

**UNIDAD EDUCATIVA PARTICULAR JAVIER
BACHILLERATO EN CIENCIAS**

MONOGRAPH

**Positive and negative influence of “barras bravas” in Latin America in the 21st
century.**

STUDENT:

Juan Sebastian Jarrin

ADVISER: Claudia Lossa

THIRD OF BACCALAUREATE - COURSE A

2017 – 2018

Gratitude

First of all, I want to thank God who always gave me strength to be able to reach my objectives. I would like to thank my parents for giving me life and for being the ones that are always with me in my good and bad moments, without them I would not be the person that I am right now.

This monograph was a really good experience for my personal and academic life because it let me research more about a topic that is really important for me.

Summary

The author chose this topic to have the opportunity to investigate more about the influence that *barras bravas* cause on the South American culture, he chose it because he has a lot of interest on it since he was a young boy. By doing this work the author got more information about this subject and he could also analyze it from another perspective

In this monography, the author starts by writing the definition of the subject and also talks about how the *barras bravas* were created in South America. The author writes about many dates so the reader can understand that there is not really an official date or a specific place where they were created but it specifies that they were probably created on Argentina or Brazil.

On the second chapter the author gives more general point of view about how the *barras bravas* are considered really dangerous people and writes about the reality of two countries, he writes about Ecuador because it is the country where he lives and Argentina because it is the country where *barras bravas* are something really common. So he analyzes how the society reacts to this social issue on each country. The author also writes about the history of the most dangerous *barras* of each country

And finally on the third chapter the author shows the results of a poll made to 60 persons of the Unidad Educativa Javier (high school where he studies). He made this so he could analyze what high school persons think about barras bravas. By doing this survey the author also achieved that now more people are informed about the definition of a *barra brava*, he wanted to do this because there is a lot of people that does not know what they are like the ones who do not like soccer at all.

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER I.....	3
Creation of barras bravas.....	3
1.1 In South America.....	3
CHAPTER II.....	7
Most dangerous <i>barras bravas</i>	7
2.1 South America.....	7
2.1.1 Argentina.....	7
2.1.1.1 Los borrachos del tablón.....	8
2.1.1.1.1 Jugador número 12.....	11
2.1.2 Ecuador.....	13
2.1.2.1 Sur oscura.....	14
CHAPTER III.....	16
What does the society thinks about the ‘barras bravas’?.....	16
3.1 Survey.....	16
3.1.1 Analysis of the survey.....	19
CONCLUSIONS.....	21
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	23
BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES.....	24

Introduction

The following monograph, named Positive and negative influence of “barras bravas” in Latin America in the 21st century, has as a main objective to explain how the *barras* influence in the Latin American soccer and how they are part of our culture. On this monograph I also try to let clear that there is a lot of people that really likes *barras* and also a lot of people that does not. It is a really important topic because it is something that we see daily, the good things and the bad things that a *barra brava* does in our society should be a topic that should have more importance.

I choose this topic because since I was kid I remembered I always wanted to be part of a *barra brava* as many other kids, but when I started growing up I realized that I still wanted to be part of a *barra* but I also realize that I wanted to know more about all the bad things that a *barra* has and why a lot of people think they are so bad. So I take advantage of this work to investigate more about a topic that I consider really interesting so I could know more things and have a better knowledge about it.

There have been many studies about this topic and most of them specify the same thing, that the *barras bravas* are a negative thing on the society and do not influence in any positive way in it because they are known for doing bad things. But there are also many people who support that

they are really necessary to keep that special and different way of living soccer in South America. Nevertheless the percentage of persons that believe that the *barras bravas* are something bad is bigger than the percentage of the ones who do not believe that.

This is a social issue with a lot of history because it is something that causes a lot of problems on a lot of countries of South America like Argentina, Ecuador, Colombia, etc. Since the *barras bravas* were created, the way that soccer is lived in South America has changed a lot. The *barras* have a lot of negative aspects that have influenced in the society like lots of fights that sometimes even have deaths, the drug dealing, the crimes and all the physical and material damages that they cause.

The first chapter explains about when, where and how the *barras bravas* were created in South America. The second one explains the impact of the *barras bravas* in Argentina and then about the two most important *barras* of that country. It also explains the impact of the *barras* in Ecuador and about the most known *barras* of the country. The third chapter analyzes the answers of a survey that I made to 60 persons of Javier High School.

Chapter I

Creation of barras bravas

1.1 In South America

First of all, let's start this first chapter by analyzing what are the *barras bravas*. It is a group organized by the fans of a soccer club, a group that usually goes to the same location every match, they are the ones who use instruments like drums, trumpets, etc. They are always animating soccer games through songs that they create, they are always trying to make soccer games more exciting. They usually have flags and a variety of musical instruments, they are always located in the same place every match, the stands, you will never see a *barra brava* sit or watching the game on seats because their purpose is not watching the game, in fact, their goal is to encourage the players of the local team so they can feel a little bit of pressure to play better.

That's their way to influence in the outcome of the match. Most of them are people with critical economic situations that live in very dangerous areas of the city, areas where corruption and crime are a really normal thing.

There are lots of people that form a *barra brava* that are actually normal people that just create a *barra* because they want to share their love for their team with more people, they

have good intentions, but there is people who create *barras* because they want to get any anti ethical benefit for themselves but, why do they do this? According to Francisco Ferrandiz (2005) the formation of this groups represents the accumulation of a series of senses of belonging: carnivalized devotion, revelry, passion, transcendence, territorial identity, homage that wants to claim ethnic groups.

They live on places that are full of crimes and maybe that's why people believe that the members of a *barra* are always criminals or people related with social problems like drugs. They are characterized for being very tough people and for being really hard to control in complicated situations like fights inside the stadiums. There is a lot of variety in the ages of the persons who conform it , for example, in most of the countries in South America are usually young people between 16 and 25 years but in countries like Brazil or Argentina where this movement has been active for more years are usually older people over 30 years.

Their eagerness was not to sit in the chairs and arrive 5 minutes before the game started, for them the day that their teams played is a sacred rite in which they get to the stadium really early surrounded by lots of people. They were created encourage the team and to become the most loyal fans, those who are always in the stadium. They first started in Brazil, being known as *torcidas*, the first one was the *Flamengo charanga* (fans of the Brazilian soccer team *Flamengo*) created in the year 1942 by their leader Jaime Rodriguez do Carvalho, they

used to sing *samba* songs in the stands. This group is now known as *Raca rubro negra* and it is the most numerous *barra brava* in the world.

During the 1920s, in Argentina, small groups of fans were created in the stands, these small groups were later known as *barras bravas*. Why are they called by that name? Because the word *barras* means, in Spanish, a synonym of the word gang and *bravas* in English means brave. In Argentina they gave them this name because they were little gangs that were really aggressive people that were always causing problems inside and outside of the stadiums. The first time they were called by the name of *barras bravas* in Argentina was in 1958 when a person died in a fight caused by Velez Sarfield and River Plate fans. People started calling them *barras* and after so much problems and violence they will quickly get the name of *barras bravas*.

La barra de la goma was one of the first *barra brava* in the world, created in Argentina in the year 1927, they were fans of the soccer team *Club Atletico San Lorenzo de Almagro*. They were known by this name because they used to carry rubber tubes to fight with the fans of the opposite team. This group does not exist anymore. The current barra of San Lorenzo is called *La gloriosa butteler* and it is one of the best barra of the world. Nevertheless, this group is not considered as a *barra* because in that year *barras bravas* hadn't yet been created.

They are all over South America, in countries like Ecuador, Chile, Peru, Colombia, Paraguay, Uruguay, the aforementioned Brazil and Argentina and even in other places of America such as Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, etc. On each country, this phenomenon is experienced in a different way, there are countries with two or three real *barras* as they are small countries where few teams predominate, but there are also other bigger countries like Brazil or Argentina where there is more variety of soccer teams and a bigger population, in these countries most of the teams have a *barra*.

The existence of the *barras bravas* in South America can be seen as something good or something bad, your opinion could be that they are a group of people that want to make a soccer game a little bit more exciting, that they are people who are capable of doing everything just for the love they have for their teams, that they will always be there in good times and bad times. Most of the times this groups are actually conformed by good people that have really good intentions, normal people that do not want to cause problems and just want to animate their teams.

The creation of this phenomenon has lead America to be a continent where soccer it is not a normal sport, for example, in Europe people that are fans of two different teams can be in a stadium together and be very close to each other, here in South America you cannot do that all the time because South America, since the creation of *barras bravas*, is known for being a

continent that has a lot of problems because of soccer, sometimes in some countries is even a political problem. In Argentina when there is any soccer match the presence of the fans of the away team it is totally forbidden, this law has been active for almost 10 years and it was implemented because of the problems that were generated in the stadiums between fans of different teams, there were very serious problems, sometimes were just fights that left a lot of injured people and there were also problems with arms, drugs and even deaths.

There is also the other point of view which is defended by people who think that a *barra* is a criminal association or a gang that is formed by people who act as mercenaries that commit criminal acts. There are lots of people that are part of a *barra* just because they want to be leaders of something, sometimes they are not even fans of the team and they are just interested of the money that they can get or steal while they are there. In the end, this two point of view are valid but the only thing that is true is that *barras bravas* are already part of the way that soccer is lived in our continent, it is also part of our folklore and latin culture.

Chapter II

Most dangerous *barras bravas*

2.1 South America

2.1.1 Argentina.

This country is the first example because Argentina is where the most famous barras bravas are located and also where the oldest barras like the barras of teams like Boca Juniors or River Plate. It is a country that has a lot of teams, stadiums, really good players, and a much known barras, maybe, the best barras all around the world and the most dangerous too. As Schama said by Schama (1995). "The symbols and national identity would be incomplete and would lose much of their continuity and enchantment capacity without the mystique and tradition of a particular territory that is explored, mapped and lived becomes "home" (p. 15). He says this to explain how the national symbols would not be the same thing without the existence of the *barras bravas*.

It is a country where soccer is one of the most important things, maybe more important than social or politic issues and that is why there are lots of *barras bravas* in this country. Every soccer team in Argentina has a very popular and dangerous *barra brava*.

2.1.1.1 Los borrachos del tablón.

Since 2000 this *barra* is known for being one of the most respected *barras* all around the world, not just for their songs, support and show that they give on every match, they are a really respected *barra* because they were the ones who handled the biggest drug sale in Argentina in those years (in the stands). Club Atletico River Plate (CARP) it is one of the biggest teams all around the world because they have a lot of members, actually, is currently one of the teams that has the most number of members all around the world so that is the reason why this team has a very large organized *barra*, are characterized by providing a real show in the stands every time their team plays, they are always present in the good and bad moments.

And within all these members, there is the *barra* of River, a really dangerous *barra* that is known all around the world because of all the problems that they have caused since their creation and known also for being one of the best *barra* in the world. They are a really nationalistic *barra*, maybe the most nationalistic in Argentina, why? Because they like to include the national flag colors on most of their flags, and also the stadium of River Plate is where the professional

soccer team of Argentina plays, so they like to say that they are like the official *barra* of the national soccer team.

Writers say that:

It is the first time that the national symbols are included in the design through a representation of the Malvinas Islands as a catalyst element of that nationality. Implicitly an idea was expressed, an idea that would take a few months to materialize: "We are Argentina". That means, the members of the *barra brava* proclaimed River as the representative club and owner of Argentina. (Guzzo, 2016, p. 74)

He said this because that was the first time that the national colors were included on flag as a sign of unity by the barra of river and like saying that they are the official barra of the national soccer team.

Even when River Plate descended to the B series of Argentine soccer the fans of this team always were in the stadium supporting their team and had the best attendance of the year, beating their eternal rival Boca Juniors that was the champion of the A series of Argentine Soccer. They

are also known for going to every country their team plays, they have gone to Brazil, Paraguay, Ecuador and many other countries all around the world, in fact, 3 years ago they went to Japan to see their team playing the Club World Cup and they actually beat a record because near 20000 persons were on Japan for the competition and that is the biggest amount of people that have gone from South America to Japan to see this tournament.

The problem is that when they make all these trips with the intention of going to support their team, they carry with them drugs, alcohol, knives and sometimes even guns like one time non official *barra* of the team called 'la barra del oeste' on 2014, River was playing against Olimpia on La Plata (ARG) and they travelled from Buenos Aires City to La Plata and when they arrived the police stopped them at the entrance to the city and check their private cars in which they travelled. They found firearms and a lot of white weapons. Two bars were stopped and the rest was forced to return to the City of Buenos Aires under a big police custody to avoid crossing the official *barra brava* of the team of Núñez(River Plate) who also travelled to La Plata for the game.

Although this fact was about a non-official barra of the team, the official barra has a lot of problems like murders or criminal acts. Why do they have to do this? They think that they are going to a fight or a war instead of going to a normal soccer match where their only purpose

should be to support their team and animating the match with their songs and instruments. They are never going to a soccer match thinking like this, they are probably thinking about the moment when they would face the bar of the rival team so they could be ready to attack.

2.1.1.1.1 Jugador número 12.

This one is really similar to the *barra* of river, I think the only difference is the team, this *barra* is an official organized group of fans of the Argentine soccer team Club Atletico Boca Juniors (CABJ) who is the classic rival of River Plate, their rivalry should be just in the soccer field but they take this to another level and they always used to fight before and after every match, this match is called “El Superclasico” and it is known for being one of the most exciting soccer matches all around the world. Since this problem started the Argentine Soccer Federation took the decision of prohibiting the entrance of the fans of the away team on the stadiums.

The *barra* appears around the year 1969 with a leader that everyone knew as Cocusa but the official *barra* actually began to be a dangerous and recognized *barra* in the 80s when a white-haired man everyone knew as “El Abuelo” took the control of the *Jugador numero 12*. “El Abuelo” as said by Gustavo Grabia (2011) is the most famous myth among all the Argentine *barras bravas*.

The reign of El Abuelo would only last until the year 1994 since in that same year the barra of Jose Barrita (El Abuelo) had a fight with the *barra* of River Plate that left two dead and many arrested people including El Abuelo who was convicted by illicit association. Someone had to take control of the bar and that's how it was, Rafael di Zeo an old member of the bar became the new leader of *La 12*.

Now that we know the history of this anarchic group, we can deduce that it is one of the most powerful *barra brava* in the world, but we cannot ignore the fact that it is also one of the most dangerous since they have been involved on many problems with drugs and deaths in Argentina and all over South America.

In Argentina they have an old saying, “The *barras* are the owners of the team”. Why do they say that? Because in that country the managers of the team are used to give a lot of privileges because they know that the people that are part of the *barra* are usually really dangerous people so they like to give many different privileges to be sure that the *barra* will be in total harmony with the team managers. As said by Gustavo Grabia (2011) many years ago an old leader of *jugador numero 12* named Enrique Ocampo better known as Kike el Carnicero

received a lot of privileges like t-shirts signed by the players, tickets and even a monthly BBQ with the coach of the team of that year, Juan Carlos Lorenzo.

2.1.2Ecuador.

38 years ago, this social phenomenon appeared in Ecuador mainly in the city of Guayaquil, in the popular “Barrio del Astillero”, with the neighborhood teams, Barcelona Sporting Club (BSC) and Club Sport Emelec (CSE). The *barras* of this two teams have are known for being one of the most numerous barras in Ecuador.They have been involved on several fights that have caused fatalities.

Many years have passed since the appearance of this phenomenon in the country, it has spread all over the country on many teams like Nacional, Liga de Quito, Deportivo Cuenca and Deportivo Quito. The *barras bravas* in Ecuador are a social problem that hasn’t been resolved yet, a lot of people complain because of the insecurity inside and outside the stadiums and the only “solution” that the Ecuadorian Soccer Federation has given is to play the “*Clasico delAstillero*”just with the home team fans, this match is considered the most important match in the country played by Barcelona and Emelec.

But, should they have to ban the entrance of the fans of the away team just like they did 10 years ago in Argentina? That should be a good solution but it also could be useless, because there have been many incidents and fights with fans of the same team, this fights are usually for drugs or to show which group has the power inside the *barra*.

2.1.2.1 Sur oscura.

On 1995 a lot of small groups of fans took the decision to create one of the most numerous and respected *barra* in South America. This recognition is due to be one of the first *barra* that implement the use of instruments, flags and other things like that in the stadiums of Ecuadorian soccer. Its name is because they are always located in the southern part of the Stadium.

They are known for being the most dangerous *barra* in Ecuador due to all the problems they have had in the recent years not only against other *barras* but also fighting against other small groups that are part of Sur Oscura. A few years ago Sur Oscura suffered many problems because there was a small group of the *barra* that received money and other benefits from the Noboa brothers (the president and vice president back then), this was like the top group of the

barra since they had the support of the presidency, but at the moment the Noboa brothers left Barcelona the other groups of the *barra* expelled this little group forever.

12 years ago on the afternoon of September 16, a kid named Carlos Cedeño went to the Estadio Monumental to see a “*Clasico Del Astillero*”, he did not expect that same day would be the day of his death because in that day a flare coming from the south part of the stadium (where Sur Oscura is located) hit him on a lung and leaving as a result his death. When this happened, the issue of insecurity in the stadiums became very important in the country.

The worst problems in the stadiums that have occurred in the country have been caused by this *barra*. They continue having many problems until last year when there was a fight in the stands leaving a lot of people with injuries caused by rocks and knives, when this happened the *barra* was expelled from the stadium but they slowly began to return and until now there are still no new incidents.

Chapter III

What does the society thinks about the ‘barras bravas’?

3.1 Survey

On a survey applied to 60 persons of Javier High School, the following results were obtained in order to analyze what people think about this topic and how they feel about it.

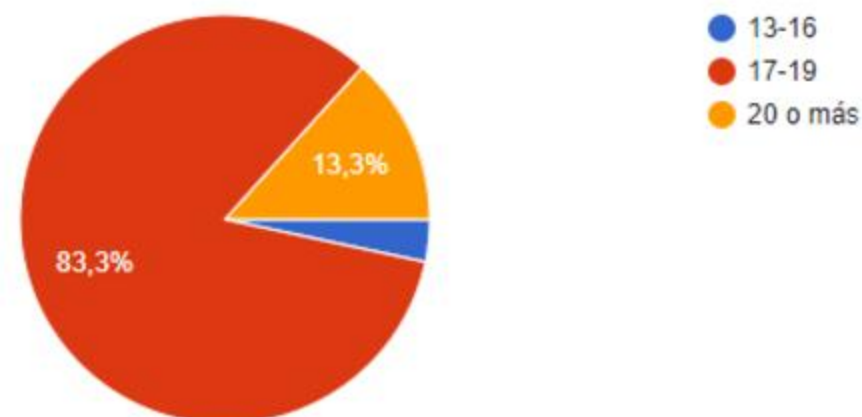


Image 1: Choose your age

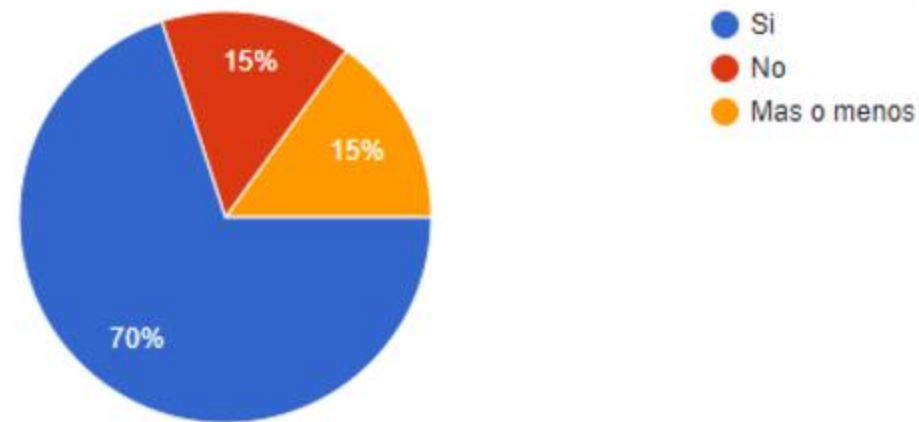


Image 2: ¿Do you

know what a barra brava is?

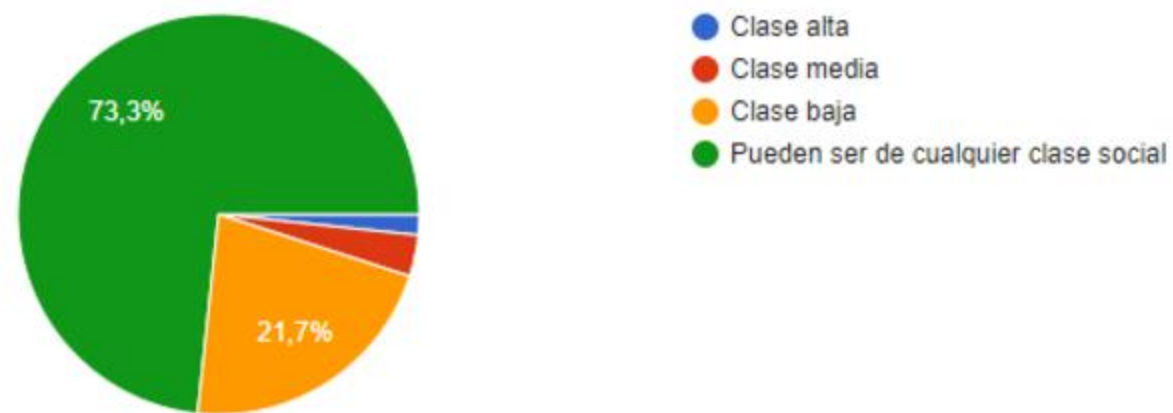


Image3: ¿What do you think about the people that go to a “barra brava” are?

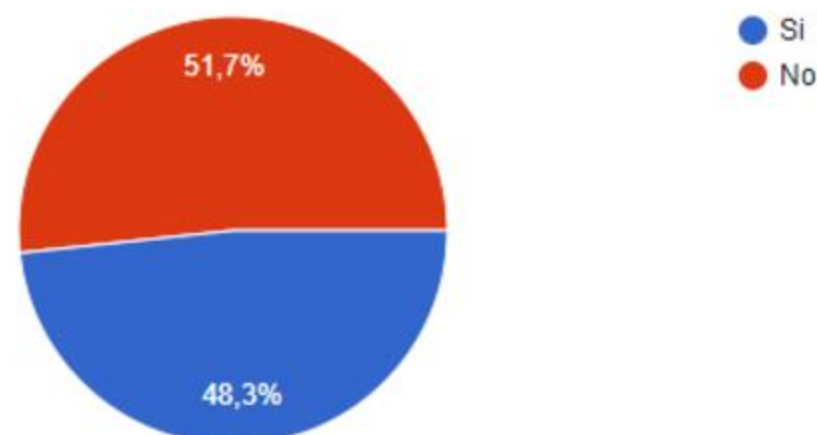


Image 4: ¿Do you consider that all the “barras bravas” are dangerous?

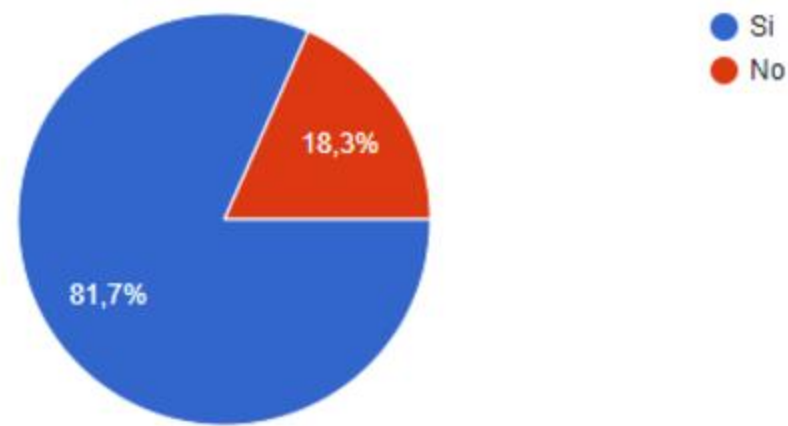


Image 5: ¿Do you consider that organized “barras bravas” should be allowed on the stadiums?

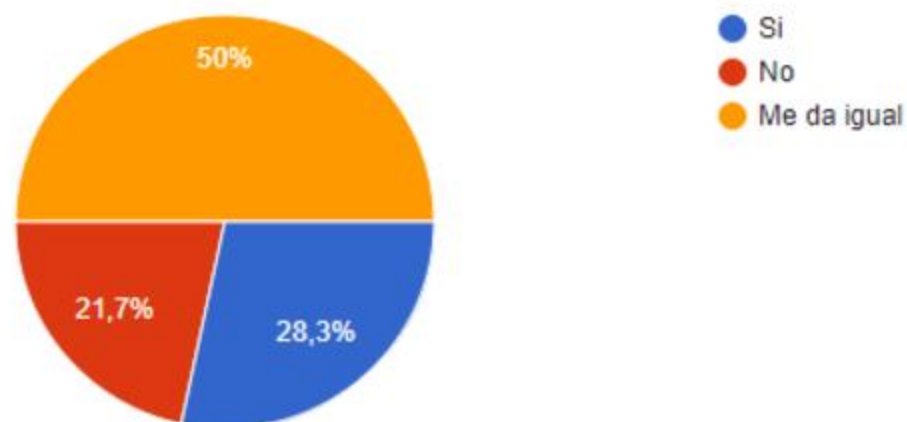


Image 6: ¿Do you think that barras bravas are something positive for the society?

3.1.1 Analysis of the survey

The 70% does know what a *barra brava* is, the 73.3% thinks that the persons that goes to a *barra* are usually low class persons. The 51.7% thinks that not all the *barras* are dangerous, it is really good that most of the people who answered the survey are aware that not everyone inside a *barra* is dangerous and that the problems sometimes are not even caused for persons that are part of the group.

The minority that thinks that all the *barras* are dangerous said that they think this because the *barras* always fight against each other, that is actually true and it is one of the reasons why not everyone goes to a *barra brava*, because they are always worried and scared about possible fights.

The 81.7% of the persons think that the *barras* should be in a stadium. As I mention before on my first chapter the fans and the *barras* are always the ones who make the games interesting, without them, Latin American soccer would not be the same. Even a lot of people do

not agree about this, barras bravas are part of the soccer culture of our continent and it is what makes us different to the others.

It is actually really curious that the 81.7% think that they should be in the stadium but just the 28.3% think that they are something positive on the society. So, they want them on the stadiums but at the same time they do not think they are something positive, why? Because most of the problems that a barra have are not usually in a stadium, most of the times the problems happen outside the stadium causing damages to innocent people.

Conclusions

At the end of this monographic work it is concluded that:

- Being part of a “*barra brava*” does not means you can be characterized for being a conflictive or a bad person, because there is a lot of people that are part of a “*barra brava*” because they like to show the love they have for their soccer teams that way, there is a lot of “*barras*” that are there just on it for that and not to do bad things, so anyone who is part of these groups will not have to suffer any kind of prejudice by any other person. You cannot generalize the people because inside of every “*barra*” you will always going to find a lot of good people.
- “*Barras bravas*” are and will always be part of the way that us (South Americans) live and experience soccer, in fact, the typical Latin soccer fan is always much more passionate than an average European soccer fan. The instruments, the songs, the flags and many other things started here in South America, it was a culture that was created in our continent a long time ago, a culture that many other countries all around the world want to copy.

- “*Barras bravas*” will never be completely accepted on the society because there are too much people who thinks they are bad but also a lot of people who thinks they are not bad at all. An example could be that many people say that “barras bravas” are the cancer of the Soccer and a lot of people also think that without them soccer would not have any sense. Maybe they could be accepted when they stop doing the bad things that they usually do.
- It is an issue that has not really evolved at all because the same kind of problems that occurred 20 years ago are still occurring nowadays. Governments and national police are always trying to control this by taking really serious decisions, but they are still failing a lot on it. It is also a fault of the bad people of the “*barras*” because the governments take very useful decisions but sometimes they just do not want to understand.

Recommendations

At the end of this work, it is recommended that:

- All the people that do not like “*barras bravas*” and believe they are just drugs and delinquency should go at least on time so they can see how exciting it is to live soccer the way they do.
- “*Barras*” have to behave better so people start feeling less uncomfortable with their presence in the stadiums. “Barras bravas” are part of South American folklore and it would be nice to keep that tradition but in a better way.
- The soccer teams should also find a way to make the security of the stadiums better to avoid any kind of problems on a match day, governments and national police do the best they can, but they do need help.

Bibliographic References

- Abarca, H., & Sepúlveda, M. (2005). Barras Bravas, pasión guerrera. Territorio, masculinidad y violencia en el fútbol chileno. *Jóvenes sin tregua: culturas y políticas de la violencia. España, Antrophos*, 145-169.
- Cañón, L., & García, B. (2007). Estudio de caso sobre el fenómeno de las barras bravas: una mirada desde la escuela. *Típica, Boletín electrónico de salud escolar*, 3(2), 1-14.
- Eslava, G. E. G. (2011). Las barras bravas. Un acercamiento sociológico a un fenómeno urbano. *Lúdica pedagógica*, 2(16).
- Galeano, E. (2010). *El fútbol a sol y sombra (2010)*. Siglo XXI de España Editores.
- Gherzi, E. (2003). Barras bravas: Teoría económica y fútbol. *Santiago, Chile*.