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### The Language of Sport: Understanding Chile and Chilenidad through Marathon Races and Fútbol Games

Lilah Drafts-Johnson  
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The Language of Sport:  
Understanding Chile and *chilenidad* through Marathon Races  
and Fútbol Games

Senior Honors Thesis  
Lilah Drafts-Johnson  
Department of Latin American Studies  
Yago Colás  
Spring 2018

*Although this paper was largely written in coffee shops and libraries, my idea for this project originated from my lived experience with sport. In the next sixty-some pages, I will argue that sports communicate messages that are not any different than those found in books, paintings, or oral stories. My time studying abroad and running in Santiago, Chile, taught me this important lesson. With only a few years of Spanish instruction prior to arriving in Chile, I often found myself feeling incapable of expressing myself fully to the people I met there. This all changed when I joined a Chilean club track and field team, el Pacífico, and began regularly practicing with them. Through sprint workouts and endurance circuits, my body was able to communicate what my words often could not. As we became more comfortable with each other, my teammates and I went from discussing our personal records to our personal lives, and practice turned into a daily exchange of culture and knowledge. Our shared passion for running overcame linguistic and cultural barriers, allowing me to form lasting friendships and a deeper understanding of the country.*

*This paper is dedicated to my teammates of el Pacífico, as well as to the Sepúlveda Sandoval family, who showed me the kind of warmth and welcome that can never be repaid, only paid forward. It is from them that I learned a little bit of the language that I will introduce in this paper.*

## Introduction

Sport, like any other performance, is a message. In the same way that literary scholars carefully attend to the most minute details of language in a passage, the ebb and flow of a race and the taps and touches of a soccer ball invite the close scrutiny of sports scholars. The stories that sports tell are open to the interpretation of spectators, coaches, referees, other athletes, politicians, and journalists, among others. When an athlete competes, their performance is subject to the appraisal of a variety of these actors, who imbue their play with meaning that the athlete may not have intended. One person's interpretation of a sport competition is often at odds with another's, and these conflicting storylines clash as the "true story" is sought to be recorded and remembered. In examining these struggles for meaning, we stand to learn more about not only the sporting event in question, but about the place and people it represents.

By recognizing that sport is a message and dedicating ourselves to its interpretation, we can better understand the motives and values of those who are fluent in its language. In this thesis, I examine several moments in Chilean history where sport communicated messages. To unpack these messages, I will study the actors in these sporting situations – the athletes, coaches, spectators, and reporters – and discuss the identities and motives of each. I will then look for linkages between these sporting moments and ideological movements happening within Chile and in the world. There is a dominant current that I would like for you to settle in with for the next fifty-some pages: sport is a language, a vehicle for transmitting messages that can be unpacked, translated, and interpreted in a variety of ways. The messages that I will examine primarily focus on questions of Chilean identity, or *la chilenidad*, and I will argue that sport has been used to project different dimensions of this identity both domestically and abroad. I will contend that sport is a viable lens for understanding the nation of Chile, offering new

perspectives on both overpicked and overlooked swaths of history. As is the case with most essays that dare to address sport in an academic setting, this will also serve as an argument for the continued study and inclusion of sports within the realm of area studies, in order to unravel and appreciate the political, social, and cultural significance that sport so often carries.

I will begin by summarizing the past and present state of sport studies in Chile, in order to contextualize the current priorities of the field as well as the limitations for an undergraduate scholar conducting research on this subject from afar. I will then offer a brief crash-course on the history of sport in Chile and outline major themes that have emerged over time in the national discourse and policy surrounding sport. From there, I will arrive at the heart of the thesis. I will examine three select events in Chilean sport history and seek to evaluate their varied meanings and the significance of the struggles waged over these meanings.

### **Sports Studies in Chile**

The meeting of Latin American studies and sports studies is like that of a blind date arranged by an overly eager mutual friend. Although the two share many commonalities as academic disciplines, their first meeting is still clumsy and uncomfortable. Sports studies, like Latin American studies, is often constrained by scholars' desire to hone in on specific social phenomena or sensational topics. For sport studies, academics are drawn to structural examples of sports as politics, looking at Tommy Smith and John Carlos' "Black Power" salute and the recent protests in the National Football League. In Latin American studies, and specifically within Chile, academics are encouraged to focus on set periods of time like the *golpe de estado* and Pinochet dictatorship. In my literature review for this project, I often came across abstracts that promised to deliver new and illuminating perspectives on the events of military regime; however, these papers tended to hastily mention the dictatorship in the conclusions of their

arguments with little convincing explanation for its inclusion. While there is a wealth of literature on political activism in sports and on lasting effects of the Pinochet regime, other topics are overlooked and underfunded in these fields of studies.

In a review of the state of sociocultural studies in sport in Latin America, researcher Miguel Cornejo highlights several challenges that the discipline faces. The dominating English culture within scholarly work, in addition to the difficulty of accessing key primary sources and documents for scholars physically outside of the region, has hindered the discipline's expansion. However, despite these linguistic and geographic limitations, recent developments in sports studies within Latin America can be credited to the formation of the Latin American Association of Sociocultural Studies in Sport (ALESDE) in 2007.<sup>1</sup> The association dedicates space and time to discuss sport as it pertains to Latin America in biennial congresses, and has sponsored and supported research in this area.<sup>2</sup> The lack of credibility frequently associated with sport studies has also placed it on the periphery of other academic fields, often situated as an afterthought or elective course in disciplines like physical education or sociology.<sup>3</sup> In his book "Soccer in Sun and Shadow," Eduardo Galeano sums up this legitimacy issue in a question he poses and answers himself: "How is soccer like God? Each inspires devotion from believers and mistrust from intellectuals."<sup>4</sup> Hopefully, this paper can convert at least a few wayward academic souls to the side of rowdy stadiums and exuberant sprints to the finish line; I can assure you that it is much more interesting than the purgatory that stuffy libraries and never-ending scholarly conferences promise.

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<sup>1</sup> Miguel Améstica Cornejo, "Assessing the Sociology of Sport: On the Latin American Association of Sociocultural Studies in Sport and Research Development in Latin America," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (2015).

<sup>2</sup> Cornejo 408.

<sup>3</sup> Cornejo 409.

<sup>4</sup> Eduardo Galeano, *Soccer in Sun and Shadow* (Verso, 1998) 33.

By analyzing specific events and social movements linked to sport in Chile, this paper will demonstrate how sport has served as a site for struggles over the ideals of *chilenidad* and of the country as a whole. This will first be put to the test in the case of Manuel Plaza, the first Chilean athlete to win an Olympic medal, doing so in the marathon race. Plaza's success at the 1928 Olympics marked the first major international sporting achievement by a Chilean athlete. This event was used to denote the entrance of Chile into the modernized and Western world by conflating the ideals and accomplishments of Manuel Plaza with the ideals and accomplishments of his country. I will also evaluate how Plaza's image as an athlete was molded in order to fit the version of *chilenidad* that his country wished to project to the world.

From there, I will examine the Chile vs. USSR fútbol match in the preliminary qualifying round of the 1974 World Cup. The Chile vs. USSR match represented the gross display of complicity in human rights violations to some, while it stood for the success of neoliberalism and banishment of communism to others. We will use this game, in addition to sport concepts and rhetoric, as a tool to explore the transition from Salvador Allende's socialist government to the military junta beginning in 1973. This section is identified by the struggle between different sections of Chilean society to create and monopolize the master narrative of the events that took place following the *golpe de estado*.

Finally, I will conclude my argument with musings on Chile's National Stadium. The National Stadium is perhaps the most exhausted sporting symbol in Chile. It was constructed on the promises of President Alessandri in 1938, broken by the horrors of General Pinochet's regime in 1973, and re-modeled by the people of Chile in the decades that followed in order to fit the needs of the country as it struggled to reconcile the downfall and then restoration of democracy. Through analysis of these three moments, the 1928 marathon, 1973 Chile vs. USSR

game, and the National Stadium's lifespan, I will demonstrate how sport was used as a battleground to propagate conflicting narratives and ideas about Chile as a country. Through these examples, I hope to call attention to "the fact that sport is what we might call a 'contested terrain,' a site where politics is at play, where destructive and damaging influences reside, but where we also find moments of political resistance, creativity, and human emotions of joy, hope, and excitement."<sup>5</sup> Drawing upon these various historical, political, and literary frameworks, this project ultimately advocates for the continued study of sport within the field of area studies, as a rich source of cultural, political and social significance.

### **Sport in Chile**

Chile declared independence from the Spanish Empire on September 18th of 1810, successfully seceding in February of 1818. However, the diffusion of modern sports in Chile began with the arrival of British immigrants in the mid 1800's. These new sports were heavily influenced by British culture, and included sports like cricket and rugby. By end of the 19th century, fútbol, track and field, and tennis had also gained popularity in the country. Chile was the second Latin American country, after Argentina, to create a national governing body for its fútbol leagues in 1895. The early institutionalization of modern sports enabled Chile to be the first and only Latin American country to take part in the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896.<sup>6</sup> To date, Chile has won a total of nine medals in Olympic competition. Notable Olympians of the country include Manuel Plaza, winner of Chile's first Olympic medal at the 1928 Games, Raquel Martínez, the first female Chilean athlete to compete at the Olympics in

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<sup>5</sup> Ben Carrington and David Andrews, "Introduction: Sport as Escape, Struggle and Art," A Companion to Sport (Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2013) 19.

<sup>6</sup> Gonzalo Bravo, Miguel Cornejo, and Carlos Matus, "Physical Education and After-School Sport Programs in Chile: The Role of Public and Private Structures," Global Perspectives on Physical Education and After-School Sport Programs (University Press of America, 1993) 188.



1936, and most recently the tennis duo of Nicolás Massú and Fernando González, who added a collection of four medals in Athens 2004 and Beijing 2008.<sup>7</sup>

Sport in Chile has undergone a series of changes throughout the years, and understanding the characteristics of Chilean sport will be important in order to contextualize the specific case studies that we will examine later on in the paper. The rise of mass culture in the 1920s, which also popularized fútbol with the inclusion of the working class in sport, brought with it a fierce divide between amateur and professional players. Amateur players, who mainly came from the working class, accurately predicted that professionalism in fútbol would disproportionately siphon away government funding away to professional fútbol associations, further decreasing access for non-professional teams to the already over-booked *canchas*.<sup>8</sup> They also feared the diminishment of the community that had formed in the working class fútbol associations by creating financial incentives for players to leave their neighborhood *barrio* teams. Amateurism was viewed as the pure form of sport, and athletes who ventured into the professional realm were often scorned by the general public, who perceived monetary transactions in sport as threatening to the moral values and sense of civic duty that sport promised to foster. The politics of amateurism continued to be disputed through the 1920s and 30s, which we will see later on in the case of Manuel Plaza.

In terms of national policy, sport in Chile has historically been paired with physical education and military initiatives. It was not until 2001 that the Ministry of Sport was separated from its parent branch, the Ministry of Defense.<sup>9</sup> These linkages point to the function of sport as

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<sup>7</sup> “Chile - National Olympic Committee,” *International Olympic Committee*.

Massú won gold in singles, and doubles with González in 2004. González won bronze in singles in 2004, and silver in 2008.

<sup>8</sup> Brenda Elsey, *Citizens and Sportsmen: Fútbol and Politics in Twentieth-Century Chile* (University of Texas Press, 2012) 88.

<sup>9</sup> Bravo and Cornejo and Matus 191.

an educational tool, as well as a training ground for potential defenders of the country. These two purposes often overlapped; in the 1930s, government funding for physical education was primarily invested in instruction of horseback riding and marksmanship, as one goal of physical education as a way to “train young men to ‘successfully defend the motherland.’”<sup>10</sup> Particularly after World War I and II, we see an urgency within the rhetoric used by military personnel to use physical education as a means of developing the masculine bodies of the country, relating athletic fitness to a matter of national security.<sup>11</sup> In 1938, legislators who successfully argued for the construction of the National Stadium did so by emphasizing that “sport developed masculine traits, including independence, initiative, and vigor, essential qualities for the ideal citizen.”<sup>12</sup> This preoccupation with developing physically fit men reveals the desire of Chilean government and military agencies to use sport to project a specific image of Chile as a nation of strong and highly moral men.

With all of this talk of men, masculinity, and male bodies, you may have noticed that women were virtually excluded from these discussions of the benefits of sport and sport facilities. Femininity was seen as the antithesis of strength and willpower, traits needed in order to be successful in athletics. During the national fútbol team’s losing streak in the 1950s, journalists criticized the footballer’s “effeminate” qualities and blamed the team’s failures on a masculinity crisis created by the emerging acceptance of women in sport.<sup>13</sup> Although most amateur clubs supported female footballers and female participation in sport steadily rose through the 1950s and 60s, the national rhetoric surrounding sport largely diminished the role of women in this realm. Brenda Elsey, an expert on Chilean fútbol associations, concisely

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<sup>10</sup> Elsey 36.

<sup>11</sup> Elsey 82.

<sup>12</sup> Elsey 94.

<sup>13</sup> Elsey 19.

summarizes, “[journalistic] analyses equated femininity with indecisiveness and weakness; therefore, while women may have benefited from football, they had nothing valuable to contribute.”<sup>14</sup> Men were charged with the active role of sustaining Chile’s ethos through the practice of good sportsmanship and success in sport, both domestically and abroad. Meanwhile, women held a passive role and non-reciprocal relationship with sport, seen as capable of being impacted by sport but not of enacting change on it in return.

Race also plays a role in the construction of a master narrative about Chilean sport. This is most obviously visible in the advertisements used for the 1962 World Cup in Santiago. Advertisements about the host country described Chileans as, “White, of European heritage; without a population of color or mixes, the population is the most homogenous in the Americas.”<sup>15</sup> Sportswriters frequently cited Chile’s European roots as a way of differentiating the Chilean fútbol team from other South American teams, and accounted for the success of the Argentine and Brazilian teams by criticizing their style of play as “flashy and individualistic.”<sup>16</sup>

From this overview of sport in Chile, several themes emerge: most notably, the attribution of success in sport to the presence of different social categories and signifiers, namely masculinity, whiteness, and high social class. As I delve into the three case studies of significant moments in Chilean sport history, the themes of gender, race, and social class will emerge and manifest themselves in different ways. How was *chilenidad* constructed from these signifiers, and why were specific versions of *chilenidad* broadcast within Chile and internationally? By deconstructing messages of *chilenidad* found in sport, we will be able to assemble a comprehensive image of distinct, and at times discordant, beliefs about Chilean identity in the 1920s and 1970s through 1980s.

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<sup>14</sup> Elsey 193.

<sup>15</sup> Elsey 127.

<sup>16</sup> Elsey 132.

## Chapter One: Manuel Plaza, Chile's Silver Medaled Golden Boy

As the dust settled following the end of the first World War in 1918, a global consciousness began to awaken for many countries, including Chile. Instability in the nitrate trade, Chile's main export, spurred on the country's need to find footing in the global arena. The 1920s in Chile were marked with political strife, first with a deadlocked Congress that led to a military coup that removed then President Arturo Alessandri.<sup>17</sup> As the economic and political situation wavered, the emerging success of athlete Manuel Plaza appeared even more valuable as a symbol to unify the country and settle the insecurity felt both domestically and internationally.

Manuel Plaza was born in 1900 and began competing at sixteen years of age in long distance races. The 1920s were when Plaza began make his mark in the history books as one of the best South American distance runners of all time. At the 1920 South American Championships in Santiago, Plaza came in third in the 5,000 meter race and second in the 10,000 meter race. In the 1924 Championships in Buenos Aires, Plaza completely dominated the distance events, taking first place in the 3,000 meter, 5,000 meter, 10,000 meter, and cross-country races. Plaza competed in his first Olympic race at the Paris games in 1924, finishing in sixth place. Today, Manuel Plaza is heralded as one of the founding fathers of track and field in Chile, and celebrated as one of the most influential athletes of all time in the country. This recognition largely comes from Plaza's race at the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam, where Plaza won Chile's first Olympic medal by taking second place in the marathon.

Plaza rose to fame at a critical point in Chilean sport history, as Chile and the rest of South America welcomed development in modern sports to show "that they had embraced the

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<sup>17</sup> Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter H. Smith, "Chapter Four – Chile," Modern Latin America (Oxford University Press, 2005).

‘civilized’ practices and values of North Atlantic cultures.’<sup>18</sup> This section of the paper will closely examine Plaza’s historic run in Amsterdam in 1928 and the ways it was interpreted by the Chilean media. To provide context for Plaza’s marathon, we will first look at the race’s origin story at the Battle of Marathon in 490. From there, we will explore how Plaza came to be regarded as an ideal model of *chilenidad* by deconstructing the identity the Chilean media claimed he represented.

Scholars of both modern and ancient times have a muddled idea of what happened at the Battle of Marathon in 490, the origin site of a mythological event that inspired the race run today. The most cited source for uncovering this event is Herodotus, a Greek historian of the Persian Empire. He details the impending battle between the Persians and Athenians, which led the Athenians to send a “day-runner,” or *hemerodromos* in Greek, to Sparta to ask for help. Day-runners in ancient Greece were trained to run incredibly long distances in order to carry messages and news. The herald sent by the Athenian general was a *hemerodromos* by the name of Pheidippides, although often referred to as Philippides, who ran the 140 miles to Sparta only for the request to be rejected. In some accounts of the story, Pheidippides ran back to Marathon, a few sources even claiming that he fought in the battle against the Persians. The story diverges again when the Athenians are victorious. In the popularized version of the story, Pheidippides made his final run, for which he is most famous and upon which the marathon race today is based. This time a forty kilometer (approximately twenty-five mile) trek to Athens, Pheidippides arrived at the Senate chamber of the city and proclaimed, “Rejoice! We have won,” before collapsing and dying from exhaustion. This last run to Athens is the least credible part of the Marathon story, omitted in Herodotus’ recollection and only mentioned centuries later by other

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<sup>18</sup> Cesar R. Torres, “A Golden Second Place: Manuel Plaza in South America,” *Kinesiology, Sport Studies and Physical Education Faculty Publications of the College at Brockport, State University of New York*, 44.

historians.<sup>19</sup> Still, this improbable tale serves as the basis for the 26.2 miles of the modern marathon.

The main lesson from the Battle of Marathon is not necessarily found in the cold and hard facts, but in what parts of the story have endured. “That imagery of military and athletic effort – a citizen fighting to save his people from tyranny and dying in the act of spreading the good news – has such emotional force that it is tantamount to blasphemy to point out some obvious historical problems.”<sup>20</sup> It is highly unlikely that Pheidippides ran the distance he was canonized for, but that is beside the point. In a sense, the details and the facts are the least interesting and least important parts of the story. By stripping down this convoluted story to its most basic form, the following account remains: A common messenger boy, through an incredible athletic feat, gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country, and was immortalized for doing so. What Pheidippides accomplished is less important than what the accomplishment came to represent: ““The victory of Greeks over Persians [at Marathon] was the victory of free states over oriental despotism; it was the victory of a handful of trained athletes over hordes of effeminate barbarians.””<sup>21</sup> Pheidippides came to represent his country, the Battle of Marathon became an example of good conquering evil, and the marathon itself transformed into a test of willpower, perseverance, and heroism. In the context of the 1928 Olympic Games, the mythical origins of the most iconic event in modern sport entail the delivery of a message. To understand the meaning of this message, we will apply the same attention to the symbols and imagery that our modern-day Pheidippides, Manuel Plaza, came to embody in his own story.

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<sup>19</sup> Stephen G. Miller, *Arete: Greek Sports from Ancient Source* (University of California Press, 2004) 26.

<sup>20</sup> Donald G. Kyle, *Sport and Spectacle in the Ancient World* (John Wiley & Sons, 2014) 100.

<sup>21</sup> Kyle 207.

## The 1928 Marathon

In the 1928 marathon, Plaza patiently stayed in the middle of the pack of runners for the first half of the race. At mile eighteen, he became an aggressor, chasing down other runners and claiming a secure spot in the top ten competitors. With just two miles to go, the stage was clearly set for a showdown between Plaza and Boughera El Ouafi, a member of the French Olympic contingent. El Ouafi extended his lead, despite Plaza's attempts to chip away at the growing gap between them, and finished in first place with a time of 2:32.57. Manuel Plaza finished twenty-six seconds later in 2:33.23, followed by the next competitor one minute and thirty-nine seconds later.<sup>22</sup>

Plaza had competed in and been successful in many marathons before this one, but the Olympic factor gave Plaza international visibility and credibility. "In participatory terms, the World Cup and the Olympics offer a platform to all nations, and most of all to small nations, of the world that is unrivaled by any other cultural or political body, even the United Nations."<sup>23</sup> Plaza's medaling at the Olympic stage meant that Plaza and his country were given a global platform, if only for a short period of time. The event also embedded traits of "Olympism" into his performance, the philosophy of the Olympics that states that the Games "are contested in a timeless spirit of amateurism which values taking part above winning and pure sport above commercial gain."<sup>24</sup> The Chilean media seized this moment, and quickly wove elements of patriotism and chivalry into every windy turn through the Dutch countryside. By deconstructing the image that the media painted of Plaza, we will be able to identify the components of

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<sup>22</sup> David E. Martin and Roger W.H. Gynn, *The Marathon Footrace: Performers and Performances* (Charles C. Thomas Publishing, 1939) 98.

<sup>23</sup> Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young, "Chapter One - Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Global Sports Event - An Introduction," *National Identity and Global Sports Events* (State University of New York Press, 2006) 2.

<sup>24</sup> Stephen Wagg, "Olympism," *Key Concepts in Sports Studies* (SAGE, 2009) 152.

*chilenidad* in this time period, and see how sport was used to communicate the interests and values of Chile.

### **The Amateur Ideal**

As previously mentioned, sport in Chile in the 1920s was marked by a major conflict between amateur and professional athletes. This conflict was largely disputed between the football clubs of the time period, but runners like Plaza were also drawn into the fray. The amateur ideal was originated in late Victorian/Edwardian Britain, and although it ostensibly embodied a desire to play for the love of the game, it also served to preserve social stratification.<sup>25</sup> Amateur players were those who could afford to not be paid for their participation in the sport, and thus were usually wealthy upper-class players. By dividing players of cricket or fútbol into professional and amateur leagues, Britain avoided socializing lower-class and upper-class players together. In Chile, amateurism abetted similar goals, in addition to preventing social mobility for working-class athletes, as we will see in the case of Manuel Plaza.

Plaza was the only distance runner to represent Chile at both the 1924 and 1928 Olympics, despite the fact that at least two other runners in the country could have qualified and competed at the event. These runners, Martiniano Becerra and Juan Jorquera, were not eligible to compete because of their status as professional, not amateur, runners.<sup>26</sup> Back in Santiago, Plaza made his living as a *suplementero*, or a paperboy, a job not unlike the one held by our hero Pheidippides. Instead of delivering his papers on bicycle, Plaza turned his paper route into a running workout, delivering newspapers along the way. This amateur status was highlighted in much of the media coverage following his historic run in the Amsterdam Olympic Games. Western news outlets used Plaza's modest profession as an undercutting comment, "[i]n the end'

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Johnes, "Amateurism," The SAGE Dictionary of Sports Studies (SAGE, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Torres 49.



El Ouafi “had only to beat another outsider, Miguel [*sic*] Plaza, the newsboy from Chile.”<sup>27</sup> However, the Chilean media spoke of Plaza’s status as an amateur with great pride. “Plaza’s fans boasted that ‘one of their own’ had risen to the top of track and field...Plaza became a hero for working-class youth, who named clubs in his honor and swapped stories of meeting him.”<sup>28</sup> Despite the opportunities that professionalism could have offered, Plaza himself was quick to assure his fellow Chileans of his intent to resume normal life. “I received numerous offers to run in Stockholm and the United States, but I preferred to return as an amateur to my beloved land where mine and my compatriots are waiting for me.”<sup>29</sup> Plaza clearly understood the need to commit to an image of amateurism, and was rewarded for this. Amateurism allowed the Chilean media to imply that Plaza’s endeavor was selfless; he did not run for money or for fame, but for his country, thus setting the standard for future athletes to do the same.

Per the strict scrutiny of the government and media, Plaza was never able to truly bask in the rewards of his accomplishment, leaving Amsterdam as a top-finisher in a world class competition, and returning to Chile as a working-class hero. He could not accept sponsorship money without fear of being ruled a professional athlete and have his career suffer the same fate as his idols Becerra and Jorquera.

“After the race Plaza reportedly received lucrative offers to run in Germany, Sweden, and the United States... Juan Livingstone, the Chilean Olympic *chef de mission*, dashed the initial enthusiasm ignited by the prospect of extending Plaza’s international racing after his Olympic success. Livingstone declared, “On sober consideration, however, this plan was considered impracticable. That boy [Plaza] must get back at his job of selling newspapers.”<sup>30</sup>

Livingstone’s comments here mark how imperative it was that Manuel return to his day job as a paperboy. Plaza’s return to Chile marked the restoration of social order and demonstrated the

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<sup>27</sup> Torres 58.

<sup>28</sup> Elsey 77.

<sup>29</sup> Torres 56.

<sup>30</sup> Torres 55.

limits to success that members of the working class had as athletes. A working-class athlete could be afforded opportunity, but only through exceptional diligence and humility, and that opportunity could only be explored to a certain extent.

### **Plaza the Gentleman**

*Chilenidad*, as exemplified by Plaza, covers actions as noble as rejecting (deserved) offers for a professional career in running, to decisions like abstaining from alcohol and calling home to the family: “The press approvingly reported that during his training in Amsterdam Plaza never went out after dinner. That he sent greetings to his wife and coach [after the race] was not lost on the journalists either.”<sup>31</sup> Plaza followed the gentleman’s code of conduct during competition as well. “He was also praised for having looked up Stenroos [his fellow competitor] after the race to shake his hand...[these comments] categorized him as a gentleman.”<sup>32</sup> In many of the depictions of Plaza’s race, there are even attempts from the Chilean media to re-package the grueling 26.2 mile endeavor as a gentleman’s stroll in the park. Plaza was said to have run a calculated and smart race, coming from behind to take second. Post-race, one authority even claims that just minutes after completing the marathon, Plaza looked, “happy, fresh, as if he had not participated in the formidable race.”<sup>33</sup> It is difficult to take these efforts of applying chivalry and well-mannered conduct to an unforgiving race like the marathon, where anywhere from thirty to seventy percent of runners typically defecate mid-race.<sup>34</sup>

In order to understand the racial construction of Plaza in the 1928 marathon, we look to historian Jorge Larraín. In his book, “Identidad Chilena,” Larraín deconstructs various interpretations of *chilenidad*. The first of these is the *versión militar-racial*, which encompasses

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<sup>31</sup> Torres 54.

<sup>32</sup> Torres 50.

<sup>33</sup> Torres 57.

<sup>34</sup> Richard N. Fogoros, “‘Runner’s Trots’: Gastrointestinal Disturbances in Runners,” (JAMA Network, 1980) 3.

a racial theory about Chileans that is rooted in their wars of past. This version of *chilenidad* posits that war is central to the Chilean identity: Chile was constructed through conquering the Mapuche and other indigenous people's land, again through a war that permitted the independence of Chile from the Spanish Empire, and finally through the War of the Pacific, which landlocked Bolivia and granted Chile resource-filled land in the north. Larraín explains that the racial aspect of this theory arrives when understanding how both war and race require an "other" to survive.

La versión militar-racial de la identidad chilena es oposicional por excelencia, en el sentido de que mucho más claramente que otras versiones requiere de un "otro" al que hay que vencer o derrotar. La guerra implica un enemigo amenazante que hay que destruir. Una identidad nacional basada en la guerra...se afirma en la necesidad de tener algún enemigo para destruir. Y no se trata solo de enemigos externos.<sup>35</sup>

The military-racial version relies on exclusionary tactics to create this particular definition of *chilenidad*. As Larraín hints at above, the "enemies" that *chilenidad* is in opposition to are not only external threats like the Peruvians and Bolivians, but the indigenous people of Chile as well. It is significant that this definition of *chilenidad* excludes the first people in the geographical territory that today is Chile, as an estimated ten percent of the population self-identify as indigenous.<sup>36</sup>

The undeniably indigenous roots of Chile are often hidden in the country's projection of itself internationally. This is apparent in the commentary of the training and performance of Manuel Plaza. According to the Chilean media, Plaza was a product of European influence on Chile's racial stock. A Chilean ambassador to the Vatican "articulated the nation's elite racial ideology by praising the positive effect that European immigrants had on Chilean workers,"

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<sup>35</sup> Jorge Larraín, *Identidad chilena* (Lom Ediciones, 2001) 157.

<sup>36</sup> "Chile - Minority Rights Group," *Minority Rights Group International*.

This figure is probably even higher, as the cited statistic is from the "partial" census of 2012 that had to be re-done in 2017 because the Chilean government missed 10% of the population in the 2012 census.

referencing both Plaza's European ancestry and the fact that Plaza's coach at the time of his victory was German-born Carlos Strutz.<sup>37</sup> Although Chilean reporters were quick to separate *lo indigeno* from *lo chileno*, reporters from other (particularly, Western) countries were not. Torres highlights one coverage of the 1928 Amsterdam where this discrepancy is clearly shown.

This was forcefully demonstrated by an exchange between Fanta, the Chilean journalist and sport official, and some foreign colleagues...As they rode together in the bus following the race, Fanta recalled being asked about Plaza's biographical data. The foreign journalists wondered if Plaza was the son of foreign parents. When Fanta answered that Plaza was pure Chilean, they concluded: "That means he is Indian." Reflecting about the episode, Fanta commented that for "the majority of the journalists it was a surprise to learn the Chilean race existed." Implicit in Fanta's reflection is the exclusion of the indigenous population from the imagined "Chilean race." Fanta did not see any "Indians" in the emergence and consolidation of the "Chilean race" that Plaza embodied.<sup>38</sup>

Plaza's success for the Chilean race and the Chilean race's impact on Plaza's success depicts a reciprocal relationship where each component sustains the other. Plaza was successful because of his European roots and the impact of European training techniques; his success also revitalizes the myth that these roots and techniques are superior to others, particularly to indigenous peoples. The exclusion of the indigenous Chilean from this relationship also implies that the indigenous population is not to share in Plaza's victory, as they do not embody the requisite traits of *chilenidad*.

### **National Treasure**

The most prominent theme in the chronicles of Plaza's race is the emphasis on his sense of patriotic duty. As mentioned before, Plaza's amateurism indicated that his motives were "pure" in competing at the Olympics, not for personal financial gain or fame but to represent his country. In true Olympic spirit fashion, Plaza vowed he would, "do everything possible so that

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<sup>37</sup> Torres 63.

<sup>38</sup> Torres 54-55.

the Chilean flag will fly from the Olympic mast.”<sup>39</sup> Plaza understood that he was running not just for himself, but for his country. However, instead of these thoughts weighing him down, he used them to motivate himself during the competition. Although he was alone in Amsterdam save for a handful of teammates and government officials, “[Plaza’s] coach recommended that as Plaza ran the Amsterdam course he pretend that in each tree of the road there is a Chilean that cheers you, that the spirit is comforted, that he helps you win.”<sup>40</sup> In his own article on this event, Torres remarks that while these comments appear to be supportive, they also contain an ominous air of paternalism. “Plaza’s ghostly compatriots were also an omnipresent phenomenon that would hold him accountable. Imagining Chile, Plaza would be running with and for the nation, and also under its gaze.”<sup>41</sup> The Chileans watching over Plaza’s race remind him that others are depending upon him to succeed, as his results will reflect on more than just him as an athlete. In the last kilometers of the race, the director of the Chilean boxing team, Santiago Pérez, urges Plaza: ““Remember that you are Chilean, Plaza! Run, run!”<sup>42</sup> While the “ghostly compatriots” remind Plaza of the standard of *chilenidad* that he must strive towards and uphold, Pérez’s comments also imply that *chilenidad* is a piece of Plaza’s success; by remembering that he is Chilean, Plaza will be able to access some kind of strength to assist him in the last leg of the race.

Plaza’s second place finish on the Olympic stage secured him a spot in the history books as one of the best Chilean and South American runners of all time. However, he and his medal were quickly stripped of their individuality as Plaza’s accomplishment came to be shared with the entire Chilean state and South American continent. This is due in part to the nationalistic

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<sup>39</sup> Torres 52.

<sup>40</sup> Torres 54.

<sup>41</sup> Torres 52.

<sup>42</sup> Torres 52.

themes embedded in Plaza's performance. From Plaza's promise before the race that the Chilean flag would be raised, to the patriotic cheers of his teammates during the race, to the efforts of Chilean and South American media to claim him as their own after the race, Plaza's identity as a Chilean and South American athlete is impossible to ignore. *La Prensa*, a Chilean newspaper, argued, "Plaza won the silver medal not only for Chile but 'for the South American continent.'"<sup>43</sup> This desire to label Plaza as Chilean can be explained by understanding what an Olympic medal signified in the 1920s. Comments that associated Plaza with his nationality "fused Plaza's success with that of his nation and conjured up powerful images of sport as a vehicle for representing the growth of the nation in international arenas and of the role of politicians as facilitators of that manifestation."<sup>44</sup> By ascribing *chilenidad* to Plaza's performance, it is not only Plaza who wins an Olympic medal, but his country and its people as well. "Chile" wins silver, "Chile" becomes the production site of one of the best marathon runners in the world, and "Chile" does all of this with the humility and grace attributed to Plaza.

Manuel Plaza became one of the first Chilean athletes to experience the stardom that resulted from mass culture in the 1920s, finding himself featured in full-page spreads of magazines and interviewed by newspapers across the continent.<sup>45</sup> Plaza was carefully molded into the poster-boy for the ideal Chilean in his time period. As an amateur athlete, he modeled patriotic duty by rejecting a professional career in favor of continuing to represent his country. A gentleman, he shook his opponents hand and competed with proper sportsmanlike conduct. The training from his German coach complemented Chile's European roots, and his dominance over North American and European runners at the 1928 Games served to bolster Chile's argument that they had earned a spot in the globalized world. The silver medal around Plaza's neck grows

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<sup>43</sup> Torres 57.

<sup>44</sup> Torres 52.

<sup>45</sup> Elsey 76.

heavy as it becomes charged with more and more meaning, carrying the weight of an entire country.

### **Mythical Reflections and a Golden Afterglow**

To revisit the story of Manuel Plaza's predecessor, we will remember that the legend of Pheidippides emerged centuries after his alleged run from Marathon to Athens, and is omitted from Herodotus', the authority on this time period, retelling of the story. Plaza, decades after his second-place finish in the marathon, also perpetuated a myth of his own: that he lost the race only because he lost his way. This rumor was sparked after an interview of Plaza with *Brava Brava*, a popular sports magazine, in 1943, where Plaza stated, "tomé por un recodo equivocado, vi que me hicieron señas y volví sobre lo andado, tomando por otro recodo. Había corrido unos ochenta metros cuando vi que no había más gente. Entonces comprendí que me había equivocado nuevamente y por segunda vez tuve que retroceder."<sup>46</sup> In other interviews, Plaza is quoted as saying that he got lost "porque estaba solo, sin entrenador ni masajista" during the course, whereas other runners had guides.<sup>47</sup> A few months before his death, one source even claims that Plaza declared that, "El Ouafi fue él que acertó el camino."<sup>48</sup> Alleging that a fellow competitor cheated in competition and scapegoating poor signage on the race course for losing the race certainly falls short of the gentleman conduct that Plaza was said to have embraced.

Ninety years after Manuel Plaza's historic run, the gleam of his medal has not dulled. In fact, it appears to have only gotten brighter. Cesar Torres nicknames this the "goldenization" of Plaza's second place finish. To return to our symbols: the Olympic Games represented modernity, an Olympic medal depicted the ticket to acceptance within Western society, and Plaza ran as Chile. Thus, Plaza's silver medal signified much more than the physical hardware

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<sup>46</sup> Aldo Schiappacasse, "¿Es verdad que Manuel Plaza se perdió en la maratón de Ámsterdam?" *Tele13* (2013).

<sup>47</sup> Schiappacasse.

<sup>48</sup> Schiappacasse.

itself: it marked Chile's exceptionalism as a Latin American country. In the words of Torres, "Plaza's success was coded as a Chilean emblem of progress and modernity, which Chilean elites thought legitimated their nation in the eyes of the North Atlantic constitutive 'other.'"<sup>49</sup> Through Plaza's success, Chile lays claim to the characteristics applied to Plaza and his run: his proper sportsmanship and gentlemanly conduct, his pure commitment to sport and country as an amateur, and his hereditary superiority as a result of Chile's European roots. We will now move past the finish line 1928 marathon and find ourselves several decades in the future, this time on the fútbol pitch.

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<sup>49</sup> Torres 65.



## Chapter Two: The Most Disgraceful Match in Fútbol History: Chile vs. Communism

On November 21, 1973, eleven members of the Chilean national fútbol team stood in the National Stadium in front of some 17,000 spectators and an empty net. Despite this, the whistle blew and the game began. Ten quick passes were shared between four players, and the game-winning goal was dribbled into the net by captain Francisco Valdés.<sup>50</sup> The thirty-second match was quickly cut short by the referee, and the team shuffled off the pitch. In the video footage of the event, the camera slowly zooms into the scoreboard above the field, which read, “La juventud y el deporte unen Chile hoy,” followed by the score: Copa del Mundo FIFA, Chile: 1 USSR: 0. In this next section, we will examine how one fútbol match came to symbolize oppression and international disgrace, while simultaneously serving as an endorsement of the Pinochet regime.

The election of 1970 in Chile saw the world’s first democratically elected socialist leader. Salvador Allende of the socialist party drew thirty-six percent of the total vote, compared to thirty-five and twenty-eight percent for the other major party candidates of the election. As Allende did not win by a majority, the decision was moved to Congress to ratify the results, and Allende was named president. On September 11, 1973, a U.S.-backed *golpe de estado* by the military abruptly ended Allende’s presidency. The socialist leader committed suicide in the presidential palace, La Moneda, and General Augusto Pinochet took over in what would become close to eighteen years of dictatorship in Chile.

Pinochet’s dictatorship is remembered for what Pinochet and his regime fought hard to make others forget. Political enemies of the state and their families were persecuted, tortured, and murdered. There have been large-scale efforts to recuperate information about the exact number of those killed or disappeared at the hands of the government during this time, but

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<sup>50</sup> “Chile-USSR,” *YouTube*, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fb5KpkSajpw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fb5KpkSajpw).

figures still largely vary. The official number of deaths is over three thousand, while the number of victims of the regime, denoting those who were detained or tortured, hovers in the tens of thousands.<sup>51</sup> This period of time has been scrutinized by many historians, looking at different forms of resistance to the dictatorship and examining how the 1988 plebiscite was successful in deposing Pinochet.

As we move from a marathon race to the “great game” of fútbol, we will notice a shift in the language used to depict the sport and its contests. The reason for this is not particularly groundbreaking; running and fútbol are simply very different sports. The most obvious difference is the individual nature of running a race, compared to the team aspect of fútbol. Successful fútbol demands collaboration, and teams rely on cooperation and communication within the team in order to function. To some degree, this collaborative aspect requires that a group of individuals, each with their own talents and beliefs about fútbol, assimilate into one uniform mind that moves throughout the field. In this section of the thesis, I will draw parallels between the creation of a cohesive fútbol team and the stratification of Chilean society by the Pinochet regime. Augusto Pinochet drew clear lines for the Chilean population: you were either on his team, or against it. By “other”-ing social groups that were in opposition to the regime, Pinochet was able to rally his supporters under a common goal, the defeat of communism, and justify the drastic measures taken by his regime. Our attention will then shift to the preliminary qualifying round for the 1974 World Cup, where Chile was slated to face the USSR. This controversial match elicited many different responses within Chile as well as in the international community, and in staying true to our reverence of the messages found in sport, we will examine the varied interpretations and implications of this game.

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<sup>51</sup> Gideon, Long, “Chile Recognises 9,800 More Victims of Pinochet's Rule,” *BBC News* (2011).

## Fair Play and Moral Economies

Athletes do not turn professional for the job security; sport is a volatile thing. Fans are finicky and fairweather, new coaches bring new strategies and demote the star player to water boy, and the game evolves faster than the aging bodies of seasoned players. In his article, “Sports and ‘the Fragility of Goodness,’” scholar Jeffrey Fry discusses the delicate relationship many athletes share between their sport and their identity: “A life in which sports play a significant role is a life subject to radical contingency... At extreme ends of the spectrum, we experience exhilaration, pain, and suffering, ‘the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat.’ This suggests a direct link between the contingency that pervades sports and the contingency of our emotional lives.”<sup>52</sup>

Perhaps because of the insecurity that a life enriched with sport entails, athletes and fans cling to the parts of the game that they can control. Runners depend on the comforting uniformity of a 400m track in whatever country or continent they compete in; the interval between the forty-five minute halves of a fútbol game is a respite that players know they can count on. When the rules are violated or a competition is perceived as unfair, rage is quick to surface if justice is not restored. However, sport is not unique in that fairness is expected as a prerequisite. By comparing the concepts of goodness and fairness in sport with the moral economies of Chileans during the period of time leading up to the *golpe de estado*, I will argue that President Allende’s inability to deliver on basic necessities of life created an environment in which civilians believed that a stark change in rules, like that brought upon by the *golpe de estado*, was justified.

Amidst the chaos of the feet in a fútbol game and the heart-racing panic set off by the gun in a track meet, there exist written and unwritten rules of each sport that create order on the

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<sup>52</sup> Jeffrey P. Fry, “Sports and ‘the Fragility of Goodness,’” *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* (2004) 35.

competitive playing field. It is not just the rules of the game that matter, but *how* those rules are practiced. “Sport’s educational value, both in ancient and modern times, has been seen as depending upon sport being practised in a certain manner and with a certain attitude.”<sup>53</sup> The chief governing principle of sport is fairness, a topic investigated by philosopher Sigmund Loland in his article, “Fair Play: Historical Anachronism or a Topical Ideal?” Opponents, in a fair game, are dependent on each other’s adherence to the rules of the competition played. However, Loland points out that many of these rules are not explicitly written, rather fragments of social code that together build a kind of shared ethos of a sport. In fútbol, for instance, this shared ethos is the understanding that the ball must be kicked out of play if any player on the field appears injured, in order for them to receive treatment as soon as possible. A problem arises when “rules” are subject to the cultural interpretation and context in which a competitor grew up learning about the game. When these differences come up, players must participate in a negotiation of meaning for the standards of how the game is played, “to keep our eyes and ears open for the hidden language expressed through movements, attitudes, and comments among experienced players... to find our way into ‘the mutually shared field’ or the culture of the game as soon as possible.”<sup>54</sup> In order to play a “fair” game, compromises sometimes have to be made on both sides in order to ensure a cohesive game.

Athletic performances and feats are derived from the desire to achieve specific goals in a contest. These goals are sometimes intrinsically inspired, and sometimes extrinsically constructed. Intrinsic goals are the phrases that the NCAA and other big sporting organizations (who ironically gain more from extrinsically-created motivation) spout – playing for the “love of the sport” and “the development of sportsmanship and positive societal attitudes” through

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<sup>53</sup> Sigmund Loland, “Fair Play: Historical Anachronism or Topical Ideal?” *Ethics and Sport* (E&FN Spon, 1998) 79.

<sup>54</sup> Loland 91.

participation in athletics.<sup>55</sup> Extrinsic goals include championship titles, breaking records, and other tangibly explained accomplishments, namely, winning and making money from winning.

Loland explains that a key difference between these two types of goals is fairness.

Internal goals are realized within the very practice of game playing. They take the character of experiential values such as the excitement of a tight tennis game, the joy of a well-coordinated attack in soccer, the kinesthetic pleasure of rhythm in a successful race in alpine skiing. The realization of internal goals depends upon the realization of the game according to the shared ethos that conceptualizes it. Hence, their realization presupposes fairness.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, most internal goals depend upon the cooperation of not only the person attempting to realize the goals, but the cooperation of the opposition. This is in stark contrast to external goals, who, “are realized outside the game but depend on the realization of the practice as a means towards their realization...the wish for prestige and profit. External goals can be realized even if the holder of such goals does not play according to the relevant ethos. Their realization does not presuppose fairness.”<sup>57</sup> These kinds of goals are built upon the statement of “win at all costs.” From this analysis of internal versus external goals, we see that players in a game are involved in a kind of social contract that allows them to actualize their aspirations in a competition.

The kryptonite of this social contract is the presence of cheating or “dirty play” in a competition. The inclusion of acts that do not adhere to the established rules or shared ethos of a game can completely interfere with the cooperative aspect of a competition. One player trips or pulls the jersey of a player on the other team a little too hard, the other team retaliates with an even harder hit. A player takes advantage of a referee’s blindness to the ball going out of bounds, and suddenly the entire field is toeing the lines. The dissolution of this shared ethos is not unlike the concept of moral economies, a political theory that has been used to explain revolutions and

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<sup>55</sup> “Division III Philosophy Statement,” *NCAA*.

<sup>56</sup> Loland 95

<sup>57</sup> Loland 95.

other unexpected social uprisings. In his essay, “The Concept of ‘Fairness’: Possibilities, Limits, Possibilities,” Michael Lebowitz reviews the ideas of moral economists E.P. Thompson and James Scott, who write about the moral economy of the peasant. “Thompson argues that the food riots... reflect a broad and passionate consensus on what was right, leading to a sharp reaction to egregious violations of that conception of justice.”<sup>58</sup> Lebowitz explains that when a community has a standard of care and that standard is not met, the community will feel justified in taking drastic measures in order to regain that standard of care. In his summary of James Scott’s argument, Lebowitz emphasizes that “conceptions of justice had their roots in the need for maintaining subsistence rather than opposition to exploitation,” meaning that individuals were rarely attempting to improve their quality of life, rather defending their current one.<sup>59</sup>

Moral economy is often discussed as a kind of social contract between peasants and elites, and the expectation of peasants that they will be protected by the elites they toil for in times of famine or hardship. It is also similar to the relationship between the people and the state. The people of a state expect needs to be met, sometimes things as basic as food, water, shelter, but sometimes ideals that are more complicated to define the completion of: equitable treatment, protection of civil liberties, and sense of economic and physical security. Politicians are elected upon the expectation that the policies or values they stand for will fulfill or take steps to fulfill the needs and wants of the people who elected them. The failure to deliver on these promises can bring about sharp criticism and action by the people, and result in the expulsion of politicians from power. For example, political theorists postulate that worker protests in China ““were legitimized by [rioters’] belief that they were defending traditional rights or customs that were

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<sup>58</sup> Michael A. Lebowitz, “The Concepts of ‘Fairness’: Possibilities, Limits, Possibilities,” *Studies in Political Economy* (2013) 118.

<sup>59</sup> Lebowitz, 119.

supported by the wider consensus of the community.”<sup>60</sup> In extreme cases, violations of trust by people in power can bring about drastic change – as exemplified by the *golpe de estado* in Chile in 1973.

### **Allende’s New Game**

The election of Salvador Allende brought with it immense hope and expectation, a dangerous combination for any politician. In campaign speeches, Allende promised social and economic equality, a complete upheaval of the system that had failed the lower classes for so long.<sup>61</sup> Allende’s goal for his country was not unlike one of the most highly regarded principles of sport: a level playing field. However, practices like land redistribution and nationalization of major industries seemed more like robbery than equality to wealthy Chileans and foreign investors. “The widening reach of Allendes’ revolution horrified well-to-do Chileans, who saw their property being stolen and their privileges usurped. Fighting back, investors took their capital abroad...”<sup>62</sup> Allende had changed the rules of the game, and those who had succeeded in the old game were finding that the talents and skills they had honed for years would do them no good in the new socialist regime.

Allende understood that his revolution would shock his citizens and the world, and in his first Parliamentary address, he asked for patience during the tumultuous times that were sure to come: “A social and economic revolution takes years. Time is necessary for the conscience of the masses to be penetrated, for new structures to be organised and made operable as well as to be adapted to the existing ones. It is sheer utopianism to imagine that the intermediary stages can

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<sup>60</sup> Lebowitz 118.

<sup>61</sup> Allende, Salvador. “First Speech to the Chilean Parliament,” *Marxists Internet Archive*.

<sup>62</sup> Pamela Constable and Arturo Valenzuela, *A Nation of Enemies: Chile Under Pinochet* (W.W. Norton & Company, 1993) 25.

be skipped.”<sup>63</sup> These “intermediary stages” dragged into overtime as the socialism fought to keep pace with the needs of Chilean citizens. Chileans were not prepared for the conditioning that Allende’s new policies required; after a slow marathon pace of waiting for change, they came into the revolution expecting a short sprint to the finish line that promised equality. But both domestic and foreign interference battered the legitimacy of Allende’s socialist strategy. “Truckers fomented strikes that created shortages of staple goods and fueled the black market. Right-wing ‘shock troops’ like Patria y Libertad blew up electrical towers and vandalized factories to heighten the climate of tension and fear.”<sup>64</sup> Years after the military coup, declassified U.S. government documents revealed which side the Land of Liberty had chosen. The U.S. had covertly funneled money into the campaign of Eduardo Frei, a Christian Democrat who preceded Allende’s presidency, in order to prevent the spread of socialism. When Allende was finally elected, President Nixon was quoted telling foreign policy aides to ““make the Chilean economy scream,”” decreasing foreign aid given to the country and withdrawing investments in Chilean companies.<sup>65</sup>

In the years that followed Allende’s inauguration, Chile was ostracized by the increasingly neoliberal and globalized world. Allende’s administration responded to shortages and deficits by creating rationing committees known as Price and Supply Boards. Citizens were forced to wait in line for hours to get food, increasing the already anxious climate of the country. This deprivation to basic needs sparked the already seething resentment as Chileans adjusted to the changes of the new political regime. “Carmen García, a mother of four from working-class Lo Prado, wept as she remembered having to ‘stand all night in the cold to get milk for the

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<sup>63</sup> Allende.

<sup>64</sup> Constable and Valenzuela 26.

<sup>65</sup> “The Election of Salvador Allende: Declassified U.S. Government Documents,” The Chile Reader: History, Culture, Politics (Duke University Press, 2013).



baby...I will never, ever forgive the Communists for that.”<sup>66</sup> The U.S. and right-wing Chilean groups eagerly deepened the divides that began to wedge themselves into society, spreading rumors of Communist plots to exterminate opposition, driving up prices of food, and gouging the prices of goods on the ever-expanding black market.<sup>67</sup> The chaos within the country had reached a breaking point in the fall of 1973, and military rule to many seemed like a viable option.

Sportscasters and coaches have a bad habit of conflating the language of sport and the language of war. The two are obviously interchangeable when talking strategy: who is on “offense,” who is on “defense,” what is the “battle plan” of the day, or how to prepare for “attacks” from the other side. After the games, “coaches/generals publicly glory in their *victories*, lament their *defeats*, and mourn their *casualties*.”<sup>68</sup> This mixing of sportspeak and warspeak bleeds into the political rhetoric as well, seen in the language used by various U.S. presidents’ speeches about both the Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars.<sup>69</sup> There are understandable reasons to use sport metaphors to explain war: “...with the decline of competing, shared objects of reverence...sports heroes and paradigmatic and memorable sporting events known throughout a nation provide some of the ‘few cohesive aesthetics’ with which people (and especially men) connect to the social body as a whole.”<sup>70</sup> Sportspeak allows politicians to discuss difficult topics like war in contextualized and relatable ways. As the population of churchgoers dwindles, sportspeak is an accessible way to inform the population about “non-sporting matters, since today ‘the average citizen arguably can be more easily summoned and engaged by sports talk

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<sup>66</sup> Constable and Valenzuela 27.

<sup>67</sup> Constable and Valenzuela.

<sup>68</sup> Sue Curry Jansen and Don Sabo, “The Sport/War Metaphor: Hegemonic Masculinity, the Persian Gulf War, and the New World Order,” *Sociology of Sport Journal* (Human Kinetics Publishers Inc., 1994) 3.

<sup>69</sup> Tricia Jenkins, “The Militarization of American Professional Sports: How the Sports– War Intertext Influences Athletic Ritual and Sports Media,” *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (SAGE Publications, 2013).

<sup>70</sup> Jenkins 246.

than by religious or God talk.”<sup>71</sup> Conversely, warspeak benefits the goals of coaches to motivate their teams. By labeling the opposing team as “the enemy,” coaches are able to unify their team members against a shared threat. Comparing sport competitions to a literal battlefield raises the stakes and heightens a team’s urgency for victory. Augusto Pinochet, an avid sports fan himself, utilized both warspeak and sportspeak in order to create divisions within the Chilean civilian populations. In the next section, we will review how sportspeak and warspeak were used to demonize political enemies of the state.

### **Politics as Fútbol**

After the 1973 *golpe de estado*, the military regime quickly drew a game plan for the future of Chile. Pinochet heavily relied on setting different segments of the population against each other in order to justify the drastic measures taken by his regime. The overarching battle was most clear for Chilean citizens: you were either with Chile, or against it. However, Pinochet also carefully fractured the interactions between the general civilian population and Chileans who served in the military, blaming the greed of non-military citizens for the downfall of democracy and the rise of socialism. “In segregated housing complexes, military families socialized almost exclusively with each other and nursed their prejudices against the civilian elite that had turned politics into a national sport.”<sup>72</sup> Military personnel were told that the leftist resistance groups had stockpiled arms to fight back after the coup, instilling fear within the military ranks that was then taken out on civilians. Chileans who supported the former Allende government were likened to an enemy at war. One former military official explains:

““What [our officers] said created great anxiety and mistrust among us; it created the desire to go out and kill those animals...This explains the transformation of an army that respected civilian leadership into one that could treat prisoners like the Vietnamese.

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<sup>71</sup> Jenkins 246.

<sup>72</sup> Constable and Valenzuela 45.

Anyone who acted with humanity was a traitor. Anyone who supported the [Allende] government was serving a foreign enemy.”<sup>73</sup>

By painting the civilians as the enemy, Pinochet and his aides ensured cooperation from the military when rounding up political enemies. The enemies of Pinochet were the enemies of the people, and any competitive athlete knows that you never cheer for the rival team. With thousands of dissenting voices silenced, either disappeared or murdered, Pinochet made it difficult to join the other side.

Inciting hatred between the home and away team is integral to many coaches’ strategies, but uniting a team is also important for a team to function successfully. Pinochet recognized this, and took steps to unify the country under the best mascot he could think of: himself. In 1977, just four years after taking power, President Pinochet was already under fire from the United Nations for violations of human rights. After the UN voted to condemn Chile for human rights abuses by a vote of 96 to 14, Pinochet called for a national referendum to demonstrate that his people supported the military regime.<sup>74</sup> This decree was subject to heavy criticism from Pinochet’s aides, but rushed through all the same. “At the polls on January 4, 1978, voters were handed a ballot with a Chilean flag for ‘yes,’ and a black box for ‘no,’ in answer to the following statement: ‘Faced with international aggression launched against our fatherland, I support President Pinochet in his defense of the dignity of Chile and reaffirm the legitimacy of the government...’”<sup>75</sup> The obvious appeals to patriotism, a Chilean flag marking the “right” answer, urged countrymen to vote in accordance with their national allegiance.

General Pinochet was fond of stripping away nuance and complexity. The aforementioned ballot options were simple “yes” or “no” answers, with no room to argue or

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<sup>73</sup> Constable and Valenzuela 55.

<sup>74</sup> Constable and Valenzuela 67.

<sup>75</sup> Constable and Valenzuela 68.

explain a decision. Pinochet continued with this line of direct questioning in future electoral votes. Eager to secure his position as president for the probable future, Pinochet pushed for a new Constitution, which included a provision ensuring eight more years of military rule before another plebiscite to renew Pinochet's term. On September 11, 1980, a national referendum was put on the ballot: "New Political Constitution: Yes or No."<sup>76</sup> After the constitution was passed, Pinochet immediately linked the passing of the Constitution to a victory for the entire country. "For a second time, we have defeated the totalitarians! ...We have shown the world how democratic this nation is, that it needs no one to come give it lessons."<sup>77</sup> Comments like these are similar to the sport to war and war to sport imagery employed by coaches and politicians. The referendum was more than a simple vote, it was a time to swear loyalty to the country, and created a "Chile against the world" mindset.

The linkage between Pinochet, the regime, and the country made protests difficult for the resistance groups forming. Pinochet had made his name synonymous with Chile, thus opposition to the dictator also implied treason to the country. For the 1988 plebiscite that would decide if Pinochet would lead for the next eight years, the ballot again read "yes" or "no." The campaign from the military regime used slogans like "Chile sí," a hard slogan to vote against. However, the "No" campaign managed to co-opt the statement by expanding it: "Chile sí, junta no," read the opposition banners.<sup>78</sup> Here we see the difficulty encountered by the groups resisting the military regime; in order to defeat Pinochet, they first needed to separate him from the nationalistic tapestry he had woven. In the same way that Pinochet had banished leftists from the Chilean identity, his opposition now had to fight to exclude Pinochet from *la chilenidad* as well.

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<sup>76</sup> Constable and Valenzuela 72.

<sup>77</sup> Constable and Valenzuela 73.

<sup>78</sup> Elsey 245.

It may seem like a trite comparison, likening a murderous dictator to an overly ambitious fútbol coach, but the fact remains that Pinochet understood how valuable sport and its accompanying ideologies could be for his regime. He rallied his team under the Chilean flag, using the rhetoric of war to draw lines between the homeland and the opposition: Marxism. Forget running suicides or staying late to do extra drills – those who disagreed with him were completely kicked out of the game, although they often still ended up in a stadium. He cozied up to the referees, who often came from the United States, and he and his players evaded the dreaded yellow and red cards for years. Pinochet was a poor sport, though. When he found himself losing, the General would change the rules of the game completely in order to regain advantage, whether that meant creating a new Chilean constitution or stuffing the ballot boxes in the latest plebiscite. Despite all the changes that Chile underwent during the Pinochet regime, fútbol remained virtually unchanged, at least on the surface, to the Chilean public. One prominent fútbol player at the time explains, “...in declassified documents it was later revealed that, soon after taking power, Pinochet had ordered football to be left alone. He understood that football was immensely popular and messing with it would be a measure that attacked football.”<sup>79</sup> This does not mean that fútbol was safe from being used as a tool by the dictatorship. In the 1974 World Cup, we will observe how Pinochet leveraged fútbol’s popularity and history in Chile in order to propagate the functionality of his regime at an international scale.

### **Fútbol as Politics**

The cultural significance of fútbol in Chile, and Latin America, is not to be underestimated. In “Del Chile de los triunfos morales al ‘Chile, país ganador,’” Diego Vilches Parra, a scholar of la Universidad de la Serena in Chile, explains the connection between fútbol

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<sup>79</sup> Carl Worswick, “Playing Under Pinochet: How Chile’s Stars of the 1970’s Feared for their Lives,” (The Guardian News and Media, 2015).

and country. “Aunque comúnmente se asume que es la identidad del país la que se expresa en una determinada forma de practicar el fútbol, lo cierto es que la identidad chilena sólo se expresa a través de este deporte en la medida en que existe un discurso que le da un significado nacional e identitario.”<sup>80</sup> Fútbol inherently does not have meaning, in the same way that a bald eagle (although perhaps a condor would be a more fitting example) does not inherently possess qualities of freedom or bravery. However, it is the meaning that we ascribe to these symbols – the bald eagle as the national bird for a country that claims to be home to the free and the brave – that gives these symbols their weight.

Eduardo Galeano’s poetic meditation, *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*, illuminates how soccer has come to play such a large role in the identity of different Latin American countries. Galeano refers to fútbol as a part of the “English Invasions,” emphasizing the colonial roots of the sport.<sup>81</sup> However, fútbol was quickly picked up on the South American continent. Chile, alongside Argentina, was the first of the South American countries to join FIFA, the International Federation of Association Football, in 1912.<sup>82</sup> This European ancestry is not unlike the heritage emphasized in the previous section about the racial stock of Manuel Plaza. As a result of its European roots, fútbol has always held a significant degree of weight as a “civilized” or “Western” sport. Being good at fútbol also communicates a message. “Al ser una manifestación típica de la cultura contemporánea, el fútbol es considerado como una expresión propia de las sociedades más desarrolladas.”<sup>83</sup> A country with a strong fútbol team denotes strength in other areas for the country, which explains why so much government money, attention, and support is often funneled into mega-events like the Olympics and World Cup.

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<sup>80</sup> Diego Vilches Parra, “Del Chile de los triunfos morales al ‘Chile, país ganador’. La identidad nacional y la selección chilena de fútbol durante la Dictadura Militar (1973-1989),” *Historia Crítica* (2016) 129.

<sup>81</sup> Galeano 27.

<sup>82</sup> Elsey 36.

<sup>83</sup> Vilches 130.

Because fútbol captures so much attention, it is often used as a political tool. And as the most popular sport on the Latin American continent, fútbol is also one of the quickest routes to the heart of a countryman. Galeano puts it best, saying, “soccer and fatherland are always connected, and politicians and dictators frequently exploit those links of identity.”<sup>84</sup> President Medici famously exploited the results of the 1970 World Cup, using Brazil’s victory as a way to legitimize his government.<sup>85</sup> Similarly, the 1978 World Cup “allowed Argentina’s generals to obfuscate the regime’s horrific record of disappearances, systematic torture, and widespread human rights violations.”<sup>86</sup> In La Paz, the Bolivian government used the “bread and circus” technique, attempting to distract labor unions from a planned strike by organizing a game against the successful Argentinian team.<sup>87</sup> Particularly in times of political unrest, the limelight and prestige of the World Cup allows countries a unique opportunity to showcase not only their fútbol talent, but also their patriotism. For this reason, the timing of the 1974 World Cup, less than a year after Chile’s military coup, appeared as a highly contested venue to disseminate ideas about the country under its new government.

Chile did not receive much international acclaim for its fútbol team in the twentieth century, instead relying on “moral victories” in place of actual wins. Diego Vilches explains the transition that took place in his essay, “Del Chile de los triunfos morales al ‘Chile, país ganador’. La identidad nacional y la selección chilena de fútbol durante la Dictadura Militar (1973-1989).” Vilches explains that the Chilean press depicted the national team as Chilean press frequently “mostró el choque deportivo ante rivales europeos como la lucha bíblica entre David y Goliat.”<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Galeano 35.

<sup>85</sup> Tony Mason, “Futbol and Politics in Latin America,” *Race and Class* (1995) 74.

<sup>86</sup> Tamir Baron, *The World Through Soccer: The Cultural Impact of a Global Sport* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2014) 10.

<sup>87</sup> Mason 75.

<sup>88</sup> Vilches 130.

This analogy uses David as Chile, the underdog whose wit and devotion to God allow him to overcome Goliath, representative of the more-developed, but immoral and godless, countries. With patience and adherence to goodness, this analogy promises that Chile will be the country chosen by God to prevail. By highlighting the sportsmanlike conduct and perseverance of the national team, Chile's losses are never really losses, just steps on the path to their ordained victory.

Just fifteen days after the military coup, Chile-David took on a new Goliath: communism. Chile's national team was slated to compete in Moscow against the Soviet Union, in a playoff game for the 1974 World Cup. General Augusto Pinochet had severed ties with communist countries that shared the same ideals as Salvador Allende, and so Chile and the USSR quickly went from "ideological comrades to bitter enemies."<sup>89</sup> This kind of juxtaposition quickly politicized the game: it was no longer just Chile against the Soviet Union, but neoliberalism against communism. The game would determine which ideology was superior, and would also stand to potentially legitimize the Pinochet regime if the Chilean team was victorious. "Entre septiembre de 1973 y julio de 1974, la selección chilena de fútbol se convirtió en el símbolo de un Chile-David que enfrentaba al Comunismo-Goliat."<sup>90</sup> At the first contest in Moscow, the match ended in a draw, 0-0. Despite this anti-climactic result, the Chilean press still ran the headline, "The Soviet Union couldn't even beat us at football," capitalizing on any kind of shortcoming from the USSR that they could.<sup>91</sup>

The subsequent play-off game was set for the National Stadium in Santiago, Chile. This location choice was immediately swarmed with controversy. At the time, there were whispers and rumors of the horrors happening within the stadium, but it is now well-documented that the

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<sup>89</sup> Worswick.

<sup>90</sup> Vilches 134.

<sup>91</sup> Worswick.



National Stadium was converted into a torture and detainment center by the Pinochet regime immediately following the September 11th coup. To the USSR, playing a game in a stadium “stained with blood” would signify the USSR’s acquiescence to Pinochet’s treatment of their left-ist Chilean comrades.<sup>92</sup> The USSR demanded that the match be played in neutral territory. However, it quickly became clear that this game was going to be anything but neutral. To play in the stadium would dismiss the rumors of human rights violations in Chile; to play in a different venue would suggest the rumors were true.

FIFA was clearly uncomfortable being thrust into this suddenly intensely political situation, and their attempts to remain apolitical turned out decisively in favor of the Pinochet regime. For the duration of the stadium inspection, the FIFA delegation was “put up in one of the capital's finest hotels and provided with a chauffeur-driven limousine.”<sup>93</sup> Perhaps these unsubtle attempts at bribery are why the FIFA officials did not question the suspicious explanation for the stadium’s present state, perhaps FIFA simply did not want to deal with the responsibility that the truth would require. In any case, the official FIFA report unconvincingly dismisses the idea of the stadium as unfit for a World Cup game:

The stadium is at present being used as a 'clearing station' and the people in there are not prisoners but only detainees whose identity has to be established (a large number of foreigners without valid documents)...The stadium is under military guard and entry is only with a special pass. Inside the outer fencing everything seemed to be normal and gardeners are working on the gardens. Inside the stadium itself the seats and pitch were empty and the remaining detainees were in the dressing and other rooms. The grass on the pitch is in perfect condition as were the seating arrangements.<sup>94</sup>

Like a parent settling a squirmish between two unruly children, FIFA unceremoniously ended the debate on the match’s location. “Based on what [our contingent] saw and heard in Santiago, life

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<sup>92</sup> Marco Werman and Dennis Maxwell, “The Soccer Match that Disgraced Chile,” *Public Radio International* (PRI, 2013).

<sup>93</sup> John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson, “Global Power Struggles in World Football: FIFA and UEFA, 1954-74, and their Legacy,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* (1997) 13.

<sup>94</sup> Sugden and Tomlinson, 13.

is back to normal and the guarantees given by the government are such that the World Cup Preliminary match Chile vs. USSR can be carried out...”<sup>95</sup> This document, which cited “life as back to normal” in Chile, was one of the first official documents to come out about Pinochet’s Chile. This report gave Chile the rubber-stamp seal of approval of a powerful international institution, and despite FIFA’s claims of neutrality, clearly picked a side.

The coverage of this event within Chile attempted to shield the Chilean public from the accusatory glares of the rest of the world. When the USSR first protested the event, the Chilean press returned to their argument of the moral duties in fútbol. “Chile andaba cumpliendo sus compromisos deportivos,” whereas the USSR had failed to fulfill their own duties by boycotting the event.<sup>96</sup> The Chilean newspapers following the match also implied that the whole of Chile was under attack by the USSR’s refusal to play. “Chile puede ser ‘un país pequeño, subdesarrollado, pero en materia de dignidad no nos vienen a dar lecciones, menos en el deporte.’”<sup>97</sup> This encouraged Chileans to personally take offense to the charges of the USSR, creating an us vs. them dynamic that implicated not just the Pinochet regime but the whole of Chile. Proponents of Pinochet strove to brand this game as an example of Chilean resilience in the face of the international community, which at the time was sharply critical of what was allegedly happening under the new regime.

Years after the Chile vs. USSR match, the fútbol players who played in the game were finally able to speak out about their experience and the impact they saw from the match. Carlos Caszely, Chile’s star striker, was one of the most outspoken members of the team in opposition to the dictatorship. His recollection of the game is one of shame. ““That team did the most

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<sup>95</sup> Sugden and Tomlinson 14.

<sup>96</sup> Vilches 132.

<sup>97</sup> Vilches 133.

ridiculous thing in history. It was a worldwide embarrassment.”<sup>98</sup> His teammate, Leonardo Véliz, shares his sentiment. “Imagine what I was feeling going into that stadium for one of the most risible games in football history, it was an absolutely disgraceful match that should never have taken place... What were those people watching thinking? Perhaps they had come to laugh at us.”<sup>99</sup> The feelings of these *fútbolistas* may derive from the fact that playing in the match allowed the dictatorship to use the World Cup match as propaganda to the outside world. One of the captives of the regime, Jorge Montealegre, recalls the impact of this match taking place. “The eyes of the world were on Chile...this symbol of a stadium turned into a concentration camp was like the worst propaganda for the dictatorship. That awful image went around the world, and the stadium became a metaphor for Chile's dictatorship.”<sup>100</sup> Playing a game in the National Stadium allowed the Pinochet regime to literally broadcast images that directly contradicted the rumors of torture and detainment.

The publicity that the World Cup game gave Chile did not convince everyone in the international community, but there was little opposition to Chile’s decision to play in the game. “Por lo tanto la clasificación como la participación en el Mundial fueron interpretadas como un enorme triunfo moral, en circunstancias que para el resto del mundo Chile eran sinónimo de dictadura y violación de los derechos humanos.”<sup>101</sup> In some ways, the game demonstrated the lengths that the Pinochet regime was willing to go in order to cover up what was happening. Although Chile did begin to receive pressure from international solidarity groups to explain the disappearances and deaths that were taking place, the terrain of *fútbol* remained strangely devoid of criticism. FIFA, as with their ruling on the Stadium’s state, continued to refuse to comment on

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<sup>98</sup> Werman and Maxwell.

<sup>99</sup> Worswick.

<sup>100</sup> Werman and Maxwell.

<sup>101</sup> Vilches 134.

its stance towards the military junta: ““We are not concerned with politics or what regimes are ruling a country...all we want to know is whether playing conditions are right.””<sup>102</sup> Some international papers even criticized the Soviet Union’s decision, saying the boycott had created a ““painful abscess”” for the Cup.<sup>103</sup> In FIFA’s official technical study of the match, the USSR controversy is not even mentioned. Renowned journalist Eduardo Galeano went on to call Chile’s performance “the most pathetic match in the history of soccer,” and although this was likely the viewpoint of many spectators around the world, the match received little ethical debate.<sup>104</sup> This lack of immediate outcry points to a common phenomenon in the sport world: the desire for sport to remain apolitical. However, the absence of a clear stance against the match instead simply left the Pinochet regime uncriticized and unchecked. Silence sends just as powerful a message as noise does, and the general quiet of the international community in 1973 condoned the actions of the Chilean military regime.

The Chilean team sent to the World Cup in 1974 were under an unbelievable amount of pressure from both the military regime, as well as their fans and compatriots. After qualifying in such an unorthodox manner, the team needed to defend their place at the competition. They also served as some of the only ambassadors of Chile to the outside world at this time, and faced such questioning about the political situation in Chile that the players began to charge money for interviews.<sup>105</sup> Instead of inferring that the players’ silence could have stemmed from fear for their personal safety or families, journalists ““interpreted this as economic opportunism on the part of the players.””<sup>106</sup> It was later revealed that several fútbol players were threatened and even imprisoned by the regime, like Hugo Lepe, a defender on the team. Families were also at risk at

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<sup>102</sup> Alex Yannis, “Soccer Storm Brewing in Soviet Bloc,” (New York Times, 1973).

<sup>103</sup> Elsey 245.

<sup>104</sup> Galeano 141.

<sup>105</sup> Elsey 246.

<sup>106</sup> Elsey 246.

this time. Carlos Caszely's mother was detained and tortured by the military, and in the final years of the dictatorship was able to employ her son's celebrity to speak out against her captors.

At the time of World Cup, though, the players were only able to play defense – treading carefully with the military regime and on the field.

“Chile were almost totally committed to defence, attempting their attacks by brief counter moves through Arias and Garcia. The tackling by the Chilean players became more desperate as the game went on and, after Caszely had been sent off for an unfair retaliatory tackle, the Chileans had to concentrate even more on defence to keep the score down with Figueroa and Quintano playing extremely well...Chile's defensive style could not quite win through against the strong European teams.”<sup>107</sup>

As the FIFA technical study states, Chile failed to score a single goal in the World Cup, their defensive strategies only successful in keeping the score down. Caszely received the first physical red card in the history of fútbol, a fitting award for the only member of the team to openly defy Pinochet, refusing to shake the general's hand in the team's send-off ceremony.<sup>108</sup> Caszely was accused by sportswriters and fans in Chile of self-sabotage, the red card a deliberate rejection of his duty to his country and his team. Years after the World Cup, Caszely was confronted by General Pinochet at a banquet where, “Chile's leader criticised the player's red tie, the colour synonymous with communism, making a motion with his fingers that he was about to cut it. ‘You may do it,’ Caszely remarked, ‘but my heart will forever remain red.’”<sup>109</sup> Ultimately, the Chilean national team, ironically nicknamed “La Roja,” failed to demonstrate Chile's alleged newfound strength as a country under the new regime, their scoreless World Cup run ending with elimination in the first round.

Despite the national team's lackluster performance in the World Cup, print media in Chile still sought to find the silver lining in terms of moral victory.

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<sup>107</sup> “FIFA World Cup 1974 Final Competition Technical Study,” (FIFA, 1974) 51-53.

<sup>108</sup> Dan Williamson, “Carlos Caszely: the Colo-Colo Legend Who Fought in Open Rebellion Against Augusto Pinochet,” *These Football Times* (2017).

<sup>109</sup> Williamson.

“El Mundial fue considerado como ‘importante pero sólo como calibrador de nuestra potencia actual.’ Es que ‘ni la vida ni la patria ni el honor están involucrados en una derrota [...] ganar, perder, son contingencias transitorias. Ser íntegros, rectos y leales va más allá de la transitoriedad.’ De esa manera, un resultado mediocre fue caracterizado como una actuación decorosa y digna, reflejo del progreso del fútbol en un Chile subdesarrollado.”<sup>110</sup>

After all, Chile had confronted its Communist-Goliath, the USSR, and won. Their participation in the World Cup was indicative of their future potential not only as a soccer team, but as a country. The rest of the 1970s gave way to drastic changes in economic policy, with the installment of neoliberal market practices under the influence of the Chicago Boys. With these changes in economic policy came new ideas about the central identity of Chileans.

In the previous chapter, we discussed one interpretation of *chilenidad* from Jorge Larraín’s book “Identidad Chilena.” As we move on to the time period of 1973 through 1988, we return to Larraín’s theories on the type of *chilenidad* developing at this time. This strain of *chilenidad* is referred to as “*La versión empresarial postmoderna,*” and it represents a change in tone in the Chilean narrative as Chile struggles to distinguish itself from its Latin American neighbors and establish itself as a “winning country.” Three specific ideas are present in this version of *chilenidad*:

“La primera idea intentaba presentar a Chile como un país diferente al resto de América Latina, un país frío y de rasgos europeos, que difiere de los tropicalismos de otros países de la región y que ha superado un pasado pre moderno. La segunda idea mostraba una actitud dinámica y triunfalista cimentada en los triunfos económicos logrados. La tercera idea mostraba a Chile como un país eficiente que crece y se desarrolla aceleradamente.”<sup>111</sup>

This threefold definition covers several themes: cultural identity, economic success, and modernity. This version of *chilenidad* developed alongside the installment of neoliberal ideals in Chile and the increasingly globalized world. In the midst of many changes to the international

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<sup>110</sup> Vilches 134.

<sup>111</sup> Larraín 163.

sphere, Chile is struggling to redefine itself as well. As the concept of what is *chilenidad* changes, so do the values of this brand of Chile. ““Implícita en este nuevo discurso, hay una nueva concepción cultural que destaca el empuje, el dinamismo, el éxito, la ganancia y el consumo como los nuevos valores centrales de la sociedad chilena.”<sup>112</sup> These new values come to shape not just the economy and labor dynamics in Chile, but how sports are played as well. With these new values come an entire re-branding of Chile: “Chile país diferente, Chile país ganador y Chile país moderno” are just a few of the campaigns used abroad by Chile as it begins to define itself in this new way.

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<sup>112</sup> Larrain 163.

### Epilogue: The National Stadium

*“Stade: In French, the word for stadium, deriving from the name—stadion—for the basic running race that was held at the ancient Olympic Games. The distance of that race was a single length of the stadium, and the name of the race was derived from the word for stadium. From that quintessential athletic event, the word has come to refer to sites of and facilities for performative events of many types, in world settings. See also OLYMPIC GAMES, ANCIENT.”*<sup>113</sup>

- From Alan Tomlinson, Oxford Dictionary of Sports Studies

It is a pity that stadiums cannot speak. Now approaching her eightieth birthday, the National Stadium in Chile is longing to resolve the multiple identity crises suffered in her early adulthood. The stadium has never been treated well by her country. A child of Arturo Alessandri’s second marriage into the presidency, she was born in 1938 and welcomed into the world with the hisses and boos of the Chilean people, who protested her very creation. President Alessandri conceived of the stadium in his meetings with the Liberal Party of Chile, who sought to win over the middle class by demonstrating their investment in public infrastructure, as well as the sport cherished by working-class Chileans. Despite concerns over the cost and accessibility of the stadium, once the proposal was approved a fierce custody battle quickly ensued.

The neighborhood associations of Santiago presented their bids to Congress to have the stadium born and raised in their districts. The historically impoverished districts of Maipu and Renca emerged with some of the strongest propositions, hoping the birth of a monumental, government-backed structure would revitalize their communities.<sup>114</sup> However, in the first of many political decisions made about the stadium that overlooked the will of the public, President Alessandri issued an executive order to build the stadium in Ñuñoa, one of the wealthier districts

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<sup>113</sup> Alan Tomlinson, “Stade,” Oxford Dictionary of Sports Studies (Oxford University Press, 2010) 442.

<sup>114</sup> Elsey 95.



in Santiago. This sparked outrage on many levels, but most notably in that the stadium would be directly across from Alessandri's family property, and that the construction of the new stadium necessitated the destruction of one of the biggest sport complexes in Chile at the time, Campos de Sport de Ñuñoa.<sup>115</sup>

The National Stadium's heritage continued to be muddled with further controversy. The architect appointed to assist in her construction, Ricardo Müller Hess, based his plans off of the stadium used for the Berlin Olympic Games of 1936. This German stadium's father later went on to commit one of the largest genocides in human history. The childhood of Chile's stadium was marred with neglect and lies. She was never complete – not on her opening day in 1938, not after efforts to finish her building in time for the 1962 World Cup, and not even after the extensive remodeling attempts of Michelle Bachelet in 2009.<sup>116</sup> Despite this, the stadium did all she was ever asked to do. She was a gracious hostess to whoever came kicking at her door, be it the prestigious national team, La Roja, or the plucky amateur squads who managed to steal a few practice sessions in her home. She echoed the noises of delight of the crowd as Carlos Caszely scored goal after goal in game after game; she reverberated the discordant silence as Victor Jara's body hung lifelessly at her entrance.

Jara's murder was not the first that marked the stadium's defilement by the Pinochet regime. After the military coup of 1973, the stadium was invaded in masse, in order to hold the political prisoners of the right-wing government. The stadium had never complained when the fans of Colo-Colo or La Roja spilled their beer and *completos* on her seats. But she did not know what to do with the blood, the tears, and the cries of anguish that now seeped into her wooden stands and fermented under her concrete tunnels. An estimated 10,000 prisoners were held in the

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<sup>115</sup> Elsey 101

<sup>116</sup> Valentina Rozas Krause, "Interrupted Stadium: Broken Promises of Modernity in the National Stadium of Chile," *Shift Journal* (2015) 66.

stadium in the fifty-eight days that Pinochet converted the national site of soccer into a concentration camp. The truth commission lists forty-one deaths that took place inside the stadium; human rights groups believe the number is likely in the hundreds.<sup>117</sup> The stadium thought back to the custody battles, when she was little more than idle construction material and blueprints on a page. How the people had desperately fought to have her, a place that was now more like Auschwitz than La Bombonera, in their own backyard.

It is a pity that stadiums cannot speak. For all of the emotion that she absorbed, from the excited yells of diehard fans to the anguished screams of accused communists, the stadium was silent the day that the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) arrived. The prisoners were hidden in her depths or sent away to the dry Atacama in the north, and between sips of Chile's oldest and finest signature wines, the inspectors declared the stadium fit to host the qualifying match between Chile and the USSR for the 1974 World Cup. The stadium watched ashamedly alongside the collection of spectators that had shown up for the national team as they faced an empty net. The Chilean players slowly approached the net with a short series of passes more reminiscent of hot potato than fútbol, as if each second of contact made them more culpable in the dictatorship's farce of a game.

Today, the stadium still stands in Ñuñoa, hosting soccer games, track and field competitions, and *ferias* for las Fiestas Patrias. She remains as complicated a symbol as ever. Her conception is remembered as a time of hope, when the budding fútbol clubs of Santiago received Alessandri's promise of a stadium as a marker of "progress, nationalism, and modernization of the country."<sup>118</sup> Her birth highlighted the turn from the populist style of politics to socialist appeals to the people, who were dismayed by practices of the Alessandri administration and the

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<sup>117</sup> Katherine Hite, "Chile's National Stadium: As Monument, As Memorial," *ReVista* (2004).

<sup>118</sup> Elsey 93.

immense deficit left from the stadium's creation.<sup>119</sup> The stadium went on to become a pawn of the dictatorship, whose image was shown throughout the world in the 1973 match between Chile and the no-show USSR team to demonstrate that Chile was fine, the rumors of human rights violations nothing more than vicious, international gossip.

Now, the stadium sits and attempts to be the best stadium that she can be given her past. To some, she has become a place of “catharsis...a place to scream to the heavens, to howl at injustice, and feel a moment of supreme satisfaction.”<sup>120</sup> To others, the stadium is a place of remembrance. Modern-day spectators who visit her will notice a small row of wooden bleachers that stand out against the red, remodeled seats, behind the northern goalpost of the stadium. Underneath the stands is a small museum that exhibits photos and names of those murdered or disappeared, former prisoners of the Pinochet regime.<sup>121</sup> The emptiness of the wooden bleachers is purposeful, designated to stay forever unoccupied in deference for those who never left the stadium.

Fútbol's importance to South American identity formation has in turn endowed the stadiums that house the sport with the same influence. Historian Josh Nadel, in an interview about his book, “Fútbol! Why Soccer Matters in Latin America,” argues that, “soccer clubs and stadiums acted as spaces where Latin American societies could grapple with the complexities of nationhood, citizenship, politics, gender, and race.”<sup>122</sup> Chile's National Stadium, as seen through the multiple roles she held in the above chronology of her lifespan, serves as an excellent example for Nadel's claim. On the National Stadium's opening day, a Chilean paper ran an article about the significance of Chile's newest staging arena:

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<sup>119</sup> Elsey 90

<sup>120</sup> Dan Zirin, *Welcome to the Terrordome: The Pain, Politics and Promise of Sport* (Haymarket Books, 2007) 84.

<sup>121</sup> David Waldstein, “In Chile's National Stadium, Dark Past Shadows Copa América Matches,” (New York Times, 2015).

<sup>122</sup> Joshua Nadel, “Futbol! Soccer History and Politics in Latin America,” *The Koyo Nnamdi Show* (2014).

“The National Stadium has greatness. And we are not referring to its large size, but to the majesty that springs from its whole form, to the suggestiveness that surrounds its vast stands, to the ambitious lines that open to host immense crowds. The athletes that enter it will feel the weight of its dominion and the emotion of its strength. As figures grow when they stand out against the evening sky, athletes in the Stadium will feel examined under a magnifying glass, as if standing on a pedestal. The spacious construction multiplies the importance of the sporting spectacle. It ennobles, heightens, provides peak sensations.”<sup>123</sup>

After probing the meaning of Manuel Plaza’s marathon run and scrutinizing the depictions of the national Chilean fútbol team in 1973 and 1974, the highly symbolic National Stadium feels like the appropriate spot to sit and reflect on the idea of contested meanings. Did Plaza feel the weight of the medal around his neck, and understand the burdens placed on him as the ambassador for not only his country, but amateurism and gentility? Did the eleven *jugadores* on the field November 22, 1973, know the impact that their thirty-second game would have? It is likely that none of these athletes ever desired the controversy and chatter that their performances would generate, but they made their marks on history all the same.

This paper has shown how sport can prop up dangerous people and their ideologies, support racial elitism and preserve social class constraints, and physically serve as a holding ground and torture center for innocent civilians. Yet still, adoring fans will flock to the big game on Sunday afternoon, buy jerseys from the corrupt corporations, and send their children to basketball camp with the hopes of improving their jump shot and their moral compass. Perhaps the zero-sum nature of most sports is what calls people to make blanket and definitive statements about them. Sport is neither good nor bad; sport simply is, and its prevalence as a cultural activity demands that it be scoured and studied in order to learn from the performances it so graciously showcases. The wise student will “avoid the uniformed tirades of the anti-sport lobby

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<sup>123</sup> Krause 64.

and often naive and idealistic accounts of pro-sports devotees,” and instead embrace the contested battleground that sport holds.<sup>124</sup>

From marathons to fútbol games and race tracks to stadiums sport has served as a venue to express ideas about identity and ideology. It is not unlike any other cultural activity in its importance or its fallibility, so that the task:

“...is to examine sport as a form of cultural struggle, resistance, and politics whilst recognizing that it is also compromised by forms of commodification, commercialization, and bureaucratic control... to consider sport as an embodied art form that is formed in relation to both intrinsic and extrinsic goals and rewards that sometimes over-determine the stated aims of the participants.”<sup>125</sup>

Sport, when treated with the value given to any other cultural artifact, will yield its secrets to the curious investigator – we only need to ask.

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<sup>124</sup> Carrington and Andrews 24.

<sup>125</sup> Carrington and Andrews 24.

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