

**UNIDAD EDUCATIVA PARTICULAR JAVIER**

**BACHILLERATO EN CIENCIAS**

**MONOGRAPH**

**“Origin of “Barras bravas” in Argentina and its social, economic and  
political impact in Latin America in the last 20 years.”**

**STUDENT:**

**STEFANO CONSTANTE**

**ADVISER: LCDA. PATRICIA SANCHEZ**

**LCDO MAURO MACKAY**

**THIRD OF BACCALAUREATE - COURSE D**

**2019 – 2020**

### **Gratitude**

I want to thank many people who made it possible, first I want to thank God for giving me my beautiful family that everyday make my stay in this school possible, my tutor Mauro who gives me his help to make this monograph better, miss patricia that thanks to her we can all have the necessary documents to carry out this work, miss Laura that everyday improve my English and all those who support me in my day to day.

## **Summary**

The monograph is about how “Barras bravas” in Argentina were evolving and how they became so important in today’s society so much that they are part of the culture of many countries. Over the years there groups were making several changes in lots of stadiums becoming increasingly respected but all this has brought many consequences in the social, political and cultural aspect.

Inside the stadium you can find a new environment for many people who had never felt what they were in a stadium before, it is something awesome and extraordinary but not everything is easy, behind all this there was a large organization that was planned for years with many resources but the main one is the support of the fans, each flag, each song, each instrument, each ticket purchased means an effort done by the fans and that is something irreproachable.

In this continent there are many important groups but we can forget about those who are the most respected and powerful. Boca jrs and River plate are the two big clubs in Argentina and obviously the most popular, each club has their own “Barra brava”, Boca jrs has “La 12” and River plate has “Los borrachos del tablón” both groups have given us good and bad moments that remain in the memory of many people around the world. (322)

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## Introduction

*The origin of “baras bravas” in Argentina and its impact in latin America in the last 20 years* is a topic that could be very interesting for many people because here in this continent the most famous sport is soccer and it is something that people constantly want to learn or to search some information about it. All we know that Brazil and Argentina are the best countries when we talk about soccer so that is why we are talking about “Barras bravas” in Argentina, they have caused a lot of interest in many soccer lovers and in this topic we don’t only talk about sport, we also introduce ourselves more thoroughly.

The objective of the monograph is to explain about how soccer could be so important in the society of latin America. The main purpose is to clarify how “barras bravas” were born because many people actually know they were made to be a dangerous group that just tries to hurt the rival team or the rival people but All of this is false, they were made to support their own team without violence and to make a soccer match a festival where everyone gets happy does not matter if the team lose or not they only want to achieve many histories.

Many authors have done different research about this topic and have been introduced more thoroughly to obtain more precise and concrete sources for example Vic Luke and Liz Crolley in their book *Football spectator behaviour in Argentina: a case of separate evolution: Carnival and combat make endurance in a “Barra”* by John Alexander Castro Lozano: *Ethnography on the honor and violence of a football fan in Argentina* by Maria Verónica Moreira and *Case study on the phenomenon of “Barras bravas”: A look from the school* by Luz Stella Cañón and Bárbara Yadira García.

Argentina has constantly been the center of attention when we talk about incidents in soccer and this was reflected in 2018 when the final is going to be played between Boca jrs and Rive plate but a tragic event occurred when the visiting team arrived at the stadium, a group of fans of the local team got together where the Boca jrs bus was going to enter to the stadium and began throwing some objetos as tear gas or rocks so many players were affected so the match had to be cancel and rescheduled in another country by Fifa and Conmebol.

In my monograph there will be three chapters: In the first chapter will be about the consequences at social, economic, and political level; the second one, different environments and feelings within a “Barra brava”, The environment before, during and after a match, How is the organization within a “Barra brava”, Honor and Shame; The third and the last chapter is about the greatest exponents of Argentine soccer, its history, achievements, excesses. (478

## **Chapter I**

### **Consequences of violence in “barras bravas” in Argentina**

#### **1.1 Background**

Soccer has been the most popular sport in Latin America especially in Argentina where people live it in a particular way. This country comes from a football culture which has led to the creation of the famous “Barras bravas” who are basically a group of people who wants to contribute their support to the team but this concept have changed over the years, now “Barras bravas” have external interests such as money or organized mafias that have made them forget or leave aside the passion, Hirschmann (1978) would say:

“the passion to earn money has been culturally legitimized: we are already in full capitalism, which is to say that the passions have stopped being divorced from the interests (...)” (p. 2). Argentina is one of the countries that has started this sport culture which has served as an example for many countries especially here in Latin America where every country practice soccer.

#### **1.2 Socialization of consequences of violence in “Barras bravas” in Argentina**

Violent actions start between a group of people who are located in certain part of the stadium popularly called “La popular”. These violent acts usually happen because of the passion and pride that each one has that brings them the honor, and in other occasions due to internal conflicts such as the fight for leadership. This consequences are product of a bad behavior invented by the leaders of the “barras”, Moreira (2007) affirms: “Fights work as instances of assesment and evaluation of social behaviors through the wich the fans try to comply with expectations established in the group (...)” (p. 14). Argentina has become a naturally violent country because when you are part of the “barra” and do not support a



fight against the rival you are breaking a very important code of honor in this life of passion, this can be punished by the leaders and it could end in a definite ban or it could be worst.

### **1.2.1 Social consequences.**

When People talk about social consequences in Argentina the first thing that comes to their minds is how Argentina is a country where people feel and breathe soccer. When someone has a son in this country the first thing he would do is to teach him about the colors he would choose, talking about soccer teams and how he has to love and support his team. These are thing that have become a tradition, but more than that they have changed the culture over the years making the country shine talking about soccer culture and passion. It is so much the social impact in this country that honor is fundamental in the fans who support the team. Nowadays it is normal for people to believe that the opponent team is an enemy and they demonstrate this through the lyrics of their song where they talk about deaths and aggresion against the rival.

### **1.2.2 Economic consequences**

“Barras bravas” in Argentina are more than a simple geoup that look for the support, In the last years there have been many cases where the club has had economic relation with the group located in the famous “popular”. In Argentina it is normal for the clubs to have contact with the leaders of the “barras”, as happened for example in 2018 when the leader of “borrachos del tablón” (river plate’s group) was blamed for having received some tickets for the final of the Copa Libertadores, it was not the first time this happen. Not everything is bad when we talk about Argentine soccer, We can say that a big part of the income that a



club receives is thank to its fans who are in some cases the one in charge of selling tickets or filling the stadium, Sanguinetti. J., & Wierny, M. (2016) affirms: “Argentine soccer is financed in proportion greater with supporters and partners more than other sources of income (...)” (p. 60). Not everything is wrong because “Barras” are a great economic help, they always assist to the stadium every week because this is part of their labor with the team and they have to represent the honour and the colours they loved.

The main results that emerge from the study of the balance sheets of the Argentina’s main soccer clubs and their international comparison, is that the Argentine professional clubs present a relatively more income structure diversified with respect to the other leagues.

Argentine soccer is financed in proportion greater with supporters and partners more than other sources of income (Sanguinetti. J., & Wierny, M , 2016, p.60)

For luck of the economy of the Argentine clubs every team, however humble it may be, it has a certain number of fans who support the team every game.

### **1.2.3 Consequences at the political level.**

In Argentina soccer is very spicy and friction sport thanks of this there have been many deaths and the country’s authorities have had to make difficult decisions such as banning the entrance of visiting fans. Many people agreed with this but many others did not, for example there are leaders of many teams that support this, Gámez (2002) says: “The crossing of the “barras” would be avoided, what would be paid in police operations would be lowered, the costs of the buses would be saved and the family would return to the stadiums (...)”. This is a reality that live soccer clubs in Argentina that remains unresolved. In each match there must be a police operation, it is not easy for a police to work on these types places because they seriously risk their lives, In Argentina it is normal the fights

between “La popular” (group of fanatics) and the police that always end in injuries and in certain cases they leave deaths. “In these clashes that fans call combats are also used the elements who are at the step like sticks, stones, pieces of Wood and bottles. The fans describe these fights with native terms saying they remain fixed in the place, they are planted to attack, or wait the advance of the enemy” (Moreira, 2007, p.11) In recent years the death rate has increased and the incidents have also increased and this is something that worries the all Argentina.(1056)

## **Chapter II**

### **Different environments and feelings within a “Barra brava”**

#### **1.3 Background**

When you go for the first time to a stadium you don’t have to be very observant to realize which is the part of the stadium where people live soccer with another passion but within that passion there is another history. People who make up the “Barra” are mostly low income people and there is a small group that is in charge of the leadership, this group manage the economic income and keep the famous “popular” alive. The situation within

this group is always difficult due to different factors as a constant dispute over leadership, this changes the original aspect of a “Barra brava” that is originally created to support the players who leave their lives in every game. This group is supposed to support the team in the good and bad times but this is very difficult to do because if we talk about money a soccer team earns more when the team is in a good sporting moment.

Every weekend thousands of people attend the stadium either for sporting, passionate reasons or simply want to support a team. In this competition, the fans put into play a set of encouragement and support practices that denote. The fans who are local in a stadium enter a framework within which they gain visibility to the violent actions of a sector or supporters called “Barra” or “Popular” (Moreira, 2007).

Argentina has become popular by their supporters who give that spice to the sport outside the field.

### **1.3.1 The environment before, during and after a match**

The day of the match is the most important day of the week for a soccer fanatic and it's more special if you are part of the supporting group of the stadium. The arrival to the stadium is a routine that this group repeats every time the team plays as local. The first part of the day is when the doors of the stadium get open and fanatics can come in, then people start coming and little by little the stadium is filling up. The last to enter the stadium are the fanatics with the instruments like drums, trumpets, megaphones in few cases and flags, they are responsible for making the carnival in the stands then when the match starts between the two clubs the local “barra” starts singing, jumping, smoking, drinking, etc... Songs are a



good way to motivate the team specially when they are losing, here in latin America is very common to see how “barras” are in charge of the songs that only happens in few countries in the world and Argentina and England will always be the most important in this aspect. “As they develop the repertoire of the songs, to the beat of the rhythm, the fans perform a physical performance that includes applause, jumps, rhythmic movements of the arms through the songs and the bodily, gestural and kinesic actions” ( Moreira, 2007, p.11) In Argentina the carnival in the stands is superficially beautiful because not everything is good, sometimes the stands become dangerous, people inside this carnival usually have conflicts and that is why this place is only for the members of the group, they have owned this side.. In Argentina the police don’t have more power than “Barras bravas”, They don’t negotiate or enter to this part of the stadium, a police operation has certain limits and there are the leaders of the big clubs who direct it and impose their rules.

### **1.3.2 How is the organization within a “Barra brava”**

This group is made up of around 200 or more people, these people have a group of rules to follow and the main rule is to always keep privacy between the members. This fanatics usually participate in violence cases and some of them have complaints or some kind of legal problem. The “Barra brava” has a certain type of order, first are the leaders which are usually two, they are in charge of giving orders to all the groups of “Barra” and they are the ones in constant movement in the stands ordering and motivating the other members or new guys who come to “la popular” so they are infected with passion and fervor, these leaders make the group an undemocratic entity, they are in contact with players and the directing team of the club and they use them to benefit for example they get free tickets to enter to



the stadium in whatever city when the team play and they receive money to finance fan trips around the country along the tournament, this is something that has been highly criticized by the press and certain public officials. Under the leaders are those who run the neighborhood units, they are responsible for organizing different neighborhoods of the city and informing to the leaders what happens in the day to day. In the last step of this order you will find the young people recently admitted to the group.

### **1.3.3 Honor and Shame**

It is difficult to explain how these values can be so important within this group of fanatics. Each member of the group has success in his mind, they do anything necessary for the team that is why fights start. In the fight, the last thing that the members of the group should do is to deny support to their group, this goes totally against to their code of honor which was raised at the beginning of his life at the “Barra” and can be severely punished by the leaders. Not only fighting you give honor to the group. There are other ways as stealing enemy flags, in the same way is when an enemy stole you a flag this is one of the biggest shame the group can live.

And the endurance is in defending yours. When we put the rags together, all flags, and we take them to a place is like a cord of iron that is armed there so that that does not touch, because it is a humiliation, compared to a violation, that you see the another match a shirt or a flag of yours on another team’s rostrum (Moreira, 2007, p.15). (1031)

## Chapter III

### **The greatest exponents of Argentine soccer, its history, achievements and excesses**

#### **3.1 Background**

When we talk about Argentine soccer we can't leave Boca jrs and River Plate aside, they both are the biggest powers in their environment. These soccer clubs have unleashed fervor and passion around the world specially in latin America where the continent stops when these two see each other face to face, all media based on them two during the week of the meeting. Very apart from the sports Boca and River are influential when we talk about politics, economics and culture.

This rivarly was bown at the beginning of the 20th century, this was the first time that both clubs met. During the last 100 years many events have done as the creation of both "Barras bravas" that are the most dangerous in Argentina and maybe in the continent, these groups have represented Argentina in a bad way making the culture of this country win a bad reputation internationally comparing the level of fanaticism with the British who were later nicknamed hooligans.

Until today, there have been a high number of events that have caused the authorities of that country to take measures in this regard, the first and the strongest of all was the restriction of the visiting fans, this somehow takes away the essence and passion that can produce “Barras bravas” but not everything is bad, these measures have reduced the number of deaths and clashes and also avoided the material damage that these violent groups constantly produce and are paid by the club leadership.

Buenos Aires, Argentina is a remarkable city where Boca and River were born and is there where people is usually living this atmosphere of soccer, this city is full of many special neighborhoods like “Barrio la boca”, Avellaneda, or “Nuñez”, all these places have a lot of history and it’s where many of the most important clubs were founded.

### **3.1.1 Boca Juniors, “La 12”.**

Boca juniors is the most popular club in Argentina and a glorious club with a lot of fans. All their home matches it is almost impossible to get a ticket if you are not an official member. The club have one of the most emblematic stadiums in the World nicknamed “La Bombonera”, this stadium it is not as big as it should be, the capacity is for about 49000 spectators but there is only one problem, Boca have more than hundred thousand of official members which makes almost impossible to enter to the stadium in certain cases. The stadium is divided from north to south, in the north part of the stadium is ubicada the “Barra brava” called “La 12” this is the different group of fans of the stadium, they are in charge of making soccer a party but not everything sounds good.



This group have been the cause of many fights and clashes and even deaths and disasters, not only for this is known, it is also a mafia and they are responsible for running the club after the official leadership.

The fan, far from being an organization horizontal where decisions are made jointly and democratically among its members or the representatives of each neighborhood, it is at charge of the so-called bosses or bonnets of the bar. These people who hold power and have the authority to send receive the support of their peers because they carry out a series of tasks that benefit the whole. (Moreira, 2007, p.8)

In 2015 many media outlets upload a photo where Carlos tevez, team's captain, was seen with Rafa Di Zeo one of the leaders of the group besides Mauro Martin, let's not forget that Rafa was few years ago in prison, this event was very questioned so much so the team players were linked with the "Barra" a fact that impacts the entire "Xeneize" community.

#### ***3.1.1.1 Rivalries and conflicts during the last 20 years.***

The biggest fight and perhaps the most remembered was in 2002 against his classic rival River Plate, when Boca jrs was winning with 4 goals and the visiting fans ambushed where the police did not act until the match was stopped, in the fight were many hits from each side and even shots there was when the police acted pulling tear gas at the end many river plate supporters were arrested including one of the leaders and the match was suspended. Moreira (2007) affirms: "In these clashes that fans call fighting elements are also used that are in step like sticks, stones, pieces of wood and bottles" (p.11).



### **3.1.2 River Plate, “Los borrachos del tablón”.**

“Los borrachos del tablón” is the name of River plate fans a “Barra brava” that became the most respected of all Argentina. Its Golden age arrived at the beginning of the 21st century thanks to the economic well-being and the good organization of it. The group is located in Buenos Aires, Argentina exactly in a particular neighborhood named “Barrio porteño de Belgrano” also known as “Barrio River”, This neighborhood unlike others is not exactly a place with economic difficulties, quite the contrary, it is a quiet place during the week with many recreational places and where River plate stadium is also located. When the weekend arrives and River plays as local, the stadium fills up and enters the most fearsome fans of the Argentine Republic. They have been part of the greatest excesses of Argentine soccer so much so fans of others teams have said publicly that they respect and avoid conflicts with them.

#### ***3.1.2.1 International fame and end of a reign.***

Their conflicts have been based on everything a “Barra brava” requires such as battles, murders, drugs and international trips were violence triumph. “Los borrachos del tablón” reach their most glorious level when they went to the 2006 world cup celebrated in Germany standing out above others groups. When the group arrived to Argentina after the world cup some weeks later they have to fight against the police in Brazil in a remembered fight in a cup match. A perfect society is one that has the courage and courage are those who show their faces in fights when the group needs it, denying your support is a sign of cowardice that can have consequences (Moreira, 2007).

The end of this glorious age arrived when one of the leaders of the group, Alan Schlenker, was arrested and sentenced to prison for a murder. (1070)

### **Conclusions**

At the end of the work you can give several conclusions regarding the topic:

- Argentina and Brazil are the most important countries in latin America when it comes to soccer but they are too different for many aspects such as language that it is so important because Brazil is the only country in latin America that does not speak Spanish that makes it different and a bit out of the way compared to Argentina that is recognized worldwide by its fans.
- Argentina was the country that promoted the creation of “Barras bravas” in latin America and was an example for many countries.
- The concept of “Barras bravas” is very different today from the original, over the years the support for the clubs was lost and now external factors are involved that leave sport aside and put the economy and another factors in a most important place.
- The violence in soccer increases every day and makes the leaders of each country take measures that move the sport away from the reality.
- The organization of this groups is very strict and respected must be complete by the members of the group, otherwise, they may be sanctions or expulsions by the leaders. (300)

## Recommendations

At the end of this work it is recommended to take some action about it:

1. Against violence inside and outside the stadium the main leaders of the clubs and municipal authorities propose a good strategy that can help the security of the fans who really want to live a carnival with family and friends.
2. To do the same thing that has been done in many countries, talk with the groups and try to reach agreements that can benefit both sides and in case of breaking the rules to apply economic and disciplinary sanctions that in the future can raise awareness of the fans.
3. To increase the restrictions within the stadiums where in most latin America countries many people who are part of the “Barra brava” introduce drugs and make an atmosphere of bad vices where in most cases people just want to go to support their team without necessity of any danger.
4. To promote people’s awareness so that they really realize what it means to go to a stadium to support your team and to put aside those false fans, to imply that we can be fans of different teams but that does not mean that violence is an object of excuse. (207)

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**Qr Code**

