Claremont Colleges
Scholarship @ Claremont

CMC Senior Theses | CMC Student Scholarship

2012

Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles: Strengthening Their Ethnic Identity Through Chivas USA

Stephanie Goldberger
Claremont McKenna College

Recommended Citation
Goldberger, Stephanie, "Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles: Strengthening Their Ethnic Identity Through Chivas USA" (2012). *CMC Senior Theses*. Paper 307.
http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/307

This Open Access Senior Thesis is brought to you by Scholarship@Claremont. It has been accepted for inclusion in this collection by an authorized administrator. For more information, please contact scholarship@cuc.claremont.edu.

CLAREMONT McKENNA COLLEGE

MEXICAN-AMERICANS IN LOS ANGELES: STRENGTHENING THEIR ETHNIC IDENTITY THROUGH CHIVAS USA

SUBMITTED TO

PROFESSOR DAVID GOLDBLATT

AND

DEAN GREGORY HESS

BY

STEPHANIE GOLDBERGER

FOR

SENIOR THESIS

SPRING 2012

APRIL 23, 2012

Contents

Introduction *1*

CHAPTER ONE: THE FORMATION OF MEXICAN-AMERICANS' IDENTITY IN LOS ANGELES

1 Theory of Identity *6*

2 Mexican-Americans' Identity in Los Angeles *8*

CHAPTER TWO: THE RISE OF SOCCER LEAGUES IN LOS ANGELES

3 From the Southern California Football League to NASL to the Birth of MLS *14*

4 The NASL *15*

5 The Creation of MLS *18*

6 The Formation of Youth Soccer Leagues in Los Angeles *20*

CHAPTER THREE: CHIVAS USA AND ITS APPEAL TO MEXICAN-AMERICANS IN LOS ANGELES

7 The Founding of Chivas USA as a "Mirror" to Chivas Guadalajara *23*

8 Corporate Sponsors and Their Relationship to Ethnic Identity *26*

9 Chivas USA in the Media *28*

CHAPTER FOUR: CHIVAS USA'S THREE SUPPORTER CLUBS

10 The Importance of Fan Clubs to Chivas USA's Success *31*

11 Legion 1908 *33*

12 Union Ultras *35*

13 Black Army 1850 *39*

CHAPTER FIVE: CHIVAS USA FANS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE LA GALAXY, MEXICAN AND AMERICAN NATIONAL SOCCER TEAMS, AND THE SHARING OF THE HOME DEPOT CENTER

14 The Rivalry Between Chivas USA and the Los Angeles Galaxy *45*

15 Chivas USA Fans' Level of Attachment to the Mexican and American National Soccer Teams *47*

16 The Poor Representation of Mexican-Americans on MLS and the United States National Team *51*

17 Chivas USA's Lease of the Home Depot Center *52*

18 Mexican-American Fans' Attitudes Toward Chivas USA's Pursuit of a New Stadium in Los Angeles *55*

Conclusion *57*

References *61*

Introduction

A large Mexican-American populace already exists in Los Angeles and, with each generation, Mexicans continue immigrating to the city. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 Data, there are currently 31,798,258 Mexicans that reside within the United States.[1] Out of Los Angeles County's population of 9,785,295, 47% is Hispanic, of which the majority is Mexican-American.[2]

This Mexican-American community in Los Angeles has maintained its connection to its Mexican heritage by playing and watching soccer. Soccer is Mexico's top watched and played sport, and many Mexicans who have immigrated to Los Angeles since the twentieth century remain soccer fans. To assimilate with American society yet to maintain their own community, Mexican-Americans formed ethnic soccer teams in their leisure time.[3] These Mexican leagues influenced the creation of American amateur and professional soccer teams in Los Angeles. However, unlike in Mexico, "soccer has never posed any serious challenge to America's own 'big three' featuring baseball, [American] football and the somewhat distant third of basketball."[4] American soccer

---

[1] Bureau of the Census, "The Hispanic Population: 2010," by Sharon R. Ennis, Merarys Ríos-Vargas, and Nora G. Albert. Census Brief, 01-16 (May 2011), http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf.

[2] Matthew Bloch, Shan Carter, and Alan McLean, "Mapping America: Every City, Every Block," The New York Times, 2010, http://projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/explorer.

[3] Joseph Contreras, In the Shadow of the Giant: Americanization of Modern Mexico, 1st ed. (Rutgers University Press, 2009): 59.

leagues were not established in the United States until the 1920s, when America's sports space was already filled with baseball, football, and basketball. Consequently, soccer is a sport in which Mexican-Americans, rather than Americans, participate as a pastime.

Understanding Mexican-Americans' interest in soccer and recognizing the large Mexican-American community in Los Angeles, Antonio Cué and Jorge Vergara founded the men's professional soccer team Chivas USA in 2004. As Major League Soccer's (MLS) eleventh franchise, Chivas USA is a sister team to Club Deportivo Guadalajara (Chivas Guadalajara), one of Mexico's four most popular and most successful soccer teams. Chivas Guadalajara is a symbol of Mexican identity and upon immigrating to the United States, Mexicans remain loyal to Chivas Guadalajara by filling their homes with Chivas Guadalajara merchandise and by forming supporters clubs to watch the team's games on television.[5]

In this thesis, I will analyze how Chivas USA, mainly due to its connection to Chivas Guadalajara, serves as an outlet through which many Mexicans can assimilate in Los Angeles and connect with their ancestral roots. To conduct my research, I socialized with two out of three of Chivas USA's supporters clubs, the Union Ultras and Black Army 1850. I interacted with these groups at their tailgates and gatherings during and after Chivas USA's 2012 season opening game at home in Carson, CA, on March 11, 2012. Both of these groups organized pre-game tailgates with food and drinks, and I spoke to their leaders and additional members in their natural environment.

---

[4] Andrei S. Markovits, "The Other 'American Exceptionalism': Why is There No Soccer in The United States?" The International Journal of the History of Sport 7, no. 2 (1990): 2, http://ces.fas.harvard.edu/publications/docs/pdfs/CES_WP1.pdf.

[5] Kevin Baxter, "Chivas de Guadalajara Gives Fans a Sense of Home," Los Angeles Times, August 8, 2009, http://articles.latimes.com/2009/aug/08/sports/sp-chivas-mexico-fans8.

Additionally, I used my experience in working as a sales and special events intern for Chivas USA in 2009 to examine how the members of Chivas USA's fan groups interact with the team's staff. From July to November of that year, I attended every Chivas USA home game and had the opportunity to communicate with fans, staff, and corporate sponsors. Since 2009, I have also attended at least two Chivas USA games each season.

In Chapter One, I explore how Mexicans in Los Angeles have created separate residential communities and sports organizations since the early twentieth century to strengthen their ethnic identity. Then, in Chapter Two, I detail the course by which soccer became institutionalized in Los Angeles during the twentieth century and, thus, increased in popularity.

As part of Chapter Three, I examine how Chivas USA has branded itself closely to its sister team Chivas de Guadalajara from Mexico and has attracted Mexican-American fans through its five values of passion, Chivas heritage, competitiveness, inspiration, and community. As I will describe, Chivas USA tried in its beginning years to build its identity from within by hiring Mexican-born and Mexican-American players and senior management staff.

Moreover, in Chapter Four, I explore how Chivas USA's Mexican-American fans have responded to the team's arrival in Los Angeles by forming three different supporter groups— Legion 1908, Union Ultras, and Black Army 1850. By interviewing members of the Union Ultras and Black Army 1850, I learned their beliefs towards a range of issues, including: why they support Chivas USA rather than the Los Angeles Galaxy, Los Angeles' second Major League Soccer team; the poor representation of Mexican-

American players on the United States National Soccer Team; and whether they support the Mexican or United States National Team when those teams compete against one another. I also questioned Chivas USA fans about their views on whether the establishment of Chivas USA's own stadium in Los Angeles would help the team to attract additional Mexican-American soccer fans. I outline my findings on their attitudes towards these topics in Chapter Five.

Worldwide, Chivas USA is not the only professional soccer team that has been created for the benefit of ethnic groups. Immigrant groups have traditionally used soccer to assimilate into the dominant cultures in which they live. For example, shortly after World War II, a large number of Turks immigrants to Germany. These Turks created their own teams in major German cities, such as Berlin and Cologne, where the greatest number of Turks resided. One such team that they helped to form was Türkiyemspor Berlin, which currently plays in the NOFV-Oberliga Nord league, the fifth-tier of the German Football League, and which "has been a legendary team for decades not only for Turkish Germans but for Turkey as well."[6]

Meanwhile, many Turkish immigrants also congregate with one another to support the German Bundesliga's Hertha Berliner Sport-Club (Hertha BSC), a soccer club that was established in 1892. However, Hertha BSC is more closely tied to a German, rather than Turkish, identity, because a group of neo-Nazis continue supporting that team. In 1933, Hitler had named Nazi party member Hans Pfeifer as the team's

[6] Esra Maden, "Multikulti Alive in Germany's 'Türk' Football Teams," Today's Zaman, November 6, 2011, http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&newsId=262021&link=262021.

President, and, due to that early Nazi influence, neo-Nazis have sustained a Hertha BSC supporter group.

Just like Berlin, Los Angeles is a multicultural city, and Mexican-Americans have formed their own amateur soccer teams in Los Angeles. Yet, because soccer was neither a greatly institutionalized nor popular sport in Southern California upon their arrival in the early twentieth century, Mexican immigrants had to step out of the mainstream and mainly build soccer leagues themselves. With Chivas USA's creation, Mexican-Americans finally found a professional team in the United States with which they could ethnically identify.

Chapter One: The Formation of Mexican-Americans' Identity in Los Angeles

I. Theory of Identity

How does one develop his identity? As an individual matures, he develops his sense of self through recognizing and understanding his ethnic history, sexual identity, social status, and religious inclinations. The values, attitudes, and behaviors of the ethnic, social, and cultural groups to which a person associates himself influence his perception of the world. Although an individual can possess multiple identities, ethnic nationalism can supersede other identities, like those of social class. [7]

Mexican-Americans often develop their ethnic identity through association and interaction with individuals of the same heritage. In other words, they form their identities by connecting with "a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement, and achieve some social consensus about the evaluation of their group."[8] For example, Mexican-Americans are usually bilingual and can immediately relate to other Mexican-Americans

[7] Anthony D. Smith, "National Identity and the Idea of European Unity," International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 68, no. 1 (Jan., 1992): 59. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2620461

[8] Yolanda Flores Niemann, Andrea J. Romero, Jorge Arredondo, and Victor Rodriguez, "What Does It Mean to Be 'Mexican'? Social Construction of an Ethnic Identity," Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences 21, no. 1 (February 1999): 48. http://hjb.sagepub.com/content/21/1/47.

by conversing in their native language, Spanish. They attribute great pride in associating with "*La Raza*," Mexicans in Los Angeles who are linked through their native roots.[9]

Mexican-Americans' pride in their heritage is transmitted across generations, and it defines their identity as a group. As Anthony Smith explains, "So the subjective perception and understanding of the communal past by each generation of a given cultural unit of population—the 'ethno-history' of that collectivity, as opposed to a historian's judgment of that past—is a defining element in the concept of cultural identity, and hence of more specific…national identities."[10] Cognitive identity binds a group socially, politically, and economically, particularly through knowledge and understanding of the past. Mexican-Americans may learn their ethnic history by reading academic records and speaking with their elders who experienced different social conditions.

Furthermore, Mexican-Americans' identity may be defined by their group's conflict with Caucasian culture, because the Mexican government has historically clashed with the American government over issues involving immigration and narcoterrorism. In 1932, over 11,000 Mexicans were sent from Los Angeles back to Mexico.[11] Feeling threatened by the American government, Mexican-Americans formed their own community in Los Angeles to retain their culture and presence in the city. As these

---

[9] Mario T. García, "La Frontera: The Border as Symbol and Reality in Mexican-American Thought," Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos 1, No. 2 (Summer 1985): 205, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1052036.

[10] Smith, "National Identity and the Idea of European Unity," 58.

[11] Rodolfo F. Acuña, Anything But Mexican: Chicanos in Contemporary Los Angeles (Verso, 1995): 7.

groups defined their collective identities, they began expressing nationalist sentiments, which transformed their search for identity into a *movement*.

II. Mexican-Americans' Identity in Los Angeles

The formation of Mexican-American identity can be traced to Mexicans' arrival to California in the late eighteenth century. In September 1781, Spaniards mainly from the Mexican states of Sinaloa and Sonora, Africans, and Indians came to Olvera Street and officially established the city of Los Angeles.[12] Although the Spanish Empire controlled Los Angeles until 1821, Mexico obtained full governance over the city from 1821 to 1848 when it achieved independence from Spain. However, in 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo forced Mexico to cede California to the United States, and all residents became United States citizens.[13] Since the United States now governed California, a natural conflict emerged between individuals identifying with American and Mexican-American traditions.

With the railroad's expansion in 1884, travel between the United States and Mexico eased, thus impelling further Mexicans to immigrate to Los Angeles. A second wave of Mexican immigration into Los Angeles came with the onset of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, when Mexicans wanted to escape from Porfirio Diaz's authoritarian regime and the deteriorating economic crisis. In 1942, a third major wave of immigration occurred when Mexico and the United States' governments collaborated to set up the

---

[12] Acuña, Anything But Mexican, 23.

[13] Griswold Del Castillo, Richard, The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (University of Oklahoma Press, 1990): 5.

'bracero' program.[14] With a large portion of Americans leaving the country to fight in World War II, the United States initiated this program to attract Mexican workers to Los Angeles and to other growing, urbanizing cities. Mexican workers filled these cities' vacant jobs to help keep the United States' economy prospering.

However, once the Great Depression hit, Los Angeles County deported more than eleven thousand people of Mexican descent, because whites did not want to compete with Mexicans for jobs.[15] During the Great Depression and similar periods when it was hard to find employment in Los Angeles, Mexican-American communities began to participate in activities together to remember their Mexican heritage and to generate pride in their Mexican-American identity. It was in 1930 that Mexicans renovated the area of the original Pueblo of Los Angeles and reopened it as Olvera Street. Olvera Street in Downtown Los Angeles has survived as "one of the few remaining centers of the Mexican past; it is a reminder that Mexicans were here before Euroamericans."[16] That street, as well as Plaza Mexico in Lynwood, exemplifies how Mexicans in the city have created a separate, physical sphere to strengthen their physical and emotional ties with one another. Mexican-Americans choose to associate with each other because they face similar discrimination against their ethnicity and because their history closely links them.[17] As the social identity theory hypothesizes, "The creation of an in-group identity

---

[14] David G. Gutiérrez, "Migration, Emergent Ethnicity, and The 'Third Space': The Shifting Politics of Nationalism in Greater Mexico," The Journal of American History 86, no. 2 (Bloomington, Indiana, 1999): 502, http://jah.oxfordjournals.org/content/86/2/481.full.pdf+html.

[15] Acuña, Anything But Mexican, 7.

[16] Ibid., 23.

will tend to produce competitive behavior with out-groups, because the process of in-group identity creation by necessity requires, or leads to, the devaluation of out-groups."[18] In other words, individuals tend to identify with their in-groups, as opposed to their out-groups. In the separate space of Olvera Street and Plaza Mexico, Mexicans congregate to celebrate Mexican religious rituals and to sell Mexican products to the local community.

As the Mexican-American population continues rising, Mexican cultural festivals and events have become larger and more widespread throughout Los Angeles, transforming the city's atmosphere. Cultural and sports activities provide an outlet through which Mexican-Americans can express their pride together."[19] In the 1930s, Los Angeles' Mexican Consulate recognized the importance of these cultural activities to the formation of Mexican-American identity, and it organized local, regional, and national soccer tournaments.[20]

The 1932 Olympics held in Los Angeles further facilitated the transnational interaction between the American and Mexican governments and their respective national sporting federations. Mexican officials traveled to Los Angeles to assist Los Angeles city officials to promote athletics in Mexican-American communities. Meanwhile, Mexican-

---

[17] Samuel P. Huntington, "The Hispanic Challenge," Foreign Policy no. 141 (March – April 2004): 41, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4147547.

[18] Abdelal, "Identity as a Variable": 7.

[19] Ramzi Farhal and Clara Irazábal, "Latino Communities in the U.S.: Place-Making in the Pre-World War II, Postwar, and Contemporary City," Journal of Planning Literature 22, no. 3 (Feb. 2008): 213. http://jpl.sagepub.com/content/22/3/207.

[20] Carlos González Gutiérrez, "Fostering Identities: Mexico's Relations with its Diaspora," The Journal of American History 86, no. 2 (Sept., 1999): 546, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2567045.

Americans in Los Angeles had helped to raise three thousand dollars to fund the travel of fifty-two Olympic athletes, coaches, and officials from the Mexican delegation. To express gratitude for their financial help, the Mexican delegation invited Mexican-American athletes to join them in circling the Coliseum during the closing ceremonies.[21] Also, in preparation for the 1932 Summer Olympic Games, an Olympic Village was constructed in Baldwin Heights, an area with a predominantly Mexican-American population. Whether intentional or unintentional, the location of these accommodations for the Olympics surely placed Olympic athletes, coaches, and administrators in close proximity to Mexican-Americans, with whom they may have communicated during their stay.

Three months after the Olympics, José Arteaga and Juan Acevedo, two former amateur athletes who were both of Mexican-origin, formed the Mexican Athletic Association of Southern California (MAASC). Tied to the Confederación Deportiva Mexicana, the Mexican national sports federation, this Mexican-American sports organization recruited Mexican and Mexican-American coaches, managers, and athletes to participate in its sports leagues, tournaments, and exhibition matches. Unfortunately, soon after the MAASC broke its relations with L.A. Department of Playground and Recreation, now the Department of Recreation and Parks, in 1936, it ceased operations due to financial problems and due to limited access to city playgrounds.

In creating Mexican-American sporting organizations, like the MAASC, in the 1930s, Mexican-Americans expanded the size of their public sphere in Los Angeles in

[21] Alamillo, José M., "Playing Across Borders: Transnational Sports and Identities in Southern California and Mexico, 1930–1945," Pacific Historical Review 79, no. 3 (August 2010): 367. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2010.79.3.360

which they could both develop their identities and branch out into the mainstream culture of Los Angeles. The spaces in which these organizations formed were usually the *barrios,* where rampant numbers of Mexican-Americans lived. Starting in the late 1940s, wealthier Americans began to relocate to nicer suburbs in order to live in newer housing complexes and to escape living near freeways, which the city began constructing as population continued rising. Mexican-Americans occupied the communities that the wealthy left, because they could not afford to live in those neighborhoods. For example, when Dodger Stadium was built, Latinos in the surrounding Chavez Ravine community were displaced. Physically segregated from neighborhoods where most Americans lived, Mexican Americans could not easily integrate with Americans and chose to strengthen their ethnic identity with one another.[22]

Since World War II, Mexican-Americans have struggled to maintain their identity amidst "an emerging 'white' ethnicity that consolidated the various minorities of European descent into a suburbanizing middle class."[23] To combat discrimination against their group, Mexican-Americans formed their own sporting leagues. President Johnson's Great Society program, established in 1965, created the Department of Housing and Urban Development that ordered the space under some freeways in Los Angeles be transformed into city parks. These parks, including Chicano Park in Logan Heights, served as gathering spaces for Latino communities, especially for Latino soccer leagues. Highlighting the importance of soccer to Mexican-Americans, Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles "envisioned soccer as a social space in which to initiate political

[22] Vilma Ortiz and Edward Eric Telles, Generations of Exclusion: Mexican Americans, Assimilation, and Race, New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008: 222.

[23] Farhal and Irazábal, "Latino Communities in the U.S.," 214.

participation, contest the dominant culture, defeat urban segregation, disprove negative ethnic stereotypes, construct and display transnational ethnic loyalties, and celebrate a notion of Mexicanness based on the Mexican experience in the United States."[24] In the post-war period, Mexican-Americans utilized soccer to illustrate their ability to sustain community organizations and to defy stereotypes that they were incompetent in leadership roles. The Hispanic soccer teams that they formed during the 1930s and 1940s influenced Americans in Los Angeles to create their own amateur and professional soccer teams, too.

[24] Juan Javier Pescador, "Los Heroes del Domingo: Soccer, Borders, and Social Spaces in Great Lakes Mexican Communities, 1940-1970," in Mexican Americans and Sports: A Reader on Athletics and Barrio Life, written by Jorge Iber and Samuel O. Regalado (Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 74-5.

Chapter Two: The Rise of Soccer Leagues in Los Angeles

I. From the Southern California Football League to NASL to the Birth of MLS

In 1902, the Southern California Foot Ball League, one of the first amateur soccer leagues in Los Angeles, was founded. In the following year, another amateur soccer league, the Southern California League, which was renamed Greater Los Angeles Soccer League, was created. By 1926, the first Hispanic soccer teams appeared in Los Angeles. One of them, América FC, whose name most likely originated from the Mexican league team of the same name, was known to have competed against Rangers FC, one of the best American teams during that time period.

With the arrival of the first visiting international soccer teams to Los Angeles in the late 1940s, individuals in Los Angeles were exposed to foreign talent. For example, Atlante of Mexico visited the city in 1948, winning against the Los Angeles Scots and the Maygars. The exhibition of local talent playing against Mexican-league players particularly enthralled Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles.

Soon after international teams began playing exhibition matches in Los Angeles, the first professional soccer team, the Los Angeles Kickers, was established in Los Angeles. To create the Los Angeles Kickers, owner Sam Mark recruited some players from the Fall River Marksmen, a Massachusetts-based team that played in the American Soccer League. The Los Angeles Kickers quickly achieved success upon winning the Lamar Hunt US Open Cup in 1958 and 1964. Established by the United States Soccer

Federation in 1913, the Lamar Hunt US Open Cup was, and still exists as, a national championship tournament between amateur and professional teams in the United States.

Professional soccer did not attain sustained success until a league throughout the entire United States formed shortly after the 1966 FIFA World Cup. The telecast of the thrilling 1966 World Cup Final between England and West Germany introduced Americans to the diverse styles of soccer and spurred the creation of two professional soccer leagues in the United States the following year. Although Germany lost 4-2 to England, the twenty-year old German Franz "The Kaiser" Beckenbauer dominated the midfield in his first World Cup. Showcasing a new system of play to the world, each team placed a player, called "the sweeper," behind the defenders. Today, professional teams continue implementing formations that include a sweeper on the field as the last defending player before the goalkeeper.

II. The NASL

In 1967, two rival professional soccer leagues, the National Professional Soccer League (NPSL) and the United Soccer Association, arose in the United States, propelling the development of professional soccer in the United States. Supported by FIFA and the United States Soccer Federation, the United Soccer Association imported twelve full international squads to play in the United States for two months. The Wolverhampton Wanderers were one of those twelve teams recruited, and they played in Los Angeles in 1967.

Meanwhile, the National Professional Soccer League formed ten teams and acquired a television contract from CBS.[25] Yet, because the NPSL was not supported by FIFA, the players that signed with the NPSL faced possible suspensions from FIFA. The NPSL's Los Angeles-based team, the Los Angeles Toros, played their one and only season at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum before the league collapsed.

After experiencing failures during their first year of existence, the NPSL and the United Soccer Association decided to merge into one league, unifying professional soccer in the United States. The league that they formed was the North American Soccer League (NASL). With seventeen teams, the NASL began play in 1968. However, most teams from the NPSL did not survive with the merge. Some of those teams that did endure relocated to other cities as newly-formed teams replaced them. Under the NASL, the Los Angeles Toros, for instance, became the San Diego Toros, and a new team, the Los Angeles Aztecs joined the NASL. By 1969, twelve out of the original seventeen teams of the NASL unfortunately had folded. When some teams signed top international players, including Pelé, Franz Beckenbauer, George Best, and Teofilo (Nene) Cubillas, in the early 1970s, NASL teams attracted more spectators and television viewership rose, briefly sustaining the league.

Despite fierce competition from the other teams, the Los Angeles Aztecs, NASL's Los Angeles-based team, won the league championship, the Soccer Bowl, in 1974, the same year that the club was founded. Interestingly, five players out of a total roster of twenty-seven men, or 0.19 percent, were Mexican: Blas Sanchez, Miguel Brigada,

[25] Dave Litterer, "North American Soccer League I (NASL) 1967-1984," March 8, 2008, http://homepages.sover.net/~spectrum/nasl/naslhist.html.

Sergio Martinez, Pedro Martinez, and Jose Lopez. Meanwhile, seventeen of the players, or 63 percent, originated from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Further reflecting the Mexican-American community's influence in Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Aztecs was one of only three NASL teams in 1974 to include players of Mexican origin on its roster. The other two teams with Mexican-born players, the Dallas Tornado and the San Jose Earthquakes, only had *one* player of Mexican origin. While the Dallas Tornado employed Mexican-American Freddie Garcia, the San Jose Earthquakes hired Gonzalo Peréz. Therefore, the Los Angeles Aztecs had five times as many players of Mexican origin as Dallas and San Jose. This disproportionate number of Mexican players on the Los Angeles Aztecs, compared to the NASL as a whole, illustrated the minimal Mexican presence in the NASL. It also highlighted that Mexicans constituted a growing ethnic group in Los Angeles.

In 1982, ABC TV did not renew its contract with NASL due to lackluster television ratings.[26] Soon after, in 1984, the NASL was left with a total of nine clubs, a small amount compared to the twenty-four teams that it included in 1978. The league lost further ground when great numbers of spectators lost interest following Pelé and other international soccer superstars' departures or retirements. For example, after helping the New York Cosmos win in 1977, 1978, and 1980, Pelé, Franz Beckenbauer, and Johann Cruyff, left the league. As a result, attendance decreased, and clubs' profits fell. Although many lesser-known players came from the English Premier League and provided fans with the most memorable entertainment, NASL marketers mainly

[26] Ian Scott, "From NASL to MLS: Transnational Culture, Exceptionalism and Britain's Part in American Soccer's Coming of Age From NASL to MLS," Journal of Popular Culture 44, no. 4 (August 2011): 832, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2011.00865.x/pdf.

emphasized teams' superstar players. Moreover, NASL folded because clubs had paid large salaries to players, and those clubs did not generate enough profit to support their finances.

After seventeen seasons, the NASL finally disbanded in 1985. The NASL had tried too hard to incorporate soccer into the mainstream culture, when American football, baseball, and basketball were still the most popular sports.[27] One of the league's greatest problems was that it had named the league championship game the "Soccer Bowl," likening it to American football's "Super Bowl." Also, the league attempted to "Americanize" the sport by giving its teams American names, such as "St. Louis Stars" and "Seattle Sounders." The very fact that the NASL had to "Americanize" its version of professional soccer signified that its administrators recognized that soccer was originally, and continues to be, a sport dominated by ethnic talent.

III. The Creation of MLS

Although the NASL failed to sustain itself through the end of the twentieth century, more Americans had become interested in attending soccer matches. Symbolizing their rising fascination with the sport, they attended soccer matches at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games in great numbers. For instance, 101,799 fans attended the third-place game between France and Brazil at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, setting a record for the greatest number of fans at an American soccer match up to that date.[28]

---

[27] Andrei S. Markovits, "The Other 'American Exceptionalism': Why is There No Soccer in The United States?" The International Journal of the History of Sport 7, no. 2 (1990): 2, http://ces.fas.harvard.edu/publications/docs/pdfs/CES_WP1.pdf.

[28] Litterer, "North American Soccer League I."

Additionally, on July 5th, 1991, 41,103 individuals flocked to the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum to attend the United States versus Mexico semifinal match as part of the 1991 CONCACAF Gold Cup.[29] CONCACAF's Gold Cup is a tournament that occurs every two years to determine the regional champion of North America, South America, and the Caribbean.

The rising numbers of Americans that had attended visiting international teams and NASL's matches in Los Angeles since the 1970s influenced FIFA to award the city the honor of hosting some matches of the 1994 World Cup. For the final World Cup game between Brazil and Italy, 94,194 individuals traveled to the Rose Bowl in Los Angeles.[30] The game went to penalty kicks, providing fans with a thrilling, prolonged demonstration of skill between each team. During the month-long World Cup, many Americans witnessed soccer played at the world's highest level for the first time.[31] The success of that tournament influenced the United States Soccer Federation to build upon the momentary popularity of soccer and to create Major League Soccer (MLS) in 1996.

MLS established itself as different than NASL from the start, because it formally drafted players from college and American youth development leagues. In other words, it focused on recruiting American talent, like Freddy Adu and Landon Donovan, rather

---

[29] "Gold Cup 1991," CONCACAF, http://www.goldcup.org/page/GoldCup/TeamRelatedLink/0,,12802~0~3~3387,00.html.

[30] "Brazil-Italy Match Report, 1994 FIFA World Cup USA," FIFA, July 17, 1994, http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/archive/edition=84/results/matches/match=3104/report.html.

[31] Markovits, Andrei S., and Steven. L. Hellerman, "The 'Olympianization" of Soccer in the United States," The American Behavioral Scientist 46, no. 11 (2003): 1535, http://search.proquest.com/docview/214762179?accountid=10141.

than on attracting mainly international superstars at the beginning of its inception. The proliferation of cable TV in the 1990s also heightened the league's visibility to Americans.[32]

While the Los Angeles Galaxy began play in 1996 as one of the founding ten teams of MLS, Club Deportivo Chivas USA, Los Angeles' second MLS team, began play in the 2005 season. From 1996 to 2002, the Los Angeles Galaxy trained and competed at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, CA. Then, when the Home Depot Center was built in Carson, CA, as a soccer-specific stadium in 2003, the LA Galaxy relocated. Now, both the Los Angeles Galaxy and Chivas USA play at the Home Depot Center, providing individuals living in and around the Los Angeles area with the opportunity to support either or both teams during each MLS season.

IV. The Formation of Youth Soccer Leagues in Los Angeles

Having been exposed to the World Cup and to Major League Soccer, Americans began participating in youth and amateur soccer leagues in rising numbers in the 1990s. The United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA) and the American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) arose to promote the growth of youth soccer in the country. Founded in 1974, the USYSA is the youth affiliate of the United States Soccer Federation and holds yearly competitions to search for the most talented teams and players. Like the USYSA, AYSO is closely tied to the United States Soccer Federation as a National Association. It was established in Los Angeles in 1964, and it permits children of all ages, abilities, and ethnicities to play. However, the majority of youth who play in

[32] Scott, "From NASL to MLS," 845.

AYSO leagues are Caucasians, and few players of ethnicity are included on teams. This scarcity of diversity on AYSO's teams may signify that the league organizers divide Los Angeles County into AYSO regions that unfairly benefit the wealthier, Caucasian communities to the detriment of ethnic communities.

Rather than join American youth soccer leagues, many Mexican-American youth have become members of youth Hispanic leagues in Los Angeles. Demonstrating the development of these Hispanic leagues in Los Angeles, "an estimated 500,000 adult Hispanic men [play] outdoor soccer in amateur leagues every weekend in LA."[33] Recently, tournaments, such as Copa Los Angeles and Verizon's Copa Alianza, have been created in Los Angeles specifically to develop amateur Hispanic soccer in Los Angeles County. Started in 2010, Copa Los Angeles is a twenty-five weekend long tournament that includes twenty-five unaffiliated leagues with more than one thousand amateur Hispanic teams. Hundreds of thousands of Hispanic individuals in Los Angeles attend that tournament each year. Another key tournament involving amateur Hispanic teams in Los Angeles is Verizon's Copa Alianza de Fútbol Hispano. In its ninth year, Copa Alianza 2012 will be held in ten cities across the United States, including Los Angeles, and it will last two weekends in each of those locations.

Through competing in these friendly Hispanic youth soccer leagues and through watching international soccer matches together, Mexican-Americans have formed an intimate community within Los Angeles. Many Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles also

[33] "Soccer Marketing, Inc.," last modified 2009, http://www.soccermarketinginc.com/web/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=8&MMN_position=3:3

identify with individuals of similar heritage as members of one of Chivas USA's three supporter clubs.

Chapter Three: Chivas USA and Its Appeal to Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles

I. The Founding of Chivas USA as a "Mirror" to Chivas Guadalajara

Owned by Jorge Vergara Madrigal, the same owner of Chivas Guadalajara, and Antonio Cué Sánchez-Navarro, Chivas USA is the only Mexican-owned club in American professional sports. Since its inaugural season in 2004, Chivas USA has established its brand identity through its connection to Chivas Guadalajara, Mexico's most successful team with eleven First Division titles.

Most visibly, Chivas USA has adopted an almost identical jersey design to that of Chivas Guadalajara. Vice President of Marketing and Global Business Francisco Suinaga understands that many Mexicans who live in Los Angeles are Chivas Guadalajara fans. To help these individuals to ethnically identify with a professional soccer team in Los Angeles, Chivas USA administrators decided to design the team's uniforms with the same colors and similar pattern as those of Chivas Guadalajara. As Suinaga explains, "Our fans decide the look of the jersey. And our fans identify with the red and white stripes, which comprise the Chivas jersey. It represents Chivas México, and we must do the same with Chivas USA."[34]

Before Chivas USA started its first MLS season, a public relations campaign was implanted to attract fans of Mexican soccer to support Chivas USA. As part of this media plan, Chivas USA players were introduced to Mexican fans in Guadalajara's

[34] Chivas USA: Sí, se puede, directed by Sergio Guerrero (Primetime Group, Voy Pictures, and Chivas USA, 2005), DVD.

Jalisco stadium, the "cathedral of fútbol in Mexico."[35] Atttending soccer games in Mexico is akin to sitting in mass each Sunday, so it is unsurprising that Chivas Guadalajara fans designate their stadium as a "cathedral." Mexicans treat playing and watching soccer as a religion, and Chivas Guadalajara is one of the four most popular teams that Mexican soccer fans support. The other three regional teams that most Mexicans follow are all based in Mexico City and include: Pumas of UNAM, Club América, and Cruz Azul.[36] Games involving these teams ignite the largest rivalries and the most outrageous display of hooliganism by fans, because the fan bases of each of these four "national" teams reflect the different social classes of Mexican society. For example, Chivas Guadalajara represents the working class, and the club hires players through its youth academy, putting into practice its policy to include all Mexicans who exemplify extraordinary soccer talent. Exemplifying its mission to remain Mexican in the face of a globalizing Mexico, Chivas Guadalajara only hires players of Mexican descent. For that reason, Chivas Guadalajara represents the most Mexican team in the world.

To capitalize upon its Mexican heritage, Chivas USA employed many Mexican-born and Mexican-American players in its early history. In his film "Chivas USA: Sí, se puede," Sergio Guerrerro followed the journey of Mexicans who immigrated to Los Angeles to play for Chivas USA in its premiere season. Mexican-born players who were recruited for Chvias USA's inaugural team included: Armando Begines and Isaac Romo

---

[35] Chivas USA: Sí, se puede, directed by Sergio Guerrero, DVD.

[36] Roger Magazine, "'The Colours Make Me Sick': América FC and Upward Mobitility in Mexico" in Fear and Loathing in World Football, written by Gary Armstrong and Richard Guilianotti, 187-98 (Oxford, U.K: 2001): 77.

from Guadalajara, Jalisco; Francisco Mendoza from El Salto, Jalisco; Ramón Ramirez from Tepic, Nayarit; and Aaron López from Michoacán. Meanwhile, Mexican-Americans who appeared on Chivas USA's roster for its inception year in 1996 were: Javier Barragán from Long Beach, CA; Francisco Gómez from Watsonville, CA; Orlando Pérez from Fontana, CA; and Ryan Suárez from Sacramento, CA.

In its first MLS season, Chivas USA not only defined itself through its roster but also through the Mexican-born and Mexican-American administrators that it hired. For example, Chivas USA hired Javier "Zully" Ledesma, a former goalkeeper for Chivas Guadalajara, as Assistant Coach. Moreover, Francisco Suinaga, who was born in Mexico City, assumed an executive position in the team's marketing and corporate development divisions. His role was to promote Chivas USA to fans in Los Angeles and to connect Chivas de Guadalajara with the United States market. Another Chivas USA executive with Mexican roots was Chief Executive Officer Javier León. A native of Mexico City, León was responsible for managing Chivas de Guadalajara's commercial rights in the United States.

To bring a different ethnic background to the team, Chivas USA hired Amsterdam-born Thomas Rongen as Head Coach in 1996. Previously, Rongen had played for the legendary Dutch team Ajax of Amsterdam and for the NASL's Los Angeles Aztecs in their 1979 season. Upon his arrival to Chivas USA, he introduced the Dutch "Total Football" style of play, emphasizing positional adaptation and possession.

Upholding its commitment to identify with Mexican-Americans, Chivas USA was founded on five values. These values include: passion, Chivas heritage, competitiveness, inspiration, and community. Unsurprisingly, they closely mirror Chivas

Guadalajara's six values of nationalism, passion, honesty, social compromise, leadership, and transparency in information.[37] This close relationship with Chivas Guadalajara allowed Chivas USA to become one of the most well-supported MLS teams in 2006. That season, in only its second year in MLS, Chivas USA attracted an average of 20,000 fans each game.[38] In comparison, the average attendance per game for Major League Soccer in its entirety was 15,504.[39] With its five values and ties to Mexican soccer, Chivas USA has, thus, celebrated its Mexican heritage, and has attracted corporate sponsors with similar values.

II. Corporate Sponsors and Their Relationship to Ethnic Identity

Although Chivas USA's roster does not reflect the team's Mexican heritage, Chivas USA has partnered with companies that aim to target Mexican-Americans and Mexican-born individuals as potential customers. Specifically, for this upcoming 2012-2013 season, Chivas USA's jersey is sponsored by Corona, Volaris, and Adidas. While Corona is Chivas USA's sole "presenting sponsor" whose name appears in the center front of the jersey, Volaris and Adidas are two of the team's fifteen "team partners." With new jersey sponsors for 2012, Chivas USA had to communicate with apparel sponsor Adidas to create and to release a new jersey for the season. In an elite

---

[37] "Valores," Chivas Guadalajara, http://www.chivascampeon.com/paginas/valores.php.

[38] Ian Scott, "From NASL to MLS: Transnational Culture, Exceptionalism and Britain's Part in American Soccer's Coming of Age From NASL to MLS," Journal of Popular Culture 44, no. 4 (August 2011): 848, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2011.00865.x/pdf.

[39] Mike Woitalla, "MLS Attendance on the Rise," Soccer America, Oct. 26, 2010, http://www.socceramerica.com/article/40114/mls-attendance-on-the-rise.html.

presentation, Chivas USA revealed the team's new design on a flight 30,000 feet above the ground from Guadalajara to Los Angeles. To reward passionate fans, Chivas USA organized a photography contest. Each person entering the contest had to submit a photograph in which he was wearing Chivas USA gear. The photograph also had to be related to Volaris, a Mexican airline and Chivas USA sponsor, in some way. Through this contest, Chivas USA specifically targeted Mexicans from Guadalajara, because the flight departed from Guadalajara and because Volaris is well-known as a Mexican, not American, airline.

Although some of the team's corporate partners are companies that may target mainly Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, like Volaris, Corona, and El Super, other companies sign sponsorships with Chivas USA to attract all ethnic groups living in Los Angeles. When Chivas USA was created, General Manager Whit Haskell stated that the mission of the club was not only to maintain Chivas' Mexican heritage but also to mix it accordingly with American traditions:

> We're going to be celebrating all things Chivas, so the way we plan the field, which'll be as Mexican-oriented as possibly with our players in attacking style of play, a youthful team…to the ambiance that we have in the stadium [and] the food that we serve, we want to deliver a product that's as close to the product in Mexico as possible. That being said, we're not in Mexico; we're in the United States, we're at the Home Depot Center and we've got an extraordinary opportunity to take that Chivas tradition and meld it with certain things that you can only find here in the United States.[40]

One of those unique "things" found in the United States are American companies, many of which sponsor professional sports teams based on similar values and mission statements. The All-American companies that are affiliated with Chivas USA for the

[40] Chivas USA: Sí, se puede, directed by Sergio Guerrero, DVD.

2012-2013 season include: Bush's Best, General Mills, State Farm, Frito Lay, The Home Depot, Time Warner Cable, Ortho, Miracle-Gro, the Marriott Hotel at Torrance Bay and South Bay, Automated Man, Clamato, and Ruffies Trash Bags. Out of all of Chivas USA's sponsors, including its four "broadcast partners," Volaris is the only company based in Mexico. Despite the locations of these companies' headquarters, all of them partner with Chivas USA in order to attract the team's Mexican-American audience as their clients.

III. Chivas USA in the Media

Recently, television studios and media companies have learned that many Mexicans in Los Angeles prefer to listen to their entertainment in Spanish, rather than in English. Consequently, to increase ratings, they have created Spanish-language programming. For example, Telemundo, Univision, and Galavision have hired Spanish-language announcers to broadcast both Major League Soccer and Latin American soccer games on local and national TV.

Importantly, Chivas USA's four broadcast partners represent English-language and Spanish-language media outlets equally. While Canal 22 and KDOC Los Angeles are Spanish-language television stations in Los Angeles, Fox Sports West and PrimeTicket are English-language television channels. Additional television channels that will broadcast Chivas USA's games during the 2012 season include ESPN Deportes, ESPN2, Galavision, and NBC Sports. These television stations recognize that they can attract higher ratings by targeting their soccer programs to Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles.

Why do Spanish-language stations that broadcast Mexican League soccer games and American soccer matches attract such high viewership? First, Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles continue supporting Mexican League teams with which they have identified due to family preferences or hometown nostalgia. Second, Mexican-Americans appreciate that Spanish announcers have more enthusiasm for the game and do not purely spew out statistics like ESPN broadcasters do. Mexican-American Jorge Ramos explains why he only watches soccer matches that are announced in Spanish:

> "It never occurred to me to listen to the games in English on ABC or ESPN. How boring! In English, they continuously explain to the viewers how soccer is played only with the feet and that the winner is not necessarily the one who is ahead, mentioning absurd statistics like shots at goal or corners. Besides, compared to the emotional commentators in Spanish, those broadcasts seem more like a funeral mass."[41]

Mexican-Americans, like Jorge Ramos, may listen to Latin American games in Spanish in order to identify with their ancestry. Yet, more importantly, they do so to avoid boredom from listening to American announcers. To escape listening to "a funeral mass," they may quickly change the channel to a Spanish-language version of the same soccer game. "The cadence and excitement of Spanish broadcasters is celebrated worldwide," as Brandon Valeriano explains, and "ESPN's coverage [of the 2006 World Cup] lacked the drama and excitement that was evident in Univision's coverage."[42]

---

[41] Jorge Ramos, The Other Face of America: Chronicles of the Immigrants Shaping Our Future (New York: HarperCollins, 2002): 222.

[42] Brandon Valeriano, "Latino Assimilation, Divided Loyalties, and the World Cup" (University of Illinois: Chicago, Jan. 2010): 29.

Soccer matches on ESPN are usually narrated play-by-play by American or British individuals, and these announcers tend to oversimplify the game, because they believe that most Americans do not understand soccer well. Mimicking broadcasts of baseball and football games, they constantly include statistics, such as a player's shots in the previous MLS season, in their commentaries. However, particularly because soccer is played for ninety minutes straight, broadcasters must keep their audience interested in the game. While Spanish-language announcers on Univision understand this need to speak with emotion as they detail each successive play on the field, English-language broadcasters fail to connect emotionally with television viewers.

Recognizing the quantity of their Mexican-American fans and the ratings success of Mexican League soccer games on television, Chivas USA recently became involved with a new Spanish-language television show on Univision. This show, titled "Dale con Ganas," or "Give It All You've Got," helps obese individuals to lose weight through exercise challenges and healthy eating plans; it holds a similar format to NBC's hit television show The Biggest Loser. On Sunday, February 19, 2012, Chivas USA players Juan Pablo Angel, Jorge Villafaña and Dan Kennedy participated in "Dale con Ganas" by teaching soccer skills to the show's four featured families.[43] The families, consisting of four members each, competed in a mini soccer tournament, and the winning family received four season tickets to Chivas USA's home games for the 2012 season. Chivas USA hopes that these players' participation in the show will allow Mexican-American viewers to further strengthen their identity with the team.

---

[43] Olivia Cervantes, "'Chivas USA Gives It All Its Got': Red-and-White Players Participate in Spanish-Language Univision Show 'Dale con Ganas,'" Chivas USA, February 16, 2012, http://www.cdchivasusa.com/news/2012/02/chivas-usa-gives-it-all-its-got.

Chapter Four: Chivas USA's Three Supporter Clubs

I. The Importance of Fan Clubs to Chivas USA's Success

Just as Chivas USA's inclusion of all cultures and ethnicities is evident in the birthplaces of its players, it is also highlighted in the diverse membership of its fan groups. In order to satisfy Mexican-Americans' yearning to form part of a community in Southern California, a total of three Chivas USA supporters groups have arisen—Legion Kalifas, Union Ultras, and Black Army 1850.

First, Legion Kalifas, the local branch of Legion 1908 in Los Angeles, allows individuals who devotedly support Mexico's Chivas Guadalajara to gather at Chivas USA games. Through wearing Chivas Guadalajara gear and chanting the same songs as Chivas Guadalajara fans, they commemorate the Mexican team abroad.

When a few members of Legion Kalifas, Chivas USA's first supporters club, felt alienated by Legion Kalifa's focus on Mexican culture and close ties to Chivas Guadalajara, they split from the group and created the Union Ultras. A third supporter club, Black Army 1850, broke off from Union Ultras in 2010, and its members define themselves as fans of American, rather than mainly Mexican, soccer leagues and culture.

While Chivas USA's three fan clubs allow individuals in Los Angeles to associate with others who share their same passion for the team, they also serve as a way for Chivas USA to generate increased income through discount ticket sales, merchandise, and special events geared. Due to the monetary benefits of having three fan clubs, Chivas USA works to retain and to increase the number of customers involved in these

fan groups each year. Recently, Sven Theysohn, Oliver Hinz, Steve Nosworthy, and Michael Kirchner examined the relationship between increased revenue and fan supporters clubs of the German National Soccer Team. In regards to membership, they found that "a club's fan base is predominantly found in its domestic market but also extends to national abroad (work, study, holiday) and internationals who have an interest in a club through prominent players or other points of contact."[44] Clubs, like Chivas USA, must strive to retain their customers by recognizing their areas of origin and by implementing sales, marketing, merchandising, and sponsorship campaigns to generate long-term profits. Loyalty is an "enduring relationship between the consumer and an organization."[45] Consequently, Chivas USA must continue maintaining a strong relationship with its three supporter groups in order to retain a steady fan base and to grow its brand.

In the twenty-first century, social media tools like Facebook and Twitter help marketing analysts to determine the popularity of commercial products, celebrities, and professional organizations, such as sports teams. As of February 9, 2012, 19,463 people "liked" Chivas USA's official fan page on Facebook, and 17,414 individuals "followed" Chivas USA on Twitter. About two months later, on April 12, 2012, the numbers had grown to 21,625 "likes" and 20,904 "followers" on Facebook and Twitter, respectively. In this short amount of time, the number of Facebook fans of Chivas USA rose by 11.11% and the number of followers of Chivas USA on Twitter increased by 20.04%.

[44] Hinz, Oliver, Michael Kirchner, Steve Nosworthy, and Sven Theysohn, "Official Supporters Clubs: The Untapped Potential of Fan Loyalty," International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship 10, no. 4 (July 2009): 303, Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost.

[45] Ibid., 305.

These numbers indicate that Chivas USA is increasing in popularity as more fans become further attached or introduced to the team through social media and as the 2012 MLS season progresses. A large proportion of these Chivas USA fans that follow the team's Facebook and Twitter also associate themselves with one of Chivas USA's supporter clubs.

II. Legion 1908

Founded in 2005, Legion 1908, or "Legion Kalifas," contains more than one thousand members and represents Chivas USA's oldest fan club. Although Legion Kalifas supporters are dedicated fans to Chivas Guadalajara, they attend Chivas USA games to keep the Mexican soccer culture alive in Los Angeles. As Legion Kalifas member Ralph Vellasios has stated, "Being at a Chivas game is the next best thing to being in Mexico."[46] Fans of Chivas USA choose to become members of Legion 1908, because they may wish to retain their identity as purely Mexicans, rather than fully submit themselves to the influence of the United States. Each time Chivas de Guadalajara wins, "a victory [to Legion 1908] signifies the success of an independent Mexico in the context of a long history of political, economic and football-related submission to, and dependency upon, North America and Europe."[47] Those Legion 1908 members who are supporters of both Chivas USA and Chivas de Guadalajara may liken a Chivas USA's victory to the success of Mexico in the United States. Until the Treaty of

[46] Schroeder, Charlie, "Legions Versus Ultras," Weekend America, November 8, 2008, http://weekendamerica.publicradio.org/display/web/2008/11/08/sports_fans_soccer/.

[47] Roger Magazine, "'The Colours Make Me Sick': América FC and Upward Mobitility in Mexico" in Fear and Loathing in World Football, written by Gary Armstrong and Richard Guilianotti, 187-98 (Oxford, U.K: 2001): 190-1.

Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed between Mexico United States in 1848 to end the Mexican-American War, Mexico had controlled a large portion of what is now the Southwestern United States, including California.

Therefore, Legion Kalifas' mission is to represent Chivas Guadalajara in Southern California, and the home page of Legion 1908's Los Angeles site does not hide this objective:

> El objetivo de este sitio es un pequeño tributo a los colores ke llevamos dentro y al escudo ke traemos tatuado en el corazon y ke el Guadalajara es la institucion mas grande que existe en Mexico y por eso este espacio es una manera de expresar el sentimiento que llevamos dentro.…Porque apesar de como te identifiques seas Legionario, Irreverente, Reja, Gordo, Tepo, Provincia, Borracho, Crudos, Jodido,....al final el sentimiento es el mismo.[48]

The translated version is as followed:

> The objective of this website is a small tribute to the colors that we carry within us and to the shield that we bring tattooed in our hearts. It is also a tribute to the fact that Guadalajara is the greatest institution that exists in Mexico and, for that reason, this space is a manner of expressing the feeling that we carry within…because in spite of how you identify yourself, whether you are legionary, irreverent, in prison, fat, from a specific province, drunk, hung-over, or screwed…at the end, the feeling [within] is the same.

To commemorate Chivas de Guadalajara, the entire Legion 1908 website is written in Spanish and all of the historical data on Chivas refers to Chivas de Guadalajara, not Chivas USA. Moreover, as signified by the slogan on the fan club's scarves, Legion 1908 represents "pasión sin fronteras," or "passion without limits."

Like Legion 1908 members at Chivas de Guadalajara games, individuals of Legion Kalifas throw confetti on the field and sings songs that slander Chivas de Guadalajara's main enemies, including Club América.

---

[48] "Club Deportivo Guadalajara," Legion 1908 Los Angeles, http://www.legion1908-la.com/.

Figure 1: Legion Kalifas Supporters at the LA Galaxy vs. Chivas USA Game, May 11th, 2011.

In other words, they reenact traditions of the Legion 1908 in Guadalajara, even though they attend Chivas USA games in Los Angeles.

Finally, influenced by Chivas Guadalajara's roster of only Mexican-born players, Legion Kalifas members call for Chivas USA to hire additional Mexican-born and Mexican-American players. As of April 2012, only three Mexican-Americans – Marky Delgado, Cesar Romero, and Jorge Villafaña (formerly Jorge Flores) – appear on Chivas USA's roster. Therefore, Chivas USA clearly does not follow Chivas de Guadalajara's policy to only hire players of Mexican descent. Instead, Chivas USA cherishes the diversity of its players and has recently renewed Colombian Juan Pablo Angel's contract and has recruited the Ecuadorian Miller Bolaños. However, Legion Kalifas members want Chivas USA to improve its developmental system within the Chivas USA organization and to develop more players of Mexican, rather than American, descent.

III. Union Ultras

Members of Chivas USA's Union Ultras also celebrate the elements of Chivas USA that reflect its Mexican heritage; however, they welcome individuals of all ethnic

groups and ages, regardless of which Mexican team, if any, that they support. Contrarily, Legion Kalifas fans are first and foremost Chivas de Guadalajara fans and utilize Chivas USA as an outlet to support Chivas Guadalajara from Southern California. Because not all Chivas USA fans wanted to identify with Legion Kalifas and Chivas Guadalajara, a few members of Legion 1908 split to form a second supporters group, Union Ultras, in 2007.

Richard Escutia, or the "Commander" of the Union Ultras, was one of this group's founding members. Born in Los Angeles and raised in Michoacán, Mexico, Escutia coordinates all of the Ultras' activities on game days. Before creating the Union Ultras, he was the "Commander" of Houston Dynamo's fan group El Batallon, whose members he had seen cheering for the Dynamo during one of Chivas USA's playoff games in 2007. Escutia's experience in the military influenced him to briefly join El Batallon as an out-of-state member from Los Angeles while also supporting Chivas USA as part of Legion 1908. However, he and a few other members soon decided to create their own, military-inspired supporters group for Chivas USA.

Why did Escutia and these members who broke off from Legion Kalifas decide to name their supporters group "Union Ultras"? Escutia explains the process by which the name "Union Ultras" was chosen:

> Eleven of us got together in City of Industry to find a new name for the group. We had several names… Me, I'm a former member of the military [former soldier and sergeant] so I like anything that has to do with battle-the regimen, battalion…There were ten votes, five-five for Cartel and Union Ultras, and I was the last vote. We decided on the Ultras.[49]

[49] Richard Escutia (Union Ultras Founder) in discussion with the author, March 11, 2012.

The first half of the name, "Union," shows respect for "Chivas *Union* Guadalajara," incorporating Chivas USA's Mexican heritage. Meanwhile, "Ultras" was chosen as the second half of this supporters group's name to signify that its members are loyal, not anarchical, to Chivas USA. In the words of the "Commander," "We don't steal others' equipment [like Legion 1908] [and] we're not racist; we're a family."[50] Union Ultras members do not engage in violence with each other or with the enemy teams' fans.

Reflecting the Ultras' familial values, Escutia's full immediate family is involved with the supporter club. One of his two sons who is currently seventeen years old was even one of the Union Ultras' founders and will take control over the group when Escutia is no longer able to continue leading it.

Figure 2: The "Commander" (wearing a Baret) Poses with Union Ultras Members.

Moreover, Escutia's wife attends every game with him and helps to direct the Union Ultras' activities. Half of the Union Ultras is composed of women, and these females are treated equally within the supporter group. Anyone is welcome to join the Union Ultras, regardless of his ethnicity, race, age, or gender. On average, though, most Union Ultras members are aged in their twenties. Chivas USA fans from the entire Los

---

[50] Ibid.

Angeles County and its surrounding cities join the Union Ultras. Escutia explains his group's demographics:

> Most are Mexican-Americans but where do they live? We get people from San Diego, Santa Barbara. We [Escutia and his family] ourselves live in Palmdale. And mostly [the members of Union Ultras] are local [LA]…when you live in LA, that's kind of close…but San Diego is much further and Santa Barbara is a hike. That's how I know you're loyal.[51]

Situated in section 101, the diverse Union Ultras members chant in both English and Spanish. To date, they have a record of seventeen total short songs from which to choose. The lyrics of these chants highlight that the Union Ultras will continue supporting Chivas USA throughout the team's successes and failures. While they bang drums, wave flags with symbols of the Union Ultras, and sing songs, all members are required to stand throughout the entire game. In fact, one of the basic rules of Union Ultras, without exception, is that "there is no sitting allowed in the first 20 rows" of the section.

At the games, there will be anywhere from fifty to one hundred individuals that compose the Union Ultras. For games in which Chivas USA is playing its hometown rival the Los Angeles Galaxy, two hundred to three hundred Union Ultras members will be in attendance.

---

[51] Ibid.

Figure 3: Tony Regalado, One of the Ultras' Founders, Leads the Group in Chants.

It is the appeal of fan unity and the whole Chivas USA team that attracts Mexican-Americans and other ethnicities to become fans of Chivas USA. Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles join the Union Ultras to enjoy this sense of community and, unlike Legion 1908 members, they do not consider it important that few Mexican-born and Mexican American individuals currently appear on Chivas USA's squad. In fact, Escutia surprised me with his opinion on the scarcity of Mexican-American players on Chivas USA's roster:

> I don't care, because I am a purist. I love the team. I don't care if we have eleven Asians, eleven Caucasians…But you know, I wish they had more Mexicans. But the fact is, more people don't want to come to this league. They still view it as inferior. I don't think so…The problem is that they see this [MLS] as inferior, but there's more to it than fair game.[52]

IV. Black Army 1850

While the Union Ultras arose out of fans' wish to identify separately from Legion Kalifas, Chivas USA's newest supporters group Black Army 1950 was formed when some Union Ultras members desired to honor American, as opposed to mainly Mexican, soccer leagues and culture. Founded in 2010, Black Army 1850 includes individuals of

[52] Ibid.

both genders, multiple ethnicities, and ages. It mostly appeals to supporters of American soccer, or Major League Soccer, in Los Angeles.

To learn about how the Black Army 1850 emerged from the Union Ultras and differs from Legion Kalifas and the Ultras, I spoke with one of its leaders and founding members, Angel Mendoza. Mendoza began by explaining that Black Army was created due to a clash of ideals with the Union Ultras. Although neither he nor Richard Escutia of the Union Ultras expanded on this disagreement, Mendoza mentioned that Black Army 1850 "believes that Chivas USA is not a Mexican team, not whatsoever."[53] Contrarily, Union Ultras mostly consists of Mexican-Americans and, although it accepts individuals from all countries and ethnicities, its identity is still mainly Mexican due to its members' ethnicities.

One of the main reasons that Black Army 1850 split with the Union Ultras was to create a supporter group that emphasized Chivas USA's identification with Los Angeles, rather than with Mexico. The Black Army's name includes the year "1850" in order to signify the year in which California became a part of the United States. In comparison, both the Union Ultras and Legion Kalifas identify with the state of California prior to 1850 in order to commemorate the early years in which Los Angeles was governed by Mexicans. Mendoza explains the significance of his supporters group's name: "The only thing that connects us to Mexico is the name, which eventually might change to Chivas

---

[53] Angel Mendoza (Black Army 1850 Founder) in discussion with the author, March 11, 2012.

Los Angeles, not just Chivas USA. That's why we're Black Army Los Angeles. We're big on the Los Angeles. We're big on the California."[54]

In its first year of existence in 2010, Black Army 1850 proved that many Chivas USA fans similarly stressed Chivas USA's identity in Los Angeles. That year, Black Army 1850 averaged about fifty people per game, a promising number of individuals considering that the supporters group had just been created.

Moreover, Mendoza and the other founding members chose to name their group "Black Army" and to dress mainly in black apparel because "black's an intimidating color. Supporter groups are supposed to be intimidating to the other team. That's what we're here for...to throw them off their game."[55] Black Army was formed for those Chivas USA fans that identify strongly with American culture and for those soccer fans that enjoy cheering loudly and influencing Chivas USA's opponent to err during the game. Finally, the founding members of Black Army 1850 elected to call themselves an "army" to emphasize the high degree of their group's organization.

What types of members does the Black Army attract? Importantly, Black Army 1850 includes all fans, regardless of sexual, ethnic, and cultural identity. For instance, the Black Army is outwardly accepting of LGBT fans. Recently, a Los Angeles Galaxy fan applauded the Black Army's acceptance of the LGBT community. As this fan, who also identifies as LGBT, highlighted, "The team's Black Army 1850 Supporter's Group is set apart in MLS in that not only do they operate with our [LGBT members']

---

[54] Angel Mendoza (Black Army 1850 Founder) in discussion with the author, March 11, 2012.

[55] Ibid.

core principles of acceptance, equality, and inclusion in mind, but they also show their support for these principles – and their [LGBT] fans – match-by-match: by flying a rather large rainbow flag."[56] In addition to embracing LGBT individuals, Black Army 1850 members hold a variety of ethnic identities, including Mexican, Nicaraguan, German, and American.

Figure 4: Black Army Members Wave American and LGBT Friendly Flags.

To highlight its connection to the United States and to strengthen its American identity, Black Army 1850 even created its own version of Chivas USA's mascot, which is a goat. "The [Black Army's] goat has the American flag to differentiate us," Mendoza says, "There are a lot of Mexicans, Ecuadorians, Colombians [in the Black Army], but we're in the U.S. and this is the team that we support in the United States."[57]

Through working with charities, Black Army 1850 strives to connect Chivas USA with the wider community of Los Angeles. Most recently, the group combined its recruitment campaign with a backpack drive in Hawthorne, a city in the Southwestern

[56] "With Enemies Like These…" Gay4Soccer, February 9, 2012, http://gay4soccer.com/2012/02/09/chivas-usa-black-army-soccerally/.

[57] Angel Mendoza (Black Army 1850 Founder) in discussion with the author, March 11, 2012.

segment of Los Angeles County. One of the group's members is a police officer for the city of Hawthorne, and that officer suggested that Black Army 1850 become involved. Due to the cost of purchasing backpacks, some children in Hawthorne's public schools must carry their books in garbage bags. Therefore, to positively impact the Los Angeles community, Black Army 1850 members provided backpacks to twenty-four kids in the Hawthorne school district. Mendoza described that "one of the girls that received a backpack previously carried her things in a pillowcase," and seeing those kids receive the backpacks gave Black Army 1850 members and him an incredible amount of joy.

An additional way through which Black Army 1850 communicates with its members and fans of Chivas USA is through social media, specifically Twitter. Mendoza controls the group's Twitter account, and he recognizes the huge influence that Twitter holds as a recruiting tool. For Chivas USA's game against Xoloitzcuintles of Tijuana on February 22, 2012, in San Diego, the Black Army gave away fifteen free tickets with transportation included. Mendoza publicized these tickets partially through Twitter in an attempt to recruit new individuals to join Black Army 1850. Reflecting the power of social networking sites as a public relations tool, Mendoza said, "When we went to San Diego, most of the seventeen people that went, apart from our ten members that went, were all from social networking and Twitter." Using Twitter as a forum, Black Army members or individuals interested in becoming involved with the supporter group can ask questions about Chivas USA's upcoming games and how to acquire tickets. Many of those same interested people then become season ticket holders with the Black Army.

Therefore, Mexican-American fans of Chivas USA choose to identify with Legion Kalifas, Union Ultras, or Black Army 1850 based on the degree of their

attachment to Chivas Guadalajara and the strength of their ethnic connection to other members of that fan group. Through interacting with members of their respective supporter club, they have developed attitudes towards a range of issues in the American and Mexican professional soccer world. The beliefs that they have formed on topics such as Chivas USA's rivalry with the Los Angeles Galaxy and the representation of Mexican-Americans on United States National Team, for instance, have helped them to strengthen their ethnic identity.

Chapter Five: Chivas USA Fans' Attitudes Towards the LA Galaxy, Mexican and American National Soccer Teams, and the Sharing of the Home Depot Center

I. The Rivalry Between Chivas USA and the Los Angeles Galaxy

Regardless of the fan club to which they associate, Mexican-American fans of Chivas USA agree that the Los Angeles Galaxy is Chivas USA's ultimate enemy. While "the Galaxy is for Central Americans, Chivas is for Mexicans."[58] Mexican-Americans support Chivas USA in greater numbers because Chivas USA is the sister team to Chivas Guadalajara. Contrarily, the Los Angeles Galaxy is well-known within MLS for attracting the best American soccer players and international soccer stars. For example, the Los Angeles Galaxy's roster currently includes players such as English superstar David Beckham, Irish striker Robbie Keane, and American forward Landon Donovan. Meanwhile, Chivas USA has attracted top international players, too, yet those players, such as Colombian Juan Pablo Angel, are neither Mexican-born nor well-known to Americans that follow Major League Soccer. As a consequence, individuals in Los Angeles view the LA Galaxy as the soccer team for the rich, while Chivas USA is associated with being the team for ethnic groups and lower and middle social classes.

Once Chivas USA began play as part of the 2005 MLS season, marketing professionals within MLS immediately took advantage of the fact that two of its league's teams would be playing their home games in the same soccer-specific stadium, the Home

[58] Chivas USA: Sí, se puede, directed by Sergio Guerrero (Primetime Group, Voy Pictures, and Chivas USA, 2005), DVD.

Depot Center. Chivas USA and the Los Angeles Galaxy became hometown rivals, and the games in which they competed against one another were termed "Honda Superclásico." The word choice of "superclásico" is significant, because the Mexican First Division's rivalry between Club América and Chivas de Guadalajara is also called the "Super Clásico."[59]

Chivas USA's Mexican-American fans believe that their team is superior to the LA Galaxy because of Mexicans' history in Los Angeles. As the Union Ultras' Escutia, "It goes deeper than the game. It's about Mexico versus U.S. In our mind, this is our land. In their mind, it is their land, but they don't realize they took it from us…Arizona, New Mexico, Texas California…this is our territory."[60] Mexicans governed Los Angeles before the Americans assumed possession of the city with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and many fans support Chivas USA to commemorate these early Mexicans' rules before 1848.[61] In contrast, LA Galaxy is an "All-American" team that is mainly supported by Americans.

Providing an additional viewpoint, Angel Mendoza of Black Army 1850 explains why he chooses to support Chivas USA, rather than the Los Angeles Galaxy:

> The reason why I never root for the Galaxy is they had a couple of players when I was young that were against the Mexican National Team, and I had just come from Mexico. So, automatically, there was no connection. As the Galaxy

[59] Duncan Tucker, "Mexico's 'Super Clasico," Guadalajara Reporter, March 30, 2012, http://guadalajarareporter.com/sports-mainmenu-89/30865-mexicos-super-clasico.html.

[60] Richard Escutia (Union Ultras Founder) in discussion with the author, March 11, 2012.

[61] Griswold Del Castillo, Richard, The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (University of Oklahoma Press, 1990): 5.

> progressed, they became super like the [National Basketball Assocation's] Lakers and I can't stand the Lakers.[62]

Mendoza, like other Chivas USA fans, prefers to support soccer teams whose team staff respects fans' ethnic heritage and whose players and ownership are, themselves, Mexican.

II. Chivas USA Fans' Level of Attachment to the Mexican and American National Soccer Teams

Although the Los Angeles Galaxy and Chivas USA both try, while at differing degrees, to target the Mexican-American community as potential supporters, many Mexican-Americans still do not follow Major League Soccer teams. Instead, they support the Mexican National Team, the United States National Team, or Mexican First Division teams. They view Mexican and international soccer matches as more exciting, because they believe that Americans do not appreciate and follow soccer as much as they do.[63] Jorge Ramos, a Mexican-born individual who resides in the United States, expresses the importance of soccer to Mexican culture:

> "My friends here in the United States cannot fully understand that in the rest of the world, soccer is much more than just a sport. Not only is it a piece of culture, but it is also an extremely important part of our first experiences as part of a

[62] Angel Mendoza (Black Army 1850 Founder) in discussion with the author, March 11, 2012.

[63] Brandon Valeriano, "Latino Assimilation, Divided Loyalties, and the World Cup" (University of Illinois: Chicago, Jan. 2010): 29.

group. It is an odd pairing; competition and unity at the same time. Some of the best moments of my childhood are tied to a soccer ball"[64]

Ramos wishes for his son, who is being raised in the United States, to grow emotionally with soccer, too. However, many Mexican-Americans find it difficult to assimilate into Los Angeles life when they cannot adequately identify with the Los Angeles Galaxy, Chivas USA, or the United States national team. As Brandon Valeriano clearly states, Mexican-Americans, or Latinos in general, choose to identify with their ancestral teams, rather than with American teams:

> Latinos will, of course, follow the Mexican and other national teams since they have been following these very same teams since their youth. Support for local club teams such as Chivas (Mexico), Pumas (Mexico), and Boca Juniors (Argentina) are entrenched into the formative years of many immigrants through first-hand experience or collective memory. These early experiences and collective memories directly feed into continued support for the Mexican, Argentine, or Guatemalan national teams.[65]

When Mexican teams play exhibitions in the United States, Mexican supporters typically outnumber American fans. The United States versus Honduras game that occurred at the Home Depot Center in Los Angeles attracted a crowd that was at least three-quarters Latin American.[66] The stadium was filled with blue jerseys to support the Honduran national team, and most chants were yelled in Spanish.

Similarly, at the Mexico versus United States Gold Cup Final game in July 2011, the majority of fans in the stadium were Mexican. Angel Mendoza attended that game

---

[64] Jorge Ramos, The Other Face of America: Chronicles of the Immigrants Shaping Our Future (New York: HarperCollins, 2002): 221.

[65] Valeriano, "Latino Assimilation," 14.

[66] Personal experience, Spring 2010.

and observed that "it was 400 U.S. national team fans and 97,000 Mexican fans."[67] Interestingly, even though Mendoza originates from Mexico City, he supports the United States National Team when it plays against Mexico. In all scenarios except when the United States plays against Mexico, Mendoza supports Mexico. Why does he, as a Mexican-American, choose to identify with his American, rather than Mexican, identity? He elucidates his reasoning for supporting the United States instead of Mexico during these rivalry games:

> There are players from Chivas USA that play for the US National Team, so of course I'm going to identify with them. Most of our guys [Black Army 1850] are part of the AOLA (American Outlaws Los Angeles], so I have no connection there [with Mexico]. I love my country [and] I love my culture, but when those teams play, I have to go for the U.S.[68]

Despite his ethnic identity, Mendoza chooses to support the United States in its soccer games against Mexico, because he identifies more strongly with an American entity, or Chivas USA. Often, at least one player on the United States Men's National Team, whether it is a youth team or the senior team, also plays for Chivas USA. For instance, Chivas USA player Jorge Villafaña has played for Chivas USA since 2007 and will participate in the CONCACAF Olympic Qualifying Tournament as a member of the United States' Under-23 National Team.

Importantly, living in the United States has influenced Mexican-Americans, like Mendoza, to maintain their ethnic identity yet also to strengthen their emotional connection to American culture. As theorized in the International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship, "If an individual from an ethnic group is highly identified

---

[67] Angel Mendoza (Black Army 1850 Founder) in discussion with the author, March 11, 2012.

[68] Ibid.

with the dominant culture/societal group (i.e. the culture in the US), this acculturation process may have an influence on being a fan of certain sports, or a sports fan in general."[69] As a result of interacting with Americans, eating American food, and watching Major League Soccer, Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles have strengthened both their American and Mexican identities.

However, not all Mexican-Americans choose to identify with the United States' National Team when it plays against Mexico's National Soccer Team. Many Mexican-Americans may support the Mexican national team because they identify exclusively with their Mexican origin and, consequently, recall Mexico's history with the United States.

Even though many Mexican-Americans favor the Mexican National Team over the American National Team when these teams compete against each other, they have become more aware of American soccer players' skills in the past two decades. Ric Jensen and Jason Sosa explain that "the success of the USA national team in friendly matches against Mexico has helped legitimize the stature of MLS in the eyes of Mexican-American fans."[70] With each competitive United States versus Mexico game, regardless of which team they support, Mexican-Americans are exposed to American soccer. Due to this exposure, they may be more likely to watch Major League Soccer matches near the cities in which they reside or on television.

---

[69] Michelle Gacio Harrolle and Galen T. Trail, "Ethnic Identification, Acculturation and Sports Identification of Latinos in the United States," International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship (April 2007): 237-8.

[70] Ric Jensen and Jason Sosa, "The Importance of Building Positive Relationships Between Hispanic Audiences and Major League Soccer Franchises: A Case Study of the Public Relations Challenges Facing Houston 1836." Soccer and Society 9, no. 4 (October 2008), 485.

III. The Poor Representation of Mexican-Americans on MLS and American National Teams

Even though many Mexican-Americans support Chivas USA in Los Angeles, they may find it hard to support the United States National Team, because few Mexican-Americans play for the United States. For the United States' match against Italy on February 29, 2012, only two players on the United States Men's National Team were of Mexican descent – Carlos Bocanegra and Nick Rimando.[71] Meanwhile, in the realm of MLS, "only 40 players out of 337 on MLS rosters in 2006 were 'Hispanic'."[72] Many of those Hispanics were internationals from Latin American countries other than Mexico.

Mexicans born in the United States lack opportunities to advance in American soccer leagues, because MLS and United States National Team scouts mainly travel to American soccer league tournaments to recruit the country's top players. Given that, on average, Mexican-American workers earn less money than non-Hispanic workers, a handful of Mexican-American youth cannot afford to play on competitive club soccer teams.[73] Members of those club teams must pay for travel expenses to tournaments and purchase uniforms and equipment, such as cleats and shinguards. Consequently, it is unsurprising that "half the nation's soccer participants come from households earning over $50,000." Unlike in the rest of the world, where individuals from the lower social

---

[71] "MNT vs. Italy Roster," *U.S. Soccer*, February 29, 2012, http://www.ussoccer.com/Teams/US-Men/Latest-Roster/120229-MNT-vs-ITA.aspx.

[72] Valeriano, "Latino Assimilation," 19.

[73] David G. Gutiérrez, "Migration, Emergent Ethnicity, and The 'Third Space': The Shifting Politics of Nationalism in Greater Mexico," The Journal of American History 86, no. 2 (Bloomington, Indiana, 1999): 508, http://jah.oxfordjournals.org/content/86/2/481.full.pdf+html.

classes compose a large portion of their respective country's national team, soccer is "an upper middle class endeavor" in the United States[74].

Major League Soccer also drafts its players from college teams. However, many Mexican-Americans cannot secure college scholarships to play on college soccer teams, because scouts fail to recruit talented individuals that play in neighborhood parks, Hispanic youth recreational soccer leagues, and inner-city high schools. Valeriano explains the Mexican-Americans' plight:

> Very few players in the club system or college system in America are of Latino descent…Seldom are Latinos given college scholarships to compete at the NCAA Division I level…Yet, throughout the country one can see young players of Latino descent playing in city parks and empty fields. Something must be wrong structurally. It seems the pipeline from youth to professionalism is broken for Latinos.[75]

Scouts should be looking at all venues and leagues, but the reality is that they do not. They may ignore Latino recreational leagues in Los Angeles due to their lack of knowledge about the Spanish language and minimal amount of free time to travel to additional youth soccer games. MLS does not have as many American-born Latinos as it should, and the shortage of Mexican-American players surely affects Mexican-Americans' sentiments towards soccer in the United States.

IV. Chivas USA's Lease of the Home Depot Center Stadium

Hesitant to support a United States National team with few Mexican-Americans on its roster, many Mexican-Americans in Los Angeles have, instead, deepened their ethnic

---

[74] Valeriano, "Latino Assimilation," 21.

[75] Ibid., 20.

identities by supporting Chivas USA. However, Mexican-Americans who support Chivas USA often suffer discrimination from non-Hispanic soccer fans and companies in Los Angeles. Specifically, Chivas USA fans, like Joe from Black Army 1850, have expressed discontent with the stadium staff's treatment of them. The Home Depot Center stadium is owned by AEG, which also owns the Los Angeles Galaxy. As such, Chivas USA must rent the stadium and parking lot for all its home games.

Joe bitterly describes AEG's exploitative relationship with Chivas USA:

> They [AEG] get to share so much revenue. The worst thing is the corporate. If they get a corporate sponsorship, they get a take. They won't display it in the stadium if they don't get a take. The reason ChivaTown [an interactive fan zone] is outside the stadium this year is because they didn't like the sponsors of ChivaTown.[76]

Chivas USA can only display its corporate sponsors' logos in the Home Depot Center when it shares its sponsorship revenue with AEG. As the stadium's owner, AEG holds the legal right to determine which stadium and team sponsors, if any, appear on the stadium's grounds.

Not only does AEG benefit from corporate sponsorship deals within the Home Depot Center but the company also generates income from charging parking fees. For Chivas USA's games, the price of the parking for one car is fifteen dollars, an outrageous cost considering that it costs less to attend the actual soccer game. To buy a single-game ticket through one of the fan clubs costs ten dollars, or 50% more than the parking fee. Meanwhile, local police officers coerce game attendees to park in the stadium's lots, because they block off all nearby street parking and place security guards on the surrounding streets, preventing anyone except residents from leaving their cars there.

[76] Joe (Black Army 1850 Member) in discussion with the author, March 11, 2012.

The high cost of parking surely dissuades some Chivas USA fans from attending the team's home games. Worsening matters, the parking revenue from each game goes to AEG and, as an extension, to the LA Galaxy, Chivas USA's rival.

Furthermore, Chivas USA fans suffer discrimination from the stadium's security officers, whose actions Chivas USA does not control. The security officers are employees of an outside company that AEG, not Chivas USA, hires. Many of these security officers are white males, and Caucasians in Los Angeles have stereotypically viewed Mexican-Americans as troublesome.

Due to these negative stereotypes of Mexican-Americans, many security officers at the Home Depot Center have closely monitored the activities of Chivas USA's supporters groups, whose members are mostly Mexican-Americans. A key mission of the Union Ultras is to demonstrate to the security officers and to AEG's executives that Mexican-American fans of Chivas USA can be civilized. As Union Ultras founder Richard Escutia firmly states, "We [Union Ultras] had to earn that [respect] for many years….to me, it's a perception. They think, if they do a bad thing, they could cause a riot but if there were a bunch of anglos, it would be called civil unrest…Same thing, only different wording."[77] Each year, the Union Ultras has to prove itself to the security forces yet again, because "with security, you start from scratch every year." New security guards are hired yearly, and Union Ultras members must change their perception of Mexican-Americans through "education and good behavior."[78] During and after each Chivas USA game, the Union Ultras members try to present a "positive, family-oriented image with

[77] Richard Escutia (Union Ultras Founder) in discussion with the author, March 11, 2012.

[78] Ibid.

no fights [or any violence]."[79] By seeing Union Ultras' members' pure enthusiasm for game, the media will be more likely to portray Mexican-Americans as a peaceful entity.

V. Mexican-American Fans' Attitudes Toward Chivas USA's Pursuit of a New Stadium in Los Angeles

Therefore, Chivas USA's supporter clubs allow Mexican-Americans to defy stereotypes and to interact peacefully with fans of similar backgrounds. Yet, in order to sustain its Mexican-American fan base, Chivas USA must employ more effective marketing campaigns or trace itself back to its original identity, in which it was strictly tied to Chivas de Guadalajara. Kevin Baxter elaborates that, "in a region that is home to more than 5 million Mexicans, Chivas USA would do well to play up its pedigree—to stamp itself as the most Mexican team in MLS even if that connection stops with the name and jersey design. Instead it seems to be running from that distinction."[80]

For the 2013-2014 Major League Soccer Season, Chivas USA will most likely move out of the Home Depot Center in order to increase its fan base and to strengthen its brand identity. Relocating to a new stadium in Los Angeles would most likely permit Chivas USA to distinguish itself from the LA Galaxy. Additionally, Mexican-Americans would further strengthen their ethnic ties to one another as they gather in mass numbers in a stadium exclusively owned by Chivas USA. Black Army 1850's Angel Mendoza strongly believes that the team should move stadiums. He explains his thoughts on the

---

[79] Ibid.

[80] Kevin Baxter, "Beyond Borderline Success: Change is Needed If Chivas USA is to Escape Shadow of Its Sister Club in Mexico," Los Angeles Times, January 8, 2012.

possible relocation and names the cities that the Chivas USA administration is considering for a new stadium:

> This is our going away year…I am so stoked [for a new stadium]. There's Pomona, there's Santa Ana, and there's the Coliseum. What I believe is [that] the Coliseum's more a probability, because there's a partnership between Chivas USA and USC, where they take over the Coliseum. The plan from what I read and what I understand is to tear down the sports arena, build a soccer specific stadium there, and that's our home.[81]

How will a move to Downtown Los Angeles, Pomona, or Santa Ana affect the team? In other words, will it increase or decrease its fan base, and what will be the demographics of fans that support Chivas USA at its new stadium? Before it was rebranded "FC Dallas" in 2005, the MLS team the Dallas Burn failed to expand its Hispanic audience when it relocated from the Cotton Bowl stadium in South Dallas, Texas, to a stadium in a non-Hispanic area, Frisco, Texas. In fact, Hispanic fans began to lose interest in the Burn, because the team also started hiring coaches and players who were neither Mexican nor Mexican-American.[82] To avoid alienating its Mexican-American fans in Los Angeles and to sustain professional soccer in the city, Chivas USA must carefully choose its new stadium's location based on the surrounding area's demographics.

---

[81] Angel Mendoza (Black Army 1850 Founder) in discussion with the author, March 11, 2012.

[82] Paul Gardner, "Chivas USA's Identity Crisis," SoccerAmerica, April 28, 2008, http://www.socceramerica.com/article/26355/chivas-usas-identity-crisis.html.

Conclusion

Chivas USA's consideration of moving to a new, soccer-specific stadium in Los Angeles reflects that professional soccer is gaining popularity in Los Angeles. As I analyzed in this thesis, the development of amateur soccer leagues and the North American Soccer League in the twentieth century influenced the United States Soccer Federation to create Major League Soccer in 1996. Recognizing that almost half of Los Angeles County is Hispanic, Major League Soccer added Chivas USA as its eleventh franchise team in 2004.

Chivas USA was founded in order to provide Mexicans in Los Angeles with the opportunity to maintain their ethnic identity. Since its inaugural season, the team has branded itself closely to its sister team Chivas Guadalajara by creating an almost-identical jersey design to that of Chivas Guadalajara and by upholding similar values to that Mexican First Division team.

As Chivas USA has grown in popularity, Mexican-Americans have formed Chivas USA supporter clubs to ethnically and socially identify with fans of similar backgrounds. After communicating with fans during the 2009 and 2012 MLS seasons, I conclude that the demographics of Chivas USA's supporter clubs are more varied than I had expected. In 2009, only two fan clubs, Legion Kalifas and the Union Ultras, existed, and they consisted mainly of Mexican-Americans. When the Black Army 1850 was created in 2010, Germans, Americans, and other non-Hispanic fans began interacting with one another.

Therefore, Chivas USA's supporter groups have increased in number and have become more diversified demographically. Mexican-Americans who are avid supporters of Chivas Guadalajara and strongly identify with their Mexican heritage choose to join Legion Kalifas. Meanwhile, Mexican-Americans who feel closer ties to other Mexican league soccer teams or wish to identify more with Chivas USA than Chivas Guadalajara elect to support the Union Ultras. Finally, Mexican-Americans may become members of Black Army 1850 because they identify more with American, rather than Mexican, culture.

Given that Mexican-Americans have supported Chivas USA in steady numbers, Major League Soccer has also begun to understand the importance of increasing its base of Latino fans. In 2002, MLS founded the company Soccer United Marketing (SUM) to control all of the commercial rights to MLS, the United States Soccer Federation, and the Mexican National Team's games in the United States. Shortly after its creation, on August 2, 2003, SUM managed all of the promotional and marketing rights for Chivas Guadalajara when that team played the MLS All-Stars in Carson, CA. Significantly, that year was the first time that an international club, rather than other MLS athletes, played the All-Stars. In organizing that All-Star game between MLS and Chivas Guadalajara players, Major League Soccer and SUM recognized Chivas Guadalajara's popularity in the Los Angeles area. Major League Soccer's formation of SUM and campaign to influence more Mexican-Americans to support MLS teams is a crucial step toward transforming soccer into a more popular sport for playing and watching in Southern California.

As the Mexican-American population continues to grow in Los Angeles, Chivas USA should consider rebranding its name to strengthen its connection to Mexican-Americans. By rebranding itself as "Chivas Los Angeles," for example, the team would maintain its appeal to the Hispanic community yet also increase its connection to residents of Los Angeles County. The word "Chivas" represents that the team wants to brand itself to Chivas Guadalajara and fans of Mexican soccer. Meanwhile, branding itself as "Chivas *Los Angeles*" would permit Mexican-American soccer fans in Los Angeles to strengthen their American identity *as well* as their Mexican identity.

In comparison to the MLS team "Houston 1836," the name of "Chivas Los Angeles" does not contain any controversial, political connotations. When the San Jose Earthquakes franchise moved to Houston in 2006, MLS decided to name the team "Houston 1836." In 1836, Texas won independence from Mexico and the city of Houston was founded. Yet, for Mexicans, "the Texas secession started the process of American conquest culminating in the invasion of Mexico in 1846 and the loss of almost half its territory."[83] Therefore, some Mexican-Americans publicly expressed discontent with the name, because they considered its connection to 1836 to be an insult to Mexico's defeat against American troops at the Battle of San Jacinto.[84] Many Mexican-Americans in Texas did not wish to wear apparel and support a team whose logo contained the date "1836." Due to these Mexican-Americans' disgust at the new team's name, MLS quickly renamed "Houston 1836" to "Houston Dynamo" before its inaugural season in 2006.

---

[83] Raúl A. Ramos, "Kicking Around Houston 1836: Soccer Team Sends the Wrong Message to Latinos," Houston Chronicle, January 28, 2006, http://www.chron.com/opinion/outlook/article/Kicking-around-Houston-1836-1884308.php.

[84] Ric Jensen and Jason Sosa, "Hispanic Audiences and Major League Soccer Franchises," 481.

In comparison to Houston 1836, Chivas USA garners the support of Mexican-American fans in Los Angeles with its logo, colors, and connection to Chivas Guadalajara. A rebranding of Chivas USA's name as well as the team's moderate success on the soccer field are factors by which the team can further attract the large Mexican-American community in Los Angeles. Major League Soccer is the premier soccer league in the United States, and Americans, as in any competitive sport, tend to support successful teams in greater numbers. Winning games will only help Chivas USA to continue attracting new fans and sustaining old fans.

Therefore, Chivas USA appeals to Mexican-American fans through its association to Chivas Guadalajara and through its values of passion, Chivas heritage, competitiveness, inspiration, and community. In order to communicate with fans of similar ethnicities, these Mexican-American supporters of Chivas USA may choose to join the Legion 1908, the Union Ultras, or the Black Army 1850. In their respective fan groups, they may discuss trending issues in American soccer, such as Chivas USA's rivalry with the Los Angeles Galaxy and ways in which the United States National Team can recruit additional Mexican-American players. It is through these three Chivas USA supporter groups that Mexican-Americans have met individuals of similar backgrounds in Los Angeles and have developed their ethnic identities.

References

Interviews

Escutia, Richard (Union Ultras Founder) in discussion with the author. March 11, 2012.

Joe (Black Army 1850 Member) in discussion with the author. March 11, 2012.

Mendoza, Angel (Black Army 1850 Founder) in discussion with the author. March 11, 2012.

Articles

Abdelal, Rawi, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose McDermott. "Identity as a Variable" (July 2005): 1-35. http://www.wcfia.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/1076__YH_identityvariable.pdf.

Alamillo, José M. "Playing Across Borders: Transnational Sports and Identities in Southern California and Mexico, 1930–1945." *Pacific Historical Review* 79, no. 3 (August 2010): 360-392. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/phr.2010.79.3.360

Baxter, Kevin. "Beyond Borderline Success: Change is Needed If Chivas USA is to Escape Shadow of Its Sister Club in Mexico." *Los Angeles Times*. January 8, 2012.

Baxter, Kevin. "Chivas de Guadalajara Gives Fans a Sense of Home." *Los Angeles Times*. August 8, 2009. http://articles.latimes.com/2009/aug/08/sports/sp-chivas-mexico-fans8.

Bloch, Matthew, Shan Carter, and Alan McLean. "Mapping America: Every City, Every Block." *The New York Times*, 2010, http://projects.nytimes.com/census/2010/explorer.

"Brazil-Italy Match Report, 1994 FIFA World Cup USA." *FIFA*. July 17, 1994. http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/archive/edition=84/results/matches/match=3104/report.html.

Bureau of the Census. "The Hispanic Population: 2010," by Sharon R. Ennis, Merarys Ríos-Vargas, and Nora G. Albert. *Census Brief*, 01-16 (May 2011). http://www.census.gov/prod/cen2010/briefs/c2010br-04.pdf.

Cervantes, Olivia. "'Chivas USA Gives It All Its Got': Red-and-White Players

Participate in Spanish-Language Univision Show 'Dale con Ganas.'" *Chivas USA*. February 16, 2012. http://www.cdchivasusa.com/news/2012/02/chivas-usa-gives-it-all-its-got.

"Club Deportivo Guadalajara." *Legion 1908 Los Angeles*. http://www.legion1908-la.com/.

Farhal, Ramzi, and Clara Irazábal. "Latino Communities in the U.S.: Place-Making in the Pre-World War II, Postwar, and Contemporary City." *Journal of Planning Literature* 22, no. 3 (Feb. 2008): 207-228. http://jpl.sagepub.com/content/22/3/207.

García, Mario T. "La Frontera: The Border as Symbol and Reality in Mexican-American Thought." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 1, No. 2 (Summer 1985): 195-225. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1052036.

Gardner, Paul. "Chivas USA's Identity Crisis." *SoccerAmerica*. April 28, 2008. http://www.socceramerica.com/article/26355/chivas-usas-identity-crisis.html.

"Gold Cup 1991." *CONCACAF*. http://www.goldcup.org/page/GoldCup/TeamRelatedLink/0,,12802~0~3~3387,00.html.

Gutiérrez, Carlos González. "Fostering Identities: Mexico's Relations with its Diaspora." *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 2 (Sept., 1999): 545-567. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2567045.

Gutiérrez, David G. "Migration, Emergent Ethnicity, and The 'Third Space': The Shifting Politics of Nationalism in Greater Mexico." *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 2 (Bloomington, Indiana, 1999): 481-517. http://jah.oxfordjournals.org/content/86/2/481.full.pdf+html.

Harrolle, Michelle Gacio, and Galen T. Trail, "Ethnic Identification, Acculturation and Sports Identification of Latinos in the United States." *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship* (April 2007): 234-253.

Hinz, Oliver, Michael Kirchner, Steve Nosworthy, and Sven Theysohn. "Official Supporters Clubs: The Untapped Potential of Fan Loyalty." *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship* 10, no. 4 (July 2009): 302-324. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*.

Huntington, Samuel P. "The Hispanic Challenge." *Foreign Policy* no. 141 (March – April 2004): 30-45. http://www.jstor.org/stable/4147547.

Jensen, Ric, and Jason Sosa, "The Importance of Building Positive Relationships

Between Hispanic Audiences and Major League Soccer Franchises: A Case Study of the Public Relations Challenges Facing Houston 1836." *Soccer and Society* 9, no. 4 (October 2008): 477-490.

Litterer, Dave. "North American Soccer League I (NASL) 1967-1984." March 8, 2008. http://homepages.sover.net/~spectrum/nasl/naslhist.html.

Maden, Esra. "Multikulti Alive in Germany's 'Türk' Football Teams." *Today's Zaman*, November 6, 2011. http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail_getNewsById.action?load=detay&newsId=262021&link=262021.

Markovits, Andrei S. "The Other 'American Exceptionalism': Why is There No Soccer in The United States?" *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 7, no. 2 (1990): 230-264. http://ces.fas.harvard.edu/publications/docs/pdfs/CES_WP1.pdf.

Markovits, Andrei S., and Steven L. Hellerman. "The 'Olympianization" of Soccer in the United States." *The American Behavioral* Scientist 46, no. 11 (2003): 1533-1549. http://search.proquest.com/docview/214762179?accountid=10141.

"MNT vs. Italy Roster," U.S. Soccer, February 29, 2012, http://www.ussoccer.com/Teams/US-Men/Latest-Roster/120229-MNT-vs-ITA.aspx.

Niemann, Yolanda Flores, Andrea J. Romero, Jorge Arredondo, and Victor Rodriguez. "What Does It Mean to Be 'Mexican'? Social Construction of an Ethnic Identity." *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences* 21, no. 1 (February 1999): 47-60. http://hjb.sagepub.com/content/21/1/47.

Ramos, Raúl A. "Kicking Around Houston 1836: Soccer Team Sends the Wrong Message to Latinos." *Houston Chronicle*. January 28, 2006. http://www.chron.com/opinion/outlook/article/Kicking-around-Houston-1836-1884308.php.

Schroeder, Charlie. "Legions Versus Ultras." *Weekend America*. November 8, 2008. http://weekendamerica.publicradio.org/display/web/2008/11/08/sports_fans_soccer/.

Scott, Ian. "From NASL to MLS: Transnational Culture, Exceptionalism and Britain's Part in American Soccer's Coming of Age From NASL to MLS." *Journal of Popular Culture* 44, no. 4 (August 2011): 831-853. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2011.00865.x/pdf.

Smith, Anthony D. "National Identity and the Idea of European Unity." *International*

Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-) 68, no. 1 (Jan., 1992): 55-76. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2620461.

"Soccer Marketing, Inc." Last modified 2009. http://www.soccermarketinginc.com/web/index.php?module=pagemaster&PAGE_user_op=view_page&PAGE_id=8&MMN_position=3:3.

Tucker, Duncan. "Mexico's 'Super Clasico." *Guadalajara Reporter*. March 30, 2012. http://guadalajarareporter.com/sports-mainmenu-89/30865-mexicos-super-clasico.html.

Wahl, Grant. "Football vs. Fútbol." *Sports Illustrated* 101, no. 1 (July 5, 2004): 68-72. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCO*host*. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=13622468&site=ehost-live.

"With Enemies Like These…" *Gay4Soccer*. February 9, 2012. http://gay4soccer.com/2012/02/09/chivas-usa-black-army-soccerally/.

Woitalla, Mike. "MLS Attendance on the Rise." *Soccer America*. Oct. 26, 2010. http://www.socceramerica.com/article/40114/mls-attendance-on-the-rise.html.

Valeriano, Brandon. "Latino Assimilation, Divided Loyalties, and the World Cup." University of Illinois: Chicago, Jan. 2010: 1-36.

"Valores." Chivas Guadalajara. http://www.chivascampeon.com/paginas/valores.php.

Books and Videos

Acuña, Rodolfo F. *Anything But Mexican: Chicanos in Contemporary Los Angeles*. Verso, 1995.

Chivas USA: Sí, se puede. Directed by Sergio Guerrero. Primetime Group, Voy Pictures, and Chivas USA, 2005. DVD.

Contreras, Joseph. *In the Shadow of the Giant: Americanization of Modern Mexico*. 1st ed. (Rutgers University Press, 2009).

Griswold Del Castillo, Richard. *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1990).

Magazine, Roger. "'The Colours Make Me Sick': América FC and Upward Mobitility in Mexico." In *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, written by Gary Armstrong and Richard Guilianotti, 187-98. Oxford, U.K: 2001.

Ortiz, Vilma, and Edward Eric Telles. *Generations of Exclusion: Mexican Americans,*

Assimilation, and Race. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008.

Pescador, Juan Javier. “Los Heroes del Domingo: Soccer, Borders, and Social Spaces in Great Lakes Mexican Communities, 1940-1970.” In *Mexican Americans and Sports: A Reader on Athletics and Barrio Life*, written by Jorge Iber and Samuel O. Regalado. Texas A&M University Press, 2007.

Ramos, Jorge. *The Other Face of America: Chronicles of the Immigrants Shaping Our Future*. New York: HarperCollins, 2002.