Fùtbol and Piłka Nożna:

The Role of Soccer in Contemporary Mexican-American and Polish-American Ethnicity in Chicago

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1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to examine how soccer functions as part of the construction of contemporary Mexican-American and Polish-American ethnicity in Chicago. As part of seeking answers to the over-all investigation, the study addresses three related sub-topics. First, how does soccer provide not only a sense of ethnic identity, but also arenas for Mexican and Polish Americans to formulate and celebrate their ethnicity? Second, how is soccer used to address the challenges Mexican Americans and Polish Americans face in Chicago? And, finally, how does soccer enable Mexican and Polish Americans to portray themselves as resources for the host society in their struggle for public approval?

Chicago serves as the geographical framework for this study. However, as there are various ways to define "Chicago," it is necessary to discuss how the precise geographical area included in this thesis is understood. Chicago can either be defined as the space within the city limits of the City of Chicago in the time period investigated in this thesis, or as the metropolis reaching far beyond these fixed borders. The colloquial term "Chicagoland," which was first put into circulation in the *Chicago Tribune* in the 1920s, suggests a metropolitan approach to Chicago, as it, originally, applied to an area reaching into Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan and Iowa.[1] More recently, the term no longer includes parts of Michigan and Iowa.[2] The idea of Chicagoland seems to coincide with the borders of Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI as a metropolitan statistical area defined by the Office of Management and Budget.[3] For the purpose of this study, however, Chicago is limited to Cook, DuPage and Will County. This limitation can be seen as a compromise between the two different approaches. On the one hand, by approaching Metropolitan Chicago as comprising these three counties, the thesis acknowledges the city as an extended urban area that reaches beyond city limits. On the other hand, as the selected counties are the most populated and closest to the city, they seem best suited to represent the city of Chicago for the analysis presented here. The Mexican-American and Polish-American populations and the soccer activities in which they are engaged occur inside the three-county area.

As this thesis studies contemporary ethnicity, the time frame of the study is the present time. However, although the focus of this study is the construction of contemporary ethnicity, it would be impossible to understand this process without acknowledging the historical contexts. It is sometimes difficult to balance between contemporary ethnicity, which is the

foreground of this study, and historical context, which serves as the background. However, in an attempt to specify the time frame, this study will focus on the period between 1990 and 2014. Whereas recent literature on ethnic groups has focused on the second generation, this study does not limit itself to a particular generation. Rather, this study investigates Mexican American and Polish-American ethnicity across generations.

Mexican Americans and Polish Americans are selected for several reasons. The two groups are two of the largest ethnic groups in Chicago. Furthermore, Mexican and Polish Americans are heavily involved in Chicago's soccer scene, as both groups participate in both the amateur and professional soccer in the city. However, the two groups are not selected merely based on their similarities; but, moreover, the differences between the two ethnic groups make it possible to study how the construction of ethnicity may differ based on different conditions. And thus, as this study investigates two different ethnic groups, there is a comparative aspect of this thesis.

1.1 Structure

This thesis is structured in five chapters. This chapter, Chapter 1, serves as an introduction as it presents the topic and boundaries of the investigation. The chapter also discusses how this thesis fits into the scholarly field of American Studies. The next chapter, Chapter 2, gives a thorough review and discussion of the theories relevant in this study. In this discussion, the concepts that are given most attention are ethnicity, assimilation, segmented assimilation and transnationalism. In addition to these concepts, drawn from studies focusing on immigration and ethnicity, the chapter also discusses soccer and sport scholarship. By doing this, the chapter functions as the theoretical framework guiding the chapters that follows. The two ethnic groups investigated in this thesis are dealt with in separate chapters, and Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 are dedicated to Mexican Americans and Polish Americans, respectively. Finally, Chapter 5 compares and contrasts the findings of the two preceding chapters and concludes this investigation.

Within this study of Mexican and Polish-American ethnicity, three sub-topics will be investigated. In addition to guide the investigation as a whole, these topics are used to establish the structure within Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. The first topic relates to the role of soccer in the negotiation and celebration of ethnic identity. The second topic is how soccer is

used to address the various and diverse challenges that Mexican Americans and Polish Americans face in Chicago. The third topic is how soccer enables Mexican and Polish Americans to portray themselves as resources for the host society in their struggle for public approval. Although other topics and issues would be of interest in an investigation like this, these three topics are carefully chosen based on the rich body of scholarship on ethnicity and immigration in the United States.

Although the investigation of Mexican and Polish Americans studies the same sub-topics, differences between the two groups make it necessary to focus on different aspects within these topics. This is especially the case when it comes to what kind of challenges the two groups experience in Chicago. For instance, whereas about 40 percent of Mexican Americans in the tri-state area lack a high-school diploma, more than 90 percent of the Polish Americans in the same area have at least a high-school degree. Compared to the national average, Mexican Americans are below average while Polish Americans are above. The same pattern also appears in regards to economic aspects. The median household income for Mexican Americans is below national average, while the income of the Polish-American community is above national average.[4] As these numbers suggest, socioeconomic aspects like education and income constitute challenges for the Mexican-American community, but this is not the case for most of the members of the Polish-American community. The challenges most Polish Americans face, however, are of a different character. As Mary Patrice Erdmans shows in her studies, conflicts within the Polish-American community between "new Polonia" and "old Polonia" can be seen as a challenge of the Polish-American experience in Chicago.[5] Because of the differences between the challenges of the Mexican and Polish American community, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 will have different focus regarding this topic. And thus, the chapter on Mexican Americans, Chapter 3, will emphasize on how soccer is used to address socioeconomic challenges, such as lack of education. The chapter on Polish Americans, on the other hand, will, for the most part, focus on how soccer is used to address the challenges of conflicts between foreign-born and American-born Polish Americans.

1.2 Chicago

The city of Chicago has been shaped by the waves of immigration, and modern immigration continues to have influence on the city. As immigrants settled in the metropolitan area, they brought with them cultural elements from their home countries. These elements have

influenced Chicago in various ways. Ethnic stores selling products from all around the world can be found at almost every street corner throughout the city. Furthermore, ethnic products are not only found in distinct stores, but it will take effort to find a gas station or store that sells beer without imported brands imported from Germany, Poland and Mexico. Ethnic groups have also left marks in Chicago's architecture. In Cicero, for instance, buildings are modeled after German, Italian and Mexican housing styles. Most importantly, perhaps, is the directly demographic influence of immigration. The three counties Cook, DuPage and Will County have 6,819,107 million inhabitants, among these, only 156,018 report "American" as their ancestry. In other words, as many as 97,3 percent of Chicago's residents recognize some degree of ethnic ancestry.[6] Furthermore, people living in Chicago not only acknowledge their foreign ancestry, but moreover, according to Henry C. Binford, "Chicagoans" take pride in how the city is a "multiethnic" construction.[7] This can be seen in how former mayor of Chicago, Richard M. Daley, successfully used Chicago's ethnic neighborhoods in attracting tourists to the city in the 1990s. As Dominic A. Pacyga and Ellen Skerrett point out, in *Chicago: City of Neighborhoods*, among the various nicknames Chicago has been given, the "most enduring title is the City of Neighborhoods."[8] And thus, through the many ethnic neighborhoods in Chicago, ethnic groups have been incorporating into the vision of what Chicago is.

Immigration was an important aspect in the development of Chicago in rebuilding the city in the decades after the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. During this transformation, the city went from being merely a regional epicenter into one of the most important cities in the nation. An important factor in Chicago's growth, with regards to both population and economy, was the role the city had as a link between the cities in the East and the frontier of the West. Through Lake Michigan, rivers and canals, and later roads and railroads, Chicago functioned as a transportation hub. In addition to transportation, the growing numbers of factories made the city into an important industrial area. At the turn of the century, Chicago had become the second most important manufacturing city in the nation.[9] As a result of the demand for labor in the growing industrial sector of Chicago in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, immigrants were "pulled" to the tri-state area. To be sure, between the 1880s and the 1920s, Brooklyn and Manhattan were the only areas in the country that attracted more immigrants than Chicago. Among those who immigrated to the city in this period were both Polish and Mexican immigrants.[10]

Chicago's "Polonia" consists of Polish Americans from three waves of immigration. Although the term "Polonia" refers to the Polish community outside of Poland, in this investigation, however, the term is limited to the Polish-American community in Chicago.[11] The biggest of the waves of Polish immigration to Chicago was the first wave which often is defined as the immigration that occurred between the 1850s and the 1920s. The size of this wave not only made Chicago one of the cities in the world with the largest "Polish" population, but also, in the 1930s, Polish Americans had become the largest ethnic group in Chicago. In the 1850s, the first Polish immigrants had established a Polish settlement in the northwest section of Chicago. Soon after the first Poles settled in Chicago, they began to develop an ethnic infrastructure. As part of the process of adjusting to the American experience, the Polish-American community constructed various organizations and establishments that were ethnic in nature. In 1867, the Polish-American community created the first Roman Catholic parish in Chicago. Polish Americans also established social and educational services such as schools, orphanages, hospitals and nursing homes for elderly in order to serve the needs of the ethnic community. The two succeeding waves of Polish immigration to Chicago were smaller in size. Nevertheless, although neither the second wave of immigration, which consisted of Poles who were fleeing from the Second World War and the following communist revolution, and the third wave of immigration, in the 1980s, altered the demographic profile of Chicago like the first wave, the two latest waves have been significant as they have revitalized the Polish-American community in Chicago. [12]

Whereas Polish immigration to Chicago began in the mid-nineteenth century, it was not until the 1910s that a sizeable number of Mexicans entered the city. Nevertheless, some Mexicans found their way to Chicago as the nineteenth century as the 1850 census suggests.[13] Like the Polish influx, Mexican immigration began as a result of economic and political hardship in the homeland. For Mexicans facing "push" factors from Mexico by hardships like the instabilities of the Revolutionary Era, industrial cities such as Chicago present opportunities for economic prosperity. Although the need for workers in Chicago at times seemed to be never-ending, competition among workers was an important part of the American experience for many immigrants. In this competition, ethnic groups were frequently put up against each other by corporations that used ethnicity as a key to keep wages down. The Mexican-American labor force in Chicago, for instance, not only competed with other ethnic groups for work, but moreover, as some Mexican Americans were used as strikebreakers, they were directly in conflict with organized workers, mostly from European

countries. It was not only competition and conflicts in the labor market that challenged the Mexican-American community in Chicago. Housing instituted a challenge for Mexican Americans. Mexicans often had to pay more in rent than people with other ethnic backgrounds. In order to afford rent, Mexican Americans lived in crowded apartments. This, in addition to problems relating sanitary conditions, made the housing arrangements not only a practical challenge, but also a health challenge for Mexican Americans. However, the Mexican-American community addressed these challenges by founding organizations to improve the conditions for group. For instance, they organized collective insurance arrangements to help individuals who lost their jobs or became ill. Religion also was an important part of how Mexican Americans adjusted to the experience in Chicago. In 1924, the first Mexican-American Roman Catholic church in the city was constructed. [14]

In many aspects, the ethnic experience of Mexican and Polish Americans in the early twentieth century share obvious similarities. For instance, both ethnic groups were often victims of racial prejudice. The discrimination against Mexican and Polish Americans was based on both "race" and religion. Although race is a much conflicted term, the concept has not only been important in the past, but continues to play an important role in the United States. The racial theories created by Social Darwinists and Eugenicists, in which different races where ranked, are today discredited. Rather, race is today conceived as a social construction. To be sure, how race functions as a social construction and is constantly changing its boundaries is reflected by how Poles were excluded from the nineteenth and early twentieth century understanding of "whiteness." Commenting upon immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, in 1914 sociologist E.A. Ross argued that the "white Americans" are in danger of "the melancholy spectacle" of being "swamped and submerged by an overwhelming tide of latecomers from the old-world hive."[15] Polish immigrants were clearly not "white" in Ross' eyes. Although Ross' view may not have been shared by the general population, the idea that Polish immigrants constituted a threat against organized American labor was widespread.[16] Likewise, in 1928, Congressman John Box argued that as the "most wretched, ignorant, dirty, diseased, and degraded people of Europe or Asia" have been excluded to immigrate to the United States, so should Mexicans, who he categorized as both "illiterate" and "unclean."[17] However, in addition to not being "white," and seen as threat to American labor, both Mexican and Polish Americans' religious belief--Roman Catholicism—made them targets for prejudice, discrimination and hatred.

However, despite what seems to be similar conditions and treatment by the host society, Mexican and Polish Americans developed in different directions. The strength of discrimination against Polish Americans weakened during the twentieth century. For Mexican Americans, on the other hand, racial prejudice seems to remain a constant obstacle. And thus, it seems that whereas Polish Americans have become "white," Mexican Americans are still somewhat "non-white." Another difference between the two communities relate to time of immigration. Whereas most Polish immigrants arrived before 1965, most Mexican immigrants to Chicago have arrived after 1965. Also when it comes to socioeconomic aspects, the Mexican and Polish-American community differs from each other. In general, Mexican Americans in Chicago have less education and income than Polish Americans. Whereas the Mexican-American community scores below the average population in Chicago in both categories, the Polish-American community is above average.

1.3 Soccer in Chicago

The story of soccer in the United States is told through different narratives. These various narratives, however, can be summarized into a story of soccer as modern phenomenon which is "foreign," and somewhat "un-American." And thus, soccer in the United States is commonly believed to be an unpopular sport. However, soccer in Chicago, present and past, challenges these myths. To be sure, although *Chicago Fire* may not generate as large crowds or media attention as the *Chicago Bears, Chicago Cubs, Chicago White Sox, Chicago Bulls* or the *Chicago Blackhawks,* soccer, according to Gabe Logan, is "the most played sport in Chicago."[18] Furthermore, according to FIFA, the United States is the country in the world with the second largest amount of registered soccer players. At the youth level, no other countries in the world can compare to the amount of players in the United States. To be sure, there are more registered youth players in the United States than there are in Germany and Brazil, number two and three on the list, combined.[19] The popular belief that soccer in the United States is a new phenomenon is also wrong as the country was among the first country in the world where the sport was played. For the most part, however, despite of the rich history of soccer in the United States, which can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century, the story of the sport has remained untold.

Recently, scholars have begun to unveil and investigate the history of soccer. In his studies of soccer in Chicago, David Trouille uses ethnic and mainstream newspapers and

interviews to reconstruct soccer's "rich yet neglected history" in the tri-state area. One of the difficulties in the study of the early history of soccer in Chicago can be found in the blurring lines between soccer, rugby and a hybrid game, which later developed into American Football, in the mid-nineteenth century. For instance, a match between Rutgers and Princeton University played in 1869, according to Trouille, "is considered the first intercollegiate game both in *soccer* and *football.*"[20] The reason that it is difficult to conclude upon which sport that was actually played, can be explained in the confusion about the rules of the game in the nineteenth century. As Trouille argues, "confusion and disputes over the rules" were widespread among players, spectators and journalists.[21]

The history of soccer in the Chicago area can be traced back to 1875. According to Trouille, a letter to the editor in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* in 1875 is the first time soccer is mentioned in the newspaper. The same newspaper covered its first soccer match in 1886. A year later, Chicago's first soccer league, the *Chicago Football Association,* was established.[22] At the turn of the century, and up to the 1920s, the interest of soccer in Chicago was growing. From having an appeal mainly among immigrants, soccer gradually increased its popularity to wider segments of society. According to David Wangerin, soccer matches in Chicago could attract crowds three times as large as most major-league baseball teams.[23] The establishment of a high school league in 1913 and the creation of various teams for the youth suggest that soccer attracted younger generations. The growth of soccer was also commented by the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, which stated that the 1914 season was the "Biggest Soccer Season in the History of Soccer," as Chicago's soccer scene consisted of more than 500 players in 70 teams competing in two leagues.[24] The steady growth of the sport continued into the 1920s, and according to Trouille, "soccer had emerged as a premier sport in the Chicago area."[25] To be sure, when the *Chicago Soccer League* was launched as an attempt to create a professional soccer league, the *Chicago Daily Tribune* described the league as "one of the best leagues in the history of the game."[26] In addition to this league, soccer in Chicago flourished, and through leagues for adults and for youth, both competitive and recreational, and the *Chicago Daily Tribune* frequently announced as many as forty local soccer matches every weekend. Furthermore, according to Trouille, "the mainstream media of this period," claimed that "soccer was surpassed only by baseball as the city's most popular sport."[27] This popularity can be seen in the crowds soccer matches attracted. In 1926, for instance, a match between a Midwestern All-Star team and a team from Prague attracted 30,000 to Soldier Field.[28] However, in the 1930s, the popularity of soccer in Chicago was on the decline, while

American football and baseball manifested their position as mainstream sports in the city. For soccer, the 1930s marked the beginning of what David Trouille defines as the sports' "ethnic period."[29] Whereas many of the teams prior to the 1940s sprung out from companies or local neighborhoods, in the 1940s, ethnicity became the foundation for soccer teams.

In addition to amateur and semi-professional teams, Chicago also has a professional soccer scene. From 1975 to 1988, the *Chicago Sting* represented the city in the *North American Soccer League* and the *Major Indoor Soccer League*. However, as both the professional outdoor and indoor league fell apart, not only Chicago, but the entire nation was without professional soccer until *Major League Soccer* (MLS) was launched in 1996. Since the Fire's inaugural season in MLS in 1998, Chicago has had a professional soccer team.

The first signs of an organized support of Chicago Fire began before the club was established. The supporter group *Barn Burners 1871* (Barn Burners) was founded in 1997 after the MLS decided to include Chicago as part of the league's expansion. Prior to the official founding of Chicago Fire Soccer Club, on October 8, 1997, *Barn Burners* and Peter Wilt, Chicago Fire's General Manager, had worked closely together in order to tie the club to its potential fans. The communication between supporters and the club officials has been important part of Chicago Fire's tradition since before the club was established. In 1998, the Fire's first season in the MLS, several additional fan groups were formed. In the first season, the different supporters were gathered in separate sections at Soldier Field. However, when the *Fire Ultras 98* (Fire Ultras), moved away from section 9 and joined *Barn Burners* in section 8 at the stadium in the 1999 season, it was the beginning of a unification of the various groups in an umbrella association.

This association, named after its physical location at Soldier Field, *Section 8 Chicago* (Section 8), has become the Independent Supporters' Association (ISA) for Chicago Fire. *Section 8* is a non-profit organization that "represent[s] all Fire supporters, organizing in-stadium support, road trips, tailgates, watch parties and social events." The organization plays an important role in unifying the numerous fan groups. As the mission statement emphasizes, the goal of *Section 8* is "to unite all Chicago Fire fans, to create a dominant in-stadium force unseen in any American team sport and to establish a home-field advantaged whenever the Chicago Fire play." In order to unite the supporters, and reflect the city, "Section 8 Chicago incorporates different languages and cultures," and thus, not only English, but also Spanish and Polish are frequently used in *Section 8*'s "support of the Club."

Most Polish-American supporters of the Chicago Fire are affiliated with either *Fire Ultras 98* or *Husaria. Section 8* describes *Fire Ultras* as "the most notorious of supporters' groups." The group is seen as a significant contributor to the unique style of support among Chicago Fire fans. The scarves, banners and flags, for instances, originated from *Fire Ultras.* In 2008, *Husaria* was established by some younger Polish fans from *Fire Ultras*. Like *Fire Ultras, Husaria* is a supporter group that supports the Chicago Fire as European "ultras." Although *Husaria* was established by a fraction from the *Fire Ultras*, the relationship between the two groups is good, and for the most part, the two groups not only stand together inside the stadium, but they also "tailgate" together. Unlike the other supporter groups, *Sector Latino* is not physically located together with *Section 8* inside the stadium. Whereas *Section 8* and most Chicago Fire supporters are located in section 117 and 118 at Toyota Park, *Sector Latino* is found on the other side of the stadium. However, although the physical separation between *Sector Latino* and *Section 8*, the two groups cooperate, for instance when trips to matches outside of Chicago are organized.

1.4 American Studies

This thesis is situated within American Studies. In order to understand ethnic studies more thoroughly, the academic discipline in which this thesis is focused needs to be discussed. As its name suggests, American Studies is the academic discipline that investigates and studies America. In an attempt to define the discipline, Leo Marx quotes Henry Nash Smith and claims that American Studies is "the investigation of American culture, past and present, as a whole."[30] As the earlier section briefly commented upon, soccer is frequently perceived as both "foreign" and "un-American." In this conception, soccer is somewhat seen as a sport for immigrants who have not yet adjusted to American culture and "American sports," such as American football, baseball, basketball and ice hockey. Furthermore, this investigation does not only focus on a sport that many people claim not to be part of American culture, but also on two ethnic groups. And thus, at first glance, the idea that this thesis is part of American Studies may seem baffling to some; upon closer consideration, however, it becomes clear that this thesis is situated within American Studies.

Since American Studies was established as an academic discipline from the 1920s to today, scholars within the field have had different understandings about "America" and what "American culture" consists of. For the early American Studies' scholarship, America was

defined through the "free land" of the "frontier," and American culture was conceived as a product of the frontier experience. Today, scholars have a broader understanding of what "America" is. Commenting upon the difficulties to strictly define the limitations and boundaries of American Studies, Philip J. Deloria, in his presidential address to the American Studies Association, claims that American Studies is "not what we choose to include, but what we *refuse* to exclude."[31] Since the 1960s, political activists, political movements and scholars have challenged the traditional narrative about American history. As a consequence of this activism, the category of what American Studies scholars "refuse to exclude," to use Deloria's words, has grown larger and wider. For instance, by challenging the discriminatory legislation African Americans faced in the United States, the Civil Rights movement struggled to incorporate African Americans as part of "America." Likewise, ethnic studies, feminist studies and queer studies, the newest addition to the flora of sub-cultural studies, have shifted academic attention away from investigations of America and American culture which are based merely on white middle-class men.

In this process, American Studies went from a monocultural towards a multicultural understanding of American culture and society. When Gene Wise wrote his essay on the history and development of American Studies as an academic discipline in 1979, he recognized the "*pluralistic approach"* applied by the American Studies scholars of his time as a break with the earlier scholarship in the field.[32] Gene Wise illustrates that American Studies in the period between the 1920s and 1950s was based upon five "basic assumptions." First, the American experience had forged an "American Mind," which was believed to be "more or less homogeneous." Second, as the "American Mind" was constructed through the opportunities provided by the frontier of the "New World," Americans differed from Europeans from the "Old World." Third, although the American Mind was believed to reside in every American, it was among the "elevated minds" it was most accessible. Fourth, aspects of the American Mind, such as democracy, Puritanism, individualism, liberalism and capitalism, were believed to be found throughout the history of the nation. Finally, although popular culture was believed to be part of America, it was not as representative for the United States as the "high culture" found in the "great American literature." [33]

Up to the 1950s, these assumptions formed the paradigm of "American Exceptionalism" which dominated American Studies. In the concept of "American Exceptionalism," America was seen as a historical break from Europe's history and culture. Whereas Europe was seen as the "old world," America was the "new world." What made

America new was the "free land," which forged American culture and identity. Because American culture was created through the "frontier experience," other cultures could not share the same value as the American culture. And thus, through the paradigm of "American Exceptionalism," American culture was monocultural. Since the 1960s, however, scholars within American Studies have been preoccupied with questioning the validity of American exceptionalism. This decade marks a paradigm shift in the field. David W. Noble defines himself as a scholar of the "postnationalist American studies community."[34] He recalls the sadness of his colleagues when graduate students refused to "worship at Emerson's tomb," because they no longer saw the ideology of the American nation state as sufficient or even valid for understanding American history.[35] These students argued that class differences were a major aspect of American society, that the country had engaged in warfare all over the globe and both military and economic imperialism were prevalent in the past and the present. Thus American history and society were not so different from that of Europe. In addition, they wanted to examine the history of women and racial minorities, who had simply been left out in the old paradigm.[36] And thus, American Studies has moved away from a study of American culture as a uniform entity towards studies of sub-cultures. In other words, American Studies has become a discipline investigating multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism, as Alice Kessler-Harris argues, acknowledges "the wide range of cultures that cohabit the U.S." and recognizes that the various ethnic cultures in the United States "can play a part in molding the larger culture even as they are molded by it."[37] This understanding of American culture as multicultural as it is influenced by various cultures which again are influenced by the main culture reflects the view of Conzen et al. which will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter. At first, the move towards a study of American culture in which America is seen through the lens of pluralism and multiculturalism may seem as a break with the foundation of the discipline. However, since the discipline was established, the main focus of American Studies has been to find a "useable past" in order to analyze and understand the present.

To be sure, this study makes no attempt to draw any conclusions beyond the limitation drawn in the first paragraph of this chapter. Nevertheless, this thesis should be understood in the light of a wider debate. As Kessler-Harris point out, Americans "are engaged in a bitter debate over multiculturalism."[38] Although more than a decade has passed since the 1980s and 1990s and the heydays of the culture wars and battles over multiculturalism in the United States, the debate about American culture and what America is, is still discussed. In 1997,

Josh DeWind and Philip Kasinitz argued that not since the Progressive Era has immigration been discussed and debated more than at the present. They claim that there seems to be a growth of "assimilation anxiety."[39] Although Samuel P. Huntington is not mentioned by DeWind and Kasinitz as one who is struck by "assimilation anxiety," Huntington's pessimistic portrayal of the future of the United States, as a nation torn apart and divided because of immigration appears to be driven by some form of "anxiety." Among other things, Huntington uses soccer to illustrate Mexican Americans' "dramatic rejections of the United States." He presents soccer matches, in which Mexican Americans decide to support Mexico over the United States, and sing and talk in Spanish, as an example of how Mexican Americans reject American ideals and values. However, although Mexican Americans often support the Mexican national team when they play against the United States, and chant in Spanish, this is by no means a Mexican-American phenomenon.[40] As the following investigation will show, the same is often the case for Polish Americans. This, however, is not mentioned by Huntington. In many ways, as Barbara Tomlinson and George Lipsitz argue, with the words of Kalamu ya Salaam, in contemporary America, those who "*control nothing are blamed for everything"* while those who "*control everything are blamed for nothing.*"[41] This can be seen in light of the current public debate, in which Mexican immigrants frequently are "blamed" for "everything" that is wrong in America.

1.5 Sources and Methods

In order to answer the research question and the sub-questions, the thesis uses multiple methods and sources. This study applies the data that seems necessary in order to seek answers. To some degree, this approach can be seen as what Robert K. Yin describes as "data triangulation." According to Yin, data triangulation is a process in which phenomena are studied from "multiple sources of evidence."[42] In this thesis, quantitative data is used to shed light on important aspects of Mexican and Polish American ethnicity in Chicago, while quantitative data is used to move beyond statistics and explore the topic in-depth. This enables this investigation to study contemporary ethnicity through "multiple sources of evidence."

Material from the U.S. Census Bureau's *American Community Survey* (ACS) serves as an important primary source in this study. In many aspects, the topics covered by the ACS make the survey ideal for the study of contemporary Mexican and Polish American ethnicity

in Chicago. For instance, as the survey includes categories such as language, place of birth, education, occupation, income and ethnic background, it provides useful data for this thesis. The ACS provides demographic data about Mexican Americans and Polish Americans, both at the national level, but also specifically at the three counties studied in this thesis. This enables a comparison between the tri-state area and the nation, and between the counties. More importantly, perhaps, as the survey also provides information about economic and social aspects, the ACS can be used to identify the challenges the two groups face in Chicago. ACS operates with three different datasets, 1-year estimates, 3-year estimates and 5-year estimates. These datasets differ in several aspects. First, and most importantly, they differ in the period of data collection, whereas the 1-year estimates consist of data collected in a twelve month period, the 5-year estimates is the result of a sixty-month period. Second, the estimates differ in the area they cover. In the 1-year estimates, only areas with a population over 65,000 are represented. The 3-year estimates cover areas with a population over 20,000, and, the 5-year estimates include data from all areas. This study uses census data from the 3-year estimates. This dataset is selected because it is more up-to date than the 5-year estimates, while at the same time, it is more reliable than the 1-year estimates. By using the 3-year estimates, this study aims at both reliability and currency. For the most part, the study uses the 2010-2012 American Community Survey 3-year estimates, as this is the most updated dataset. However, in order to look at developments over time, this investigation will also use the 3-year estimates of 2007-2009, 2008-2010 and 2009-2011.

In addition to census data, oral history plays an important part in this study. According to the Oral History Association, "oral history refers to both a method of recording and preserving oral testimony and to the product of that process."[43] In other words, oral history can be seen as both method and sources. Like any other method, oral history has its strengths and weaknesses. Its reliance on people's memory is often pointed out as one of the disadvantages of the method. However, when it comes to soccer in Chicago, there are few other possibilities to achieve data about the past. As a matter of fact, the lack of documentation of soccer in Chicago leads to one of the strengths of oral history, its possibility to give a voice to groups that most often are left out of the public discussion.

The narrators interviewed for this study have been recruited through their affiliation with soccer in Chicago. According to the Oral History Association, an "oral history project should choose potential narrators based on the relevance of their experience to the subject at

hand."[44] All narrators have signed an "Oral History Donor Form" which transfers the legal title and all literary property rights to the author. The narrators have approved the author to use their real names. In order to reach the Polish-American soccer scene, numerous soccer clubs from the Polish-American community have been contacted through both e-mail and telephone. Unfortunately, only one of the many "Polish" soccer clubs in Chicago replied. However, although it would have been useful for this investigation to represent a wider spectrum of the Polish-American soccer scene, the insights that George Gorecki from *Stare Byki* share through the oral history interview conducted for the chapter on Polish Americans is invaluable. Gorecki is not only among the founders of *Stare Byki*, but also has experience from various levels of soccer in Chicago through his involvement in both *Chicago National Soccer League* and *Illinois Soccer Association.* In addition to the interview with George Gorecki, Jacek Rudzinski from *Ultras Fire 98* has also been interviewed. Rudzinski is relevant because he represents a group of organized *Chicago Fire* fans with a Polish origin.

For the chapter on Mexican Americans, three persons have been interviewed. Like the Polish-American soccer scene, the Mexican-American soccer community was contacted through e-mail. However, as the initial e-mails were not responded, the author contacted Alejandro Yanun, who frequently writes about Mexican-American soccer clubs in Chicago as a journalist for *Vivelo Hoy.* With the help from Yanun, it became possible to come in contact with, and interview, two Mexican Americans involved with *CLASA.* Mario Calleros, owner of *Atletico Nacional*, the most successful of the Mexican-American teams was interviewed on October 7. The following day, Rigo Alonso, the son of the creator and currently owner of *Tangas* was interviewed. Through an already established contact within *Sector Latino,* Mexican-American *Chicago Fire* fan and *Sector Latino* member, Salvador R. Mares was suggested as a person that could contribute to this investigation.

A final interview was conducted with Bob Bradley in the spring of 2014. This interview became possible as Bradley left his job as head coach for Egypt's national team and moved to Norway as he became in charge of *Stabæk IF.* As a former head coach of the Chicago Fire and the United States national team, Bob Bradley is a wealth of information on soccer and its related politics. And although his interview is used in both chapter 3 and 4, it is especially useful in chapter 4 as it provides information about soccer in Chicago in a time when the Polish-American support of the Fire was larger than it is today.

Observation is also used as a primary source here. For this study two soccer matches have been observed. On September 29, 2013, a match between *Stare Byki* and *SAC Wisla* competing in the *National Soccer League of Chicago* at Oak Brook Sports Core was observed for the chapter on Polish Americans. Unfortunately, CLASA had already ended its season when this study was initiated in September of 2013. However, the author has been able to attend an informal soccer practice organized by *Tangas* in Marquette Park in Chicago. In addition to these two observations that provide data about amateur soccer clubs, a MLS match between *Chicago Fire* and *Montreal FC* played at Toyota Park on September 28, provides information on how Mexican and Polish-American ethnicity is reflected in professional soccer.

Academic articles on ethnicity, transnationalism and segmented assimilation serve as important secondary sources. On ethnicity, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.," by Kathleen N. Conzen, David A. Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George E. Pozzetta and Rudolph J. Vecoli, provides the main theoretical framework. However, Thomas Hylland Eriksen's *Ethnicity and Nationalism* is also frequently consulted in the discussion and investigation of ethnicity. On segmented assimilation, William Haller, Alejandro Portes and Scott M. Lynch's "Dreams Fulfilled, Dreams Shattered: Determinants of Segmented Assimilation in the Second Generation," is the chief reference. On Transnationalism, "Transnational Migration Studies: Past Developments and Future Trends," by Peggy Levitt and B. Nadya Jaworsky serves as the main reference point. In addition to scholarly literature on ethnicity, transnationalism and segmented assimilation, academic scholarship on Polish Americans and Mexican Americans is used as secondary sources. These secondary sources will be discussed in the next chapter, and will be applied in the following chapters.

2 Theory

This chapter presents the relevant theories in the study of the role of soccer in the construction of contemporary Mexican and Polish-American ethnicity in Chicago. Because of the complexity of the topic investigated, this thesis uses various theories to shed light on the Mexican-American and Polish-American experience in Chicago. First, the chapter discusses ethnicity and ethnic identity as these concepts constitute the main focus of this investigation. Second, the chapter will discuss "assimilation." In this discussion, the term will not only be defined, but, also, how the term has developed and been given various meanings by scholars will be analyzed. Third, and as an extension of the discussion of assimilation, the chapter presents and discusses the theory of "segmented assimilation." This section emphasizes how the theory applies to the challenges Mexican and Polish Americans face in Chicago. Fourth, the theory of "transnationalism" and how this concept can be applied in the study of ethnicity will be discussed. In addition to these theories related to immigration, the chapter will present and discuss relevant sport and soccer scholarship. Finally, the chapter concludes by showing how these theories are tied to the three sub-topics addressed in this investigation.

2.1 Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity

In many ways, "ethnicity," and the numerous concepts related to it, such as *ethnic identity, ethnic group, ethnic origin,* and *ethnic community,* seem to fit into the category of words that people commonly use, but rarely seem able to define. Perhaps, the lack of definition can be the result of an idea that these terms are somewhat intuitively understood. However, it is not only in everyday English that ethnicity seems to be conceived as a term that does not need to be defined, but, moreover, a similar notion is shared by scholars. As Thomas Hylland Eriksen points out in *Ethnicity and Nationalism,* remarkably few of the scholars who study ethnicity have defined the term.[45] And thus, it seems that not much has changed since 1974, when Wsevolod W. Isajiw only found thirteen definitions of ethnicity as he studied sixty-five scholarly articles investigating ethnicity.[46] However, to some degree, there seem to be some uniform notions about what "ethnicity" and the various "ethnic" phenomena referred to in both everyday language and academic literature. As Eriksen argues, ethnicity is used to as a term referring to the *"classification of people* and *group relationships."*[47] Whereas "classification of people" can be done based on various variables, when it comes to ethnicity,

the classification often springs out of some understanding of ancestry or origin. This can be seen in how words like ethnicity, nationality, ancestry, country of origin and race often are used interchangeably.[48] However, it is not only ancestry or origin that functions as a variable in this classification, but also differences in regards to culture.

As the term ethnicity refers to a complex social phenomenon, the concept is difficult to define clearly. However, the previously mentioned aspects of ethnicity, "classification of people" and "group relationships," can serve as a good starting point in a definition of the term. According to Eriksen, "for ethnicity to come about, the groups must entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves."[49] In other words, ethnicity can be seen as interaction between at least two ethnic groups, in which differences between the groups is what constitutes group membership. This view is reflected by Conzen et al., who stress that ethnicity in the United States is a "dual construction."[50] To be sure, although ethnicity often is conceived as phenomena related to immigrants and minorities, the concept also includes majority groups. And thus, as Conzen et al. argue, "all Americans, native born and immigrant, were involved in continual renegotiation of identities."[51] However, whereas what immigrants and their descendants created has been termed ethnicity, the same process occurred among "Americans," but is most often referred to as the creation of "nationality" in the mainstream society that distinguishes it from minority sub-cultures.[52] Ethnicity as a category of classification in the United States emerged as a result of interaction between groups of people. In this interaction, both ethnic identities and American nationality were negotiated based on similarities and differences between people and groups. And thus, it makes sense to talk about a dual construction of ethnicity as both "American nationality" and the ethnic groups that were constructed in relation to it and each other. Eriksen emphasizes that "ethnicity is an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum of regular interaction."[53] And thus, ethnicity can be seen as a "social identity," which is "based on a contrast vis-à-vis others."[54] In other words, ethnicity is an identity constructed through interaction between groups that are culturally distinct from each other.

Although an important aspect of ethnicity is cultural differences, cultural similarities also play a central part in the definition of the term. According to Eriksen, ethnicity is "characterized by metaphoric or fictive kinship."[55] The same view is held by Werner Sollors who understands ethnicity as a "collective fiction."[56] In many aspects, the link that ties

members of ethnic groups together may be seen as "metaphoric or fictive." Nevertheless, as Conzen et al. point out, ethnicity is "a process of construction or invention which incorporates, adapts, and amplifies preexisting communal solidarities, cultural attributes, and historical memories." Consequently, ethnicity is not fictive, but "it is grounded in real life context and social experience."[57] The authenticity of ethnicity will be discussed throughout this investigation. From this discussion, it will, hopefully, be evident that ethnicity is not merely rooted in a "myth," but, rather, is part of the American experience. As Conzen et al., argue, "ethnic groups in modern settings are constantly recreating themselves, and ethnicity is continuously being reinvented in response to changing realities both within the group and the host society."[58] In other words, Mexican and Polish-American ethnicity is being formulated and re-formulated based on the American experience, not merely on some mythical past.

As an essential aspect of ethnicity is interaction between ethnic groups, a thesis studying the construction of contemporary ethnicity must investigate the spheres where these interactions occur. To be sure, as Conzen et al. remind us, "these interactions, which could be competitive, cooperative, or conflictual, and perhaps a combination of all three, are seen as essential components of the process of ethnic group formation and definition."[59] In other words, in order to study the construction of contemporary Mexican and Polish-American ethnicity in Chicago, one must study ethnic interaction and relationship. In this thesis, the term "arena" will be used for the social spheres for interaction and negotiation, both within ethnic groups, but also between ethnic groups and the host society. An "arena" can not only be seen as a sphere of activity, but moreover, the word arena also connotes an area where people meet. Soccer provides various arenas for interaction both within the Mexican and Polish-American ethnic groups, and between these groups and other groups, including the host society. Furthermore, as will be discussed later, because of the marginalization of soccer in the United States, both amateur and professional soccer provide arenas where immigrants and ethnic groups are able to impact and contribute to their surroundings. These arenas include everything from casual pick-up soccer in Chicago's many parks, where Mexican and Polish Americans participate as players, to professional soccer where Mexican and Polish Americans participate as fans in the stands. Consequently, through soccer, Mexican and Polish Americans are able to influence "the terms, modes, and outcomes of [their] accommodation to 'others,'" as Conzen et al. put it.[60]

The term "ethnicity" is closely connected to ethnic "identity." And thus, in order to discuss how ethnicity is constructed, one needs to understand how identities are formed. "Identity" is a central concept in various academic disciplines, such as social anthropology, sociology and psychology. Among scholars within these disciplines, the concept is frequently portrayed as one of the most complex concept in their fields of study.[61] The term is used in various ways and is applied to a wide spectrum of contexts and situations. Whereas scholars in the past have disagreed upon whether identities are primordial or social constructions, today, most scholars agree that identities are constructions that individuals are shaping themselves.[62] This, however, does not suggest that identities cannot be ascribed or given. Scholars operate with both individual and collective identity. As Maxine Schwarz Seller argues, identity also "has a communal, or group, dimension."[63] It is in the negotiation between the individual and the collective dimensions that identities are forged.[64] As Conzen et al. claim, ethnic identities are constructed as immigrants and their descendants attempt "to reconcile the duality of 'foreigness' and the 'Americaness.'"[65] This can be seen in how Mexican and Polish Americans negotiate the meaning of soccer in order for the sport to resolve the "duality" of the ethnic experience.

Ruben Rumbaut identifies four possible forms of ethnic identification for the second and third generation in the United States. First, children of immigrants may identify with their parents national origins. For the populations investigated in this thesis, this would be a Polish or a Mexican identity. Second, they may adopt a hyphenated identity, and identify as Polish-American or Mexican-American. Third, the children may take a "plain" American identity. Or, fourth, an identity based on race or pan-ethnicity can be used. For those with a Mexican ancestry this identification reflects a Latino or a Hispanic identity. [66] Although the likelihood for a pan-ethnic identity among people with a Polish heritage seems far less likely, an example of this could draw from an Eastern-European American identity. Among these four different ethnic identifications, the first two are tied to an ancestral homeland, whereas the two last are tied to America. However, which of these identities that Polish and Mexican Americans adapt in their identification depend upon who they interact with. Furthermore, as Cynthia Feliciano finds in her study of how ethnic identification develops and changes through different stages in the lives of Mexican Americans, the norm is for ethnic identities to change.[67]

Identities are far from constant because they are something one may or may not have, something that can be lost, found, created constructed or imagined.[68] Furthermore, ethnic identities are situational, as different contexts influence the interaction between people. As Ronald Cohen illustrates, although "group A can be labeled A in relation to B, C, and D," when members of the group interact within the group, "A people are keenly aware of subgroup differences in which groups X, Y, and Z all understand ethnic distinctions among themselves."[69] In other words, ethnicity is situational as the contexts of interaction influence the relationship between the actors. This can be seen in the Mexican and Polish-American soccer scene in Chicago. For instance, the Polish-American support of the *Chicago Fire* is organized in two supporter groups, *Husaria* and *Fire Ultras 98*. Before, during and after matches at Toyota Park, the members of the two groups seemingly operate as one group as they have their own tailgate and are located in their own section within the *Sector 8 Chicago.* And thus, in interaction with other fans, the two groups seem to understand themselves as a "Polish-American group," in the interaction within, however, they are divided into sub-groups.[70] Likewise, a pan-ethnic group, like *Sector Latino*, may function as an ethnic group in relation to other ethnic groups, or the dominant group. However, interaction within this pan-ethnic group is fractionalized among various ethnic groups, of which the Mexican-American group is by far the biggest.

An important part of negotiations of ethnicity is to create cultural elements that can unify potential members despite fractions and differences between them. To be sure, as Conzen et al. argue, "one of the purposes of invented traditions was to provide symbols and slogans which could unify the group despite such differences." For Polish and Mexican Americans in Chicago, soccer can be seen as part of what Conzen et al. describe as "the symbolic umbrella of ethnic culture." Consequently, soccer seems to be "broad and flexible enough to serve [the] several, often contradictory, purposes" of ethnic culture. A significant role of ethnic culture is to sketch out the boundaries of ethnic group. Ethnic culture must provide a sense of ethnic identities and rally the members "to advance its claims to power, status, and resources." However, in addition of creating a distinct culture that make members of ethnic groups differ from other people, ethnic culture also needs to "defuse the hostility of mainstream ethnoculture by depicting the compatibility of the sidestream ethnoculture."[71] Through soccer, Polish and Mexican Americans are able to formulate distinct ethnic identities and cultures, and, at the same time, negotiate their compatibility with the host society.

Prior to the 1970s, terms like "ethnicity" and "ethnic groups" were rarely used by academics. A study examining the thirteen most used anthropology textbooks between 1917 and 1971 reveals that neither "ethnic," nor "ethnic group" is included in the textbooks' index. In textbooks published in the 1970s and after, however, these terms are both found in the index listings and discussed and defined in the most important textbooks of anthropology.[72] To be sure, the term "ethnicity" was coined in 1954 by David Riesman, but it was not until 1972 the word was included in the *Oxford English Dictionary.*[73] In many ways, "ethnicity" and "ethnic" seemingly replaced anthropological terms such as "culture," "cultural" and "tribal."[74] However, what Ronald Cohen describes as "the shift from 'tribe' to 'ethnicity'" is not "a simple shift from one term to a more acceptable one," but rather it "involves fundamental changes in anthropological perspectives."[75] To be sure, the new emphasis on ethnicity can be seen as a paradigm change within the scholarly field.

In a study from 1965, Michael Moerman investigated "the Lue," an ethnic group in Thailand. In this study, Moerman faced a challenge that Eriksen claims to be a common challenge among anthropologists. This challenge, or "problem" as Eriksen puts it, can be seen in the difficulties of defining the boundaries of ethnic groups. Criteria such as language, political organization and culture did not "correlate completely." Furthermore, the characteristics and cultural elements that the members of the ethnic group, the Lue, claimed as distinct for their group were traits shared by nearby ethnic groups. The Lue "had no exclusive livelihood, no exclusive customs, no exclusive religion," and thus, Moerman concluded that one "is Lue by virtue of believing and calling himself Lue and acting in ways that validate his Lueness." In other words, ethnic groups may be defined through a subjective understanding among the members, and not necessarily through objective criteria such as for instance language, religion, customs and culture.[76]

This, however, does not suggest that ethnicity can be defined through subjective criteria alone. Rather, as Sol Encel claims, in "Ethnicity and Multiculturalism," there is a "dual character of ethnicity" as it is "a phenomenon which is both objective and subjective, external and internal."[77] This "dual character of ethnicity" is an important feature of the phenomenon. On the one side, ethnicity is subjective and internal as it is about how members of ethnic groups identify. If a person feels Polish American, his or her ethnic identity can be Polish American, even though this person may not speak Polish. At the same time, however, there is also an external and objective element to ethnicity. As John Milton Yinger argues,

part of the definition of an ethnic group is a group of people who "are thought, by themselves and/or others, to have a common origin and share important segments of a common culture."[78] Thus, it is not only how people themselves identify, but how they are labeled by others that influence ethnic groups. This suggests that ethnicity has an external element. Furthermore, although the example from "the Lue" shows that ethnicity cannot always be identified through objective criteria, Yinger argues that "some mixtures of language, religion, race, and ancestral homeland with its related culture [are] the defining element[s]" of ethnic groups. [79]

Whereas Yinger claims that "race" is part of the mixture that defines ethnic groups, the relationship between race and ethnicity is both complex and problematic. First, "race" itself is a problematic term with a repulsive history. Modern genetics scholarship no longer operates with races as meaningful categories into which to divide mankind. And thus, "if race is thought of strictly in physical anthropological terms," argues Yinger, "it has no place in the definition of ethnicity."[80] However, although the concept of race is useless from a genetics' point of view, for scholars who study social phenomena, races may be relevant as social constructions. According to Eriksen, "race exists as a cultural construct, whether it has a 'biological' reality or not."[81] However, scholars disagree upon whether the social category of race should be seen as part of ethnicity. Some, like Pierre van den Berghe and Yinger argue that there may be a relationship between race and ethnicity. Others, like Michael Banton, claim that the concepts of race and ethnicity should be kept apart. According to Banton, race is used to categorize people into groups based on negative characteristics, whereas ethnicity, in contrast, is a positive categorization of people based on the groups' own identification.[82] As Eriksen argues, "this implies that race is a negative term of exclusion, while ethnic identity is a term of positive inclusion."[83] However, although the terms of ethnicity and ethnic groups may be ascribed less negative connotations than race, it seems that an understanding of ethnicity as merely positive is a simplification. According to Eriksen, the genocide in Rwanda and Yugoslavia in the 1990s exemplifies how conflicts can occur between ethnic groups, and thus, "there is no inherent reason why ethnicity should be more benign than race."[84]

In many aspects, the borders between race and ethnicity may not only be unclear, but overlapping. As Eriksen puts it, "ethnic groups have a common myth of origin, which relates ethnicity to descent, which again makes it a kindred concept to race."[85] This can be illustrated with the development of an African-American identity. The history of blacks in the United

States exemplifies a process in which "'racial' groups are ethnified."[86] Based on their experience in the United States, and the idea of a common African heritage, African Americans can be said to have forged and have been categorized into one pan-ethnic culture. Whereas racial groups can be ethnified, opposite processes also occurs, in which ethnic groups are racialized. This phenomenon can be found in the Mexican-American experience. As Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut report, whereas Mexican immigrants tend to claim to be multiracial, their children tend to "racialize their national origin."[87]

In this investigation, ethnicity is conceived as both subjective and objective, and internal and external. Although the "objective" and "external" elements such as language, religion, race, origin and culture cannot define ethnic groups alone, they are important categories in order to operationalize the concept. These aspects are also important from a "subjective" and "internal" understanding of ethnicity. For most Mexican and Polish Americans, a mixture of these elements is important in their subjective understanding of themselves. In the investigation of the role of soccer in the formulation of contemporary Polish and Mexican-American ethnicity then, how soccer influences and interacts with these elements is crucial. Furthermore, the following chapters will study how soccer provides arenas to formulate and celebrate ethnicity. By providing arenas for interactions and negotiations within and between groups, soccer serves as a social sphere, in which group relationship may be studied.

In addition to providing a sense of ethnic identity and arenas for celebration and negotiation of Mexican-American and Polish-American ethnicity, soccer may also play an essential role in contemporary ethnicity as the sport is used to address the challenges the two groups face in Chicago, and enables the groups to portray themselves as resources in the host society. And thus, this thesis will investigate how soccer is able to serve the "often contradictory, purposes" that Conzen et al. claim that "ethnic culture" has to serve.[88]

2.2 Assimilation

At first glance, the persistence of ethnicity and the prevalence of ethnic groups in the United States may seem as contradictions to the prediction of assimilation. Upon closer consideration, however, it seems clear that ethnicity and assimilation are not necessarily oppositions. As Richard Alba argues, assimilation is a term that is "weighted with emotional

and attitudinal valences."[89] In the United States, assimilation has often been equated with "Americanization," as it is seen as a process in which immigrants abandon their ethnic culture and merge into mainstream American culture. This, however, is only one of the numerous ways to define the concept. As Robert Jioubu points out, by using assimilation interchangeably with other terms like "acculturation, amalgamation, Americanization, or nondifferentation," scholars have made the term almost worthless. [90] The lack of consistency in the terminology makes it extremely important for academic scholarship to be precise in how these terms are defined. In this investigation, the term "assimilation" is not understood as a one-directional process of "acculturation" or "Americanization," but rather, assimilation is seen as a multi-directional process among ethnic groups and the host society. In *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups,* assimilation is defined as "the processes that lead to greater homogeneity in society."[91] Although this definition of the process can be seen in light of "Americanization," as immigrants abandon their ethnic culture and adopt American culture, it can also be seen as a process in which "homogeneity" is constructed because ethnic groups and the dominant society influence each other. As Yinger puts it, "assimilation is a process of boundary reduction" that transpires in the interactions between "members of two or more societies."[92] This point of view reflects Richard Alba's position as he claims that assimilation may "take place as changes in two (or more) groups, or parts of them, [and may] shrink the differences and social distances between them."[93] Although ethnic groups and the dominant society have unequal strength and power in the social interaction, ethnic groups influence the culture in which they "assimilate" into. And thus, the process of assimilation can be seen as the interaction and negotiation in which ethnic groups and the host society influence each other in a manner that lower the boundaries between them and thus lead to more homogeneity.

In many ways, the idea that assimilation is a process in which both ethnic groups and the dominant culture grow closer together differs from how the term traditionally has been perceived. Traditional assimilation theory, written within the paradigm that Barbara Schmitter Heisler coins as the "Classical Period," assumed that assimilation was the final product of a universal process that was irreversible.[94] As classical assimilation theory arose from sociology, it is probably not surprising that the "Chicago School," with Robert E. Park in the lead, was the pioneer group in the establishment of the theoretical framework. In their "race relations cycle," Park and Ernest W. Burgess identify contact, competition, accommodation, and assimilation as the four phases in a process that eventually would end with assimilation as

the final result.[95] Although the four staged process could be slowed down by aspects within the ethnic groups and the host society, in the end, assimilation was seen as the "final perfect product." [96] Park and Burgess define assimilation as "a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life." This understanding of assimilation seems close to the idea of "Americanization," as it seems that it is only ethnic groups who are influenced in the process.

Whereas Park and his associates understood assimilation as a one-way process, Louis Wirth claims that assimilation is "a two-way process" that includes both the "willingness of the dominant group to absorb and of the minority to be absorbed."[97] Wirth, then, adds an important perspective to the process as he points out that the in order for assimilation to occur, the dominant group has to be willing to incorporate members of the ethnic group into their American core. This, for instance, may be useful in order to investigate why some immigrants seem to move straight into the mainstream, while others may find the path towards being "American" more difficult. In more recent scholarship, Herbert Gans repeats a similar argument as he claims that "ethnics can acculturate on their own, but they cannot assimilate unless they are given permission to enter the 'American' group or institution."[98] And thus, both Wirth and Gans recognize that the process of assimilation is a "two-way process." However, although they acknowledge assimilation as a two-way process, the process is still similar to an idea of Americanization as ethnic groups when assimilated are "absorbed."

In 1964, Milton Gordon published *Assimilation in American Life,* a study that has made Gordon one of the most cited scholars within the field of ethnic and immigration studies.[99] In the book, Gordon identifies seven different types of assimilation: cultural, structural, marital, identificational, attitude receptional, behavior receptional, and civic assimilation.[100] By identifying assimilation as a complex, many stage process with various forms of assimilation taking place, Gordon provided an alternative to the traditional conception of immigrant adaptation as a straight-forward linear process. Rather, according to Gordon, the process is "a matter of degree" as "each of the stages or subprocesses distinguished above may take place in varying degrees."[101] In other words, assimilation is not a phenomenon that either takes place or does not take place, but rather, it is a process that occurs in various degrees and in various forms.

In this investigation, assimilation is seen as a continuous process of social interaction and negotiation between ethnic groups and the dominant group. And thus, as both Wirth and Gans illustrate, it is seen as a "two way process." However, whereas Wirth and Gans seem to believe that the outcome of this interaction leads to ethnic groups' "acculturation" as they are being "absorbed" by the mainstream culture, this thesis understand the process, not only as a "two way process," but moreover, as a "bidirectional" process. As Elliot Barkan argues, assimilation can be seen as "a bidirectional phenomenon" as "the general society and culture are affected by the heritages of those who assimilate."[102] Although, as Barkan emphasizes, "it is not a matter of an equal exchange" the interaction between ethnic groups and the host society is "not entirely a one-way movement of norms, values, attitudes, language, behavioral patterns and associations from host/dominant society to ethnic group members."[103] In other words, assimilation should be seen as process that influences and affects both ethnic groups and mainstream American society. Reflecting the definitions of assimilation presented by Yinger and Alba, this thesis understands assimilation as a process leading towards homogeneity as changes in both ethnic groups and the dominant group lowers the boundaries between them.

2.3 Segmented Assimilation

In many ways, the theory of "Segmented Assimilation" can be seen as a variation of traditional assimilation theory. However, whereas traditional theory has viewed assimilation as the final product that will be reached eventually, segmented assimilation portrays three possible trajectories for the second generation. The first trajectory reflects the traditional idea of assimilation theory as it is an outcome in which the second generation successfully assimilates into the mainstream society. In the second trajectory, the outcome of the process is not assimilation into the core society, but rather into an ethnic culture. The third trajectory, however, is identified as "downward assimilation," an outcome in which the second generation is assimilated into the lowest parts of the American society, in regards of socioeconomic status. And thus, according to segmented assimilation theory, the second generation may assimilate into different segments of society, hence the name, *segmented* assimilation.

Recently, segmented assimilation has gained popularity among scholars studying immigration and ethnicity in the United States. According to Stephan R. Warner, the theory

established its "definitive codification," with Rubén Rumbaut and Alejandro Portes' *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation* published in 2001.[104] In addition to Rumbaut and Portes, Min Zhou has been an important contributor in the establishment and development of the theoretical framework of segmented assimilation. The theory emerged from studies from the late 1980s and 1990s that found irregularities in the pattern of assimilation as a process of upward mobility. As Zhou argues, these studies presented "observed anomalies" from the traditional pattern.[105] The most important anomaly could be found in the scenarios where some members of the second generation seemed to assimilate in the wrong direction. In 1992, Herbert J. Gans identified a "second-generation decline" among the second generation. In one of the three possible outcomes for the second generation sketched by Gans, the less fortunate are in danger of being confined in the lowest segments of society as they "will either not be asked, or will be reluctant to work at immigrant wages and hours their parents did but will lack job opportunities to do better."[106] For these immigrant children, the American experience may lead to lives influenced by poverty, crime and drugs. And thus, rather than following a pattern of improvement among the second generation, this scenario can be seen as a "decline." Furthermore, the gap between their American experience and the promises of the American Dream, leads to a frustration. This frustration is coined "the second generation revolt" by Joel Perlmann and Roger Waldinger.[107] The "second-generation decline" and the "second generation revolt" can be seen as what the segmented assimilation theory categorizes "downward assimilation."

According to the theory of segmented assimilation, since 1965, characteristics of immigration patterns and American society have developed in a direction that makes the traditional pattern of upward mobility among the second generation more difficult to achieve, especially among certain ethnic groups, such as Mexican Americans. Min Zhou asserts that there are three features of contemporary immigration that differ from the "turn-of-the-century inflows."[108] First, today's second generation is more diversified regarding national origin. Whereas immigration prior to 1965 primarily was from European countries, most immigrants to the United States today are from Asia and South- and Central America. Second, the human capital the immigrants possess is more varied than earlier waves of immigration. On the one hand, more than 60 percent of immigrants from India and Taiwan have degrees from colleges, while, on the other hand, the number is less than 5 percent among immigrants from Cambodia, Laos, El Salvador and Mexico.[109] Third, whereas most of the immigrants from earlier waves settled in the industrial cities in the Northeast, immigrants are now spreading

across the nation. Since the 1980s, for instance, more than a third of immigrants have settled in California.[110] In addition to these three characteristics of current immigration there are contextual changes in American society that have influenced how immigrants are received.

Min Zhou categories these as "structural conditions in the host society" and identifies four factors that affect outcomes for the second generation.[111] First, changes in the economy have shaped the labor market into an hour-glass structure. In this structure, it is more difficult to move upwards as there are fewer opportunities to do so.[112] Second, it is not only divisions in the labor market that separates the rich and the poor, but as the middle-class has moved to the suburbs, "poverty has been highly concentrated … in the most disadvantaged segments of the minority population in inner-city ghettos."[113] And thus, whereas the most fortunate children of immigrants move into privileged neighborhoods, the children of poor immigrants are less fortunate as they "often find themselves growing up in underprivileged neighborhoods subject to poverty, poor schools, violence and drugs, and a generally disruptive social environment."[114] Third, more children grow up in a one-parent household. For children of immigrants, growing up in one-parent families often has both economic and psychological disadvantages. Fourth, as the gap between the American Dream and the American reality widens, the youth who are denied the promises of upwards mobility have created an "oppositional culture." [115]In many aspects, the growth of oppositional culture, especially in inner-city neighborhoods, is not only a structural condition, but moreover, it can be seen as "downward assimilation."

In "Dreams Fulfilled, Dreams Shattered, Determinants of Segmented Assimilation in the Second Generation," William Haller, Alejandro Portes and Scott M. Lynch present a model of the segmented assimilation theory that reflects Zhou's views in many ways. In their model, the outcome of the assimilation process depends upon interaction between what they identify as "background determinants" and "barriers to successful adaptation." The category of background determinants consists of human capital, modes of incorporation and family structure. The obstacles, or the category compromising "barriers to successful adaptation," also consist of three sub-categories. These are "racial prejudice," "de-industrialization and the bifurcation of the American labor market," and "the proliferation of gangs and the drug trade that provide an alternative path to staying in school and completing an education."[116] Furthermore, the outcomes for the second generation, according to the theory, are a result of the interaction between the background determinants and the obstacles.

Although the theory of segmented assimilation seems to win more and more support among scholars, it is also criticized by scholarly authorities within the field. Richard Alba, Philip Kasinitz and Mary C. Waters, for instance, criticize the emphasize scholars supporting the segmented assimilation theory seem to give "downward assimilation." According to Alba, Kasinitz and Waters, "downward assimilation" is not "as widespread as Portes and his colleagues assert."[117] They argue that most of the second generation speaks English fluently and have moved beyond their parents in both educational and occupational achievement. Nevertheless, although one could argue that the segmented assimilation theory portrays the process second-generation adjustment too negatively, the theory provides important insights into the challenges of the second generation in the United States. Not only, however, does the theory identify challenges of the American experience, but more importantly, segmented assimilation theory shed light upon factors that influence how these challenges are encountered.

In addition to indicate the challenges Mexican and Polish Americans may face in Chicago, the segmented assimilation theory is of interest in this study because the theory clearly states the importance of ethnicity in the process of immigrants and their descendants adaptation into the core society. Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou claim that ethnicity may be a benefit, rather than an obstacle in the process of assimilation. They argue that the "coethnic community," is the most important resource for ethnic groups as they challenge the obstacles in the process of adaptation. "Immigrants who join well-established and diversified ethnic groups," Portes and Zhou argue, may use the networks provided by the community as "moral and material resources."[118]

2.4 Transnationalism

In addition to segmented assimilation, the concept of "transnationalism" seems to be a trend in the scholarship on immigration and ethnicity. Like the segmented assimilation scholarship, transnational migration studies in the United States have developed as an alternative to the classical assimilation paradigm. The traditional view of assimilation as a linear movement, in which immigrants are believed to abandon their connection to their former homeland as they assimilate and become "Americans," became contested by studies that conclude that, not only do many immigrants preserve ties to their homeland, but, moreover, these connections do not necessarily hinder incorporation into society in the United States.[119] On the contrary, studies

show that it is often the most successfully incorporated immigrants who participate in transnational activities.[120] As Alejandro Portes claims, "these activities can support rather than stall the successful adaptation of immigrants and their offspring to their new country."[121] And thus, as transnationalism seems to influence the ethnic experience and the process of adjustment to the United States, the approach most definitely can shed light on the topic investigated in this thesis. Through soccer, Mexican and Polish Americans are both maintaining and forging new transnational ties and activities.

The concepts of "transnationalism" and "transnational migration" have developed since the 1990s as an alternative framework to understand the immigrant experience. Whereas the concept of transnationalism is used to analyze various "transnational" movements, such as capital, ideas, culture, to mention a few elements, in this investigation, transnationalism is understood primarily in relation to "transnational migration." Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Cristina Szanton Blanc define transnational migration as "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement."[122] And thus, this variation of transnationalism can be seen as a social construction in which immigrants connects their new and former homes.

Some of the criticism against transnationalism can be found in the argument that preserving transnational ties is nothing new, but rather, transnational activities have been present since the first wave of immigration to the United States. As Roger Waldinger and David Fitzgerald argue, "historians immediately dissented" the view that transnationalism is a modern phenomenon that serves as "a decisive break with the past."[123] Rather, they argue that ties between immigrants' places of destination and origin, and activities between these places have been present throughout the history of immigration to the United States. However, as Alejandro Portes argues, although transnationalism may not be new, "the phenomenon has been given a big push by the advent of new technologies in transportation and telecommunications which greatly facilitate rapid communication across national borders and long distances."[124]And thus, although the immigrants of the nineteenth century may have kept some ties to the societies they left, today's immigrants have transportation and communication tools that make the maintaining of these ties easier. For Polish and Mexican Americans, the internet has made it possible to watch professional soccer from Poland and Mexico in their new homes in Chicago.

Few scholars, if any, deny that immigrants remain connected to the country they emigrated from. The strength and degree of this connection, however, may vary between individuals. As Alejandro Portes stresses, "transnational activities are quite heterogeneous and vary across immigrant communities, both in their popularity and in their character." According to Portes, the variation in degree and frequency of transnational activities depends on "contexts of exit and reception." [125] Immigrants who are received with hostility in the United States are more likely to be involved with transnational activities than others. Furthermore, the size of the ethnic community is an important element as the size of the co-ethnic population influence the potential for transnational markets. In these respects, the nature of the transnational activities should differ between Mexican and Polish Americans in Chicago in recent history.

However, although there seems to be a consensus among scholars regarding transnationalism in the first generation, they seem to disagree when it comes to whether or not transnationalism can be transmitted to the second generation.[126] Some scholars argue that transnationalism either rapidly decays or disappears in the second and third generation. And thus, according to this view, transnationalism is of little or no interest in the study of the descendants of immigrants. Others, however, such as Levitt and Jaworsky argue that although transnational activities does not play the same role for the second and third generation as they do for the immigrants themselves, transnationalism is still of significance. They argue that "the same children who never go back to their ancestral homes are frequently raised in households where people, values, goods, and claims from somewhere else are present on a daily basis." And thus, "they have the skills and social connections to become transnational activists if and when they choose to do so during a particular life-cycle stage."[127] In many ways, what Levitt and Jaworsky illustrate is that the strength and degree of transnationalism may vary. And although transnational ties may be weaker among the children and grandchildren of immigrants, they have the skills to strengthen these ties if necessary. Some may never do so, while others may do so on special occasions. And thus, as Levitt and Jaworsky argue, "although the numbers who engage in regular transnational practices may be fairly small, those who engage in occasional, informal transnational activities, including social, cultural, and religious practices, in response to elections, economic downturns, life-cycle events, and climatic disasters are much greater."[128]

Recognizing the difference between routine and occasional transnational practices, scholars distinguish between transnationalism based on the degree of regularity. Luis E. Guarnizo, for instance, divides transnational activities into two categories, "core" and "expanded" transnationalism. His definition of core transnationalism is three-fold as it refers to practices that "form an integral part of the individual's habitual life," occur regularly, and, "are patterned, and therefore, somewhat predictable." Expanded transnationalism is used to describe those transnational activities that are sporadic and unpredictable. [129] A similar dichotomization of transnationalism is found in Itzigsohn et al. They operate with "narrow" and "broad" transnationalism. Narrow transnationalism can be seen as "highly institutionalized and continuous activities involving regular travel." Broad transnationalism describes transnational activities that occur "occasional or loosely coupled with sporadic or no movement." [130] The differentiation that Guarnizo and Itzigsohn et al. make between "core" or "narrow" transnationalism on the one side, and "expanded" or "broad" transnationalism on the other side, provides an important dimension to the concept of transnationalism. Rather than understanding transnationalism as something that either is present or not, this emphasis enables an approach to transnational activities that acknowledges that transnationalism varies in regards of strength, degree and frequency. Another important categorization of transnationalism can be found in which segments of society transnational activities emerge. Michael P. Smith and Guarnizo divide transnationalism into two categories, transnationalism from "above" and from "below." Transnationalism from above is seen as transnational activities involving "global capital, media, and political institutions." Transnationalism from below, on the other hand, refers to transnational activities that spring out from "local, grassroots activity."[131]

A final distinction between the various forms of transnationalism can be found in the areas of the transnational practices. Alejandro Portes operates with three different areas of transnational activities. First, political transnationalism can take form as associations created in the United States by immigrants who want to help the development of the communities they left. Second, economic transnationalism can be seen either as individuals' sending money, or through companies created to export and/or import various merchandises between the country of settlement and origin. Finally, socio-cultural transnationalism may involve cultural exchange, like the "election of beauty queens and selection of performing groups in immigrant communities to take part in annual hometown festivals."[132]

Furthermore, an additional aspect stressed by scholars influenced by transnational approaches is the importance of looking beyond fixed territorial borders in order to understand social constructions such as ethnicity. To be sure, although this thesis is limited to Chicago, it would be impossible to study soccer and ethnicity in Chicago without recognizing transnational aspects. As the following investigation will show, the various forms of transnationalism presented above are significant elements in the city's soccer scene. For instances, the possibility to watch professional soccer matches from Poland and Mexico, on television and internet can be seen as an example of transnationalism from "above," as it is provide because of globalization of media. Likewise, transnationalism from "above" is present in the multinational corporations who sponsor soccer worldwide. However, transnationalism from "below" is also present. An illustration of this can be seen in how *Fire Ultras'* merchandize is produced in Poland, and imported to Chicago.

2.5 Soccer Scholarship

The body of academic scholarship investigating soccer, in particular, and sports, in general, is surprisingly small. According to Steven A. Riess, the lack of scholarly attention given sports is "because of intellectual snobbery."[133] It is not until recently that scholars have begun to recognize the significance of sport. Ironically, in his historiography of sports in the United States, in which Riess argues in favor of incorporating sports in academic research as it functions as "an excellent vehicle to explore such historical problems as the rise of industrial capitalism and the emergence of urbanization," he himself excludes soccer. As previously discussed in *Chapter 1*, soccer has been played in the United States since the late nineteenth century. Furthermore, soccer is by far the most popular sport in the world. "The Beautiful Game" has been adopted throughout the world, in both industrialized and less industrialized countries. Furthermore, everywhere the sport is played, it appeals to a wide spectrum of society, as it is a sport popular among the working-class, the middle-class and the upper-class. And thus, the wide appeal of soccer should make it especially interesting for scholars. It was not until the year 2000, however, *Soccer & Society,* the first international academic journal dedicated scholarly investigation of soccer was established. Although the journal, not surprisingly, originates in England, it is international, not only by investigating soccer through both international and multinational approaches, but also because the articles are contributed by scholars worldwide. Furthermore, the journal aims at a multi-disciplinary approach to

soccer as it covers articles from numerous academic disciplines, such as anthropology, cultural studies, economics, history, political science and sociology. The establishment of *Soccer & Society* illustrates both how scholars earlier have neglected the significance of soccer and that the sport is about to receive more attention from academic circles.

Although soccer until recently has been neglected in academic scholarship, it appears in some earlier scholarly research. As Derek Van Rheenen illustrates in "The Promise of Soccer in America: The Open Play of Ethnic Subcultures," the relationship between soccer and assimilation was researched by some scholars in the 1970s. In a study of soccer in Milwaukee in 1976, for instance, J.C. Pooley reports that participation in ethnic soccer clubs hindered structural assimilation. One year earlier, J. McKay's study of ethnic soccer in Canada shows the opposite, as competition led clubs to look outside of their ethnic groups in order to recruit the best players. According to McKay, soccer may promote cultural assimilation.[134] The seemingly contrasting findings in these two studies show that the relationship between soccer and assimilation may not be constant, but depends on contextual aspects. As Van Rheenen argues, "the power of sport as an assimilatory agent depends not only on the sport and the participating ethnic group, but also on the historical and cultural context within which the game is played."[135]

In"¡Vamos Taximaroa! Mexican/Chicano Soccer Associations and Transnational/Translocal Communities, 1967-2002," Juan Javier Pescador studies the role of Mexican-American soccer clubs and soccer associations in the Great Lakes area.[136] Pescador's research show that the Mexican-American soccer scene in the Midwest is construction based on the conditions and challenges of the Mexican-American experience in the area. By doing this, Pescador "challenge[s] the predominant assumptions that organized sports (namely soccer) represent social forms to maintain 'Mexican traditions' alive in the US." Furthermore, he claims that the soccer scene is neither a "display of loyalty to the 'sending community,'" nor a reproduction of "traditional hierarchies from the motherland."[137] On the contrary, Pescador argues that Mexican Americans use soccer to adjust to the American experience. In this adjustment, soccer is both instrumental and cultural. On the one side, soccer can be seen as an instrument for the community to "initiate political participation, contest the dominant culture, defy urban segregation," and address other challenges Mexican Americans face. On the other side, soccer is cultural as it functions as an arena to "celebrate a notion of Mexicanness based on the Mexican experience in the United States."[138]

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented theories that are relevant to the study of the role of soccer in the construction of contemporary Mexican and Polish-American ethnicity in Chicago. These theories are important as they lay the foundation for the theoretical framework of the investigation in the two following chapters. As the discussion in this chapter has illustrated so far, the theories presented can be used to shed light on various aspects of the ethnic experience in the United States. Rather than understanding these theories as opposites, this thesis uses and applies them to supplement each other in order to better grasp the complexity of the topic investigated.

As part of Polish and Mexican-American culture, the meaning of soccer, like the significance of ethnicity itself, is constantly negotiated based on the conditions and challenges of the American experience. First, how does soccer provide not only a sense of ethnic identity, but also arenas for Mexican and Polish Americans to formulate and celebrate their ethnicity? Second, how is soccer used to address the challenges Mexican Americans and Polish Americans face in Chicago? And, finally, how does soccer enable Mexican and Polish Americans to portray themselves as resources for the host society in their struggle for public approval? In other words, this thesis investigates how soccer serves the "often contradictory, purposes" that Conzen et al. claim that "ethnic culture" has to serve.[139]

Understood as a constant negotiation between ethnic groups and the dominant group, assimilation is an essential concept in this investigation. Because assimilation is a "bidirectional phenomenon," to use Elliot Barkan's terminology, in which both ethnic groups and the dominant group influence and affect each other, the term directly applies to the sub-topic that investigates ethnic identities and formulation of ethnicity. In the following chapters, the concept of assimilation is used to analyze how soccer is re-interpreted by Mexican and Polish Americans as the two groups are influenced by the American experience. However, assimilation is also interesting in order to understand how Mexican and Polish Americans use soccer in order to influence and impact mainstream culture. This aspect of the process makes it interesting in relation to the sub-topic of investigating how the two groups use soccer to present themselves as resources.

Although segmented assimilation theory is valuable in examining all of the sub-topics in this study, it is particularly useful in identifying the challenges Mexican and Polish

Americans face in Chicago because the theory portrays and categorizes the challenges of the ethnic experience. In this thesis, the theory of segmented assimilation is primarily used in order to recognize and classify the challenges that Mexican and Polish Americans address through soccer. According to the theory, there are three obstacles that immigrants and their descendants face in their adjustment to the United States. These obstacles are discrimination and racial prejudice, lack of opportunities to move upwards on the occupational ladder, and the attraction of gangs and drug activity as an alternative to education. However, in addition to these obstacles, additional challenges can be found in what are identified as "background determinants." These are family structure, human capital and modes of incorporation. The last category, modes of incorporation, is sub-divided into "attitudes of the authorities," "attitudes of the public, and the "character of the pre-existing ethnic community."[140] According to the segmented assimilation theory, the outcome of the process depends on how these factors mediate with each other. And thus, both the obstacles and the background determinants can be potential challenges for the two groups of this study. In addition to recognize and categorize challenges Mexican and Polish Americans face in Chicago, the theory also recognizes important aspects in regards to how these challenges can be addressed. And thus, the theory is an important part in the investigation of how Mexican and Polish Americans use soccer to address the challenges they face in Chicago.

The concept of transnationalism is also applied to the topics investigated in this thesis. First, although they may vary in strength and degree, transnational activities can be important in ethnic identities. Because of technological improvements, Mexican and Polish Americans are able to watch soccer matches from the country of their ancestors in their living room in Chicago. Second, the transnational activities are important in how Mexican and Polish Americans use soccer to address the challenges they face in Chicago. Both *Sector Latino*, a Mexican-American supporter club, and *Fire Ultras 98*, a Polish-American supporter club, rely on connection to their members' former homes as part of their supporter cultures. Finally, transnationalism is important in order to understand how Mexican and Polish American are able to portray themselves as resources in Chicago. There are forces that work at various levels in order to develop soccer into a mainstream sport in the United States. This can be seen in how transnationalism from "above" is pushing soccer both worldwide and in the United States. Major League Soccer (MLS) was established as part of an agreement with FIFA, the international soccer association. Likewise, global corporations, such as *Coca Cola*,

McDonalds, and *Visa,* to name a few, are part heavily involved in promoting soccer through their sponsorship.

3 Mexican Americans

This chapter investigates the role of soccer in the contemporary Mexican-American ethnic community in Chicago. It does this by examining three related topics which are discussed in separate sections. The first section investigates how soccer provides not only a sense of ethnic identity, but also arenas for Mexican Americans to formulate and celebrate their ethnicity. The second section discusses how Mexican Americans use soccer to address the challenges they face in Chicago. In this discussion, the emphasis will primarily be on education. The third section investigates how soccer enables Mexican Americans to challenge negative stereotypes and portray themselves as resources for the host society. In addition, a fourth, and final, section concludes this chapter.

This chapter is based on various primary sources and secondary sources. The primary sources are observations by the author on site, blog entries, the American Community Survey Data (ACS) and oral history interviews with three narrators from the Mexican-American soccer scene in Chicago. The narrators should not be understood as members in a representative sample. Neither should their experience by any means be seen as universal for Chicago's entire Mexican-American population. Nevertheless, the interviews are significant as they provide personal experience and comments to the topic of this investigation from inside the community. Another source of qualitative data is participant observation. The author has been able to attend an informal soccer practice in Marquette Park, organized by *Tangas* for the neighborhood community. A concert in Cicero, in which members from *Sector Latino* were gathered, has also been observed. In addition to interviews and observations, blog entries from Gregory Tejada, a third-generation Mexican-American freelance writer from Chicago, are used to shed light upon the topic. Furthermore, data from ACS, which is part of the constantly on-going survey conducted by the United States' Census Bureau, is used to provide statistics on Mexican Americans in Chicago. Through the material provided by the ACS, it is also possible to compare and contrast the Mexican-American community in Chicago to their co-ethnic community nationwide, and to the Chicago average. By comparing data from the 2007-2009 ACS with the 2010-2012 ACS, one is able to identify recent developments within the Mexican-American community.

The secondary sources in this chapter are mainly newspaper articles and scholarly articles and books. The newspaper articles are from both ethnic newspapers, such as *Vivelo Hoy,* and from mainstream newspapers, like *Chicago Tribune.* In addition to these articles, the chapter also uses articles from *Chicago Fire*'s website. Most of the academic scholarship used in this chapter has already been presented in Chapter 2. Conzen et al., and their article on "the invention of ethnicity," is the foundation for how ethnicity is understood, not only in this chapter, but throughout the thesis.

Other scholarly investigations of ethnicity, however, are also consulted and applied when necessary. The concept of "segmented assimilation," which is a theory that portrays three possible outcomes of the assimilation process, is used to identify the challenges of the Mexican American experience. For the most part, Alejandro Portes and Rúben G. Rumbaut's *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation,* Min Zhou's "Growing Up American: The Challenge Confronting Immigrant Children and Children of Immigrants," and William Haller, Alejandro Portes and Scott M. Lynch's "Dreams Fulfilled, Dreams Shattered: Determinants of Segmented Assimilation in the Second Generation," are used to discuss "segmented assimilation." Other studies focusing primarily on Mexican Americans also provide a more specific account for the particular challenges of that particular group. Finally, the scholarship on soccer, in particular, and sports, in general, are used to shed light on the role soccer plays in the creation of Mexican American ethnicity, and how soccer address the challenges they face in Chicago.

Although Mexican Americans often are perceived as a uniform group, the more than a million Mexican Americans in the greater Chicago area differ from each other in many respects.[141] The first census that includes information on place of birth, the 1850 census, reported that there were thirty people living in Illinois who were born in Mexico.[142] Although small in size, the early Mexican immigration to Chicago made Mexicans part of the city's urban landscape. When José María Velasco visited Chicago as part of a Mexican delegation to the 1893 World's Fair, Velasco writes in a letter that he was able to buy "Mexican tamales" from a Mexican who sold food at a street-corner.[143] This suggests that the history of Chicago's Mexican-American community begins prior to the mass immigration from Mexico in the twentieth century. In addition to differences related to time of arrival and between generations, the Mexican-American community in Chicago differs in socioeconomic aspects. Furthermore, the group is composed of both legal and illegal immigrants, as well as members

from the working-class, middle-class and upper-class. Thus, the Mexican-American community should not be understood as a homogenous group.

Although it is impossible to represent the diversity of the group through the narration of only three of the group's members, some of the differences within the community are reflected by the three narrators interviewed for this chapter. *Sector Latino* member and Chicago Fire fan Salvador Mares can be categorized as a second-generation Mexican American as he is born in the United States by immigrant parents. However, the owner of *Atletico Nacional*, Mario Calleros and Rigo Alonso, one of the owners of Tangancicuaro, are more difficult to place within the framework of this terminology. Because Rigo moved to Chicago when he was seven, he fits into the category of foreign born immigrants. However, Rigo exemplifies what Rubén Rumbaut has identified as the "one-and-a-half generation."[144] Although Rigo was born in Mexico, he shares many of the characteristics of the second-generation because he grew up in the United States. To be sure, as Rigo points out, he was "raised by American books."[145] The term "one-and-a-half generation" refers to children who somehow can be seen in between the first- and the second-generation. Mario Calleros, on the other hand, seems far more difficult to frame within these concepts. On the one hand, he was born in the United States, and thus, may be labeled as part of the second generation. Nevertheless, as he grew up in Mexico between the ages of ten and fifteen, before moving back to Chicago, Mario's experience seems to share more similarities with the experiences of those in either the first-generation or the one-and-a-half generation. Although the concepts of first-, one-and-a-half- and second-generation, are useful in the study of ethnic groups, Mario exemplifies the fact that these categories are not always able to frame the complexity of the individual experiences.

3.1 Ethnic Identity

As discussed in-depth in the previous chapter, an ethnic identity is an "identity" that is forged through social interactions. This identity is based on both cultural differences between people and cultural similarities among people. As already pointed out, Mexican Americans constitute a heterogeneous community. Nevertheless, despite the many differences within the ethnic group, in regards to aspects like regional origin, class, education, time in Chicago and legal status, Mexican Americans are unified through various cultural elements. As pointed out in Conzen et al., one of the reasons behind the creation of ethnicity is to find a "symbolic

umbrella of the ethnic culture" with which members of the ethnic community can identify.[146] An ethnic group is often defined as a group of people who share a common origin, religion, language and culture. These elements can be seen as the "symbolic umbrella" that ties members of ethnic groups together. In other words, a significant part of Mexican-American identity can be found in identification with the distinct symbolic umbrella. For instance, a specific religion, Catholicism, can be seen as an element that unifies the Mexican-American community. For many Mexican Americans, Catholicism is incorporated into their ethnic identity, and as many as 80 percent of the Mexican Americans consider themselves Catholic.[147] This investigation will focus upon other aspect of ethnic identity, such as ideas related to a common origin, language and culture, and how soccer transmits these shared elements. However, an ethnic identity is not only created through cultural similarities, but also through cultural differences. As Eriksen points out, ethnic identities are "based on a contrast vis-à-vis others."[148] A Mexican-American identity, then, can be seen as cultural aspects that make Mexican Americans distinct from members of other groups.

For Mexican Americans in Chicago, soccer provides a sense of common origin. This notion is perhaps the most central aspect of ethnic identity in general. As Maxine Schwartz Seller argues, ethnic groups are constituted upon a mutual "consciousness of a common historical past."[149] As both amateur and professional soccer provide various links to a Mexican heritage, soccer can be seen as part of Mexican-American identity. In amateur soccer, for instance, the links to origin can be seen in the names of Mexican-American soccer clubs in Chicago. Most teams are either named after a Mexican town, city or region, such as *Tangancicuaro* (Tangas), which has its name from a Mexican municipality with the same name, or they have names adopted from successful clubs in Mexico, such as *Atletico Nacional*. Originally, these teams consisted of people who originated from the same geographical area.[150] And thus, the Mexican-American soccer scene in the tri-state area reflects the divisions within the ethnic group in relation to "regional origin" portrayed by Conzen and associates.[151] However, these teams that initially were put together by people from distinct towns, cities or regions in Mexico have become more diversified as part of the American experience. Because teams began to recruit in the Mexican-American community in Chicago, regional origin in Mexico became less important.[152] And thus, the clubs have developed from being based on regional origin towards being centered on a Mexican origin.

Professional soccer can also be seen as a source creating notions of shared origin. For Mexican Americans, Mexican soccer has been accessible for a long time. The Mexican national team has played in the United States on a, more or less, regular basis since the 1970s. These matches have been both official matches organized by the Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) and exhibition matches. Because of the passion Mexican Americans have for soccer, and the size of the Mexican-American population, major corporations, such as Miller and Budweiser, have frequently sponsored exhibition matches featuring the Mexican national team, and other professional soccer teams from Mexico, on American soil.[153] As these matches are organized and sponsored by global corporations and institutions, they can be seen in light of the concept of transnationalism from "above."[154] However, although matches with Mexican teams are frequently organized in every city in the United States with a sizeable Mexican American population, including Chicago, these matches are no longer the only opportunity to watch Mexican soccer. With current technological development, Mexican professional soccer is easily accessible through television or internet. And thus, for Mexican Americans interested in soccer, the easy access to Mexican soccer creates opportunities to preserve a connection their geographic origins through a sport. This seems to reflect Portes, who claim that new technology has made transnational ties easier to maintain.[155] Watching Mexican soccer in Chicago can be seen as a way to link origin and settlement, in other words, soccer can be seen in relation to both transnationalism and ethnic identity.

To be involved with soccer, as either a player or a fan, can be seen as part of an ethnic identity. As Mike Cronin and David Mayall point out, members of ethnic groups may "express their distinct ethnic identity by participating in or supporting a (native) sport or team."[156] By doing this, they claim that involvement in sports can be part of ethnic identification, which seems to be the case when it comes to Mexican Americans in Chicago. The people interviewed for this study understand soccer as something "Mexican." And thus, as they see it themselves, being involved in soccer is part of an understanding of Mexican American culture. In *Offside: Soccer & American Exceptionalism,* a study in which the status of soccer in the United States is understood as an "American exceptionalism", Andrei S. Markovits and Steven L. Hellerman, define sports culture as "what people breathe, read, discuss, analyze, compare, and historicize."[157] Although Markovits and Hellerman argue that soccer is not part of mainstream America's sports culture, soccer is part of what can be seen

as Mexican-American sports culture. For many Mexican Americans in Chicago, soccer most definitely is what they "breathe, read, discuss, analyze, compare and historicize."

This view of soccer's role in the community is reflected in the interviews with both Mario Calleros and Rigo Alonso. As Mario points out, there is no other sport that is more popular in Mexico than soccer.[158] Likewise, Rigo claims that soccer is "the number one sport" in Mexico.[159] However, soccer in Mexico, is not only an important sport, but is part of what can be seen as "sports culture." For Mario, "soccer is definitely a big part" of what he considers to be Mexican culture. The interviews were conducted at a time where it looked like Mexico would not qualify for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. Although the lack of success on the soccer field probably is far from what Conzen et al. had in mind when they argue that crisis in the "homeland" may gather members of the ethnic community in the United States, for Mexican-Americans soccer fans, soccer results are tied to the fate of the "homeland."[160] "What they are going through now in Mexico, not qualifying to the World Cup, that is just devastating," says Mario.[161] Both Mario and Rigo emphasize that it would not only be devastating for the soccer fans in Mexico, but moreover, would be so to the entire economy. Furthermore, when Rigo talks to his friends, one of the topics they often talk about is the state of Mexican soccer. And thus, as soccer is a topic that Mexican Americans not only "breathe," but also discuss and analyze, it seems that soccer, in the words of Conzen et al., "provide[s] the basis for solidarity among the potential members of the group."[162] In other words, to participate in the Mexican-American soccer scene is both a link between members of the group, and a link to their shared origin and historical past.

This shared sense of a historical past is strengthened by the language Mexican Americans use when they participate in soccer related activities. Language and identity are not only closely related, but they also interact and influence each other.[163] As Portes and Rumbaut argue, language is an important part of ethnic identity as it provides an idea of "we-ness" and connection to "a common historical past."[164] In Cook County, as many as 87.1 percent of the Mexican American population speaks Spanish at home, in Chicago's two other counties, the percentage is lower as 80.1 and 75.9 percent speak Spanish, in DuPage and Will County, respectively.[165] Although language is an important part of ethnic identity for other ethnic groups in the United States, it seems to be more important for Spanish speaking ethnic groups than members of other ethnic groups. According to Richard Alba, ethnic groups in the United States tend to lose knowledge of the language of their origin in the third-generation.

Among Hispanics, however, the pattern of language assimilation seems to differ from other ethnic groups as the knowledge of Spanish remains strong into the third-generation.[166] An obvious reason for this is the influx of Mexican immigrants keeping the Spanish language alive. As a large segment of both the second- and the third-generation Mexican-American community speaks the same language as Mexican immigrants, language may create a "we-ness" that unifies the Mexican American community over a longer period of time.

Through soccer, Mexican Americans are frequently in contact with Spanish, as either actively or passively participants in various forms of communication. By watching matches broadcasted from Mexico at the television or the computer, for example, Mexican Americans are exposed to Spanish-language commentaries. It is not only Mexican soccer, however, that transmits Spanish, but matches from La Liga, the premier division in Spain, obviously also have Spanish-speaking commentators. Furthermore, Chicago Fire matches are broadcasted on a local Spanish-speaking radio station. Soccer also enables Mexican Americans to be more actively involved in communication in Spanish. *Sector Latino*, for instance, uses only Spanish as they sing and cheer for the Chicago Fire. Likewise, as the author of this study experienced, at an informal soccer get-together organized by *Tangas,* communication on the field was in Spanish. Although communication with the players outside of the field proved that the players spoke English fluently, the players communicated with each other in Spanish. Rigo Alonso states that every team within the club use Spanish when they communicate.[167] Likewise, the same is true in *Atletico Nacional,* according to Mario Calleros.[168] Because both professional and amateur soccer promote Spanish, soccer transmits an idea of Mexican-American "we-ness" through language. Consequently, soccer provides a sense of ethnic identity for Mexican Americans.

So far, this chapter has focused on how soccer provides a sense of Mexican-American ethnic identity by transmitting what can be seen as shared origin, culture and language. However, the dynamic nature of ethnicity has not yet been explored. Ethnic identities are social construction constantly being re-negotiated and re-constructed to reflect the ethnic experience in Chicago. As Conzen et al. argue, ethnic identities are constructed in order to solve the conflict between the "duality" of "foreigness" and the "Americanness" that Americans with an ethnic background experience.[169] This conflict is reflected in the interviews with Salvador Mares and Rigo Alonso. As Salvador puts it, sometimes he has felt that he is "neither American nor Mexican," but somewhat "in between." When he visits

family in Mexico and talks to his Mexican cousins, they tell him that his Spanish is "kind of bad" because he is an American or a "Gringo." Likewise, in the United States, Salvador explains, people tell him: "your English is kind of funny, because you're Mexican or because you speak Spanish more or something like that."[170] Rigo also points to language as an element in which being Mexican American is difficult. "Some might criticize you for maybe not speaking properly the language of Spanish," Rigo states. To be sure, as Rigo argues "a real Mexican will tell right away if you are Mexican or not." When Rigo travels to Mexico and visits his family, which he does every two years or so, he does not feel Mexican. "It does feel a little weird," he explains, "because the way you dress, the way you talk, the way you act, is totally different from the real typical Mexican." And thus, "we can tell, and they can tell that we are different."[171] What both Salvador and Rigo comment upon is a conflict between two cultures.

As Mexican Americans may be considered "Mexican" in one situation, while "American" in another, Mexican-American ethnicity is situational. This illustrates how Thomas Hylland Eriksen describes ethnic identities as "based on a contrast vis-à-vis others."[172] As the stories of Rigo and Salvador illustrate, their ethnicity depends on who they interact with. In interaction with the dominant group in Chicago, cultural aspects, such as language, make them different than mainstream "Americans." However, when Rigo and Salvador interact with Mexicans in Mexico, they become "Americans." And thus, as Ronald Cohen argues, ethnic labels depend upon the relation between the actors involved in the interaction.[173] In many aspects, the creation of Mexican-American ethnicity can be seen as negotiations that attempt to solve the contradiction between this "duality."

For Salvador Mares, soccer is an arena in which he negotiates the "duality." When the United States played against Panama in the 2013 Gold Cup final, Salvador was wearing the USA jersey although he "kind of wanted Panama to win". The reason he wore the American jersey was "only because of how they are using Mexican players." Salvador explains: "I don't like the US National team, but I like certain players." The Mexican-American players on the United States national team represent Salvador's experience as a Mexican American. "I feel if I were to be professional, I would be in their exact same shoes," Salvador remarks. And, although he "would like to play for Mexico," Salvador says: "I feel like I would be playing for the United States." Whereas players with Hispanic origins now frequently appear at every age group of the national team, Salvador "didn't grow up seeing many Mexican American

players." However, Salvador believes that successful Mexican-American players are crucial as role models for children with the same ethnic background. As Salvador points out: "I think it is good to have those kind of players playing now so the kids growing up can be like, I can cheer for the US and not be ashamed of it, or not be embarrassed, because these players are just like me."[174] For Salvador, and other Mexican Americans, professional Mexican-American soccer players are important as role models in the process of formulating ethnic identities. These players illustrate that it is possible to be both "Mexican" and "American." Consequently, soccer serves as an arena in which Mexican-American ethnicity is negotiated.

Through events, such as soccer matches featuring the Mexican national team, soccer gathers Mexican Americans in celebration of their ethnicity. For instance, as Peter Karl points out in "Gold Cup Final USA vs Mexico: Border, Burritos and Budweisers," when the Mexican national team plays in the United States, the event turns into an ethnic celebration. "Dressed in Mexican wrestling masks, headdresses, Aztec warrior suits, and countless of Chicharito jerseys, the Mexicans are here for a festival, not a football match," argues Karl.[175] Furthermore, these matches present opportunities for Mexican Americans to forge a sphere in which they are the protagonists. As they gather to watch the Mexican national team, Mexican Americans are able to celebrate a notion of "Mexicaness," while at the same time, claim their rights to the public sphere. Commenting upon Mexican Americans' support of the Mexican National team, Gregory Tejeda, a third-generation Mexican American in Chicago, argues that following the Mexican national team is neither "un-American" nor "separatists;" but, on the contrary, "it just means that some of us are conscious of where we come from and who we are."[176] And thus, Tejeda argues that celebration of ethnic identities is part of what it means to be American.

For those who visit Toyota Park for one of Chicago Fire's home matches, the supporter group named *Sector Latino* illustrates the possibility to celebrate ethnicity, while at the same time show loyalty to the United States. Repeatedly chanting "Vamos Chicago" as they jump to the beat created by drums and cowbells, while waving Chicago's municipal flag, *Sector Latino* illustrates what can be seen as a re-creation of contemporary Mexican-American ethnicity in Chicago. In 2005, Walter Arredondo and some of his friends started the group "to bring something new to the Chicago Fire passion." Inspired by soccer fans in Mexico, they bring parts of Mexican fan culture to Toyota Park. Through trumpets, percussion, flags, banners and songs, *Sector Latino* creates an atmosphere similar to those in

Mexico. However, as Arredondo comments, the group is "in some ways breaking traditions." Rather than supporting Mexican teams, *Sector Latino* has members who "now love the Chicago Fire more than the clubs that their families love." By supporting the Chicago Fire, Mexican Americans are able to celebrate their ethnicity, and at the same time, show their loyalty to their home, Chicago[177]. The creation of *Sector Latino* reflects what Alba, Kasinitz and Waters recognize as "cultural creativity," as the group use ethnic culture to adjust to Chicago and the American experience.[178]

One of the members who now love the Fire more than his favorite Mexican club is Salvador Mares. When Salvador's favorite Mexican team, Club America, came to play against the Chicago Fire, Salvador "was kind of stuck between who to really cheer for." As he explains: "Club America is my team from Mexico and the Fire is my team from the United States." When the match began, however, Salvador had decided to stand in the section with *Sector Latino* and support the Chicago Fire. As usual, during the match, *Sector Latino* sang, played drums, and waved various flag to support the Fire through both vision and sound. For Salvador, however, what he experienced at that match, is the very essence of ethnic identity:

> While we were singing, we had our flags up, and one of the flags that came up was an American flag. So, I felt like, you know, singing in Spanish, while having an American flag… I felt a connection in my heart, like this flag represents who we are, you know. And even though people might think that America only have Black people or White people, [they] have to know that America has people from all over the world. And that's when I felt like a real American at that point. [179]

Whereas *Sector Latino* gives a Mexican-American flavor to Toyota Park, the Mexican-American amateur soccer scene creates a similar atmosphere in Chicago's many parks and soccer fields. Pescador argues that in soccer matches between Mexican-American amateur teams, "soccer players, their families, relatives, and friends, along with the food vendors, the musicians, and the spectators Mexicanize the urban landscape." [180] And thus, amateur soccer creates a sphere for Mexican Americans to gather around cultural aspects such as language, food, soccer and music. For Salvador Mares, watching soccer matches between Mexican American teams was a childhood ritual. As Salvador was growing up, his father brought him to Douglas Park. As Salvador explains, "the park is kind of famous," and "if you play soccer, you know where that park is at."[181] In a time before Chicago Fire, Douglas Park was the place for the highest level of soccer in Chicago. Although Salvador and his father primarily went there to watch soccer, they always brought a ball along so they could play some themselves.

Soccer can be seen as an arena that incorporates the diversity within the Mexican American community. For instance, as Pescador argues, the Mexican-American amateur soccer scene functions as "a border space between players and sponsors, and recently arrived Mexican immigrants and middle-class Mexican Americans."[182] This can be seen in the case of *Atletico Nacional*. In order to recruit the best players available to his club, Mario Calleros often look to Mexico. Because he owns a staffing agency, Mario is able to offer potential players work in exchange for their service on the field.[183] In other words, soccer serves as an arena where both immigrants and American-born Mexican Americans from various socioeconomic backgrounds are physically gathered through their shared interest in soccer. By creating these meeting places, amateur soccer contributes to a sphere where social interaction between members of the group can both celebrate and negotiate their ethnicity, as is illustrated below. Likewise, matches featuring the Mexican national team gather Mexican Americans in pubs and in the stands. And thus, soccer, in the words of Conzen et al., "provide[s] the basis for solidarity among the potential members of the group."[184]

For Salvador and his father, and for other Mexican Americans, parks become arenas where they can celebrate the positive aspects of their ethnicity, either by watching their co-ethnics in a high level soccer match, or by kicking the ball around themselves. Furthermore, in Chicago's vibrant amateur soccer scene, Mexican Americans are not a minority, but on the contrary, they have transformed the city's soccer landscape into an arena where Mexican Americans are the majority. Consequently, soccer functions as an arena where Mexican Americans can celebrate the success of their ethnic group. This can be seen in how *Vivelo Hoy*, a Chicago based Spanish-language newspaper, in its numerous articles portray the success of Mexican American clubs and players. For instance, in an article after the CLASA final in 2011, *Vivelo Hoy* portrays *Atlético Nacional's* victory as a "glorious" achievement. However, the article not only emphasizes the club's success in 2011, but also, the article describes how the club's "rich history" is a result of the Mexican-American experience.[185] And thus, the article reflects Pescador's argument that soccer can be seen as an arena in which Mexican Americans "celebrate a notion of Mexicanness based on the Mexican experience in the United States."[186] Furthermore, the success of Mexican-American soccer establishes an alternative narrative to the many stories in which Mexican Americans are portrayed negatively.

The CLASA final is important to the Mexican American community. The attendance of the CLASA final can be up to 8,000. When *Atletico Nacional* qualifies for the final, as the owner of the club, Mario Calleros is approached by people from all over the city and vicinity, including the radio station. Mario explains that people he has never met before come up to him and tell him: "Hey, I came from close to Wisconsin to come watch you guys." Mario has also received phone calls from California with people telling him: "we saw the highlights that you guys own. I used to live out there. We used to root for this team." From being a team in the lowest division of the CLASA operation, *Atletico Nacional* has become a successful symbol for Mexican Americans to rally around. The development of *Atletico Nacional* can perhaps best be described through what a player told Mario: "Before, *Nacional* was just another team, just like all those teams that are out there, you know. [But] *Nacional* is not just *Nacional* anymore, *Nacional*, now, is a community."[187] Likewise, Rigo Alonso claims that "being in CLASA is pride more than anything." If you manage to reach the play offs, "people notice that." The pride and prestige of CLASA can be seen in the number of attendances the league attracts compared to other leagues in Chicago. Rigo explains that "if you play with National League, which is a good league [and] come to the final, there are hardly any people there." Likewise, Hispano, another Hispanic league, had only about 300 people watching their final.[188] Although an attendance of a couple of hundreds is not too bad for amateur soccer, it is low compared to the attendance of the CLASA final. And thus, CLASA is an important arena for Mexican Americans to celebrate their successful experience.

Expectations related to gender roles are also negotiated and re-interpreted through soccer. Although soccer is the most popular sport in Mexico, the sport has traditionally been a male domain. As the head coach of the Mexican women's national team Leonardo Cuellar explains, when he began coaching the national team, "it was rare to see a younger girl play."[189] Whereas masculinity has been linked with soccer in Mexico, in the United States, soccer has traditionally, at least to some degree, been seen as a sport played by either "foreigners" or women. For Mexican-American girls, the different understandings towards soccer and gender between Mexican and American culture must be negotiated. In many aspects, this negotiation reflects how Vicky L Ruíz argues that Mexican-American girls and women have "selected, retained, borrowed, and created their own cultural forms."[190] The establishment and development of female soccer in Rigo Alonso's club, *Tangas*, illustrates how cultural ideas are re-interpreted through interactions, not only within the Mexican-American community, but between the ethnic community and the mainstream community.

To be sure, in the beginning, Rigo Alonso was not especially fond of the idea of creating a team for girls within *Tangas*. His daughter, however, made him change his mind. When his daughter was six, she played for another team. But one day, she asked Rigo: "why can't you have a girls' team, why just for boys?" Rigo began to think that his daughter might be right, and as other coaches and players in the club had daughters and sisters who wanted to play soccer, a team was put together. For the first couple of years, the girls' team struggled both to provide players and results. The main problem, however, was not to find enough players that wanted to join the team, but rather to find enough parents who would let their daughters join. The parental generation's "way of thinking is that a woman cannot be playing soccer," as the sport "is not for girls … [but] for boys," Rigo explains. Needless to say, these attitudes made it difficult to keep the team running. Into the third year of operation, however, the team began to receive approval. The source of the newborn approval can be found outside of the Mexican-American community. Rigo recalls that the captain on the team asked: "why don't we get White girls on our team along with Mexican girls." The club listened to the captain and recruited nine White players, which according to Rigo "changed the whole thing." As the new girls were brought in, the team began to win. The fact that the team was winning was extremely important as less Mexican-American girls were denied to play by their parents. Furthermore, as the team became more successful on the field, more people began to come to their matches. As a consequence, girls who were still not allowed to play, according to Rigo, began to say: "I don't care if my mom or dad doesn't want me to play, I want to be part of that team."[191]

In many aspects, this story illustrates how soccer provides an arena in which ethnic identities are both celebrated and formulated. For the Mexican-American girls involved, playing soccer can be seen as an activity that links them to both Mexican and American culture. These girls have, in the words of Ruiz, have "selected" and "borrowed" elements from both cultures, and adjusted and applied them to their experience. By playing soccer, the girls celebrate both notions of being American, as female soccer is part of American culture, and, being Mexican as they participate in Mexico's national sport. This exemplifies how soccer can function as an arena for interactions between the ethnic group and the dominant culture. However, the story also shows how soccer serves as an arena for negotiations within the ethnic community. In this example, the negotiations were primarily between the parental generation and the second-generation. Finally, this story illustrates how soccer is an arena for celebration of ethnicity. For the girls involved, soccer can be seen as celebrating their

Mexican American ethnicity. Furthermore, as the team became more successful, more people began to watch the matches.

The history and development of the Mexican-American soccer scene in Chicago reflects how soccer functions as an arena for the construction of ethnicity. Although the soccer scene might seem as a replication of Mexican tradition at first glance, it becomes clear that the soccer scene is a unique product of the Mexican-American experience in the city. As Part of this experience, soccer functions as an arena to both celebrate and formulate ethnicity. This can be seen in how Mexican-American girls, through interaction within the Mexican-American community and with the mainstream community, negotiate ethnic culture and gender roles. By playing soccer, these girls are able to participate in an activity that is considered both "Mexican" and "American." In other words, soccer is applied to solve the contradiction between "foreigness" and "Americanness," which Conzen et al. identifies as one of the functions ethnic culture serves.[192] Likewise, for Salvador Mares, attending Chicago Fire matches with other members of *Sector Latino* provides opportunities to celebrate his ethnicity. At these matches, the atmosphere in *Sector Latino's* section is definitely "Mexican," but at the same time, the support also links them to Chicago. To support Chicago Fire is a way to be both "Mexican" and "American," or to put it in another way, to be Mexican American.

3.2 Challenges

Mexican Americans actively use soccer to address the challenges they face in Chicago. As Pescador argues, "soccer clubs have sometimes served as the first step in a process of association to voice social needs in the community."[193] This section investigates how soccer is used to prevent "downward assimilation" in the Mexican-American community. In the following investigation, the emphasis will be on education. According to Portes and Rumbaut, Mexican Americans "represent *the* textbook example" of an ethnic group in danger of downward assimilation.[194] As discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 2, downward assimilation is one of the three trajectories of the assimilation process outlined in the segmented assimilation theory. In *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants,* Robert Courtney Smith simplifies the model as a process in which the outcome is either "positive" or "negative" assimilation.[195] In this simplified model, "negative" assimilation refers to "downward assimilation," or what Herbert Gans terms as "the second

generation decline."[196] The term "positive" assimilation refers to traditional assimilation and to the second trajectory of the segmented assimilation, in which people are assimilated into ethnic groups. According to the theory, "the proliferation of gangs and drugs" as an alternative to education is not only seen as an obstacle, but also, it is used as an indicator of downward assimilation.[197] Soccer, however, is used as a tool to promote education among Mexican Americans.

Statistics show that Mexican Americans have less education than the population in general. Among the population over 25 years old in the United States, 85.9 percent has a high- school degree or higher, compared to 57.6 percent among Mexican Americans. In the three counties of this study, the percentages of those with at least a high-school degree varies. Whereas 57.2 percent of the Mexican-American population in Cook County has a high-school degree or higher, 64.4 percent does in DuPage County and 63.7 percent does in Will County. The larger amount of high-school graduates in DuPage and Will County can probably be explained within the socioeconomic differences among the three counties. Both DuPage and Will County score high on educational attainment as both counties have more than 90 percent with at a degree from high school or higher education in their general population. And thus, compared to these counties' average, Mexican Americans in the two counties are still far behind as only about 60 percent have a high school degree or higher.[198] These numbers suggest that lack of education is a challenge for the Mexican American community in the Chicago metropolitan area.

However, although Mexican Americans seem to be far behind the rest of the population when it comes to education, compared to previous years, the educational level of the group is slowly, but steadily growing. Whereas the 2007-2009 ACS reported that 54.7 percent of Mexicans Americans over 25 had a high school degree or higher, the same category had grown with 2.9 percent to 57.6 percent in the most recent survey, the 2010-2012 ACS. The numbers for Cook, DuPage and Will County show a similar growth. Likewise, the two surveys show that the percentage of Mexican Americans over 25 with less than a high school diploma is decreasing. In the 2007-2009 ACS, 45.3 percent of the U.S. Mexican American population had not finished high school, compared to 42.4 percent in the 2010-2012 ACS. [199] Although these figures show a positive development of education among Mexican Americans, some scholars claim that the progress is irrelevant. Haller, Portes and Lynch, for instance, argue that although the second-generation seems to move beyond their

parents, the progress is of little importance as "the very low educational and occupational backgrounds of many immigrant parents implies that their children could scarcely go lower."[200] Other scholars, however, like Alba, Kasinitz and Waters use the improvement in education, among other things, to point out that "The Kids are (Mostly) Alright."[201]

Nevertheless, regardless of this debate, education is a challenge for the Mexican-American community in Chicago. Education is frequently used as an indicator in the process of integration among children of immigrants. School performance is seen as a signal for the outcome of integration as upward mobility is linked with academic success.[202] In many aspects, the prospects of the American educational system, in which public education and scholarship opportunities are believed to create equal opportunities for students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, are an illusion. Instead of providing equal opportunities, schools, in the words of Keniston et al., are "arenas of injustice."[203] Rather than removing pre-existing socioeconomic differences, schools re-produce these differences. This finding of socioeconomic re-production within the educational system is identified by various scholars Coleman et al., for instance, report that children with well-educated parents and pupils enrolled in schools where most of their peers come from middle-class families have most academic success.[204] Although the combination of high social capital among parents and socioeconomic characteristics of the school district most often transform into successful education in privileged districts, it is not only the combination that converts into good grades. As Davis argues, among African-American and Latin-American children from disadvantaged families, those who attend suburban schools outperform those who are enrolled in inner—city schools.[205] As most Mexican-American students in Chicago live in Cook County, and have parents with less education and income than the average population, they have disadvantages that make educational success a challenge.

Soccer, however, is both directly and indirectly improving the prospects of educational achievement among Mexican Americans in Chicago. The direct connection between soccer and education can be seen in how soccer is actively used to promote education among Mexican Americans. According to Juan Javier Pescador, one of the "explicit goals" when *CLASA* was established was to "improve the education of Latino youth in the city."[206] Through the organization's newspaper, CLASA does not only write about sports, but also, it provides the community with information about grants and fellowships that may increase the possibilities of educational realization.[207] Likewise, in an attempt to do something with the

high dropout rate among Mexican Americans, the *United Neighborhood Organization* has created a Soccer Academy in Chicago. The idea behind the academy is to connect soccer and education in an attempt to improve the educational level among Mexican American children.[208] As Portes and Fernández-Kelly point out, the programs and organizations that are most successful in guiding unprivileged adolescents through higher education are "grounded, invariably, in knowledge of the cultural and language" of the ethnic group.[209] Because soccer is incorporated into Mexican-American culture, educational programs based on soccer may be especially helpful in Mexican Americans' education.

Portes and Fernández-Kelly also identify the significance that a "really significant other" and "outside help" may have on educational success.[210] They report that among those who manage to graduate from college, despite of an underprivileged background, "the appearance of a *really* significant other" was "a constant."[211] This "other" could be anyone with "the necessary knowledge and experience to guide the student in the right direction."[212] The amateur soccer community provides both "outside help" and "really significant others" to the Mexican-American children who play soccer. This can be seen in how Rigo Alonso functions as a "significant other" for players in *Tangas*. As he states: "As long as you keep someone away from the streets I think that you have accomplished something." What motivates Rigo to continue his work in *Tangas*, is knowing that he may make a difference for the community's youth. He explains that "the greatest thing about soccer" is when he is approached with positive feedback by former players on the street or in the grocery store. To be greeted by players he has not seen or been in contact with, for perhaps as many as ten years, tells Rigo that he has done something right. As Rigo emphasizes "every kid that we save and graduates from college is another point in our favor."[213] In many aspects, Rigo seems to answer the call expressed by the head coach of the United States National Team, Jürgen Klinsmann, who when talking to a conference organized by US Youth Soccer, addressed the responsibility of coaches in youth soccer to "give a positive guidance."[214]

Furthermore, soccer may provide a path for educational progress for Mexican Americans. Mario Calleros' brother is a high-school soccer coach. Mario tells how his brother has been able to get his high-school players into division one schools, with scholarships. This, according to Mario, would have been unheard of only some decades earlier.[215] As soccer has become more popular in Chicago, and the rest of the country, its potential for providing opportunities for Mexican Americans to go to college on full scholarships has grown. Rigo

Alonso explains that many of the young players in *Tangas* have received scholarships. One year, as many as ten players went to college on a soccer scholarship.[216] Because soccer clubs create an infrastructure that provides both "outside help" and "significant others" that may help and guide Mexican-American youth, soccer improves the educational prospects for Mexican Americans in Chicago.

However, soccer is not only providing educational opportunities, but, in addition, the sport also addresses an obstacle that may lead to school dropouts. By establishing leisure activities for the youth, Mexican Americans actively use amateur soccer clubs to address the potential risks of adolescents being negatively influenced by the streets. As Haller, Portes and Lynch argue, among the obstacles the second-generation face in the process of integration into American society is "the proliferation of gangs and the drug trade that provide an alternative path to staying in school and completing an education."[217] Because gang and drug activities are linked to the inner-city streets, soccer, and other alternatives that keep the Mexican-American youth away from the streets are important in order to lower the possibilities of "downward assimilation." Established in 1996, Club Mexico, according to Pescador, was created "as an after school program to keep youth off the street and especially away from the many gangs that plagued *La Vilita."*[218] Likewise, when *Tangas* started teams for children, the goal was to give opportunities for "the kids to stay off the streets." Rigo explains that "by being at practice, being at games," the children will hopefully have their minds "off drugs, off the streets, violence and all that stuff." Because creating activities for kids is the main focus for the youth program, the club does not have any try-outs. The kids who come and want to join the club are welcome regardless of their skills. "For most of them, it will probably be their first outing for soccer," Rigo explains, "so we don't want to take away their dreams or chances" to play. Rather, the philosophy of the club is that "you are welcome whether you know how to kick a ball or not." The price to play for the club is fairly low. The kids are charged 150 dollars a season, which includes jerseys, practices, matches and everything else. In addition to formal youth teams, Rigo Alonso and *Tangas* also organize more informal activities for the community to play soccer. Every Thursday, the club arranges an indoor league at Marquette Park. The league is based upon an open-enrollment, which make it a place where kids in the neighborhood can drop in and play without any registration. Because of this flexibility, kids are able to participate without making any commitments. The league is especially important during the winter, when the children of the neighborhood have few other activities available for them. And thus, for the kids in the neighborhood, *Tangas*

provides an opportunity for everyone that is interested to play.[219] *Tangas* and *Club Mexico* illustrates how Mexican Americans actively use soccer in order to create alternatives to the dangers of streets.

The kids who play soccer for *Tangas* are taught skills that are transferable beyond the soccer field. Sports in general, argues Steve Young, NFL Hall of Fame and member of the Positive Coaching Alliance National Advisory Board, provides "an incredible infrastructure" for teaching children "character building traits," such "self-confidence, team work, mental toughness, self-control and respect for others."[220] These "traits" that Steve Young points out are also recognized by Rigo Alonso. To be sure, Rigo claims that playing for the *Tangas* can be seen as "an educational program." Rigo explains that "in a way, soccer practices, soccer games, will teach you how to be a man as you are growing up." By focusing on "discipline" and "respect," the club instills important values in their players. Respecting authorities is another important aspect taught in *Tangas*. The club has strict rules for young players. The kids are "not allowed to swear," and at "practice you have to control that a 100 percent." If the players "break a rule, they know what to expect." During the time Rigo has been a coach in the club, he has only suspended two players. One of the times, a player was suspended for three games because he demonstratively removed his jersey before the game was over. "It may be silly, but it is a rule," Rigo says, and points out that removing your jersey, before the final whistle is to "not respect your teammates."[221] The values Rigo and the other coaches in *Tangas* teach their players are also taught by coaches in other Chicago clubs. As Pescador shows in his study, the coach of Club Deportivo Taximarao, Saúl Soto, actively aimed at teaching his players "discipline, self-respect, camaraderie, work ethics, competitiveness and unity," all values that Soto wanted the players to use also "outside the soccer field."[222] Likewise, Mario Calleros also believe that players on his team are taught skills and values that are transferable beyond the soccer field. [223]

Skills such as discipline, and respect for teammates and authorities may positively influence Mexican Americans' school performance. As Min Zhou argues, rejection and "rebellion against all forms of authority" can be seen as a challenge for children growing up in underprivileged segments of society.[224] However, by playing soccer in *Tangas*, kids are taught to respect the authority of the coach and follow the club's rules. A study by Zhou and Carl L Bankston finds that Vietnamese students "who reported strong orientations toward traditional family values of obedience, industriousness, and helping others were more likely to

do well in school than those who did not."[225] In many aspects, the values that proved important for the Vietnemese are values that are taught at the soccer field for Mexican Americans. In order to play you have to show "obedience" to the rules of the team and the coach. Likewise, you have to work hard and be "industriousness." Participating in a team sport also is about teamwork and helping others. In other words, the values instilled in Mexican-American children who play soccer seem to improve the chances of positive educational outcomes.

By promoting bilingualism, the Mexican-American soccer scene provides another important tool for children's education. Most scholarship prior to the 1960s concluded that bilingualism was obstacle, rather than an asset. For some scholars, the fact that some immigrants and their children preserved their native language, while, at the same time, struggled to learn English, illustrated the lack of intellectual capacity of some immigrant groups. An example of this view can be found in a 1923 study of immigrants in the army, conducted by Carl Brigham. Without paying attention to how long the immigrants had lived in the United States, Brigham concluded that immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe lacked knowledge of the English language because of the limited intellectual capacity of their people.[226] Other scholars, on the other hand, like Madorah Smith argued that it was not the lack of intellectual capacity, but bilingualism that established the challenges immigrants faced in learning English. In a study of bilingualism in Hawaii in the 1930s, Smith reported that children who practice two languages have a "language handicap." She claimed that "an important factor in the retardation of speech found in the preschool population is the attempt to make use of two languages."[227] In 1962, however, a study by Elizabeth Peal and Wallace E. Lambert reported a quite different view on bilingualism. In their study of children in Canada, Peal and Lambert compared monolingual and bilingual children and found that children who were bilingual performed better than those who only spoke one language fluently. Their findings challenged previously research, in which bilingualism was seen as an obstacle.[228] Most academic scholarship now supports the findings of the study conducted by Peal and Lambert. For instance, Roberto M. Fernández and Francois Nielsen argue that "proficiency in both English and parental native languages was positively related to academic achievement."[229] Likewise, Maria E. Matute-Bianchi reports that "advanced bilingual skills were related to a strong Mexican identity and that fully bilingual young Mexican-Americans tended to perform better in school than those who lacked proficient bilingual skills."

According to her study, Mexican Americans who speak Spanish fluently have a closer connection the ethnic community and its resources than those who do not speak Spanish.[230]

Although one could argue that the Mexican-American soccer scene promotes monolingualism, as it primarily is an arena where Spanish is spoken, soccer is also used to teach English. For instance, one of the first Mexican-American soccer clubs in Chicago, Club *Nexaca* organized English classes for the community.[231] However, although *Nexaca* shows that English has been promoted by soccer, Spanish remains the main language of the sport. As Mexican Americans learn English at school and through communication with the dominant society, soccer is an arena where their Spanish language skills are preserved. This makes most of the children involved in soccer bilingual. Nevertheless, lack of fluency in English is a problem for many Mexican Americans. To be sure, 42.6 percent of Mexican Americans in Cook County speak English "less than very well," a bigger proportion than the Mexican American population nationwide (34.3 percent) and the part in DuPage (36 percent) and Will Counties (34.7 percent). However, the size of the population that communicates "less than very well" in English in Cook County is equal in size as the population that is born outside of the United States (43 percent).[232] This may be seen to support Richard Alba who claims that it is only in "rare exceptions" that second-generation Mexican Americans are not fluent in English.[233] And thus, by promoting the Spanish language, soccer also promotes bilingualism.

One of the most important contributions of soccer in dealing with the challenges Mexican Americans face in Chicago is the role soccer plays as a link inside the Mexican-American community, especially between generations. In addition to their passionate love for soccer, what Salvador Mares, Mario Calleros and Rigo Alonso have in common is that their passion for the game is transferred to them from their parents. Salvador's interest for soccer was encouraged, if not instilled, by his father who frequently exposed him to soccer on the television or in parks. Watching soccer is an activity that Salvador and his father still enjoy together.[234] For Mario Calleros and Rigo Alonso, involvement in soccer is also a family tradition. *Atletico Nacional*, the team Mario Calleros now is the owner of, is the same team that Mario's father played for in the 1960s. Mario first got involved in the team as a player at the time when he was around eighteen.[235] Likewise, for Rigo Alonso, *Tangas* is part of a family tradition. To be sure, as *Tangas* is owned by Rigo's father, and his brother also is involved in the leadership of the club, in many ways, the family traditions involved are strong.

However, it is not only Rigo and his father that is connected through soccer, but also Rigo and his children as all three of them play soccer in various teams within *Tangas.*[236]

The intergenerational link provided through soccer, is an important aspect in the process of Mexican Americans' adjustment to Chicago. According to Portes and Rumbaut, there are three patterns of intergenerational relations. Intergenerational conflicts are low in what can be seen as "selective acculturation." Selective acculturation occurs when children and their parents assimilate at the same speed. More intergenerational friction can be found in "partial dissonant acculturation." Intergenerational conflicts occur when parents and children assimilate at different speeds. This is termed as "dissonant acculturation," which most likely leads to "role reversal."[237] Selective acculturation is seen as a sign of "positive" assimilation. Furthermore, selective acculturation occurs when the second-generation is proud of its ethnic heritage. As has been discussed in the first section of this chapter, soccer forges arenas in which Mexican Americans celebrate their ethnicity, and thus, it promotes positive aspects of ethnic culture. This is in contrast to the findings of Portes and Rumbaut, who report that among the ethnic groups included in their study, Mexican Americans "have the lowest average self-esteem."[238] Nevertheless, soccer seems to provide a positive self-image and self-esteem for the Mexican Americans who participate in the sport in Chicago.

3.3 Resources

As the previous section has shown, compared to other ethnic groups, Mexican Americans can be seen as a disadvantaged group when it comes to socioeconomic aspects. According to Min Zhou, disadvantaged groups may respond to their "disadvantaged status with different strategies." She claims that disadvantaged group may either "actively fight for acceptance by the larger society," create an ethnicity in "resistance" to the "ideology and norms of the larger society," or simply "give up" and accept being "trapped in the bottom of society." [239] These strategies do not only resemble the three trajectories of the segmented assimilation theory, but they also can be seen in light of the concept of the "invention of ethnicity." To be sure, an important role of ethnic groups is, according to Seller, their function as "social, economic, and political interest groups."[240] Also Conzen et al., understand ethnicity to incorporate what they identify as "interest group ethnicity." [241] An important part of ethnicity, they argue, is the struggle to "shift its weighting" from "negative to positive."[242] This section will investigate

how Mexican Americans use soccer to challenge the negative portrayal of their group by portraying themselves as a resource for the host society.

In *Legacies*, Portes and Rumbaut argue that Mexican Americans have been struggling against "negative modes of incorporation" for more than 100 years.[243] The attitudes towards Mexican Americans can be found how they are commonly portrayed through negative stereotypes, in which they frequently are linked to criminal activities. Adalberto Aguirre Jr. argues that a Mexican American is seen "as a potential drug smuggler or undocumented alien," in his essay entitled "Profiling Mexican Identity: Issues and Concerns."[244] In addition, the stereotypical Mexican American is believed to endanger local communities through membership of some sort of local gang. Consequently, these stereotypes portray Mexican Americans as threats to both national and local security. Not surprisingly then, as Fernando Delgado argues in "Sport and Politics: Major League Soccer, Constitution, and (The) Latino Audience(s)," Mexican Americans, and other Latinos, "have been reconstructed as mere Others."[245] And thus, Mexican Americans, both immigrants and those born in the United States, are often perceived as intruders who supposedly do not belong in the United States.

The stories from the narrators interviewed for this study support claims of racial prejudice against Mexican Americans. As Mario Calleros explains, growing up Mexican American had "its challenges." At high school, he went to a school where about 80 percent of the kids were White, 15 percent African American, and the rest 5 percent Mexican American. "We were never completely welcome," Mario explains. He says: "I wouldn't say we ever suffered bad[ly] from discrimination, but we were never the favorites here at school." Likewise, later on, when he began working Mario experienced that it often was "easier for other people to get the job," before he as a Mexican American was employed. However, talking about racial prejudice Mario says: "I never, never, thank God, I never really suffered the discrimination that I know others have." According to Mario, his parents were important in the lack of racial prejudice he faced. "I've been fortunate enough that, maybe due to the fact that, growing up in business, we always" had to be "polite and outgoing." The background from business has "opened a lot of doors for us and has made it a lot easier for us," Mario explains. Although Mario experienced some racial prejudice, the values he was taught by his parents and the support from the ethnic community helped him to cope with it.[246] This illustrates how Mario was shielded by his family and Mexican-American community, and thus, reflects Haller, Portes and Lynch's point of view as they argue that the

ethnic community may play an important role in guiding the second-generation through obstacles such as racial prejudice.[247]

Salvador has encountered racism "a fair amount of time." Most of that racism is what he labels as "ignorance." One of the occasions he remembers is from when he worked at a pool in a Black community. Part of his job was to check that people had pool passes, and when Salvador asked a lady for her passes, she showed her four tickets as she rudely asked him if he even "know how to count in English." Another example of racial prejudice against Mexican Americans can be seen in how supporters from some other MLS teams talk about *Sector* L*atino* through negative stereotypes. Rather than addressing *Sector Latino* by their name, they call them "Sector Illegal" or "Sector Burrito."[248] These disrespectful "nicknames" reflect how Mexican Americans are portrayed as "others" who allegedly do not belong in the United States, as Aguirre Jr. and Delgado argue. However, in their struggle against racial prejudice, the members of *Sector Latino* have created important alliances with other Chicago Fire fans. The support from other supporters is reflected in a "tweet" from Section 8 Chicago:

> @tomange20 @Nordecke Sector illegal? Don't you mean @SectorLatino12 aka "tu papi"? #VoteFire #smashracism[249]

In this twitter post, Section 8 Chicago addresses discrimination against *Sector Latino* members from Columbus Crew supporters. This, however, is only one of the occasions in which Section 8 Chicago has taken a stand against racism. When Chicago Fire played Montreal on October 23, 2013, Section 8 Chicago organized "Rock out Against Racism" as a pre-match concert. At the concert, Section 8 Chicago also sold t-shirts with "Section 8 Chicago – rock out against racism" printed on them. As Section 8 Chicago actively addresses racism, Mexican Americans are not alone in their struggle to, in the words of Conzen et al., shift the "weighting" of their ethnicity "from negative to positive."[250]

As illustrated in the support *Sector Latino* received from Section 8 Chicago, Mexican Americans do not stand alone in their struggle to present their ethnicity as a resource for the United States. As Fernando Delgado argues, "Major League Soccer's orientation toward Latinos implicitly challenges other discourses in contemporary U.S. culture by affirming Latino identity and difference."[251] This can be seen in how Chicago Fire actively tries to reach out to Mexican Americans. In an attempt to lure Mexican Americans to their matches, Chicago Fire has bought big Mexican stars, such as Jorge Campos and Cuauhtémoc Blanco.

Furthermore, in order to reach out to the Spanish speaking population, the entire administrative body of MLS is bilingual. March, 6, 2012, Chicago Fire announced that all of the team's matches will be broadcasted live on Spanish Radio, which illustrates how Chicago Fire actively tries to reach the Hispanic population in Chicago. Furthermore, commenting on the deal, Ricardo Otero, program director, states that "this will bring the best of sports around the world en Espanõl to our Hispanic community and we are happy to proudly embrace and support our local professional sports teams." And thus, Otero advocates that the Hispanic community should follow Chicago Fire.[252]

Much has changed since the days of Chicago Sting's participation in North American Soccer League, between 1975 and 1984, to the present. Chicago Sting never had any support from the Mexican American community. Rather than targeting Mexican Americans, the Sting aimed for the Eastern European population by signing players with Polish and German background. [253] However, today, Chicago Fire targets Mexican Americans, which suggests that there has been a change in what Haller, Portes and Lynch identify as the modes of incorporation. And thus, it seems that the attitudes of the professional soccer community toward Mexican Americans have improved. Furthermore, as Mexican Americans only went to Chicago Sting matches when the Los Angeles Aztecs arrived with Mexican star players, Mexican Americans in Chicago identified themselves not with the city's team, but rather with Mexican players.[254] Chicago Fire, on the other hand, enjoys a steady Mexican-American fan base. This suggests that Mexican Americans in Chicago feel more connected to the city; and thus, might indicate that they have begun a process of integration.

For Mexican Americans, soccer provides a sphere in society where they are considered a resource. Brad Rothenberg, co-founder of *Alianza de Futbol*, claims that "Latino talent is critically important to U.S. Soccer's future." Furthermore, in order to integrate Mexican American players into the "American" soccer scene, Rothenberg has created Alianza de Futbol, as an arena to unite the best Mexican-American youth players. The organization is based in several cities, including Chicago.[255] Likewise, Jürgen Klinsmann, the U.S. national team's coach, wants the national team to have a "Latin flavor."[256] According to Hopkins, "it takes a certain naivety to think American society is not changing and that kids today are prepared to accept the status quo of American sports."[257] And thus, the development of soccer in the United States illustrates the view of Conzen et al. who argue that "much of ethnic cultures was incorporated into changing definitions of what was American and what it meant

to be American."[258] The American soccer scene also reflects the idea of assimilation as "a bidirectional" process in which both ethnic culture and the dominant culture is influencing each other.[259] Through soccer, the boundaries between Mexican Americans and the host society is lowered, which can be seen as a process leading towards more homogeneity. Mexican Americans have already been important in the success of soccer in America this far, and the Mexican-American community is crucial for the future success of soccer in the United States."[260] As Gary Hopkins put it:

> American soccer should wake up every morning and say "gracias" to the 48 million Hispanic that call the USA home. It should further mount a statue with a huge sombrero, soccer ball and flag in honor of the Mexican-American community that constitute the majority of this demographic and who have played a vital and incredible role in soccer's commercial growth.[261]

3.4 Conclusion

As this chapter has shown soccer serves important functions in the construction of contemporary Mexican-American ethnicity in Chicago. By transmitting notions of shared origin, culture and language, soccer provides elements important in an idea of Mexican-American identity. However, because Mexican-American ethnicity is not a static category, but rather a process of continuous negotiation, these elements are constantly being negotiated. As part of Mexican-American culture, the meaning of soccer, like the significance of ethnicity itself, is negotiated through social interactions based on changing contexts of the American experience. In this process of negotiation, soccer is "broad and flexible enough" to serve the "contradictory functions" that ethnic culture, according to Conzen et al., must serve.[262] Providing cultural elements that may uniform the diverse community is one of these functions.

Another important function of soccer in the Mexican-American community in Chicago is its role in addressing the challenges Mexican Americans face in the city. As the theory of segmented assimilation outlines, education is an obstacle for the Mexican-American community. However, through the infrastructure created through amateur soccer, Mexican Americans actively address challenges concerning education. Soccer clubs provide network and knowledge that may guide Mexican-American youth who participate in soccer towards educational success. And thus, soccer clubs can be seen as what Portes and Fernández-Kelly identify as "outside help," which is believed to be significant for educational attainment

among disadvantaged students.[263] In addition, soccer clubs also instill important values and skills in young Mexican Americans who participate in the sport. By promoting bilingualism and positive self-esteem, soccer seems to lower the risks of "downward assimilation" for those involved.

Soccer might be seen as an ideal sphere for Mexican Americans to portray themselves as resources for the host society. As Van Rheenen argues, the marginalization of soccer in the United States has enabled ethnic groups to influence the sport.[264] For Mexican Americans, both the amateur soccer scene and the professional soccer scene in Chicago serve as arenas in which they are able to challenge negative stereotypes. Although the Mexican-American ethnic community alone, may not be able to shift the "weighting" of Mexican Americans from "negative to positive," to put it in the words of Conzen et al., through soccer, the ethnic community has forged alliances that are useful in order to portray Mexican Americans as resources.[265] For instance, in their struggle against racial prejudice, *Sector Latino* members are joined by other Chicago Fire fans as Section 8 Chicago actively takes a stand against racism. For the soccer community in Chicago, Mexican Americans are not only seen as important because of the atmosphere they create at Toyota Park, but they are also seen as crucial in order for the sport to continue its growth in the city. Furthermore, by promoting soccer in America, transnational forces from "above" are simultaneously aiding Mexican Americans as resources in the host society. In other words, soccer is an arena in which Mexican Americans have created alliances in order to portray themselves as resources.

4 Polish Americans

This chapter investigates the role of soccer in contemporary Polish-American ethnicity in Chicago. It does this by examining three related topics which are discussed in separate sections. The first section discusses how soccer not only provides sense of ethnic identity, but also arenas for Polish Americans to formulate and celebrate their ethnicity. The second section investigates how soccer used to address challenges Polish Americans face in Chicago. This section emphasizes on how soccer is used to solve the conflict within the Polish-American community between the "new Polonia" and the "old Polonia."[266] The third section discusses how Polish Americans use soccer to portray themselves as a resource in Chicago. A final section summarizes and concludes this chapter.

This chapter uses various primary and secondary sources. The primary sources are interviews, observations by the author and the *American Community Survey Data* (ACS). Three oral history interviews were conducted especially for this chapter. Interviews with George Gorecki, founder of *Stare Byki F.C.*, and Jacek Rudzinski, member of *Fire Ultras 98,* provide insight from the Polish-American soccer community in Chicago. These narrators reflect some of the variation in the community as George is an American-born second-generation Polish American involved in amateur soccer, while Jacek is a Polish immigrant, who arrived in Chicago as a teenager in 1981, and is involved in the city's professional soccer scene as a supporter of the *Chicago Fire.* In addition to these interviews, an interview with former Chicago Fire coach Bob Bradley is used in this section of the thesis. The author of this investigation has also observed two of *Stare Byki's* matches, a "tailgate" outside of Toyota Park, where members of *Fire Ultras* gather at game days, and a Chicago Fire match. The ACS is used to provide relevant statistics concerning the population investigated in this chapter.

The official websites of Polish-American amateur soccer clubs are important secondary sources in this chapter. These websites provide the history of the clubs; describe how the clubs view themselves; show what kind of activities the clubs organizes; and display the clubs' sponsors. In order to identify the challenges Polish Americans face in Chicago, this chapter uses "The Polish Community in Metro Chicago: A Community Profile of Strengths and Needs," a census report published by the *Polish American Association*, and Mary Patrice Erdmans' *Opposite Poles: Immigrants and Ethnics in Polish Chicago, 1976-1990*. In

addition, the scholarly literature presented in Chapter 2 is also applied to this chapter's investigation.

The Polish-American community in Chicago consists of foreign-born immigrants and descendants from three waves of immigration. The first wave of Polish immigrants settled in Chicago in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Whereas this immigration consisted mainly of people from rural areas with regional identities as Poland was not a country at the time, in the 1920s and 1930s, the second-generation Polish Americans forged an ethnic identity that was rooted in the American working-class. As Mary Patrice Erdmans argues, "the regional identities of the early immigrants were unified on American soil under the umbrella of Polishness as a national and cultural identity." [267] When the second wave of Polish immigrants arrived in Chicago after they had been displaced by the Second World War and the new communist regime in Poland, the new immigrants settled in a Polish-American community that had developed quite different ideas about Poland. Different ideas of "Polishness" led to negotiations about Polish-American identity in Chicago. The third wave of Polish immigration arrived in Chicago in the late 1970s and 1980s. These immigrants moved away from Poland's communist regime for political and economic reasons.[268] Because the Polish-American community in Chicago is made from three waves, the community is heterogeneous. As Conzen et al. argue, an important part in the construction of ethnicity is the creation of an "umbrella of the ethnic culture" that may be used to unite the diverse community.[269] In other words, Polish Americans must negotiate an ethnic culture and identity that is wide enough to incorporate both recent immigrants and the second and later-generations of Polish Americans.

4.1 Ethnic Identity

An important part of the creation of Polish-American ethnicity is to forge cultural elements that may unify Polish Americans despite of the differences within the ethnic community. Like other ethnic identities, Polish-American ethnicity is constantly being negotiated through social interactions both within the group, and between the Polish-American group and other groups, including the host society.[270] Although these interactions take places on numerous social arenas, this section emphasizes on interactions that occur in arenas provided by soccer.

Although soccer may play an important role in the negotiation of contemporary Polish-American ethnicity in Chicago, it does not, however, necessarily indicate that every

Polish American is a passionate and dedicated soccer fan. To be sure, soccer, or "Płka Nożna," which is the Polish name for the sport, is not mentioned in the list of "100 Things Every Polish American Should Do," compiled and edited by Stas Kmiec as part of the countdown to the 100th issue of the *Polish American Journal.*[271] However, although the list covers a wide area of activities, some themes appear more frequently than others. The most repeated themes are language, culture, religion, support of the ethnic community, maintaining or re-establishing ties to Poland, and, ethnic pride. These themes can be seen in light of how Yinger portrays ethnicity as a mixture of various elements, such as "language, religion, race, and ancestral homeland with its related culture."[272] Although soccer somehow has not made it to this list, soccer transmits many of these elements.

Some scholars, like Richard Alba and Mary C. Waters, argue that white Americans conceive their ethnic identities merely as cultural and symbolic. Alba claims that ethnic identities, for the most part, are something people celebrate occasionally in ethnic parades and certain holidays. Likewise, Waters claims that ethnic identity serves more symbolic than structural functions as few white Americans structure their lives around ethnicity.[273] In this investigation, an ethnic identity is understood as "structural" when important aspects of everyday life, like language, friendship and leisure activities, remain primarily ethnic. In other words, Polish Americans who primarily speak Polish, socialize with co-ethnics, and participate in "Polish" activities, have a "structural" ethnic identity. However, although Alba and Waters argue that Polish-American identity primarily is symbolic, Mary Patrice Erdmans' study of the Polish-American community in Chicago suggests otherwise. Erdmans claims that for many Polish Americans across generations, ethnicity affects "social behavior," how people identify, and, moreover, it "serve[s] as a basis for solidarity, and it did affect their everyday lives."[274]

At first, data from ACS seems to support the notion that Polish-American ethnicity may primarily be symbolic. To be sure, for example, nationwide, 91.5 percent of Polish Americans report that they speak English at home. However, if one looks at the numbers for the three counties in this investigation, the statistics reveal that ethnicity may be of structural importance. Nationwide, 8.5 percent of the Polish-American population speak another language than English at home, while the percentages Polish Americans who speak another language than English are 31.8, 16.9 and 12.2 in Cook, DuPage and Will County, respectively.[275] These numbers suggest that the Polish language is more important in

Chicago's Polish-American community than in the American Polonia on a national basis. As more than 30 percent speaks Polish at home in Cook County, the county with the largest Polish-American population in the Midwest by far, ethnicity seems to be of a structural character for a sizeable amount of the Chicago ethnic community. However, over two-thirds of Polish Americans in Chicago speak English rather than Polish at home. This suggests that language is part of the negotiations of what it means to be Polish American.

Friendship and socialization are also important elements in ethnic identities. Parks, soccer fields and stadiums function as arenas for Polish Americans, in which they can maintain contact with their ethnic friends. For Jacek Rudzinski, for instance, soccer creates various arenas for him and his friends to gather. Although Jacek and his friends no longer play soccer in an organized league, they still meet and play casual pick-up games in parks. However, whereas playing soccer is an activity to maintain friendship, Jacek explains that for him, attending Chicago Fire games at Toyota Park is even more important in this regard. Jacek describes that watching the Fire "becomes the bowling night." These matches provide an occasion to meet his Polish friends, talk Polish, "drink beer, have fun, and swear."[276] To be sure, every year, he buys himself a season ticket as a birthday present for himself. Going to a Chicago Fire game, then, is not an irregular activity, but rather, it is part of how Jacek structures his life. Although the game itself is important, it is only part of the experience. To be with his Polish-American friends is at least as important as the game. In other words, soccer is not only symbolic, but it also has structural meanings.

For many Polish Americans, soccer is a natural part of their ethnicity. As George Gorecki puts it, soccer is "very much part of ethnic culture for a lot of Polish people," as "it is a big part of their recreational lives." George remembers that as he was growing up, all his friends with a Polish heritage shared the same interest for soccer. However, they did not play for an organized team; but rather, their participation in soccer was "basically just friends kicking the ball around in the park."[277] In other words, playing soccer was an activity that required little with regards to both organization and infrastructure, and equipment. All George and his friends needed to play were a soccer ball and, preferably, a park, to play in. Playing soccer was also an important part in Jacek Rudzinski's adolescences. Before Jacek moved to the United States when he was thirteen, he used to play soccer everyday back in Poland. Playing soccer was part of what made the adjustment to the new environment easier for Jacek. In Chicago, he lived in a Polish neighborhood, went to a Polish church, ate at Polish diners,

and had polish friends, with whom he played soccer with. And thus, for both George and Jacek, growing up in Chicago's Polish-American ethnic community, soccer was part of everyday life, and an essential part of leisure activity. In other words, playing soccer was not merely a "symbolic" act of ethnicity, but rather it was an activity that was a natural part of being Polish American. This suggests that Polish-American ethnicity is more than merely a symbolic identity, as it structures the activities for many boys within the community.

However, soccer is not only an arena for interactions within the Polish-American community, but also, it can be seen as part of the interaction between Polish Americans and mainstream Americans. As George explains: "When I was a kid, nobody played soccer. It was only an ethnic thing."[278] Consequently, playing soccer was part of what made Polish Americans, and other ethnics, different than mainstream Americans. This difference makes sports an interesting arena in the study of ethnicity. As Thomas Hylland Eriksen argues, "for ethnicity to come about, the groups must entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves."[279] Through sports, Polish Americans and Americans definitely could develop notions of being culturally different from each other. To begin with, this cultural difference can be found in which sports the two groups preferred. Whereas American football, basketball, baseball and hockey were considered mainstream sports, soccer, in the 1970s and 1980s, was still associated with being "foreign" and "ethnic." On the one hand, some sports were incorporated into an idea of American identity, on the other hand, other sports, such as soccer, could be incorporated into ethnic identities.

Although Jacek and George preferred soccer when they were growing up, they both tried more "American sports." Because of their "whiteness," most Polish Americans may blend in as mainstream Americans. This, according to Mary Patrice Erdmans, gives American born Polish Americans a "voluntary identity" because they can decide when they want to show their "Polishness." [280] For George, the decision to play soccer rather than other sports can be seen as an indication of ethnic identity. As an American-born second-generation Polish American, George could have participated in any of the mainstream sports without being recognized as "Polish" by his American peers. Nevertheless, George continued to play the game of his father, and the game he grew up playing with his Polish-American friends. However, for Polish immigrants, like Jacek, the identity may be more "involuntary." A Polish accent, for instance, is difficult to hide away.[281] When Jacek came to Chicago he did not know English. Although he today does not have a Polish accent, it seems reasonable to

assume that he had one as he grew up. When Jacek and his friends tried American sports in their adolescences, it was impossible for Jacek to hide his Polish background.[282]

The connection to Poland is an important part of Polish-American ethnicity. As George Gorecki puts it, part of being Polish American means that he is "having that same contact with all of [his] relatives that still live in Poland, but just happen[s] to live in Chicago."[283] In other words, there is an element of "transnationalism" in George's ethnic identity. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are various forms of transnationalism. What George describes, however, seems to illustrate what Schiller, Basch and Blanc terms as "transnational migration." This form of transnationalism is understood as a social construction in which immigrants "forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement."[284] Scholars who study transnationalism disagree upon whether or not transnational ties may be transmitted across generations. However, as George is an American-born second-generation Polish American, he illustrates that transnational ties may be passed between generations. Although soccer is not the only way George stays in contact with Poland, it is part of his transnational activities. When the European Championship was held in Poland and Ukraine in 2012, he was planning to go, but was unable to find tickets. However, whereas George did stay home, an article in *Voices of NY*, translated from the Polish language newspaper *Nowy Dziennik*, states that "probably hundreds [of Polish Americans] … are going to Poland to watch in Euro 2012 games."[285] For those who went, the trip was far from cheap as it was not only the flight tickets that were expensive, but also the tickets to the matches could cost as much as 250 Euros. However, as Jerzy Karwowski, one of the Polish Americans interviewed in the article states, "everything costs, but money is not everything," and attending the European Championship in Poland is an "once-in-a-lifetime occasion."[286] For those who remained in the United States, the championship was easily accessible as it was broadcasted by ESPN, a mainstream television station, and could be watched at home, at pubs, or at the computer. In other words, an event, such as the Euro 2012 championship, involves various forms of transnational activities.

Matches with the Polish national team forge arenas that transmit elements important in Polish-American identities, such as language, culture and notions of a Polish origin. Watching the Polish national team play, however, evokes quite different emotions in George Gorecki and Jacek Rudzinski. George says that "it is always great to see players you follow, live and in person." However, he has "the same kind of feeling" when he watches Poland play as when

he watches the United States.[287] For Jacek, on the other hand, watching the Polish national team is more than just a soccer game. Whenever the opportunity to see Poland play in Chicago occurs, which according to Jacek is every six years or so, Jacek is always there. Although these games typically begin at 5:30 or 6:30 pm, Jacek goes to the stadium at 9:00 am. The entire day, and night, is spent with his Polish friends. And although the highlight of the day is the match itself, the entire day is an opportunity to be "Polish." By talking Polish, drinking Polish beer, singing Polish songs, Jacek, and other Polish Americans, have an arena in which they can celebrate their ethnicity. For Jacek, these matches are emotional as they remind him of his dad, and his Polish heritage. To be sure, as he puts it: "You hear the national anthem and you cry, and the hair on your arms stands up."[288] In other words, these games are important as they provide an ethnic symbol and a connection to Polish roots.

It is not only matches with the Polish national team that provides arenas for celebration and formulation of Polish-American ethnicity, but similar arenas are forged through Chicago's professional soccer scene. During Chicago Fire's inaugural season in *Major League Soccer* (MLS) in 1998, the club attracted a Polish-American fan-base that soon developed into *Fire Ultras 98*. With somewhere between a hundred and a hundred-and-fifty people, *Fire Ultras* used to be the largest of the Fire's supporter groups. In the stands, the group stood out, not only in its large numbers, but also in its support of the club. The members of *Fire Ultras* were easily recognized as they wore orange jackets. Although one could assume that the orange jackets had some sort of symbolism for the group, they were merely the result of a coincidence. Jacek Rudzinski explains that the group began to wear the jackets after some members had bought them cheap.[289] However, the songs the groups sang, and scarves they began to wear to matches were not coincidental. Rather, the chants and the scarves were both part of a tradition brought from Poland. According to Jacek, everyone affiliated with *Fire Ultras* was born in Poland. [290]By bringing their soccer culture to support the Chicago Fire, the members of *Fire Ultras* used soccer as an arena to celebrate their ethnicity.

However, celebration and formulation of ethnicity are often difficult to keep separate. For Jacek, going to soccer matches is part of "replicating" what his ancestors did back in Poland. He explains that his father and grandfather "gathered in a pub, or they gathered in a house and then went to the game." For Jacek, drinking beer before games is taking part in "a shared experience" with his ancestors."[291] Above all, soccer is "a slice of Europe for me,

which I am re-creating."[292] In many ways, *Fire Ultras* illustrate how soccer functions as an arena in which ethnic culture is both celebrated and negotiated. The tailgate, for instance, is an American phenomenon.

Fire Ultras also illustrate how ethnicity may be situational. Whenever his friends and family in Poland talk negatively about the quality of American soccer, rather than join in the criticism, Jacek disagrees with them and argues that the quality of the game in the United States has moved beyond and surpassed its quality in Poland. "When they start bitching about the league," Jacek asks them "so in FIFA rankings, where is Poland and where is the U.S?" To be sure, he points out that "when somebody criticizes the U.S. game, I will definitely defend the U.S. game." Furthermore, he has brought his brother-in-laws and cousins to games at Toyota Park, in order showcase the tailgate and let them experience the American soccer scene.[293] When communicating with friends and family in Poland, Jacek seems to be proud of his "American" connection. However, he claims that he "doesn't feel American or anything."[294] Nevertheless, as Mary Patrice Erdmans argues, American-born "Polish Americans have to negotiate a Polish identity, and immigrants have to negotiate an American identity."[295]

The Polish-American amateur soccer scene also illustrates how soccer provides arenas in which Polish Americans can both formulate and celebrate their ethnicity. Furthermore, these arenas are ideal in the investigation of contemporary Polish-American ethnicity because they illustrate how negotiations may have different outcomes in various contexts. As Conzen et al. remind us, "ethnicization" depends upon various contextual factors that frame the interactions that forge ethnicity.[296] This can be seen in the various paths Polish-American soccer clubs in Chicago have taken. *Wisla Chicago, A.A.C. Eagles, Stare Byki F.C.* and *CKS Warta* are four clubs that emerged from the Polish-American community. Although they were all established as Polish-American clubs, they have developed in different directions.

Stare Byki F.C., which can be translated into "the Old Bulls," arose from the Polish-American community in Chicago. The history of the club begins in 1982, when a group from the *Polish Youth Association* was gathered at the Billy Goat tavern in Chicago. The group was divided into younger and older members. The younger members were competitive and claimed that they could beat the older ones in a game of soccer. They decided to play a game the next year. Leading up to the game, the older members practiced a couple of times a week. When the game was over, they decided to continue to play together and looked for a

competitive league to join. In the first ten years, the club consisted mainly of the same "core group." However, as players who were, as George Gorecki puts it, "less committed to soccer," dropped out, the team needed to recruit new players. According to George, this was the moment "when other people came in who was [sic] not Polish." In this process, "the ethnic level of *Stare Byki* decreased," while the "talent increased," he says.

The process of de-ethnification of *Stare Byki* can be seen as part of a negotiation of Polish-American ethnicity. According to George, the development, in which *Stare Byki* became less "Polish" was "more natural than anything." As players quit, the club needed new players in order to survive. This situation led to negotiations within the club about what role ethnicity would play in *Stare Byki*. There were some in the club, who, according to George, "wanted to keep the team all Polish." Those, however, were not many enough to "have a strong voice" in the discussion about the club's future. For most of the players, the wish to compete on the highest level possible was more important than preserving the ethnic base of the club. [297] The negotiation about what role ethnicity should play in *Stare Byki* reflects two opposite views regarding the role of the club. For a minority of the players in the club, playing soccer was an opportunity to meet and interact with co-ethnics. For them, the club served as an arena where they could talk Polish, and participate in an ethnic activity. These were the ones who eventually dropped out as the club became more competitive. For the majority of the players, however, the competitive aspect of soccer was considered more important than preserving the ethnic foundation of the club.

The de-ethnification of *Stare Byki* can be seen in light of similar processes in other clubs. In his study of soccer in Canada, J. McKay reports that soccer promotes cultural assimilation as soccer clubs diversify their squads in order to compete at the highest level possible.[298] Likewise, Derek Van Rheenen discusses how the San Francisco-based Greek-American Athletic Club, after being regulated from the city's top division decided to no longer only recruit players based on their heritage, but rather, to recruit the best players available.[299] A similar pattern is also present in Chicago soccer. Although soccer clubs may still remain ethnic in their name and symbols, most clubs have become diversified in their players. According to David Trouille, there is a lack of consistency between the names of the players and the name of the clubs.[300] In many ways, the process of de-ethnification can be seen in light of assimilation. As discussed in Chapter 2, assimilation is a process that lowers the boundaries between groups of people. In regards to *Stare Byki*, the boundaries between

Polish-Americans and members from other ethnic groups and mainstream Americans have almost disappeared. Although the club originated from the Polish Youth Association, few, according to George Gorecki, would probably consider *Stare Byki* as a Polish-American club today. [301]

A similar process can be found in the history of *A.A.C. Eagles*, the most successful of Chicago's Polish-American soccer clubs by far. The club was founded in 1940 as the *Polish American Athletic Club Eagles*. Through its history, the club has won the Peel Cup, an Illinois based tournament, seven times. The club has also won the National Amateur Cup and the U.S. Open Cup. In addition to these state and national-based championships, the *Eagles* have numerous titles from leagues in Chicago. However, like *Stare Byki*, the *Eagles* consist of players from various ethnic backgrounds. When the *Eagles* won the Metropolitan Soccer League in 2013, in addition to Polish Americans, the team included players like Danny Martinez, Trinidad Correa, Miguel Mandragon, Andy Lynch, Art Rodriguez, Robbie McGown and George Samuel.[302] Regardless of the "non-Polish" players, as George Gorecki puts it, the *Eagles* are "primarily a Polish club for sure." To be sure, although the *Eagle*s may not be as "ethnically pure" as other clubs, "the Polish community takes them as a Polish club despite the fact that they are not all Polish." [303]

Although the players on the *Eagles* reflect ethnic diversification, the club itself has maintained its position within the Polish-American community. The club organizes various social gatherings for the ethnic community. In the clubhouse, the *Eagles* arrange celebrations of religious holidays, like *Wigilia*, a traditional Christmas party, *Andrzejki,* St. Andrew's day, *Święconka,* Easter. In addition to religious celebrations, banquets and dances are frequently hosted by the club. This illustrates how soccer is used to transmit elements important in Polish-American identities, such as religion, language and culture. The *Eagles* also organize picnics with various forms of cultural contributions. The variation can be seen in the program for the "Farwell to Summer 2013" picnic which begins at 11:00 am with a mass held by Father Bruno Chmiel, accompanied with *the Chopin Choir*. Then, at 3:00 pm, the *Eagles* play before the program continues with a concert by a band in the afternoon. In between, the program promises "family fun and activities for children of all ages," and "delicious" food and "tasty" refreshments provided by the club's sponsors.[304] The social gatherings organized by the soccer club also indicate that the *Eagles* have maintained their connection to the

Polish-American community, and thus, may explain why the club is considered to be a "Polish" club.

However, although the pattern of ethnic soccer clubs in Chicago is a development in which the clubs become more diversified; *Wisla Chicago* has not followed the general pattern. Established in 1927, Wisla Chicago is the oldest of the Polish-American soccer clubs in city. The club takes pride in its "glorious" part in "maintaining and cultivating" Polonia.[305] Whereas the *Eagles* have both players and sponsors from outside of the Polish-American community, *Wisla* has remained "ethnically pure" in regards to the clubs' players and sponsors. When *Wisla* played against *Stare Byki*, September 29th, 2013, Wisla's players, coaches, and fans all communicated in Polish only. Likewise, the "Polishness" of the club is reflected in the club's sponsor and partners. The club is sponsored by *Zywiec*, a Polish beer manufacturer, *Sobieski*, a Polish vodka brand, *doma*, a Chicago based international transport primarily between the United States and Eastern Europe, and *FaktyChicago.com*, a Polish-American newspaper. In other words, although Wisla is the oldest of the Polish-American soccer clubs in Chicago, it seems to be the club that has been influenced least by assimilation. According to David Trouille, the teams that are most diversified have a tendency to be found in clubs that are old and well-established. However, generally, diversified teams are also most often clubs that originally sprung out of an ethnic community that has not been revitalized by immigrants.[306] In this regard, the two waves of Polish immigration in the mid-twentieth century and in the late twentieth century have made it possible for *Wisla* to maintain its "Polishness" by recruiting players and staff among immigrants.

4.2 Challenges

The Polish-American community in Chicago is frequently presented as the largest Polish congregation outside of Warsaw. When Jerzy Podbrozny, a Polish soccer player, moved from Europe and joined the ranks of Chicago Fire in 1998, he stated that he "wanted to be in Chicago because of the large Polish population."[307] However, as already pointed out, the Polish-American community is far from homogenous. Rather, as Mary Patrice Erdmans argues, the community is divided in two groups, the American-born second and later-generation Polish Americans and the Polish immigrants who arrived in the late 1970s and 1980s. Differences between these groups lead to conflicts within the Polish-American community. American-born Polish Americans and Polish immigrants not only write

negatively about each other in both mainstream and Polish newspapers, but also fought each other in legal battles.[308] Much of the conflict, Erdmans argues, can be explained in terms of how the established Polish-American community and Polish immigrants differ in regard to "culture, networks, power, and national loyalty."[309] In the following discussion, this investigation analyzes how amateur and professional soccer provide solutions to between "new Polonia" and "old Polonia."

The conflict between Polish immigrants and the Polish-American community is potentially important among Polish immigrants and their children's adaptation to the United States. As the segmented assimilation theory outlines, the outcome of the second generation depends on how "background determinants," identified as human capital, family structure and "modes of incorporation" interact with the obstacles the members of the second generation face as part of their adjustment to society. According to the theory, the obstacles immigrant children and children of immigrants face in the process of adaptation are linked to racism, changes in the labor market and participation in gang and drug activity.[310] Because of their "whiteness," Polish Americans obviously are less likely to face racial prejudice than members of other ethnic groups. Nevertheless, with the history of discrimination against Polish Americans in mind, it is important to remember the potential for racism against members of this group. Because of the success of the Polish-American community in regards to, not only socioeconomic aspects, but also in respects of how the community is incorporated into Chicago, the community may play a significant role in how the second-generation Polish Americans adapts. As Portes and Zhou argue, co-ethnic communities may function as immigrants' most significant resource if the community functions well.[311] However, in order for immigrants and their descendants to take advantage of the pre-existing ethnic community, immigrants and their co-ethnics must accept and recognize each other. In other words, the conflict between "new Polonia" and "old Polonia" restricts Polish immigrants' access to the resources of the established Polish-American community.

The A.A.C. Eagles Soccer Academy illustrates how soccer may function solve the conflict between immigrants and the established Polish-American community. Because the academy emerged from the soccer club that was created in 1940, it seems reasonable to position the academy within the "old Polonia." As already discussed, Polish immigrants and Polish-Americans have different interest and needs when it comes to attachment and social networks. Whereas immigrants need to improve their attachment to Chicago, American-born

Polish Americans need to strengthen their connections to Poland.[312] The Eagles' soccer academy provides an opportunity for both groups to strengthen their weak attachments and social networks. Most of the coaching staff in the academy was born in Poland. For them, soccer has become an entrance to the Polish-American community in Chicago. In other words, soccer is used to strengthen the Polish immigrants' attachment to networks in their new home. However, at the same time, the academy takes advantage of its staff's connection in Poland. Recently, the Eagles Soccer Academy has started a cooperation project with *Akademia Futbolu 14*, a soccer academy in Western Poland. Through this partnership, the two academies exchange ideas among coaches, but also organize matches and tournaments between the Polish-based and Chicago-based teams.[313] This exemplifies how contradictory interests may be resolved through soccer.

Whereas some immigrants join the ranks of already established Polish-American soccer clubs, others create new clubs. According to Mary Patrice Erdmans, immigrants and American-born Polish Americans often "had problems coexisting in the same organizations."[314] *CKS Warta* was founded in 1996 by Polish immigrants who "brought the love, the passion and the sport of soccer to [the] United States."[315] *Warta*, however, is not merely an attempt to replicate Polish culture in Chicago, but rather the club addresses the challenges Polish immigrants face in the tri-state area. By providing opportunities for Polish immigrants to participate in a familiar activity from their homeland, *Warta* may make the process of adjustment to a new environment easier. As David Trouille finds in his studies, soccer clubs have the potential to play "a crucial role in helping to alleviate the alienation" of the immigrant experience."[316]

By providing activities for the Polish-American youth, *Warta* directly addresses a challenge often portrayed as an obstacle in immigrants and their children's adaptation to the United States. The club states that its goal "is to create a safe and friendly atmosphere for the development of younger players into the players of tomorrow." Furthermore, the club aims "to keep kids off streets by offering them the opportunity to play soccer and compete in the most recognized sport in the world."[317] As discussed more thoroughly in previous chapters, the inner-city streets constitute obstacles in the process of the second generation's adaptation to the United States. However, although the risk of "downward assimilation" may be smaller for Polish Americans than for certain other ethnic groups, it is not a given that members of the second generation of Polish Americans smoothly adjust and move towards the American

mainstream. Whereas the Polish-American population in Chicago has a higher educational level and more income than the city average,[318] segments of the ethnic community are less fortunate. According to "The Polish Community in Metro Chicago," the disadvantaged segments of the Polish-American community consist primarily of immigrants, and are larger in urban Chicago rather than in the suburbs. The report states that 37.1 percent of Polish immigrants in Chicago have no high-school degree. Furthermore, 13.4 percent of Polish immigrants are below 150 percent of the poverty level.[319] For the second-generation Polish Americans growing up in poverty, with parents without high-school diplomas, in the rough environments in the inner-city, "downward assimilation" is a possible outcome. However, by luring the second generation, and other children, away from the streets, *Warta* addresses challenges Polish Americans may experience in Chicago.

Warta also addresses the challenges regarding the division between "new" and "old" Poles in the Polish-American community. By being successful on the field, the club has achieved recognition from the Polish-American community. The club takes pride in being "a successful and recognized Club," not only in Chicago's soccer community, but "in the entire Polish Community throughout the US." This success and recognition came in 2001, when the club won the National Soccer League Indoor Championship and finished second in the Polish Soccer Tournament of North America.[320] The emphasis the club itself puts on its success in the ethnic community suggests that soccer functions as an arena to gain recognition from co-ethnics. Through participation in amateur soccer, Polish immigrants find arenas for interaction and negotiation with the established co-ethnic community. As Portes and Zhou argue, co-ethnic communities may function as immigrants' most significant resource if the community functions well.[321] However, in order for immigrants to take advantage of the pre-existing ethnic community, the newly arrived immigrants must be recognized by their co-ethnics. The Polish Soccer Tournament Association of North America illustrates how soccer serves as a bridge between immigrants and the established ethnic community. In order for teams to be able to participate, they have to be registered in the U.S. soccer federation. Among the teams participating in the tournament, there is a mixture of older teams, such as *Wisla Chicago* and *A.A.C. Eagles*, and newer teams like *CKS Warta*.

However, the tournament does not only serve as an arena for immigrants to be recognized by the established Polish-American community, but it also becomes an arena for the established community to prove its "Polishness" to the immigrants. Although the

American born Polish Americans have more power than Polish immigrants, in the conflict within the community, the latter group has an advantage by being born in Poland. As Mary Patrice Erdmans argues, "the presence of these new immigrants, whose cultural identity as Poles could not be doubted, accentuated just how non-Polish the ethnics actually were."[322] By serving as an arena in which the two groups seek recognition from each other, soccer is used to solve tension and conflict within the community.

The professional soccer scene differs from the amateur soccer scene. Whereas the amateur soccer scene already was dominated by well-established Polish-American clubs, there was no established professional soccer scene in Chicago prior to 1998, except for the years when Chicago Sting was in operation. This made professional soccer a domain in which Polish immigrants could claim power and influence without directly confronting the co-ethnic community. Furthermore, As Derek Van Rheenen argues, the "socially marginalized position" of soccer has made it possible for ethnic groups to be influential in the development of the sport.[323] Consequently, contextual aspects, both within the Polish-American community and the host society, enabled professional soccer, and the support of Chicago Fire, to be an arena in which Polish immigrants could attach themselves to the United States and forge social networks and connections in Chicago. As Mary Patrice Erdmans points out, one of the challenges Polish immigrants face in the United States is their weak attachment to the United States. [324] Through their support of the Chicago Fire, Polish immigrants are able to address this obstacle.

The establishment of *Fire Ultras* 98 illustrates how Polish immigrants have used soccer to attach themselves to Chicago. When *Fire Ultras* was in its prime in the late 1990s and early 2000s, it gathered about hundred-and-fifty Polish immigrants to its section whenever Chicago Fire played at home. Although these immigrants easily could be identified as Polish through their language, songs, flags and the Polish symbolism in their merchandise, at the same time, their attachment to Chicago was noticeably displayed. The merchandise that *Fire Ultras* produces reflect a dual loyalty, to both Poland and Chicago. According to Erdmans, "national loyalty" is an aspect that divides the community, "with each group favoring its country of birth."[325] However, by supporting Chicago Fire, Polish immigrants show that they are also loyal to Chicago.

In *Fire Ultras*, Polish immigrants apply a supporter culture they are familiar with from Poland in their new homeland. Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut identify human

capital as language skills, education and working experience.[326] In general, Polish immigrants have high human capital. However, as Mary Patrice Erdmans argues, the process of immigration often leads to a decrease in human capital. Knowledge of language, education and job experience from Poland are not necessarily as meaningful in the United States.[327] Nevertheless, although some skills and experiences may be less valuable in a new environment, other experiences may be adjusted in order to be meaningful in the process of immigrants' adaptation to the United States. As Alba, Kasinitz and Waters argue, people who are exposed to various cultures are able to use "cultural creativity" in order to adjust to society.[328] By using supporter culture from Poland and adjust it to the support of Chicago Fire, Polish immigrants illustrate how "cultural creativity" is used in order for the members of the group to attach themselves to Chicago.

The support of the Chicago Fire also provides attachment to Chicago by forging both informal and formal social networks. Since *Section 8 Chicago* was officially established in 2003, members of Fire Ultras have frequently held positions in the organization. Jacek Rudzinski, for instance, was elected and served as Section 8 Chicago's Director of Marketing in 2006. As least as important, however, are the more informal social networks that are created through the professional soccer scene. At the tailgate, inside the stadiums or in the bus to an away game, the members of *Fire Ultras* forge social networks through, more or less, casual interactions. When Jacek Rudzinski walks around the tailgate, it seems that he knows everyone that is there. Jacek says that if he would arrive at the tailgate without a beer, he would "get a beer in a second."[329]

4.3 Resources

Whereas Polish Americans were frequently harassed and discriminated against in the first decades of the twentieth century, the Polish-American community was able to challenge racism as the community was incorporated into the host society. An important function of the creation of ethnicity is the ethnic groups' attempts to portray their ethnicity as a resource for society. As Conzen et al. argue, an ethnic group struggles to "shift its weighting … from negative to positive."[330] Today, Polish Americans are for the most part viewed positively by Americans. In the terminology of segmented assimilation, Polish Americans enjoy both "governmental" and "societal" approval. However, this positive reception is not a given. And thus, as ethnicity is being re-negotiated, ethnic groups, according to Conzen et al., need to

"defuse the hostility of the mainstream ethnoculture by depicting the compatibility of the sidestream ethnoculture."[331] This section discusses how soccer provides opportunities for Polish Americans to portray themselves as a resource for the host society.

The history of soccer in Chicago illustrates that soccer has played a significant role in how ethnic groups have attempted to portray themselves as resources for the city. Since the early twentieth century, soccer matches with international or ethnic teams have frequently been played in Chicago. According to David Trouille, these matches can be seen as "Chicago's coliseum of ethnicity in which victory or defeat reflected a group's local standing, with the 'non-ethnic' authorities controlling the proceedings."[332] As discussed previously, the success of Polish-Americans soccer clubs, such as the *Eagles* and *Wisla*, have made these teams important symbols for Polish Americans to gather around. An important element in whether or not a team is considered to represent the Polish-American community in Chicago or not can be found in the clubs' results. According to George Gorecki, one of the reasons for why his club, *Stare Byki*, is not recognized as a Polish-American team is because of its lack of success.[333]

In many respects, soccer is an arena in which Polish Americans in Chicago have managed to portray themselves as a resource for the host society. This can be seen in how the Chicago Fire actively reached out to the Polish-American community when the club was created. From the beginning, the management of Chicago Fire wanted to tie the club to the history of the city. This can be seen in three ways. First, the club is not only named after the Great Chicago Fire, but also it is founded on October 8, the same date as the original fire. Second, Peter Wilt, the original general manager of the Fire, included Lee Stern, the owner of the Chicago Sting, when Chicago Fire was created. By doing this, Chicago Fire connected itself to Chicago's soccer history. Third, in recruiting players, the Chicago Fire actively tried to look for players that reflected Chicago's ethnic population.[334] Consequently, an important part of connecting Chicago Fire to Chicago was to tie the club to the city's Polish-American community.

The Chicago Fire recruited Polish players, such as Piotr Nowak, Jerzy Podbrozny and Roman Kosecki. These players were not only recruited because of their talent, but also with the Polish-American population in Chicago in mind. And, as Bob Bradley puts it, "the response was incredible," as "the Polish community embraced the team."[335] In an interview with the *Chicago Tribune* after a match in 1998, Jerzy Podbrozny stated with delight that "a

lot of Polish people saw that game."[336] For Bradley, both the signings themselves, but also how the Polish-American community responded was perhaps the club's "most important moment."[337] According to Bob Bradley, Chicago "had an Eastern European flavor." [338]

Also in the stands, the Polish Americans were seen as a resource. As Bradley puts it, Section 8 Chicago created an atmosphere that could be found in Europe. In creating this atmosphere, Polish Americans played an important role. According to Bradley, most of those who created the electric atmosphere were either Polish or were closely connected to the Polish-American community in Chicago.[339] In "The Fans Guide to the Chicago Fire Soccer Club," a media guide produced by Section 8 Chicago, *Fire Ultras* is described as "responsible for the original visual style of Fire fans" as this group was first began "wearing scarves, displaying large banners, and waving flags."[340] Consequently, for Chicago Fire and the professional soccer community, a group like *Fire Ultras* was considered to be vital in order to create an authentic supporter culture.

However, whereas *Fire Ultras* used to attract a hundred-and-fifty Polish immigrants to Chicago Fire's matches, today there are rarely more than twenty people with an affiliation to *Fire Ultras*. On special occasions, however, the number can be larger. The reasons for the decline are complex. According to Jacek Rudzinski, Chicago Fire's lack of success during the last couple of years definitely plays an important factor. Likewise, the move from *Soldier Field,* and its central location, to Toyota Park, outside of the city, is also part of the explanation. In many aspects, whereas the club in its first seasons created something "real" and "unique," as Bob Bradley puts it, the club itself has found it difficult to re-create the success of its early years.[341] As Jacek points out, this "is a sad period" for the club. Jacek does not feel that the club target Polish Americans. However, current the lack of attempt to reach out to the Polish-American community is perhaps not necessarily a lack of recognition from the club. As Jacek points out, this "is a sad period" for the club. He cannot remember the last time he saw a commercial with the Chicago Fire."[342]

Although Jacek claims that the Chicago Fire does not attempt to reach out to the Polish-American population today, as late as August 10, 2013, in association with *the Polish National Alliance, the Polish Roman Catholic Union, the Polish Falcons of America* and *the Polish Women's Alliance,* the Chicago Fire organized a "Polish American Night with the Chicago Fire," in which Polish Americans were offered match tickets at almost half the price of ordinary tickets.[343] This suggests that the Polish-American population still is considered to

be important for Chicago Fire. However, as will be discussed in the next chapter, Polish immigrants may not necessarily consider Chicago Fire as important as they used to do.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that soccer may play an important role in the construction of contemporary Polish-American ethnicity in Chicago. For many Polish-Americans in Chicago, soccer is an important part of ethnic culture. Playing soccer is a natural leisure activity for children who grow up in the Polish-American community. As soccer is the national sport in Poland, playing soccer can be seen as an activity that links Polish Americans to a Polish heritage. Ethnic ties among Polish Americans may also be strengthened as soccer functions as an arena in which Polish Americans may maintain and re-establish socialization and friendship with co-ethnics.

For many Polish Americans, soccer provides arenas to celebrate their ethnicity. As Alba and Waters argue, for white Americans, such as Polish Americans, ethnicity is often sporadic and symbolic. For the second and later-generations of Polish Americans, soccer provides various occasions for symbolic celebration of their ethnicity. This can be seen in everything from participation in a causal pick game in a park, in which the activity itself may symbolize a form of celebration of being Polish American, to being in the stadium as the Polish National Team plays in Chicago. The latter example reflects an occasion similar to ethnic parades where Polish culture is celebrated through symbols. However, whereas soccer provides arenas in which Polish Americans may celebrate their ethnicity more or less sporadically, soccer also enables a more "structural" sense of ethnic celebration. For players and coaches, their families, and fans, amateur soccer clubs, like the *Eagles*, connect soccer to ethnic celebration. In these occasions, to play or to watch soccer is part of an ethnic activity that play a significant role in how Polish Americans structure their lives.

However, at the same time soccer also functions as an arena in which Polish-American ethnicity is negotiated. The *Fire Ultras* illustrate how being a fan of a professional soccer team involves both ethnic celebration and negotiation. By being a fan of the Chicago Fire and member of *Fire Ultras,* Jacek Rudzinski "replicates" what his father and grandfather used to do back in Poland. What Jacek understands as a "replication" refers to a "shared experience" in which drinking beer and watching soccer are important ingredients. European fan culture,

with songs, scarves and flags are essential, is also significant part of *Fire Ultras*. However, whereas Jacek uses soccer as an arena to celebrate his heritage, it is also an arena where ethnic identities are being negotiated. Although the songs, scarves and flags that the *Fire Ultras* display at Toyota Park have ties to Poland, they are adjusted to fit the support of Chicago Fire. It is not only symbolism that is being negotiated in order to be suitable for the American experience, but moreover, practices and rituals are re-negotiated as well. The tailgate, for instance, which has become a crucial part of the game-day experience for the members of *Fire Ultras*, is an American phenomenon. To be sure, the tailgate is something Jacek is proud to show friends and family that visit from Poland.

One of the challenges Polish Americans face in Chicago refers to the conflict between "new Polonia" and "old Polonia." Both amateur and professional soccer is used to ease the tension within the Polish-American community. In the soccer academy organized by the *Eagles*, foreign-born and American-born Polish Americans have taken advantage of the different interest of the two groups. The club has provided immigrants with social networks and attachment to Chicago. In exchange, the immigrants have used their ties in Poland to attach the *Eagles* closer to Poland. In other words, both the foreign-born and the American-born Polish Americans have used soccer to strengthen their weak attachments. The conflict between the two groups, however, was also eased through interaction between teams representing "new Polonia" and "old Polonia." This can be seen in how Polish-American clubs compete for recognition within the community in tournaments such as the Polish Soccer Tournament Association of North America. However, whereas a Polish-American amateur soccer scene already was established, Chicago did not have an established professional soccer scene when Chicago Fire first entered MLS in 1998. Because of this, professional soccer provided an opportunity for Polish immigrants to attach themselves to Chicago without being in directly conflict with the Polish-American community.

Through soccer, Polish Americans have been able to portray themselves as a resource for the host society. In order for soccer to gradually be established as a mainstream sport in the United States, the soccer community needs to rally the support from as many potential fans as possible. As a result of the persistent efforts by Polish-American soccer clubs, such as *Wisla* and the *Eagles*, the Polish-American community has manifested itself as an important resource and contributor for Chicago's soccer scene. The Polish-American community has also flocked to the stands when the Polish national team has played matches in Chicago. The

efforts of the Polish-American community then have been vital for why Chicago Fire, when established, actively aimed to reach out for Polish Americans in order to create a fan-base. This illustrates how soccer functions as an arena in which Polish Americans, in the words of Conzen et al., have been able to portray the groups "weighting" as positive.[344] However, although the Polish-American community at large was the target group for Chicago Fire, it was foreign-born Polish immigrants who responded most vividly.

The response from Polish immigrants can be seen in the creation of *Fire Ultras*. As Section 8 Chicago recognizes, *Fire Ultras* were crucial in the development of fan culture in Chicago. To be sure, *Fire Ultras* are described as "responsible for the original visual style of Fire fans."[345] In other words, Polish Americans are not only seen as a resource for Chicago Fire, but also, they are seen as contributors of key ingredients in the creation of Chicago's unique supporter culture. This suggests, as Conzen et al. argue, that immigrants and ethnic groups have been important as they have "transformed the larger American society."[346] Furthermore, *Fire Ultras* exemplifies assimilation as a process of interaction and negotiation, in which the result is not necessarily "acculturation," but rather lowered boundaries between groups of people.

5 Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the role of soccer in contemporary Mexican-American and Polish-American ethnicity in Chicago. It has done so by investigating the two groups through three related sub-topics. As the previous chapters have illustrated, soccer provides both a sense of ethnic identity, and arenas for Mexican and Polish Americans to formulate and celebrate their identities. Soccer also functions in addressing the challenges Mexican and Polish Americans face in Chicago. And, finally, for Mexican and Polish Americans, soccer is an ideal arena for the groups to portray themselves as resources for the host society in their struggle for public approval.

Neither the Mexican-American, nor the Polish-American community in the city is in any manner homogenous communities. Rather, within these ethnic groups, members are divided by class, education, language, generation, and time in America, among other aspects. Conzen et al. argue that ethnicity is constructed to find a "symbolic umbrella of the ethnic culture" with which the potential members of the ethnic community can identify.[347] This thesis has explored how soccer provides arenas that unify the Mexican and Polish American community, and it has also shown how soccer plays an important role in both Mexican and Polish-American ethnicity in Chicago.

Through soccer, Mexican and Polish Americans have established meeting-places within their ethnic communities. As Juan Javier Pescador argues, amateur soccer provides arenas that bring the Mexican-American community together as it gathers everything from middle-class Mexican Americans to Mexican immigrants who have recently arrived Chicago.[348] This argument is supported by the findings of this thesis. Through *Atletico Nacional*, Mexican immigrants interact with Mario Calleros, a business owner who also owns the club. Furthermore, because of the success of the club, *Atletico Nacional* has become a community in itself, in which Mexican Americans from various socioeconomic backgrounds are gathered in their support of the club.[349]

This, however, is not unique to the Mexican-American community in Chicago, but, as the investigation of Polish Americans has revealed, soccer provides similar functions among the Polish-American community in the city. Polish-American soccer clubs, such as the *Eagles* and *Wisla* gather both foreign-born and American-born Polish Americans. Likewise, the *Polish Soccer Tournament Association of North America* assembles clubs that emerge from

both “new Polonia” and “old Polonia.” Similar meeting places are forged through casual pick-up soccer in parks and in pubs and in the stands. And thus, soccer establishes arenas that physically unify the Mexican-American and Polish-American community as it gathers the groups’ potential members.

An important part of an ethnic identity can be found in the mixture of elements such as language, origin and culture. This investigation has illustrated how these elements are transmitted through soccer. Matches with both the Mexican and the Polish national team, for instance, are frequently played in Chicago. These matches are significant for various reasons. As matches featuring Poland and Mexico in the United States are commonly promoted and sponsored by major corporations, such as Budweiser and Miller, they indicate how transnationalism form “above” influence the Mexican and Polish-American experience. These matches provide opportunities for Mexican and Polish Americans, regardless of generation, to preserve a connection to their ancestral homelands in various ways. To watch Poland or Mexico play is a link to an origin in itself.

Furthermore, the link is strengthened by the usage of Polish and Mexican language in chants and conversations in the stands and outside the stadium. For Mexican and Polish Americans who only speak English, soccer provides opportunities to learn some Spanish or Polish words, while for others, soccer functions as an arena to maintain their language. In the stands, links to the origin can also be seen in symbols. Mexican Americans, for instance, often bring “Mexican wrestling masks, headdresses, Aztec warrior suits” when they watch Mexico on American soil.[350] Likewise, Polish beer, flags and scarves are symbols that link Polish Americans to a Polish origin. The Mexican and Polish-American narrators interviewed for this investigation have all claimed that soccer is important part of their ethnic culture. Consequently, as soccer influences and interacts with notions important in ethnic identification, such as language, origin and culture, the sport plays a role in both Mexican-American and Polish-American ethnicity in Chicago.

Another important function of soccer in Mexican and Polish-American ethnicity is its role in addressing the challenges the two groups face in Chicago. As the segmented assimilation theory claims, the inner-city streets are potentially dangerous obstacles in the second generation’s process of adaptation to the United States.[351] Soccer is actively used as a tool in order to address the risks of the streets. Both Polish-American and Mexican-American soccer clubs, for instance, conceive soccer as an arena to “keep the kids” away from the

streets. This has been illustrated in this thesis with examples from *Tangas* and *Wisla.* Because Mexican and Polish Americans use soccer to address the challenges of the American experience, the sport does more than merely create notions of a "mythical past."

This investigation has explored how Mexican and Polish Americans use soccer as a tool to improve the challenges they face. However, because the Mexican and Polish-American experiences in Chicago differ, soccer addresses different challenges. Both segmented assimilation theory and data from ACS state that education is an obstacle for the Mexican-American community. However, through soccer, Mexican Americans actively address challenges concerning education. The infrastructure created through amateur soccer clubs establishes important social networks and knowledge that may guide Mexican-American youth towards educational success. Soccer clubs, then, can be seen as what Alejandro Portes and Patricia Fernández-Kelly categorize as "outside help."[352] Furthermore, because soccer clubs also instill important values and skills in young Mexican Americans who are involved, and promotes bilingualism and positive self-esteem, soccer lowers the risks of "downward assimilation" for Mexican Americans who participate in the sport. And thus, soccer is used and functions as a tool to promote education among Mexican Americans. In other words, the sport, both directly and indirectly, addresses challenges Mexican Americans face in Chicago.

The challenges Polish Americans face in Chicago, however, are of another character. As this study has investigated, one of the challenges within the Polish-American community can be found in the conflict between "new Polonia" and "old Polonia." In order to solve this conflict, both amateur and professional soccer have played important roles. The *Eagles*, for instance, has provided immigrants with social networks and attachment to Chicago. In exchange, the immigrants have shared their social network and connections in Poland with American-born Polish Americans. In other words, both the foreign-born and the American-born Polish Americans have used soccer to strengthen their weak attachments. However, whereas a Polish-American amateur soccer scene already was established, Chicago did not have an established professional soccer scene when Chicago Fire first entered MLS in 1998. Because of this, professional soccer provided an opportunity for Polish immigrants to attach themselves to Chicago without being in directly conflict with the Polish-American community.

Whereas the Mexican-American support of Chicago Fire seems to be increasing, the Polish-American support of the team has declined. From their peak between the late 1990s

and the early 2000s, *Fire Ultras* are reduced to a core group of about twenty people. For those who are left, soccer is still an important part of how they structure their lives. Every birthday, Jacek Rudzinski buys a season-ticket as a present to himself.[353] For him and other Polish Americans, *Fire Ultras* have remained an arena where they meet other Polish Americans and are able to talk Polish and drink Polish beer. However, whereas Chicago Fire matches were something a larger group used to gather around every week, besides the core group, others are now attending on some special occasions. This suggests that soccer has become less "structural" and more "symbolic." As Richard Alba and Mary C. Waters argue, for most "white" Americans, ethnic identity is primarily symbolic in nature as it is something people celebrate on certain occasions.[354] As Polish immigrants have become incorporated into both the established Polish-American community in Chicago and more mainstream institutions in the city, soccer may not be as important as it used to be. Nevertheless, it is not unusual for people who have not attended games for several years to one day turn up unexpectedly.[355] This illustrates how *Fire Ultras* and soccer have developed from being aspects that many Polish immigrants structured their lives around to become "symbolic" elements celebrated every once in a while.

For Polish Americans, the possibilities to "blend" in as mainstream Americans are greater than for most Mexican Americans. Mary Patrice Erdmans distinguishes between "voluntary" and "involuntary" ethnicity.[356] Whereas Polish immigrants, because of their accents, may have an "involuntary" ethnicity, Polish Americans who speak English with an American accent have a "voluntary" ethnic identity. The longer Polish immigrants have stayed in Chicago, the accents that distinguish them from mainstream Americans become less noticeable. In other words, they are able to base their ethnicity more on a "voluntary" basis. This may be part of the explanation to why *Fire Ultras* have declined over the last ten years. As Polish immigrants have been able to blend into both the Polish-American and the host society, soccer may not be as an important arena. As both Louis Wirth and Herbert Gans argue that assimilation is a "two way process," and in order for assimilation to occur, the host society must admit ethnics to be incorporated. And thus, Polish Americans have been allowed to be incorporated.

For Mexican Americans, however, it is not as easy to blend in. Regardless of their language, most Mexican Americans, because of their "race" have an "involuntary" ethnicity. Because they are unable to simply blend into the mainstream, Mexican Americans must

actively challenge notions that perceive them as "intruders" who do not belong in the United States.[357] In the words of Conzen et al., they must change their group's "weighting" from "negative to positive."[358] As this investigation has explored, soccer provides an ideal sphere for Mexican Americans to portray themselves as a resource for the host society. First, because of the marginalization of soccer in the United States, both amateur and professional soccer is an arena in which Mexican Americans have been able to influence their environment. By doing this, they have, as Pescador argues, "assert[ed] their rights to public services and … claim[ed] a social space as protagonists, as heroes."[359] However, as soccer is becoming more popular, soccer is not only an arena for Mexican Americans in order for them to influence their surroundings, but, moreover, it has become an arena in which they are portrayed as resources by others.

Although the Mexican-American ethnic community may not be strong enough to challenge the racial prejudice Mexican Americans face in Chicago, through soccer, they have forged valuable alliances. In their struggle against racial prejudice, *Sector Latino* members are joined by other Chicago Fire fans as Section 8 Chicago actively takes a stand against racism. For the soccer community in Chicago, Mexican Americans are not only seen as important because of the atmosphere they create at Toyota Park, but they are also seen as crucial in order for the sport to continue its growth in the city. Furthermore, by promoting soccer in America, transnational forces from "above" are simultaneously aiding Mexican Americans as resources in the host society. In other words, soccer is an arena in which Mexican Americans have created alliances in order to portray themselves as resources.

In this investigation, assimilation has been understood as "a bidirectional phenomenon," as "the general society and culture are affected by the heritages of those who assimilate."[360] In other words, assimilation is seen as process that influences and affects both ethnic groups and mainstream American society. Through soccer, the boundaries between Mexican Americans and the host society is lowered. Furthermore, as Gary Hopkins argues, "it takes a certain naivety to think American society is not changing and that kids today are prepared to accept the status quo of American sports."[361] And thus, the development of soccer in the United States illustrates the view of Conzen et al. who argue that "much of ethnic cultures was incorporated into changing definitions of what was American and what it meant to be American."[362] As soccer is becoming more popular, the boundaries between Mexican Americans and mainstream Americans may be lowered. And thus, as this thesis understands

assimilation as a process leading towards homogeneity as changes in both ethnic groups and the dominant group lowers the boundaries between them, Chicago's soccer scene can be seen as an arena where negotiations both within ethnic groups, and between ethnic groups and the host society influences and affects both.

As this investigation has shown, soccer has serves several important functions in Mexican and Polish-American ethnicity in Chicago. First, soccer gathers the Mexican and Polish-American community. Both amateur and professional soccer establish arenas in which Mexican and Polish Americans interact and negotiate regardless of socioeconomic differences between the members. Because soccer transmits important ethnic elements, such as language, origin and culture, the sport also unifies the Mexican and Polish-American community in notions of a shared culture. Furthermore, because of the flexibility of the sport, it enables Mexican and Polish Americans to both celebrate and negotiate their ethnicity.

Second, soccer is actively used by Mexican and Polish Americans in addressing the challenges they face in Chicago. Although this investigation has shown that Mexican and Polish Americans face quite different challenges as part of their American experience, both groups are able to use soccer in their encounter of obstacles. Third, Mexican and Polish Americans use soccer to portray themselves as resources for the host society. And more importantly, one could argue, because of the context of soccer in Chicago, and the rest of the nation, the soccer community needs the support of ethnic groups. In order words, soccer serves as an arena in which both Mexican and Polish Americans are seen as resources. Soccer, then, is "broad and flexible enough to serve [the] several, often contradictory, purposes" of ethnic culture. [363] And thus, soccer plays a significant role in contemporary Mexican and Polish-American ethnicity in Chicago.

Future research on soccer and ethnicity should pay attention to the role of fan clubs, such as *Sector Latino* and *Fire Ultras*. Recently, scholars such as David Trouille, Derek Van Rheenen and Juan Javier Pescador have begun to explore the significance of amateur soccer clubs in the creation of ethnicity in the United States. These studies, however, have for the most part focused on the amateur soccer scene. And thus, by neglecting the professional soccer scene, current scholarship has not yet been able to explore and important dimension of the sport. As this investigation has revealed, the differences between the amateur and the professional soccer scene in Chicago made professional soccer ideal for Polish immigrants in their negotiations with the American-born Polish Americans and the host society. In the

support of Chicago Fire, Polish immigrants created an arena that had not been claimed by the already established Polish-American community in the city. Although Chicago Fire reached out to the entire ethnic community, it was primarily Polish immigrants who responded. This indicates that investigations including supporter groups add an additional dimension to the study of soccer and ethnicity. As there has been a growing scholarly interest in soccer lately, this is a dimension that surely will be included in future studies as the size of the academic scholarship expands.

In an investigation like this, there are always topics and aspects that have not been analyzed as thoroughly as one would have preferred. One of the aspects this thesis has been unable to investigate in as much depth is the role of soccer in the negotiation of gender roles as part of the formulation of ethnicity. Unfortunately, the narrators interviewed for this study have all been male. Nevertheless, as the development of female soccer teams within *Tangas* illustrates, soccer is an arena in which Mexican-American girls formulate gender roles. Likewise, in the stands at Toyota Park, women institute a large segments of those affiliated with *Sector Latino*. And thus, as Vicy Ruiz reports, Mexican-American women have "selected, retained, borrowed, and created their own cultural forms."[364] Because soccer, in most countries in the world, is closely connected with masculinity, while the sport in the United States for a long time has been dominated by women, soccer provides an ideal frame for negotiation of gender roles as part of the ethnic experience. Although this thesis, because of its limitation and primary sources, only has been able to touch the surface of this topic, it has revealed the potential for future research on the role of soccer in negotiation of gender roles and ethnic identities.

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