras*

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<sup>63</sup> Hau. Pg. 483

<sup>64</sup> Francisco Olaso, "Argentina: Heroína Contra Las Barras Bravas," *Proceso* 2013.

being illicit and undesired by many, they are seen as a crucial element in representing an aspect of a fundamental part of the nation's culture and identity.

Looking at a recent CNN interview of an anonymous *Barra*, we can understand the attitudes they hold as a group in regards to politicians and political society within Argentina. When discussing the political actions of former president Mauricio Macri, a Barra said, "We do not agree with the policies of this president because he governs for a part of Argentina, which already has money. He does not govern for people like us who are in critical situations and who cannot make ends meet, as we cannot afford food or the services that we have to pay."<sup>65</sup> These individuals, who often come from immigrant families, are a representation of what goes on in the bigger political spectrum within Argentina. I witnessed this first hand when I lived in the country, and understand that dissatisfaction of the working classes with the government has been a consistent theme within Argentine politics and political society. For reasons discussed within this section, instead football being a venue for corruption to take place, it is these intolerant attitudes of the state on migration that ultimately play a role in impacting the perceptions within political society. Within the following section, I will look into how this phenomenon compares within the German context, and how the xenophobic and nationalistic attitudes within the *Ultra* groups can help us understand attitudes held within Germany toward the broader political picture.

### **Migration in Germany**

As mentioned within the introduction of this thesis chapter, the analysis surrounding migration within Germany is heavily concentrated in the recent wave of Syrian immigrants

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<sup>65</sup> David Cox, "El Lado Oscuro De Las Barras Bravas En Argentina: Una Mirada a La Violencia En El Fútbol," *CNN Español* 2018.

settling within the country. This is mainly due to the fact that immigration to Germany is a relatively recent phenomenon that is epitomized by the surge of people that relocated due to the consequences of the Syrian Refugee Crisis. As Jeffrey Gedmin, Tim Griebel and Erik Vollman have argued, migration has had a marked effect on the perception of German identity.<sup>66</sup> Those perceptions are embedded in a historical trust toward political institutions and characterized by a rather optimistic and positive outlook on political society. Current attitudes surrounding migration within the country are characterized by an opposition on the relocation of Islamic individuals within Germany. Football becomes an important vector in expressing old and new forms of intolerance.

### *Colonial Origins of German Migration Policy*

Part of understanding attitudes toward migration today within Germany requires us to look into its seemingly marginalized colonial past throughout the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and how the ideologies held then gave way toward stances of intolerance today. One of the most important factors to understand when observing migration in the context of German history is that despite it being a relatively recent phenomenon within the country, the conceptualizations of migration have been around since the 1800's as seen through its imperial past. Perhaps the reason why this is not a topic that has been covered much within today's study on German migration, and how it gives shape toward conceptualizations of identity, is that its colonial endeavors only lasted around 30 years from 1884 to 1915, and was "one of the most short-lived

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<sup>66</sup> Jeffrey Gedmin, "Right-Wing Populism in Germany: Muslims and Minorities after the 2015 Refugee Crisis," in *The One Percent Problem: Muslims in the West and the Rise of the New Populists*, ed. Jeffrey Gedmin (Brookings, 2019). Tim Griebel.

of all modern colonialisms.”<sup>67</sup>

While countries such as France and England saw their colonies as extensions of their empires as seen through the cases of Algeria and India, Germany did not view its influence in its colonies as an extension of the country but rather territory under their rule. As put by Conrad, “First, Germany and her colonies have usually been treated as separate entities, all the calls to treat colony and metropole within a single analytical field notwithstanding.”<sup>68</sup> This is important in noting in that in moments of colonialism, the German government made sure to mark a clear division between those that were considered part of the empire, versus those that were ruled by the empire. As a result of this separation, German identity seemingly becomes fortified as now its classification becomes more distinct. We will see later in this chapter how these attitudes seemingly prevail and can be reflected a century later, as seen with the Syrian migrants traveling within the country.

Germany’s colonial past can be understood as a spark for the conditions under which strong nationalistic sentiments were able to arise at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. With the colonization of current day Western African states such as Namibia, came the tendencies that some historians have said to be the predecessors of attitudes held by Nazis in regards to Aryanism and genocide.<sup>69</sup> This can be pinpointed in 1904-1907 with the war against the Herero and Nama in Southwest Africa, where it is said around 100,000 African natives were killed or put into concentration camps.<sup>70</sup> As put by Conrad:

*“Some historians have interpreted the German war against the Herero and Nama*

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<sup>67</sup> Sebastian Conrad, "Rethinking German Colonialism in a Global Age," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 41, no. 4 (2013). Pg. 544

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. Pg. 549

<sup>70</sup> BBC, "Germany Returns Skulls of Namibian Genocide Victims," BBC 2018.

*in Southwest Africa (1904–07) as part of the longer ‘prehistory of the Holocaust’.*

*The massacres, the infamous orders issued by General von Trotha to shoot any Africans on German-occupied territory and the establishment of concentration camps are then understood as ‘an important step towards the Nazi war of annihilation’.”<sup>71</sup>*

My goal is thus not to understand German colonialism by itself, but to help conceptualize ideas on identity and nationhood that are later prevalent throughout the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century during the World Wars and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the migration of Syrian refugees.

#### Migration, Identity, and Nationhood in Germany

As Vollman and Griebel note, “Migration policy is very important when it comes to questions of identity; it is directly related to questions of who people think they are in comparison to other groups.”<sup>72</sup> Germany today hosts a political stage that is often characterized by its constant public discourses revolving around migration from both the Middle Eastern and Northern African states. This has been a political matter that has led into discussion of security, integration, and often, national German identity. As seen throughout history, Germany has never truly been a destination for immigrants around the world, such as it has been the case of countries like Argentina. As Gedmin phrases it, “Germany had never been considered a proper immigration country. Immigration had often been associated with a recruiting of labor from abroad, chiefly Turkish guest workers who had never posed any significant political problem. It was first in 2005 that the German government formally recognized that Germany had become an

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<sup>71</sup> Conrad. Pg. 549

<sup>72</sup> Gedmin. Pg. 2

immigration country.”<sup>73</sup> This is important to note in that the German identity and community have been characterized by a historically white homogeneous society, which have often has been enforced or influenced by the state, and that have not quite dealt with issues such as those posed by Anderson surrounding conceptions of nationality.

In 2015, the number of Muslim refugees coming from Syria and other parts of the Middle East was well over one million in “a country a bit larger than the U.S. state of Oregon.”<sup>74</sup> This was critical in challenging notions of German identity, in that immigrants of other ethnic and racial backgrounds had not significantly been present within the country, or had been a large enough factor in disrupting typical discourses surrounding politics that impact perceptions on political society. However, due the increasing wave of Muslim immigrants in 2015, there has been a resurgence of far-right political thought that has resulted in the first far-right populist political party in the German Bundestag since the fall of the Nazis named *Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)* or “Alternative for Germany”.<sup>75</sup> Here we see the impact of migration on perceptions of political society, as we have the German state or political officials beginning to introduce notions of anti-immigrant sentiment and racism, which ultimately impacts conceptualizations of identity within the country.

Despite Germany initially having taken an open doors approach toward Syrian refugees in 2015, it was short lived in that within only a year were political parties besides the AfD suggesting a limit or cap on the number of immigrants let in the country. “By 2016, a majority of Germans wanted a cap on refugees. In one survey, 81 percent of AfD supporters strongly

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<sup>73</sup> Gedmin.

<sup>74</sup> Der Spiegel, "Sigmar Gabriel Geht Von Einer Million Flüchtlinge 2015 Aus - Der Spiegel - Politik," *Der Spiegel* 2015.

<sup>75</sup> Tim Griebel, "We Can('T) Do This: A Corpus-Assisted Critical Discourse Analysis of Migration in Germany.," *Journal of Language & Politics* 18, no. 5 (2019). Pg. 1

supported the idea of a cap. Approval was also high in Chancellor Merkel's Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU), at 64 percent, followed by the Free Democratic Party with 57 percent, the Left Party with 54 percent, the Social Democrats (SPD) with 53 percent.<sup>76</sup> While there were concerns for security, and the well-being of the German people, one of the biggest factors seen when it came to the opposition of migration within the country was that people believed it was threatening to German identity. In Griebel's analysis, he reports, "in the context of debates on refugee migration, culture is frequently used to constitute an antagonistic division between the 'self' and the 'other', thereby creating the illusion of a homogenous German political identity which is threatened by refugee immigration."<sup>77</sup> This quote is indicating the concerns with immigration amongst the German people. Politicians had rallied under AfD's proposed bill, which in turn had a major influence on the positions held with the German nation, as seen through reports found within the media. In a 2017 in *The New York Times*, Amanda Taub and Max Fisher include a part of a speech by a member of the AfD, and reactions of the German nation to his discourse. They report:

*"The AfD is the last revolutionary, the last peaceful chance for our fatherland," declared the man, Björn Höcke, referring to the political party Alternative for Germany, and employing a reverential term for Germany, one of several nationalist buzzwords usually shunned in the country's politics.*  
*'Jawohl!' a few shouted. 'Yes!'*<sup>78</sup>

The purpose in describing this movement is to show the impact of migration on politics

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<sup>76</sup> Gedmin.

<sup>77</sup> Griebel. Pg. 5

<sup>78</sup> Max Fisher Amanda Taub, "Germany's Extreme Right Challenges Guilt over Nazi Past," *The New York Times* 2017.

and political society, and how these perceptions of the nation are often influenced by the state. Because the German state emphasizes transparency, an emphasis on fighting crime, and a lack of corruption, we understand why German society holds the perceptions it does today as described in Chapter 4, and why sectors within the country such as the footballing industry embody the same ideals. We also see an opposite reaction to that of Argentina within Germany, in that migration has fortified the attitudes of the nation toward politics and political society rather than caused a skepticism toward political elites. This is so in that individuals embodying anti-immigrant attitudes continue to trust in the AfD, while those favoring migration continue to trust politicians dealing with maintaining open borders to foreigners. This phenomenon within Germany reacts in a opposite way to the theory provided in Anderson's book, and cannot be paralleled to that of Argentina, considering the Latin American country's growing skepticism toward the state and its political parties.

Thus far I have covered migration within Germany and the perspectives surrounding identity that have risen due to the increase in Syrian refugees within the country. What will follow is a look into how these political movements have transcended into the footballing world, and how illicit groups such as the Ultras have reacted to the increasing Muslim population within Germany.

### *Football, Identity & Ultras*

Talking about the relation between football and immigration, Timm Beichelt writes:

*"Perhaps the most important link between politics and football is the political concern to manage immigration and social integration. A fairly extensive literature shows mainly in individual studies how political actors, through*

*benevolent financial and symbolic support, have contributed to the fact that immigrants could and can integrate better into the majority society.* ”<sup>79</sup>

I question whether or not this continues to be the case within Germany today. Political attitudes within Germany have most definitely transcended into the footballing world along with racism and discrimination. These attitudes are not just held by extremist football hooligan groups known as the *Ultras*, as described in Chapter 4, but also amongst the rest of the German nation in light of the recent wave of immigrants settling in the country. A World Cup winning, high profile player on the German men’s football squad, Mesut Özil, quit the national team after the 2018 international competition in Russia, as he had subject to racism and discrimination within his own country for being a third generation Turkish-German, and for having posed in a photo with Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In response to these diatribes, Özil wrote “I’m a German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose.”<sup>80</sup> Despite the German footballer having had much success representing the nation on the field, and for having been involved in philanthropic events helping German children with immigrant backgrounds, he continued to be subject to these anti-immigrant and racist attacks.<sup>81</sup>

In response to the increasing hostilities within football, Gunter Gebauer, a philosopher and expert on sports at the Free University of Berlin said, “We all thought sport would be capable of integrating people into society, but it was not true.”<sup>82</sup> The reality of this situation is that political society has invested its ideals into the sporting world, and the very meaning of German identity has been questioned at all levels, even in the case of a third generation Turkish-

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<sup>79</sup> Beichelt. Pg. 64

<sup>80</sup> Tariq Panja, "Charges of Racism Hobble a Soccer Revival in Germany," *The New York Times*, September 17, 2018 2018.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

German who has proudly represented the country time and time again, on and off the pitch. Migration has triggered political debates revolving around the preserving of identity, which in turn has affected perceptions on political society that have impacted the footballing community. As will be mentioned by Beichelt in Chapter 4, “football has some lessons for our understanding of the balance between politics and society.”<sup>83</sup> Even in a society that aims to keep private matters separate from the public, the attitudes surrounding public spheres permeate the private.

At the same time, there are other aspects of political society that have impacted football in Germany, more specifically seen through the Ultra fan groups and the rising PEGIDA movement. While not all Ultras support PEGIDA and vice versa, there are some individuals who are involved in both camps, specifically those within Eastern Germany.<sup>84</sup> This can be seen in Chapter 4 within the *Dresden Dynamo* and *Borussia Dortmund* cases, but what is important to note is the Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West, a political movement fueled and supported by the ideals of the AfD, is finding its way into football through Ultras. While finding concrete evidence of an Ultra openly supporting PEGIDA is hard to come by, it is known that the far right-wing ideology of Ultras, specifically in locations such as Dresden, often circulate against anti-immigrant sentiment and racism.<sup>85</sup> Within protests in the city of Chemnitz, for example, crowds of people blatantly displayed racist symbols, and through their chants implied a differentiation in identity between Germans and Islamic migrants. Jen Kirby reports, “the protests intensified when thousands of far-right demonstrators descended on the city center en masse. They chanted nationalistic slogans (“Chemnitz is ours — foreigners out”) and

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<sup>83</sup> Beichelt. Pg. 72

<sup>84</sup> Derek Alexander, "Hateful and Here: German Anti-Islam Extremists Rally in Glasgow in Bid to Recruit Scots," *Daily Record* 2015.

<sup>85</sup> DW.

reportedly gave Nazi salutes.”<sup>86</sup> This being said, it comes back to political thought surrounding ideas of identity, and Germans feeling as though the status of their nation as a homogeneous society is at risk.

In the case of far right-wing German Ultras, movements such as PEGIDA and political parties, such as the AfD, serve as an extension of their voices within the political world, where they feel there is a certain level of representation for their ideals. What this signifies is as long as Germany continues to take into refugees and other migrants from Middle Eastern or Arabic-speaking countries, this right-wing reaction from the German populace will continue to flourish, as well as the debates that surround German identity moving forward.

### **Conclusion**

What we notice within this study of football, identity and the state, is the importance of migration in shaping attitudes and perceptions toward political society. When it comes to the experiences both Argentina and Germany have had over the course of history, Argentina experienced migration much earlier than Germany truly did. The constant reinterpretations of what it meant to be a “white homogenous society” within Argentina paved the way for the growing skepticism between the state or government and the growing nation, and helped develop the attitudes held toward political society within the country today. With the theoretical perspective provided by Benedict Anderson, I have applied this logic to help understand why it is that political corruption and illicit actors have been able to flourish within Argentina, more specifically with the help of the footballing industry. Rather than working toward a unified nation, the Argentine state throughout history, and despite differentiating racial or ethnic

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<sup>86</sup> Jen Kirby, "Far-Right Rallies in Germany Descend into Violence," *Vox* 2018.

backgrounds, has continually found ways to discriminate against incoming migrants. It is my assertion that these attitudes of constant deception and discrimination were what led the country to hold the perceptions on corruption it does today on politicians and politics.

If we look at the German case, the country is starting to truly feel the effects of a disrupted homogeneous society due to the impacts of migration. In a country where the state has always played a part in shaping the attitudes and perceptions of its people, Germans find themselves in position where despite their attitudes being divided on the increasing numbers of Muslim migrants, they continually look up to representatives in the Bundestag to act in their best interest. Members of PEGIDA and even Ultras are able to look up to the AfD. If we compare this to Argentina, many times the *Barras Bravas* often feel as though their views and working class status do not quite get represented by the state, and the only way for them to be heard is to engage in illicit activities benefitting politicians and club officials. Perhaps it will be Germany's fate to eventually deal with similar outcomes as those found within Argentina. However, as long as the state plays a part in continuing to shape the political attitudes, and represent the voice of its nation during the susceptible changes shaped by the impact of migration, the longer Germany will maintain good faith in its perceptions of political society.

## Chapter 3: Argentina, Fútbol, and Politics

There is no question that politics and football within Argentina have gone hand in hand over the last century. Yet alongside the establishment of the Argentine Football Association (AFA) in the late 1800's, monumental rises in corruption would affect the political and economic health of the country for years to come.<sup>87</sup> Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there has been a rise in interlinked connections between politicians, state elites, club officials and members of mafia-like organizations that populate groups known as "barras bravas" within the AFA.<sup>88</sup> These links have contributed to an increase in the way corruption has intertwined with political and economic interests, as well as a rise in social violence.

Over the course of this chapter, I will be covering a variety of topics related to the way football influences politics and vice versa. My goal here is to provide a more nuanced definition of corruption: *the abuse of public office by Argentine politicians, club presidents and board members, for the sake of their personal political and financial gain*. I also aim to answer the following questions:

1. In what ways has the corruption caused by football impacted perceptions of comparative politics within Argentina or the Global South?
2. How has Argentina dealt with the corruption of politics caused by the world of football?

This will be done so by combining scholarly definitions by Andrei Shleifer, Robert Vishney, and Tone Sissner, and use them to frame my claims on corruption within Argentina. What is important to note is that Shleifer and Vishney limit the definition of corruption to "the

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<sup>87</sup> Levinsky. Pg. 26

<sup>88</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 49

sale by government officials of government property for personal gain.”<sup>89</sup> However, as we will see in the case of Argentina, the grasp of corruption goes further than the abuses of solely politicians. For this reason, I incorporate Sissner’s views on corruption as an “ambiguous phenomenon often causing diverse, ambivalent, and, contradictory understandings among scholars, policymakers, and practitioners alike”, and “can only be understood when seen as part of wider social and cultural contexts.”<sup>90</sup>

Football in Argentina transcends the sporting world. Individuals who live within the country do not simply view football as a sport. It is passion, it is culture, it is life, and it is death. One who is not sparked by football in Argentina is simply not considered an Argentine. As Pablo Albarces hypothesizes in his book *Fútbol y Patria*, “The construction of historically masculine identity—but today feminine identity as well—in Argentina are transcended by football as the first cause.”<sup>91</sup> This is pivotal to understanding the Argentine case in that football has transcended all aspects of life and culture, and has not been limited to in that today it surpasses a historically male audience. This sport reaches into different sectors of the country, but more so than anywhere else, its influences can mainly be found in politics.

The first section will go over the historical ties between football and politics from the creation of the AFA until the 1980’s. This is done for two reasons. The first reason is that the 1980’s marked the years in which football in Argentina started becoming commercialized more so than ever. The second reason is that the mid 1980’s marked the period when the Argentine government started implementing neoliberal policies that affected Argentine politics and the

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<sup>89</sup> Robert W. Vishney Andrei Shleifer, "Corruption," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 108, no. 3 (1993). Pg. 599

<sup>90</sup> T.K. Sissner, *Anthropological Perspectives on Corruption*, Working Paper (Universitat Zurich - Wirtschaftswissenschaftliches Institut.: Chr. Michelsen Institute, 2001). Pg. 2

<sup>91</sup> Albarces. Pg. 27

economy, and further solidified the connection that we see between government officials and football. The years that precede this time frame are important as they set the foundation for the corrupt phenomenon that is football today in Argentina.

The second section will use *Neoliberalism from Below* by Verónica Gago, and see how the arguments she poses in regards to corrupt actors and illicit markets can be paralleled with my study. More specifically, Gago's theory on neoliberalism and the rise of microeconomies is done through an illicit clothing market in Buenos Aires known as "La Salada", an analysis that can be paralleled with the illicit activities and actors that arise from the micro-economy football produces within Argentina. I aim to add to her study in that corruption in neoliberal reformed economies as exemplified in my research can come from above rather than below, as seen through the involvement of government and football officials in illicit activities.

The third section will discuss the relation between football and politics since the middle of the 1980's up until today, and the prevalent impacts they have had on the economy. This will be done primarily by using Juan José Sebreli's book, *La Era del Fútbol*. The fourth and final section will cover where Argentina as a nation stands today on the international stage, looking at football from a more global lens, and the ties the AFA has had with the superseding sporting institution of the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA).

### **Background: (1893-1983)**

Traces of the connection between politics and football in Argentina have been around since the turn of the twentieth century. Between the years 1909-1936, Buenos Aires was undergoing extreme population growth. By 1918, the population doubled with the immigration

of Europeans mainly of Italian and Spanish descent.<sup>92</sup> There was no national sense of identity for many of the individuals that migrated to Argentina, mainly due to the cultural differences of the incoming northern and southern Italian, and Spanish communities. There were communities according to village or regional origins, but none that interlinked between them. “One of the major problems confronting historians who wish to analyze the settlement patterns of Italian immigrants abroad is that village, local region, and provincial identities were more influential than any overall Italian identity”.<sup>93</sup> For this reason, did sports, specifically football play an important role in uniting these different communities.

It is within this time frame that the AFA had started to grow in popularity, mainly due to the expanding population. By the year 1918, around 25 years after the creation of the AFA, 42 clubs had been established within the association. Each club served as a representation of different parts of the country and people of different socioeconomic backgrounds. The first division of the AFA consisted of 20 teams while the second and third divisions consisted of 22.<sup>94</sup> Football clubs became direct representations of the populace and symbols that individuals could identify with, giving them a sense of belonging. Levinsky writes about the kinds of people that populated clubs within the association. He says, “those found within the first division were representative of the high class, while those of the second were representative of the lower.”<sup>95</sup> Football had grown at the right place and the right time, as its status in the upcoming years would resemble more of a religion than that of a sport.

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<sup>92</sup> Samuel L. Baily, *Immigrants in the Lands of Promise : Italians in Buenos Aires and New York City, 1870-1914*, Cornell Studies in Comparative History Acls Humanities E-Book. (Cornell University Press, 1999).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid. Pg. 121

<sup>94</sup> Levinsky. Pg. 30

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

It is important to note that the popularization and politicization of the sport did not come with teams of first division or of “high class,” as they represented the minority of the population. Instead, it came with those clubs found within the second divisions that represented the lower socioeconomic groups. Amongst these teams are those that are considered most famous today in Argentina, such as River Plate, Boca Juniors, Racing, and Independiente. These are teams that ultimately would end up being placed in the first division with the professionalization of the sport in 1931 due to the popularity and size they had gained over the years.<sup>96</sup> Sebreli writes, “As football became a lower-class sport first and then a spectacle for the popular masses, the bourgeois class moved away from it.”<sup>97</sup> This rise in popularity among the masses is pivotal for the politicization of the sport. This movement amongst the lower class served as a gateway or tool politicians in the 1930’s would later need in order to maintain contact with the masses.

It was in the 1920’s in Argentina under the presidency of Marcelo T. de Alvear, a member of the Radical Civic Union, when the roots of politics start to become entangled with those of football. We do not see a direct use of the sport at this point for political gain or support, but rather an alliance between both of these sectors. The AFA had slowly started gaining more political backing as the government helped its economic development. Levinsky writes, “The assistance of the State had multiple faces, because on the one hand it helped the clubs to subsist, especially those with less resources, and at the same time allowed the club officials a certain type of relationship with power, which operated with notoriety and preparation for future development possibilities in national politics.”<sup>98</sup> In return for the resources provided by the State, the AFA and its clubs would later put members of the Radical Civic Union in high

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid. Pg. 51

<sup>97</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 30

<sup>98</sup> Levinsky. Pg. 60

administrative positions, particularly during the time of first *de facto* president, José Felix Uriburu. This would later contribute to the continual tie between football and politics throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and into the connections we see today.

### AFA and Military Dictatorships

By 1931, military dictator José Felix Uriburu had risen to power, successfully directing a coup d'état against the sitting constitutional government of Hipólito Yrigoyen.<sup>99</sup> As a result of his rise to power, Uriburu had banned the Radical Civic Union as a way of preventing the overthrow of his new rule. The simultaneous professionalization of football, and the banning of the Radical Civic Union by the Uriburu dictatorship, marked a special time in Argentine football. As put by Sebreli, “Radical leaders inhibited from acting in politics found an ingenious way not to lose contact with the masses, entering the directive commissions of recently professionalized football clubs.”<sup>100</sup> It is in this time that the country witnessed the rise of Barras Bravas: mafia-like organizations found unofficially within the AFA involved in the promoting of corrupt endeavors ranging from money laundering, to political crimes, to violent crimes. Former radicals, now football club owners and officials, utilized them to carry out political deeds such as voting for incumbent officials to maintain their influence and contact with the masses, as well as intimidate any opposition that arose.

Among the members of the Radical Civic Union Party that in this time became involved in the administrative football world, Sebreli writes, “Thus we find the radical leaders Pedro Bidegain and Eduardo Larrandart as successive presidents of *San Lorenzo*. Larrandart was also president of the AFA. Another radical leader, Agustín Rodriguez Arraya, was president of

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<sup>99</sup> Levinsky. Pg. 44

<sup>100</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 170

*Rosario Central*, and Tiburcio Padilla, president of *Chacarita*; they all made the club the succession of the committee.”<sup>101</sup> Within the same page, Sebreli gives the following important list, mentioning two of the five biggest football clubs today in Argentina and all of Latin America:

- Santiago Banchetti → La Plata Radical Party Leader → Club President: *Estudiantes*
- Raúl Colombo → Pilar Radical Party Leader → Club President: *Almagro*
- Herminio Sande → Radical Party Leader → Club President: *Independiente*

The influence of the world of politics on the sporting and administrative side of football did not halt with the rise and fall of the Uriburu dictatorship in 1932, but continued throughout the century. Presidents and dictators came and went, but football and its endeavors stayed. Levinsky writes, “The clubs would accommodate (as well as the AFA) to be well connected with the national governments of the day, without importing their ideologies too much. Business and power predate them.”<sup>102</sup> The importance of the Uriburu years is highlighting when politics and politicians directly entered the world of football. The 1930’s were the years that would lead to the further intermingling of the government within the AFA’s endeavors and vice versa. As I will argue below, this was the decade that set the stage for the highest levels of corruption in Argentine history in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. These were also the years when politicization of the sport would be taken to new levels with the rise of military dictator, Juan Domingo Perón, the president elected to the most terms in Argentine history.

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<sup>101</sup> Sebreli.

<sup>102</sup> Levinsky. Pg. 65

### Peronism and AFA

Juan Perón in the 1946 presidential election successfully defeated the Radical Civic Union-led opposition by around 11 percent.<sup>103</sup> Unlike previous military dictators, Perón understood the power of football as a way of maintaining political power and support. Having come from a lower-middle class background, he had seen the rise in popularity of the sport and grasped its resonance with the growing population.<sup>104</sup> Levinsky writes, “The rise of Peronism in 1946 produced an important turn in the relation between the state and the AFA. Peronism had used football as a tool of political propaganda and made the sport a ‘matter of the State’.”<sup>105</sup> Like recent totalitarian dictators in Europe, Hitler and Mussolini, who had used football as a way of ideologically uniting the State, Perón used the sport as a medium toward maintaining contact with the populace and utilized it as a tool for building a political platform.

Perón was known as “The First Sportsman” and the “President of Argentine Football.” Within his dictatorship, the first ever-direct live feed of a football match within the country was broadcasted. A week later in 1951, he was reelected. Within these broadcasts, messages of economic nationalism would be displayed promoting the recently mutualized or nationalized Argentine energy and gas company known as YPF. Levinsky writes, “On television screens, propaganda related to the YPF would display messages saying ‘Always present in the manifestations of Argentine sports’.”<sup>106</sup> The overall oil production increased by around 33 percent during Perón’s rule, and the annual consumption approximately doubled to 70 million barrels. Argentina’s oil supply altered from 60 percent domestic in 1945, to 60 percent imported

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<sup>103</sup> Dieter Nohlen, *Elections in the Americas: A Data Handbook : Volume 2 South America* (OUP Oxford, 2005).

<sup>104</sup> Thomas F. McGann, "Juan Perón," in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., 2019).

<sup>105</sup> Levinsky. Pg. 73

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. Pg. 74

by 1954. By 1955, oil imports had risen to around \$300 million and surpassed 25 percent of total imports.<sup>107</sup> Football was being used as a way to promote the State's national interests.

There came point where footballing clubs under Perón understood that they needed a link to the political world in order to continue to develop and grow as institutions. As Levinsky writes "Most of the clubs, with very few exceptions, had understood that if prior to Peronism the link with national politics was convenient, now it would become essential to survive, grow and project into the future."<sup>108</sup> The linkage between football clubs, their owners, and the state was more prevalent than ever. In moments of deficit when football clubs and the AFA were attempting to expand, they would ask the state for financial help, and in return would give political support to the Peronist regime and push toward supporting whatever legislation the dictatorship favored. One of the most exemplary cases can be seen with one of the biggest football clubs in Argentina today, San Lorenzo. In 1950, club president Enrique Pinto had sought 60 million pesos from the state to continue the construction of a stadium with the capacity to hold 150,000 people. There was much opposition due to high taxes that the club owed, as well as labor legislation that increased the cost of employees. However, the finances were granted by the state and in return Perón, Minister of the Treasury, Ramón Cereijo, and Minister of Political Affairs, Román Subiza, were named honorary members of San Lorenzo.<sup>109</sup>

Just as Radical Civic Union members had done during the time of Uriburu, Perón had managed to place representatives of his government in positions of power within the football clubs. Levinsky provides the following list: Raúl Mende (Secretary of Technical Affairs of the Presidency) – *Boca Juniors*; Aníbal Imbert (GOU member who exercised strict censorship in

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<sup>107</sup> Paul H. Lewis, *The Crisis of Argentine Capitalism* (The University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

<sup>108</sup> Levinsky. Pg. 75

<sup>109</sup> Ibid. Pg. 89

radio stations) – *Vélez*; Atilio Renzi (military man and Intendant of the Presidential Residence) – *Ferro*; Guillermo Soleyra Casares (police head in charge of the Division of Political Information of the Presidency of the Nation) – *Tigre*; Oscar Pelliza (Undersecretary of Economic Policy, then Vice President of the Central Bank and Subsecretary of Economic Affairs) – *Huracán*; etc.<sup>110</sup> These political connections between the periods of 1893-1983 were pivotal for the platform on which football and politics stand on today in Argentina.

Another important factor that has contributed to the fortifying ties between politics and football in Argentina most specifically, is the use of stadiums as a way of uniting the populace under a common identity. Perón understood the advantages of providing state funds to help the construction of football stadiums. As Mussolini and Hitler had done, “The First Sportsman” viewed and utilized stadiums as centers where people of different socio-economic backgrounds could congregate and unite to share their love for football.<sup>111</sup> This in turn would increase his political support tailoring to the desires of a growing population. As a result of the sport growing, stadiums served, in Gaffney’s words, “to bring residents of different zones together and facilitated the development and identification of neighborhood-specific identities. These evolving identities and geographies helped to position individuals and groups within the larger urban matrix, not only in relation to each other, but in opposition to other people and spaces.”<sup>112</sup>

With the rising of stadiums specifically, Argentina experiences the further integration of Barras Bravas within mainstream culture. These congregation centers in turn became locations where individuals could express their political opinions, or in the case of Barras, openly display their support or opposition toward a political candidate. This impact not only affected those in

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<sup>110</sup> Levinsky. Pg. 89

<sup>111</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 155

<sup>112</sup> Christopher Thomas Gaffney, *Temples of the Earthbound Gods: Stadiums in the Cultural Landscapes of Rio De Janeiro and Buenos Aires* (University of Texas Press, 2008). Pg. 134

the stadiums, but also with the introduction of televised matches in 1951, it allowed for the further spreading of political ideals written on banners and chanted in unison by thousands of these members. As Gaffney concludes, “the expanded televisual reach of stadium events that amplifies the power and reach of the barras.”<sup>113</sup>

It was the interlinked connections between politicians and AFA club officials that allow for the political and economic corruption that was to come at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. We will later see this through Julio Grondona’s extended AFA presidency, the Kirchner administration, and the continual use of Barras today. These are all exemplary of the following sections discussion relating illicit actors within microeconomies of a neoliberal reformed society.

### **Neoliberalism and Argentine Fútbol**

Since the fall of the last military dictatorship in 1983, the Argentine economy has experienced various neoliberal policy reforms. Among these, for example, are the privatization of Argentina’s ten largest state-owned enterprises in the 1990’s during the presidency of Carlos Menem, the pegging of the Argentine peso to the US dollar from 1991-2002, and up until recently a series of Macrismo (of origin from President Mauricio Macri) economic policies imbedded in neoliberal foundations.<sup>114</sup> Despite many attempts to tame a wavering economy, since 1983 Argentina has suffered multiple recessions, and even a depression in 2002, to the

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid. Pg. 169

<sup>114</sup> Roberto Pablo Saba. Pg. 355

point where nearly 50 percent of the population was living in poverty due to the effects of implemented neoliberal policies.<sup>115</sup>

This is the foundation and background to Verónica Gago's book *Neoliberalism From Below: Popular Pragmatics & Baroque Economies*. Gago focuses primarily on the effects of neoliberalism within Argentina from the time of the 1990's and how the country has suffered financially over the past quarter century, which as a result has affected the perception of government and politics. Neoliberal policies within Argentina and Latin America have gained a bad reputation over the last 25 years, which can be reflected by the people who struggle in response to the failing economies. She writes, "Latin America is interesting, since in this region...what emerges from the economic and political crisis is the crisis of the legitimacy of neoliberalism, which delegitimizes any discursive appeal to structural adjustment."<sup>116</sup>

Gago wants to show how as a result of neoliberalism and its failures within Argentina, informal economies arise within the country and therefore new forms of development arise within these niches. This can be seen when she writes, "The neodevelopmentalism promoted in the region during the last decade is tied to a specific conjuncture: it results from the conditions imposed by the exit from neoliberalism's crisis of legitimacy."<sup>117</sup> In particular she focuses on neodevelopmentalism that revolves around the regional level and that would have a certain type of social inclusion, ultimately having an impact on the wage system within Argentina. So to reiterate, is focusing on a ground-up financial development at the regional level that results in consequence to neoliberal policies. Here is where I believe the case of Argentine football can be

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<sup>115</sup> World Bank, "Argentina Poverty Rate 1980-2020," <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/ARG/argentina/poverty-rate>.

<sup>116</sup> Verónica Gago, *Neoliberalism from Below: Popular Pragmatics & Baroque Economies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017). Pg. 21

<sup>117</sup> Ibid. Pg. 23

exemplified by Gago's theory on informal economies. As the connections between politicians and AFA club officials have continued since the fall of the last dictatorship, they have also become more economically driven with the implementation of neoliberal policies. To reiterate a point by Sebreli, "The old political leaders who manipulated the masses through football are replaced by businessmen on the fringes of the classical upper classes, often of shady origins, and of little culture whose only ambition is economic power, although sometimes they do not limit themselves from obtaining political power."<sup>118</sup> This can be exemplified through the Menem administration in the 90s and the neoliberal economic policies that were implemented, and ultimately placed more power in the hands of a democratically elected executive branch than ever before.

The connections between Gago's argument and my own research that focuses on how politics and economics are being viewed through the narrow lens of football, can best phrased in her conclusion when she writes, "neoliberalism must be characterized by its polymorphic ability to recuperate many libertarian principles, while that polymorphism is also challenged and defied by (commercial, affective, productive) economies, forms of doing and calculating, that use neoliberalism tactically, putting it into crisis in intermittent but recurring way."<sup>119</sup> She makes the case for this argument through her analysis of "La Salada" market in Buenos Aires. It is described as the largest illegal textile market in Latin America, which since 2001 has not stopped growing and draws vast quantities of buyers and sellers from around the continent. Like my case for football in Argentina, La Salada "allows for a broader analytic, to the point that it can

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<sup>118</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 186

<sup>119</sup> Gago. Pg. 235

function as a mirror of other urban forms and even of a specific form of ‘logistical urbanism’ highlighting a mode of production of heterogeneity in the metropolises of the Global South.”<sup>120</sup>

Like football in Argentina, La Salada has a strong following and generates unprecedented amounts of revenue per year. In 2009, the illicit market grossed nearly 15 billion Argentine pesos in comparison to the shopping malls that only generated 8.5 billion.<sup>121</sup> It is important to notice the parallels that even in an economy with a profitable retail industry, the neoliberal policies instilled since the 1990’s within Argentina have allowed for the rise of informal economies and illicit actors within these economies to take corrupt means to personally profit. In the case of the AFA, Sebreli notes how, “As a result of the fabulous business that is football, an entire sector inevitably emerges that uses it and acquires specific characteristics. The bureaucracy of sport has the peculiarities of all bureaucratic sectors with vicarious economic power: they handle large amounts of money that are not legally their property, but which they can dispose of at will, allowing them to grant all kinds of prebend and privileges, as well as great opportunities to increase their own private capital.”<sup>122</sup>

In Argentina, the AFA and its clubs earned in 2016 a total of \$3.4 billion.<sup>123</sup> This revenue derives from four different sources. They are the following: 1. Ticket sales and social fees; 2. Marketing and Sponsors; 3. Revenue from trades and transfers of players; 4. Television Rights. These are all overseen and regulated by the AFA. The issue that arises when overseeing a vast quantity of revenue within Argentina, specifically when it comes to football, is that it allows for many opportunities to money launder. When determining who does participates in laundering

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid. Pg. 17

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. Pg. 34

<sup>122</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 208

<sup>123</sup> Juan Sanguinetti Ariel Alberto Corember, Marisa Wierny, "El Fútbol En La Economía Argentina. Números Sin Pasiones," *Journal of Sports Economics & Management* 1, no. 6 (2016). Pg. 56

activities, it typically falls in the hands of club officials, directors of the AFA, politicians (who as we have seen throughout the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are linked to football clubs), and players. As one analysis holds, “Many of those involved in it are tainted by corruption, from club presidents down to security guards at matches. Money laundering in the system is thought to be rife.”<sup>124</sup>

A relatively recent example can be seen in 2013 when 10 individuals involved within the AFA and its football clubs were arrested and charged for money laundering. Of those 10 individuals, two were public officials and one was the Inspector General of Currency Control. This was published within an article by InSight Crime, a foundation dedicated to the study of the principal threat to national and citizen security in Latin America and the Caribbean: Organized Crime. The article states, “Judicial sources told newspaper *La Nación* that the raids uncovered the ‘central office’ for money laundering in Argentine soccer, alleged to have handled transfers worth tens of millions of dollars in recent years.”<sup>125</sup> Money laundering in the football industry within Argentina is facilitated in multiple ways, from simple to sophisticated. They include “cash and international transfers, fiscal paradises, shell companies, and the illegal use of non-banking professionals to move money. In particular, selling rights to a player or team’s image for undeclared amounts was being increasingly used to evade taxes.”<sup>126</sup>

While these financial crimes are more apparent in that legitimate actors commit them, there are other illicit or unofficial actors within the micro-economy of Argentine football, which work in a similar fashion to the actors found within La Salada market. These unofficial actors

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<sup>124</sup>“Corruption in Argentine Football: Foul Play,” *The Economist* 2012.

<sup>125</sup> Charles Parkinson, “Argentine Soccer at Center of Major Money Laundering Network,” (2013), <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/brief/argentine-soccer-at-center-of-major-money-laundering-network/>.

<sup>126</sup> Fox Sports, “Argentina Targets Money Laundering in Football,” (Fox Corporation, 2012).

found within the AFA are the Barras Bravas. In the next section, I tie their emergence back to Gago's arguments regarding the rise of illicit actors in “*proletarian microeconomies*”.<sup>127</sup> Gago situates this term as “the current capitalist drive becomes competitive and dynamic by flexibly articulating itself with the practices, networks, and the attributes that have historically characterized the flows of unpaid labor. This allows us to understand the labor market as a ‘pluri-articulated’ assemblage where mixed and hybrid forms coexist (always as a counterpoint to a homogeneous ideal of wage labor).”<sup>128</sup>

What Gago wants to iterate is that with neoliberalism comes the rise in illicit actors found within these microeconomies. She goes on to say how, “Informality, if understood only in terms of deproleterianization, risks being reduced to the privileged source and space of violence and crime. By emphasizing La Salada as a territory marked by extreme and exceptional violence, while also marginalizing it, this discourse appraises in a strictly negative way that which in fact functions as a possibility for life (and not only survival and violence) for a massive portion of the population, as a space for highly innovative modes of coping with scarcity, violence, institutions, and consumption.”<sup>129</sup> Under its current political and economic status, neoliberal reforms implemented in Argentina since the 1980’s have caused a rise in proletarian microeconomies, mostly visible through the corruption found within the football world and its connections to politics, in addition to the rise of illicit markets such as La Salada.

Politicians and political scientists around the world downplay football and find it trivial within the scope of government’s agendas on fighting crime and corruption. This is exemplified through the lack of research and prosecution on crimes committed within the sporting world.

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<sup>127</sup> Gago. Pg. 33

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

They are seen as minimal in importance and are not considered a threat. However, as we have seen throughout history, specifically within Argentina and even in cases surrounding corruption within Spain and Italy, football has the capability of illicitly placing large amounts of capital into the hands of individuals within positions of political and economic power.

### ***Fútbol and Politics within Argentina Today: (1983-Present)***

Since the 1980's, football and the AFA have grown exponentially from a sporting league to a global corporation. As a result of the previous century's history, they have also remained involved in politics. Since the fall of the last dictatorship, there was only one individual who had continually been involved within the administrative side of the AFA: former president of the AFA, Julio Humberto Grondona. Grondona served as president of the Argentine Football Association for 34 years, something that had never been done before and only came to an end due to his passing in 2014. From 1979 to 2014, Grondona had been able to remain as president of the AFA through three separate Argentine governments. In his years as president, Grondona all but once ran unopposed in all the AFA presidential elections, something that was considered inconceivable in the history of the association.<sup>130</sup>

How was this possible? It is believed that he was able to do this for two reasons. The first is due to his rapport with the Argentine governments in power at the time. In Eugenio Paradiso's investigation, he quotes an Argentine sports journalist who says, "the relationship between different governments and Grondona has always been the best, because you have to think about the fact that Grondona has been with military governments, with democratic left-wing governments, and with democratic Peronist governments, and if he is still there it is because he is

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<sup>130</sup> Marcello Casal, "Las Polémicas De Grondona: Corrupción, Amenazas Y Negocios," *El Cinco Cero*.

functional to the government. It is an exchange of things.”<sup>131</sup> In the same article, Paradiso states that by working closely with the state, Julio Grondona was able to help the government gain popular support amongst the populace considering the cultural impact of the sport, while simultaneously developing a relationship of mutual trust that would benefit him in the long run of his future business and political endeavors.<sup>132</sup>

An example can be seen through one of the five biggest clubs in Argentina, *Racing*. For fourteen years, the football club had been dealing with an economic crisis. Yet the state was able to help the club deal with their financial situation:

*“In 1999, the club was declared bankrupt. It was managed by Blanquiceleste S.A. (a corporation) for eight years, until it became a civil association again in 2008.*

*Blanquiceleste S.A. was insolvent and therefore unable to pay the club’s debts.*

*After the corporation went bankrupt in 2008, Argentina’s ex-president Néstor Kirchner developed a plan to save Racing by assigning the club’s management to a group of political friends, who cancelled the debts. The idea was to allow club members to elect Racing’s president after dealing with the financial problems.”<sup>133</sup>*

How was situation beneficial to both parties? Had *Racing* disappeared, it is presumable that the AFA would have had major complications with the club’s following, considering it is amongst the five biggest clubs in the country. Now that the government had supported the club on the brink of extinction, they in return gained the popular support from club supporters. One last interesting thing to point out in regards to this situation, is that President Nestor Kirchner had

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<sup>131</sup> Paradiso. Pg. 485

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid. Pg. 492

been raised a *Racing* fan from a young age.<sup>134</sup> AFA would in later once again benefit from the Kirchner administration’s “political” stunts with the passing of *Fútbol Para Todos*.

In August 2009, then-President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner announces to the Argentine public the launching of a new national network called “Fútbol Para Todos” or Football for Everyone. This was a federally sponsored network that granted everyone within Argentina access to football matches and tournaments of the Argentine Primera División, Primera B Nacional, Copa Argentina, as well as matches of the biggest tournament in South America, Copa Libertadores, and Copa Sudamericana when the Argentine national football team was involved.<sup>135</sup> Prior to 2009, media network *Clarín* had held the rights to all these televised games, which meant that until Sunday nights, no other channel or media source could air highlights of any matches. In this time period, the president’s approval rating increased from 22 points to 50 points amongst individuals of different demographics, most specifically those who did not watch any televised football matches and those who would watch multiple matches every week.<sup>136</sup> In response to this move, President Kirchner received opposition and much criticism from opposing political parties. In an interview, Senator Gerardo Morales called the actions of the president “shameless”, and other parties such as the Republican Proposal Party of Argentina expressed that “the purpose of its broadcast is not public but partisan.”<sup>137</sup> It was reported that in response to *Fútbol Para Todos*, the government spent six billion pesos on the rights to the televised matches, much of which went to *Clarín* and the AFA, and ultimately increased the deficit and liabilities of

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<sup>134</sup>Daniel Szwarc, "¿De Qué Equipos Fueron Hinchas Los Presidentes Argentinos?," (2018), <https://www.90min.com/es/posts/6009415-de-que-equipos-fueron-hinchas-los-presidentes-argentinos>.

<sup>135</sup>"Se Terminó El Fútbol Para Todos: Cuánto Dinero Gastó El Estado En Ocho Años Y Lo Que Habrá Que Pagar En El Próximo Torneo," *La Nación*, June 28, 2017 2017.

<sup>136</sup>Lucrecia Bullrich, "Fútbol Para Todos Mejora La Imagen De Cristina Kirchner," *ibid.* 2014.

<sup>137</sup>Canal AR, "El Macrismo, Indignado Con Una Publicidad Del Fútbol Para Todos," in *Conflicto de Primera* (2011).

all clubs within the AFA. Why is this important? It was reported that “Grondona would be like to handle the advances of television rights in a way that ‘transforms the presidents of the clubs into hostages of the will of ‘Don Julio’’” and that “the AFA would hand over the checks and suggest to some club presidents that they exchange them in one or more friendly financial ‘caves’.”<sup>138</sup>

The issue that arises with Grondona is that nobody quite knows all of his endeavors with politicians. In a news article by *La Política*, it was reported that “The head of the AFA publicly asked that the President stand for the elections for a new term and assured that he would vote for her. He assured that the country is ‘better’ and praised government measures. ‘The support she has given me was a solution,’ he said gratefully.”<sup>139</sup> All that had reached the public was that which the media reported. The extent to which Grondona had contact with the government was not quite reported, but the instances where there was dialogue between both actors does cause suspicion as to what happened and what was said behind closed doors.

### Barras Bravas

The second reason for Julio Grondona having been able to maintain his status as president of the AFA for 34 years is said to be attributed to the presence and connections to the Barras Bravas. If you have ever watched a televised Argentine football match, the chances are that you have seen Barras Bravas. To the untrained eye, they simply appear as a band of football hooligans who cheer at matches, sing songs, and get involved in brawls at the games. This is a

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<sup>138</sup> Luis Majul, "Grondona Y El Fútbol Para Todos: Cómo Es "La Ruta Del Dinero G", " *Perfil* 2014.

<sup>139</sup> "Grondona: "Cristina Kirchner Se Debe Presentar, Y Yo La Votaría", " *La Política Online* 2011.

much more complex group of people that in reality work in a systematized fashion, resembling more of an organized crime group.

Since the 1930's both club officials and politicians have found ways to support themselves politically and ultimately economically, many times with the backing of Barras Bravas. Involved in money laundering, drug trafficking, organized violence, and thefts, these groups are popularly known to act like a mafia.<sup>140</sup> In a Vice World of Sports interview, Daniel Rapaport interviews the two heads of the *Boca Juniors* Barras Bravas known as "La 12", Mauro Marti and Rafael di Zeo. They describe within this interview the power structure of their organization. They say the following:

*"We have three people at the top, and then there are four or five below them. And below them, ten, twenty or even more which is a lot. We are fans of the Boca fans.*

*We are not Boca fans, we are fans of Boca's fans. First you become a fan of the fans. It's a school. We all start from the bottom, so everyone knows how it works.*

*They take care of us because we can't go out. If we go out, we get arrested on the spot."*<sup>141</sup>

Sebreli outlines how politicians use *barras* as a way to maintain political control. There is a reciprocal action between political party committees and football clubs. The power brokers or liaisons of a committee manage to create support for political parties by gathering people and granting them free tickets to the football matches, therefore associating them to a club. This is how Barras Bravas were originally formed. As put by Sebreli, "In 1911 the administrators of the club *Huracán* managed to get a political candidate from the neighborhood to pay for the

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<sup>140</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 49

<sup>141</sup> Daniel Rapaport, "Going inside the Madness of the Superclásico: Argentina's Boca Juniors-River Plate Rivalry," *Sports Illustrated* 2017.

construction of tribunes on condition that the members vote for him.”<sup>142</sup> Once barras are formed by power brokers, they contribute to the political support of club officials and politicians with votes in managerial position elections within the football clubs. They also serve as an intimidation tool as they often engage in verbal and even physical attacks against opposing barras, players and political candidates.<sup>143</sup>

Barras Bravas engage in a variety of violent acts ranging from small brawls at football stadiums to organized murders on specific targets. Typically in Argentina, one football club’s barras direct their violence toward another football club’s barras. An example can be seen in 1983, where five barras of the football clubs *Boca Juniors*, *Quilmes*, *Independiente*, *Estudiantes*, and *River Plate* were all shot to death in separate instances.<sup>144</sup> Barras bravas very much act as gangs where each of them control certain ‘barrios’ or neighborhoods in Argentina, whether it be in or out of the city of Buenos Aires. Barras have been around since at least the 1910’s and their actions by nature as organized criminal groups have not varied much since their creation.<sup>145</sup> For this reason today in Argentina do we see a growing tolerance toward these groups.

In the same VICE World of Sports interview, Mariano Closs, an Argentine Fox Sports journalist says, “Being a Barra Brava is like having a great job. Better than having any honest job. This is the big problem with Argentinean football. And we’ve been dragging this for years. And no football club board member has the courage to make a change because their lives are at risk, the well-being of their families is at risk. And these people kill for power. They live for power.”

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<sup>142</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 170

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. Pg. 169

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. Pg. 95.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid. Pg. 51

In 1971, when interviewed about the violence that occurs at football stadiums, a director of the AFA, Valentín Suárez, admitted that the violence observed at events was the true motive of attendance of all fans including barras and not love of the sport. He says: “When these men (barras bravas) are in the bleachers, they do not care about fair play. They are there to undress their passion and unload the aggressiveness they could not release during the week. So that helps because emotional release is healthy. Bottles will always fly above the heads of the referees and all we can do is moderate that aggressiveness.”<sup>146</sup> In a 2019 interview with Javier Cantero the President of *Independiente*, one of Argentina’s biggest football clubs, he discusses the power of the Barras Bravas, specifically from his personal experience with his own club. Cantero mentions that there was a moment where he had spoken out against them, announcing publicly how much money the Barras were earning every month. In response, 27 Barras of *Independiente* raided his home, and kept him in the president’s office for 40 minutes in order to threaten him. This was a scare tactic that they used against him in order to remind him that he was not innocent of any illegal endeavors being the President of *Independiente*, and that he should remember to stay quiet. Following this, he says:

“Barras Bravas’ main weapon is their phonebook. They have judges, policemen, even the governor on speed dial. This is their lethal weapon. What would hurt me most? Beating me up? Or if I didn’t get funding for the club? Had they beaten me up, I’d have been a hero. They’re not that stupid. They were too smart for that. I didn’t get a single phone call, not one, from a football official. That’s when you realize you don’t fit in this milieu.”<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid. Pg. 99

<sup>147</sup> RT Documentary, "Argentinian DNA: More Than a Game. Exploring Argentina's Passion for Football," (2019).

A political candidate whether working in the AFA or working toward being elected for a position within the AFA, will give tickets to the power brokers according to the number of votes barras bravas contribute to their campaign and election. Many times in return for their political support, club officials will implicitly grant impunity to the Barras Bravas and sometimes even grant explicit protection.<sup>148</sup> This was the name of the game for years in Argentina that occurred through the rise and fall of different political regimes. Within the VICE interview, for example, when discussing the influence they have on the world of football and politics and what they are capable of accomplishing, both di Zeo and Marti say:

*“A lot. Whatever we set out to do. Because in this country, football is engraved in everything. Politics, sports, everything is related. In other countries it’s different. Football is football and politics is politics. Here everything is mixed because there is a lot of passion. When it comes to decide who to vote for, our word is important. Our opinion is important, even at a national level. We can destabilize an entire country if we want.”*

When discussing the connections Barras Bravas have had with Julio Grondona, it is unclear whether or not they were direct. No account exists whether or not he personally ever had any interaction with them searching for political support to maintain his status as AFA president, or, if he advocated for their supporting of a political candidate in the Argentine government. What can be said is that if presidents of individual clubs are voted into their seats in great part by Barras support, and the presidents ultimately have say into who is to be the next AFA president, Grondona's maintaining of power can be credited to the influence of the organized crime groups.

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<sup>148</sup> Sebreli. Pg. 169

Despite having denied connections to the Barras, Julio Grondona had been accused of generating violence in Argentine football for his support of the Barras Bravas and not having tried to end this phenomenon.<sup>149</sup> In his 34 years as president of the AFA, the only policy that Grondona enacted in order to alleviate violence at matches was to ban the visiting team's fans from attending matches, although this only lasted four years and applied to the second division within the AFA.<sup>150</sup> Most of the violence between *Barras* is seen with bigger teams found within the first division, so Grondona's act was nearly pointless. Today in Argentina, Barras continue to reign the world of football due to their corrupt influence and power, and nothing has been done to stop these organized crime groups to continue to flourish and spread.

### **Argentina & the AFA on the International Stage**

As I discussed above, football in Argentina serves as a microcosm for understanding the current day political and economic status of the country. Dominated by corrupted club officials and power seeking Barras Bravas, the connections between football and civil society show how poorly the state and its institutions are running the country. We have seen how corruption within the AFA takes place, and how politicians many times play an important role in securing these outcomes. What will follow in this section is an analysis specifically on the consequences of the political decisions throughout the 90s focusing primarily on neoliberal reforms. This will help us understand how corruption at the political level set the stage for the corruption we have witnessed throughout the chapter within the AFA.

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<sup>149</sup> Casal.

<sup>150</sup> Associated Press, "Soccer Ban on Visiting Fans Lifted in Argentina," Fox 2011.

### Political Corruption in Argentina

Over the past 20 years, Argentina has spent multiple efforts attempting to climb its way out of the depression that it suffered in 2001 caused by “a partial deposit freeze, a partial default on public debt, and an abandonment of the fixed exchange rate,” changes that were all characteristic of neoliberal reforms.<sup>151</sup> In this time, unemployment rates moved past 20 percent, where “reports surfaced of widespread hunger and malnutrition in a country that had long prided itself as being one of the world’s breadbaskets”, and the poverty rate was on its way to reaching nearly 50 percent.<sup>152</sup> The economy was in total turmoil.

The privatization acts of the 1990’s in Argentina led to extreme rises in corruption that ultimately caused the country’s political system to become tainted. As a result, the national economy suffered one of its worst financial crises in its history. 16 years after his presidency, Carlos Menem, who spearheaded the neoliberal movement within Argentina, was politically persecuted, arrested, convicted and sentenced to over 4 and a half years in prison for “overseeing the embezzlement of public funds to pay bonuses to government officials during his presidency in the 1990s.”<sup>153</sup> In brief, he had “devised a scheme in which money set aside for an intelligence agency was periodically funneled away to pay what the prosecution said was a total of \$466 million to ministers and other government workers on top of their regular salaries.” Amongst others that were arrested and sentenced to prison terms were Domingo Cavallo, a former Minister of Economy, and Raul Ocampo, a former justice minister.

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<sup>151</sup> Jorge A. Salazar Alicia Etchebarne-Bourdin, "The Role of the Imf in Argentina, 1991-2002," (Washington D.C.: IMF, 2003).

<sup>152</sup> Sarah Marsh, "Chronology: Argentina's Turbulent History of Economic Crises," *Reuters* 2014.

<sup>153</sup> Jonathan Gilbert, "Ex-President of Argentina Is Sentenced in Embezzlement Case," *The New York Times* 2015.

Since 2001, the country has struggled with a wavering economy dealing with sky rocketing inflation, declining GDP rates, soaring interest rates, high borrowing rates, etc. Over the past couple of years, inflation rates in Argentina have been around 18-20%, annual percent change of GDP is only at 2%, and interest rates are above 60%.<sup>154</sup> The country that was once viewed by the international world as the top emerging economy and was praised by the IMF for “the firm commitment of the authorities to raise domestic savings, and to maintain fiscal and financial equilibrium and price stability”, had in the most literal sense gone from riches to rags.<sup>155</sup>

The accusations of corruption do not stop with Menem, but continued throughout the following decade under the Kirchner administrations. In December of 2018, Cristina Kirchner was indicted for corruption charges and will face trial in the coming months accusing her of leading a graft scheme from 2003 to 2015 that “diverted up to 160 million USD worth of commission from public works contracts to the officials of the senator and her late husband Nestor Kirchner’s government.”<sup>156</sup> These investigations are known as the “notebooks of corruption” as they refer to multiple photocopied notebooks that belonged to Oscar Centeno, a former chauffeur at the Ministry of Federal Planning. Within this notebook, there were “names, amounts and delivery times of alleged bribes paid by construction sector bosses to former Kirchner officials.”<sup>157</sup> Today, Cristina Kirchner holds diplomatic immunity from jail for currently holding the chair as senator of the province of Buenos Aires, and as of November 2019 has become the Vice-President elect of Argentina.

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<sup>154</sup> Daniele Palumbo Andrew Walker, "Argentina - the Crisis in Six Charts," *BBC News* 2018.

<sup>155</sup> IMF, "Imf Praises Argentine Measures, Sees Us\$2b Loan Increase," *International Monetary Fund* 1995.

<sup>156</sup> "Former Argentine President Cristina Kirchner to Face Corruption Charges," *Asian News International* 2018.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

These acts of corruption have affected international perception of Argentina. From 2012-2018, Argentina received the ranking of 85<sup>th</sup> out of 176 countries on the international Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and holds a corruption index of 40.<sup>158</sup> As a note of comparison, Denmark ranks 1<sup>st</sup> with a CPI of 88 while Somalia ranks last with a CPI of 10.

Part of the criteria taken into account when measuring CPI is international financial transparency.<sup>159</sup> This is defined by the IMF as the international “comprehensiveness, clarity, reliability, timeliness, and relevance of public reporting on the past, present, and future state of public finances”.<sup>160</sup> It was not until 2016 that Argentina had a national law guaranteeing access to public information.<sup>161</sup> As I have shown through numerous examples involving the lack of transparency regarding international investments, Argentina has experienced similar cases involving international institutions in the world of football. Just as governments have their relations with foreign administrations, so do those found within the football world.

### FIFA Corruption Scandal

The International Federation of Association Football (FIFA), for example, is the highest international governing body for all football leagues around the world. FIFA is responsible for the organization and advancement of football’s major international tournaments, most notably the World Cup.<sup>162</sup> Being that they serve as the umbrella to all football leagues, they oversee the AFA. FIFA’s historical lack of transparency, however, illustrates AFA’s role in the corruption

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<sup>158</sup> The CPI is an annual index determined by “expert assessments and opinion surveys” currently ranking 176 countries ‘on a scale from 100 (very clean) to 0 (highly corrupt)’. See: Transparency International, "Corruption Perception Index 2017," (2017).

<sup>159</sup> "Financial Transparency Glossary," ed. International Secretariat (Berling, Germany2014).

<sup>160</sup> IMF, "Fiscal Transparency," ed. IMF (2020).

<sup>161</sup> Transparency International, "Transparency Agenda for Argentina," (Transparency International, 2016).

<sup>162</sup> FIFA, "Fifa Mission," (2020).

scandals of 2015. Football in Argentina therefore continually opens doors for corrupt endeavors, or the way I have framed it, continually provides the opportunity for the AFA and club officials to abuse and personally benefit from their positions of power.

In 2015, nine FIFA officials and five individuals were arrested on the charges of bribery, racketeering, fraud, money laundering, and obstruction of justice.<sup>163</sup> The US Department of Justice and other European partners such as the Swiss government spearheaded these investigations on the basis that many of these crimes were committed within meetings on US soil and done with US banks. Of the nine officials, two of them were in very high positions. One of the individuals was the vice president of FIFA at the time, Jeffrey Webb, and the other was a former vice president, Jack Warner. Both also at one point were presidents of the Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF), the major organization that overlooks all of North American football. On May 27, 2015, US Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch delivered a speech announcing the charges against the nine officials:

*"The 14 defendants charged in the indictment we are unsealing today include high-ranking officials of FIFA, the international organization responsible for regulating and promoting soccer; leaders of regional and other governing bodies under the FIFA umbrella; and sports marketing executives who, according to the indictment, paid millions of dollars in bribes and kickbacks to obtain lucrative media and marketing rights to international soccer tournaments. The 47-count indictment against these individuals includes charges of racketeering, wire fraud and money laundering conspiracies spanning two decades. FIFA and the regional*

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<sup>163</sup> Alexander Mandel, "Fixing Soccer: Changing Fifa's Corporate Governance Structure in Response to the Current Fifa Corruption Scandal," *Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal* 35, no. 2 (2017).

*bodies under its umbrella make money, in part, by selling commercial rights to their soccer tournaments to sports marketing companies, often through multi-year contracts covering multiple editions of the tournaments. The sports marketing companies, in turn, sell those rights downstream to TV and radio broadcast networks, major corporate sponsors and other entities for significant sums of money.*<sup>164</sup>

This was a corruption scandal that had gone unnoticed for years, allowing for many individuals to get involved. Among the rest of those accused and imprisoned were two Argentine businessmen and owners of a football broadcasting rights company in Argentina, Hugo Jenkins and his son Mariano Jenkins.<sup>165</sup> It is imperative to remember in this moment the individual who was responsible as a chairman for FIFA's finance and media committees: Julio Grondona.<sup>166</sup>

In 2017, a former Swiss banker, Jorge Luis Arzuaga, was arrested and admitted to paying Julio Grondona millions of USD in bribes. He had opened Swiss bank accounts for Grondona and "other high-ranking FIFA officials from a TV rights marketing company, Torneos, based in Argentina", and deposited for them upwards of \$25 million USD in bribes.<sup>167</sup> This would have been the end of Grondona's corrupt influence on the AFA as we know it, but he had died the year before the start of the corruption scandal and had not lived to face sentences for his crimes.

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<sup>164</sup> Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch, "Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch Delivers Remarks at Press Conference Announcing Charges against Nine Fifa Officials and Five Corporate Executives," news release, 2015, <https://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/attorney-general-loretta-e-lynch-delivers-remarks-press-conference-announcing-charges>.

<sup>165</sup> Maximiliano Rizzi, "Judge Releases Argentine Fifa Suspects from House Arrest," *Reuters* 2015.

<sup>166</sup> Steven Cohen, "Fifa's Dirty Wars," *The New Republic* 2017.

<sup>167</sup> David Conn, "Swiss Banker Admits Paying Millions in Bribes to Fifa Executive Julio Grondona," *The Guardian* 2017.

Since 2015, investigations have been ongoing and new information has been uncovered, but nothing worthy of an indictment has taken place since the high profile arrests 4 years ago.

As discussed above, Grondona was not the only AFA representative or person with connections to AFA officials taking bribes. Argentine football and its administration have continually opened doors for corruption to flourish and are only able to do so by maintaining their non-transparent approaches that further promote illicit acts that benefit their business and political aspirations. As football is a microcosm of the political arena in Argentina, these are the results of a faulty political system that has repeatedly caused severe damage to its population and country as a whole.

### **Conclusion**

Over the last century, , but more so from the mid 1980's, the Argentine Football Association seemingly has become more corrupt as the business oriented side of football has allowed for the further illicit self-promotion of club officials and politicians. As of today, nothing has been done to combat corruption in football. Any efforts that have been initiated to combat corruption specifically within Argentina seemingly disappear or are left unattended. This can be seen with the proposed new AFA laws regarding transparency of clubs and club directives that ultimately never were implemented. According to an article in *The Economist* covering the guidelines under the proposed legislation: The AFA governing body had to make an annual report on "every member of staff paid at least \$13,800 a year (including bonuses, prizes and gifts), as must every club in the top two divisions of the league. They also have to provide details of payments they make to corporate sponsors, government officials and anybody else with whom they do business. Failure to disclose this information can result in a fine of up to \$23,000. And if

reports uncover evidence of illegal payments, the fine can be as much as ten times the sum involved.”<sup>168</sup>

Perhaps the failure of the implementation of these proposed directives has to do with the fact that although there are many individuals in positions of authority who have the capability to make change, these might be individuals who contribute to the corruption found within the footballing and political world. It is important to understand that even if these new AFA laws were to be implemented, this would only solve part of the issues that arise within the corruption of football. For example, what would become of the Barras Bravas? As we have seen through the interviews of club officials, they do not always rely on their support as they often act in a self-sufficient way through illicit actions. There are many doors allowing for the free flow of corruption that are yet to be closed.

This chapter looked into the nature of the illicit micro economies that arise within the political and footballing world, and how they have continually allowed for the increase in illicit actors rooted in the rise of neoliberal policies. I have also given further insight into the impacts of corruption in a neoliberal era and how it can be used and promoted by the sporting world to maneuver political and business decisions. My conclusion is that if there is to be any change within Argentina, it must come from the higher authorities both in the Argentine government and by the overarching football authority that is FIFA. If steps are not taken to control the corrupt practices found within Argentina, politics and football will continually remain interlinked in a way that will further advance the illicit practices carried out by club officials, politicians, and Barras Bravas, and will ultimately continue causing severe damage to the political and economic infrastructure of the country.

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<sup>168</sup> "Corruption in Argentine Football: Foul Play."

## Chapter 4: Germany, Fußball, and Politics

In 2006, Germany hosted the FIFA World Cup for the second time in its history. The first had been 32 years earlier in West Germany 1974, where its national team had been led by star captain Franz Beckenbauer and emerged victorious in defeating the Dutch for their second ever world title. 1974 had been a significant year for Germany not just because of its World Cup victory, but because this was the year that marked the beginning of a merge in between private businesses and the sporting industry within Europe. This particular World Cup tournament witnessed the contribution of major sponsors for the first time, which in return brought higher yields of income than ever before.<sup>169</sup> Among many notorious businesses, the company that spearheaded this movement of private investment and highly benefitted from this effort was Adidas. Adidas throughout the last 50 years has become one of the most recognized sporting brands in the world, along with companies such as Nike and Puma. In the case of Germany, this merge was important as this marked the beginning of the transformation of football into the global corporation it is today. We will also see later in the chapter the consequences of this merger and how Adidas in particular had played an important role in the carrying out of corrupt acts within the footballing world. Over the past four and a half decades, the World Cup, and football as we know it, have become phenomena of high investment by private organizations and businesses around the world.

Today the international tournament has become a highly sought event by football federations all around the world. There are many reasons as to why a federation would be willing to bid and invest billions of dollars in order to host the cup. What host countries typically

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<sup>169</sup> Subodh Varma, "Fifa World Cup, Brought to You by Big Business," *News Click* (2018).

experience is known as “The World Cup Effect.”<sup>170</sup> This entails major opportunities such as potential economic boosts, an increase in jobs, an incredible rise in tourism, and improved life for locals which in turn could increase work productivity.<sup>171</sup> To give an example of the World Cup’s economic impacts, South Africa experienced a 15 percent increase in tourism in 2010 when they hosted the event, or upwards of one million tourists. In Brazil, four years later in 2014, tourism numbers increased from 5.8 to 6.4 million. Germany, in 2006, experienced a two million person increase in tourism as their numbers soared from 21.5 to 23.5 million.<sup>172</sup> With much economic potential and opportunity, the process of bidding in order to host the World Cup has allowed for questionable exchanges between individual parties, and potential opportunities for a rise in corruption. This can be seen most recently in the bidding process for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar and ongoing investigations of the 2006 bids for the tournament to be held in Germany.

Over the past 14 years, there have been accusations of money laundering, fraud, criminal mismanagement, and misappropriation relating to the bids that took place for the Germany World Cup. There are suspicions, for example, that a payment of 6.7 million euro or 7.1 million dollars was made to FIFA in 2005 by former Adidas CEO Robert Louis-Dreyfus, at the request of Franz Beckenbauer, chair of the 2006 FIFA World Cup Organizing Committee and official of the German Football Association (DFB).<sup>173</sup> This money was used in order to buy bids to host the international football tournament. In 2015, the German news magazine *Der Spiegel* “accused

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<sup>170</sup> Thays Cristina Domareski Ruiz, Adriana Fumi Chim Miki, and Francisco Antonio Dos Anjos, "Competitiveness, Economic Legacy and Tourism Impacts: World Cup," *Investigaciones Turísticas*, no. 17 (2019).

<sup>171</sup> Luke Christou, "World Cup 2030: The Economic Impact of Hosting the Fifa Tournament," *Verdict* (2018).

<sup>172</sup> The World Bank, "International Tourism, Number of Arrivals - South Africa, Brazil, Germany," (2020).

<sup>173</sup> BBC.

[Louis-Dreyfus and Beckenbauer] of setting up a slush fund worth €6.7m (£5.6m) that was used to acquire support from Asia for the World Cup vote in June 2000, with money provided by the former Adidas chief executive...Louis-Dreyfus.”<sup>174</sup> There were several attempts to cover up this story: some claimed that the 6.7 million euro was used for the funding of a gala ceremony for the opening of Berlin’s Olympic stadium. However, the event was cancelled five months prior to the start of the World Cup.<sup>175</sup> In return, Beckenbauer (as well as his DFB colleagues Fedor Radmann and Andreas Abold) was said to have pocketed 1.7 million euro or 1.8 million dollars, for allowing the misappropriation of money in order to allow and ensure Germany’s ability to host the World Cup. Beckenbauer allegedly placed that bribed money in a bank account in Gibraltar that helped him avoid German taxes.

Since 2016, German and Swiss authorities investigated Beckenbauer’s case to the point where his home in Austria was raided in order to find evidence relating to the investigation. “Der Kaiser” - as the German public has often referred to Beckenbauer due to his lavish lifestyle and prominent partaking in the German footballing world - has denied any allegations against him and mostly kept quiet over the years in regards to this case. Despite him having taken this stance on the investigation, *The Guardian* reported that he had silently paid the German state what he owed from the near two million dollars he was given.<sup>176</sup> The problem with the investigation is that the clock on the statute of limitations for the tax evasion charges against Beckenbauer are ten years, and have run since he last committed the crime in 2005. In Germany, “The statute of limitation for income tax returns usually amounts to four years. An extension up to five years is possible in cases of tax evasion or up to ten years in cases of tax fraud. Further prescriptions

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<sup>174</sup> Ed Aarons, "Franz Beckenbauer Faces Criminal Investigation into Corruption Claims," *The Guardian*, September 1, 2016 2016.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

have to be considered regarding the start date and suspension of the statute of limitation.”<sup>177</sup> Beckenbauer’s case has extended past the 10-year period and, as of recently, has slowed down significantly due to his deteriorating health, a similar situation that was observed with the investigation of AFA’s Julio Grondona in Argentina. As of October of 2019, the Swiss courts have asked if Beckenbauer is healthy to face trial; however there have been no signs of his improvement.

Understanding this case of shady exchanges among individual parties in German football is not meant to label the country’s sporting association - the DFB - as corrupt, but more so to demonstrate that it’s transparency. In moments of vulnerability where crime is able to take place, the institutions of German bureaucracy ultimately keep and hold each other accountable for their actions. This fits the arguments made in Chapter 3 above, that the sport of football serves as a reflection of the politics found within a given country. The DFB complied with the Beckenbauer investigations after it was uncovered that he had been accused of his crimes, and allowed for authorities to proceed as they deemed necessary.

With this background in mind, the chapter aims at demonstrating how politics within Germany is separate from the sporting world, most specifically the footballing world, but will demonstrate how one can serve as a reflection of the other. I aim to answer the following questions with the purpose of understanding the relationship between the political and sporting worlds within Germany:

1. To what extent does football impact politics and economics within Germany?
2. How has the German political system successfully avoided a rise in internal corruption within its institutions?

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<sup>177</sup> PWC, "Germany: Individual - Tax Administration," (2020).

3. How has history affected the perceptions on corruption within Germany and the views on its institutions, as well as crimes that are committed within the footballing world?

My aim is to show that when corruption and corrupt acts are able to succeed within an economically and politically advanced state, it does not reach levels that can be detrimental for political and economic health of country as seen in Latin America, specifically in my case, Argentina. Yet we will nevertheless see how perceptions of corruption within Germany affect the country's institutions, particularly those that surround the football industry. This will be done in five main sections starting with a history of football in Germany, documenting its impact throughout the years. Section two will cover the points made in Wolfgang Streeck's *How Will Capitalism End?* as a way of explaining why Germany holds the positions it does today in relation to the separation of the sporting and political worlds. Section three will cover where football resides today within the country, and cover the economic, as well as potential political impacts. Last, fourth and final section will cover German football on the international stage and look at its relation to the overarching institution known as FIFA.

#### **Background: (1875-1945)**

The origins of the first football clubs within Germany can be seen as early as 1875, four years after the unification of the country in 1871. With a propelling economy and major economic developments deriving from technologies that originated in Britain and France, such as those found within the coal mining and steel producing industries, came "a kind of by-product - the concept of athleticism, competitive sports and team games, such as football, which reached

Germany via a number of different channels.”<sup>178</sup> Because football was of British origin, it was originally met with hostility within Germany, especially due to the rising tensions, growing aspiration, and competitive nature that came with the desire to become a world power in comparison to its neighboring countries. As put by German author Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, “Even though it may test the imagination, there was a time when not a few experts thought football was finished as the be-all and end-all of German sport.”<sup>179</sup> Yet from the initial years of the sport’s presence within the country, Germans felt a necessity to maintain patriotic roots within the footballing world.

Because of the growing sense of nationalism toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the German populace found it necessary to instill their state ideals within the first written legislation of the *Deutscher Fußball-Bund* (DFB) in 1900. They wanted the footballing industry to serve as a reflection of the nation’s principles, but keep it separate from the political world. It is because of this sentiment that “the DFB was required to provide evidence that the football movement was patriotic.”<sup>180</sup> Although the DFB was founded on apolitical grounds in that it “was not involved in the activities of and debates between political parties”, it did actively support political developments in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and helped push for the nationalist agenda in order to “demonstrate its commitment to the national cause.”<sup>181</sup> This was apparent especially during the times of the Weimar Republic in the interwar period, where despite the military restraints set on Germany due to the Treaty of Versailles, the militaristic ideals instilled at the foundation of the DFB continued to be prevalent in its legislation. This is most noticeable in that “many football

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<sup>178</sup> Udo Merkel, "The Hidden Social and Political History of the German Football Association (Dfb), 1900–50," *Soccer and Society* (2000).

<sup>179</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!: The Story of German Football*, ed. WSC Books Ltd (London: WSC Books Ltd, 2002).

<sup>180</sup> Merkel. Pg. 173

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

introductory texts and publications of the Weimar Republic contain long list of educationally and militarily relevant norms and values attached to the involvement in football, ranging from courage, strength, decisiveness, altruism and masculinity to the ability to fight for the nation's survival as every citizen's duty.”<sup>182</sup>

The Germanization of football was key for its further development in that it bridged the connection between a foreign sport and the masses within Germany. Terms such as *Führer* had replaced the English word “captain”, and other terms such as “goal” had been replaced with the German word *Tor*.<sup>183</sup> By 1904, the sum of clubs within the country totaled nearly 200 with around nine thousand individual members. Despite it having had much opposition from conservative German elites, it was due to the growing popularity of the sport that the DFB joined FIFA. It was not until after World War I that the sport truly became considered a fundamental part German culture and sports. As written by Udo Merkel, “From then onwards, the concept of competitive sport had become the second pillar of physical culture in Germany, and sport became the generic term for the totality of physical exercises.”<sup>184</sup> Football had gained so much traction that by 1925, with the participation and growing interest of the working classes, the DFB had increased by five times in number since before The Great War.<sup>185</sup> However, it was also more divided than ever in terms of the class differences between its members. For this reason were its originally reflected state ideals embedded in its constitution further promoted after the war and used as a method of uniting the population ideologically.

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid. Pg. 178

<sup>183</sup> Ibid. Pg. 137

<sup>184</sup> Ibid. pg. 175

<sup>185</sup> Ibid. Pg. 177

### Fußball and Nazism: (1933-1945)

Despite its original intentions of keeping football apolitical, the DFB in the 1900's went from being a sporting league based on German ideals, to eventually being used as a political tool during the times of the Third Reich under the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler. According to German sports publisher, Kurt Munch, football in the 1930s was no exception to other elements of life within the Nazi regime. "National Socialism," he wrote, "cannot allow a single aspect of life to be outside the general organization of the nation. Every athlete of the Third Reich must serve the State. The German sportsman is in his entire essence, political. It is impossible for an individual or a private club to engage in physical exercise and sports. These are matters of the State."<sup>186</sup>

While the DFB was not directly getting involved with the politics of the Nazi party, they abided by the policies put forth. The rise of Adolf Hitler and the national socialists meant the abolishing of "working-class organizations, social-democratic and communist football clubs and two years later the abolition of religious football organizations."<sup>187</sup> The DFB had maintained its original motives and values of German nationalism, but more so than ever aimed at promoting them. Their mission under the Nazis was to continue to promote and strengthen the nation and state, and prove its devotion, integrity and dependability to the national party. Despite working class organizations being shut down, the Nazi party did not exclude worker athletes from joining the middle-class clubs or even the bourgeois or Nazi teams. This tactic was called *Gleichschaltung*, or "enforced integration", which was used to maintain the image and notion of an Aryan society. It also served the purpose of further advancing the goal of German dominating

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<sup>186</sup> Sebreli, Pg. 158

<sup>187</sup> Merkel, Pg. 182

on the sports fields, which in the eyes of National Socialist leaders further promoted the idea of world domination.<sup>188</sup>

It is important to also understand that despite a spike in German nationalism and the rise of the Nazis or Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP), connections between the DFB and FIFA remained. However, the DFB was now supervised by a new sporting department within the Third Reich known as the *Fachamt Fußball* or the “Specialist Office for Football.”<sup>189</sup> This allowed for further supervision of the NSDAP of the footballing leagues. It is also at this time in 1937 that many representatives within the sporting agencies, such as the president of the DFB, Felix Linnemann, became part of the Nazi Party.<sup>190</sup> We see this as well with individuals such as Paul Flierl, leader of the DFB’s southern subdivision later to become the 16<sup>th</sup> district, who joined the NSDAP in May of 1933.<sup>191</sup> As a member of both organizations, Linnemann made sure to continue a policy known as *Führerprinzip* or “leader principle”, which signified the reorganization of sports at the regional level into 16 districts. This allowed for the continuity and further integration of Aryan ideals this time around in a more concentrated fashion, specifically targeted at the youth.<sup>192</sup>

*Gleichschaltung* was also one of the most effective ways the Nazis were able to use football as a way to spread their political ideals to the younger generation. In 1933, the DFB agreed to create new rules that fortified the efforts to contribute to the “national revival through an expansion of their youth programmes.”<sup>193</sup> It is in this time that all youth football departments were integrated into the Hitler Youth, the only official boys youth organization during the Third

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid. Pg. 181

<sup>189</sup> Ibid. Pg. 182

<sup>190</sup> Ibid. Pg. 183

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid. Pg. 182

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

Reich that was partially a paramilitary organization. This integration concretely merged political programs with sporting ones. This was one of Hitler's most effective methods in spreading his power and maintaining order.

It is important to understand the use of stadiums by the Nazis during this time was a pivotal political tool used to spread fascist ideals. Just like fascist Italy had done under the rule of Mussolini, Germany had used football stadiums as a way to "accommodate crowds of spectators and to create the effect of a Fascist spectacle—conveying strength, discipline, and obedience—unfolding before the public's eyes."<sup>194</sup> This was a fortifying tool in spreading Nazi ideals, in that not only could these congregation centers be used for sporting events, but were also beneficial to the NSDAP in hosting youth rallies and politically motivated events. An example can be seen with the construction of the *Olympiastadion* in 1936, which throughout the years has served primarily to host football matches, but earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century had been utilized by Hitler as a way to assemble crowds for political speeches.<sup>195</sup>

I have so far aimed at understanding the relationship between politics and football throughout the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, both mediums were not entirely integrated with one another, in that the political world often extended its influence on the sporting or footballing world, but not so much the other way around. The extent to which football increasingly played a role in the political world, however, can be seen through some members of the DFB joining the NSDAP, who later welcomed Hitler's rise to power and entirely supported his rule and politics till the very end of his regime. German ideals were prioritized since the very creation of the *Deutscher Fußball-Bund* and taken to an extreme with the rise of the Nazis. These

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<sup>194</sup> Alexander Colin Wynn, "The Gooooaaaaals of Government: Football as a Political Tool of Fascism and Nazism" (Wesleyan University, 2007).

<sup>195</sup> Colin Philpott, "Relics of the Reich - Dark Tourism and Nazi Sites in Germany," *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes; Bingley* 9, no. 2 (2017).

ideals were then spread through systematic divisions within the sporting world, most specifically through football, which emphasized a focus and objective on influencing perceptions of the state on the youth. These attitudes toward the state would later evolve throughout the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and would lay the foundations for the contemporary attitudes held by the German populace.

The following section aims at applying Wolfgang Streeck's analysis of the contemporary global capitalist system as a way of further understanding the split in between the private and public spheres within Germany, and the perceptions and attitudes held in regards to these divisions within the country. I also aim to use his analysis as a way of further understanding how this split has impacted levels and perceptions of corruption.

### **Fußball, Economics, and Politics - A Theoretical Application of Wolfgang Streeck**

It is important to note that my analysis bridges the historical separation of the sporting and state systems, which will be further understood by applying Streeck's analysis in chapters 2 and 3 of his book regarding the fall of capitalism and its unstable nature. While I am not concerned with capitalism as an economic system, I do intend to apply the author's analysis on Germany's private and public sphere split as a way of grasping the conditions as to why the sporting world and public administrations within Germany were able to remain separate from each other. This will be done so in a fashion that helps conceptualize the perceptions Germans hold today in regards to the necessity of keeping a split between both sectors.

Throughout the majority of Germany history, there has been a noticeable separation between private business-economic sectors and governing institutions. More specifically, there appears to be an identifiable split between the footballing world and the federal government. In

the case of German football, we see this at the time of the drafting of the first legislation of the DFB in 1900, where this institution was privately run, yet nevertheless embodied the ideals of the state and nationhood. This comes to a halt with the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party in that the state extended its influence to all sectors of German society, the footballing world included. With the end of World War II and the fall of the Third Reich, all business-economic institutions influenced or controlled by the state went through the process of “Denazification”, or, the removal of Nazi influence in all sectors of government and the economy.<sup>196</sup> For DFB, this meant the removal of the president at the time, Felix Linnemann, and other members affiliated with the NSDAP. From the mid 1940s to beyond the 2000s, the German Football Association seemingly becomes less political. The ideologies on which the institution was founded become less prominent especially by the 1980s and throughout the 1990s.

As indicated by Wolfgang Streeck, the 1980s through the 1990s marks a true separation between the public and private sectors. Germany in this time begins to experience small-scale privatizations, such as that of public swimming pools into private “fun baths” or *Spaßbäder*.<sup>197</sup> It is also in this time that the country started to understand the roles of businesses, or the private sector, in comparison to that of the government, or the public, and what could be done to run the economy most successfully. As Streeck argues, in Germany “it became received political wisdom during the 1980s and ‘90s that the difference between public and private provision was that the state dictates to people what they are supposed to need – which will always in effect be the same for everybody – whereas private markets cater to what people really want, as

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<sup>196</sup> Elmer Plischke, "Denazification Law and Procedure," *The American Journal of International Law* Vol. 41, No. 4 (1947).

<sup>197</sup> Streeck. Pg. 105

individuals.”<sup>198</sup> Politicians understood their role in not meddling with the privatization process, as there was much potential for the rise in misconduct among public officials, as seen in Latin America during the 90s.<sup>199</sup> Within these decades, “only the private sector was capable of properly attending to the changing needs of a richer and more demanding clientele, and that the best thing the state could do under the circumstances was to step out of the way, shut down its primitive-utilitarian facilities and invite private business in to provide colour, fun and, above all, freedom of choice.”<sup>200</sup> In regards to the sporting world, this diminished the opportunities for ambitious politicians and individuals in high governmental positions to further pursue personal economic power, a phenomenon that did take place in Argentina and even countries like Italy through the rise in Silvio Berlusconi.<sup>201</sup>

An example of major privatizations of a state owned enterprises (SOE) that characterize the importance of the separation between the private and public sectors, can be seen through the *Deutsche Bundespost*, the German postal service, and *Deutsche Bundesbahn*, the German Federal Railway. These were originally Western German run SOEs whose privatization were characterized by a hands off approach from the government, in that they allowed for private investors to bid on the ownership.

Another example demonstrating the importance of a hands-off approach towards the division of the private and public sectors can be seen during the 1990s after the reunification of West and East Germany. Due to the Soviet bloc’s collapse, the East had significantly fallen behind economically in comparison to the West. This hands off approach towards privatizing was demonstrated with the creation of the *Treuhandanstalt* or the *Treuhand*. In order to facilitate

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Gilbert.

<sup>200</sup> Streeck. Pg. 105

<sup>201</sup> Gilbert.

the privatization of industries throughout Germany, the state created the *Treuhandanstalt*, or “trust agency”, that served the purpose of reprivatizing and privatizing East German businesses.<sup>202</sup> While the government was first-hand getting involved with 15,102 privatizations of 4,358 enterprises mostly in the eastern region, its methods toward carrying out this process emphasized a hands-off approach.<sup>203</sup> The government did not seek the highest offers when it came to the bidding process, as seen in Argentina for example, but rather worked in the best interest for the German populace. As Stephen Kinzer notes, “Rather than awarding each company to the highest bidder, as was usually done during Mr. Rohwedder’s tenure, the Treuhand now favors bidders who promise to keep employees working.”<sup>204</sup> Despite its operations having only lasted about four years (1990-1994), and significant protests against the laying off of 2.5 million previously employed state workers, the *Treuhand* did its best to employ individuals.

The approaches taken by the government to move forward with these privatizations could be a significant source behind perceptions on corruption in German institutions today, as well as why organizations like the DFB strive for a transparency system, and remain independent of the influence of public officials and individuals involved in government affairs. When it comes to privatization, a neoliberal economic tactic, there are opportunities for shady exchanges to take place as seen in Latin America in the 1990s. Yet the German state wanted to work in a

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<sup>202</sup> Douglas Webber, "The Decline and Resurgence of the ‘German Model’: The Treuhandanstalt and Privatization Politics in East Germany," *Journal of European Public Policy* Vol. 1, no. Issue 3 (1994).

<sup>203</sup> Birgit Breue, "The Work of the Treuhand in Retrospect," *German History in Documents and Images* Vol. 10. One Germany in Europe, 1989 - 2009 (2005).

<sup>204</sup> Stephen Kinzer, "Facing Down Protests, Eastern Germany Goes Private," *The New York Times* 1991.

transparent fashion and limit windows for corruption to flourish, therefore appearing that certain neoliberal reforms had different outcomes when comparing results in Europe and Latin America.

It is important here to understand how Streeck's arguments come into dialogue with the earlier points brought up by Veronica Gago. Streeck understands capitalist societies, such as Germany, as systems whose progress is marked by the production and accumulation of material capital. He says that for capitalist societies to achieve their goals, they must have free markets, scientific advancements, and to some extent have support from the state. The point Streeck brings up that I find most relatable as to Germany's continuous split between the private and public sectors prior to and after the fall of the Nazi government, are his remarks on perceptions of government found within capitalist societies. He writes, "The persistence of a capitalist system thus relies on most of its participants believing in the system's legitimacy and accepting its necessary financial inequality, all reasons to the contrary notwithstanding." This is important to note in that simply the belief and trust in the system's legitimacy is a reason as to why Germany is able to maintain its transparent approach toward both public and private affairs. This then limits the window for corruption to succeed and for illicit microeconomies to arise, such as in the case of Argentina where perceptions of the government administrations remain skeptical, and we see rises in illicit markets such as "La Salada".

If we apply this logic to Gago's reflections on the microeconomies and actors that arise within a capitalist society, then we can understand how neoliberal reforms in Germany resulted in positive outcomes and not ones that permit rises in corruption. People in Germany understand the role of their government and the necessity for limited intermingling between the public and private sectors. When individuals struggle with the legitimacy of their governments, and we see government influence in private institutions as witnessed many times in Latin America, it is

understandable how opportunities are presented for a rise in illicit actors within microeconomies such as in “La Salada”. It is, however, necessary to point out that Streeck does not think more transparent governing systems are immune to corruption, most specifically in the sporting world. He writes:

*Corruption is also rampant in professional athletics, which has in recent decades become a huge global industry, financed by mushrooming marketing activities for sports equipment and fashion goods...Doping among athletes competing for ever-increasing sums of prize money and even more lucrative advertising contracts in worldwide winner-take-all markets is accompanied by corruption among officials of international sports association, some of whom are reported to have been paid huge sums by athletes and their management for suppressing the results of positive doping tests, and by corporations and governments for locating events in places they prefer. Officials also own firms that sell television rights in the events their associations organize.<sup>205</sup>*

It can be understood that corruption within the sporting world can be a consequence of what occurs when governments meddle within the private sector, which in turn causes perceptions of institution’s legitimacy to diminish, therefor allowing for these illicit microeconomies to arise as a byproduct. When a country’s economy is failing due to the political mismanagement of its governmental institutions, and perceptions of legitimacy are low, the microeconomies that emerge are reflections of higher tolerance levels of corruption within the broader social scale.

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<sup>205</sup> Streeck. Pg. 33

We have to understand that the Beckenbauer corruption scandal was still able to take place and perhaps other small scale acts as well throughout the DFB. What Streeck's points allow is for us to understand how the German system is able to cope with these acts in a transparent fashion, and shows how perceptions within a state are pivotal for the persistence of capitalist systems.<sup>206</sup>

I have so far tried to explain a theoretical understanding as to why Germany holds the positions it does today, most specifically within its institutions such as the DFB, which helps us understand the transparency found within the country today and throughout the last century. Perceptions of legitimacy are important in shaping the drives within a capitalist society such as Germany and the measures that are taken in order to continue the transparent outlook on politics and economics moving forward. In the following section, I dive into an analysis of the last 50 years of German football and observe its connections to the political world, a first-person account on the perceptions of the German populace on their government administrations, and the impact it has had on the views on corruption within the country.

### **Fußball within Germany Today: (1950-Present)**

There is no doubt that football within Germany has continued to be a pivotal part of the culture and an influence on the populace today. What has this meant in the grand scheme of things in terms of football's influence in the political world? Has football continued to be separate from politics as seen prior to the rise of National Socialism in Germany? These are some of the questions I aimed to answer when I spent six months traveling around Germany from August to December 2019.

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<sup>206</sup> Carl Schmitt, *Theorist for the Reich* (Princeton University Press, 1983); ibid.

Leading up to my fall semester in Darmstadt, Germany, I was almost certain that I would find out more on corruption cases of the footballing world within the country. I had spent months leading up to my time abroad trying to find examples within Germany resembling the corruption ties between government and football officials seen in Latin America. However, no matter how hard I looked, I was not able to find anything truly significant that represented the ties I had found within Argentina. Perhaps the occasional match fixing scandal or football violence story, but nothing of substance could truly be found.<sup>207</sup> Despite this being so, I felt as though much of what goes unreported within news and journal articles could be heard on the streets by talking to people.

To my surprise, even after months of being there and talking with journalists, authors, German friends and professors, I still was not able to find anything of great substance. Everyone seemed almost taken aback at the thought of their government being involved in corruption scandals, and many times I was questioned as to why I was performing this study. It later became apparent to me that the reason why Germans felt this way was because of the influence the state has had and enforced on the legitimacy of its governance systems. This was truly representative of Streeck's points regarding the belief in a system's legitimacy. If we look at cases of corruption over the past few decades, we notice that the number one priority of the government is to ensure a transparent investigation on these matters. To show as an example, in a recent bribery and corruption case of Bundestag public officials, the anti-corruption organization *Transparency Deutschland*, openly informed the public on the briefing of the case and welcomed the investigation to the public prosecutor's office in Frankfurt.<sup>208</sup> While this case is not significant

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<sup>207</sup> Diana Magnay, "Soccer Match-Fixing Trial Begins in Germany," CNN 2010.

<sup>208</sup> Christou; Transparency International, "Transparency Germany Welcomes Corruption Investigation into Karin Strenza and Eduard Lintner," (Transparency International, 2020).

to my study, it goes to show that the procedures taken when it comes to matters of corruption tend to be open to the public and are informative in a way that guarantees the populace is aware at all times what occurs within an investigation, especially when it deals with government officials.

If we take a look at the Beckenbauer investigation, it is an interesting case in how it has been dealt with by the public and government, and the impacts it has had on the perceptions of Germans. Here we see the government play its part in reporting the facts to the German public and openly discussing an upcoming trial for *Der Kaiser*. However, if we see where the case is today, we understand that even after 5 years of investigations, there still has not been a trial mainly due to Beckenbauer's deteriorating health. The impact this has on the public from my perspective is that the people feel as though the government has already played its part in ensuring justice, being that the accused was obligated to pay back the money laundered, and are almost satisfied with that alone. However, the truth is that this is still an ongoing investigation that has yet to be fully prosecuted. Despite this being so, I still aimed at determining why Germans hold the attitudes they did toward the footballing world and the lack of connections between politics and the sporting world. The rest of this chapter therefore aims at understanding how football has developed in Germany over the last fifty years, its limited political influence, small cases of corruption, and the impact on the population's attitudes toward their bureaucracy.

#### *Post War Germany, the 1974 World Cup, and Corruption*

Football within Germany maintained a steady cultural backing throughout the twentieth century, even through the hard times of the Second World War. Despite this popular support, the sport had yet to become professionalized. It was not until 1950s that the country started taking

the initiative toward professionalizing football, or start forming what is today known as the top division of football within Germany. Up until this point, regulations within the DFB went for the most part unrestricted, as many of the rules specifically dealing with player wages and transfer fees had not been strictly enforced. It is known that DFB during this time had failed to act against the more affluent clubs that “undermined the system of maximum wages and illegally paid money to outstanding players to encourage them to leave a club.”<sup>209</sup> Despite some minor scandals and accusations, “the DFB did – hardly anything” and the German Football Association simply raised maximum transfer fees, player shares, and increased bonds in order to “enable the governing body to look more closely into deals.”<sup>210</sup> [How was this received by the public?]

In 1963, the first division German football league was created, the *Bundesliga*, and with it came an oligarchy among all big clubs within the division. In other words, these big clubs assumed an oligarchical role amongst all football organizations being that as a result of their emergence, many of the smaller local clubs lost their symbolic significance with their communities, and as a result caused the sport to lose its grass roots with the working class. What followed was a shift of the sport toward middle class culture, meaning a shift away from the proletariat working classes, and a complete reinterpretation on the significance of football. It was so noteworthy that, as Merkel writes, “The players, once local heroes, became national stars; the supporters turned into fans; the clubs changed into business houses. This gradual loss of economic and social closeness to the working class world also meant a complete change in the relationship between club, player and supporter.”<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Merkel, "The 1974 and 2006 World Cups in Germany: Commonalities, Continuities and Changes."

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.; Hesse-Lichtenberger. Pg. 155

<sup>211</sup> Merkel, "The 1974 and 2006 World Cups in Germany: Commonalities, Continuities and Changes."

This movement was pivotal toward what was to follow in the proceeding decade surrounding the 1974 World Cup in West Germany. As touched upon in the introduction of the chapter, the international footballing tournament witnessed unprecedented levels of commercialization more than ever before. This was not only significant toward the World Cup in Germany, but in the bigger picture was monumental for the future of football globally. “Never before,” Merkel recalls, “had so many players been involved in advertising and marketing campaigns, publicly praising the benefits of certain petrol brands, toys, sweets and many other products.”<sup>212</sup> This period marked the ascension of Adidas as a major sporting brand, most noteworthy for having sponsored the German national team and paid all of its players 10,000 Deutschmarks for wearing the company’s boots. It is also known that the entire World Cup was broadcast in color, something that had not truly been done before. As a result of the high amounts of propaganda, “FIFA and the German Football Association made about 100 million Deutschmark as a result of more than one hundred contracts with sponsors.”<sup>213</sup> While this specific tournament was known for its major commercial profits, it is important to understand that this was not an economic phenomenon that appeared out of the blue, but rather took years to develop, especially earlier in the 1970s as the German Football Association and its affiliates expanded.

With an expanding internal infrastructure within the DFB and higher economic incentives came cases of corruption within the *Bundesliga*. The commercialization of the sport had expanded more than ever before, so much that during these years economic activities took place unnoticed and away from the public eye. There had been rumors that the *Bundesliga* was involving itself in acts of corruption during this time, but it was not until the 1970-1971 season

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid. Pg. 17

<sup>213</sup> Ibid. Pg. 18

that the gossip was confirmed to be true. The President of the *Offenbacher Kickers* club, Horst Gregorio Canellas, had revealed to his guests, many of whom were journalists at his birthday party, that multiple matches throughout the season had been fixed for high amounts of money.<sup>214</sup> Canellas had provided evidence that was “unambiguous and convincing, as he had taped a number of telephone conversations with players from Berlin, Cologne and Braunschweig. They were not only willing to engage in match-fixing, but demanded large sums of cash to lose important matches.”<sup>215</sup>

When the investigations were done, it was determined that over one million Deutschemarks had been passed around in order to manipulate the outcomes of eighteen matches. It was not until five years later after the World Cup that other players admitted their involvement in the scandal. As a result, both the *Offenbach* and *Bielefeld* clubs lost their licenses, and other teams that were involved had many of their top players banned.<sup>216</sup> It was understood that “two clubs, two managers, five administrators, and 52 players from seven clubs were punished.”<sup>217</sup> This as a result caused an extreme loss in attendance during the following season and a growing lack of popularity of the *Bundesliga*. In less than three years, however, the DFB seemingly stopped caring about the case in order to promote the upcoming World Cup. The investigation was declared to be over with and even pardoned some of the footballers so that they could participate in the international tournament.<sup>218</sup>

Despite prominent scandals seen throughout German footballing history, it appears that the populace has been willing to forgive and forget. The underlying assumption would be that it

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<sup>214</sup> Hesse-Lichtenberger. Pg. 156

<sup>215</sup> Merkel, "The 1974 and 2006 World Cups in Germany: Commonalities, Continuities and Changes."

<sup>216</sup> Ibid. Pg. 20

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

is due to their belief in the legitimacy of their institutions, and as long as somebody is held responsible for their actions, that everything will continue to be okay. This was evident in the professionalization of football within Germany, the corruption scandals involving match fixing, and even today with the Beckenbauer case reflected in the introduction. German football has continued to grow since the 70s and continues to be a powerhouse amongst footballing leagues around the world. How this evolution has shaped the sport today and what are its dynamics both culturally and economically in Germany?

### Fußball & Politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Over the last fifty years, football or “Fußball” has become a highly profiting sport within Germany. In 2019 alone, the *Bundesliga* has generated more than \$4.33 billion dollars in revenue, a 5.44 percent increase since the previous year, and the 15<sup>th</sup> consecutive season of record revenue.<sup>219</sup> In the 2018-2019 footballing season, *Bayern Munich*, the largest, most popular, and often most victorious of clubs within Germany, gained a net profit of 660.1 million euros.<sup>220</sup> Among all European clubs, they ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the top 20 for most revenue generated, trailing behind *FC Barcelona*, *Real Madrid* (both in Spain), and Manchester United (in England), three of the biggest and widely regarded best football clubs in the world. It is safe to say that the DFB and German football has continued to be a highly profitable industry within Europe, as well as continued to have a major cultural backing.

With higher amounts of revenue than ever before, it justifiable to question whether or not there has been any influence from the political on the footballing world and vice versa since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his book, *Ersatzspielfelder* or translated to English “Replacing Playing

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<sup>219</sup> Fistpost, "Germany's Bundesliga Clubs Exceed 4 Billion Euros in Revenue for First Time," news release, February 19, 2020, 2020, <https://www.firstpost.com/sports/germany-s-bundesliga-clubs-exceed-4-billion-euros-in-revenue-for-first-time-8057751.html>.

<sup>220</sup> David Lange, "Top Football Clubs Revenue in Europe 2018/19," ed. Statista (2020).

*Fields*”, Timm Beichelt aims to understand where football stands within the political and economic world, within Europe and also within Germany. He argues that football in Germany serves as a way to understand the balance between politics and society. He says, “...the internal structure of the football policy field is characterized by a mutual dependence of state institutions and football players. The reasons for this dependency are to be found in the extremely high level of football players with economic and social capital...But even without a detailed analysis of these reasons, it can already be seen that football has some lessons for our understanding of the balance between politics and society.”<sup>221</sup> Despite this being so, this is not a desired outcome within the German bureaucracy. As the President of the Bundestag, Wolfgang Schäuble, has said before, “politics [should] leave football alone and [...] also trust that football can do a lot better than politics.”<sup>222</sup> This goes to show the attitudes that I have elaborated on in regards to perceptions on public vs. private sectors within Germany remain in line with Streeck’s points. Germans understand that this connection between football and politics should remain separate from one and other, as this presents a dangerous scenario for rises in corruption at the political level.

Football in Germany today tries to shy away from politics as much as possible, so much that the DFB committee have openly staged their association’s autonomy as non-political.<sup>223</sup> Much of this has to do with accusations against the German Football Association for having been too close to the Nazi regime. In response, the association countered with a statement indicating

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<sup>221</sup> Timm Beichelt, *Ersatzspielfelder: Zum Verhältnis Von Fußball Und Macht* ed. Suhrkamp Verlag AG (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag AG, 2018). Pg. 72

<sup>222</sup> Wolfgang Schäuble, ““Enjoyment of Soccer, Policy Competence and Security Issues. Wolfgang Schäuble in Conversation with Uwe Baumann and Dittmar Dahlmann)”, in *Header, throw-in, injury time. Discussions and contributions on the topicality and history of football*, ed. Uwe Baumann / Dittmar Dahlmann (2008).

<sup>223</sup> Beichelt. Pg. 55

that its interests solely lied in purely sporting motives.<sup>224</sup> Today, the furthest extent to which football associates with politics can be seen through a conference held every three years sponsored by the Sports Committee of the Bundestag. The meeting typically has executive board members of the DFB, delegates of state and regional associations, judiciary bodies and auditors to regulate and overlook the sessions. The meetings are established in order to carry out the following mission, delineated by the Chairwoman of the Sports Committee, Dagmar Freitag:

*“Supporting and funding the framework for elite sport is at the heart of the Sports Committee’s work. This includes discussing effective systems to preserve the integrity of sport, and in particular to fight doping in sport, for example. Of course, the Sports Committee also deals with the importance of sport in other areas of life, such as education, health, integration and the economy. It maintains close links with sports federations, a wide variety of other organisations and external experts, enabling it to give impetus to sports policy and support legislative processes.”<sup>225</sup>*

Despite the mission of the DFB to remain apolitical, and the mission of the Sports Committee of the Bundestag to develop sports policy, there are moments in recent history that have caused challenges for these institutions and further demonstrate cases of corruption in Germany. This can be seen particularly in the last ten years with the football club Bayern Munich. In April of 2013, it was discovered that the long-time manager and eventual president of the football club, Uli Hoeneß, had evaded 28.5 million euros in taxes by opening multiple Swiss

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Deutscher Bundestag, ed. The Sports Committee (Germany: Deutscher Bundestag, 2020).

bank accounts.<sup>226</sup> In these accounts, it became clear that they included his own capital, but also substantial funds from the temporary CEO of Adidas at the time, Robert Louis-Dreyfus. Hoeneß was sentenced to three and a half years in prison, but only served half of his term.<sup>227</sup> This is not the first instance of a member of Bayern Munich having dealt with corrupt acts or acts of misconduct, as we are already aware of the case of a former president of the club, Franz Beckenbauer. A third case of misconduct can be seen with a former CEO of the club, Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, as he was caught trying to smuggle two watches worth a total of €100,000 euros past customs in 2013 and was fined €250,000 and criminally cited as a result.<sup>228</sup>

Although these acts of corruption seem individually motivated, they can also be seen as political in that they represent the capital power and greed that football possesses today. If we look at how Bayern Munich had been promoted by Rummenigge, we understand he often referenced and praised the club as a “very good example for serious and solid financial policy” and exemplary for national governing institutions.<sup>229</sup> As Timm Bechelt questions, however, “Have the three people (Hoeneß, Beckenbauer, Rummenigge) who were absolute top players and top earners, and who were able to exercise power as long-standing officials, lost their sense of the circumstances and therefore think they no longer feel bound by social decency and state laws? Or we should rather see them as private slips that have little to do with the big picture?” The way I see this is that these three individuals are representations of the economic and even political power of football. Each of them are or at some point were high ranking football officials with access to large amounts of capital, and much influence on German society, especially with

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<sup>226</sup> Bechelt. Pg. 75

<sup>227</sup> "Former Bayern Munich President Uli Hoeness Released from Prison," in *The Guardian* (The Guardian, February 2016).

<sup>228</sup> Stephan Uersfeld, "Karl-Heinz Rummenigge Accepts Fine," in *ESPN* (ESPN, 2013).

<sup>229</sup> Bechelt. Pg. 55

the cultural power the sport holds today. In the following chapter, I will question the capital power football holds day specifically through FIFA, and how the sport is able to resort to high amounts of capital in trying times within a global pandemic scenario as seen with the rise in COVID-19.

These circumstances within Germany show the power and influence the sport holds today. Even in a highly transparent system that emphasizes the diminishing of corruption within all spheres of society, football has the capability of allowing individuals to rise to these positions of power where they feel immune to social decency and state laws. This is not only the case with individuals that hold high rankings within the footballing world, but can also to some extent be seen through the violent actions of radical fan groups within Germany known as *Ultras*. These groups of hooligans can serve as a representation of how political thought can be incorporated into football within Germany, especially with their ongoing opposition to Islamic migration within the country. In the following section, I will discuss their roll within the footballing world, which in part reflects their political views.

### Ultras

Despite the institutional break down of far right political thought in Germany through the process of Denazification, the country today continues to witness expressions of these political ideologies in football stadiums seen through the actions of Ultras. Before diving into examples demonstrating how these groups of people bring their ideologies to the sporting world, we need to understand that Ultras are a product of the globalization of football. Their beliefs are rooted in British hooliganism and are a product of the media that has unconsciously contributed to their expansion through reports often dealing with the effects of their actions, shrouding their broader

political thought process.<sup>230</sup> While the background of their origin is not necessary in regards to the analysis on Ultra ideology, it is worth noting for the sake of further understanding how they have been able to expand over the past decades, and maintain the numbers they do today. This will be important in later grasping the gravity of their actions and the impact they have on the political movements they support.

In 2017, thousands of Dynamo Dresden Ultras, an eastern German club in the second division of the *Bundesliga*, stormed the city of Karlsruhe protesting against the DFB establishment, as the association actively has worked toward diminishing the growing Ultra numbers. While many praised the Ultras for their passionate behavior in support of their club, they completely failed to understand that many of these individuals are supporters of the German nationalist, anti-Islam, far right political movement in Germany known as PEGIDA, or, “Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West.” The political movement arose in response to the increasing numbers of Islamic refugees in Germany due to the Syrian Refugee Crisis in 2015.<sup>231</sup> This is important within the footballing world for various reasons. While these protests do not make the DFB itself political, Dresden fans are bringing politics to the footballing world through violent acts and displaying of far-right banners, something undesirable for the association considering its past history and present mission. Often during Dresden matches, banners displaying the number 88 are waved, a number that is common amongst right wing extremism, as Ben Knight writes: “8 is for the eighth letter in the alphabet - H. 88 is HH. HH is an abbreviation for *Heil Hitler* and is very commonly used in such groups and cultures.”<sup>232</sup>

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<sup>230</sup> Axel Falk, "Right-Wing Extremism in Eastern German Ultras," *Bundesliga Fanatic*, <http://bundesligafanatic.com/20171115/understanding-right-wing-extremism-in-german-ultras/>.

<sup>231</sup> Ben Knight, "German Issues in a Nutshell: Pegida," in *German Election* (2017).

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

While these Ultra groups do not display as sophisticated an organization as the hierarchical system found within the *Barras Bravas* groups in Latin America, they are known for having carried out “massive attacks” against opposing fans, and even police officers during matches.<sup>233</sup> At a match between *Borussia Dortmund* and *Dresden Dynamo* in 2011, the Ultra groups caused a violent upheaval resulting in 17 injuries, two of which were police officers, and \$27,800 worth of stadium damages.<sup>234</sup> This had been the 5<sup>th</sup> time that season that the Dresden fans had engaged in acts of violence. Despite the constant problems caused by this group and their recognized affiliation with right wing extremism, *Dresden Dynamo* as an institution has yet to denounce the Ultras, while other actors such as the Mayor and the University of Dresden have.<sup>235</sup> The only response they have released in regards to the political affiliation of this group has been to say that, “The professional sports teams of the city of Dresden are politically neutral. The clubs from Dresden stand for acceptance and respect, and we are against discrimination, the fear of foreigners, and against racism.”<sup>236</sup>

This type of behavior is not only limited to Dresden Ultras, but can also be seen in other parts of East Germany, such as in Chemnitz (*Chemnitzer FC*) or in the West in the city of Dortmund (*Borussia Dortmund*). In the end, right wing extremism is a big deal in German football, however it is only really prominent in the east, as the western cities and clubs have done their best to eradicate it.<sup>237</sup> As seen through the lack of action of some institutions within the

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<sup>233</sup> DW, "Dynamo Dresden Struggles to Shake Off Hooligans," (DW.com, 2011).

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Niklas Wildhagen, "Groundhog Day for Dynamo: How Pegida Protests Put the Club in a Bind," Bundesliga Fanatic, <http://bundesligafanatic.com/20150120/groundhog-day-for-dynamo-how-the-pegida-protests-put-the-club-in-a-bind/>.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

east, such as with *Dresden Dynamo*, these political ideologies remain, more so in some places than in others. If these acts continue, clubs could see a complete loss of reputation for enabling these violent settings, and witness the second hand effects of what occurs when politics crosses into the sporting world.

### **Germany on the International Stage**

This chapter so far has attempted to show how the internal separation of the private and public industries, most specifically through football, has contributed toward the transparency of Germany's institutions and prevented corruption for the most part from becoming an existential threat to the governing body found within the country. It is no surprise that this is reflected within the *Transparency International* rankings, as Germany ranks 11<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries with a Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of 80 out of 100.<sup>238</sup> Looking at other countries found within this index, none rank above a score of 90. That is to say, to some extent corruption is present in all countries, however it is found in different quantities. This being said, Germany undoubtedly has experienced problems with corruption as seen through the acts within the footballing world. However, those acts of corruption have not been as prominent within the industry to take away from the DFB's legitimacy as a transparent institution. To show the lengths that football within Germany has aimed to take in preventing the abuse of public office by politicians, club presidents and board members, for the sake of their personal political and financial gain, or what I consider my operative definition of corruption, the following section will look at the system of checks and balances within the European football world.

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<sup>238</sup> IMF, "Corruption Perceptions Index," ed. Transparency International (2018).

### **The DFB and FIFA**

Despite football in Germany being separate from politics in almost every sense possible, there are aspects about European football's governing structures that act very much in a political way in order to maintain transparency. The legal rules that govern football are not just limited to a national German context, but also internationally. All associations follow a strict set of guidelines when governing their own footballing leagues.

As explained by Beichelt, "Football clubs, which generally exist in Germany as larger member clubs, must in turn be members of regional and / or national umbrella organizations such as the German Football Association (DFB) in order to be able to participate in regular game operations."<sup>239</sup> The DFB, in turn, is a member of the European Football Union or UEFA and the World Football Association of FIFA, as we know it. UEFA is also a member of FIFA, as well as five other continental associations such as The South American Football Association, or, CONMEBOL. For teams within the DFB, this governmental structure means that teams or clubs are subject to a series of control systems if they are to participate in separate sporting events. To give an example, if a team is part of the youth and amateur regional associations, and participates in the major European competitions such as the Europa League or Champions League, they are overseen by the *Ligaverband* and its subsidiary *Deutsche Fußball Liga* (DFL).

Why is this system of governance important? First of all, more so than anywhere in the world, Europe has the most overseeing institutions as it contains the highest number of member associations within UEFA at a total of 54 members.<sup>240</sup> For the sake of comparing, CONMEBOL only has 10 associations. The second reason why this is important is that it gives us an idea on

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<sup>239</sup> Beichelt. Pg. 53

<sup>240</sup> "Uefa Member Associations," UEFA, <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/member-associations/>.

the magnitude of the 2006 Beckenbauer case. How was it possible for something of this caliber to occur, especially with all of the overseeing institutions within Europe and even Germany? Typically, more petty cases, such as the one involving Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, are dealt internally within the association, in this case the DFB. However, when corruption comes from above in the umbrella institution, FIFA, it makes one question how the associations beneath it have dealt with the issue. In the case of *Der Kaiser*, the FIFA ethics committee has over the past 15 years investigated its own workings, as well as those of the DFB. As a result, DFB associates Fedor Radmann and Andreas Abold were charged for allowing the misappropriation of money in order to allow and ensure Germany's ability to host the World Cup. At the same time, the DFB paid back the taxes to the German government owed by Beckenbauer and his associates. It is the many divisions within these interlinked associations that allows for a system of checks, as well as allows for transparency if corruption is able to find a way to take place. When covering perceptions of corruption within Germany, we can understand now that part of the contributing factor for these mentalities can be attributed to the systems of governance not just at the political level, but also in the interlinked international footballing administrations seen through FIFA, UEFA, and the DFB. Politics and governance systems are important for shaping the perceptions of governance and corruption in Germany, but ultimately football is a solidifying factor for the continuation on the perceptions on transparency due to its cultural backing.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to demonstrate ways that Germany and the DFB have been able to limit corrupt acts within their institutions and associations. No country is free from corruption, but some are able to keep it in check better than others. In Germany, as seen through a theoretical

application of Wolfgang Streeck, the transparency and lack of corruption within its institutions has been possible through the continuity and reapplication of the separation between the public and private spheres. In some instances, we see a little bit of an overlap; however as the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed into the 21<sup>st</sup>, the country has been able to keep both industries separate.

In turn, the continuance of these practices have influenced perceptions of corruption within Germany, as seen through my personal experiences having done research in the country, as well as the perspectives found within the scholarly investigations of German authors such as Beichelt, Merkel, and Streeck. Within the footballing world, keeping the political institutions out of the private has allowed for transparency within the DFB and even its umbrella association UEFA. Political institutions do not meddle with the endeavors of the footballing world within Germany; however, they are the pillars that keep the structure standing that is the DFB. Without the pillars that are the Sports Committee of the Bundestag, a government institution, the structure of the DFB has the potential of falling into unethical practices that could result in actions of corruption. However, to reiterate one of Streeck's points regarding the separation of the public and private sectors in the 1990s, "only the private sector was capable of properly attending to the changing needs of a richer and more demanding clientele, and that the best thing the state could do under the circumstances was to step out of the way, shut down its primitive-utilitarian facilities and invite private business in to provide colour, fun and, above all, freedom of choice."<sup>241</sup> For the reasons established within Streeck's text, the sporting world will continually aim to diminish the opportunities for ambitious politicians and individuals in high governmental positions to further pursue personal political and financial gain.

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<sup>241</sup> Streeck.

## Chapter 5:

### Conclusion

Writing a Master's Thesis on Politics, Fútbol, and Corruption has been a journey over the past two years. This part of my graduate studies has given me the opportunity to merge my academic interests with my personal ones, and has taught me many valuable lessons on the way. The research I have done throughout the course of my Master's seemingly shifted in direction every time I further explored this topic, and led me to pursue different angles that I found would be valuable in contributing to discourses on governance systems and corruption within the field of Political Science. Furthermore, this conclusion will cover the ways in which the focus of my research shifted from the time I began writing in 2018, to when I completed it in 2020. Additionally, I will highlight the findings that I found most valuable, and lastly will discuss the future of this research moving forward.

#### **Academic Progression**

Initially, the research I aimed to do had been focused on the study of corruption and how it functioned within political systems in Latin America. Due to my Argentine background and my experiences living within the country, I felt inspired to focus primarily on my ancestral home and understand why it is that Argentina today faces problems of political corruption as well as over the course of its history. At the same time, I was aware of the impact of football on politics, in that I was living within the country during the period of *Fútbol Para Todos* and the Kirchner administration's ties with Julio Grondona. Despite this being so, I wanted to make this a comparative study and understand if and how this phenomenon functioned within the European

context. My aim initially as you have seen throughout my writing was to prove that countries located and considered to be part of the “Global North”, at the root of it all experienced the same issues regarding corruption within political administrations as countries in the “Global South”.

When I was offered the opportunity to do research in Germany in the fall of 2019, I knew that this would be the country for the comparative angle I would take in my thesis. My goal was to find out all there was about corruption within German political systems, and understand how football fit within that context. My logic was that due to the economic powerhouse and cultural sway of the sport all over Europe, I was bound to find information that would be beneficial in comparison to my analysis of corruption within politics and football in Argentina. I believed using Germany for my research would be ideal in that the country, as we have seen on the CPI, ranked amongst the governments in the world that least experienced institutional corruption.<sup>242</sup> My thought process was if I could demonstrate Germany experienced the same phenomenon as that in Argentina, this would contribute to dialogues on redefining Political Science terms regarding what constitutes a country from the “Global North” vs. “Global South”.

Unfortunately, I was proven wrong in that after months in Germany, I was unable to find an indicator truly resembling corruption at the political level facilitated by the sport. For these reasons, as seen in Chapter 2, *Football, Identity, and the State*, I aimed to further explore what were the conditions that allowed for football in Argentina to serve as a vessel for corruption to flourish within the political world, and why that political scenario was not replicated within Germany. As indicated within my analysis tying in Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities*, the answer became apparent to me through an understanding of migration within Latin America and Europe. We understand that migration in Argentina had ideologically separated to some

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<sup>242</sup> IMF, "Corruption Perceptions Index."

extent governing institutions from the growing Argentine nation, caused a growing skepticism of political society within the country that in turn acclimated the populace and governing system to distrustful actions such as illicit and corrupt political acts. This is so in that by the state trying to create obstacles for incoming Italian, Spaniard, and Latin American immigrants (groups who were not considered ethnically white) in order to keep a homogeneous society, it created a divide where the nation was able to grow in a unified fashion, under one identity that was characterized by a distrust in public institutions. Even in moments where the state worked toward shaping discourses on identity of what it meant to be Argentine, it would not last long as regimes came and went, and often contradicted each other's objectives surrounding nationhood. This is apparent for example in the shift from Peronist ideals to the time Alfonsín was elected, and again at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>243</sup>

In contrast, migration in Germany has been a relatively recent phenomenon that has started infringing in the eyes of some on what it means to be German, as seen through the rise of the PEGIDA movement. Throughout German history, as reflected in the DFB constitution and ideals pushed forward since the time of Bismarck, the state and its institutions helped shape perceptions of national identity and political society.<sup>244</sup> Later during times of the Third Reich, we see the extreme case of the state influencing perceptions of political society via racial violence, and witness the continual framing of German identity by the government. Unlike Argentina, the country does not experience a wave of immigration post-fascism, and Germany after expelling the Jewish population is more racially and ethnically homogeneous than ever. This notion is continuous until the turn of the century with the growing Turkish and Syrian population within

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<sup>243</sup> Hau; *ibid.* Pg. 482

<sup>244</sup> Merkel, "The Hidden Social and Political History of the German Football Association (Dfb), 1900–50." Pg. 178

the country. Here we understand that even in moments where German identity is at stake, the mutual trust between the state and the nation endures, in that the populace continues to look up to the government for guidance, as seen with the AfD.

In the end, despite my narratives and research having circulated around corruption in the footballing world in Argentina, and how I aimed at comprehending the same study within the German context, it is xenophobia and hyper-nationalism within Europe (and to some extent within Argentina) that gets cultivated through football. At root of it all, instead of football being a venue for corruption to take place, the sport becomes a substitute for intolerant attitudes toward migration that ultimately impacts perceptions within political society.

### **Important Findings**

When writing this Master's Thesis, I knew I was not going to find new information that had not already been discovered or written about within the field of Political Science. In other words, I was not going to re-invent the wheel within my writing. However, I knew I was approaching this study from a perspective that has not often been covered within this concentration. For that reason, I want to bring up a point mentioned in my introduction, regarding one of my guiding claims that football associations can represent how political and economic institutions lack transparency and accountability in Argentina.<sup>245</sup>

While this is true for Argentina, the Germany case did not follow the same conclusions. However, what I did notice after the research was completed was Germany's transparency could be reflected even within the sporting institutions. This being said, within the context of this study, football remains a microcosm of the larger political and economic picture within

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<sup>245</sup> Orjales. Pg. 2

respective states. Verónica Gago's points were pivotal in helping understand how neoliberalism affected Argentina in a way that allows for a rise in illicit markets, in her case "La Salada", and in mine the murky football industry. On the other hand, Wolfgang Streeck was pivotal in helping me understand attitudes held toward private and public spheres within Germany, and how the footballing world was able to remain separate from the political, avoiding further corrupt developments between parties.

This being said, I do find it rather fascinating how these two unrelated topics, sports and politics, somehow find a way to be interconnected and in my case are able to help understand perceptions of corruption within political society. Therefore, I do believe there is more research moving forward that could be done and benefit the aspects of political science that look into sporting institutions, particularly football.

### **Moving Forward**

While my study comes to a halt here, I do believe there are a couple of things that could be beneficial for the future of this research. The angle I took as we have seen is mainly focused on a bivariate comparison with Argentina and Germany. I do believe that there could be more to learn from a multivariate analysis looking into the same phenomenon within other countries. Perhaps somewhere like Italy or Spain could be beneficial in that they can link to the Argentine case for sharing cultural similarities, and can connect with the German case for fitting within the European context.

Also, despite there being a separation in between both case studies in that one is Latin American and the other is European, both Argentina and Germany resemble depictions of Western ideology and political governance systems. It would be valuable to try and understand

this research from perhaps an Asian or even Middle Eastern context, where the footballing industries are growing at an incredible rate, as seen recently with high caliber players transferring to these leagues in order to finish out their careers.<sup>246</sup> This being said, there are so many angles that can be taken when understanding the connections between football and politics, especially as one looks into different countries, their unique histories, and current political systems. I do hope that whoever it is that decides to pursue this angle moving forward finds my research valuable, and continues pushing forward with this analysis on discourses of corruption, politics, and migration within political science.

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<sup>246</sup> Ante Jukic, "David Villa Joins Ex-Barcelona Team-Mate Iniesta at Vissel Kobe," *GOAL* 2018.

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