

Topic: My experience and identity of being a fútbol player.

Abstract: Being a fútbol player is great one gets to bond with family members and make new friends but it has also brought something that I wouldn't have thought of. It gives me identity of who I am and what I am. I have been identified as a Mexican just because of the sport I play and only when I play. When I am in my regular clothes there is confusion of what ethnicity I am and what language I speak. There is a stereotype when I play futbol but it also gives me the identity that I don't mind having I am a Mexicano and I am proud of that.

Keywords: Futbol player, Family, Friends, Stereotype with futbol, Identity confusion, Proud of being Mexicano.

I love soccer a lot and I have played it for a while already for me this sport has been something that has brought family and friends together it has brought rivalry and fun. It is also a sport that I have seen brings people together. This sport is something I feel very connected to. As a kid I wanted to be a professional fútbol player but it didn't happen. My dad has also liked fútbol a lot he is the one who thought me the game and the one who introduced the game to me. As a kid we would spend time together outside playing and trying to get better and as I have been growing up we don't do the same thing as we did go outside and play now we both go to a park and play a cascara which is a word for a friendly game between people, we just get together build the team and play and often times I play against my dad and we play against each other but even if he is in another team its kind of like a bond after the game its how we spend time together and at times he tells me how I played the game and tries to give me some advice. I have seen that fútbol has been a big part of why we hold a close relationship together because we both

can relate to it. It also brings us together when we watch the games even if we both like different teams we both hang out and watch each others team play and its another bonding time. It gives us something to talk about and connect with.

But fútbol doesn't just make me connect with my father but also with my family. When it's Mexico's time to play we all sit to watch the game we all cheer and get mad and start criticizing the players like if we were actually there at the game. It's a very pleasant feeling to be gathered there just for two hours sharing the same space and bonding it's like we all share the same passion for the same sport for that moment.

Not only family gets together with this sport but also people every Thursday when my dad and I go to play we play against complete strangers but as we play and keep seeing them there they become kind of like friends even if we don't even know their names or we don't know theirs we talk as if we knew each other already its kind of like an instant connection that we have just because we go and play we become part of a group. But even if we don't become friends we start to notice when people don't go and ask for them like if they were some one important to us but in reality they are just strangers that we get together and play fútbol with. This sport opens doors to companionship and to meeting new people. Also I am a person that doesn't go out much I stay at home do other things that interest me so as growing up I had had few friends and even if they are not many they were good friends but as I got out of high school most of us lost contact with each other for one reason or another. But this is where fútbol also comes in and plays an important part in my life. This sport has brought friendships together. In different places that I have worked I have made friends but its usually thru a topic that was brought up fútbol. We connect instantly its like it just opens a door automatically doesn't matter if you barely know the person you connect thru that. I have met plenty of my current friends by fútbol but only one of

them I met thru playing the others just by talking so now that I see it now only does it open doors when you play it but when you know the sport and you find others like you other fans. So that has been something else that makes this sport important to me that it brought friendships as well.

But with fútbol I have found out that it brings other things besides companionship, friendship and a bond with my Family. In my experience I noticed that it makes a part of a certain group of people. You are stereotyped that by having a soccer ball and knowing how to play you automatically must be Mexican. I have experienced this many times but the time I experienced it the most was in a job I had at a camp in a summer camp in 2009. When I got there people really didn't know where I was from and I always get the same reaction from people that I must be white or American because of my skin color. After the next day there we had some free time to spare. So I took a soccer ball to camp since I like fútbol so I took it to play when ever I had a free time. So as I was playing someone approached me and said to me if I liked playing soccer and of course I said yes and after a few other questions he asked me if I was Mexican and I said yes why so they responded o because you speak Spanish and well you like soccer. I just laughed since they were stereotyping. How come they didn't say if I was from somewhere else maybe from South America? Why did they guess I was Mexican? Was it because they just put two things together that they noticed that I spoke Spanish and liked soccer so automatically I must be Mexican right? It makes me laugh a bit that people stereotype a lot but I could see maybe why they would think that. We live in a place were there are a lot of Hispanics and when ever you see a group of people playing fútbol they are mostly Mexicanos. So I'm thinking may be they made that assumption about me for knowing Spanish and knowing how to play fútbol.

But this isn't the only time that since because I know how to play the sport people have automatically thought of me being Mexican or Hispanic and start to talk to me in Spanish when before they didn't. My color skin has a clear complexion and very often people mistake me for being American so they speak to me in English or at least try to because they don't know it very well. For example when I was at work a lot of Hispanic people would go thru my department and most of them wouldn't ask me for help even though I used to see them looking at me first like trying to figure it out if I spoke Spanish but since I didn't look Mexican they would just start talking in between themselves and of course I would understand what they would say and sometimes they would talk about me that looked like a *gabacho* a white person. I kind of laughed a little and sometimes I would just let them talk a little bit more just to see what else they would say them I would just go up to them and asked if they needed any help in Spanish.

The interesting thing about this though is that this confusion never happens when I go out to go and play some fútbol. I look the same just with different apparel but I'm still the same but for a reason even though I make look whiter than any of the people there isn't confusion about me being a *gabacho* or Mexicano. They simply know that I speak Spanish. The guys there just come up to me and just start speaking in Spanish as if I already knew and as if they knew already that I knew how to speak Spanish even if I don't look like I do for many.

I don't really mind people telling me if I'm Mexican because I know how to play soccer because I am Mexican so I don't get offended its part of who I really am and soccer is a big part of me so if they make that connection it doesn't bother me a bit people can judge all they want it doesn't hurt me. I am proud of what I am and who I am, but one thing I don't like is when the sport is criticized and so are the people who played it for example I once was with a group of people and I said lets play futbol and some other three guys said yes and then one of the guy said

you want to play beaner ball? For what I understood from that comment is that everyone that plays futbol is a so called beaner and of course it isn't true. I know it's similar to what others have done that by me playing fútbol it makes me Mexican but I rather people say Mexican because that what I am.

But something that I have noticed is the fact that not in all places does that happen me. I have been to different cities in the USA and I've been to Mexico in different places as well and in all places I noticed that in some cities they did start to speak Spanish to me but in other they didn't until I spoke or let them know that I knew Spanish. For instance all around here the bay area I get confused with being American *gabacho* and I am used to it already. But once I go down south like San Ysidro by the border I get spoken to in Spanish right away. When I was in New York I was surprised by how people spoke to me in Spanish even though there were people there that had the same clear skin color as mine and spoke Spanish they were Spaniards so I thought people would think the same of me and speak Spanish or Castilian but no they all spoke English until I let it know I spoke Spanish. As for Mexico when I went there I was confused for being American in once city but not on the next one. I noticed that all this happened because of the place I was in and the people that were around me. Here you see a lot of Mexicanos but are darker so that maybe the reasons people don't know if I'm Mexicano as well in new York I guess I looked white but not have the same features as the Spaniards so people spoke to me in English and as for Mexico I saw that in the places I was in the peoples skin color looked a lot like mine they were cleared skin Mexicans so I blended in and in the other city they were darker and here was a lot of tourist. So I'm guessing that maybe the reason but what ever it its pretty interesting

So fútbol has brought to me things that are important to me like family and friendship which I do appreciate a lot but also stereotype and confusion of whom I really am what ethnicity

which I never thought a sport could do that to someone. I guess there is still a lot to learn about the way people see and perceive one another. But even if these confusion keeps happening I wont mind just as long as they don't make fun of the sport or call us names that offend us. I will not mind because I am what I am and even if I didn't have a football with me and people didn't know what ethnicity I was or if I speak Spanish I would let it be know that, I do I always do because I am proud to be what I am a Mexicano and I am passionate about the sport. This sport has giving me identity which is sometimes good because I want people to know who I am and what I am but sometimes it is hard to do so when I am in my normal clothes and my skin complexion fools a lot of people and also my hair color. It is when I play futbol that I don't need to tell someone who I am. But I don't mind I liked being called and being identified as a Mexicano