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Dynamics of Mutual Support and Social Capital Building among Millonarios FC Fan Groups. Solidarity Practices in the Urban Context of Bogotá

**Dinámicas de apoyo mutuo y construcción
de capital social en las hinchadas de
Millonarios FC. Prácticas solidarias en el
contexto urbano de Bogotá**

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the dynamics of mutual support among Millonarios FC fan groups that contribute to the construction and strengthening of social capital within this group. To this end, a qualitative research approach with a case study design was conducted to understand the meanings, practices, and internal relationships of solidarity. The sample consisted of 11 participants selected through purposive sampling, using semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentary analysis. The data were thematically coded, integrating analytical categories such as trust, norms, networks, reciprocity, fan identity, mutual support, and solidarity practices. The results show that the fan base functions as a cohesive community in which practices of economic aid, protection, and emotional support strengthen internal bonds. The main conclusion is that these dynamics generate stable support networks, consolidate collective identity, and shape informal mechanisms of reciprocity, self-management, and economic solidarity that facilitate the collective mobilization of symbolic and material resources.

Keywords: Social capital; Solidarity economy; Mutual support; Supporter identity; Qualitative Research; Economic history.

JEL Codes: Z20, P13, D02, D91, O17

RESUMEN

El artículo tiene como objetivo analizar cómo las dinámicas de apoyo mutuo presentes en las hinchadas de Millonarios FC contribuyen a la construcción y fortalecimiento del capital social dentro del grupo. Para ello, se desarrolló una investigación cualitativa con diseño de estudio de caso, centrada en comprender significados, prácticas y relaciones internas de solidaridad. La muestra estuvo conformada por 11 participantes seleccionados mediante muestreo intencional, y se utilizaron entrevistas semiestructuradas, observación participante y análisis documental. La información fue codificada temáticamente, integrando categorías analíticas como confianza, normas, redes, reciprocidad, identidad de hinchada, apoyo mutuo y prácticas solidarias. Los resultados muestran que

la hinchada funciona como una comunidad cohesionada donde las prácticas de ayuda económica, protección y acompañamiento emocional fortalecen los vínculos internos. La principal conclusión señala que estas dinámicas generan redes estables de apoyo, consolidan la identidad colectiva y configuran mecanismos informales de reciprocidad, autogestión y solidaridad económica que facilitan la movilización colectiva de recursos simbólicos y materiales.

Keywords: Capital social; Economía Solidaria; Apoyo mutuo; Identidad de hinchada; Investigación cualitativa; Historia económica.

Códigos JEL: Z20, P13, D02, D91, O17

Introduction

The supporters' groups of Colombian football, particularly the barras bravas of Millonarios FC, constitute complex settings where collective identities, cultural practices, and specific forms of social organization converge (Maldonado, 2017; Castro, 2013). Although frequently associated with conflict and confrontation, these groups are also spaces where relationships of solidarity, cooperation, and belonging emerge, allowing them to be understood from a broader and less stigmatized perspective (Gómez, 2025; Maz Galindo, 2019). Within these collectives, dynamics of mutual support are set in motion that facilitate group cohesion and contribute to the generation of symbolic, emotional, and material resources that can be interpreted as forms of social capital (Hinojo et al., 2020; Gómez, 2001).

Although the literature on organized football supporters has extensively examined identity, rituals, territoriality, conflict and violence, less attention has been paid to the economic and relational mechanisms through which these groups organize mutual aid, redistribute resources and sustain collective participation. This gap is particularly relevant in the Colombian context, where supporters' groups may simultaneously operate as identity communities and as informal networks of cooperation. Examining these practices makes it possible to move beyond interpretations centered exclusively on conflict and to investigate how trust, reciprocity, collective norms and resource mobilization generate social value within football communities (Poveda, 2004; Roldán Pérez & Luna Villa, 2019).

The study of these dynamics is relevant because it allows for the visualization of social dimensions that often go unnoticed in the traditional analysis of barras bravas (Jackson, 2017). Networks of solidarity, shared rituals, mechanisms of collective aid, and internal norms of reciprocity constitute fundamental elements that organize the life of supporters and directly influence the way these groups relate to each other and to their environment (Gómez, 2025b; Lozano, 2021). The central question guiding this research is: How are the dynamics of mutual support configured and how do they operate within the supporters' groups of Millonarios FC, and in what way do these practices contribute to the construction and strengthening of social capital? This question invites an examination of these processes from a sociological perspective that recognizes their nuances and complexities (Roldán Pérez & Luna Villa, 2019). This analysis makes it possible to understand how dynamics of mutual support not only shape social relationships but also operate as informal mechanisms of resource allocation, transaction cost reduction, and sustained participation in the sports spectacle, thereby broadening the economic understanding of supporters' groups as social units with their own rationalities (Gutierrez, 2020).

From an economic perspective, these practices are also relevant because cooperation among supporters can reduce individual participation costs, distribute risks and facilitate access to resources required for travel, tickets, collective activities and symbolic goods associated with football fandom. Accordingly, the supporters' group can be examined not merely as a cultural collective but also as an informal organizational space in which social relations influence the allocation and mobilization of scarce resources (Letnar & Širok, 2025; Díaz Jiménez et al., 2020).

In this sense, the general objective of this study is to analyze the dynamics of mutual support present in the supporters' groups of Millonarios FC and understand how these practices contribute to the construction and strengthening of social capital within these groups. The aim is to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of football supporter groups, moving beyond simplistic or reductionist views and highlighting the ways in which these communities produce cohesion, a sense of belonging, and support networks that shape their internal functioning and their relationship with the city (Castro Lozano, 2022 ; Laverde et al., 2020)

Theoretical Framework

Social Capital

The concept of social capital has been widely developed in the social sciences to explain how relationships, networks, and shared norms influence the capacity of individuals and groups to act collectively (Bunge, 1997). Although multiple approaches exist, three authors have been fundamental to its development: Pierre Bourdieu, James Coleman, and Robert Putnam.

Pierre Bourdieu (1986) understands social capital as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources to which an individual has access by virtue of belonging to institutionalized social networks. From this perspective, social capital is a strategic resource that strengthens the social position of actors and functions interdependently with other forms of capital, such as economic and cultural capital. For Bourdieu, membership in groups such as football supporters' groups allows for the accumulation of recognition, support, and symbolic benefits that reinforce collective identity (Alaa et al., 2015).

James Coleman (1990), in turn, defines social capital as a variety of entities that emerge from the structure of social relations and facilitate the action of individuals within a network. In this approach, social capital manifests in shared norms, obligations, expectations, and mutual trust. These elements enable people to cooperate and reduce the costs of collective action. In the case of organized groups, such as the *barras bravas*, these internal norms and mechanisms of reciprocity play a significant role in coordination and solidarity (Rincón & Gómez, 2023).

Similarly, Robert Putnam (1993; 2000) highlights social capital as a collective good derived from relations of trust, reciprocity, and civic

participation. Putnam distinguishes between bridging and bonding social capital: the former connects diverse groups, while the latter strengthens the internal bonds of a homogeneous group (Chavarro et al., 2017). In the context of football supporters' groups, bonding social capital generally predominates, fostering cohesion, shared identity, and mutual support within the collective, although it can sometimes generate exclusion towards "others."

Taken together, these approaches provide complementary rather than interchangeable analytical dimensions. Bourdieu makes it possible to examine the resources accessible through group membership; Coleman explains how norms, obligations, and expectations facilitate coordinated action; and Putnam allows for differentiation between dense internal ties and relationships extending beyond the group. Applied to football supporters, this analytical convergence makes it possible to distinguish between the existence of strong internal cohesion and the broader social effects generated by such cohesion. Consequently, high levels of bonding social capital should not automatically be interpreted as socially positive outcomes, since strong internal solidarity may coexist with exclusionary boundaries toward external groups (Zúñiga Ortega, 2025; Bourdieu, 2012).

Consequently, social capital within supporters' groups is expressed through support networks, group loyalty, the construction of trust, and the establishment of internal norms that guide collective behavior. These elements help explain why these groups possess strong cohesion and how they mobilize symbolic and material resources (Maldonado, 2021; Bunge, 1969).

Solidarity Economy

The solidarity economy is understood as a set of economic practices based on the values of cooperation, reciprocity, self-management, and collective well-being, in opposition to the purely market-driven logics of traditional capitalism. Diverse authors have contributed to its conceptualization, highlighting that it is not only an economic

model but also a form of social organization (Gómez, 2025c; Maldonado, 2021).

According to Luis Razeto (1993), one of the leading Latin American scholars in this field, the solidarity economy implies the articulation of economic initiatives that place solidarity at the center as an organizing principle. For Razeto, these initiatives, whether they be cooperatives, aid funds, exchange networks, or community groups, function based on cooperation among individuals who share common needs and objectives. This type of economy produces not solely monetary values but also symbolic and relational ones, such as trust, mutual aid, and social cohesion (Maldonado, 2024; Kovács et al., 2021).

Similarly, Boaventura de Sousa Santos has proposed that the solidarity economy is framed within alternative forms of production and consumption that seek to democratize the creation of value and strengthen collective practices. For this author, the solidarity economy does not seek to completely replace the market, but to create spaces for more horizontal and humane relationships within existing economic systems (Rodríguez, 2025a; 2025b).

The International Labour Organization (ILO) acknowledges that the solidarity economy unfolds through community organizations, associations, cooperatives, and social networks that operate under principles of democratic management and collective benefit (Kalmanovitz, 2019). These experiences foster local development, social inclusion, and community resilience. In contexts such as that of football supporters' groups, the solidarity economy can manifest in practices of mutual aid, collective support funds, organization of community events, exchanges of goods, collaboration on travel, and self-management strategies to sustain the group's activities (Gómez & Velasco, 2024). Although they are not formally recognized as part of the traditional solidarity economy, many of their daily practices reflect the same principles: cooperation, reciprocity, trust, and collective action (Romashkina et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, the presence of cooperation, reciprocity, or mutual aid does not by itself imply that a supporters' group constitutes a solidarity economy organization in a strict institutional sense. In this study, the concept is therefore used as an analytical lens to identify solidarity-oriented economic practices, such as collective funds, reciprocal aid, self-management, and shared financing, rather than to formally classify the supporters' group as a solidarity-economy organization (Gao et al., 2025; Gómez, 2025a)

Relationship between Social Capital and Solidarity Economy

The link between the two concepts is close. Social capital, understood as the capacity of a group to mobilize resources derived from trust, reciprocity, and networks, provides an operational basis for the solidarity economy. Without social capital, solidarity practices could not be sustained. Social capital and solidarity-oriented economic practices are analytically related but conceptually distinct. Networks of trust and reciprocity can facilitate cooperative economic actions, while repeated practices of mutual aid may simultaneously reinforce the density and durability of social networks. Their relationship should therefore be understood as reciprocal and contingent rather than as a necessary causal dependency (Téllez et al., 2022; Gómez et al., 2021).

Within supporters' groups, these dimensions are articulated through:

- Support networks for travel, emergencies, or basic needs.
- Self-managed collective funds.
- Community or neighborhood initiatives led by the group.
- Internal norms of reciprocity and mutual aid.
- The construction of identity and belonging that strengthens cooperation.

From this perspective, the *barras bravas* can be analyzed as spaces where bonding social capital and practices of an informal solidarity economy converge, enabling an explanation of their resilience, cohesion, and capacity for organization (Vesga & García, 2020). These dynamics allow supporters' groups to be interpreted not only as symbolic communities but also as informal economic structures that manage resources, distribute risks, and generate collective financing mechanisms, bringing them closer to alternative forms of non-institutionalized sports economies (Dobson & Goddard, 2001).

Methodology

The present research adopted a qualitative approach, given that its central purpose was to understand in depth the dynamics of mutual support and the construction of social capital within the supporters' groups of Millonarios FC, phenomena that require an interpretive and contextual approach (Devi Prasad, 2019; Bunge, 1997). This approach enabled access to the meanings, values, and internal logics that guide solidarity practices among members of the supporters' group, exploring not only what they do but also how they justify and experience these practices. In keeping with this perspective, a case study design was employed, which enables the intensive analysis of a specific social collective, recognizing the complexity of its internal organization, history, cultural codes, and forms of relationships. The *barras bravas*, understood as communities with strong identities, shared norms, and dense networks of interaction, require a methodological design that allows for the exploration of their daily life from within and in all its diversity (Téllez et al., 2020; Bunge, 1980).

The study population consisted of members of the supporters' groups of Millonarios FC, with special attention to those involved in practices of solidarity and cooperation within the group. The sample, composed of 11 participants, was selected through purposive sampling, which prioritized the inclusion of participants who could offer relevant and varied information on the forms of mutual support and the construction of social capital (Román et al., 2025; Van Eck &

Waltman, 2009). The aim was to integrate heterogeneous voices within the supporters' group: members with long-standing involvement and leadership roles; active members who participate in travel, collective activities, and supporters' rituals; and participants representing specific profiles such as female supporters, young people who recently joined, or members involved in solidarity initiatives. This internal diversity broadens the understanding of the processes under study and facilitates the triangulation of perspectives within the group itself (Rodríguez et al., 2021; Bunge, 1969).

Table 1. Demographic characterization of the interview participants

Participant	Role within the Supporters' Group	Sex
Participant (1)	Leadership roles	Man
Participant (2)	Active member who participates in travel to matches	Man
Participant (3)	Young supporter	Man
Participant (4)	Young supporter	Woman
Participant (5)	Active member who participates in travel to matches	Man
Participant (6)	Young person who recently joined the group	Woman



Participant (7)	Member involved in solidarity initiatives	Man
Participant (8)	Member involved in solidarity initiatives	Man
Participant (9)	Member involved in solidarity initiatives	Man
Participant (10)	Member involved in solidarity initiatives	Woman
Participant (11)	Member involved in solidarity initiatives	Woman

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on fieldwork conducted in Bogotá, Colombia, in 2025.

The primary data collection technique was the semi-structured interview, conducted with the 11 previously selected participants (Paramo, 2008). This technique enabled an in-depth exploration of experiences, perceptions, and meanings while offering the necessary flexibility to explore emerging themes during the dialogue (Barbosa et al., 2020). The interviews, which lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, addressed aspects such as concrete experiences of mutual support, informal mechanisms of internal organization, the presence of norms of reciprocity, perceptions of trust within the groups, and the ways in which practices that can be interpreted as expressions of a solidarity economy are articulated (Gómez, 2024b). For this purpose, an interview guide was developed based on analytical categories derived from the theoretical framework, including social

capital, trust, norms, networks, reciprocity, mutual support, supporter identity, cohesion, and material and symbolic solidarity practices (Barreto & Gómez 2025; Páramo, 2008).

Complementarily, participant, and non-participant observation was conducted in different spaces of interaction typical of the supporters' group, such as organizational meetings, travel to matches, community activities, or moments of football-related ritual. Observation contributed to recording non-verbal dynamics and bodily practices that interviews might not capture completely, such as gestures of care, spontaneously assumed roles, forms of group organization, and micro-interactions that reveal patterns of solidarity and cohesion (Van Dijk, 2015). The observations were recorded in a detailed field diary, which included descriptions, relevant dialogues, and initial analytical interpretations, allowing for the construction of rich and contextualized material that complements the interview corpus (Camacho et al., 2023).

Likewise, a documentary analysis of materials produced by the supporters' group itself was conducted, such as social media publications, communiqués, internal regulations, songs, chants, and graphic pieces. These documents helped identify collective discourses on solidarity, unity, loyalty, reciprocity, and belonging, as well as an understand how mutual support practices are legitimized and transmitted within the supporters' culture. The triangulation of interviews, observations and documentary sources strengthened the analytical rigor of the study by contrasting participants' accounts, observed practices and the symbolic representations communicated by the supporters' group (Gómez, 2024c; Castro et al., 2017).

The analysis of the information involved a thematic coding process that combined predefined categories, such as social capital, trust, networks, mutual support, norms, reciprocity, and solidarity economy, with emergent categories that arose directly from the data and reflected the language, experiences, and interpretations of the supporters. The first step involved the complete transcription of the interviews and the systematization of the field diaries and documents. Subsequently, successive readings were conducted to identify recurrent themes and patterns of meaning (Devi Prasad,

2019). Depending on the available resources, the coding and organization of the qualitative corpus were conducted using Atlas.ti which facilitated category management, code co-occurrence analysis, and the construction of semantic relationships. This process enabled the organization of categories, the construction of networks of meanings, and the generation of analysis matrices that facilitated comparison among the different participants and techniques used (Aguilera et al., 2020; Maldonado, 2005). To ensure the quality and rigor of the study, criteria specific to qualitative research were considered. Credibility was strengthened through the triangulation of sources, techniques, and perspectives within the group. Transferability was supported through detailed descriptions of the supporters' context and the observed dynamics, allowing other researchers to understand the conditions under which the findings were generated. Dependability was maintained through a transparent and detailed description of each phase of the methodological process, making it possible to trace the logic of the study. Finally, confirmability was supported by maintaining records, analytical notes, and procedures that document the distinction between the researcher's data and interpretations (López et al., 2025; Maldonado, 2009).

Regarding ethical considerations, voluntary participation was ensured through an informed consent process in which the research objectives, the use of the information, and the participants' right to withdraw at any time were explained. Anonymity was guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms for both the participants and the supporters' group, when considered necessary, especially given the sensitive context in which some supporter groups are situated. Particular care was taken to avoid stigmatizing discourses that could put participants at risk, while the language and analysis were oriented toward a respectful understanding of the social and solidarity dynamics that characterize these collectives (Gómez, 2024; Páramo, 2008).

RESULTS

The results of the study indicate that the supporters' groups of Millonarios FC constitute highly cohesive social spaces where mutual support and the construction of social capital are expressed in multiple dimensions of the supporters' lives. Based on the interviews conducted with the 11 participants, clear patterns emerged in terms of internal organization, solidarity practices, trust, reciprocity, and mechanisms of economic self-management that contribute to strengthening collective identity and group cohesion (Letnar & Širok, 2025; Ibagón & Gómez, 2018).

Internal Organization and Social Relations

The participants described an internal organization marked by defined roles, recognized forms of leadership, and informal regulatory mechanisms. Although not all members hold visible positions, most recognize the presence of natural leaders and "veterans" who guide internal dynamics and ensure compliance with implicit norms (Villca & Quispe, 2025). "No one is in charge on their own here, but we all know who organizes things and who we need to listen to (Participant 3, translated by the authors).

Pre-match meetings, neighborhood gatherings, and collective travel function spaces for coordination spaces. The participants indicated that these encounters foster cohesion and allow new members to understand the group's rules: mutual respect, loyalty, and unconditional support (Valadez et al., 2024). "When you first join, the first thing they explain is that we all look out for one another here. If you come here, it is because you become part of the community" (Participant 7, translated by the authors).

Mutual Support Practices

Experiences of mutual support were consistently present in the participants' accounts. Members described different forms of aid, ranging from financial contributions for travel or tickets to emotional support in difficult personal situations (Jiménez et al., 2024). In several cases, the participants highlighted that the group's solidarity is activated especially during trips or group travel. "If someone runs out of money or things go wrong, we all pitch in, but no one gets left behind. Ever" (Participant 1, author's translation).

Support also emerges in situations of risk, particularly in contexts of confrontation or external tensions: "When there is a problem with another supporters' group or with the police, you know that everyone will stand up for you. That gives a lot of peace of mind" (Participant 5, author's translation). Similarly, several participants pointed out that emotional support is also relevant, though less visible: "Sometimes you come here feeling bad because of things going on at home, and there is always someone who asks how you are doing and listens to you. That is also support" (Participant 10, author's translation).

Trust, Internal Norms, and Reciprocity

Trust appears as a central element in the construction of social capital within the supporters' group. Most participants stated that belonging to the group is sustained by the confidence that other members will act in accordance with implicit norms of loyalty and reciprocity (Zúñiga Ortega, 2025). "Everything works here because we trust one another. If you break your word, no one wants to see you anymore" (Participant 4, author's translation)..

Internal norms include behaviors such as not abandoning a companion, respecting the group leader, participating in collective

activities, and maintaining solidarity. Although there are no formal sanctions, social mechanisms of correction or temporary exclusion exist for those who break the rules (Martínez et al., 2024). "The supporters' group is like a family: if you make a mistake, they tell you; if you keep making mistakes, they simply stop taking you into account" (Participant 8, author's translation). Reciprocity—helping others and then receiving help in return—is a principle recognized by all: "You knowing help that one day you may also need something" (Participant 2, author's translation).

Solidarity Practices, Collective Financing and Self-Management

The research revealed the existence of dynamics that function as forms of an informal solidarity economy and are fundamental to sustaining participation in supporters' activities (Zamora Torres et al., 2023). The following practices were identified:

- Collections to finance trips ("vacas").
- Common funds to purchase instruments, banners, or flags.
- Self-management activities (raffles, sale of jerseys or food).
- Direct support for members in emergency situations.

"We are not rich, but together we make things happen. If we have to go out and sell empanadas to buy the drums, we do it" (Participant 9, author's translation). Taken together, the empirical evidence shows recurrent patterns of mutual aid, reciprocity, trust, collective financing, and self-management among the participants, alongside a strong perception of belonging and intra-group protection (Gómez et al., 2023).

Contribution to Cohesion and Supporter Identity

The findings show that mutual support and solidarity practices not only respond to material needs but also play a symbolic role in the construction of supporter identity and cohesion. The participants

repeatedly expressed that the supporters' group is an extension of the family and a space for recognition (Zúñiga Ortega, 2025). "The supporters' group is my second family. Here I found people who support me more than they do at home" (Participant 6, author's translation). "What unites us is not just Millonarios. It is knowing that we are not alone" (Participant 11, author's translation).

Internal solidarity, trust, and collective organization strengthen a sense of community that is reproduced in every match, every trip, and every supporters' activity, consolidating the group's social capital and its capacity to remain united in the face of adverse contexts (Gao et al., 2025).

The data show that the supporters' groups of Millonarios FC are settings where mutual support, reciprocity, trust, and the solidarity economy come together to strengthen internal social capital. These practices allow members to experience a strong sense of community, belonging, and protection, making the supporters' group as a space of sociability and collective support (Martínez et al., 2024; Valencia & Cuartas, 2020).

Discussion

The results of this study show that the supporters' groups of Millonarios FC are settings where dynamics of mutual support and forms of social capital construction manifest themselves strongly. These findings closely align with the theoretical propositions of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam, who agree that social capital is based on the existence of networks, norms, and relations of trust that facilitate collective action (Jackson, 2017; Bourdieu, 1986). In this sense, the supporters' group appears as a highly cohesive space where reciprocity, constant mutual aid, and loyalty function as social resources that help sustain the collective beyond its sporting character. The evidence provided by the participants—who state that "no one is left behind" or that "there is always someone who responds"—confirms the density of these networks and the strength

of the solidarity bonds that characterize the group (Gómez et al., 2023; Roldán Pérez & Luna Villa, 2019).

From Bourdieu's perspective (1986), social capital is understood as a resource accumulated through belonging to a group, which offers symbolic and material benefits to its members. The results suggest that belonging to the supporters' group provides access to networks of emotional, economic, and protective support that the participants consider fundamental in their daily lives (Letnar & Širok, 2025; Malagón et al., 2024). Thus, when supporters affirm that the supporters' group is their "second family" or that within the group "there is more support than at home," it confirms that the supporters' group functions as a space for the accumulation and mobilization of social capital that extends beyond the realm of football. This coincides with Bourdieu's idea that social groups generate obligations and lasting bonds that can be transformed into resources in times of need (Gao et al., 2025; Castro Lozano, 2022).

Beyond validating the classical postulates of social capital, the findings allow these dynamics to be interpreted as forms of collective economy that reduce individual vulnerability, optimize access to scarce resources, and generate forms of cooperation that operate according to logics different from those of the formal market, thus configuring a bottom-up football economy (Morrow, 1999). On the other hand, Coleman's (1990) propositions about shared norms and reciprocity become especially visible in the practices described by the participants. The supporters' group operates under implicit rules that coordinate action, regulate behavior, and guarantee that members act according to expectations of solidarity (Malagón et al., 2022). These norms are expressed in the obligation not to abandon any member, the fulfillment of collective agreements, and a sustained willingness to provide help. The existence of informal sanctions, such as temporary exclusion from the group or loss of trust, also aligns with Coleman's notions about the regulatory role of norms in cohesive networks (Villca & Quispe, 2025; Galindo, 2019). However, these forms of social capital may also generate dynamics of closure and exclusion, reinforcing symbolic boundaries between insiders and outsiders, which raises tensions between internal cohesion and social fragmentation in the urban context.

In relation to Putnam (2000), who differentiates between bonding social capital (strong internal ties) and bridging social capital (connections to other groups), the results show that bonding social capital predominates in the supporters' group. This type of social capital is characterized by generating intense, closed relationships based on shared identities, such as love for the team. Based on statements from the participants, such as "here everyone stands up for you" or "we are a blue family," the supporters' group presents itself as a cohesive group that strengthens the sense of belonging and reinforces internal bonds. Although Putnam has pointed out that this type of social capital can be potentially exclusive towards "others," in this context it fulfills a protective and welfare function for the members of the collective (Valadez et al., 2024; Grodecki, 2019).

The predominance of bonding social capital identified in the Millonarios FC case is consistent with international research on organized football supporters. Grodecki (2019), for example, shows that supporter networks may generate dense structures of solidarity and collective action that extend beyond match attendance. The present findings converge with this perspective, as participants describe reciprocal protection, economic cooperation, and emotionally significant relationships. However, the Millonarios FC case adds an economic dimension to this discussion by showing that solidarity networks are also mobilized to finance travel, acquire collective goods and respond to individual emergencies. Thus, the contribution of the case lies in confirming the existence of social capital among supporters and demonstrating how such capital may be translated into concrete mechanisms of resource mobilization and collective risk-sharing (Gutierrez, 2020; Maz Galindo, 2019).

Regarding the solidarity economy, the findings show that within the supporters' group, practices of self-management and resource redistribution have developed that align with the propositions of Razeto and the Latin American tradition of the solidarity economy. Activities such as collective fundraising ("vacas"), holding raffles or sales to finance instruments, and providing economic support in emergencies constitute organized forms of cooperation that help sustain participation in the group. When participants state that

"among all of us we make things happen" or that "if we have to go out and sell to buy drums, we do it," they demonstrate how the supporters' group operates as a network of exchange and solidarity based on community values, beyond individualistic market logic (Jiménez et al., 2024; Galindo, 2019).

From the perspective of football economics, these findings also suggest that supporters should not be understood exclusively as consumers of the sporting spectacle. Within the group analyzed, supporters collectively generate resources, distribute costs, organize mobility, and finance symbolic goods required for sustained participation. Such practices reveal a meso-level economic structure operating beneath the formal football market: while clubs and professional competitions organize the commercial supply of football, supporter networks partially address the economic conditions of participation through informal cooperation and self-management. This broadens the economic analysis of football by incorporating forms of value production and resource allocation that are not captured by ticket revenues, broadcasting rights, or club finances (Castro Lozano, 2022; Alaa et al., 2015)

These findings also have implications for the design of public interventions involving organized football supporters. Rather than approaching these groups exclusively through security and risk-control frameworks, the evidence suggests that public policy may also recognize their internal capacities for self-organization, mutual aid, and collective action. Programs related to youth participation, coexistence, community development, and sport for social inclusion could potentially build on these existing networks. Nevertheless, such an application requires caution: the strong bonding social capital identified in this study may simultaneously reinforce boundaries toward external groups, suggesting that public interventions should seek to transform strong intra-group solidarity into bridging relationships with neighborhoods, institutions and other supporter communities (Galindo, 2019; Dobson & Goddard, 2001).

These results also help explain how mutual support practices contribute to strengthening supporter identity. The presence of

rituals, collective trips, and dynamics of mutual protection foster a sense of belonging that reinforces the group's social capital (Zúñiga Ortega, 2025; Hodges, 2016). This finding is consistent with the proposition that supporters' groups are not only sporting spaces but emotionally significant communities that fulfill symbolic, affective, and social functions for their members (Poveda, 2004). In this way, the construction of supporter identity is shaped by the social capital generated within the supporters' group, as reflected in statements such as "here I found people who support me more than at home."

Conclusions

The findings of this research show that the supporters' groups of Millonarios FC constitute social spaces where mutual support, solidarity, and relations of trust are configured as central elements in the construction and strengthening of social capital. Throughout the study, it became clear that members share not only a sporting identity but also affective, community, and organizational bonds that generate cohesion and a sense of belonging.

First, it is evident that the internal organization of the supporters' group is structured by informal roles, implicit norms, and forms of leadership that guide collective life. These structures enable the coordination of activities and ensure that members understand the group's expectations, especially in terms of loyalty, respect, and commitment. The existence of unwritten rules, as well as social sanctions for those who transgress them, confirms that the supporters' group functions as a regulated space oriented towards cooperation.

Second, the dynamics of mutual support constitute one of the most visible pillars of the internal functioning of the supporters' group. The diverse forms of economic, emotional, logistical, and protective support strengthen the bonds between members and generate stable networks of solidarity. The participants' accounts, in which they state that "no one is left behind" or that "there is always

someone who responds," demonstrate that the supporters' group plays a significant role as a source of collective support.

Likewise, the findings indicate that trust and reciprocity are fundamental dimensions of the social capital present in the supporters' group. These relations of trust are built from constant interaction, mutual recognition, and compliance with internal norms. In turn, reciprocity is understood as a continuous exchange of favors, support, and care that reinforces the stability of the networks and the continued involvement of members in the group.

A fourth finding concerns the existence of solidarity-oriented economic practices based on collective financing, reciprocal aid and self-management. Collections, common funds, raffles and other resource-mobilization mechanisms help make participation possible for members with heterogeneous economic capacities. Rather than demonstrating that the supporters' group constitutes a solidarity-economy organization in the institutional sense, these practices reveal an informal economic infrastructure sustained by trust and reciprocity. This distinction constitutes one of the main conceptual contributions of the study, since it connects social capital with the economic mechanisms through which football participation is collectively sustained.

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