

THE 1986 WORLD CUP AND POLITICAL LEGITIMACY DURING MEXICO'S  
"LOST DECADE"

by

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## ABSTRACT

NOE PLIEGO CAMPOS. The 1986 World Cup and political legitimacy during Mexico's "Lost Decade." (Under the direction of Dr. JURGEN BUCHENAU)

Using newspapers from Mexico City, Ciudad Nezahualcotel, Queretaro, and other cities throughout Mexico and outside of Mexico alongside official documents and publications, I argue that the Mexican government led by President Miguel de la Madrid supported the bid for the 1986 World Cup during the "Lost Decade" in order to hold onto popular support and as an attempt to present a stable Mexico to the world. I also demonstrate that popular criticism against the government's decision to support the bid used soccer jargon and imagery to construct their arguments.

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## DEDICATION

In memory of Keith Lamont Scott, Justin Carr, the Charlotte Uprising, and those that face and fight back against oppression around the world.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In March of 2016 the Federación Mexicana de Fútbol Asociación, A.C. (FMF), the private organization that administers Mexican soccer, announced that they would present a bid to host the 2026 World Cup.<sup>1</sup> That same day sports journalist Christian Martinoli asked via his Twitter account: “World Cup Mexico 2026, do all of you like the idea?” Of the 15,027 users that responded to the poll in a twenty-four-hour span, 79 percent said yes.<sup>2</sup> The overwhelming support for the event reflects in part the popularity of soccer and the prestige within the soccer world that would come with Mexico becoming the first nation to host the tournament three times. Rafael del Castillo, leader of the FMF, in the 1980s organized the 1986 World Cup and declared “Mexico is super ready” to host the 2026 edition.<sup>3</sup> Despite, del Castillo’s enthusiasm one user responded “...but first we have to finish paying the one from ’86...”<sup>4</sup> The user’s wariness to host another mega-sports event highlights a distinct manner the 1986 World Cup. Most remember Diego Maradona’s famous “Hand of God” and other tremendous plays that led Argentina to the championship. However, the 1986 World Cup hosted by Mexico occurred in the middle of a tumultuous decade hit hard by economic and political problems as well as a devastating earthquake.

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<sup>1</sup> “¡Es oficial! México va por la Copa del Mundo del 2026,” *PublicSport*, last modified March 4, 2016, <http://www.publimetro.com.mx/publisport/mexico-quiere-organizar-el-mundial-de-la-fifa-del-2026/mpcd!oZCgtu7wPTvLE/>.

<sup>2</sup> Christian Martinoli, Twitter post, March 4, 2016, 8:41 P.M., <https://twitter.com/martinolimx>.

<sup>3</sup> Carlos Barrón, “México tiene todo para organizar una Copa del Mundo,” *Excelsior*, last modified March 8, 2016, <http://www.excelsior.com.mx/adrenalina/2016/03/08/1079509>.

<sup>4</sup> Alberto Gaxiola, Twitter post, March 4, 2016, 8:43 P.M., <https://twitter.com/ggaxmann>.



Economic troubles escalated on August 19, 1982, when Finance Minister Jesús Silva Herzog Flores notified the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the U.S. government of Mexico's inability to pay its mounting debt to international creditors. This notification triggered the 1982 debt crisis, caused by borrowing at double-digit interest rates to support social programs, hyperinflation, and the widespread practice of government officials taking public funds for personal benefit. Mexico's debt issue was not unique. External debt hurt much of Latin America, which is why many scholars of the region remember the 1980s as the Lost Decade. In Mexico, inflation rose over 100 percent for several years and the devaluation of currency got to the point where 2,200 pesos equaled 1 US dollar in contrast to 25 pesos to 1 US dollar at the start of the crisis.<sup>5</sup>

A month before the disaster became public knowledge, the presidential candidate of the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) won the 1982 elections. Even though their presidential candidate, Miguel de la Madrid, received 68% of the vote in July of 1982, the PRI received far fewer votes for legislative candidates.<sup>6</sup> The election displayed early signs of the PRI losing its grip on voter loyalty in the 1980s. In addition, President Miguel de la Madrid (1982-1988) implemented neoliberal policies to solve the problems created by his predecessor and to address the demands from the IMF and other entities. These decisions further weakened PRI's grasp on voter loyalty. He slashed government subsidies for housing and food, privatized industries, and opened Mexico to the global market. Removing subsidies due to demands from external bodies like the International Monetary Fund inhibited him from using economic populism like previous presidents to

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<sup>5</sup> Jurgen Buchenau, *The Mexican Mosaic: A Brief History of Mexico* (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2008), 118-119.

<sup>6</sup> Enrique Krauze, *Mexico, Biography of Power: A History of Modern Mexico, 1810-1996*, translated by Hnk Heifetz (HarperCollins Books: New York City, 1997), 763.

hold onto the loyalty of voters. It made him unpopular among the urban popular and middle classes since it forced them to pay more for necessities with a weakened peso.

Additionally, President de la Madrid's weak and slow response to the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City failed to satisfy the citizens of the city who lost their homes. The earthquake registered an 8.1 on the Richter scale and killed around 9,000 people, injured almost 30,000, and left at least 100,000 homeless.<sup>7</sup> It also caused around \$4 billion worth of property damage that only strained the Mexican economy even more.<sup>8</sup> Scholars like Louise Walker argue that the state's inadequate response to the 1985 earthquake must be understood as another moment alongside the 1968 Tlatelolco Massacre in which the PRI lost legitimacy.<sup>9</sup> The economic problems alongside the state's weak responses to the problems that citizens faced further weakened the legitimacy of the PRI. Soon many disgruntled citizens looked to other political parties for solutions.

The loss of voter loyalty to the PRI affected areas outside of Mexico as well, and especially in northern Mexico. In the state of Chihuahua about 2.3 million residents held a negative perception of the PRI-ran federal government.<sup>10</sup> Ranchers, farmers, and entrepreneurs from the region faced the devaluation of their savings and their businesses because of the 1982 debt crisis. Due to those reasons, they turned their loyalty to the conservative party *Partido Acción Nacional* (PAN).<sup>11</sup> By 1983 the party won municipal presidencies across the state, including the major cities Chihuahua and Ciudad Juarez.

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<sup>7</sup> Samuel Dillon and Julia Preston, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004), 122.

<sup>8</sup> "After the Earthquake: Victims' Coordinating Council," *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 579.

<sup>9</sup> Louise E. Walker, "Economic Fault Lines and Middle-Class Fears: Tlatelolco, Mexico City, 1985," in *Aftershocks: Earthquakes and Popular Politics in Latin America*, ed. Jurgen Buchenau and Lyman L. Johnson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009), 212.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Dillon and Julia Preston, *Opening Mexico: The Making of a Democracy*, 124.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, 96.

This provided direct evidence that the PRI faced a political crisis. Despite these events, President de la Madrid travelled to Chihuahua and announced, “those who think that the party of the Revolution is in a crisis are deceived.”<sup>12</sup> While President de la Madrid’s words reflected a confidence in his party, people’s actions to support other parties showed their distrust of the party. Moreover, the PAN’s ability to gain the once-loyal-PRI-voters further weakened the political power of the PRI, despite the anti-democratic attempts to stay in power.

The PRI’s weakening legitimacy in the 1980s caused by economic and political problems remains a topic of study. Different studies focus solely on the economic<sup>13</sup>, while others engage with the political aspect.<sup>14</sup> Yet, I try to engage this dynamic and problem via the 1986 World Cup. However, why use this tournament to talk about the Lost Decade? Why use soccer to understand political legitimacy and culture? Historians of sports in general and soccer demonstrate that people of all classes and in top-down and bottom-up approaches use sports teams to manifest national identity.<sup>15</sup> For example, Roger Killeson in *The Country of Football: Soccer and the Making of Modern Brazil* focused “on how people thought about soccer and, through it, about the nation.”<sup>16</sup> Thus,

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<sup>12</sup> Enrique Krauze, *Mexico, Biography of Power*, 765.

<sup>13</sup> Sarah Babb, *Managing Mexico: Economists from Nationalism to Neoliberalism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).; James E. Cypher, *State and Capital in Mexico: Development Policy Since 1940*, Boulder Westview Press, 1990; Gerardo Otero, *Neoliberalism Revisited: Economic Restructuring and Mexico’s Political Future*, ed. Gerardo Otero (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1996); Elsa M. Gracida, “Reflexiones sobre el pensamieto económico en México, 1970-1986,” *Iberoamericana*, no. 26. (June, 2006): 67-87.

<sup>14</sup> Roderic Ai. Camp, ‘The Revolution’s Second Generation: The Miracle, 1946-1982 and Collapse of the PRI, 1982-2000,’ in *A Companion to Mexican History and Culture*, ed. William H. Beezley (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011): 468-480.

<sup>15</sup> *Football in the Americas: Fútbol, Futebol, Soccer*, ed. by Rory M. Miller and Liz Crolley, (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2007); Joshua H. Nadel, *Fútbol: Why Soccer Matters in Latin America*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> Roger Kittleson, *The Country of Football: Soccer and the Making of Modern Brazil*, (Berkely: University of California Press, 2014), 9.

the subject of sports lends itself to social and cultural histories. Scholars such as Christian Koller and Fabian Brandle write that:

The history of football is and remains fundamentally a history of social inclusion and exclusion, a history of the struggle of the underprivileged for material well-being, and a history as well of the maximization of profits by clever businessmen and anonymous marketing firms. In sum, it is an important part of social and economic history.<sup>17</sup>

In many ways, I follow Roger Kittleson's line of thought, as I use the 1986 World Cup to understand the PRI and the issues it faced in the 1980s.

The 1986 World Cup occurs in the midst of a debt crisis that resulted in the creation of a neoliberal state led by a party that sought after ways to deal with the debt and the fact that people wanted to vote for another party. Yet, academics who focus on sports histories of Latin America fail to acknowledge the mega-sports hosted in a tumultuous decade. In light of a historiography that for the most part neglects the 1986 World Cup I repeat the question driving my research: why did President de la Madrid and the government support a bid for the event? I also ask other questions to examine the World Cup within the context of the Lost Decade. For instance, what does it mean for the government to pay FIFA, a private organization, for a logo on a commemorative coin for the World Cup produced by the state? Did Mexicans and non-Mexicans protest the event, if so who, why, and in what ways? Did President de la Madrid's support of the World Cup in the midst of an economic crisis sway some voters to vote for another party?

While the economy and the PRI's legitimacy hit a steady decline, Rafael del Castillo worked to prepare a bid for the 1986 World Cup. This occurred after Colombian President Belisario Betancur announced to the world in October 1982 that his nation

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<sup>17</sup> Christian Koller and Brandle Fabian, *Goal!: A Cultural and Social History of Modern Football*, (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015), 6.

would not host the tournament. Thus, only a few months after Mexico told the world it could not afford to pay off its debts, Mexican officials, FMF representatives, and many others expressed interest in hosting a mega-sports event citing profits to aid the debt-ridden Mexican economy. However, they fail to explain how a mega-sports event would do so. Also, they fail to explain the difference between profits for private enterprises versus for public benefit. Although the decision of hosting the World Cup in Mexico seemed contradictory, if not irresponsible, I argue that President Miguel de la Madrid supported the World Cup bid for political reasons. The tournament provided a way for him to deal with the debt crisis and PRI's legitimacy crisis. Further, President de la Madrid's support for the tournament cannot be understated.

President de la Madrid's decision to host the mega-sports event echoed the decisions made by PRI leadership in the 1960s when they sought out to host the 1968 Olympics. Historian Celeste González de Bustamante found that government officials alongside various news stations used the international attention on Mexico to present the nation as modern with peace and order.<sup>18</sup> Projecting stability in Mexico mattered not only to garner tourism, but also foreign investment. More recently in 2014, Ariel Rodríguez Kuri re-assessed the 1968 Games and argued that the International Olympic Committee selected Mexico City "despite and thanks to the Cold War."<sup>19</sup> He also asserted that the Games "represented a radical novelty in the political culture and in the practice of the Mexican government," who for the first time organized and hosted an international sports

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<sup>18</sup> Celeste González de Bustamante, "1968 Olympic Dreams and Tlatelolco Nightmares: Imagining and Imaging Modernity on Television," *Mexican Studies* 26, no. 1, (Winter 2010), 1-30.

<sup>19</sup> Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, "Ganar la sede. La política internacional de los juegos olímpicos de 1968," *Historia Mexicana* 64, no. 1, (July-September 2014), 245, 281.

event.<sup>20</sup> Kuri thus understood that the PRI leadership in the 1960s saw the '68 summer games as a foreign policy tool since they sought to highlight Mexico's stability and potential. Also, the 1970 World Cup, hosted by Mexico shortly after the Summer Games provided the country another chance to "project the image of a developed and modern Mexico."<sup>21</sup> Likewise, I view the 1986 World Cup as an act of foreign policy because the tournament provided an opportunity to showcase the nation in order to court potential investors in light of capital flight of the previous years.

The 1986 World Cup remains understudied in general histories of Mexico as well as economic, political, and sports histories. In 2006, *Televisa*, the nation's largest and most powerful television company, produced a documentary titled *México '86 A 20 Años*. The documentary failed to address the debt crisis or the political issues of the decade that strained the PRI's grasp onto legitimacy. Instead it portrays Mexico as an underdog to get the 1986 World Cup bid with resilience because the nation organized the tournament despite the 1985 Mexico City earthquake.<sup>22</sup> It also emphasizes the nationalistic pride since Mexico became the first nation in the world to host the World Cup twice. The documentary matters because Televisa's power as the largest media corporation shaped and continues to shape Mexican discourse and media. Recently in 2014, a few scholars addressed the 1986 World Cup in relation to Mexico. For instance, Joshua H. Nadel in a study of soccer's importance in Latin America briefly chronicled the 1986 Mexican team's performance in the tournament within the context of "unfulfilled promises" from

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<sup>20</sup> Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, "Ganar la sede," 245, 281.

<sup>21</sup> Joshua H. Nadel, ¡*Fútbol!*, 177.

<sup>22</sup> "México '86 A 20 Años (Parte 1)," YouTube video, 4:44, posted by "MuertoInc," May 24, 2006, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxiemHk5ysw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxiemHk5ysw;); "Mexico '86 A 20 Años (Parte 2)," YouTube video, 5:15, posted by "MuertoInc," May 25, 2006, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLVNgHzkY8M>.

Mexican leadership to exploit oil for social welfare.<sup>23</sup> In addition, he claimed that the nation experienced “a surge in nationalist pride and raising spirits in the midst of a financial gloom” after FIFA awarded it with hosting rights.<sup>24</sup> In a larger study of the FIFA sanctioned tournament titled *The FIFA World Cup 1930-2010* historians Claire and Keith Brewster argue that media moguls from Televisa convinced a nation wary to spend money on a mega event to support the bid.<sup>25</sup> Their argument echoed public intellectual and anti-imperialist Eduardo Galeano, who passionately declared:

Who ran the 1986 World Cup? The Mexican Soccer Federation? No, please, no more intermediaries: it was run by Guillermo Cañedo, vice president of Televisa and president of the company’s international network. This World Cup belonged to Televisa, the private monopoly that owns the free time of all Mexicans and also owns Mexican soccer. And nothing could be more important than the money Televisa, along with FIFA, could earn from the European broadcast rights. When a Mexican journalist had the insolent audacity to ask about the costs and profits of the World Cup, Cañedo cut him off cold: ‘This is a private company and we don’t have to report to anybody.’<sup>26</sup>

While the influence of Televisa cannot be ignored, I contend that President de la Madrid supported the bid for political reasons. Due to the austerity measures he could no longer rely on social welfare programs for voter loyalty like PRI historically did. The World Cup provided him with a project to increase nationalism and deal with the political problems he faced. Moreover, I showcase that popular discontent against the 1986 World Cup relied on soccer jargon and imagery in many ways to showcase the government’s irresponsible decision to fund a mega-sports event as people suffered due to its decisions.

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<sup>23</sup> Joshua H. Nadel, *¡Fútbol!*, 192-195, 198.

<sup>24</sup> Joshua H. Nadel, *¡Fútbol!*, 194.

<sup>25</sup> Claire Brewster and Keith Brewster, “‘He Hath Not Done This for Any Other Nation’: Mexico’s 1970 and 1986 World Cups,” in *The FIFA World Cup 1930-2010: Politics, Commerce, Spectacle and Identities*, ed. Stefan Rinke and Kay Schiller, (Gottingen, Germany: Wallstein Verlag, 2014), 199-219.

<sup>26</sup> Eduardo Galeano, *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*, trans. Mark Fried, (New York: Nation Books, 2013), 196.

## SOURCES

This project relies on a wide array of sources collected throughout Mexico City, Nezahualcóyotl, and Queretaro. It includes documents from the *Archivo General de la Nación*, where I collected documents and photographs unavailable elsewhere. I also rely on newspapers collected at various archives including the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México*, *Centro de Estudios del Movimiento Obrero y Socialista*, and the *Centro de Información y Documentación de Nezahualcóyotl*. This allowed me to gather newspapers of various political ideologies as well as from local, state, and national perspectives. Various times, I could not find a trace of government documents or advertisements by government agencies that newspapers reported on. For instance, local newspapers in Queretaro contained many advertisements from the State's tourism office that asked citizens to behave in a respectful manner, especially when dealing with tourists. Yet, finding official sources about the state government's investment of resources proved to be extremely difficult. Thus, to answer these questions, I rely heavily on written and visual evidence, found mostly in newspapers, and rely on the government documents I did manage to find in the archives.



## CHAPTER 2: “THERE ARE NO LOSSES FOR THE HOST NATION”: PURSUING ECONOMIC RELIEF AND OTHER ARGUMENTS FOR MEXICO TO HOST THE WORLD CUP, OCTOBER 1982-MAY 1983

From the beginning of his presidency, President Miguel de la Madrid faced scrutiny from both the political Left and Right due to the PRI's role in creating the 1982 debt crisis. The Left criticized PRI for the corruption and the attacks against workers while the Right, the PAN, pointed at inflation and spending. The 1986 World Cup provided him an opportunity to tackle both sides of criticisms. On the one hand, according to many supporters of the tournament, the mega-sports event would provide economic relief. However, today scholars such as Robert A. Baade and Victor A. Matheson advise cities to “more thoroughly evaluate booster promises of a financial windfall from hosting a sports mega-event such as the World Cup before committing substantial public resources to such an event” because these events fail to spur economic growth.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, the tournament provided President de la Madrid with a project with which Mexicans could get behind in a time when people started to increasingly lose hope in the PRI.

The bidding process lasted from October 1982 to May 1983, the organizing process lasted until May of 1986, and the tournament lasted until June of 1986. Overall the ordeal lasted more than half of De la Madrid's presidency. This project provided him

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<sup>27</sup> Robert A. Baade and Victor A. Matheson, "The Quest for the Cup: Assessing the Economic Impact of the World Cup," *Regional Studies* 38, no. 4, (2007), 352.

and the PRI with an alternative way to hold onto the loyalty of disgruntled citizens. Previously the party relied on social welfare programs that new regulations set by the IMF cut funding from. Yet, those who supported the World Cup in Mexico focused on the economic promises, regards of whether they could be kept, and used the weak economy to shape people's lives and views.

The potential profit and potential opportunity for Mexico to become as the first nation in the world to host the event twice, garnered support from various sectors despite the debt crisis. The language of those who focused on profit echoed the language of neoliberalism as they noted that the state would not spend money on the tournament. Others saw the fact that Mexico hosted the tournament in 1970, a relatively recent experience and an existing infrastructure, as another reason that the nation could do it again. These individuals voiced their opinions from the moment Colombia's president declared his nation no longer wanted to host the World Cup to the moment that Mexico submitted the bid to FIFA. During this stage (October 1982 to March 1983), Miguel de la Madrid transitioned from president-elect to president and individuals wanted his opinion about what position the nation should take regarding the bid, especially as the nation started to feel the early impacts of the debt crisis. Thus, the rhetoric that President Miguel de la Madrid used to support the bid for the sports event should be placed in a context where both the political Left and Right scrutinized the PRI for the debt crisis.

Further, comprehending the sports event as a business opportunity also allows for an understanding of why Mexican officials supported a bid for the World Cup only months after the start of the economic issues. FIFA's focus on profits from the World Cup became clear in the 1980s. The international soccer organizations in the 1980s

expanded from nine sponsors in the 1982 World Cup to twelve multinational companies, such as Coca-Cola, Anheuser-Busch, and Gillette in 1986. This demonstrated that the World Cup became a business opportunity, not just a sports event.<sup>28</sup> Scholar Heidrun Homburg declares that “since the 80s the [World] Cup has generated stupendous marketing and commercial revenues; at the end of the following decade it turned from a multi-million to a multi-billion [dollar] affair.”<sup>29</sup> FIFA officials at multiple levels explicitly referred to the World Cup as a business. For example, FIFA’s General Secretary Joseph S. Blatter in February 1983 reflected the organization’s business-oriented mentality and declared that the “World Cup is a business” into which the host nation needed to invest 60 million U.S. dollars while reminding people of the positive economic results from the 1982 World Cup in Spain.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, FIFA President Joao Havelange in May 1983 stated “The World Cup is a business...FIFA takes ten percent of earnings.”<sup>31</sup>

Yet, why would Colombia give up the ability to host the tournament if it provided an opportunity of economic growth? The Colombian government did so because the economic circumstance of the nation in the 1980s differed in comparison to 1974 when FIFA granted them the rights to host the World Cup. In 1985, Colombian economist Miguel Urrutia argued that during the 1970s the nation’s economy experienced growth

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<sup>28</sup> FIFA’s Communications & Public Affairs Division, “FIFA Partners: The Official FIFA World Cup Partners & Sponsors since 1966” in *FIFA World Cup Off the Pitch*, January 19, 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Heidrun Homburg, “Financing World Football. A Business History of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA),” *Zeitschrift für Unternehmensgeschichte / Journal of Business History* 53, no.1, (2008), 1.

<sup>30</sup> “En dólares el país anfitrión de la Copa,” *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), February 16, 1983.

<sup>31</sup> “El fútbol es negocio, pero le damos la mano a los necesitados,” *El Universal*, (Mexico City), May 29, 1983.

and helped increase the living standards of the poor.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the nation's president needed to garner support from citizens, according to journalist Jessica Lopez, who wrote "conservative president Misael Pastrana Borrero had made it his mission to host the World Cup after coming to power as a result of a later discredited election."<sup>33</sup> This eagerness from the Colombian president to host a World Cup as a way to earn credibility amongst his nation's people parallels what later occurs with Mexico's Miguel de la Madrid. Colombians as hosts expressed nationalistic pride that their nation would host despite being of the third-world would host a World Cup tournament.<sup>34</sup> However, Belisario Betancur, Colombia's president in October of 1982, announced to the world that his country would no longer host the tournament. He stated, "here in the country we have many things to do and there is no time to attend to FIFA and it's associates' extravagances."<sup>35</sup> In addition Betancur declared, "the World Cup should have served Colombia and not Colombia serving the multinational that FIFA is" demonstrating a gap between the wants of the host nation and the commercialized FIFA.<sup>36</sup> His declarations suggested that he as president made the decision partly based on lacking economic resources, but also on manifesting national sovereignty. Many remember the intense debate in Colombia around the question of should the nation host the tournament or invest into schools and hospitals instead. Also, the impact of the violence that marks

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<sup>32</sup> Miguel Urrutia, *Winner and Losers in Colombia's Economic Growth of the 1970s*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 1.

<sup>33</sup> Jessica Lopez, "The Untold Story of the Tangled Politics That Landed Mexico the 1986 World Cup," *Remezcla*, last modified May 10, 2016, <http://remezcla.com/features/sports/mexico-1986-world-cup-scandal>.

<sup>34</sup> "Colombia 1986: el Mundial Que No Fue," *YouTube* video, 4:10, posted by "Senaldeportes," January 6, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svlpdKkVLrE>.

<sup>35</sup> Dagoberto Escorcía, "Betancur: 'Colombia no tiene tiempo para atender las extravagancias de la FIFA,'" *El País* (Mexico City), October 27, 1982.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibíd.*

1980s Colombia on Bentacur's decision remains unknown. However, Bentacur's decision highlighted a desire to manifest national sovereignty against a multi-national organization.

Yet, some felt that FIFA pressured Colombia into giving up the World Cup. Two FIFA officials professed that they did not and argued that a host nation needs to invest into infrastructure because "not only do these public projects serve the organization of the tournament, but that they will be taken advantage of to help the national economy and the nation as a whole."<sup>37</sup> Their statement highlights one of the ways in which the multi-national soccer organization passes the expenses onto the host nation. This statement also manifested the Keynesian nature of mega-sports events because the governments of host nations invest into infrastructure for the sports event in hopes to garner gains from it afterwards as well. The president's statements highlighted that he wanted his administration to pay attention to the problems people faced as the economic situation worsened and the disconnection grew between FIFA and the host nation. However, cultural journalist Eduardo Arias, in 2013, made clear that Colombia failed to invest into infrastructure.<sup>38</sup>

While Colombia pointed at their economic situation as a reason to give up the hosting rights, many Mexicans saw their circumstances as a reason to host the event. Their thought process depended on the perceived successes of the 1982 World Cup. Newspapers highlighted potential profits that could help relief the crisis and shaped the

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<sup>37</sup> "Aseguran en la FIFA: No hubo presión contra Colombia," *El Universal* (Mexico City), October 26, 1982.

<sup>38</sup> "Colombia 1986: el Mundial Que No Fue," *YouTube* video, 4:10, posted by "Senaldeportes," January 6, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=svlpdKkVLrE>.

pro-World Cup arguments. The nationally read and “ideologically pluralistic”<sup>39</sup> newspaper *El Universal* ran various headlines that expressed support for the tournament. A few days after Betancur’s resignation of the tournament, the newspaper ran a story titled “¡Después de la renuncia de Colombia MEXICO TRAS EL MUNDIAL!” It also included this as the tagline: “[Mexico] has everything to do it and only depends on the government’s decision. It would be beneficial to the national economy. The Mexican Soccer Federation will do what it can to go get it.”<sup>40</sup> The attention-grabbing headline in bold and capital letters, as well as the tagline demonstrated the need for government support and the promises of economic prosperity as part of the pro-World Cup rhetoric. The article’s writer also assured the readers, struggling due to the debt crisis, that the necessary infrastructure (hotels, satellites, stadiums) existed and thus, monetary expenses from the government would be minimal.<sup>41</sup> The articulation of minimal spending from the government remained a pivotal element as to why the bid for the tournament garnered support in a moment when austerity measures made life hard for the popular and middle classes. Also, the idea of the government not needing to spend more money fell in line with the neoliberal policies that demanded a decrease in government spending. The next day Zaragoza ran a story with “SERIA BUEN NEGOCIO” as part of the headline. The headline made it seem that the FMF president, Rafael del Castillo made a definite statement on the possible economic impact of the tournament. However, the article does not include a single quote that reflects that type of assertiveness from del Castillo. Rafael

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<sup>39</sup> Horacio Jiménez, Alberto Morales, and Misael Zavala, “Ealy Ortiz: la libertad de expresión es una lucha permanente,” *El Universal*, last modified March 17, 2017, <http://www.eluniversal.com.mx/articulo/nacion/sociedad/2017/03/16/ealy-ortiz-la-libertad-de-expresion-es-una-lucha-permanente>.

<sup>40</sup> Zaragoza Zacarías, “¡Después de la renuncia de Colombia México tras el mundial!,” *El Universal* (Mexico City), October 26, 1982.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibíd.*

del Castillo in a tentative manner stated, “The World Cup *can* be a good business decision for Mexico, especially in these really difficult moments regarding the economy and some dollars could be recuperated.”<sup>42</sup> *El Universal* ran a similar article again a few days later, with a headline that suggested that del Castillo “assured” that Mexico getting the World Cup would help “capture” dollars. Again, del Castillo’s words seem tentative and only manifested that the economic profit “in reality it would be a grain of salt” before talking about the possibility that the tournament could yield revenue after the expenditures.<sup>43</sup> In that same article, del Castillo reaffirmed that the soccer federation first needed to get the government’s support because without it a World Cup cannot occur.<sup>44</sup> Coverage from *El Universal* of Rafael del Castillo sheds light onto the newspaper’s sensationalist support of the event while, on the other hand, his words reflected an attempt to highlight the chances of the tournament aiding the national economy. Yet, the specifics of how it would improve the economic situation were never fully explained besides of mentions of ticket sales and tourist dollars. It also showed the need to remind readers that the government, soon to be under President Miguel de la Madrid’s reign needed to support the bid before they could move forward. Without the government’s backing, the bid would have remained just an idea, albeit backed by the leader of an organization that administers the most popular sport in the nation.

Many other members of the sports world in Mexico, especially those with influence, voiced their support for the World Cup. Well respected soccer coach Ignacio

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<sup>42</sup> Zaragoza Zacarías, “Del Castillo: apoyamos antes a los demás países, pero...Seria buen negocio,” *El Universal* (Mexico City), October 27, 1982.

<sup>43</sup> J. Ubaldo Espinoza D., “Entrevista con del Castillo: Aseguro que obtener la sede para México ayudaría a captar dólares,” *El Universal*, October 28, 1982.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibíd.*

"Nacho" Trelles in a routine conference stated that "in my opinion there would be no problem to organize it," which showed his confidence in his country organizing the tournament despite the debt problem.<sup>45</sup> Another soccer coach Arpad Fekete out of Jalisco, Guadalajara, argued that the crisis not only impacted Mexico, but also the world. Fekete went on to state that "the people will forget [about the crisis due to the tournament] and I am sure that there will be happiness."<sup>46</sup> His words manifested the idea that Mexico should host the tournament to provide those affected by the crisis a chance to forget about economic problems. This rhetoric mirrors, in part, President Miguel de la Madrid, who later articulated he followed the will of the people. In addition, Fekete argued that "Mexico would be highly recognized outside of Mexico and that everyone will want to come," presenting a nationalist argument and proposing an increase in tourism as part of the tournament.<sup>47</sup>

Others declared the possibility of high profits for Mexico while the worst being a nation without gains or losses. For instance, Francisco Hernandez, a member of the organizing committee for the 1970 World Cup, supported the idea of the debt-ridden nation hosting the event. He predicted at least 45 million dollars in profits and declared, "there are no losses for the host nation," echoing the rhetoric of FIFA's Joseph Blatter, who saw the tournament as a business.<sup>48</sup> By December of that same year, the owner Pumas, one of the largest soccer teams in the nation, Guillermo Aguilar Alvarez echoed his statements. He stated that Mexico, in the worst-case scenario, would not lose any

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<sup>45</sup> J. Ubaldo Espinoza D. "No pasa nada: Trelesoivoic No es difcil hacer el mundial, el problema es contar con buen equipo," *El Universal*, October 27, 1982.

<sup>46</sup> "Que el Mundial har  olvidar la crisis dice Arpad Fekete," *El Siglo de Torre n* (Torre n, M xico), March 13, 1983.

<sup>47</sup> *Ib d.*

<sup>48</sup> "Si M xico organiza el mundial afirma se ganar n m s de 45 Millones de d lares," *El Siglo de Torre n* (Torre n, M xico), November 19, 1982.



money and envisioned 100 million dollars in profit in the best case scenario.<sup>49</sup> Yet, Alvarez failed to clarify who benefited from the profits. Alvarez also stated that the World Cup would “shut the mouths of those who think that Mexico is in a crisis and that it can explode with a revolution” due to the economic troubles.<sup>50</sup> Yet, little evidence suggests that Mexico at that time could have erupted into a revolution. The words of important figure in the sports world filled newspapers, which readers could easily see due to sensationalist headlines formatted in all capital letters and bold print.

While leaders in the sports world in Mexico declared their support, Miguel de la Madrid as president-elect never made a definite declaration concerning the government’s support or lack thereof for the bid. Yet, he made it clear that he would study the possibility of hosting the tournament. President-elect Miguel de la Madrid also met with FIFA officials. One of many meetings occurred in early November of 1982. The writer for *El Universal* clarified that he knew little actual information about the meeting between FIFA’s president Havelange, FIFA vice presidents Harry Kavan and Guillermo Cañedo, and president-elect Miguel de la Madrid. However, he still asserted that FIFA’s president preferred Mexico.<sup>51</sup> He also stated de la Madrid declared an initiative to study the possibility of hosting the tournament. This meeting along with the pro-World Cup arguments from sports leaders and journalists fostered a pro-World Cup environment before de la Madrid took office.

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<sup>49</sup> “Habla de las ganancias que dejaría la ‘Copa Mundial,’” *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), December 18, 1982.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>51</sup> Eduardo Arvivo Marín, “Entrevista privada del licenciado De la Madrid y Havelange: México, podría ser,” *El Universal* (Mexico City), November 7, 1982.

While President de la Madrid failed to make a public statement leaders of his party, the PRI, made assertive claims about the tournament. The party's leader of sports activity, Gamaliel Ramirez, in November of 1982 made clear that the infrastructure constructed for the 1968 Olympics and the 1970 World Cup equipped Mexico to host the 1986 tournament. Also, Ramirez, as representative of the party noted that he wanted to get "workers and peasants" to practice sport via municipal competitions.<sup>52</sup> This demonstrated that sport became a way for the party to engage with voters. Moreover, this reflected a continuance of practices used by the PRI in the 1950s. In the mid-1900s the PRI engaged with young Mexicans by introducing sports as noted by historian Jaime Pensado.<sup>53</sup> Due to his words, a newspaper out of Torreon ran the headline "El PRI apoya la organización de Copa Mundial, en México."<sup>54</sup> In addition, state governors such as Guillermo Jiménez in the state of Puebla raised their hands to support the tournament.<sup>55</sup> Miguel de la Madrid as president-elect thus also faced party leadership supporting the bid alongside those in the sports world.

As president, he carried out the study that consisted of gathering information about how people in nation felt about the tournament. This task fell into the hands of the Sub-secretary of Sport Francisco Alanís Camino, who acted many times as the spokesperson for the president when it came to the tournament. Under him the government created a plebiscite intended to find out if Mexicans wanted the World

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<sup>52</sup> "El PRI apoya la organización de Copa Mundial, en México," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), November 16, 1982.

<sup>53</sup> Jaime Pensado, *Rebel Mexico: Student Unrest and Authoritarian Political Culture during the Long Sixties*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 60-61.

<sup>54</sup> "El PRI apoya la organización de Copa Mundial, en México," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), November 16, 1982.

<sup>55</sup> "FIFA es la dueña de la pelota y la alquila, se le garantizan dólares," *Proceso*, January 22, 1983, <http://www.proceso.com.mx/135264/fifa-es-la-duena-de-la-pelota-y-la-alquila-si-le-garantizan-dolares>.

Cup.<sup>56</sup> He announced the decision to use the plebiscite in a press conference in February 1983 alongside FMF president Rafael del Castillo, which highlighted the working relationship between the state and the soccer federation. Alanís Camino also laid out the methodology behind the survey: an office that collected opinions made via phone calls, letters, or in person. Further, Camino declared that he would interpret the lack of responses from citizens as apathy and thus a rejection of the tournament. In that same press conference, he laid out that various secretaries such as the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores and the Secretaría de Turismo, Comunicaciones, and Transportes would meet to make an administrative decision about the mega-sports event. Moreover, Alanís Camino stated that the plebiscite went along with President de la Madrid's administrative style of listening to the people's will. On a personal note, the sub-secretary of sport insisted that he would not state his opinion on the matter, but did mention that the World Cup presented an economic opportunity since the nation hosted the 1968 Olympics and the 1970 World Cup.<sup>57</sup> He also noted that the government did not view the mega-sports as a business opportunity even though his own words reflected that as a government representative he thought about the possible economic opportunities such a tournament could provide.

The survey conducted by the government in many ways demonstrated President de la Madrid's eagerness to listen to the will of the people. However, contemporaries criticized the survey as misleading and for some a criticism of the Mexican people themselves. For instance, member of the 1970 World Cup organizing committee Felipe

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<sup>56</sup> "Lo desligará de la FMF: El fut profesional tendrá que cambiar su razón social," *El Universal* (Mexico City), March 9, 1983.

<sup>57</sup> Javier Escamilla, "Sera el pueblo el que decidirá si México organiza el Mundial: Alanís," *La Nación* (Mexico City), February 12, 1983.

Zetter argued that Mexicans would support the bid in the survey, but that they lacked the expertise of economists. Zetter thus viewed the Mexican people as ignorant to large economic problems. The public also remained ignorant of the fact that the nation spent more than they planned to for the 1970 tournament.<sup>58</sup> Fernando Rello Espinosa, winner of the 1980 National Prize for Economics, argued that the government and pro-World Cup supporters manipulated the survey. He believed that the questions failed to put this large sports event in context of the issue of private profits versus benefits for the public.<sup>59</sup> Meaning that the tournament might yield profits, however, he argued that the private sector would benefit more than the public. This distinction mattered since people like Francisco Hernandez, who predicted millions in profits, never clarified who would enjoy the benefits of the profits. Also, a sports writer out of Torreón, Coahuila, noted:

we think that [the plebiscite] has been a failure, everyone manipulates the results in a way that confirms to their own wishes or interests, during a single day two elements of different organizations inform, one that an overwhelming majority want the World Cup, and the other, that, an overwhelming majority do not want it.<sup>60</sup>

The writer's words reflected the lack of uncertainty about the survey and the results from it because media reported conflicting information.

Despite the criticism and the questionable legitimacy of the survey, Sub-secretary of sport Alanís Camino organized a press conference to announce the state's decision in March of 1983. A few days beforehand, the Brazilian president denied the country's soccer federation governmental support. In the press conference in *Los Pinos*, he

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<sup>58</sup> Hector M. Huerta, "Felipe Zetter, al ataque: Fustiga a Del Castillo por lo del Mundial y lo acusa de demagogo," *El Universal* (Mexico City, March 9, 1983).

<sup>59</sup> "Afirmo nacional de economía de organizarse el Mundial, solo beneficiaría a empresas privadas," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), March 11, 1983.

<sup>60</sup> Casar Marina Miravalle, "Comentarios Deportivos," *El Siglo de Torreón*, (Torreón, Mexico), March 5, 1983.

articulated that the government supported the bid “because it is a unique and extraordinary occasion, and with an incalculable value to promote in the world the image of Mexico.”<sup>61</sup> This demonstrated that the nation-state under President de la Madrid sought to use the event as a tool for foreign policy. He also argued that they supported the bid because eighty percent of those who expressed an opinion approved the idea.<sup>62</sup> This highlighted President de la Madrid’s attempt to garner credibility as a leader, who followed the people’s will, in a moment when he faced political scrutiny. In addition, he stated that private companies, not the state, would fund the event.<sup>63</sup> Alanís wanted the public to know that the government in a manner recognized the economic problems the nation faced as well as a rejection of Keynesian policies. He also made clear that the tournament did not serve as a “circus” to distract people from the economic problems and assured that by 1986 “the nation’s economic situation would improve with the plans implemented by the current administration.”<sup>64</sup> The latter demonstrated Alanís Camino’s confidence in the economic policies enacted by President de la Madrid. Later that same day FMF president Rafael del Castillo organized a press conference. He tapped into nationalism and resiliency as he articulated that “[the World Cup] is a hard and difficult challenge that we will overcome.”<sup>65</sup> Thus, the opportunity to showcase the nation and garner popular support, something the PRI needed as voters looked towards other parties, led President de la Madrid to declare the nation’s government support the bid for the tournament.

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<sup>61</sup> Manuel Robles, “El Mundial no alterará la economía de México: el subsecretario del Deporte,” *Proceso*, March 12, 1983, <http://www.proceso.com.mx/135625/el-mundial-no-alterara-la-economia-de-mexico-el-subsecretario-del-deporte>.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibíd.*

However, getting the Mexican government to support the bid did not assure a decision by FIFA for the rights to host the tournament. The FMF and the Mexican government still faced competition in Canada and the United States. Newspaper writers and officials in Mexico reflected the fear Mexican had that the U.S. would outbid them. This fear started very early on in October of 1982 when the U.S. soccer federation recruited diplomat and war criminal Henry Kissinger to advocate on their behalf. A comic released that month contained a caricature of a happy Kissinger with a soccer ball as solemn caricatures of Brazil, Canada, and Mexico expressed "...this one already feels he is owner of the ball." This depiction showcased how Latin Americans viewed Americans as arrogant as well as their understanding of Henry Kissinger's possible impact.<sup>66</sup> *El Universal* ran this sensationalist headline: "La ciudad de Atlanta será sede, A EU EL MUNDIAL 86." The article stated that FIFA awarded the tournament to the United States and that Coca-Cola would use its resources to fund the tournament. Despite the claims made, no evidence suggested such a thing. Moreover, Mexican officials felt that the US government would use its economic power to get the rights for the tournament. In an interview for the documentary *Mexico '86 A 20 Años*, FMF president Rafael del Castillo in an interview for the documentary delved into the United States' bid. He declared that that US did many things to convince FIFA to give them the rights to host the tournament, including "offers of a lot of money to the members of the executive committee. Offers of lowering the public debt of the nations."<sup>67</sup> He practically accused the United States, who in 1994 hosted the event, of using its economic power for bribery

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<sup>66</sup> Iracheta, "Doctorcito futbolero," *El Universal*, October 29, 1982.

<sup>67</sup> "Mexico '86 A 20 Años (Parte 1)," Youtube video, 4:44, posted by "MuertoInc." May 24, 2006, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kxiemHk5ysw&t=120s>.

and corruption. Yet, FIFA's actions and declarations suggested that things worked in the favor of Mexico.

FIFA's president João Havelange created an environment in the international soccer community that favored Mexico. He denied Brazil, his home country, support because the Brazilian soccer federation re-elected Giulite Coutinho as the organization's president. The impact of the fact that a military dictatorship ruled Brazil as a factor that swayed FIFA away from Brazil remains unknown. Most coverage simply noted that the Brazilian government lacked the will to support the mega-sports event. However, the fact that FIFA faced strong criticism for allowing Argentina to host the 1978 edition of the tournament amid an era marked by disappearances of civilians must have influenced the decision making. Despite Havelange's criticism of the re-elected federation president in Brazil, Coutinho discredited the U.S. bid by describing a World Cup there as a television show because the nation lacked a strong soccer following. Havelange also stated on Televisa that Canada lacked credibility under FIFA's eyes and later attacked the United States because they lacked the adequate grounds and stadiums needed for soccer. These types of comments discredited the other two bidding nations and made the case for Mexico stronger. Soon the South American Football Confederation (CONMEBOL) echoed similar sentiments and supported Mexico's petition. In addition, newspapers circulated that Latin American nations would boycott the tournament if FIFA selected the U.S. instead of Mexico.<sup>68</sup> The idea of such a boycott could have resulted from the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress of *TV Iberoamerica*. At the congress, FIFA vice president, senior executive of Televisa, and president of a Latin American production company Guillermo Cañedo

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<sup>68</sup> "En dólares el país anfitrión de la Copa," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), February 16, 1983.

asked for the congress to support Mexico as host in March 1983.<sup>69</sup> The attacks against the United States and Canada from FIFA's president and the support of the vice president helped Mexico gather the support of various nations. The odds favored the debt-ridden nation the night FIFA selected the host for the 1986 World Cup.

On May 20, 1983, FIFA unanimously voted and held a press conference to notify the world that FIFA awarded the World Cup to Mexico.<sup>70</sup> They cited the 1968 Olympic Games and the 1970 World Cup as important reasons since necessary structures and facilities existed throughout the country.<sup>71</sup> Their explanation echoed the arguments made by those who wanted the Mexican government to support the bid. Yet, the officials from the Canadian soccer federation expressed discontent for the selection based on what they perceived as FIFA's favoritism towards Mexico. For example, the Canadians held up their 90-page document beside a 10-page mimeographed document that Mexico submitted to demonstrate to the world that FIFA wanted Mexico to win.<sup>72</sup> In addition, Rafael del Castillo, the Mexican representative, only used ten of the thirty allotted minutes to make his argument to earn Mexico the rights to host.<sup>73</sup> These elements of suspicion alongside FIFA's meetings with President de la Madrid failed to yield an investigation into corruption. Despite these misgivings, President Miguel de la Madrid expressed certainty that his country would do a brilliant job as host for the 1986 World Cup. He cited Mexico's sports infrastructure, organizational capabilities, and popular

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<sup>69</sup> "México pide apoyo para organizar la Copa Mundial de Fútbol de 1986," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), March 28, 1983.

<sup>70</sup> "México organizará el Mundial de Fútbol de 1986," *El País* (Madrid), May 21, 1983.

<sup>71</sup> "Mexico: Host of the World Cup for the Second Time." in *FIFA World Cup- Mexico '86: Official Report*, ed. by Günther Furrer and Erich Vogel, (Zurich, Sweden: Fédération Internationale de Football Association, 1986).

<sup>72</sup> "Mexico is Chosen as World Cup Host," *New York Times* (New York City), May 21, 1983.

<sup>73</sup> México organizará el Mundial de Fútbol de 1986," *El País* (Madrid), May 21, 1983.



support as his reasons. He again boasted that eighty-percent of Mexicans supported the World Cup and reiterated that the government would not invest any money.<sup>74</sup> Further, he failed to acknowledge the economic crisis and the political issues directly. In addition, FIFA official Guillermo Cañedo remarked that the support from various sports institutions and more importantly the government's helped his nation earn the hosting rights.<sup>75</sup> Rafael del Castillo's Mexican Soccer Federation (FMF) within the next few days stated, "now let's renovate our faith in Mexico and in Mexicans, and the world will be witness that with union and everyone's work, we will make this sports party into an unforgettable date" paralleling President de la Madrid, who wanted to use the spotlight as a chance to showcase the nation.<sup>76</sup>

While, the president and the FMF avoided Mexico's political issues, others highlighted them. For example, Pascual Ortiz Rubio, president of the Confederación Deportiva Mexicana (CODEME) an organization above the Mexican Soccer Federation, saw the tournament as a chance for the nation to demonstrate to the world that it had political and social stability.<sup>77</sup> Ortiz Rubio's words in a calmer manner echoed those that stated that the World Cup would present the nation a chance to show that a revolution was not going to happen. Moreover, officials within President de la Madrid's cabinet viewed the tournament as an opportunity to showcase the nation's stability. For example, in an interview the leader of the Department of the Federal District of Mexico Ramón

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<sup>74</sup> "MMH: 'México hará brillante papel como sede del Mundial'," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), May 21, 1983.

<sup>75</sup> "La misma FIFA reconoce que México tendrá poco tiempo para el Mundial," *El Universal* (Mexico City), May 22, 1983.

<sup>76</sup> "En medio de la crisis económica que vive el país, prometen hacer un Mundial lucido," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), May 22, 1983.

<sup>77</sup> "México demostrara su estabilidad política y social: P. Ortiz Rubio," *El Nacional* (Mexico City), May 21, 1983.

Aguirre Velázquez noted that “Mexico has the great opportunity to show the world Mexican hospitality and the stability that the country experiences.”<sup>78</sup> While the messages slightly differed, the president, the FMF, and other officials like Rubio saw the World Cup as a chance to display Mexico’s ability to practice resiliency for the world. It echoed President de la Madrid’s stated plans in his inaugural speech when he expressed a desire to show the nation and the world that his nation would get out of its problems despite the lack of confidence.<sup>79</sup> The desire to exhibit the resiliency via a mega-sports event works as foreign policy because many wondered if the nation could recover from the economic problems it faced.

Up until March of 1983, when President Miguel de la Madrid declared that the government would support the bid, he faced a frail economy and the weakening legitimacy of his party. The World Cup thus presented him with an opportunity to confront both issues. On one hand, per those in the sports world and other sectors, the tournament provided an economic opportunity to help relieve the damages of the debt crisis. On the other hand, the tournament provided the Mexican people something to look forward to while they dealt with the impacts of austerity policies. Yet, when FIFA awarded Mexico the rights to host the mega-sports event in May of 1983 President Miguel de la Madrid ignored those problems and reminded the nation that eighty-percent of those surveyed supported the government’s backing of the tournament. By doing that he tried to establish himself as a leader who followed the will of the people. From that

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<sup>78</sup> Jaime Pineda Frago, “Ramón Aguirre: Ocasión para demostrar nuestra estabilidad,” *El Nacional* (Mexico City), May 21, 1983.

<sup>79</sup> Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, “1982 Mensaje de Toma de Posesión como Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, en el Palacio Legislativo del Congreso de la Unión México,” *Memoria Política de México*, (Mexico City): December 1, 1982.  
<http://www.memoriapoliticademexico.org/Textos/7CRumbo/1982MTP.html>

moment President Miguel de la Madrid worked to provide the resources to complete a successful organization of the mega-sports event watched by millions around the world. The overarching need to economically benefit from the tournament continued since the debt crisis transformed into the Lost Decade. The reiterated promise that the government would not spend money on tournament went along with the implementation of neoliberal policies that demanded the state avoid spending money. Yet, the political importance of the tournament increased because President de la Madrid after May 1983 faced criticism for PRI's anti-democratic actions, their troubling response to the 1985 earthquake, and the austerity measures that pushed once loyal voters to other parties.

### CHAPTER 3: “*QUEREMOS FRIJOLES, NO GOLES*”: ANTI-WORLD CUP ARGUMENTS, OCTOBER 1982-MAY 1986

Overwhelmingly, journalists joined President de la Madrid and expressed happiness in their headlines. They all presented the World Cup as an event that provided an economic opportunity. In addition, they saw it as a chance to showcase the nation. However, political problems arose during the organizing process. The dynamic between economic and political problems increased the importance of hosting a successful tournament. How could President de la Madrid defend a mega-sports event during an economic crisis if it did not promise to create economic growth? How could he defend the tournament as his party faced strong criticism for disappearances of political dissidents, manipulation of electoral results, and a damning inadequate response to the 1985 earthquake?

In this chapter, I explore the popular criticism of the 1986 World Cup, which President de la Madrid supported and eventually funded despite promises not to. Criticism can be found in leftist newspapers such as *Unomásuno*, *Proceso*, and *La Jornada*. Writers like *Proceso*'s Francisco Ponce presented strong critiques that pointed to the economic crisis, among other things, as a reason not to host the tournament. However, the ideology of newspapers did not indicate their perspective on the 1986 World Cup and Mexico's role. Ideological center and newspapers funded by the federal government featured political cartoons that presented strong criticisms against the Mexican governments. Their words and images echoed in the Chamber of Deputies,

where Leftist elected official challenged funding of a World Cup coin. It can also be found in the streets of Mexico as the *damnificados*, the word used to describe those affected by the earthquake, protested outside of the World Cup group drawing ceremony and Ciudad Nezahualc6yotl where May Day demonstrators chanted “*queremos frijoles, no goles*” “we want beans, not goals.” What brought together these different manifestations was itself a desire to show the hypocrisy of the government’s support of a mega-sports event as people suffered. They also used soccer-jargon and imagery as a rhetorical tool that allowed them to criticize the PRI’s nation-state.



Figure 1 Iracheta's "El pretendiente" in *El Universal*, October 23, 1982<sup>80</sup>

## ECONOMIC ANTI-WORLD CUP ARGUMENTS

The economic arguments against the 1986 World Cup surfaced immediately in October of 1982. This criticism continued throughout the organizing process. Economist Ricardo Ramirez Brum argued that the economic crisis left the nation without the

<sup>80</sup> Iracheta, “El pretendiente,” *El Universal*, October 23, 1982.

“economic capability” to organize the tournament.<sup>81</sup> His words reflected the core of the economic arguments against the mega-sports events. In addition, political cartoonists such as Iracheta featured in *El Universal* expressed similar sentiments. For instance, in a political cartoon titled “The Suitor” (Figure 1) he depicts a weak Mexican caricature underneath a heavy rock. The rock represented the debt crisis. Also, the weak Mexican caricature expressed “Colombia does not have money, but I do.” Iracheta’s in a simple political cartoon brought together voices that used language that alluded to nationalism, criticisms of capitalism, and much more.<sup>82</sup> Important sports figures and political figures presented economic criticisms against the tournament.

Sports figures spoke out against the tournament in relation to the economic problems. For example, Felipe Zetter, member of the 1970 World Cup committee, dispelled arguments that the tournament would yield economic benefits. He reflected on his experience and criticized Rafael del Castillo, president of the Mexican Soccer Federation, who wanted Mexico to host the 1986 World Cup. Zetter accused del Castillo of demagoguery and scamming the Mexican people. To back up those accusations he pointed at the proposed budget. The FMF requested 20,000,000 pesos, which Zetter saw as just enough money to cover the costs for only one of the World Cup cities, Guadalajara.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, he noted that the 1970 committee spent 50,000,000 pesos for the stadium in Jalisco. That price preceded the inflation issues that the country faced in 1983. Zetter also pointed to Argentina and Spain as examples of weak economic results:

Argentina still resents the havoc of doing a World Cup and in Spain [the tournament] starts to cause negative effects in the economy. A World Cup

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<sup>81</sup> “México no tiene capacidad económica para el Mundial,” *El Universal* (Mexico City), October 31, 1986.

<sup>82</sup> Iracheta, “El pretendiente,” *El Universal* (Mexico City), October 28, 1982.

<sup>83</sup> Hector M. Huerta, “Felipe Zetter, al ataque: Fustiga a Del Castillo por lo del Mundial y lo acusa de demagogo,” *El Universal* (Mexico City, March 9, 1983.

is necessarily inflationary because the prices for taxis, food, lodging, transportation goes up and afterward nothing goes down because the Government permits the increases thinking that with one World Cup that the economic situation can be cushioned. *El pueblo*, in order of priorities, will win nothing.<sup>84</sup>

His perspective challenged FIFA officials and his compatriots who saw the tournament as an economic opportunity. Like others critical of the tournament he suggested that the money should be invested into priorities for subsistence and stated, “What del Castillo says is a lie because with 20,000,000 pesos you cannot do anything.”<sup>85</sup>

In addition, neoliberalism came up again as many of the anti-World Cup spokespeople disliked the implications of a private body like FIFA requiring the Mexican government to liberate its markets in the name of profits. For example, another member of the Organizing Committee for the 1970 World Cup, Fernando Corona, argued against Mexico hosting the 1986 World Cup. He pointed to the economic crisis and critiqued FIFA for its disconnection from the host nation regarding economic goals. Before making his arguments, he stated, “First and foremost, I am Mexican and second I am a fan of soccer” to demonstrate that he cared more about Mexico’s economic state than soccer. His choice to identify as Mexican foremost would become important as many politicians and the FMF used nationalism as a reason to support the World Cup. He continued to state that only a select few, the wealthy and sponsors, would get a chance to experience the World Cup. In addition, he reminded people of the politics between FIFA, an international private organization, and Mexico by saying that they both had different goals in 1970 and imagined that a gap between the two would be wider now. He argued that by the 1980s the commercial opportunities came before the audience that would pay

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibíd.*.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibíd.*

for the tickets since FIFA would push for a free market due to their interest in the commercial aspect, which would result in making ticket prices excessively expensive for the general public. He, like the Canadians, brought up questions about FIFA's transparency by criticizing its method of picking a host because it depended on 22 people who voted for what they liked instead of giving each national federation the chance to vote for the host. In contrast, to President de la Madrid and other World Cup supporters, Corona stated that Mexico should focus on getting sport and recreation to the people instead of trying to project an image of strength to the world through soccer stadiums.<sup>86</sup> Fernando Corona's anti-World Cup sentiment therefore reflected a distrust of FIFA's commercial goals that would not help with his country's goal of overcoming the economic crisis.

While sports figures spoke out against the tournament based on their experience, others articulated other economic arguments. Antonio J. Oliver, writer for *El Nacional*, criticized the government's support of the bid and stated, "the manipulation of soccer with political goals has an undeniable flavor of fascism" as he reminded everyone that Benito Mussolini used Italy's 1934 and 1938 FIFA World Cup wins to instill a toxic nationalism.<sup>87</sup> Oliver then tied capitalism and neoliberalism into his criticism of the tournament. He argued that "in behalf of sports, commercialized by electronic media, an ideology can be inculcated and it has served as a pretext for the promotion of consumerism, greediness, the most coarse materialism."<sup>88</sup> Antonio J. Oliver's reaction to

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<sup>86</sup> "Inconcebible un Mundial de Fútbol en México en momentos de crisis." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), February 17, 1983.

<sup>87</sup> "En medio de la crisis económica que vive el país, prometen hacer un Mundial lucido." *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), May 22, 1983.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibíd.*



the event therefore demonstrated a dislike of the possible cultural effects that a global and what he interpreted as a capitalistic event could have on Mexico as well as a mistrust of the FIFA and the Mexican government.<sup>89</sup> The winner of the 1980 National Prize for Economics Fernando Rello Espinosa presented a different argument. He argued that only private enterprises would benefit from the World Cup. Espinosa, however, proposed that the government must pressure FIFA to obtain benefits since:

Soccer is a business on a global scale and FIFA receives the most important part of it. Now 25% of it does not go to the government, but to the Mexican Soccer Federation (FMF), private enterprise tied to commercial TV, the one that pressures and has power in soccer; because it benefits it economically, it will take the greatest cut.<sup>90</sup>

Meaning that without the government seeking profits, the World Cup would end up only helping private companies. Espinosa wanted the government to advocate for profits to go into a social fund that would build soccer or recreational centers in impoverished areas and get the games only on a federal-sponsored television channel so that revenue from advertisements went to the government and not a private television station. He also believed that the government supported the World Cup not only because of economic reasons, but also politically because it allowed them to distract people from the economic problems.<sup>91</sup> This idea resonated from the concept of *panem et circenses*, which originated in the Roman empire as a way to explain the empires use of ‘bread and games’ to distract the masses from the bigger problems within the society. The surveys that found Mexicans supported the World Cup to him provided further prove of this manipulation because he felt that the government and pro-World Cup supporters manipulated the survey since the

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>90</sup> “Afirmo nacional de economía de organizarse el Mundial, solo beneficiaría a empresas privadas,” *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), March 11, 1983.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibíd.*

questions failed to put this large sports events in context of the issue of private profits versus benefits for the public.

The anti-World Cup sentiments that these people expressed contained truths that played themselves out before the World Cup even started. First, a legal fight between ‘normal’ suite owners at the *Estadio Azteca* and FIFA highlighted the way FIFA wanted to impose its own rules onto Mexican private businesses to maximize profits. The stadium meant a lot to the people because the stadium’s name itself served as a symbol to Mexico’s pride in their indigenous history. Further, Pelé became a soccer ‘god’ in that stadium in 1970 after leading Brazil, a national soccer team that many Mexicans view as their second team, to win the World Cup. FIFA almost decided to cut it from the lists of stadiums to host games in 1986 despite the symbolic reasons behind why soccer enthusiast wanted the Estadio Azteca to host World Cup games.<sup>92</sup> FIFA wanted to cut the stadium because it wanted to commercialize these suites and sell them without paying the owners. These issues came up in 1984 and did not get resolved until September of 1985, the same month of the Mexico City earthquake. Owners of these seats argued that they already owned these seats and therefore felt that they did not need to pay to attend World Cup games. However, by September 1985, a payment of 7.2 million dollars was made to the organizing committee to settle the legal issue so that the Estadio Azteca could host World Cup games.<sup>93</sup> The promise from FIFA and pro-World Cup of profits contributed for the suite owners to give in. For example, by July 1985, João Havelange promised that the 1986 World Cup was FIFA’s, not Mexico’s, best business move

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<sup>92</sup> “No aceptaron dueños de palcos y plateas pagar: El Azteca quedo fuera del Mundial 86.” *El Siglo de Torreón*, (Torreón, México), March 17, 1984.

<sup>93</sup> “Por concepto de plateas y palcos: Más de 7 millones de dolores pagara a FIFA Estadio Azteca.” *El Siglo de Torreón*, (Torreón, México), September 15, 1985.

concerning their profits because at that point FIFA already pocketed 13 billion pesos from television contracts, in stadium advertisements, and other money received from commercialization. João Havelange tried to make these guaranteed pesos as a reflection of the supporters from Brazil and Argentina, who are willing to travel to Mexico and not the commercialization of this event.<sup>94</sup> FIFA won this issue, which demonstrated that it had its own goals and plans that Mexico would have to agree with to host the World Cup.

Likewise, the issue between a private entity and a Mexican body played itself out in the Chamber of Deputies formed by 500 representatives of the nation over the dispute about coins to commemorate the World Cup as a “national event with international implications” in December 1984. Edmundo Jardon Arzate, a member of the socialist *Partido Socialista Unificado de México* (PSUM), quickly criticized the coin as part of Televisa’s propaganda as he cited various images such as the “horizontal lines” that went towards a soccer ball that looked familiar to Televisa’s symbol. Further, he made it clear that he believed only Televisa benefitted from the World Cup. His criticism expressed in the Chambers against the television network reflected the Party’s attitude towards it. In the party’s newspaper *Así Es*, they described the network as a “reactionary” force and laid out a plan for the government to nationalize and change its messaging. For instance, “use *Chesperito* but changing the core of the message: now *Chesperito* is a reactionary because Televisa owns it, but he could be a progressive if he functioned in response of other interests.”<sup>95</sup> It is comedic to consider a socialist and progressive *Chesperito* despite his already red costume due to his naïveté. However, it is important to note that

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<sup>94</sup> Lo declaro ayer Joao Havelange ‘El mundial de México es el mejor negocio que ha hecho la FIFA.’” *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), July 1, 1985.

<sup>95</sup> David Padilla, Ana Rosa Orozco, and Gerardo Angeles, *Así Es* (Mexico City), October 29-November 4, 1982.

newspapers covered the Party's opinion on the tournament differently. *Unomásuno* published that the party supported President de la Madrid's decision to support the bid because they hoped that profits from the event would fund social welfare programs.<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, *El Universal* quoted the PSUM declaring the tournament as "circus, *maroma* and theater, but that it will not give bread."<sup>97</sup> However, their stance became clear when a PSUM representative criticized the tournament as an economic problem that would result in inflation.<sup>98</sup> The PSUM, who continued to attack Televisa and the government for attempting to distract the *pueblo* from their problems eventually gave into the excitement, or more precisely the people's excitement, of the World Cup and declared that "they also felt" the happiness of Mexican fans.<sup>99</sup>

While Jardon criticized the coin due to an anti-Televisa stance, the PRI representative Maria Luisa Calzada de Campos defended the coin. She argued that it represented the House of Coins, the oldest and prominent supplier of coins for Central American and the Caribbean, the possibility of 40 million dollars in profit, and cited a 1983 survey that showed that the Mexican public wanted the World Cup. Ultimately, she appealed to nationalism and possible profits. In response, Representative Jardon, using soccer terminology such as "off sides" refuted Campos' "Mexicans want the World Cup" argument by reminding the chamber that Mexico earned the World Cup only after Colombia gave it up because of their economic state. In addition, he made clear that they failed to uphold the nation's sovereignty if they agreed to FIFA's every request. Jardon

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<sup>96</sup> "Divididas opiniones de los partidos," *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), March 11, 1983.

<sup>97</sup> Fidel Samaniego, "Los partidos de oposición contra el mundial de 1986," *El Universal* (Mexico City), March 12, 1983.

<sup>98</sup> Jorge Aviles, "Se provocará una mayor inflación dice la oposición," *El Universal* (Mexico City), May 21, 1983.

<sup>99</sup> "La euforia del Mundial," *Así Es* (Mexico City), June 07, 1986.

also pointed towards the state Queretaro as an example of the commerciality of FIFA because the state before the World Cup craze failed to view soccer as a prominent sport. Lastly, he mentioned that Televisa, in which FIFA Vice President Cañedo held a strong role, created the pro-World Cup sentiment and again repeated that only Televisa would benefit from this World Cup. Criticisms of the coin continued as Hector Ramirez Cuellar of the Popular Socialist Party stated that the event benefits the private sector despite the heavy investment from federal and local government; again, a disconnection between FIFA and the host nation. In addition, Cuellar pointed out that if the Mexican government might get 40 million pesos from coins and that Televisa will make 750 million pesos that there might be something fishy since FIFA might look like a sports organization, but really, it is a corporation for big investors and industries. Jardon tried one more time to sway voters by appealing to the “national event with international implications” slogan by telling the representatives to celebrate 1985 instead because it signified 175 years of Mexican independence and 75 since the start of the Mexican Revolution. Yet, by the end of the day, 213 individuals voted for the coin despite having to pay a private company to use a logo on a Mexican coin, demonstrating the power of predicted economic effects in the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>100</sup>

The conversation about the World Cup came up in the Mexican Chamber of Deputies again in January 1986 when Jorge Alocer Villanueva, representative of United Socialist Party of Mexico, asked about the country’s ability to keep up with FIFA’s standards. His questions came about because of a letter from the Bank of Mexico to Fernando Alanis Camino, sub-secretary of sport, that asked the “Republic to permit the

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<sup>100</sup> Legislatura Mexicana, Cámara de Diputados, *Diario de los Debates de la Cámara de Diputados del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, LII Año III, December 5, 1984.

circulation of all types of currency in the country” in February 1983. The timing of the letter bothered Villanueva because it indicated to him that the liberalization of currency markets occurred so that the Banco de México could keep a promise to FIFA. Villanueva, like the anti-World Cup spokespeople, worried about a private entity forcing the nation to change its economic policies to maximize profits. In addition, he stated that Mexican politicians pushed free market policies under the guise that FIFA asked for it instead of their own desires. Heriberto Castillo Martinez, representative for the Party for Mexican Workers, reminded the chamber that FIFA within its contract with the host nation made it clear that the government of the host nation must guarantee the success of the tournament and that this clause made him wary of the possibility that FIFA wanted to force policies. In response to these leftist politicians, Jose Angel Pescador, a member of PRI, argued that these claims of Mexico losing control of the World Cup insulted the people and thus appealed for support of the World Cup in the name of nationalism. In addition, Schmal and Martinez articulated wariness about proposed economic policies that would allow tourists to visit the country without reporting their wealth at the entry.<sup>101</sup> According to them, agreeing to FIFA’s request would facilitate for future changes to further open markets or in other words facilitate Mexico’s participation in the neoliberal economy. By the end of 1986 Mexico held ties with IMF and the World Bank and joined the General Agreement of Trade and Tariffs. Part of the conversation displayed rhetorical choices to appeal to nationalism in two ways. From the left-wing politicians nationalism meant to place the country before profits as PRI and others felt that support towards pro-World Cup endeavors reflected nationalism.

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<sup>101</sup> Legislatura Mexicana, Cámara de Diputados, *Diario de Debates de la Comisión permanente del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, LIII Año 1, February 12, 1986.

The economic aspects of the World Cup caused some people like Espinosa to perceive President de la Madrid and the Mexican government as failing to look for a profit due to its inability to demand for any major changes that would bring in revenue for the federal government. Those sentiments came from people who supported the World Cup, but wanted the government to benefit from it. On the contrast, those that questioned President de la Madrid due to his support of an event they viewed as capitalistic and exploitive wanted Mexicans to wake up to their reality.

#### POLITICAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE WORLD CUP

While the economical debate shaped a large amount of the debate during the organizing process, President de la Madrid also faced political problems. The PRI's reaction to the 1985 earthquake created a situation that further weakened his relationship with urban Mexicans. In addition, President de la Madrid faced political pressure from human rights activists as well as political parties. Human rights activist such as Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, who lost her son in 1975 due to a *desaparición*, in part responded to the Dirty War of the 1970s.<sup>102</sup> The latter due to the largest opposition party, the *Partido Acción Nacional*, a conservative party that lost seats after corrupt actions from the PRI. While the earthquake and the political problems complicated President de la Madrid's political stability, the potential to use the tournament as a distraction increased.

The natural disaster left many homeless or dead. The government failed to react properly according to the city's residents. The following day a newspaper reported that the Executive Organizing Committee of the 1986 World Cup informed FIFA that the

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<sup>102</sup> While the term *Dirty War* is not used in the 1980s by activist and advocates it is important to recognize and refer to it as that.

Estadio Azteca and *Ciudad Universitaria* did not suffer any damage and could still be used as venues.<sup>103</sup> City residents quickly circulated a rumor that President de la Madrid's first action of the day was to call FIFA to let them know the soccer tournament would still go on instead of figuring out ways to help the residents, demonstrating that the Mexican people viewed de la Madrid as a disconnected opportunist and not a caring leader.<sup>104</sup> In 1985 and later in 2006, de la Madrid viewed his decision and the Mexican federation's decision to continue with the World Cup as a sign of strength and resilience.<sup>105</sup> By September 27, people were still rescuing others from under the rubble, but also finding dead bodies. The authorities, however, decided to use heavy machinery to remove the rubble and thus giving up on the search of live people under the rubble. This decision resulted in protest from family members of missing people, some even protested outside of the remains of a children's hospital in the city.<sup>106</sup> Their protest, tears, and supplications failed to change the order, which signified that Mexican officials gave up on looking for live people under the remains of the buildings as well as their eagerness to clean up the streets as soon as possible for the upcoming World Cup. Elena Poniatowska's exposé that highlighted the voices of the *damnificados* echoed that sentiment as people in the streets resented the government due to its focus on the hotels and not the apartments of the Mexican people.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> "No sufrieron danos, los estadios para el Mundial," *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), September 20, 1985.

<sup>104</sup> Louise E. Walker, "Economic Fault Lines and Middle-Class Fears: Tlatelolco, Mexico City, 1985," 190.

<sup>105</sup> "Cobertura SIN: Mexico 86," YouTube video, 9:57, posted by "Edward Becerra," February 11, 2008. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5xsNsQQPrA>.

<sup>106</sup> "Inician la remoción de ruinas y la fumigación de escombros," *El Informador* (Guadalajara, Jalisco), September 29, 1985.

<sup>107</sup> Elena Poniatowska, *Nothing, Nobody: The Voices of the Mexico City Earthquake*, trans. Aurora Camacho de Schmidty and Arthur Schmidty. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 145.



In addition, Louise Walker's analysis of the immediate aftermath suggested that the Mexican government not only lacked competence to respond to a natural disaster, but almost willingly denied aid to the people of Mexico City.<sup>108</sup> To exemplify this supposition Walker pointed to President de la Madrid's rejection of an aid package from the international community due to a desire to present a strong self-governing government.<sup>109</sup> However, President de la Madrid did take a million dollar private check from First Lady Nancy Reagan, which he quickly endorsed and put it right into payments towards the debt. He put the money towards the debt instead of refugee funds because within the time he endorsed the check the debt grew by 12 million dollars.<sup>110</sup> Walker, ultimately, deems the relationship between the state and its people, particularly Mexico City's middle class as "vanished," which contributed to the ongoing troubles in the 1980s.<sup>111</sup> To add insult to injury the collapse of apartment buildings in Tlatelolco resulted from contractors breaking building codes by buying cheap inadequate materials and splitting the difference with officials for personal benefit.<sup>112</sup> The anger from Mexico City's residents continued throughout 1986 because the government failed to address the problems caused by the earthquake. A month before the World Cup, city officials met with some of the community leaders and negotiated a deal that focused on the middle class.<sup>113</sup> One can only speculate that the negotiations between community leaders and the city's government only happened so that these community leaders would not use the World Cup as a platform for protest.

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<sup>108</sup> Louise E. Walker, "Economic Fault Lines and Middle-Class Fears: Tlatelolco, Mexico City, 1985," 211.

<sup>109</sup> Louise E. Walker, "Economic Fault Lines and Middle-Class Fears: Tlatelolco, Mexico City, 1985," 190.

<sup>110</sup> Elena Poniatowska, *Nothing, Nobody: The Voices of the Mexico City Earthquake*, 98-102.

<sup>111</sup> Louise E. Walker, "Economic Fault Lines and Middle-Class Fears: Tlatelolco, Mexico City, 1985," 212.

<sup>112</sup> Jurgen Buchenau and Gilbert Joseph, "The Ember of Revolution," 178

<sup>113</sup> Louise E. Walker, "Economic Fault Lines and Middle-Class Fears: Tlatelolco, Mexico City, 1985," 184-221.

While the government at various levels responded in a weak and unconvincing manner, the soccer community attempted to organize fundraisers and other initiatives to relieve the harm created by the earthquake. The team Cruz Azul based in Mexico City reacted by donating more than three million pesos to help the victims.<sup>114</sup> Players and staff from the team also worked to collect goods to donate. The team agreed to participate in a fundraising friendly against the Mexican national soccer team.<sup>115</sup> From the Mexican national team, Manuel Negrete declared:

It is painful to see how the country suffers; its people, that has always been cheerful, now it is sad. I would like to make a call to action to everyone, because we all have to give life back to our Mexico, we all have to collaborate and overcome the traumas to continue forward and make our country more dignified. *Ojala* that this union that exists in these moments does not disappear in time; that, on the contrary, that were treat ourselves like brothers, the police, the soccer player, the journalist, the medic and even the *mendigo*.<sup>116</sup>

He expressed a sincere urge to provide aid to the *damnificados* as well as a call for unity. Despite these responsive efforts from soccer teams and city residents, the problems continued for the victims

For those severely affected by the 1985 earthquake, the World Cup seemed like an unnecessary luxury. To them it exposed the government's on going inability to provide for citizens. Again, Louise Walker argues that the 1985 earthquake signified another moment of PRI's diminishing political legitimacy. The *damnificados* from the *Union de Vecinos y Damnificados "19 de Septiembre"* organized a demonstration to

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<sup>114</sup> Carlos Hernandez H. "Cruz Azul donara más de tres millones de pesos en ayuda a los damnificados," *El Nacional* (Mexico City), September 25, 1985.

<sup>115</sup> Mirofrís, "El partido entre la seleccion nacional y Cruz Azul, a beneficio," *El Nacional* (Mexico City), September 25, 1985.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibíd.*

highlight the government's inadequate response to their demands.<sup>117</sup> They presented a visible and recent example to the nation of those hurt by the PRI's corruption. *La Jornada* on their front page the day afterwards focused on a young child, who held a sign stating, "The 1986 World Cup is absurd when Mexico is dying of hunger and living in the streets."<sup>118</sup> The message did not differ from those of other critics. They continued to protest and demand for reparations. A week before the tournament kicked off around 40 thousand *damnificados* still faced unemployment and homelessness as their daily reality. A young man with four dependents spoke about the government's emphasis on image and not the people. In an interview, he stated, "they cleaned the principal streets and painted the walls that can be seen from an automobile. They displaced the people and demolished the buildings that could have been repaired." The words from this man highlighted the government's attempt to present a stable Mexico. A Mexico without problems that investors should consider for future investment. A Mexico that can practice resilience. Another man, this one older with gray hairs, spoke and stated, "Look it will be like always: the poor one will continue to be poor and the rich man makes more money, this time with tourism and the fans."<sup>119</sup> His words reflected something else. A sense of hopelessness. A sense that their reality contributed to a history of the rich making money while the poor faced poverty. Despite the sense of hopelessness, a coalition of 50,000 earthquake victims threatened to organize demonstrations during the tournament. It almost seemed as if 1968 could be repeated. However, government officials, to avoid another '68 worked hard to speed up construction in the neighborhoods affected by the

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<sup>117</sup> Alaba Elsie Lizama, "Manifestación de damnificados durante el sorteo de equipos del mundial de fútbol," *El Nacional* (Mexico City), December 16, 1985.

<sup>118</sup> "Protesta," *La Jornada* (Mexico City), December 16, 1985.

<sup>119</sup> "40,000 sin hogar: critican damnificados el "dispendio" del Mundial," *El Universal*, May 23, 1986.

natural disaster.<sup>120</sup> Thus, demonstrating that the Mexican government wanted to present a clean and stable nation.

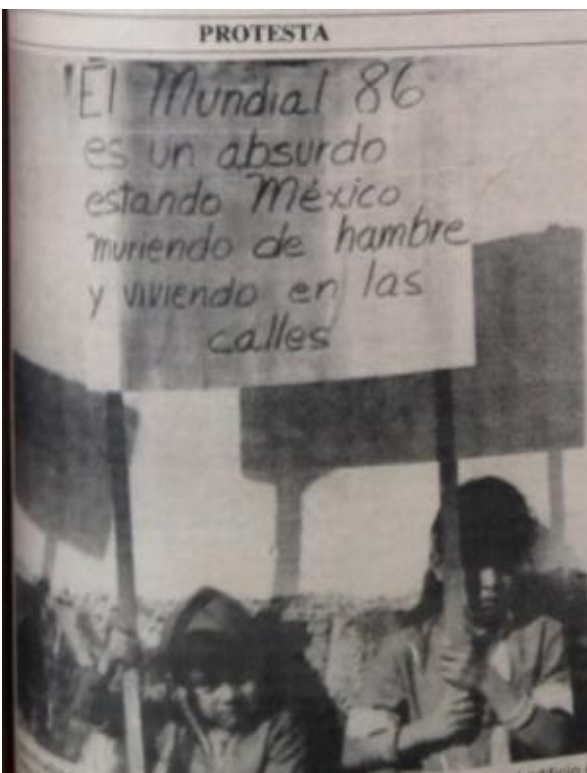


Figure 2 "Protesta" in *La Jornada*, December 16, 1985. Image from the silent protest organized by one of the organizations that formed in reaction to the 1985 Earthquake<sup>121</sup>

While the *damnificados* spoke about their suffering, President de la Madrid spoke about another Mexico. In a speech to FIFA officials he presented a Mexico full of commitment and resiliency. For example, he stated:

Of course we suffered the great shame of the September earthquakes, but as I told the sir Havelange, the Mexican *pueblo* reacted in a manner that is surprisingly full of solidarity, vigor, and responsibility and because of that

<sup>120</sup> William A. Orme Jr., "World Cup Called Financial Winner, *The Washington Post*, June 29, 1986.

<sup>121</sup> "Protesta," *La Jornada*, December 16, 1985.

the Mexican government was able to manage this social commotion in an effective manner.<sup>122</sup>

His words reflected an attempt by him and Mexican government to co-opt the rescue work completed by nameless Mexicans. He detailed how fast the government re-instated electricity and telephone services. The fact that he highlighted this work denoted his attention on services that facilitate the organizing of a mega-sports event. He failed to talk about the lack of housing.<sup>123</sup>

The problems with the middle class in Mexico City began to spread as PRI began to lose legitimacy. PRI's biggest concern then became the growing middle and working-class membership in other parties. The middle and working-class cited the reduced buying power, the slow fight against corruption, and PRI's failure to deliver its equality for everyone as reasons to reject PRI.<sup>124</sup> Their reasons to leave PRI in the 1980s resonated with the student protestors of 1968 demonstrating that PRI failed to recreate itself as a more democratic party. Anti-PRI individuals saw the 1985 elections as a test of the nation's future democracy. However, others simply wanted to gauge President de la Madrid's popularity. Before this election, PRI held more than 200 out of 300 seats in Congress demonstrating the enormous power it had in the government. In addition, those close to President de la Madrid declared that PRI would win without fraud, demonstrating PRI's openness about their willingness to cheat.<sup>125</sup> The elections resulted in PRI only

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<sup>122</sup> Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, "En la audiencia que concedió a los miembros del Comité Organizador del Campeonato Mundial de Fútbol México 86, en el salón Carranza de la residencia oficial de los Pinos." December 12, 1984, Unidad de la Crónica Presidencial, Archivo General de la Nación, Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, Unidad de la Crónica Presidencial, Secretario, Box 05, Folder 4.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> Richard J. Meislin, "Some Analysis Fear Violence in July Elections: Bad Times Benefit Mexican Opposition," *New York Times* (New York City), December 23, 1984.

<sup>125</sup> Richard J. Meislin, "Mexico's Perpetual Political Machine," *New York Times* (New York City), June 30, 1985.

giving up a few Congressional seats and they retained all of the state governor seats up for grabs during the elections. After complaints from *Partido Accion Nacional* (PAN), conservative party, the Federal Elections Commission declared that fraud occurred at 380 of 52,931 polling places.<sup>126</sup> This finding did not satisfy PAN in the state of Nuevo Leon, a state they thought could be won so on August 3, 1985, 30,000 Mexicans, many affiliated with PAN, went out on to the streets of Monterrey, Nuevo León, to protest against alleged fraud from PRI in the 1985 elections.<sup>127</sup> The protest resulted in violence, though the cause remains unknown. However, this protest and the overall sentiment against PRI due to its ties to electoral fraud and anti-democratic practices would lead more and more people to stray away from voting for PRI in future elections.

Closer to Mexico City, demonstrators during the 1986 May Day rally hit the streets and declared “*no queremos goles, queremos frijoles*” “we do not want goals, we want beans.”<sup>128</sup> They did it in Ciudad Nezahualcóyotl, known for its poverty and informal workers. This received little coverage, however, like the students of 1968, these people alongside those that wrote their ideas used the World Cup to criticize the Mexican nation-state led by the PRI. A local journalist covered the protest and wrote “*es el clamor del pueblo de Neza que ya no siente lo duro sino lo tupidio.*”<sup>129</sup> Yet, criticism of the tournament happened early in the bidding process. Before the debt crisis citizens of Neza responded to price increases in a strong manner. For example, in September of 1981 the Secretaría de Gobernación (SEGOB) reported on the fact that citizens in the city burned

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<sup>126</sup> Henry Giniger, Mitt Freudenheim, and Richard Levine, “The Nation: No Surprise in Mexico,” *New York Times* (New York City), July 14, 1985.

<sup>127</sup> Richard J. Meislin, “39 Hurt in Mexico Protest on Voting Results,” *New York Times* (New York City), August 4, 1985.

<sup>128</sup> Jose Comas, “No queremos goles, queremos frijoles,” *El Pais*, (Madrid, Spain), May 8, 1986.

<sup>129</sup> “Carmelo Ramirez Reyes,” “Queremos frijoles no goles,” *El Verde* (Cuidad Nezahuacotl, Mexico), May 2, 1986.

ten buses.<sup>130</sup> Groups of up to four hundred people threatened to continue protests. They reacted in this manner over the increase in bus fare. The SEGOB reported that the fare increased from “\$1.50 to \$2.50 from \$3.00 to \$4.00 and from \$3.50 to \$5.00.”<sup>131</sup> This bus fare they reported “was the principal cause of the problem.”<sup>132</sup> The next day, the SEGOB reported that the number of burned buses reached fifteen.<sup>133</sup> The number of burned buses reached around eighteen with at least severe damages to another sixty. In response to this, local officials arrested around large amounts of people. This led to an official releasing thirty underage individuals who participated in the direct actions against the increase in bus fare.<sup>134</sup> This problem happened again in 1983. So how did a city, which burned buses to highlight their disgust with increased bus fares, host the mega-sports event?

In May 1983 once FIFA granted Mexico the right to host the sports event, the mayor of Neza urged the FMF to include his city as a host city.<sup>135</sup> In addition, to earn the trust of the residents, the stadium lost the name *Estadio Jose Lopez Portillo*, name of the Mexican president who inaugurated the stadium in 1981 and contributed to the cause of the 1982 debt crisis and became the *Estadio Neza 86*.<sup>136</sup> Moreover, this question also caught the imagination of readers in Malaysia. The article described the city as an “area where crime, prostitution, and drug addiction is rife” and “where almost three million

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<sup>130</sup> Informe Folio, No. 51, September 15, 1981, AGN, Secretaría de Gobernación, Panoramas estatales, box 1703 C, folder 12.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>132</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>133</sup> Informe Folio, No. 52, September 15, 1981, AGN, Secretaría de Gobernación, Panoramas estatales, box 1703 C, folder 12.

<sup>134</sup> Informe Folio, No. 67, September 15, 1981, AGN, Secretaría de Gobernación, Panoramas estatales, box 1703 C, folder 12.

<sup>135</sup> “En Neza piden que su estadio sea una subsele del mundial,” *El Universal* (Mexico City), May 21, 1983.

<sup>136</sup> Enrique Hernandez Alcazar, “30 años de Mexico 86,” *Vanity Fair Mexico* (Mexico City), Last modified July 28, 2016, [www.vanityfair.mx/lifestyle/articulos/30-anos-del-mundial-de-mexico-86-cuando-el-futbol-tomo-mexico/21489](http://www.vanityfair.mx/lifestyle/articulos/30-anos-del-mundial-de-mexico-86-cuando-el-futbol-tomo-mexico/21489).

people survive in sub-human conditions.”<sup>137</sup> However, the local government invested heavily into the area around the stadium. The city placed “boarding” to hide some of the “eyesores.”<sup>138</sup> This labor occurred with the help of young unemployed people from Mexico City, who volunteered to paint fences and sidewalks and put up a “great wall with arches” to hide the “misery in the route towards the stadium.”<sup>139</sup> The government also invested into creating a specific route for players and tourist that would allow them to move from their hotels in Mexico City to the stadium without witnessing the social problems. In addition, from protecting tourists from the “eyesores,” the city invested heavily to protecting tourist from their residents. The number of active police on the streets increased from 1,500 to 3,000.<sup>140</sup>

The people of Neza responded the 1985 earthquake in a manner that reflected the nature of its existence. A city grown out of disparity with people who fight to live. First, the city accepted the *damnificados*. They remained there and a journalist for *El Porvenir* based out of Monterrey highlighted the amount of protest signs outside of the now-named *Estadio Neza 86*. One sign stood out to him: “Journalist: you will sleep in a hotel with comfort, but we are without a home and it will be so after the World Cup.”<sup>141</sup> Due to their urgency to clean the streets of Mexico City for international eyes city official ordered the removal of debris from the destruction of buildings that included the bodies of victims. The debris, unusable metal, and much more from the destroyed infrastructure landed in the landfills of Neza. Parents and children throughout Neza overnight according to a

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<sup>137</sup> “Slum city to host World Cup clashes,” *New Strait Times* (Malaysia), April 9, 1986.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>139</sup> Enrique Hernandez Alcazar, “30 años de Mexico 86,” *Vanity Fair Mexico* (Mexico City), Last modified July 28, 2016, [www.vanityfair.mx/lifestyle/articulos/30-anos-del-mundial-de-mexico-86-cuando-el-futbol-tomo-mexico/21489](http://www.vanityfair.mx/lifestyle/articulos/30-anos-del-mundial-de-mexico-86-cuando-el-futbol-tomo-mexico/21489).

<sup>140</sup> “Slum city to host World Cup clashes,” *New Strait Times* (Malaysia), April 9, 1986.

<sup>141</sup> Ted Cordova-Claure, “El miedo en Nezahualcáyotl,” *El Porvenir* (Monterrey), May 21, 1986.



journalist turned into *pepenadores*. *Pepeadores* is a colloquial term to refer to waste pickers, a job made famous in the telenovela *Maria la del Barrio*. They generally looked for metal and other goods to sell. Thus residents as they looked through the waste found bodies throughout Neza's landfills, which led one person to say that "the trash smells like corpses."<sup>142</sup> The journalist wrote "The terrible thing of this that can be called 'the industry of the waste and the tragedy,' is that the *pepenadores* have found "grounded human flesh and even full bodies of people who passed away during the great earthquake that destroyed Mexico City." By November of 1985, city officials criminalized the *pepenadores* and detained them.<sup>143</sup>

In addition, the image presented by the May Day demonstrators in 1986, differed from the image that the city presented. For example, the General Director of the Organizing Committee for the World Cup in the state of Mexico Ernesto Adonegui Luna talked about Neza as a city prepared to host the tournament. He also expressed trust in the residents to welcome the tourists. Municipal president Jose Lucio Ramirez Ornelas talked about the tournament as a "great opportunity" for the city and to foster a positive image of the city his government cleaned the streets, painted walls, and organized a series of cultural and artistic events.<sup>144</sup> Yet, as in other cases, fostering a positive image of Neza depended on oppressive measures.

Neza officials sought to displace the poor residents of the city by increasing the cost of services and physically removing them. As noted previously, residents reacted to

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<sup>142</sup> Salvador Garduso Bustamente, "Escombros y Carrona Humana en la Zona," *El Sol del Valle* (City), October 5-11, 1985.

<sup>143</sup> Benito Olivares, "Detenciones masivas de humildes personas que recolectan en basaureros," *El Sol de México* (Mexico City), November 5, 1985.

<sup>144</sup> "Nezahualcoytl listo para recibir los turistas que vendran al Mundial," *El Sol de Toluca* (Toluca, Mexico), April 10, 1986.

price increases with strong resistance. Late April 1986, the residents faced another price surge. According to a young student, “the majority of residents, working class...use 70 percent of their salary to eat, and thus do not have money to pay for pavement.”<sup>145</sup> This time for the city’s need to complete projects for the 1986 World Cup. The area around the stadium before 1982 was simply a dust desert with a lack of infrastructure. The government though invested heavily to provide water services, streets with sidewalks, and other basic structures. The investment can best be exemplified through the increase of paved streets. The government paved 100 kilometers, 27 percent of work done over the two decades of the city’s official existence. Overall, this yielded 443,542 square meters of paved surface resulted in 2,215,000 pesos in costs.<sup>146</sup> This, residents argued, would lead to their displacement because they lacked the resources to pay taxes imposed onto them without their consultation. However, city officials, also used explicit methods to push out the poorer residents out of the view of tourists. For example, the police removed the various informal vendors outside of the stadium. This, according to journalist Ted Cordova-Claure, made “Neza an example of police abuse against semi-marginal populations, another example that showcases the ‘*calcutizacion*’ of Latin American cities.”<sup>147</sup>

The state-sanctioned violence that pushed out the vendors out of the view from tourist remained a minimal example of violence experienced by citizens elsewhere. Mexico’s human rights violations faced scrutiny from Amnesty International. The

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<sup>145</sup> Hermenegildo Castro, “Expulsión de pobres que no pueden pagar servicios: El mundial de fútbol convierte a Neza en un municipio caro,” *La Jornada* (Mexico City), April 28, 1986.

<sup>146</sup> Hermenegildo Castro, “Expulsión de pobres que no pueden pagar servicios: El mundial de fútbol convierte a Neza en un municipio caro,” *La Jornada* (Mexico City), April 28, 1986.

<sup>147</sup> Ted Cordova-Claure, “El miedo en Nezahualcóyotl,” *El Porvenir* (Monterrey), May 21, 1986.

organization during the 1978 World Cup played an important role. They helped amplify the voices of Argentinians, who felt the blunt force of the dictatorship. In addition, soccer players also used their platform to speak out against the injustices that the citizens of the host nation faced. Their claims of human rights violations followed the claims made by Mexicans, who directly felt the effects of the Dirty War. In 1984, President de la Madrid faced activists who criticized the Mexican government for its infringement on human rights. For example, human rights activist Rosario Ibarra de Piedra presented a large book with detailed descriptions of 462 people that went missing in the hands of the Mexican government since 1969. This same book went missing after four men assaulted and took the book away from a young assistant of hers, who wanted to make copies of it. She insisted that five of 70 cases that had happened since President de la Madrid remained unresolved. She compared the 70 disappearances that happened in two years during de la Madrid's presidency to the 100 that occurred in the previous presidency. The government described Ibarra de Piedra as person who "transcended her modest and original local role of leading the struggle for the presentation of the so-called-detained-disappeared, to her own political space inside the Mexican left and society."<sup>148</sup> Ibarra later in 1988 ran for president. The journalist interviewed various politicians and political activist that "believe the discontent brought on by the austerity measures used to combat the economic crisis may be leading some elements of the Government to believe the time for strong measures has come again."<sup>149</sup> The issues of human rights failed to improve and

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<sup>148</sup> "Síntesis de la relación con el Frente Nacional Contra la Represión, encabezado por la SRA. Maria del Rosario Ibara de Piedra," *Frente Nacional Contra la Represión*, AGN, Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, Secretaria Particular I, Correspondencia, Box 12.

<sup>149</sup> Richard J. Meislin, "For Mexicans, Concern Rises on Civil Rights," *New York Times* (New York City), September 23, 1984.

therefore Amnesty International accused the Mexican government of criminal acts against indigenous people and peasants during the World Cup.<sup>150</sup>

Social and political unrest occurred in the 1980s for different reasons; from economical to social and political reasons. The economic problems remained unsolved. During that time, a kilo of tortillas cost 500 pesos, of meat up to 18 thousand, and a 19-inch television could cost up to 100 thousand pesos.<sup>151</sup> These prices forced Mexican families earning minimum wages to spend about 50% of their salary for necessities in comparison to a third in 1981.<sup>152</sup> People voiced their opinions in newspapers and streets; however, President de la Madrid failed to address the issues while he supported the World Cup. Therefore, when the Mexican people expressed their anger in front of the world's eyes during the opening ceremony of the World Cup on May 31, 1986 they did so for various reasons that further strained the relationship between PRI and the Mexican people.

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<sup>150</sup> "Dos caras de México," *El País*, (Madrid), June 10, 1986.

<sup>151</sup> Enrique Hernandez Alcazar, "30 años de Mexico 86," *Vanity Fair Mexico* (Mexico City), Last modified July 28, 2016, [www.vanityfair.mx/lifestyle/articulos/30-anos-del-mundial-de-mexico-86-cuando-el-futbol-tomo-mexico/21489](http://www.vanityfair.mx/lifestyle/articulos/30-anos-del-mundial-de-mexico-86-cuando-el-futbol-tomo-mexico/21489).

<sup>152</sup> Carlos Tello, Enrique González Tiburcio, and Francisco Báez, *México: Informe sobre la crisis (1982-1986)*, (Mexico City: UNAM, 1989), 453.

## INTERLUDE



Figure 3 Two individuals leaning against a tree at a demonstration to commemorate the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tlatelolco Massacre in Mexico City, October 2, 1985. The younger individual holds a sign that best translates to "To hell with the debt and the I.M.F. Pablo Pueblo."<sup>153</sup>



Figure 4 The bus and heavy car manufacturer Diesel Nacional donates a bus to the Mexican national soccer team, April 10, 1985<sup>154</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Hermanos Mayo, AGN, Hermanos Mayo, HMCR2-1472.

<sup>154</sup> Hermanos Mayo, AGN, Hermanos Mayo, HMCR2-1474-1.



Figure 5 In the stands fans for the Mexico-Iraq game unleashed their creativity enlaced with racial stereotypes of Iraqis.<sup>155</sup>



Figure 6 "Violencia en el Angel" A young man holds a flag despite his bloody face caused by a beer bottle hitting his face, June 5, 1986<sup>156</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Hermanos Mayo, AGN, Hermanos Mayo, HMCR2-1787.

<sup>156</sup> "Violencia en el Angel," *La Jornada* (Mexico City) June 5, 1986.



Figure 7 The Secretaria de Turismo invested heavily into the tournament. Among their projects, they focused on asking Mexican citizens to respect the tourists such as in this ad placed in the *Diario de Querétaro*.<sup>157</sup>



Figure 8 The English fans, known as hooligans, at a game. After the team's loss to Argentina they would get into confrontations with police and even attacked Mexican.<sup>158</sup>

<sup>157</sup> Secretaria de Turismo. Advertisement from the Secretaria de Turismo, *Diario de Querétaro* (Querétaro) May 25, 1986.

<sup>158</sup> Hermanos Mayo, AGN, Hermanos Mayo, *HMCR2-1797*.



Figure 9 President Miguel de la Madrid with young children before the game against Bulgaria<sup>159</sup>



Figure 10 Maral's "PRIque" in *Unomásuno*, May 25, 1986. Political cartoonists made explicit connections between the PRI and the mega-sports event.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>159</sup> Hermanos Mayo, AGN, Hermanos Mayo, 63-AQ, 15-V-86

<sup>160</sup> Maral, "PRIque," *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), May 25, 1986.





Figure 11 "Workers of the Fundidora Monterrey burn their PRI credentials and attire."<sup>161</sup>

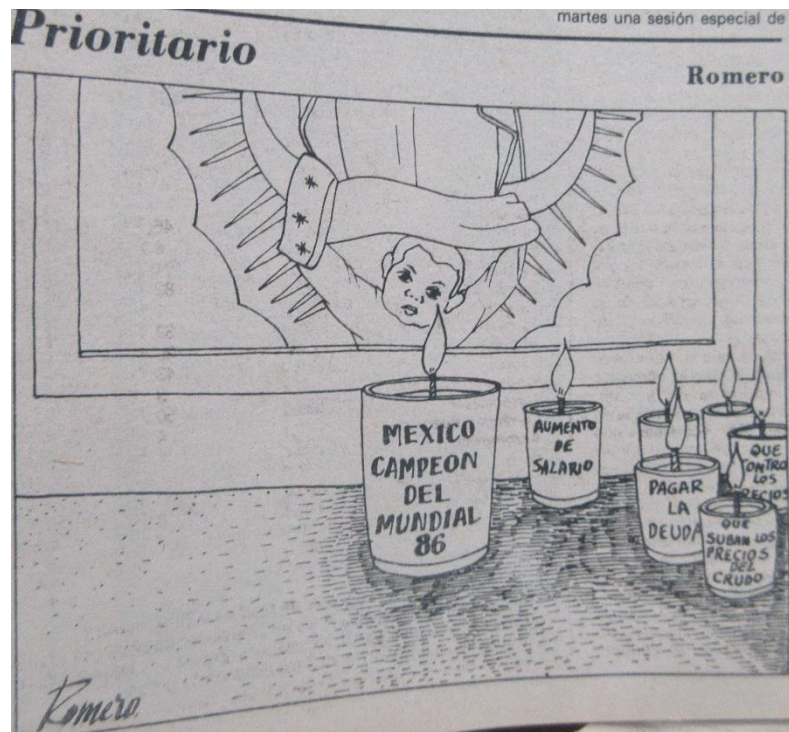


Figure 12" Prioritario" in *Unomásuno*, May 25, 1986<sup>162</sup>

<sup>161</sup> "Acereros," *La Jornada* (Mexico City), June 5, 1986.

<sup>162</sup> Romero, "Prioritario," *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), May 25, 1986.

CHAPTER 4: TAUNTS, TANKS, AND TORTAS: AN EXAMINATION OF THE IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF THE 1986 WORLD CUP, JUNE 1986



Figure 13 Helioflores' "Tortas prohibidas," in *La Jornada*, May 31, 1986<sup>163</sup>

As the opening of the World Cup got closer the attention on the Mexican national soccer team increased as well. Reporters wanted their stories and opinions. A few days before the tournament a few of the players answered questions talked politics. Some expressed apathy towards politics as others declared their allegiance or lack of allegiance to a political party. Before he scored a brilliant scissors kick to help Mexico move to the quarterfinals Manuel Negrete declared:

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<sup>163</sup> Helioflores, "Tortas prohibidas," *La Jornada*, May 31, 1986.

I am from the PRI... Maybe I have not learned enough about other parties as I should, but the PRI is the one that is convenient for me. It is true, in the country there is corruption, economic crisis, but you look to the other side and there are wars, terrorism. If another party arrived, I would have a lot of uncertainty, I would not know what would happen.<sup>164</sup>

His words reflected a dependence on the PRI for stability. Stability that might signify corruption and poverty, but at least it lacked war and terrorism. The PRI depended on the perceived stability to keep voters on their side. Thus, the 1986 World Cup presented an opportunity as many PRI officials and others noted to showcase the nation's stability to the world. The eyes and opinions of the world mattered to the Mexican government led by President de la Madrid, who sought investments to deal with the debt problem.

The Mexican government at multiple levels and occasions demonstrated that they wanted a positive perception from foreigners. In a publication, titled *México Está Preparado*, the Secretaría de Gobernación (SEGOB) laid out the various ways that the government prepared for the tournament as well as a general history and overview of the politics. It included information on the demands from FIFA and the various government agencies that acted to fulfil the demands. It includes the offices of tourism, communications, and a few others. The SEGOB presented the book at an event for journalists, who could use the book as an introduction to Mexico.<sup>165</sup> In the first pages of the booklet, the Secretaría published a picture of President de la Madrid followed by a message of friendship. "The Mexicans give a fraternal and cordial welcome to all of the participants of the sports celebration: we trust that our efforts will contribute to a better

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<sup>164</sup> Sergio Guzman, "Fe, política, apodos...", *Unomásuno* (Mexico City) June 1, 1986.

<sup>165</sup> "Palabras del Subsecretario de Gobernación, Dr. Fernando Pérez Correa durante el acto se anunció el programa cultural y del libro 'México Está Preparado'," May 28, 1986, AGN, Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, Unidad de la Crónica Presidencial, Secretario, Box 1, Folder 2 FS121.

understanding between the peoples of the world.”<sup>166</sup> In a simple statement, the president framed Mexico as a space where world citizens should enjoy the celebration of sport and get to know each other. The message also represented one of the ways that Mexico attempted to do foreign policy.

As part of the planning for the year, the government deemed the World Cup as an “event of attention due to political priorities.” This list included moments such as guaranteed prices in April of 1986 and the May Day demonstrations.<sup>167</sup> The Department of the Federal District, a part of President de la Madrid’s cabinet, led “*Operación Limpieza*.”<sup>168</sup> Carlos Monsiváis detailed that police throughout the city since March 1986, pushed out beggars, informal vendors, protestors, and sex workers in order to show the world that Mexico City differs from cities like Calcuta.<sup>169</sup> He also condemned the operation as full of hypocrisy because the state pushed out the problem from cameras but failed to “eradicate the misery.”<sup>170</sup>

The federal government also created a system to deal with the “political priority” known as the 1986 World Cup. The “system” relied on a network consisting of national government agencies and state and local governments. It included the SEGOB as well as the *Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional* and even the *Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes*. They worked to “guarantee the national community the development of the event into an atmosphere of peace and social order and to show the international

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<sup>166</sup> *México Está Preparado*, AGN, Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, Unidad de la Crónica Presidencial, Secretario, Box 01, Folder 3 FS036.

<sup>167</sup> “Eventos de Atención Política Prioritarios en 1986,” Acuerdos MMH/SG 184.5, IMG\_3974, 3975, 3976.

<sup>168</sup> Carlos Monsiváis, “Ante el Mundial, la miseria no se corrige, pero que no se vea la “Operación Limpieza”, consagración de la hipocresía,” *Proceso* (Mexico City), May 12, 1986.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>170</sup> *Ibíd.*

community the ability to organize in our nation in the face of a challenge of such a magnitude.” The national government worked with state and local leaders, who they deemed as “the reasonable ones for the security in each of its host cities.”<sup>171</sup> To prepare for this, the government spent around 300 million pesos on police equipment and surveillance technology. This among other spending expenditures from other government agencies demonstrate that President de la Madrid failed to uphold his promise to not spend on the tournament.

The local, national, and international problems that surrounded the 1986 World Cup finally would be ignored. Or at least that is what the government desired according to those who criticized the tournament as an exercise of *panem et circenses*. The World Cup organizing committee picked the *Estadio Azteca*, the Azteca Stadium, to host the inauguration of the international event out of the twelve total stadiums to host World Cup games.<sup>172</sup> The moment that Mexico waited for arrived and on May 31, 1986, it opened the gates to the *Estadio Azteca* for the world to join this celebration. A few days beforehand, Guillermo Cañedo spoke about the ceremony. He reflected “everyone knows of the critical economic situation that Mexico is going through ....and we have decided that the inauguration should be austere without a waste of money.”<sup>173</sup> The ceremony consisted of displays of Mexican nationalism and four speeches that repeated the rhetoric of nationalism and resilience to support the World Cup, to which the Mexican public reacted with discontent. In this chapter, I look at the ways immediate effects of the 1986

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<sup>171</sup> “Sistema de seguridad Campeonato mundial de futbol,” AGN, Acuerdos MMH/SG 184.2.

<sup>172</sup> FIFA, *FIFA World Cup- Mexico '86: Official Report*, edited by Günther Furrer and Erich Vogel, Zurich, Sweden: Fédération Internationale de Football Association, 1986, 16.

<sup>173</sup> “La ceremonia inaugural será austere, afirmó Memo Cañedo,” *El Universal* (Mexico City), May 21, 1986.

World Cup. I do this by looking at newspaper coverage of the tournament and reactions from citizens. The latter is best understood by the ways citizens interacted at stadiums and during celebrations.

Before the tournament started journalist provided analysis for their readers. *New York Times* reporter William Stockton's analysis demonstrated that the government's big hopes for profits would remain hopes even before the World Cup started. For example, Stockton presented the issue of ticket sales by stating that only 70 percent of the 3 million tickets sold and that only 300,000 tickets belonged to foreigners compared to the 82 percent of tickets sold for the 1982 Spain World Cup. Therefore, hope for an influx of foreign tourism seemed weak; however, television channels played documentaries in hopes of getting the tourist to visit tourist attractions in the city to generate future tourism. To combat the low-ticket sales, the organizing committee considered selling individual tickets instead of city-based packages. The predicted ticket price ranged from \$3 to \$50, which felt out of reach to the average worker who earned \$3 a day. Stockton, like previous people, noted the economic problems and pointed out that no one knew how the committee afforded to pay its 2000 employees and even worse, no one knew their source of income. To echo the previous anti-World Cup writers Stockton also explained that in addition to the 12 sponsors that the World Cup also had a "larger group of commercial 'collaborators' [that] can use the World Cup logo with their products, loaning or donating equipment in return. Ford Motor Company, for example, loaned 200 cars and International Business Machines loaned 5,000 typewriters, 500 computer terminals and a central computer for the World Cup." Stockton, however, directly

addressed the World Cup as an echo of the Roman concept of *panem et circenses* by stating:

The diversion that the games will provide, even if the Mexican team falls on its face in the opening round and is eliminated, will be a boost to the morale of the country, a distraction from a life of increasingly narrow vistas, particularly for the lower classes who have watched their real wages slowly shrink in recent years to levels of the 1960's.<sup>174</sup>

Stockton, with the ability to cover most of the logistics presented information on ticketing, television, tourism, and private investment and demonstrated that many of the things anti-World Cup arguments came to life.

A Mexican journalist provided another report days before the tournament. Like Stockton, he talked about the lack of tourists. He suggested that the number of tourists would not exceed 30 thousand, "a number that would fill a stadium during a single game." In addition, he pointed out that the fans "don't do tourism. They will not visit historic relics or museums."<sup>175</sup> This journalist explained what economist explain when they suggest that mega-sports events do not yield economic growth. Another journalist also noted that around 25,000 tourists arrived and compared that number to the 50,000 security officials that the government paid for. He also pointedly criticized that:

When Mexico received the world for sport in 1968 and 1970, it was presented as a vigorous nation in development with good perspectives. Currently it figures within the most indebted in the world, with a *lastre* of 96,000 million dollars. The catastrophic situation of finances goes along with the fast increase in social tensions. This was reflected in the previous weeks with the demand each time with more sound: "*No queremos goles, queremos frijoles.*" And the country still suffers the effects of the devastating earthquake of the September 19 from last year that costa the live of around 10,000 people. Today there are around 44,000 people without a home.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> William Stockton, "The World Cup '86; Soccer Fever a Respite, Not a Malady," *New York Times* (New York, 1986), May 25, 1986.

<sup>175</sup> Ted Cordova-Claure, "El miedo en Nezahualc6yotl," *El Porvenir* (Monterrey), May 21, 1986.

<sup>176</sup> "Por tercera ocasi6n se celebra un evento magno," *El Universal* (Mexico City), May 23, 1986.

His words, like others, presented a Mexico hurt by the economy and the earthquake. In addition, these two problems created social tensions. However, the speakers during the fiesta-like inauguration ceremony for the tournament presented a Mexico ready to celebrate. They presented a resilient Mexico. A Mexico that despite the 1985 earthquake and its economic problems worked hard to organize a celebration for the people of the world. The reaction from the citizens, however, suggested something else. It suggested a discontent Mexico that would only ignore its problems momentarily.

Mexico's chance to showcase their resiliency, their pride, and much more arrived. President de la Madrid and other officials attended and spoke. Viewers from around the world would partake and witness the tournament because of the large Mexican investment in television transmission technology. The Mexican government recognized the chance to engage a large world-wide audience via television. Due to this, the Department of Tourism invested in video production that showcased various tourist attractions throughout the nation. Many Mexicans ridiculed a three-minute video. For instance, some ridiculed the content and exclaimed "They're fucking dumbass dancers *que hacen dengues*"<sup>177</sup> because the choreographer mixed soccer movements with ballet.<sup>178</sup> Others criticized it for lacking *mexicanidad* because foreigners helped created the video. The producer Luis de Llano Macedo in some ways agreed. He referred to his video as *agringado* because the Department of Tourism wanted to attract tourists. However, he defended it from those that criticized the content because he wanted to instill energy and positivity into the *pueblo* and classified it as *triumfalista* because "it is a

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<sup>177</sup> "Que hacen dengues" is a colloquial phrase that best translates "to make you make a face of disgust."

<sup>178</sup> Ernesto Flores, "La realidad mexicana es terrible, pero tenemos que representar su lado positive," *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), May 25, 1986.



video for winning” despite Mexico’s “terrible” reality.<sup>179</sup> Despite the criticism from Mexicans, 150 nations received a copy of it to transmit in hopes to garner tourism. For the inauguration ceremony, the Department and its producers extended it to thirteen minutes that included images of indigenous Mexico as well as attractions in Puebla and the modernity of Mexico City.

As the Italian and Bulgarian team stood on the field, the announcer introduced the first speaker, which sparked the largest public outcry of anger against the national politics and the World Cup. The expression of anger and discontent started as soon as the stadium’s announcer called out the name of Guillermo J. Cañedo, president of the organizing committee for the World Cup of 1986. The crowd booed and whistled as he stood in front of the microphone before speaking. As the first speaker, he stated “Mister President of the Republic, mister boss of the department of the Federal District, ladies and gentlemen, Mexico receives all the finalist national teams to the FIFA World Cup and with them their nations and all the nations of the world,” to introduce the world to Mexico and Mexico to the world. He went onto remind the audience that his country hosted a World Cup 16 years earlier and he assured the world that they would host it again with the same “spirit and enthusiasm... demonstrating again that Mexico despite its serious problems continues to be on its feet.”<sup>180</sup> He continued to state that “unity, cooperation, and liberty” must exist to overcome difficult times, echoing the FMF statements from 1983.<sup>181</sup> Cañedo more than likely alluded to the 1982 debt crisis and the

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<sup>179</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>180</sup> “Inauguración del mundial México 86 Estadio Azteca Video de Duglin,” YouTube video, 15:43, posted by “payaso duglin y tito,” May 14, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyaoPbyvPVA>.; “Mexico 86: La Ola, los abucheos y discursos oficiales,” YouTube video, 9:54, posted by “Edward Becerra,” February 11, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45FicJKGJDA>.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibíd.*

ever more recent 1985 earthquake that affected Mexico City when he used the phrase “difficult times.” The people heckled him due to their frustration with his attempt to make Mexicans feel pride for overcoming obstacles through his speech. He went on to thank FIFA for trusting them to host the World Cup. Cañedo also stated that he wanted international coexistence during this World Cup, which the decoration of the stadium as a party reflected and an awareness of the contemporary global conflicts. Further, Cañedo reminded the world of this World Cup as the one transmitting to more people on television than any sport event before. The new way to use television according to him, allowed the world to title this the “World Cup of communication.” As he began to close his speech, he thanked President de la Madrid for his support and trust in the organizing committee, a trust that almost fell through in 1983 when the federal government wanted to create a new committee. He closed by stating that Mexico welcomed the world with the “affection and hospitality that are part of [Mexican] tradition” before he welcomed Rafael del Castillo, president of the FMF. The crowd responded to his closing remark with some applause as well as murmuring. The latter juxtaposed his remark on hospitality.

Rafael del Castillo took the stage to talk on behalf of the FMF as expressions of anger continued. He opened by referring first to the Mexican president and the FIFA president before the world, which might show del Castillo’s relationship with the Mexican president and FIFA president as essential for the World Cup to happen. Del Castillo reminded the world of the nation’s resiliency as he stated, “Mexico after the grave occurrences of September decided to host the world cup instead of evade.”<sup>182</sup> The

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<sup>182</sup> *Ibíd.*

rhetoric, like Cañedo's, focused on the country needing to prove itself to the world as a nation with the ability to pick itself up after a crisis. Further, del Castillo paralleled the need of unity to overcome difficult circumstances. Yet, del Castillo added at the end that the country still needed to prove more to the world as he stated, "As Mexicans it is left to us to demonstrate our strength of character, our technical capability and organization, and the receptive and sensible quality of our peoples."<sup>183</sup> The people needed to prove themselves in the mind of del Castillo. The crowd, continued to boo and murmur, while some applauded, demonstrating a sense of awkwardness in the stands because Mexicans did not know what image to present to the world: anger or happiness.

The crowd whistled and murmured as João Havelange, FIFA president, approached the microphone to speak, which showed that not even FIFA would escape the wrath of the Mexicans. He spoke in Spanish, not his native language, as he read from a notecard, and referred to Mexico as his country. This statement implied that he either thought thoroughly about a speech he wrote by himself or carelessness from his translator. Further, the choice to speak in Spanish displayed his desire to communicate with the Mexican people in their language instead of through a translator. He also stated "From Mexico, our historic country" and alluded to the Mayans and Aztecs that made up Mexico's history.<sup>184</sup> Murmurs from the crowd that continued throughout his speech that could only be heard clearly whenever he took pauses between his sentences. As he continued to praise the host nation, he mentioned the president of Mexico, which caused a roar of boos from the crowd. He concluded by stating, "fraternity in the service of the major competition of the nations. With goodness, we serve the Mexican people, the youth

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<sup>183</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>184</sup> *Ibíd.*

of the world, and the ideals of peace,”<sup>185</sup> which resulted in some applause from the Mexican people. The announcer took over and let the crowd know that President de la Madrid would speak next.

President de la Madrid stood at the microphone as the crowd booed him the loudest demonstrating that their biggest resentment was against their national leader. However, he had the shortest speech of everyone who spoke due to possibly wanting to avoid public punishment from the crowd or just wanting to start the opening game as soon as possible. He gave a final welcome to the world and declared, “Mexico sends with its conduct to all the nations of the land a message of peace and friendship.” He finished his short speech by officially declaring the start of the World Cup. Writing for *Proceso* Glarza Gerardo noted that:

The sound in the stadium was similar as when a goal happens, overall it was Mexican. The local sound informed that president Miguel de la Madrid would declare the inauguration. The *reflichas* and the taunts intensified, the *Azteca* shakes, rumbles. No one in the stadium heard the sixty-nine words that the president of the republic pronounced, that lasted sixty seconds. No one.<sup>186</sup>

Gerardo’s words illustrate the intense emotions expressed by the thousands of middle-class Mexicans who afforded a seat at the game. Cultural critic Carlos Monsiváis reflected on the inauguration and humorously noted that a soccer referee’s whistle subdued the crowd’s “anti-authority” towards their national officials.<sup>187</sup> In addition, George Vecsey, an American sports writer, remembered the opening ceremony and saw it

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<sup>185</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>186</sup> Glarza Gerardo, “Las rechiflas al presidente marcaron la inauguración: al segundo juego asistió sigilosamente,” *Proceso* (Mexico City), June 9, 1986.

<sup>187</sup> Carlos Monsiváis, “¡¡¡Goooo!!! Somos el desmadre,” *Cuadernos Políticos*, no. 47, (México, D.F.: July-September 1986), 57-73.

as the moment he became aware of “growing cynicism and despair” in the host nation.<sup>188</sup>

The latter demonstrated that the public resentment of the people made some, especially foreigners, re-consider their view of politics.

The announcer then cut the mixed reaction by letting the crowd know the Mexican national anthem would soon play. The cameras then zoomed into the crowd and showed various people singing as the anthem resonated from the woman’s voice who officially sang it. People in the crowd wore green, white, and red to let the world know that they stood there to represent Mexico. It also showed two men in Italian shirts holding up the Mexican flag, which explicitly exemplified Cañedo’s message of international coexistence. The crowd erupted in applause expressing happiness as it celebrated Mexico and knowing that the World Cup would soon kick off.

Through its decoration of the stadium, the Mexican government displayed their nation as a country proud of its history and culture. The speakers acknowledged the troubles the country had faced as it prepared to host the World Cup and tried to make it a positive experience by focusing on resilience. Yet, the crowd’s boos and whistles reminded the government of the discontent the people felt despite wanting to celebrate a World Cup. The loudness of the whistling, yelling, and booing made it so hard to hear that a reporter remembered the day by stating that he only heard a small bit of Cañedo’s speech.<sup>189</sup> The people’s anger expressed itself most against Cañedo and President de la Madrid demonstrating that the people directed their discontent at their government. Yet,

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<sup>188</sup> George Vecsey, “Sports of the Times; Postcards from 1986,” *New York Times* (New York City), December 28, 1986.

<sup>189</sup> José Comas, “Abucheos al presidente de México en la inauguración,” *El País* (Madrid, Spain), May 31, 1986.

the Mexican people did not let FIFA think they were safe from criticism as the people displayed by murmuring throughout João's speech.

Yet, did this discontent displayed by those in the stadium hurt the president's image? Internationally, no. This happened because the image from the ceremony failed to reach the televisions of at least eighteen European nations.<sup>190</sup> In response European nations criticized Mexico's organization efforts. One Spanish journalist described the failure as "a manifestation of its capability to descend into chaos."<sup>191</sup> The head of sports operations for the European Broadcast Union days later referred to the ongoing problems as "the biggest disaster in the history of sports broadcasting."<sup>192</sup> Many European nations even considered to sue Mexico's Televisa, who with the Mexican government invested into brand new communications infrastructure.<sup>193</sup> The problem with European television networks, however, started in December 1985, when they denied paying the high costs to gain access to live coverage of the World Cup group drawing ceremony.<sup>194</sup> Despite those problems though, the World Cup organizers claimed that 2,500 million people in 150 nations followed the inaugural ceremony.<sup>195</sup>

Within Mexico though, President de la Madrid worked to improve his image after the displayed anger. Over the next two days, President de la Madrid appeared in two different interviews with the intent to clean up his image after ultimately getting

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<sup>190</sup> "Pese a todo se escucharon cohetones en el Azteca," *El Universal* (Mexico City), June 1, 1986.

<sup>191</sup> Jose Comas, "Abucheos al president de México en la inauguracion," *El Pais* (Madrid), June 1, 1986.

<sup>192</sup> Ghrame L. Jones, "World Cup Mexico 86: Analysis: European Broadcast Officials Cite Poor Conditions, Foul-Ups," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), June 04, 1986.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>194</sup> "Los periodistas de la radio y la televisión europea: No pagáramos 3 mil 200 dólares por transmitir el sorteo," *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), December 13, 1985; Alejandro Caballero, "Las cadenas europeas no estaran presentes hoy en el sorteo," *La Jornada* (Mexico City), December 14, 1985.

<sup>195</sup> José Comas, "El presidente De la Madrid intenta mejorar su imagen," *El País* (Madrid, Spain), June 17, 1986.

embarrassed in front of the eyes of the whole world. Further, to let the public know he supported the World Cup, the two television companies transmitted simultaneous live video between his location, *Los Pinos*, and the Mexican soccer team's locker.<sup>196</sup> The team and him worked together to provide the population happiness. A website based on a series of books a historian wrote during de la Madrid's presidency stated that the vocal disapproval during the speeches became the topic of discussion for a few days. In addition, it stated that some felt that the vocal disapproval rooted itself in the government's unpopularity or the middle and upper-class against the government's politics in the midst of the economic crisis, however, the website reminded people did this out of fun.<sup>197</sup> Further, it reminded people that Mexicans celebrated the World Cup as soon as the national anthem played. Yet, this attempt to play off the importance of the anger as something trivial compared to Televisa's *México '86 20 Anos Despues* is tamed because the documentary's narrator nor de la Madrid mention it at all despite them playing video and audio of his speech, where the murmurs of discontent can be heard.<sup>198</sup> However, Louise Walker argued that because only the middle and upper class could afford tickets to enter, it was they who whistled and booed during the speeches.<sup>199</sup> In a speech on the economy during February 1986, he spoke to this same middle-class and asked them to:

Renovate their spirit and recognize that the drop of their standard of living was a result of a crisis without precedence, which the Government of the

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<sup>196</sup> José Comas, "El presidente De la Madrid intenta mejorar su imagen," *El País* (Madrid, Spain), June 17, 1986.

<sup>197</sup> "Campeonato mundial de fútbol," *Crónica del sexenio 1982-1988*, MMH.org, 2013, <http://www.mmh.org.mx/nav/node/560>.

<sup>198</sup> "Mundial Mexico 86," YouTube video, 5:17, posted by "Videoteca Auriazul," June 1, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9E088k62h5k>.

<sup>199</sup> Louise E. Walker, "Economic Fault Lines and Middle-Class Fears: Tlatelolco, Mexico City, 1985," 212.

Mexican Revolution has strongly combatted to avoid that it should be worse, but to overcome it requires your dynamism and your effort.<sup>200</sup>

More, importantly though the lower class or the masses, like the anti-World Cup Mexicans predicted, could not afford the tickets and one can only wonder how much louder the vocal disapproval of the speakers if they attended the opening ceremony of the 1986 World Cup.

#### CHRONICLING THE WORLD CUP

Coverage of the opening game in Mexican newspapers for the most part avoided coverage of the vocal reproach expressed by those in the stadium. Scholars Rory M. Miller and Liz Crolley described the stadium as a space in authoritarian or repressive nations that provided anonymity and thus gave the people who went to games the chance to express political ideas without too much repression.<sup>201</sup> Thus, the reproach that Mexicans must be understood as a manifestation of discontent expressed in a concert of anonymity. No one faced a problem for their political protest as the thousands who disappear in the hands of the state. One journalist even highlighted that the military “preferred to observe the game and smile.”<sup>202</sup> Despite the military’s decision to not act in a repressive manner, the Mexican people and the fans from around the world felt their presence in entering the stadium, which Monterrey journalist Hector Hugo Jimenez described as an “odyssey.”<sup>203</sup> He first described the war tanks and the large amounts of soldiers that welcomed people into the stadium in his short report on getting to his seat.

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<sup>200</sup> Miguel de la Madrid, “1986 Mensaje a la nación sobre la situación económica del país, dirigido desde Palacio Nacional,” *Memoria Política de México*, (Mexico City): February 21, 1988.

<sup>201</sup> *Football in the Americas: Fútbol, Futebol, Soccer*, 10.

<sup>202</sup> Héctor Hugo Jiménez, “Entrar al Azteca, una odisea,” *El Porvenir* (Mexico City), June 1, 1986.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibíd.*





Figure 14 Tanks and soldiers outside the Estadio Azteca at the Inauguration Ceremony<sup>204</sup>

Other reporters provided firsthand accounts of the inauguration. While writing from different perspectives they all highlighted security as something remarkable. For instance, Antonio Marimon for *Unomásuno* wrote about the four stages of security that he passed through in an article titled “In the Azteca all of us were suspects.”<sup>205</sup> The title itself featured on the front page alongside an image that captured an officer with military gear and an assault rifle highlighted the immense security used for the World Cup. He recalled how some women laughed as female police officers patted them down. Moreover, as a “cronista,” he lacked the time to write down notes. When he tried to do so he faced a “a face over his, scrutinizing” along with constant verbal warnings to move along.<sup>206</sup> Another journalist spoke about the treatment he received from the Mexican security officials. Fidel Samaniego noted the seventeen tanks near the entrances and that the soldiers yelled “*Chingao, que se formen! No saben lo que es de dos en fondo?*”

<sup>204</sup> Hermanos Mayo, AGN, Hermanos Mayo, HMCR2-1773-1.

<sup>205</sup> Antonio Morimon, “En el Azteca todos éramos sospechosos,” *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), June 1, 1986.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibíd.*

“Fuck, get in line! Don’t you know what it means to make two lines towards the back!?”

Samaniego also noted this treatment only happened to those that afforded seats furthest away from the field. Those that arrived with nice clothes and jewelry walked to their seats without scrutiny.<sup>207</sup> Antonio Marimon summarized his experience with security this way:

That was the Azteca yesterday, prohibitions until you reached your seat. A place severely fragmented in zones to protect us better, but from what? Maybe from the shadow of another Munich, of the violent ghost of the era, of the paranoia that has beaten the men of the great cities, or from a feeling of global insecurity. From what?

His words illustrated a man troubled by security in the name of preventing terrorism. A man who felt that the people of cities lived in fear, and insecure. This lack of security that officials addressed by restricting freedoms took away from the experience from many. Yet, the writer noted the acts of solidarity and cultural exchange that he witnessed. He happily noted that a group of Poles, Germans, and Brazilians took a picture together and the cheers of “Mé-xi-co Mé-xi-co Mé-xi-co,” that the crowd led. In a very sarcastic tone he also noted “Who knows why such beautiful things tend to end with one or few speeches.” Marimon then detailed how the crowd booed the first three speakers, however, none of it compared with the disapproval of President de la Madrid. He then followed with a series of rhetorical questions that should force a reader to think about the socio-political world they inhabit:

It is worth pointing out and that the intelligent politicians of the regimen reflect on this episode. The massive and anonymous public whistled-from middle class and upper class-at this president, or at the memory of a system and of a party that are very responsible in the descent of the economic crisis? Did they boo one individual or an institution? Was the gesture superficial or representative of a current of opinion? Maybe the

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<sup>207</sup> “Fue el público lo mayor en la deslucida inauguración del XII Mundial de Fútbol,” *El Universal* (Mexico City), June 1, 1986.

fans felt that their territory was invaded by the formal rituals from power and rebelled against those that embodied that situation? That phenomena will remain there for the interested to analyze. The people that nearly filled that great amphitheater of concrete, anxiously longed to receive their plan, their game, their favorite spectacle.<sup>208</sup>

Like this analysis, this same writer understands soccer as something political. As something that governments use to their advantage. In an op-ed titled “Soccer, a game full of politics” he traced the relationship between sports and politics and wrote “that governments and political projects use soccer to reinforce their popular base, to attempt to convince of their benefits to the masses or to do publicity for their systems.”<sup>209</sup> This is itself my argument. President de la Madrid while highly influenced by Televisa used the World Cup for his own means. He used it to retain and gain popular support. He also needed the tournament to showcase his nation that needed investments.

While many journalists reflected on the World Cup from within the stadium others talked about what they saw in the streets of Mexico City. A city known for its smog and traffic, saw none of that while the inauguration occurred. Instead some men gathered at restaurants or any place with a “giant screen.” Others sat on sidewalks and listened to coverage on their radio. Even on the busy road Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas, people turned their radio to the coverage. The journalist even walked into the Zocalo, Mexico City’s main square, to look for people and found only a few officers. They trekked north to Tepito “el barrio bravo” where only a few small shop owners opened and not a single car moved.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>208</sup> Antonio Morimon, “En el Azteca todos éramos sospechosos,” *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), June 1, 1986.

<sup>209</sup> Antonio Morimon, “El fútbol, un juego lleno de política,” *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), June 1, 1986.

<sup>210</sup> “EL D.F. en el día de la inauguración: una ciudad semidesierta,” *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), June 1, 1986.

## IMMEDIATE EFFECTS

Overall during the month of June, the people of Mexico experienced a euphoric nationalist rush that allowed many to forget their troubles. This though remained untrue for many including the *damnificados* throughout Mexico City or even the poor in Monterrey. Further, the workers of the first and oldest iron and steel company in Latin America, Fundidora,<sup>211</sup> despite their chant “*No queremos futbol, queremos trabajo*” “We do not want soccer, we want work” failed to garner support after the Mexican government decided to close the steel factory.<sup>212</sup> If the poor could not afford to attend games, could they at least earn money from it? One journalist provided an insight into how locals used the tournament to earn money. In this way, the masses engaged with the tournament. Yet, they did it extra officially. The organizing committee sold licenses at the price of one million pesos according to a journalist.<sup>213</sup> Another journalist reporting for *Proceso* reported that the license for a 7.32x2.44 meter stand cost 1.5 million pesos and that a 2.44x2.44 meter stand cost 500 thousand pesos.<sup>214</sup> One journalist goes on a sexist diversion as he noted “the beautiful girls of vigorous legs and generous breast” before noting that at the stadium one could buy hamburgers, baguettes, or sandwiches but not tacos or tortas.<sup>215</sup> One journalist focused on the prices and wrote “‘hot dogs’ 500, beer

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<sup>211</sup> For more see Michael Snodgrass, *Deference and Defiance in Monterrey: Workers, Paternalism, and Revolution in Mexico, 1890-1950*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Eleocadio Martínez Silva, “Convertirse en ex obreros. La experiencia de los ex fundidores de Monterrey,” *Estudios Sociológicos* 21, no. 81 (September-December, 2009): 837-859.

<sup>212</sup> Correa Guillermo and Corro Salvador, “Los trabajadores de Fundidora intentan sobrevivir, hacen marchas y repudian al PRI,” *Proceso* (Mexico City), June 2, 1986.

<sup>213</sup> Victor Manuel Juarez, “Inauguración del Mundial: Tianguis de la supervivencia,” *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), June 1, 1986.

<sup>214</sup> Monge Raul, “DDF limpia ciudad de vendedores ambulantes para favorecer los mercados del mundial de Televisa,” *Proceso*, May 5, 1986.

<sup>215</sup> Victor Manuel Juarez, “Inauguración del Mundial: Tianguis de la supervivencia,” *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), June 1, 1986.

500, soft drink (small cup) 200, French fries 300, *tacos de guisados* 500, shrimp and oyster cocktails (small cup) 1,000.”<sup>216</sup> Despite these financial obstacles, the masses looked for opportunities. For example, street clowns known as the “clowns of the crisis,” performed near embassies, airline companies, and busy streets such as Reforma.<sup>217</sup> Others attempted to sell the traditional *tacos* outside of the stadiums and attempted to take advantage of hungry spectators. Televisa and other private companies, however, reaped direct benefits from Mexico hosting the games until the moment Maradona lifted the World Cup trophy, which proved the predictions of the anti-World Cup voices.



Figure 15 Maral's "Euforia" in *Unomásuno*, June 5, 1986<sup>218</sup>

Despite these obstacles, many gathered at the *Angel de la Independencia* to celebrate victories from the Mexican national soccer team. During these celebrations, a few people died<sup>219</sup> and some even chanted insults at President de La Madrid for hosting

<sup>216</sup> Javier Mendoza Maya, “Pese a todo se escucharon cohetones en el Azteca,” *El Universal* (Mexico City), June 1, 1986.

<sup>217</sup> “‘Payasos de la crisis’ en medio del Mundial,” *El Universal* (Mexico City), May 29, 1986.

<sup>218</sup> Maral, “Euforia,” *Unomásuno*, June 5, 1986

<sup>219</sup> “Dos muertos en los festejos por la victoria mexicana,” *El País* (Madrid), June 17, 1986.

the World Cup despite the problems.<sup>220</sup> Yet, the *Angel* also became the site of strong repression from the city's police early on June 4<sup>th</sup>. According to a journalist from PSUM's *Así Es* around four thousand fans remained at the monument around 2 am before police arrived to break up a fight started by fifty young men.<sup>221</sup> The police attempted to de-escalate the situation, however, soon they engaged in repressive actions. For example, the police told this reporter "nos vale madre!" "we don't give a fuck" after they identified as such after hitting their back. The officers then demanded for them to give up their photography film; a clear attempt to censor them. In addition, the police stripped cameras away from journalists from the Associated Press. The ordeal lasted 45 minutes and coverage of it in other newspaper remained minimal.<sup>222</sup> The coverage that occurred in other newspapers, including *La Jornada* focused on disorder and vandalism.<sup>223</sup> This led to strong negative criticisms against those who celebrated the victories at the Angel. For example, one political cartoonist depicted them as caveman versions of the mascot *Pique*.<sup>224</sup> The *PSUM* even blamed the trouble at the Angel on Televisa, demonstrating the party's insistence on the television network's ability to shape Mexico.

While people chanted against President de la Madrid at stadiums and monuments, Mexican soccer players failed to question a World Cup in times of economic instability and in some places political instability. This silence showed either a refusal in their part to see the troubles and only focus on soccer or a possible threat from soccer directors for them to keep out of politics. However, during the tournament, a Brazilian player named

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<sup>220</sup> "Mexican Peso Plunges Past 800 per Dollar in Near-Panic Selling," *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), June 09, 1986.

<sup>221</sup> Lilia Vidrio, "Una semana de ensueño del México '86," *Así Es* (Mexico City), July 5, 1986.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>223</sup> Jaime Aviles y Miguel Ángel Velázquez, "Desordenes y vandalismo invadieron la ciudad," *La Jornada* (Mexico City), June 4, 1986.

<sup>224</sup> Maral, "Euforia," *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), June 5, 1986.

Sócrates known for his leftist-political views made two strong declarations during the tournament. First on June 4, Socrates declared that FIFA wanted Brazil and Mexico to get far in the tournament due to “evident political and commercial reasons” and even thought that the referee might have helped Brazil win against Spain after not counting a Spanish goal.<sup>225</sup> Sócrates reflected on the role of sports event in “developing nations.” His words showcased an understanding that scholars are now manifesting as well. He argued that “It always occurs in the developing countries. Let’s remember Argentina, in 1978: the instrumentation of soccer in our countries is a lamentable deed done by the *right*. And in Mexico, like in the world, soccer is manipulated, in particular the World Cup.”<sup>226</sup> These declarations of FIFA wanting Mexico to advance from a player demonstrate that the soccer community gave a blind eye to the situation despite knowing that Havelange, FIFA’s president, created a pro-Mexico environment during the bidding process and attempted to do the same during the World Cup regarding the referees. Yet, the details remain unclear mainly due to the fact that closed door meetings happened between FIFA officials and President Miguel de la Madrid. In addition, he also stated that he did not understand how a county like Mexico with its social problems could organize a World Cup.<sup>227</sup> By June 10, the Brazilian soccer federation announced that Brazilian players should keep political statements to themselves and further that “[Sócrates’] role is to play soccer.”<sup>228</sup> Political declarations such as these failed to come from the Mexican soccer

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<sup>225</sup> “Sócrates asegura que hay razones extradeportivas para que gane Brasil,” *El País* (Madrid), June 4, 1986.

<sup>226</sup> Sergio Guzman, “‘Conviene Brasil y México sean primeros,’ Sócrates,” *UnaMasUno* (Mexico City), June 3, 1986.

<sup>227</sup> José Damian Gonzales, “Prohibido a los jugadores brasileños hacer declaraciones políticas,” *El País* (Madrid), June 10, 1986.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibíd.*

players or anyone else involved and therefore this incident while telling remained an isolated incident.

At the end, Mexico lost to Germany in the second round of the knock out playoff system in penalty kicks. This only happened after Manuel Negrete scored a goal that remains amongst the most remembered. Additionally, a political cartoonist depicted Carlos Salinas thanking him for saving Mexico.<sup>229</sup> Carlos Monsiváis' cultural analysis in his piece “¡¡¡Gool!!! Somos el Desmadre” articulated how politics, economy, and nationalism all intersected as the country hosted the World Cup. Tickets prices ranged from 100-110,000 pesos or 181-200 dollars, and therefore attendance demonstrated status.<sup>230</sup> Some working-class people used it as a chance to sell merchandise and once Mexico lost their chance of reaping benefits from the World Cup they went away. One seller stated:

What do I freaking do? I betted on a win and I bought all of this: shirts, flags, *piques*, horns. Who do I sell them to? The demand for September 15 are also low. The only thing left is to wait for a revolution or an invasion from the *gringos*. And possibly I still will not get rid of the merchandise.

The World Cup in the sense of nationalism brought a short-lived euphoric experience. The supporters of the national team went from saying “we won” and celebrating through the night at *El Angel de la Independencia* in Mexico City to saying “they lost” removing all fault from a team they felt they belonged to only a few seconds before they lost the game to Germany.<sup>231</sup> Also, the shock of tanks and an aggressive military shaped how journalist reflected on their experience at the inauguration of the tournament. Their words

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<sup>229</sup> Romero, “¡Gool!” *Unomásuno*, June 16, 2016.

<sup>230</sup> Calculation is made with a 1 dollar: 550 pesos conversation rate as reported to be a few days before the tournament on June 8, 1986 in “Mexican Peso Plunges Past 800 per Dollar in Near-Panic Selling,” *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), June, 09, 1986.

<sup>231</sup> Carlos Monsiváis, “¡¡¡Gool!!! Somos el Desmadre,” *Cuadernos Políticos*, no. 47, (México, D.F.: July-September 1986), 57-73



as judgements of the tournament in regard to President de la Madrid's goal to present Mexico as a space for fraternal relationships between people from around the world would lead us to think that he failed. However, their words that highlight the moments of cultural exchange between locals and those from around the world suggest that President de la Madrid succeeded.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION



Figure 16 Romero's "A pique" in *Unomásuno*, June 6, 1986.<sup>232</sup>

President de la Madrid's words, those spoken by him and his officials, indicate that the 1986 World Cup must be understood as a political project. Internally it provided him a project that in many ways attempted to distract the people of their living conditions. In addition, the project provided him an opportunity to retain and gain support. Previously, his party relied on social programs. However, the 1982 debt crisis resulted in foreign multi-national agencies in dictating the government to decrease the amount of federal funds going towards social programs and subsidies.

The 1986 World Cup provided him a chance to showcase the nation. These words also influenced the way security officials approached the tournament. So did it work? The

<sup>232</sup> Romero, "A pique," *Unomásuno* (Mexico City), June 6, 1986

boos during the inauguration indicate an overwhelming no. Also, the journalists' reactions that highlighted the tanks and overwhelmingly sense of paranoia also denoted that stability needed to be projected via security forces. The PRI faced a critical contest against three candidates during the 1988 election. One would think that the candidates would use the PRI's decision to host a tournament in a debt-ridden nation as a talking point. However, it did not happen. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, previously a PRI governor in Michoacan, volunteered his state to host World Cup game.<sup>233</sup> Thus, any negative attention from Cardenas would have indicated a sense of hypocrisy. The *Partido Accion Nacional* candidate showed little concern for this. And lastly, the campaign for Rosario Ibarra de Piedra under a Trotskyite party failed to gather large support. While the 1988 campaign failed to mention the tournament as a source of political debate I argue that the project failed in retaining voters. The 1988 campaign resulted in the PRI's smaller margin of victory.

When President de la Madrid passed away in April 2012, many individuals took to Twitter to write about what he meant to them. While many simply noted his death, and respected him as a dead person other remembered his actions. For instance, one person Tweeted that hearing President Miguel de la Madrid's name always reminded him of the *abuchada* in 1986.<sup>234</sup> A year later, Patricio de la Fuente, a representative of the political party *Movimiento Ciudadano* tweeted "talking of *rechiflas*, the mother of all of them was against Miguel de la Madrid during the 1986 World Cup. I don't remember one like

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<sup>233</sup> Luis Ignacio Jorda, "Morelia será considerada sub sede del Mundial de Fut-86," *El Nacional* (Mexico City), November 23, 1983.; "Oficial: Morelia será sub sede del Mundial," *El Porvenir* (Monterrey), November 23, 1983.

<sup>234</sup> Manolo Ramzi, Twitter post, April 1, 2012, 2:28 p.m., <https://twitter.com/ManRamzi/>

it.”<sup>235</sup> The PAN’s official Twitter also reminded its followers of the incident.<sup>236</sup> These personal memories of de la Madrid indicate a different memory of him than conveyed by Mexican intellectual Enrique Krauze. In his book, *Mexico: Biography of Power*, he portrayed a population largely apathetic to President de la Madrid. He wrote, “De la Madrid could walk in the street and, though he might not be applauded, he was certainly not insulted.”<sup>237</sup> However, the memories associated with the 1986 World Cup indicate something else. They suggest a memory where the people, even though those that afforded a ticket were middle and upper class, displayed their disdain towards him and the other officials.

Did Mexico’s international reputation increase? The *Los Angeles Times* four days into the tournament wrote about “charges of organizational chaos, widespread inefficiency...[criticisms] of working conditions and facilities” from European television and radio officials.<sup>238</sup> Due to the Mexico’s poor handling of television technology FIFA officials such as Joseph Blatter felt disappointed by the organizational efforts. His view reflected the anger felt by many European television networks who threatened to sue Televisa.<sup>239</sup> In addition, Mexico’s *Proceso* found that European journalist provided coverage of the poverty found in Tepito, Neza, and the areas damaged by the 1985 earthquake.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Patricio de la Fuente, Twitter post, December 16, 2013, 10:44 a.m., <https://twitter.com/patoloquasto>.

<sup>236</sup> Partido Acción Nacional, Twitter post, May 31, 2013, 8:50 a.m., <http://twitter.com/AccionNacional>.

<sup>237</sup> Enrique Krauze, *Mexico, Biography of Power*, 769.

<sup>238</sup> Ghrame L. Jones, “World Cup Mexico 86: Analysis: European Broadcast Officials Cite Poor Conditions, Foul-Ups,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 04, 1986.

<sup>239</sup> John Williams, Eric Dunning, and Patrick Murphy,

<sup>240</sup> Mergier Ann Marie, “‘Nos robaron’, es el grito de los consorcios contratantes Truena Europa contra la incapacidad de la televisión mexicana,” *Proceso* (Mexico City), June 9, 1986.

Lastly, did the economy improve because of the 1986 World Cup? Early numbers indicate it did not. As the political cartoon by Romero titled “A Pique” depicts, the 1986 World Cup failed to end the devaluation of the Mexican peso. In addition, one can imagine that if the World Cup would have been a huge economic success that many predicted and used as central to their pro-World Cup arguments that President de la Madrid would have spoken about it robustly and as a symbol of his success as a leader. The actual number of foreign tourist fell well under the predicted number that various people used as leverage to get the Mexican public to support the World Cup. According to a report, the government ended up spending 3,269 million pesos and in return profited 5,247 million pesos. However, the total amount spent on the tournament remains unclear. Guillermo Cañedo in a panel alongside Joao Havelange declared:

Due to habit, I do not talk about financial amounts. The 1970 World Cup and this one of 1986, was organized by private initiative. Its costs, profitability or loses, have never been given for public knowledge and we will not change that. I can say that with the collaboration of many institutions, including the state governments, we were able to organize this competition that again will be a sports success.<sup>241</sup>

Despite that, journalists within a few weeks after the World Cup ended reported about the 3,000 million pesos that the government spent on security because neither FIFA nor the FMF wanted to spend money on it.<sup>242</sup> The profits might not even amount to much at all when considering that at one point 800 pesos equated one U.S. dollar during the tournament.<sup>243</sup>

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<sup>241</sup> Hugo Cheix, “Cañedo: no se darán a conocer el costa y utilidades de esta Copa,” *La Jornada* (Mexico City), May 29, 1986.

<sup>242</sup> “El Gobierno Federal gasto 3 mil millones de pesos en la seguridad durante el Mundial 86,” *El Siglo de Torreón* (Torreón, México), July 11, 1986.

<sup>243</sup> “Mexican Peso Plunges Past 800 per Dollar in Near-Panic Selling,” *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles), June, 09, 1986.

The millions of dollars that people promised fell in the hands of the private companies and FIFA, who by December 1986 announced a record-breaking 40 million dollar earning for the World Cup.<sup>244</sup> For example, Televisa due to its agreement with the Mexican government to create Telemexico earned a huge amount of the television revenue. They earned 75% of an estimated 8-million-dollar contract with foreign television contracts. Also, Emilio Azcarraga, who owned the Estadio Azteca and led Televisa, earned the rental fees for nine games, including the championship game.<sup>245</sup> A few months before in October, FIFA donated 1.3 million dollars for the Mexican Red Cross, whose president rejected any criticisms of the World Cup during economic woes.<sup>246</sup> The failure to profit more from the World Cup can further be seen in de la Madrid's annual speeches in 1986 and 1987 when he rarely mentions the 1986 World Cup. During his 1986 speech, he highlighted the government's program for security for the World Cup and 780 million dollars of profits from tourism that equate the amount from the previous year.<sup>247</sup> In his 1987 speech he referred to 1986 as a year with many economic problems, however, failed to talk about the World Cup as something that helped alleviate them like many proponents of the World Cup argued.<sup>248</sup> Worse, Joseph S. Blatter, FIFA's general secretary, declared that he felt unsatisfied in the way the host nation organized the World Cup a few days before the World Cup ended. He criticized the way the Bank of Mexico set up ticket sales and therefore announced that in the future

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<sup>244</sup> "El Mundial de fútbol 86, tuvo una ganancia récord," *El Siglo de Torreón*, (Torreón, México), December 12, 1986.

<sup>245</sup> William A. Orme Jr., "World Cup Called Financial Winner, *The Washington Post*, June 29, 1986.

<sup>246</sup> "La FIFA hace donativo para damnificados," *El Siglo de Torreón*, (Torreón, México), October 22, 1986.

<sup>247</sup> Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, "Cuarto Informe de Gobierno del presidente Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado," *500 Años de México en documentos*, "September 10, 1986.

<sup>248</sup> Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, "Quinto Informe de Gobierno del presidente Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado," *500 Años de México en documentos*, September 10, 1987.

FIFA must intervene even more in the organization of the World Cup.<sup>249</sup> In addition, the “World Cup of Communications” ended up lacking quality, which resulted in countries around the world complaining about the lack of quality in the television transmission of the games, and eventually threatened FIFA with lawsuits.<sup>250</sup>

However, many questions about the 1986 World Cup remain unresolved. For instance, how much money did the government spend? How did the World Cup shape the cities outside of Mexico City, such as Queretaro, which built a stadium for the tournament? How many people did the government displace from their homes? More importantly, what is the substance of the meetings between President de la Madrid and FIFA officials in November of 1982? These questions can only be answered with the access to more official documents.

What is clear is that the 1986 World Cup remains the tournament where Diego Maradona became a legend. It is clear that most only remember the joy Mexicans felt as they celebrated at the *Angel de la Independencia* until the late hours of the June nights. Also, many remember President Miguel de la Madrid as the president who was booed and publicly shamed like no other president. The 1986 World Cup was a political project and must be understood as that though because President de la Madrid invested half of his tenure to the project and ignored the plight of millions of hungry and homeless Mexicans all for the possibility to earn profits and present a stable Mexico to the world.

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<sup>249</sup> “El secretario de la FIFA critica la organización del campeonato,” *El País* (Madrid), June 27, 1986.

<sup>250</sup> Emilio Pérez de Rozas, “15.000 millones, precio del fracaso de Telemexico,” *El País* (Madrid), June 8, 1996.

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