



On Building a Football Fanbase: The Case of Leones Negros

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to analyze how the fanbase of a football team is built in a complex process which allows the study of the motivations enthused by this sport in our subjects. In order to answer our working question –What is the process to build a contemporary football fanbase for the University of Guadalajara’s team, the Leones Negros? –, this study was conducted using qualitative methodology, interviews with fans, and hemerographic consultation. The team Leones Negros was chosen due to its symbolic value –a relevant source for historic memory among the city’s people. Among the findings, the institutional mediation that results in the communication of emotions rooted in the subjects’ biography when conforming their identity stands out.

KEYWORDS: Communication; Sport; History; Identity; Collective memory.

La construcción de la pasión por el fútbol¹. El caso de los Leones Negros de la UdeG²

RESUMEN: Este artículo tiene como objetivo conocer la construcción de los aficionados al fútbol como proceso complejo al estudiar las motivaciones que este deporte provoca en los sujetos. Con la pregunta: ¿cuál es el proceso de construcción de los aficionados al fútbol contemporáneo en el caso de Leones Negros de la Universidad de Guadalajara? El estudio utilizó metodología cualitativa con entrevistas a aficionados y con una revisión hemerográfica. Se eligió al equipo de los Leones Negros porque conlleva una carga simbólica relevante en la memoria de los habitantes de Guadalajara, Jalisco. Entre los hallazgos se destacan la mediación institucional que deriva en la comunicación de emociones arraigadas en la biografía de los sujetos en la conformación de su identidad.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Comunicación; deporte; historia; identidad; memoria colectiva.

HOW TO QUOTE

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¹ In the Spanish version of this paper, the word “fútbol” is not stressed in the first syllable, considering that in the Mexican context, it is written and pronounced stressing the last syllable, meaning it does not carry the orthographic accent on the letter “u”.

² This article is a product of the doctoral thesis “On Building a Football Fanbase: The Case of Leones Negros” presented in 2017 at the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente (ITESO). It is available at the following link: <https://rei.iteso.mx/handle/11117/5102>

Introduction

Nowadays, football soccer attracts people from diverse societies; games with higher expectations paralyze entire towns and nations; television broadcasts have an audience of millions of viewers of what is considered the world's most crowded sport. It is assumed that this popularity is due to the simplicity of its practice that provokes multiple interpretations of the choreographies of the football players on the fields, which set the stadium atmosphere, and its diffusion through television screens as the ideal scenario to express identities.

Being a fan of football soccer is something that, in appearance, the person decides with total freedom; however, thinking about the origin of this singularity, which distinguishes the individual from others, presents complex overlaps by examining the origin in the memory of people and their emotions expressed during their daily lives.

This article addresses the construction of the football fanbase focused on analyzing history as an integrator of communities channeled through emotional production interpreted through communication. We start from the hypothesis that being a football fan is driven by the history incorporated into the subjects' memory in expressing emotions such as pride. In this way, the relationship is built with contrasting references that originated in the past, such as the fervor of the confrontations in which rivalries emerge between teams, institutions, and territories. Consequently, individuals perceive this otherness in order to collectively enhance themselves through symbolic elements³ by distinguishing themselves through communication practices.

According to the above, the history integrated into the process of communication for the construction of contemporary football fanbases is guided by emotional production; to study it, the case of the professional football team Leones Negros (Black Lions) of the University of Guadalajara (UdeG) was addressed, which carries a relevant symbolic weight for the memory and emotions of the residents of the city of Guadalajara, Jalisco. This

³ Football jerseys, flags, scarves, crests, colors, anthems, chants, shouts, body gestures, make-up, and tattoos, among others.

particularity stands out because it is a team supported by a public institution of higher education.

The victory of Leones Negros against the Tecos of the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara (Autonomous University of Guadalajara or UAG) to win the championship in the promotion division meant their return to the First Division of Mexican football in 2014, after 20 years of absence from top-level football competition.⁴ This event generated the questions that were applied to the fans of Leones Negros, and at the same time, it was observed the institutional exaltation to connect people with UdeG in this second stage in the First Division; a team that, however, currently participates in the lower divisions of professional football in Mexico.

The importance of this article lies in the fact that the studies that address the implications of football soccer in society emphasize the analysis of national teams or teams that relish in greater popularity and media visibility but do not consider the sports organizations that are developed in the different entities of the country, as is the case of the Leones Negros of the UdeG.

Methodology

In order to account for the construction of a football fanbase in the case of Leones Negros of the UdeG, the fans who attend the Jalisco stadium, located in the city of Guadalajara, and those who watch the games on television were interviewed. To complement their statements, the narrative of the journalists was obtained by consulting the reports written in the press and those broadcasted on radio and television, as well as the impressions of members of the institution of the University of Guadalajara team.

Fans were consulted during visits to the Jalisco stadium at Leones Negros' games and in commercial places where they were welcomed to watch football soccer. The place and time for the interview were agreed upon. Other people decided to give their

⁴ Attendance at Jalisco Stadium: 54,455 people, equivalent to 96% of the stadium's capacity. Final score in penalties series: Leones Negros of the UdeG 4-3 Tecos of the UAG. 05/10/2014.

statements in situ at the stadium before the game or where they gathered to watch it on television.

The interviews were individual and performed with a focused interview guide; these were recorded in audio and transcribed for its analysis. The questions were directed to the following aspects: a) Origin of the team's fondness, b) Attendance at the stadium, c) Meaning and sense of belonging, d) Football soccer watched on television in commercial reception places, e) Tangible objects allusive to the team, and f) Institutional mediation.

Open interaction with the people was conducted over a relatively long time: observing what was happening, listening to what was said, and asking different topics. As Hammersley and Atkinson (1994) state, "gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry" (p. 15). In this case, the methodological alibi led us to the interior of Jalisco, to the stadium stands, and to the sections into which this stadium is divided, as well as to its peripheral roads, during the Leones Negros matches.

After the exploratory phase, the observations were focused on joining the conversation with fans inside and outside the stadium. The observation with ethnographic principle was centered on the subjects and the places where they perform their activities, the times and sequences of their practices, as well as their objectives and expressions. A field diary was used to register the relationship with people and perceptions of the interaction. This description allowed the identification of "the social discourses: which will make possible the analysis of the representation of different social objects of the investigated actors" (Reguillo, 2003, p. 29).

Visits to the Jalisco stadium were frequent, that way, the fans that were interviewed identified me as the one who was doing the research on the Leones Negros. They knew me as someone from the outside interested in them during their football games. Their collaboration was generous in time, disposition, and sense to integrate me into the group. So, by creating rapport, I participated in their post-game meetings, where they shared food and drinks and talked more about football. I also joined their trips to cheer on the team in away games and, on other occasions, I was with them watching the games on screens. With

the status granted, they asked me to mediate their discussions and I was invited to their civil and religious festivities.

Integrating myself into their daily lives was a priority, given that football games are disruptive and often determine people’s strategies as fans of the team. Hence, the case studied in Guadalajara is holistic, that is, a complex whole that people incorporate on various fronts to interpret messages, symbols, and practices. The interviewees were kind in sharing their lives through their statements and passion, central topics for constructing this knowledge.

Table 1

List of interviewees ordered by age.

Interview	Date	Sex, Age	Occupation	Place of birth	Team	Fan of the UdeG
l1	09/18/2016	F, 18	Student	Guadalajara	UdeG	2nd
l2	03/10/2016	M, 25	Employee	Guadalajara	Cruz Azul → UdeG ⁵	2nd
l3	04/10/2016	F, 27	Employee	Guadalajara	Chivas → UdeG	2nd
l4	08/20/2016	M, 57	UdeG Employee	Guadalajara	UdeG	1st
l5	10/13/2015	M, 57	Professional	Guadalajara	Chivas and UdeG	1st
l6	11/10/2015	M, 58	Football player Technical Director of UdeG	Tala	UdeG	1st
l7	11/10/2015	M, 59	Journalist Employee of UdeG	Guadalajara	UdeG	1st

Source: Own elaboration.

⁵The arrow [→] indicates that they switched from one team to another. On the other hand, the period of the beginning of their passion with the UdeG team is pointed out: The first stage [1st] covers from its foundation in 1974 until its disappearance in 1994; or in the second [2nd] covers from the reappearance in 2009 until its return to the First Division professional football league in 2014. The letter l and the interviewee number are used as a pseudonym to protect the confidentiality of the participants.

With the interview, the observation of the fanbase practices of the people who, as living sources, "affect the construction of new or modified versions of past events and personal histories" (Aceves, 1999, p. 219) was guided. The interviews caused emotion in the subjects, who shared their testimonies with good disposition. It can be confirmed that talking about daily life is verbalized, reflexively, the depth of the emotions that give meaning through the narrative memory; therefore, it is "an essential element of what it is now common to call identity, individual or collective, social or cultural" (Aceves, 1999, p. 228).

With the arguments and texts constructed, orality was interpreted by the participation of the subject as a member of a society contextualized in historical, political, economic, and cultural moments, leading to situated narratives of identity as "the articulation between a personal story and a social and cultural tradition" (Martecelli, 2010, p. 62). This author states that "it is also the fruit of a tradition that allows us both to establish our personal singularity and to insert ourselves in a collective representation" (p. 64). With the reconstruction of the verbalized experience, "the events shared in the past and the collective interpretations about themselves allow a collective construction of identity" (Aceves, 1999, p. 234).

The people interviewed, men and women, were organized in the following way: by cheering groups, by their individual attendance in the stands of the stadium, by those who follow the Leones Negros on the television screens, and by members of the institution. All of them declared their love for the Leones Negros of the UdeG team and "have in common [...] their passion for soccer" (Archetti, 2008, p. 264). In order to approach the history of the Leones Negros, documentary sources from the collection of the Hemeroteca Nacional de México (HNM)⁶ were consulted. With this information, the testimonies and data collected were cross-checked to correct inaccuracies in dates and names trusted to the interviewees' memory.

⁶ Consulted on February 21, 2017.

The Emotional Production

Emotions are the hinge to connect history with the biography of the subject in their construction as a fan of the football team. By way of mediation, it is the people's search to participate with expressions that transcend their individuality and link them to the collective. Following Kistner (2015): "The bond of these people with football is not about business, power or delusions of greatness, but about joy, pleasure, and fun. That is what they pay for. Even more and more" (p. 8). It is the fee for not being left out of the events that produces emotions of mimetic sense.

It is an excitement that we seek voluntarily. To feel it, we have to pay for it many times. And, unlike the other, this one is always pleasant, and, within certain limits, we can enjoy it with the social consent of others and with our own conscience (Elias & Dunning, 2014, p. 122).

However, certainties do not represent a form of spectacle in spaces for sports practices. Their diffusion transfers the uncertainty of competitive sports of the unpredictable as entertainment in daily life, in which subjects experience the emotions generated, produced, constructed, and diffused that bind, link, and identify them with social structures and their institutions.

The search for emotions is caused by a liberating and delightful condition, given the quality of a game-oriented experience that is observed in its performers, in other terms: "Sports, and in particular competitive games between professional players in front of an audience, lead to a controlled but pleasurable decontrol of emotions and affections" (Elias & Dunning, 2014, p. 72).

Emotions make everyday life easier, and according to Kistner (2015), football soccer "is the biggest generator of action, of emotion" (p. 11), which allows a large number of subjects to be attached to the victories that teams achieve in competition. Certainly: "Sports are the symbolic way to achieve victories that otherwise the vast majority of supporters would never achieve in life. The governors know this and optimize this function as much as possible" (Suárez, 2000, p. 10).

The production of emotions, mediated through institutional messages and disseminated in the media, is presented as the axis of the construction of the fans with the exaltation of pride for consuming the sport-show. To define it in the process of construction of fans:

What is known about pride comes essentially from the psychological literature, where it is presented as a feeling of satisfaction, delight or pleasure in something one has achieved and/or one is able to do, or in the achievements and/or capabilities of someone one is connected with. (Decrop & Derbaix, 2010, p. 587)

On the sense of cohering with collectivity, Decrop and Derbaix (2010) go on to point out that "pride is often presented as supporting both self- and social identity processes" (p. 587). In this way, inserted in the speech disseminated by the institution that supports the football team, it has profitable economic implications with scopes in constructing identity offered as an experience for the fans. Therefore, the subjects refer to themselves as being able to attach themselves to the collectivity, access to which is lucrative in both its economic and ideological aspects. As a long-term process, the exposure to strong emotions is explained by the constraints of today's societies.

The fact that in these, the ability of individuals to act in that way in public has become more restricted is just, plain and simple, another aspect of the same development, in the course of which social control and self-control over public manifestations of strong emotion increase (Elias & Dunning, 2014, p. 111).

The construction of sports affinities is closely related to sense, identity, and emotion, which is relevant to understand the groups attracted by sports practices; for that reason, "the search for identity, identification, meaning, and prestige are woven into a complex web along with the search for emotions" (Dunning, 2003, p. 47).

The expression of strong emotions in a collective way has as its context the situation of sports in which corporal violence is regulated as a civilizing process, here the physical activity of the bodies is supervised by the compliance of the regulation of matches legitimized by judges and referees empowered by the institutions that regulate the

practices. Emotions as mediation account for the subjects' search for expressing and communicating, in which "emotion is, so to speak, what gives taste to all game-related pleasures" (Elias & Dunning, 2014, p. 124).

From this, it is necessary to admit that pride is the emotion that generates the sport-show for collective cohesion, according to that "pride is a cornerstone of sport consumption... pride emerged as a key construct that impacts the individual and social identity processes underlying sport consumption" (Decrop & Derbaix, 2010, p. 586). Furthermore, these authors account for the link between the subject and the sport by developing a model based on Funk and James founded on psychology that involves four stages.

Firstly, awareness: when an individual knows that a sport team exists but is not interested in following that particular team. Secondly, attraction: a particular interest that develops and is based on factors such as imitation for hedonic reasons, such as entertainment and escape, which value watching the game in situational variables such as promos or the novelty that teams offer. Thirdly is attachment, when the individual has formed a meaningful psychological connection is supported by various attitude properties. Lastly, the fourth stage is allegiance, when this connection becomes resistant, persistent, biases cognition and influences behavior (Decrop & Derbeaix, 2010, pp. 588-589).

Likewise, they suggest that personal and social factors are essential to the development of loyalty, given that they examine the mediating role of attachment as a process by which a subject moves from attraction, in other words, from liking a team to devotion. This loyalty results from a process in which the individuals develop a strong emotional condition of their bonds with symbolic value, benefits, and attributes associated with a team sport.

Consequently, according to Decrop and Derbaix (2010), public display of pride is constituted for the fans, in body and word, via significant objects and practices. Additionally, these authors list a set of tangible objects such as: clothing, scarves, paraphernalia, tattoos, makeup, memberships, subscriptions, and photographs, among others. As for the group of intangibles, they point out: colors, hymns, shouts, signatures,

and corporal gestures. For fans, their body is an object of pride, given that they express an unbreakable commitment of loyalty through it. The relationship that is established with the colors that distinguish the football team originated in history and is linked to the emotion of pride as a narrative plot for the construction of identity. Decrop and Derbaix (2010) refer to this exaltation as contributing to fans building their identity with material possessions and sports consumption by creating and maintaining strong bonds (p. 594), suggesting that:

[...] fans are proud to outdo other fans and to show off as the greatest team's enthusiast. Such phenomena may be interpreted as a kind of conspicuous pride, which assists sport consumers to express their emotions in an individual direction (Decrop & Derbaix, 2010, p. 596).

Pride, in the production of emotions, is concentrated on following the teams with their offering institutions and integrates the referent of the subject's identity with what orients the sense of the fanbase, who manifest themselves with the football jersey and the colors of the team endowed with meaning and originated in the history of the institution. By wearing the jersey, people are wrapped up in history as a discourse provided in a directed manner. The emotions they feel are incorporated into the repertoire of the memory that builds them as a fanbase and are reiterated through communication.

Figure 1. First jerseys of the UdeG football uniform.



Source: Exhibition in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. Photo E. Rivera (June 24, 2017).

Fans use the team jersey as a device that works as an extension of the sense of belonging. It was observed that the jersey is kissed, waved, shown off, taken off the body, raised and shown again, taken out of the car window to be displayed during the drive to the stadium before the game or after the victory and, on the contrary, the rival jersey may be destroyed, found as a shredded rag thrown on the street after high-stakes games.

Thus, dressing up, traveling, buying tickets, attending, eating, and drinking around football is interpreted as festive spending, which is understood as “the way of reconversion of social and corporal energies that allow opening, expanding and multiplying the potentialities of subjects and collectives” (Scribano, 2009, p. 149). In this way, the subjects require symbolic consumables for practices that express lived emotions, which, in addition to being felt in the body, are considered their own domain, the investment of which is understood as festive spending to build and rebuild themselves as fans. Their motivations are interpreted in a reflexive and, to a certain point, critical way, by adhering to the

formation of collectivities around soccer, which, nowadays, emphasizes that it is necessary to *wear the jersey* to feel and, therefore, be excited with pride of the colors.

In the stadium and in front of the screen, the jersey is worn to express and regulate joy, happiness, sadness, love, hate, anxiety, fear, compassion, jealousy, pride, shame, excitement, elation, pleasure, rage, surprise, anger, rejoicing, all these emotions are experienced with the body and expressed in everyday life, through the following of sports such as soccer.

History as an Integrator of Collectivities

The above said, history binds the subjects to the football team. Under this approach, the dissemination of the history by the institution is taken and constructed from the information disseminated in the media; thereby, the tale is integrated by symbolic elements strategically placed, such as: the year of foundation on the crests of the teams and the achievements. On the other hand, in people's memory are the players, the lineups, the plays, the football moments in the quality of badges, and the sporting feats that are maximized in the imaginary by being elevated as epic fights.

History as an integrator of collectivities is disseminated in ideological aspects of sense in the subjects by linking their biography with institutional history. The past is offered as an emotion, even of nostalgia, which, according to Cuesta (1998), "nostalgia is an exponent of the game of time in memories and an expression of the privilege it grants to the past." (p. 208). These exaltations represent a powerful instrument for the formation of pride-bound groups.

A collectivity, a group, or a nation maintains its cohesion through the shared rules and common purposes that bind all its members together. History, by explaining its origin, allows the subject to understand the bonds that unite him/her to the community (Villoro, 1982, p. 43).

Subjects become aware of their sense of belonging, group integration is promoted and, in this case, identity is based on historical events that "reinforce the attitude of defense and fight against external groups" (Villoro, 1982, p. 44). According to Aguilar

(1982), one of the uses of history is precisely to “consolidate or invent an identity and continually reconquer the certainty of a collective or personal feeling” (p. 147). Here, it is necessary to distinguish that:

Collective memory is not history, though it is sometimes made from similar material. It is a collective phenomenon but it only manifests itself in the actions and statements of individuals. It can take hold of historically and socially remote events but it often privileges the interests of the contemporary (Kansteiner, 2007, p. 32).

History, according to Cuesta (1998), is “understood as a cumulative knowledge with its marks of exhaustiveness, rigor, control of testimonies [...] and on the other hand, the memory of these past events is cultivated by contemporaries and their descendants” (p. 204). In the same way, it can be added that:

While memory is a social and cultural value, a vindication of a past that we want to prevent from being forgotten, history is, in addition to that, a constructed speech, obligatorily feasible to contrast and objectify or, what is the same, subject to a method (Aróstegui, 2004, p. 31).

In particular, when it comes to biased groups: “the concept of collective memory applies with more justice to certain social groups” (Cuesta, 1998, p. 210). After all:

We turn to testimonies to strengthen or invalidate, but also to complete what we know about an event of which we are somehow informed, when, however, we do not know well many of the circumstances surrounding it [...] if our impression can be based, not only on our memory but also on those of others, our confidence in the accuracy of our memory will be greater, as if the same experience were restarted not only by the same person but by several (Halbwachs, 2004, pp. 25-26).

Additionally, the individual story of the memory for the construction of identity, according to Martecelli (2010), “identity is inseparable from the work by which the actor forges, in the story a feeling of continuity through time, and sometimes inconclusive, a feeling of internal coherence with the help of social and cultural elements” (Martecelli, 2010, p. 64). The construction of meaning by way of memory searches in the past for the

narrative of identity, “is also the result of a work that selects more or less arbitrarily some events of a life in order to give them overall coherence” (Martecelli, 2010, pp. 64-65).

For memory cohesion, it is inferred that what is remembered and spoken about is based on the moments of solid emotions shared with others. Even more so as there is a certainty of how flimsy the memory is:

Countless studies testify to the limited and selective nature of memory, both individual and collective, and its fragile, partial, manipulated, and discontinuous texture, due to the erosion of time, the accumulation of experiences, to the real impossibility of retaining the totality of facts and, in any case, to the action of the present on the past (Cuesta, 1998, p. 206).

Similarly, Giménez (2016) states that for the construction of identities, it is necessary: “to constitute a history and a memory that confer identity stability precisely” (p. 69). Then, for the construction of collectivities, for example, in the formation of national communities, their identities are rooted “in foundational myths, in a common history, and supposedly shared cultural features” (Giménez, 2016, pp. 73-74).

Additionally, identity is built with the situated discourse of power the institution produces. Barbero (2011) indicates that athletes are proposed as an example to face and surpass crises in the construction and reconstruction of collective identity to ensure the fighting spirit for the population, in addition to embodying expressions of collective pride on a global scale, and excelling with team spirit over individualism. After all, “this is the social function of champions and about the culture that is recreated through the more or less fictionalized narratives of their exploits” (Barbero, 2011, p. 70).

Consequently, before the subjects who witnessed the sporting feats, whether in person or via media, it is pertinent to integrate the notion of communicative memory established by Assman:

[...] refers to the individual experience in the context of a significant historical event [...] refers to the fact that the individual shares with the collective (colleagues, friends, relatives, etc.) as a contemporary and eyewitness his memories of certain events, as well as what he

heard about them. These events are therefore part of his biography (Sydel, 2014, pp. 199-200).

At the same time, “cultural memory consists of objectified culture, that is, the texts, rites, images, buildings, and monuments which are designed to recall fateful events in the history of the group.” (Kansteiner, 2007, p. 33). It is understood that the sporting feat remembered is in relation to ideologies, institutions, and power that underwrite it. For the case studied here, history diffusion was explicit in building the fanbase. When Leones Negros ascends to the First Division in 2014, in its second phase, according to Alberto Castellanos Gutiérrez, president of the board of trustees of Leones Negros de la UdeG: “The University of Guadalajara team represents a symbol of identity above all because it is preceded by a great history in Mexican football” (Yáñez, 2016, p. 206).

That is why it must be concluded that, with the elements mentioned above as mediation for the subjects, becoming a fan is, through communicative memory, the way to join the common history to give meaning to their individuality and transcend along with the group configured with communication in practices such as conversation.

Founding of the UdeG Football Team

The history of the University of Guadalajara team remains in the memory of people who witnessed its beginning when the historical context of Mexican football was facilitated by the intertwining of agents that came together in an institutional, political, economic, and enthusiastic way in Mexico City and Guadalajara, Jalisco.

At the beginning of the '70s, there was only one university team in the first-division football league: The Pumas of the UNAM. The approach of a university to professional football showed that in a well-administered way, football could offer economic advantages to the institutions and to the student community avid for sports (Bañuelos, Calderón, Sotelo, & Krauze, 1998, p. 38).

In June 1974, the incorporation of the University of Guadalajara team into professional football was discussed, and it was agreed to debut it in the league

tournament. In this matter, and with the predictions against them: "The University of Guadalajara, which reached the First Division after having received the rights from Torreon, will visit on Sunday 14 [July 1974] none other than América, another of the six at the Azteca stadium" (La Afición, June 28, 1974).

The result of that first game was a 2-2 tie, "with goals by Sylvio Fogel of América and two goals by [Ernesto] Burro Sánchez of UdeG, and it is a team that, from the start, attracts attention for the colorful uniform" (E6, personal communication, November 10, 2015). With that performance, the UdeG team made a good impression in their opening match, although it was marked as a "mediocre game with a two-goal tie [...] For the University of Guadalajara, the tie was very good and their presence in the capital was quite honorable" (Ramos, July 15, 1974).

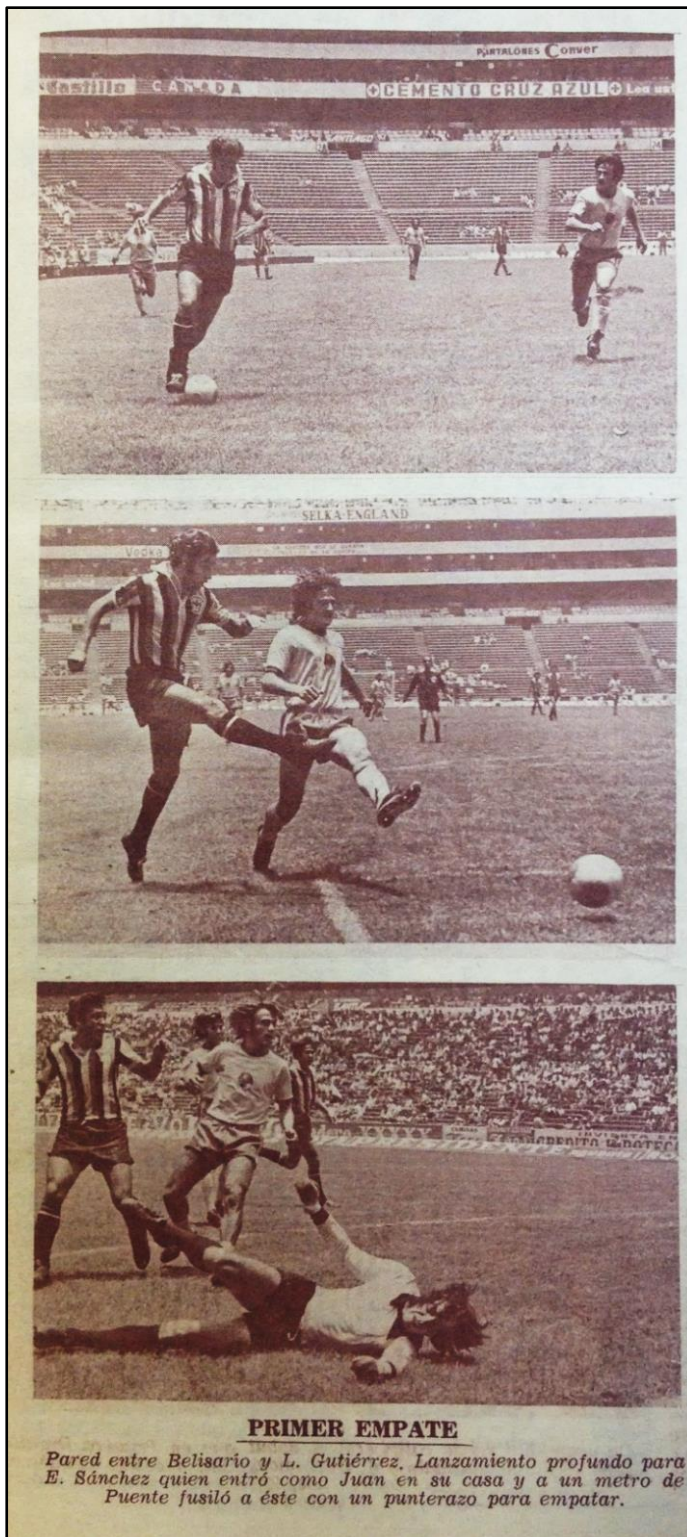
Figure 2. The first UdeG football team. Source: Los Leones del U. Guadalajara.



"It can be qualified as an acceptable debut, the one that had the U. of Guadalajara in the First Division, which started with: Vizcaíno, Gutiérrez, Jorge Gómez, Nacho Gómez, Ríos, Zamora, Talavera, B. López, Alberto Gómez, Ernesto Sánchez, and Aguilar."

Source: Photo by F. Mejia (Ramos, July 15, 1974, p. 2).

Figure 3. UdeG team's first goal.



"FIRST TIE. Wall between Belisario and L. Gutiérrez. Long kick for E. Sánchez, who passed everyone and kicked hard a meter away from Puente to make the tie."

Source: Photo by F. Mejia (Ramos, July 15, 1974, p. 3).

With the football players of the first team arrived coach José Gómez Nogueira, who, with his guidance, scored 42 points in that inaugural season for the UdeG, which was considered an unprecedented athletic feat.

He is a Brazilian coach who had more prestige in Brazil as a physical trainer than a coach; he was very tough and disciplined. He arrives at the institution, establishes great discipline and the team achieves a sub-championship in his second season, which they lose against América in a final that many people still remember, but of great technical quality, that's what I mean that changed football in Mexico (E6, personal communication, November 10, 2015).

This technical director brought the first jerseys from Brazil, in addition to complete training uniforms, game uniforms, shoes, and even blackboards, "at that time, a trend of bringing Brazilian items was beginning because it was thought to be the best there was on the market for football practice" (E6, personal communication, November 10, 2015).

Besides the playing equipment, the team was reinforced with players:

It is said that Gómez Nogueira is in Brazil looking for four top foreigners. We don't know if he will be able to hire them. We're sure of one thing. If he finds them, he will bring them because the U. of Guadalajara has good economic backing, the Chancellor of the U. of Guadalajara, Rafael García de Quevedo, has already said it: "we will have a team worthy of football in Guadalajara" (Ramos, July 15, 1974).

To participate in the First Division, the team had the following Brazilian reinforcements: Eusebio de Jesús, Belarmino de Almeida Jr. "Nené", and Roberto da Silva. The spectacular play generated by this strengthened team remained in the fans' memory and is considered to be a change in the style of how Mexican football was played by incorporating what became known as the Brazilian style.

In Brazil, this football style is identified by elements such as the priority of technique over strength, the avoidance of one-on-one play, the exchange of passes at the grass level, a certain contempt for tactical systems, and the enjoyment of spin moves (Damo & Oliven, 2009, p. 107).

In fact, “with the topic of the Brazilian players who came, of black color, the sports commentator Ángel Fernández Rugama gave the club the nickname of Leones Negros (Black Lions), which remained there for the rest of their history” (E6, personal communication, November 10, 2015). Indeed, the media dissemination of the narrative through sports commentary on television marked the course of channeling the name as a possible category of identity affiliation:

I asked him [Ángel Fernández]: where did he come up with the idea of calling them “negros”, and he said: “Oh, don’t you see those black men (negros)? They are so good, they are runners”. Yes! That’s what he told me, and that’s why it came up at the moment he was narrating: “These are actual Black Lions!” (E7, personal communication, November 10, 2015).

In a critical interpretation of football players and their sports skills for social promotion in Brazil, it is indicated that:

With an exceptional number of gifts/talents –Brazil is the most populated country in the world where football is widely spread–, and with the very few legal, ethical, or cultural restrictions to manipulate them, there is no reason why it should not become a “barn of pros” [*sic*] (Damo & Oliven, 2009, p. 124).

The blackness of these football players is at the origin of the nickname whose narration occurred, according to Yáñez (2016), during the television broadcast of the football match “on September 5, 1974, when the UdeG visited and defeated the *Potros de Hierro* of Atlante by a score of 3-2 in the Azteca stadium” (p. 30). This commentary remained in the football imagination of the ‘70s of the 20th century. In the words of J. Villoro, that was how “Ángel Fernández renamed entire teams [...] he was a renamer of reality that enriched it with that wonderful word [...] that turned the football commentary into an authentic show” (Televisa, 2006).

He also referred to Leones Negros as the team that was born big because, in its beginnings in the First Division, they filled the stadiums where they played and were of great expectation among the fans.

It is the team that changed Mexican football in some way, because [...] it was played with too many pauses, very slow, and when these very fast and agile Brazilian players appeared, the team started to play at another speed, at another rhythm and well, it changed the rhythm of Mexican football (E6, personal communication, November 10, 2015).

With Leones Negros' matches against teams from the Mexican capital, like América and Pumas, games of high rivalry were created. América brought competitive foreign players, and Pumas had Brazilians such as Evanivaldo Castro Silva "Cabinho", José Geraldo Cándido, and Spencer Coelho, "and several players where everyone turns to see Brazilian football as a country from where they can bring players, at that time, at a low price and that could come to evolve football in Mexico" (E6, personal communication, November 10, 2015).

This [first] stage was considered to be one of splendor for Leones Negros, which provided a spectacle on the stadium fields in Mexico. It caught the attention of the fans, who always attended the stadiums where they played. It was the style of play, the uniform, and the foreign players, the elements that attracted the attention of football fans in Mexico (E6, personal communication, November 10, 2015).

The Leones Negros de la UdeG marked the decade of the seventies, states Murrieta (2016), due to "the spectacular nature of their play and the attractiveness of their uniforms" (p. 116). In this team played: Rodríguez Jara; Calderón; Roberto Da Silva; "Topo Gigio" Montes de Oca; "El Cuirio" Santoyo; "Potrillo" Nájera; Eusebio Belarmino de Almeida "Nené"; Rubén Anguiano; Aurelio Martínez, and Jair. Football soccer players who are remembered as a group in the memory; this is to say that "any review of the seventies and eighties of football in Guadalajara would be incomplete if the appearance of the self-named Leones Negros of the University of Guadalajara is omitted" (Doñán, 2011, p. 226).

According to Dietschy (2014), is the eve of the economic globalization of sport, in the context when the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) in 1974 had to "take into account the demands of overseas associations. Some of them, particularly in South America, considered themselves as one of the centers, if not the center, of the

football world” (p. 23). Then, paraphrasing Llopis (2009), the contemporary consequences of the global transformations in football are channeled, like the elimination of protectionist measures of the national markets of football players and the transformations of the organizations of the clubs, which cause in the sociocultural field [...] an evaporation of the national contours of soccer, from which an indifference of the national styles of play would be generating (Llopis, 2009, pp. 10-11).

Communication for the Building of a Football Fanbase

The historical characteristics of the football team diffused with the emotion of pride, such as the values promulgated by the team, the color of the jersey, its imaginary, the sports career with its wins and losses, as well as the visibility through the media, are elements that the subjects evaluate in order to become a fan, that is, to be part of the group and in addition, the perception of rivalry against fans of other teams. In this way, with information, they decide to reject, discriminate, or change their affiliation to become fans of a particular team.

We are a team that already had an identity before, and as I say, it's part of the university, it makes you feel part of a family, which other teams don't have. We're not like Atlas or Chivas regarding violence (E2, personal communication, March 10, 2016).

Similarly, the notion of social belonging is valued through the practices that link the subject to the institution: “it is like an identity because it is part of my university, and it is like having the Leones Negros jersey” (E3, personal communication, April 10, 2016). This sense of identity of people with the place where they develop and spend their daily lives, from where they are born or live, is communicated through the emotional framework. After all, pride is shown through practices and symbols, so belonging to the University defines being a soccer-oriented fan, which becomes possible through communication strategies with the help of institutional mediation.

The above is explicit in what is understood here as the directed fans, given that, for the construction of the identity with the institution, the symbol is Leones Negros, and “the

University of Guadalajara could not stay away from seeking strategies that would provide them with these elements” (Yáñez, 2016, p. 17).

You have to comprehend football to magnitudes of thought, feeling, and physicality so that you can really know to what degree you could get to do things for your own team and for your fanaticism, which are a lot, although they have very few people in these years, they have a lot of history, and the colors, I really feel that they represent me a lot (E1, personal communication, September 18, 2016).

It can be concluded that sports confrontations and rivalries are a topic of conversation when, indeed, talking about sports is one of the topics that connect people with whom the social environment is shared.

Football becomes, in the best of cases and senses granted, a common language that allows to nurture bonds of proximity and sociability even with total strangers, with whom moments and emotions are exchanged, opinions in a bar, in a cab, in a meeting or wherever (Segura, 2014, pp. 3-4).

In Mexico, sports are one of the main topics for conversation: “The main spontaneous mentions to the question, what is the main topic of conversation? (when meeting with friends) are: family (14%), sports (9%), work (7%), economic problems (7%), crime (5%), and daily life (5%)” (Mitosky Consultation, 2011). Indeed, sports as a topic for conversation are topics of collective memory and popular culture, since “in the social memory of our time sports events have a central place [...] And in some that memory is an important part of what is important, of what is emotional, of what is extraordinary” (Galindo, 2012, p. 73).

For J. Villoro (2014): “When there are no games, we talk about football, or at least about transfers of disproportion [...] They are not great topics, but they allow us to keep talking” (p. 26). In addition, they are topics that identify those competent to converse by possessing information. In this regard:

Around football, a common language is built that identifies the people who speak as select members of the community of fans who love their colors and, more importantly, a psychic

identification between the game and the actors actively or passively participating in it (Taguenca, 2014, p. 231).

Nevertheless, the conversation also establishes differences with those who do not wish to participate, as Eco (1994) mentions, when reconstructing a dialogue where, on one side, there is the one who speaks passionately about football soccer, and on the other side, the interlocutor, who does not understand that is not a topic of their competence.

I have nothing against football [...] I watch a good game with interest and joy on TV because I recognize and appreciate the merits of this noble game. I do not hate soccer, I hate its lovers [...] I do not love the fans because they have a strange characteristic: they do not understand why you are not one and insist on talking to you as if you were one (Eco, 1994, p. 205).

The relationship between people with the football conversation rooted in their communicative memory is relevant as mediation in the social context in Guadalajara, Jalisco. The anthropologist Andrés Fábregas Puig mentions it with his experience when he settled in this city:

In daily life, people used to introduce themselves with their names, but also by answering a question they ask each other: "What team do you root for?" So in Jalisco, when you introduce yourself, you say your name and the name of the football team you are a fan. The funny thing is that the relationship can be amicable if there is a coincidence, or rough if there is not, and worse if it is about Chivas-Atlas (Olivos & Cuadriello, 2012, p. 188).

Furthermore, conversing builds social relations, which mediate the subjects' preferences, and configures the formation of groups by distinguishing themselves from others when talking about a football team. It is here when what is observed on the screens acquires meaning, in the process of second-order reception named as resonance groups: "The memory, the mental evocation of an image, a saying or a television script and the resurrection of televised sensations in other moments and places of everyday life, 'reconnect' subjects with television referents" (Orozco, 2014, p. 52).

By relating the reception on television, the construction of the fans has an echo in resonance groups that constitute the reception process and presence in the stadium by acquiring meaning with groups of people in the recognition of otherness.

As a topic of conversation, in Guadalajara, football has been practiced since the beginning of the 20th century, with the Chivas team, founded in 1906, and Club Atlas, established in 1916. The city hosted the FIFA World Championships organized in Mexico in 1970 and 1986 at the Jalisco stadium and also at the Tres de Marzo stadium of the Universidad Autónoma de Guadalajara, located in Zapopan, for the 1986 World Cup in Mexico.

For Doñán (2011), "football appears as one of the signs of identity of the tapatiez (people from Guadalajara), being Guadalajara the football city for excellence in Mexico" (pp. 201-202). It can be confirmed that football in this urban context is a theme incorporated into people's sense of belonging that is reinvented through communication and conversation.

We love it! I think we can't talk about anything other than that, there are only a few citizens who don't like football because you see it in the neighborhood, you see it in the basic forces, it is everywhere, on TV, you go out to play with your friend and tells you about the player, as a child you want to be the most valued player in the world or the Mexican who is playing the best (E2, personal communication, March 10, 2016).

In this way: "Guadalajara is a very passionate city about football, it is one of the sports that have been followed the most for many years by Guadalajara's society" (E4, personal communication, August 20, 2016). In this regard, referring to the city coincides with referring to cultural memory by proceeding:

It covers a big part of the culture of Guadalajara because we have the Jalisco stadium, and it has gone through global events, so it has a great repertoire of history, and it really makes us stand out in the country because when they mention the fans that are here, they already say: Oh! Yes, I remember, there is Chivas or there is Atlas or there is Leones Negros. So, we started to become more famous at a national level (E1, personal communication, September 18, 2016).

In the testimonies quoted above, according to Dunning (2003), it is emphasized that “personal and collective identities are more important in sport than in any other recreational activity” (p. 34). In this identification, in the contemporary context of global communication flows, football gives an account by observing referents that represent the institutional organization, and in this case, also the city locally. In this way, the team is a mediator in deciding to affiliate the subjects through the conversation of the communicative memory.

In consequence, football watched on the screens or witnessed in the stadium gives information for conversations, whe26

re the communication highlights the expression of the fanbase and the events that were narrated as in the family environment, where there is a link with masculine figures, in which women are named in order to entice them. So, it was said: “I started to go alone, and so far, a friend from University is the one who is going with me, I already convinced her, she’s already a fan of the Leones Negros as well” (E2, personal communication, March 10, 2016).

On the other hand, when football games are watched on television, it was said: “with my dad, we share as much time as possible with him and with the Leones Negros” (E1, personal communication, September 18, 2016). In this amalgam of mediations, the beginning of his fanaticism is narrated.

It all started because of my dad, he used to come [to the Jalisco stadium] every Friday night to watch the Leones Negros [...] at that time I was not interested in football and that’s when they invited me and I went, something called my attention to the team that I cannot understand why, I still cannot understand it, maybe their colors, their shirt, their symbolism that the University of Guadalajara has, something made me fall in love and did what neither Atlas nor Chivas could achieve, then from there it was when I fell in love with them completely (E1, personal communication, September 18, 2016).

Indeed, the density of meanings in people is possible, according to Fuentes (2002), by “processes by which subjects socially construct reality and give meaning to both what

they do and what they perceive" (p. 25). In this case, interpersonal communication and the topic of football soccer constitute a source of sociability and collectivity, which, for Lever, is "one of the recurring topics used by people, known or not, to establish some kind of connection" (Angelotti, 2010, p. 78). The conversation as integration by themes of sport and, in particular of football, involves collectivity, "the way of living in football is by talking about it, verbalizing it, which makes the viewer also an important actor [...] in this spectacle" (Villena, 2003, p. 259). By way of communicative memory:

What my uncles said, fathers of the local football here in the city, was what I started to like [. . .] I'm a person who interacts very easily with others and that helps me to be able to talk and comment on a play, a game, or simply talk about football, even if there is no football (E5, personal communication, October 13, 2015).

With communication, meanings integrate the exchange of information and give sense to the relationship between the interacting individuals. For Castells (2009), "communication is the sharing of meaning through the exchange of information" (p. 88). Here, it makes sense for "the constitution of the social identities of the subjects as participants in different degrees and forms of social structuring through communicative practices" (Fuentes, 2002, p. 26).

It is a complete cultural and social root that is directly in the veins, I believe, there's the dad who is talking to you about football, there's the uncle, the whole family that's talking to you about it, and since you are a kid you take it, you smell it, you feel it (E2, personal communication, March 10, 2016).

This flow of communication unites the subjects by sharing their appreciation of the individual and collective reception; in both forms, they represent the sense of union to build fans in the discussion of the shared uncertainty that is placed in the social dispute.

I have always liked football a lot, but I didn't have friends who liked the same team as me or who had the same passion for watching the games every Sunday, going on trips, and being able to share it and not feel like an outsider or a weirdo because I am a woman and I like football, but on the contrary, that they accept me and that I am proud to go, and to

have the jerseys, and feel the goals and feel the shouts and everything in the stadium (E3, personal communication, April 10, 2016).

The places where the activities are performed were mentioned by the interviewees, in this case, the reflexivity of the subjects delimited by the urban space where their fanbase develops and in the territorial sense, its identity and roots are established with the place, here they referred to the city of Guadalajara and the Jalisco stadium, this building also named *monumental* by way of cultural memory.

This connection gives meaning to the relationship with which the football team, Leones Negros, territorializes as a sports representative of the University of Guadalajara, links the subjects with the ascription of the institutionality where they studied, graduated or for who left their studies incomplete, that is, the history of the team, the university, and the city, linked to the communicative memory and biography of the fans, besides referring to the cultural memory and the emotions:

Mainly because of my university, as well as there are other teams and as I also follow Chivas, I have felt more represented by Leones Negros because of them I started going to the stadium because I feel the jersey more and because I have worn it many more times, because I have suffered, I have cried, and I have laughed at the stadium (E3, personal communication, April 10, 2016).

Meanwhile, on the other hand, the reference to the mediation of the higher education institution is repeated and mentioned:

I have always liked the University of Guadalajara team since it is from the alma mater where I have my functions, and it is a team that fills my heart because of the fondness I have for that famous team of the Leones Negros (E4, personal communication, August 20, 2016).

From this, the institutional mediation is highlighted in the construction of a fanbase directed with the sense of identity, nevertheless, being a fan of Leones Negros is also a status for those who aspire to be university students, given that the team provides the

opportunity, certainly imagined, to belong to or identify with the University of Guadalajara.

Conclusions

The diffusion of the history of the football soccer team is one of the strategies to build a fanbase directed by the board of directors that supports it institutionally. In the case studied here, it is presented with the emotion of pride and recurrently through the nickname *Leones Negros*, as well as in the design of the uniform with its colors are a reminder of the historical trajectory with a symbolic weight and relevant communicative memory.

In the density of football in the city of Guadalajara, fans of *Leones Negros* distinguish themselves with the t-shirt as a distinctive and valuable symbol of their three colors –black, red, and yellow– that identify them with UdeG. In contrast, fanbases of the centennial teams in this city stand out with two colors that are constantly mentioned as a reference in the media: *Chivas*, the red-and-white team, and the red-and-black team of *Atlas*.

Additionally, regarding the difference in the uses and appropriations of football spaces in Guadalajara, another indication is the schedule of the *Leones Negros* games at the *Jalisco* stadium, which is not a minor issue. These are usually scheduled on Sunday at noon. Nowadays, when television broadcasts impose games schedules, only a few professional football teams in Mexico and the world play at noon, as it remains a tradition implanted by the social dynamics of the last decades of the last century, which, in this case, weights with nostalgia for the sporting glories of *Leones Negros* fans.

Thus, the history of the team as a mediation interferes in the knowledge and communicative memory of its fans, as well as in their motivations to attach themselves to a team that is linked to the emotions experienced through victories and defeats, championships, players categorized as idols, epic matches, constructed rivalries, emblematic players, line-ups, the origin of nicknames, colors, jerseys, all of the above as a repertoire of memory that is linked to the biography.

The history disseminated in this way is used as a substantial element that unites people who are fans of football teams, for their common knowledge, although located at different levels of the notion of subjects with diverse profiles, which allows them to join in a trans-classist and transgenerational way to others who have and share the team as a referent through the conversation of the present day and the communicative memory.

As the essence of information for the fans, history connects them with the team, even with the social differences in terms of cultural, economic, or political origin, this diversity unites them with the knowledge of the shared history that comes from the institutional version. However, the fans participate in an interpretative way with their emotional experience through the communicative memory by joining in an identified way.

On the other hand, the media coverage for the diffusion of a team, the peak moments of its spectacular nature are usually the first contacts of the subjects who have not yet defined their sports affinities, which is why witnessing the achievement of championships or defining games, is the motivation to decide which team they will root for and affiliate with as fans, whose decision will probably be for the rest of their life.

For Leones Negros fans, the memory of the spectacular style of play and the innovation in the practice of football soccer in Mexico, the players that gave the team its name, and the look of the uniform are elements in the collective memory that are reiterated with the feeling of pride and remembered as nostalgia for the generations that watched the team in the decade of the seventies and eighties of the 20th century. As a link between that historical moment and the present, one of the mediations between people is built through conversation and leads others into the contemporary experience based on what was selected as memorable in their life history. As a result, the subjects interpret their fondness through these practices of identity with the territory, given that being from Leones Negros also ties them to their native Guadalajara.

Finally, with the emotional production through speech, the fans differentiate themselves from groups of fans of other teams. In this way, they stand out as a possible category in the diversity of ways of incorporating, interpreting, and living football, particularly in the city of Guadalajara, where for these people, being a fan of Leones Negros

means to territorialize with the local based on its history and the interpretations about football that they dialogue, discuss, and communicate through the conversation around identity.

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