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# THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE RIVER-BOCA RIVALRY. SYMBOLS, SPEECHES AND RITUALS OF THE CLAQUES IN THE PROCESS OF POPULARIZATION OF THE SOCCER

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#### **ABSTRACT:**

This work offers a look backwards, whose objective has been to highlight and analyze two key aspects: on the one hand, the incorporation of soccer as a cultural asset in our country and its impact on the modes of socialization - mainly the role of the club - in a Stage where the national fluctuated as a result of the migratory waves of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; On the other, the history of the River Plate Athletic Club, from its foundation to the present day, emphasizing those cultural, symbolic and territorial aspects that have contributed to the identity construction of the institution.

## **KEYWORDS:**

Culture, club - popularization, football - territory - River Plate

# LA CONSTRUCCIÓN DE LA RIVALIDAD RIVER-BOCA. SÍMBOLOS, DISCURSOS Y RITUALES DEL *HINCHISMO* EN EL PROCESO DE POPULARIZACIÓN DEL FÚTBOL

#### **RESUMEN:**

Este trabajo ofrece una mirada hacia atrás, cuyo objetivo ha sido relevar y analizar dos aspectos clave: por un lado, la incorporación del fútbol como bien cultural en nuestro país y su impacto en los modos de socialización –principalmente el rol del club– en una etapa donde lo nacional fluctuaba a raíz las oleadas migratorias de fines de siglo XIX y principios del XX; por el otro, la historia del Club Atlético River Plate, desde su fundación hasta la actualidad, enfatizando en aquellos aspectos

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culturales, simbólicos y territoriales que han contribuido a la construcción identitaria de la institución.

### **PALABRAS CLAVE:**

cultura, club - popularización, fútbol - territorio - River Plate

#### 1. INTRODUCCION

All research, whatever its discipline and subject matter, requires a preliminary search of antecedents, experiences and disputes. A priori, this statement is a no-brainer. However, this process is indispensable, since it provides substantial information as a function of the present and to understand certain scenarios and conflicts. In general terms, we might venture to say that history is the set of chronologically ordered accounts of events, incidents or processes of the past that impact and have relevance in the present. Not knowing its importance would not only mean an elemental error, but it would also make it impossible to identify continuities and ruptures.

In our case, it is pertinent to approach a definition of what is meant by social history, since our object is analyzed in the framework of a "society in movement" (Bianchi, 2013). This aspect should be pointed out, since it is not a static and unidirectional sequence of events. Febvre adheres to this view and maintains that "history is by definition absolutely social. It is the scientifically elaborated study of the various activities and creations of men in other times, captured in their time, in the framework of extremely varied societies ... ".

This chapter offers a look *backwards*, whose objective has been to highlight and analyze two key aspects: on the one hand, the incorporation of football as a cultural asset in our country and its impact on the modes of socialization - mainly the role of the club - in a stage where the national fluctuated as a result of the migratory waves of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; On the other, the history of the River Plate Athletic Club - from its foundation to the present - emphasizing those cultural, symbolic and territorial aspects that have contributed to the institution's identity construction. In this last point, it is necessary to point out the unavoidable role of an *another* in a sort of symbiosis: Club Atlético Boca Juniors, "the rival of the whole life".

To this end, a set of testimonies, voices, experiences and subjectivities have been gathered corresponding to diverse personal, academic and journalistic sources that allows to elaborate an integrated corpus. According to Alejandro Fabbri, "official histories are like a fantastic creation". However, in his book he prioritizes the reality about mythological construction, shedding light on the origins and development of

local football clubs. At the same time, all the temptation to be trapped between numerous stories (mythical or not) that envelop them, such as the legend according to which the field of Tiger Athletic Club is known like the one of the "drowned milkman", because a deliveryman of milk died on his lawn-, and on more than one occasion flirt with the improbable.

Our concerns were oriented to the possibility (or not) of tracking and finding marks or traces linked to senses, speeches and experiences. What symbolic and identity elements underlie that "rivalry that was born in the South"? What do these territorial and sports disputes tell us? Is there an identity that is ratified in time from the stigmatization of the Other? We start from the premise that the answer to these questions would give us a complete panorama of the cultural, political and sporting context in which River emerged institutionally and, at the same time, to find certain subjectivities in the constitution of this incipient fan / partner.

Previously, it will be crucial to address the role played by clubs as institutions outside the state orbit, identity matrices, "nationality" and alternative cultural device of socialization (Archetti, 2001). To this end, a brief and essential historiography has been developed regarding the center-periphery relationship in the times of British imperialism, the introduction of football in the region (the product of these commercial relations), its appropriation, resignification and the process of popularization.

### 2. DISCUSSION

## 2.1 Sport and imperialism. Two sides of the same coin

Prior to the formation of clubs or the so-called civil associations, much water ran under the bridge. This simple metaphor serves as a kick-start and an account of the conditions under which sport - and football in particular - has broken out and been appropriate in the societies of our region.

At present, Latin American sport is a great socializer and thus allows us to understand some of the crucial phenomena of contemporary cultural analysis: the constitution of identities. Plotting this analysis requires a historical entry. Because in spite of its impact and pregnancy in our societies, sport is not an autochthonous, vernacular invention: "understanding the modes of appropriation and diffusion of this phenomenon also illustrates about the relationships between center-periphery, an important knot of socio-cultural Latin American reality "(Alabarces, 2006: 2).

Sport is an invention of European modernity and, more accurately, a product of British capitalism in the mid-nineteenth century. At that time, and especially as a

codification of different popular games - soccer or rugby - or regulation of practices of the British aristocracy - boxing, for example - sport emerges in *public schools*, quickly becoming a pastime of classes with free time, but also as an instrument of discipline of the body and preparation for the war of the elites.

Consequently, from the nineteenth century, the origin of modern sports can be traced. Basically in industrial England and later in the United States, they emerged as an alternative power towards the end of the period. While the British were the creators of cricket, football, rugby, cycling, boxing, fencing; baseball, volleyball and basketball were invented by the Americans. Likewise, the global diffusion of modern sports is simultaneous with the construction of world markets and colonial empires.

To a certain extent, Britain "owed" its sovereignty to sport. The mechanism of diffusion and circulation involved simultaneously two agents: colonial administrators or business bourgeoisies, who extended their practices among local British or North American residents (both in the effective colonies and in the economic neo-colonies), especially through the schools of the Anglo-Saxon communities, and then to be imitated by the local elites; and at the same time the workers or employees of the transports, basically railroads and ships, who, influenced by the rapid popularization and professionalization of sports in their countries of origin, displayed their practices in the ports or in the places to which the the railways reached This duplicity allowed a rapid expansion of sports practices in broad segments of local populations - simultaneously, elites and middle classes: although it would be necessary to reach the twentieth century for expansion among the popular classes, debtors of free time to play sports, which would require some modernization of labor regimes.

This expansion among the popular classes is what has been defined as *processes of popularization*. These consist of the particular modes in which classes appropriate a sport, in some cases even displacing the ruling classes from their practice. In this sense, the reasons -considering the particularities of each society and nation- are articulated in two key axes. On one hand, the equality that defines modern sport within a democratic sports imaginative (Garcia Ferrando, 1990), designing a real space of social ascent impossible to find in the sociopolitical world of capitalism (Archetti, 2001). Sport is thus transformed into a place where not only the weak can overcome the powerful -a central aspect when it comes to international competitions between peripheral and central countries-<sup>2</sup>; It is also where the poor can use himself to obtain such promotion. On the other hand, the professionalization, which confronts the popular and middle classes in emergence with the elites, that means

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In perspective with the International Division of Labor prevailing during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is a process of world production between countries and regions that "ordered" the specialization in the elaboration of certain goods.

"the payment for an unlawful use of free time, making it legitimate and useful; allowing, once again, the construction of sport as a space of incorporation and social advancement of the popular classes "(Alabarces, 2006: 5).

# 2.2 The ball reaches the Rio de La Plata: the popularization of football

British interests and political-economic influence in our territory date back to the early nineteenth century. The first great event, undoubtedly, were the English Invasions (1806-1807) to the Viceroyalty of the Rio de La Plata, registering a game of cricket among the invaders. A few years later, Thomas Hogg, owner of a textile factory in Yorkshire and installed early in Buenos Aires, founded a shopping center, a library, a school and in 1819 a cricket club (all British).

In 1832, a group of young Argentines who returned from their studies abroad founded their own cricket club. Hogg's son - also called Thomas - founded the Deadnought Swimming Club around 1860, organizing competitions in 1863 and, years later, introduced squash. With his brother James, created the Buenos Aires Athletic Society, that the 30 of May of 1867 organized the first athletic competition. Both also played in the first match of rugby, in the Buenos Aires Cricket Club, 14 of May of 1874. Both played the first game of tennis, in 1880. And finally, although not less important, the 20 of June of 1867 both led the teams of the first football game.

The decisive momentum for football was made in 1884 by the Scottish Alexander Watson Hutton, when he founded the Buenos Aires English High School, introducing sports to the school curriculum. On the other hand, the railroads, all in the hands of British capitals, collaborated: in 1891 the first League was created, created by F. L. Wooley, member of Buenos Aires and Rosario Railway Athletic Club, a sports club linked to the company. The combination of these two factors could be seen in the party, in 1890, between the workers of the Ferrocarril Nordeste Argentino and the students of the National College of Santiago del Estero: this game also indicated the rapid expansion of the practice in the national territory. In 1893, as a result of an alliance between British clubs and colleges, the Argentine Football Association was created, which would soon Hispanicize its name - and the record of its records - in 1905. The whole decade will be dominated by the clubs and colleges of the community, but in the next one would begin the hegemony of the new clubs of the Creole middle classes: these, sometimes linked to territorial possessions - the new porteño neighborhoods or the small towns of the interior of the country - or to industrial or service companies - railroads, but also commercial institutions- are the agents of an intense process of popularization that will also involve the popular

classes and will lead to professionalization in 1931<sup>3</sup> (Frydenberg, 2003). From that point on, elite clubs give up playing football to focus on rugby and later on female hockey, which for decades will form a hard core and distinctive class.

On the Uruguayan shores, the process will have similarities: in 1842, it was created at the Victoria Cricket Club and in 1861, the Montevideo Cricket Club. Since the beginning of sports broadcasting football appeared more widespread than cricket, but this was strengthened in 1891, with the founding of the Central Uruguay Railway Cricket Club (later Peñarol of Montevideo): its members, obviously linked to the railway, played cricket in summer and football in winter, until finally concentrating on the second. In 1899 the National club was created, to "pull out the sport from the hands of the foreigners", as its name clearly indicates. In 1900 the Uruguay Football Association was founded; the process of popularization, similar to that of Argentina, culminates when eastern football conquered the Olympic gold medals in Paris and Amsterdam in 1924 and 1928, respectively, and the first World Cup, played in Montevideo in 1930.

The arrival of the soccer to Buenos Aires towards 1870 coincided with the constitution of the State and of the Argentine Nation. From that date until the end of that century, its practice was practiced within the English colony, its schools, its enterprises and in a few clubs along with groups of the local Creole elite. The arrival of the sport to the popular sectors also coincided with an inaugural time: the popularization of football practice was simultaneous with the very formation of modern popular sectors in the city.

The actors and speeches that competed in the peak moments of the foundational wave of football clubs ranged from anarchist groups, revolutionary unionists and socialists to the new patriotic tradition, elaborated from the state apparatus to homogenize a society formed in good proportion by newly arrived immigrants to nationalist groups and the church (Frydenberg, 1995).

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Football - as a convening practice for many social sectors - was the scene of the configuration of a wide range of phenomena, and especially those that make up the symbolic world. At the same time, it was a generator of habits, feelings and values that shaped the culture itself. If we look at the place that has occupied in Argentine society since the last years of the nineteenth century, we can see the relevance of the approach to the phenomenon of football, highlighting its role in the creation of identity bonds:

The popularization of soccer practice occurred during the first decade of the twentieth century, from the foundation of a large number of club-teams. The original creative act of these protoinstitutions tensed the spirits of its young founders, and in that nucleating action the feeling and values amassed in the short life experience of these new *footballers* were expressed in a good proportion. (Frydenberg, 1995)

In a context in which the local social fabric was in full constitution, the clubs and civil associations began to play a key role, becoming a space capable of homogenizing the mixtures corresponding to the most diverse ethnic groups, as a result of the two great migratory waves (the first by 1880 and the second since the 1920s) that represented our country.

# 2.3 The social dimension of the clubs and the consolidation of the "national"

The expansion of sport in Argentina can be associated with the development of civil society, since sports organizations and clubs generated spaces of autonomy and social participation outside the State. In this particular context, sporting practices and, in particular, team sports, "allowed to establish a national space of real competition and social mobility - since the best athletes from the provinces were able to make a career in Buenos Aires - and territorial and symbolic unification, where the press the and radio of the 1920s played a crucial role in this direction "(Archetti, 2001: 12).

The possibility of building a kind of common history - and being protagonists of it - is a vital function and a substantial aspect when analyzing its social role:

An important feature of associative culture is the type of sociability that exists. [...] Sociability becomes a "cognitive recall" of sports experiences. The club, besides making possible the practice of sports, can be described as a group of people who relate, exchange sports experiences and get to know each other, thereby building a common reality. (Heinemann, 1997: 18)

By 1914, many of the sports introduced by the British in the previous century had become free-time practices scattered throughout the national territory. This is an important date in the history of our football, since the previous year, an eminently "criollo" club, Racing Club de Avellaneda, theoretically without a single player of British origin in the starting lineup conquers for the first time the championship of first division. From this event, the British clubs like Alumni or Belgrano Athletic, lose their soccer weight and their players will disappear of the national teams. The Creole foundation "is not only the Argentinization of a British sport but a foundation where the children of Latino immigrants begin to dominate active practice" (Archetti, 2001: 9).

The anthropologist even goes beyond the social dimension of the clubs and their (unplanned) mission as an articulator in the construction of national identity, that is, the "Argentinization" of foreign masses through sports practices. Thus, it proposes a double simultaneous process:

Argentina imports English sports and makes them theirs in a kind of amnesic symbiosis, since over time these practices will only be seen as national, will export the tango to the whole world. Import and export take place in parallel and consolidate a global cultural world. [...] Sport becomes a mirror in which to see and be seen at the same time. Argentina exports bodies, faces, gestures and sporting events, and from them an image of the national is constructed at the same time, outside and inside" (Archetti, 2001: 17-114).

To this perspective, we find in Mosse a complementary look, which emphasizes the importance of collective sports in the consolidation of nationalisms: "Virility and courage are dimensions of traditional masculinity that blend with the new corporeal ideals (beauty and physical condition) of modernity "(Mosse, 1985: 117-128). That is to say, in this incorporation there was a selection of practices that made possible the expression of identities, not only masculine, but of class and national. In this sense, Archetti makes a fundamental contribution linked to the class question. In the presentation of such different sporting practices - such as football, boxing and motorsports - we found the basis of the national made up of "a complex kaleidoscope and, in many cases, contradictory. Not only are there individual contradictions but also class dimensions that seem incompatible. [...] Precisely, it is through this heterogeneous combination that the images of the national are constructed" (Archetti, 2001: 114).

If we go deeper into the popularization of football, we must inevitably refer to the construction of the city and the construction of generational identity, local (neighborhood, then areal) and Buenos Aires, which has developed through a series

of conflicting links. Thus, it seems necessary to abandon the traditional view of free access to spaces as one of the causes of football's popularity. It may be necessary to imagine that they played where they could and not where they wanted, because of a triple pressure that the city exerted on those looking for the field: private lots, public works and the remoteness of available lands (Frydenberg, 1995: 59). It is a commonplace to maintain that there was an intimate relationship between football (especially club life) and the neighborhood. In a way, the obstacles contributed to fostering an enormous symbolic identity power that founded the relationship between football, territory and other clubs, as we will observe in the River case.

# 2.4 Football and popular sectors: intervention on the public space

The power with which the phenomenon of football was generated was linked to the encounter of two simultaneous phenomena: the formation of modern popular sectors and the adoption of football practice. That is to say, a good part of its roots would have to be placed in the force with which it was associated with the links forging of identity in the original moment.

The popularization of the practice of football was added, in space and time, to the formation of the modern city and that of the popular sectors and their culture. The dizzying rhythm with which many clubs were opened at the dawn of the twentieth century coincided with the dispute of this power with the British and Creole elites:

The city of Buenos Aires happened to have with time twenty soccer stadiums, mostly of clubs born between 1900 and 1915. [...] In addition to the quantity, it stands out the fact that the social origins of the majority of the clubs can be assimilated to young employees of commercial houses and, especially, residents of Buenos Aires neighborhoods. (Frydenberg, 1995: 58)

In this way, a formidable power is identified in these new *footballers* that managed to cross the urban space with dozens of soccer fields. The question for the effort that this implied surely has to be traced in the characteristics that defined football as a scenario in which feelings and values that began to mark the lives of those young people were put into play. This complex movement becomes incomprehensible if one does not take care of the generational aspect, since it was a collective looking for its own place in a volatile and conformational society. Once again, Frydenberg brings a valuable reflection on this:

It was a generation - in many cases children of immigrants - who wanted to show themselves, to distinguish themselves, in this case expressed openly in a struggle for land. In fact, there was no neighborhood or quarter without a sense of belonging. It was a symbolic construction based on common experiences built on practices that - as in the case of football- strongly involved its participants. (Frydenberg, 1995: 59)

If the identity bond was not associated with national collectivities, the feeling and the reason for the defense of small local, neighborhood, block or corner space prevailed. Added to this will appear since 1910 a recurrent attachment to the homeland symbology, emblematized in the national heroes. That is to say, this temporary decoupling between the foundation of the homeland tradition of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and its full adoption may perhaps refer us to the passage of the formation of the patriotic discourse and its reception, in this case transmitted in football.

For most of the clubs founded at the time it was not easy to find an appropriate space to install a playing field. However, why was football the sport that ended up taking root among the majority of our country? The answer to this question is usually linked to the availability of the resources necessary for its practice: a field used as a field of play - or "paddock" - and some element that fulfills the function of a ball. Numerous theses affirm that the force of the insertion of the soccer between the popular sectors was due precisely to the plastic reception of the city space. The curious thing is that at the same time they mention the changes that had to cross the clubs in their search for land: "This notion built on the happy encounter between city and football - at least for Buenos Aires towards the first decades of the XX century- does not seem evident, and soon after advancing, it was also not appropriate to continue sustaining it" (Frydenberg, 1995: 45).

The city was formed by the action of a multiplicity of actors who imprinted their seal. Among them we can highlight the presence of land owners through the process of land lot and sale, which will lead to new neighborhoods. Another of the transforming elements of the city was undoubtedly the massive arrival of immigrants", with whose basic contribution the city doubled its inhabitants between 1900 (800,000) and 1915 (more than 1,500,000)" (Frydenberg 1995: 46).

The action of the youth of the popular sectors, whose ages ranged from 12 to 20 years is key, mainly born in the country, of native or immigrant parents, where "the relation between the formation of the urban space and the process of popularization of The practice of football is established in the way young people used the city, the way they influenced their production" (ibid.: 46).

The issue of space and the way in which the courts were established are not a minor issue, since it allows to perform various analyses. Young people felt the need to have a terrain, their own space, to be used as a field (Ibid .: 47). Thus, the process of

popularizing football began in Buenos Aires, with three closely related aspects: initiation in the practice of the game, the founding of a club and the search for a field of its own: "the task of obtaining land that became the soccer field was one of the most problematic undertakings that had to get around these young people. Over time, whether or not they had land, it acted as a filter that would determine the survival or otherwise of the club team "(Ibid.: 47).

The beginning of the twentieth century marked the creation of a competitive space in the context of the very formation of the city and the popular sectors themselves and their culture. The mobilization and the effort to obtain a physical space is part of a dual process: on the one hand, the configuration of a new city -and in which the presence of much available space could be assumed-; On the other hand, the popularization of football, which resulted in the urban space being inadequate and scarce.

In general terms, it could be argued that clubs born from the popular sectors that survived this foundational stage were those from more remote neighborhoods, places where school and residence coincided, since "the clubs that survived and grew were the ones that could win this battle to a city unwilling to receive them" (Ibid: 51-52).

# 2.5 Case River. Towards a symbolic, territorial and sporting approach

So far we have raised the most relevant aspects regarding the introduction of football in our country, the phenomenon of popularization and its role as an identity-building device. It was practically a "must-see" stop, since ignoring the context and conditions that allowed the appearance of numerous clubs in the city of Buenos Aires would prevent us from continuing our journey.

To go into the facts and experiences that gave rise to the emergence of the River Plate Athletic Club the reading and analysis of the institutional history have been fundamental, the territorial issue, the symbolic production and some data related to the sport. In some passages we will observe that the intersection and overlapping with the Boca Juniors Athletic Club is the confirmation of a social scenario constructed in function of an *Other*, where disputes will be part of objective and subjective realities (Berger and Luckmann, 2013).

It must be pointed out that the experience of competition had a special emotive load. The practice of football was integrated, since its inception, by a series of experiences that transformed it into an scenario in which many of the basic values amassed by a large portion of the social groups were put into play. In this sense, football was a experience endowed with an uncommon power. This strength was expressed in the

generation of bonds of identity that were immediately related with the process of formation of the city. Thus, the city, in practice and in the representation of youngsters, was acquiring the features of a unique spatial universe in spite of its contrasts:

Football helped to build the identity of the neighborhood and the Buenos Aires. Through the participation in the social drama of football, an experience of competition, the experience of solidarity and horizontal relations, the city was designed and the representations that formed it. (Frydenberg, 1995: 46-47)

La Boca was the epicenter where a history nurtured of particularities was originated. It was an area of great economic development between 1860 and 1900. The journalist Ezequiel Fernández Moores retakes a municipal census of 1886 -cited by Dora Barrancos in the book *Mujeres en la sociedad argentina*- which provides a descriptive and precise panorama. He points out that in La Boca 90% of the 69 exchange houses of the city of Buenos Aires were found. There are also 10 cigarette factories, 4 of pasta, 2 of cookies, 31 of shoes, 2 laboratories of watchmaking, 5 pharmacies, 33 hairdressers, 19 bakeries, 2 bookstores, a theater, 18 schools (12 public and 6 private) 1 newspaper, the first rowing clubs, streetcars, railway station that connects it to the port of Ensenada. Almost 25,000 inhabitants (60% working class) in 220 blocks. Italians of Liguria in the great majority, but also Spaniards, French, Swiss, English and of bordering countries. The square meter is quoted at 5.58 pesos, more than in Pilar, Flores and Belgrano. It is only surpassed by Balvanera.

The history of River Plate began to be woven from 1901, when in the house of Mr. Jacobs, deputy manager of the Wilson coaling station, English families and friends met to spend time on Sundays and frequently practiced football. Thus, the initiative to create a club emerged, which was called Santa Rosa.

On May 25, 1901<sup>4</sup>, the members of the club met in Almirante Brown 927 - where a printing press called Francisco Gentile operated- with the players of another amateur team: La Rosales. The goal was to found a true and unique football club between them. Before signing the founding act, there was a key point of discussion: there was no consensus to choose the name. Some preferred Santa Rosa, others La

Plate. Online: <www.cariverplate.com.ar/history>. Accessed January 6, 2016.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> The first Steering Committee was composed of Leopoldo Bard (President), Alberto Flores (Vice-Chairman), Bernardo Messina (Secretary), Enrique Balza (Prosecretariat), Enrique Salvarezza (Treasurer), Juan Bonino (Protesorero), José Pita, Enrique Zanni, Pedro Martínez, Eduardo Rolón, Carlos Antelo and Livio Ratto (Vocals). Source: official site Club Atlético River

Rosales; Moreover, names such as Foward and Juventud Boquense were proposed, since the club would be established in the Buenos Aires neighborhood of La Boca. Finally, the player Pedro Martínez proposed the name River Plate, which sympathized among the members. While building the dock 3 of the Port of Buenos Aires, a group of sailors gathered and moved gigantic boxes to practice with a ball in moments of leisure, Martinez was struck by the inscription that appeared in these drawers: "The River Plate". Probably the intention of the text was to indicate "Río de La Plata".

The majority of its founders were descendants of Italians, counting in minority form with Creoles and children or grandchildren of British, with the exception of the president Leopoldo Bard (Austrian) and Pedro Martínez (of Spanish ancestry). Geographically, the genesis of the club is limited to the port area, although River's trajectory would provoke a gradual transfer towards the north of the city during the following decades.

From the beginning, football was the hallmark of the club and its discipline par excellence. Although the growth of the institution later promoted the development of other activities<sup>5</sup>, it remained the pillar on which the entity is based and has given it recognition at the national and international level.

In these first approaches we can make history "talk". First, the names chosen when founding football clubs can help to form a clearer concept of the ideas and feelings that mobilized these young people. The adoption of the "Club Atlético" - used by most clubs during the first decade of the twentieth century - responds to two hypotheses: on the one hand, as a Hispanicization of the English "Athletic Club", thus expressing the influence of the model with which arrives here attached to the practice of football. Above all, and perhaps juxtaposed to the above explanation, one can assume its use as the influence of official (school) discourse promotor of athletics, hygiene and physical activity. The athletic club condenses the presence of an explicit discourse stream in the model of fair play, added to that of the school curriculum. However, athletic clubs - in their overwhelming majority - were no more than football teams in the first decade of the twentieth century. That is to say, in the founding act the young people denominated their football clubs in the style of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> It currently has 65 disciplines (federated, non-federated and recreational), the River Plate Institute (which has initial, primary and secondary levels), the University Plateau River Plate (IURP) - which was inaugurated on December 12, 2007 by approval Of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Nation and later by the National Commission of Evaluation and University Accreditation (CONEAU), with the launching of undergraduate and postgraduate degrees - and the River Plate Foundation. Source: official site Club Atlético River Plate. Online: <www.cariverplate.com.ar/polideportivo>. Accessed January 6, 2016.

sportsman, in a movement that is more linked to a compromise solution than to the emblem (Frydenberg, 1996).

Secondly, the date of foundation is not a minor fact: it coincides with the so-called May Revolution of 1810<sup>6</sup>, whose value and symbolic weight is significant in the history of our country. This mention operates (consciously or unconsciously) and has been internalized as an objective reality from a gradual discursive construction that places River as a representative of *Argentinity* against Boca, who condensed pejoratively stigmatizations linked to xenophobia, racism and illegality (Is not a white and European immigrant, but a "black bolita of the Riachuelo." This aspect will be addressed and taken up in later pages).

In third place, the ethnic group that prevails in the foundation coincides with the colors of the shirt and identification of the club, but also with the origins of its greatest adversary, Boca Juniors. White and red refer to the colors of Genoa, Italy's sixth most populous commune. The design of its flag has a layout similar to the English. Here we find the first common nucleus, since both the young founders of River and those of Boca came from and belonged to the same ethnic group. While the former molded (and will continue to do so over decades) an identity increasingly removed from that origin, Boca has incorporated the legacy of *xeneizes* (Genoese), materializing it discursively as a positive cultural good at all times (for example, placing that inscription on the lower part of the back of their shirt).

On the other hand, it is also feasible to discover some political-ideological features at the dawn of the clubs of the time. While the testimony of Alexander Fabbri is certainly generic, it helps us to find that River's first president, Leopoldo Bard, was a seasoned radical leader:

Racing was founded by the most notable of the society of Avellaneda, linked to the Conservative Party. There are other teams that were founded with a majority of socialist or anarchist members: the red of Argentinos Juniors is for its socialist members, the same as that of Chacarita and Independiente, which is far from inheriting it from the Nottingham Forrest (English club). Leopoldo Bard, River's first president, was a fervent radical leader. In the case of Rosario,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> In a first order, there are three other clubs that were born on May 25: Platense in 1905, Defensores de Belgrano in 1906 and Hurricane in 1907. It currently has 65 disciplines (federated, non-federated and recreational), the River Plate Institute (IURP) - which was inaugurated on December 12, 2007 by the approval of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of the Nation and, later, by the National Evaluation and University Accreditation (CONEAU), with the launching of graduate and postgraduate degrees - and the River Plate Foundation. Source: official site Club Atlético River Plate.

<sup>&</sup>lt;www.cariverplate.com.ar/polideportivo>. Accessed January 6, 2016.

Newell's Old Boys was an elitist team, founded in the Anglo-Argentine College of Rosario, while Central was railway. Over the years and the development of football, clubs changed their social composition. In fact, Boca was a very popular Italian club and it is still today, but with well-to-do class supporters, closer to River before.

# 2.6 Time of moving and rivalries

"The only possible fatherland is the permanent encounter with the other," says the philosopher Darío Sztajnszrajber. The socio-cultural history of River, the construction of narratives, stories, myths, among others, has been the result of an initial encounter - and sustained over time - with Boca, in a sort of binomial in which one cannot think of one in the absence of the other. As we have seen so far, the immigrants from Genoa were the embryonic link that gave rise to the two most popular and preponderant clubs of our country. Several factors, some of importance (such as the popularization of football and its positioning as the most representative sport in Argentina), and others linked to subjectivities and collective experiences (the decision to form a club with certain characteristics) were influenced by this process.

In the process of the genesis of modern Buenos Aires, its landscape changes enormously in a few decades. It goes from the city of the neighborhoods to the one of the quarters. This movement between the decades of the 10' and 20' is key in the construction of the city and its current scenario, as well as the meanings adhered to it from the 30's onwards: "The 20's and 30's are the moments of the birth of the neighborhood imaginary and that of the neighborhoods themselves "(Frydenberg, 2014).

From the market action (land parceling and sale by installments), the extension of the streetcar network and the action of the State, the urbanization of the territory took place. Towards the beginning of the twentieth century, the movement produced an overcrowded downtown, traditional neighborhoods like La Boca and a multitude of "neighborhoods" more or less connected to that downtownby train and streetcars. By the first decade the neighborhoods appeared as border suburbs of a border of a downtown that was expanding towards the suburbs.

The so-called full modernization meant the transformation of those neighborhoods and interstitial zones that separated them into fully urbanized areas. This process led to the emergence of *quarters* in the 1920s. The urban and social movement that included their birth implied the emergence of a new local public space, structured in the joint action of new associations (development societies, popular libraries, clubs); social actors (the socially homogeneous slums); (street, corner, neighborhood cafes)

and their sociabilities, as well as popular sectors or rather the new culture of these popular sectors (Frydenberg, 2014).

Through the practice of football (among other phenomena) the belonging to the city begins to be perceived and put into play, feeling united to a common space, finite and shared. The content of that sharing was given by competition, rivalry, the matching of success achieved or invented. If you observe the phenomenon, probably few inhabitants should have known the city so well then, like these young people, who were using urban space in all its width and length:

Perhaps this process can be assimilated to a metaphor that links the club-team (defending the small group-local universe) in their participation in a league (which grouped competitors), with the link between the small local world, neighborhood, block, corner, with the whole conformed by the city. (Frydenberg, 1995: 53)

In this sense, we can affirm that the league was the totalizing frame in the way the city was as a global urban space, that sheltered to all the rival teams that felt as representatives of the neighborhoods. In the vast majority of cases the relationship between the whole and the part appears in a link in which the rest is perceived as an adversary-enemy, but always necessary:

The rivalry was linked to the defense of something of their own, assimilable in many cases -not in all- to the space, the neighborhood or the block. And if the court was located in the same physical space the mobilizing power was formidable. The use of the city manifested itself through rivalry, which in turn was the mirror upon which the identity was built. (Ibid: 54)

Thus, the urban space is constituted as a substantial element when analyzing the River case, which made a journey through several stadiums before finally establishing itself in Núñez in 1938. An issue that appears immediately linked to the sites to which the clubs moved refers to whether they did it to neighborhoods far from the one of origin; If so, how far from the first? In the course of the transfers, did they return to their place of origin or their surroundings? Casually, or rather, causally, one of the two cases in which the neighborhood bond was generated after the transfers culminated -that is, in areas other than those in which they were bornwas River (the other was Independent of Avellaneda). But they seem to be exceptional cases, since the majority of those who moved did not return exactly to the same space in which they were born, although they had an area like an axis near the originating one. In contrast, and despite the transfers, Boca maintained the link with the community that gave rise to the club:

The data testify to the existence of a first moment of contact between the club and the neighborhood, especially in the clubs born in the first years of the century, when the pressure by the space was not so acute. The insistence on the effort to obtain ther own piece of land and the persistence in moving several times, shows the strength of the identity connection with the place that it said to defend. (Frydenberg, 1995: 56)

The first court of River rises on May 28, 1901 (a few days after its foundation) on the east side of the South Dock of the Port of Buenos Aires (in Villafañe and Caboto), next to the Wilson Carboneras. There he started its amateur campaign, playing matches with clubs of close quarters and neighborhoods. In 1906, River was evicted from his estate by order of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Nation, settling in Sarandí<sup>7</sup>, on the other side of the Riachuelo, in a property owned by the Dresco naval stores. However, Sarandí was an unfriendly place for River supporters: his main argument lay in the discomfort of moving there. The leaders took note of this. But where? In 1907 returned to La Boca, but this time to the West side of the South Dock.

The founding and official party between River and Boca was disputed on August 24, 1913. The two teams formed in La Boca and explicitly recognized their Genoese heritage: River adopts the colors of the Italian city flag in his uniform. "Old rivals," headlines the newspaper *El Nacional*, despite the fact that they confronted each other that day for the first time. River won 2-1 at the old Racing Club court: "There are blows between players for a charge to Boca goalkeeper" and "excessive rough play", deplores *La Prensa*. It's a warning. " That same year, River underwent a new eviction and provisionally rented the lawn of Club Ferro Carril Oeste in Caballito. In 1915, he returned for the second time to La Boca and settled in the block included in the streets Pinzón, Caboto, Aristóbulo del Valle and Pedro de Mendoza.

This will not be the last move. In 1923 it leaves definitively the place of its origins (La Boca) and is established in Recoleta. There is built a stadium with capacity for 40,000 people on a plot on the avenue Alvear (now Libertador) between Tagle and Austria; With an official and a popular platform. By that date, the club already has 5,070 members.

The club's favorite home date appeared once again, but in 1935: the leaders placed the foundation stone of the Monumental stadium and on September 27 of the

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> In its passage by Sarandí, River played in Segunda. He had joined the Football Association in 1905 and started in Third. In 1906 it ascended to Second and the following year lost the end by the ascent to First 1 to 0 before National, a team of employees of the company Gath and Chaves. The base of that equipment arrived at First in 1908. Source: official site Club Atletico River Plate. Online: <www.cariverplate.com.ar/history>. Accessed January 7, 2016.

following year began its construction. Towards the end of 1937 River got its last laurel in the stage of Alvear and  $Tagle^8$ . The outcome of the movings officially took place on May 26, 1938, the date of inauguration of the Monumental, held with a friendly -again- before Peñarol of Montevideo and a concurrence of 70,000 spectators $^9$ .

Between 1916 and 1922, when Boca returns from his fleeting stay in Wilde and River de Sarandí and Ferro, the courts are about three blocks away. Political life was crossed by two decrees of General Agustín P. Justo, elected Argentine president in 1932 in the midst of allegations of fraud and outlawed radicalism (honorary partner of both clubs), help Boca and River to complete the construction of their definitive stadiums. Boca in the Bombonera -project promoted in 1936 by President Camilo Cichero- and River in Núñez builds the majestic Monumental Stadium, today Antonio Vespucio Liberti, a Boquense surname. Antonio is the nephew of Tomás Liberti, a Mason and Genoese soda maker, famous in the neighborhood because in 1884 he had led the creation of the La Boca Volunteer Firefighters. Once again, Boca was "filtering" in River.

#### 2.7 From millionaires and bosteros

With the onset of professionalism in 1931, River hired Carlos Peucelle -from Sportivo Buenos Aires- for 10,000 pesos and the following year it bought Bernabé Ferreyra from Club Atlético Tigre for 35,000. The club revolutionized the market of passes of the time, earning the nickname of *Millionaires*, being the only South American club in history to have realized the most expensive incorporation of the world until that moment. Thus, the nickname adopted a powerful force and was accompanied by the graphic media of the time.

Journals such as *Crítica* and *La Mañana* begin to include in their chronicles the novel epithet to refer to River, whose diffusion and circulation played a fundamental role in the incorporation into jargon and language among the footballing public. The purchase of these two players (as objective data) enabled the construction of speeches - in this case the nickname - that over the years were installed, in other words, as a symbol endowed with legitimacy in the social imaginary: a temporary displacement in which decade after decade a subjective reality becomes objective

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Two-time winner after beating Argentinos Juniors by 6 to 0. The team surpassed the barrier of the hundred (106). Source: official site Club Atlético River Plate. Online:

<sup>&</sup>lt;www.cariverplate.com.ar/history>. Accessed January 7, 2016.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> The stadium was shaped like a horseshoe until 1958. From the sale of Enrique Omar Sivori for 10,000,000 pesos to Juventus in Italy, the leadership used the funds to complete the works of the Admiral Brown Baja stand. With this construction the stadium adopted the physiognomy of a ring and the sector was called the Enrique Omar Sivori tribune (high, medium and low). Source: Ibídem.

(Berger and Luckmann, 1991). It develops an internalization process that will occur with other nicknames or adjectives: such is the case of *hens*. The latter linked to a strictly sporting<sup>10</sup> event and had its correlate in a match played against Banfield<sup>11</sup>, in which a fan of the South club released on the court a white hen with a red stripe painted on the plumage, behind the bow of Hugo Gatti. Once again, the graphic media published images and echoed what happened.

On the other hand, Boca -as has happened with all Argentine soccer clubs- was not unscathed to these narratives and symbols that were constructed and articulated in the sport, geographic and territorial, becoming even more relevant from the journalistic discourse. Fernández Moores explains the denomination *bosteros*:

The 1925 census reveals that in the city of Buenos Aires, 26,000 people live crowded in 605 rooms of 508 little convents. In seven blocks there are 66 taverns. Cabarets with Italian, Russian, Slavic names. La Boca is the focus of epidemics. Casa Amarilla is a disaster zone: occupations, pollution and floods. "And to all of Boca -years later, those of River and other fans swollen- the shit covered them."

In this sense, it is evident the active participation of the football phenomenon in the formation of the neighborhood identities. It is necessary to insist that the new neighborhoods of Buenos Aires are basically symbolic constructions. The elaborate construction of the ritualized context of the soccer spectacle helped to crystallize the neighborhood identifications, which were strongly linked to football (Frydenberg, 2014). Thus, we conceive the football spectacle framed in a peculiar, modern, profane 12 ritual context. This process, together with structural and media changes,

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> En In May of 1966, River Plate disputed the end of the Glass Liberating of America against Peñarol of Montevideo. In the first leg, played in Uruguay, the local won 2-0. Then, in the Monumental, River won 3 to 2. Thus, the series was unveiled in a third and final match at the National Stadium in Santiago de Chile. The Argentine team started winning 2-0, but the two goals converted into the complement by the Uruguayans, added to two others in extra time, resulted in a final result of 4 to 2 and River lost the opportunity to obtain the first cup Of its history, as well as becoming the first Argentine club to get it. Source: The Graphic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Match corresponding to the thirty-third date of the National Championship, disputed in the stadium of Banfield. The match ended 1 to 1. Source: Asociación de Fútbol Argentino (AFA).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> In order for the phenomenon of the close link between football and neighborhood identities to be visible, it is necessary to incorporate categories that allow it to be perceived. To help explain it will be necessary to use concepts such as "ritual". Regarding the concept of ritual: modern society can not be understood if it is thought that rituals have been excluded from its bosom. Modernity includes these phenomena. There are modern urban inventions and they are rituals. Characteristic features of the rituals and that are present in the soccer spectacle: break with everyday life; Specific spatial and temporal framework; Programmed staging that is repeated periodically over a cyclical time; Preeminence of the community over individuality; Is an occasion for common actions, in which society becomes aware of itself and self-affirms, with feelings of "communitas" (proposed as necessary for

as well as adoptions and own productions, produced changes in the culture of these social sectors.

Gradually, these adjectives - "millionaires," "chickens", "bosteros", among the best known - have dissolved in the colloquial and always justified *folklore of football*. In the interviews conducted this response has been observed as a constant to the question of discrimination and xenophobia detected in the songs during the matches. This problem - which will be repeated in later pages - has been articulated in the *claques*, a phenomenon that takes on a considerable dimension from the popularization of soccer: "Claques is a base with which the ritual was structured, and with it, The football identifications in the '20. This format of adhesion was born with the popularization of football, and will be a necessary element of the crystallization of soccer and neighborhood identities "(Frydenberg, 2014).

In the middle of the process of urban renewal, towards the beginning of the twentieth century, football coexists as it can in the city. It is a practice that links the open, urban frontier with overpopulated areas. Thus, soccer as practice and fashion among young people of the popular sectors, and as an incipient spectacle, preexists the appearance of the neighborhood. It spreads over the neighborhoods with young people who quickly learn what rivalry, enmity and claques meant. In that previous movement, the local identity, small, local, structures most of the initiatives of those founders of clubs. They claimed to defend the honor of the place, to be its true representatives.

That emotional, evaluative and attitudinal format will be repeated later, with the generation of territorial neighborhood identifications. But that happens in the context of another city that emerges vertiginously. In those twenty years, -from 1910 to 1930-, substantial changes were made; witnessed and, in many cases, executed by the inhabitants of the city. The football (practiced or in the role of fan) gave spaces

the functioning of any society). The most marked difference between religious ritual and football ritual would be in the absence of supernatural beings or forces. The ritual "does" more than it "says". That's why you have to read what people do in the ritual. The elements of ritual present in football: stadiums; Hierarchies of the order of football (spatially placed: leaders, etc, platea, popular); Collective behaviors: the swollen with their songs, dances, colors; World of football as an analogy of a universal religion: with its elements of "idolatrization", normativization; A programmed, repetitive, stereotyped scenario; Temporary unanimity that is built against a scapegoat: for example, the referee. The concept of ritual basic ideas was drawn from Bromberger, C. (2001). "The sports multitudes: analogy between sports and religious rituals". In EF Sports, N ° 29. Buenos Aires.

of participation in the reconfigured public space. Obviously, it was not the only one. However, it was a privileged one from the point of view of the generation of territorial identities and, why not (following Archetti), national as well.

On the other hand, if we analyze soccer with all its components, we can see a connection between the extraordinary stage of ritual, daily life and the spaces of male sociability. A simultaneous, unique movement took place, in which the spectacle, the club, the neighborhood and the press were strengthened among themselves, in charge of codifying, classifying and making it more and more visible.

If we fence in the popular sectors of Buenos Aires, the overwhelming majority of the fans and their role as such pointed to a necessity and possibility at that historical moment to become visible, to take part, to belong and to ascend socially (Archetti, 2001). This is in the general context of a framework that the elite itself devised and enabled: a process of integration aimed at social and cultural homogenization. In these new constructions, football operated as a matrix on which new solidarities and oppositions were created.

The rivalry between River and Boca takes on a pernicious legitimacy. In it are observed issues that exceed the merely sporting: it is amalgamated from a network of symbols, experiences, rituals, territorialities that make of the "superclassic" an attractive final product, mobilizing, salable and discursively pregnant. Amílcar Romero enunciates it in form of a question: "Madero vs. Huergo?" The author offers an inescapable counterpoint to this antagonism fueled by diverse voices, and where in historical records they were classic rivals, better said "old rivals of the dominions of the south", even before confronting each other in a field of game for the first time:

Port Issues, Madero vs. Huergo; of religion, Masons against Marranos; of politics, the majority of radicals on one side, and socialists and anarchists on the other; on the other side of the dividing line of Almirante Brown, the xeneizes with their typical small convents: many were the factors that worked in the distinctive division of bands, which in these days we recognize with the simple antinomy between *millionaires* and *xeneizes*, Hens and woods. [...] An antagonism that breaks with all the barriers of what is known here and in the rest of the world, born inside neighborhoods (the other case would be Atlanta-Chacarita), the smallest grade scale in the list that make up the interregional (Real Madrid- Barcelona), the inter-city (National-Peñarol, Students-Gymnastics) and the interneighborhoods (San Lorenzo-Hurricane or Vélez-Chicago).

#### 3. CONCLUSIONS

This first approach offers us a set of considerations that smooths the way a little more. The questions about the discriminatory senses that are inscribed in current practices and discourses by the River fans have a precedent, which has been the purpose of this section: to try to account for the origins, that is, the socio-cultural and historical conditions that have made possible the construction and legitimization of certain senses that are always articulated as a function of Boca Juniors.

Tracking River's roots led us unequivocally to ask about his rival, the one who has formed an antagonistic binomial par excellence and efficiently turned into a salable spectacle. We consider that the press of the time (1910-1930) played a key role in the circulation and diffusion of these senses that, from the beginning, were part of the "benevolent" football *folklore*. Over the years we have observed that this expression has been wrecked in the dangerous waters of common sense, enclosed in the universe of the preexisting and therefore unnecessary to question, objective that this thesis poses: to problematize the cultural and discursively established.

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