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Home Field Advantage: Reconceptualizing the Value of Professional Sports

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Abstract (EN)

Professional sports demand significant financial resources and are often conceptualized based on their economic potential. In the United States, entrepreneurial urban governance schemes increasingly invest public resources in sports infrastructure to boost city image and attract outside investment. Meanwhile, the financialization of European leagues, driven by growing private and foreign investment, has disrupted the connection between many teams and their urban locale. Prevailing research has focused almost exclusively on the external economic impact of professional sports teams, often overlooking the internal “intangible” benefits that they provide to the host community. This study addresses this research gap by evaluating how residents and key stakeholders perceive the emotional and social effects of hosting a professional team. A mixed-methods approach combining quantitative psychic income surveys and semi-structured key stakeholder interviews was employed to gather resident perspectives on their local teams in two distinct contexts: the Packers in Green Bay, Wisconsin, USA (American Football), and Rayo Vallecano in Vallecas, Madrid, Spain (Soccer). In both cases, residents identified meaningful intangible effects tied to hosting a professional team, which suggests a need to reconceptualize professional sports teams not merely as economic goods, but rather as cultural institutions that generate public value without necessarily expecting financial return. This reframing helps provide a more comprehensive understanding of the value that professional sports bring to their communities while highlighting the need for funding and governance approaches that account for the broader roles these teams play.

Keywords: Professional Sports, Urban Entrepreneurialism, Psychic Income, Cultural Institution

Abstract (DE)

Profisport erfordert erhebliche finanzielle Ressourcen und wird häufig im Hinblick auf sein wirtschaftliches Potenzial konzipiert und beurteilt. In den Vereinigten Staaten investieren Akteure unternehmerischer urbaner Governance zunehmend öffentliche Mittel in Sportinfrastrukturen, um das Stadtimage zu stärken und externe Investitionen anzuziehen. Gleichzeitig hat die Finanzialisierung europäischer Sportligen – angetrieben durch wachsende private und ausländische Investitionen – die Verbindung vieler Mannschaften zu ihrem urbanen Umfeld geschwächt. Die bisherige Forschung konzentriert sich fast ausschließlich auf die externen wirtschaftlichen Auswirkungen von Profisportteams und vernachlässigt dabei häufig die lokalen, „immateriellen“ Vorteile, die sie für die Gastbergemeinschaft bieten. Diese Studie schließt diese Forschungslücke, indem sie untersucht, wie Bewohner*innen und zentrale Akteur*innen die emotionalen und sozialen Effekte der Austragung eines Profiteams wahrnehmen. Ein Mixed-Methods-Ansatz, der quantitative „Psychic Income“-Umfragen mit halbstrukturierten Interviews kombiniert, wurde genutzt, um Perspektiven von Anwohner*innen auf ihre lokalen Teams in zwei unterschiedlichen Kontexten zu erfassen: die Packers in Green Bay, Wisconsin (USA) und Rayo Vallecano in Vallecas, Madrid (Spanien). In beiden Fällen benannten die Befragten bedeutende immaterielle Effekte, die mit der Präsenz eines Profiteams verbunden sind, was auf die Notwendigkeit hinweist, Profiteams nicht nur als wirtschaftliche Güter, sondern als kulturelle Institutionen zu verstehen, die öffentlichen Mehrwert erzeugen, ohne zwangsläufig finanzielle Renditen zu erwarten. Diese Neubewertung ermöglicht ein umfassenderes Verständnis der Bedeutung, die Profisportteams für ihre Gemeinden bieten, und unterstreicht die Notwendigkeit von Finanzierungs- und Governance-Modellen, die die sozialen Funktionen dieser Teams berücksichtigen.

Schlagwörter: Profisport, Urban Entrepreneurialism, Psychic Income, kulturelle Institution

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“People who work together will win, whether it be against complex football defenses or the problems of modern society.”

—Vince Lombardi

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Introduction

Professional sports teams have a complex and differentially understood role in their host communities. Local teams, which contribute to a city's identity and pride, can also act as movable pawns for owners and city officials in an era of "franchise flight." The increasing commercialization of high-level sports is materially reflected in stadium naming rights, as well as jersey branding and sponsorships. Globalizing leagues have made foreign club ownership even more common, and stadiums are increasingly tapping into public funds for construction and expansion.

These contemporary trends have inspired much academic investigation into the economic effects of hosting a professional team. Creating favorable conditions for sports through public-private stadium partnerships has been an entrepreneurial urban governance strategy since the 1970s (Baade, 2003; Coates & Humphreys, 2008; Humphreys, 2019), despite decades of research challenging the productivity of such infrastructure (Bradbury et al., 2022). Other stadium supporters point to "intangible" or "spillover" benefits of hosting a professional team, such as improved community visibility and city reputation. These effects, however, are also contentious because they still focus on attracting outside capital (Crompton, 2004), and may play a role in creating class and neighborhood divisions (J. M. Smith & Ingham, 2003).

Ironically, what is missing from this body of literature is an investigation of internal perspectives in "major league cities," separate from concerns of economic return, regarding the broader effects of hosting a professional sports team. This study contributes to the growing body of literature at the intersection of sports and urban studies by evaluating the perceptions of residents and key stakeholders in Green Bay, Wisconsin, USA, and Vallecas, Madrid, Spain. The National Football League's Green Bay Packers are the only fan-owned franchise in the United States, and it is said that the team will never leave the city. In Madrid, neighbors in Vallecas are fighting to keep *La Liga*'s Rayo Vallecano soccer club local. The time, capital, and energy invested by these populations to keep their team is, arguably, evidence of residents benefiting from its presence. This study, therefore, asks and addresses the research question:

How do residents and key stakeholders perceive the emotional and social effects of hosting a professional team in their community?

The following thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter One reviews relevant literature in sports and urban studies research through economic, social, and emotional lenses. Chapter Two presents the conceptual framework guiding the analysis, which is further supported by the methodology described in Chapter Three. Chapter Four presents the results from both cases, followed by a reconceptualization of professional sports in Chapter Five's discussion. Finally, Chapter Six reflects on the study's limitations, proposes directions for future research, and offers concluding remarks.

1: Literature Review

1.1: Urban Entrepreneurialism

Cities around the world, especially in a Western context, have increasingly adopted business-minded approaches to urban governance in response to new forms of postmodern capitalist accumulation (Hollands, 2023; Pike & Pollard, 2010; Swyngedouw, 1989). Neoliberal policies and globalized financial markets have given rise to what many scholars refer to as a “new urban politics” based on local economic development and a new “hypermobility of capital” (Cox, 1993, p. 435). This trend has “ushered in a new academic vocabulary, of cities as ‘growth machines’, of city advertising as ‘place marketing’ and of redevelopment as ‘revitalization’” (T. Hall & Hubbard, 1996, p. 153). Harvey (1989), therefore, called contemporary urbanization patterns “entrepreneurial,” in stark contrast to pre-1970s managerial practices.

To understand urban entrepreneurial strategies, one must first identify the key players and their objectives in today’s cities. Harvey (1989) identified a range of actors outside of city government that influence development. He described a governance process based on conflictual “coalition politics” and “class alliance formation” (p. 6). Governance, as an object of research, refers to game-like interactions between public and private members within a network that is relatively autonomous from state control (Rhodes, 2007). Pierre (1999), similarly, emphasized the role of *institutions*, both public and private, in contemporary urban politics. Governance, here, refers to “the process through which local authorities, in concert with private interests, seek to enhance collective goals” (p. 374). The dominant values and goals of stakeholders in each city thus inform the overall model of urban governance: “For instance, urban governance dominated by private business interests will generate urban policies that differ from those resulting from urban governance in which other constituencies play a dominating role” (Pierre, 1999, p. 375).

Pierre (1999) outlined four ideal types of urban governance: corporatist, welfare, managerial, and progrowth. The traditional role of city government is generally considered to be managerial, focusing on democratic planning, participation, and the distribution of goods to residents (K. A. Owen, 2002). Here, the objectives of “enhancing the efficiency of public service production and delivery, as well as providing the customers of these services with genuine choice of products and providers” are a top priority (Pierre, 1999, p. 380). However, Harvey (1989) noted that the 1970s backdrop of unemployment, deindustrialization, and “fiscal austerity at both the national and local levels” set the stage for individuals, institutions, and actors within urban governance systems to increasingly adopt business attitudes to be economically competitive and globally distinguished, thereby shifting governance schemes to one more closely aligned with progrowth agendas (p. 5).

Prominent actors within a “growth machine” framework might include “the local chamber of commerce, some cabal of local financiers, industrialists and merchants, or some roundtable business leaders and real estate and property developers,” which leaves “educational and religious institutions, different arms of government, local labour organizations, as well as political parties, social movements, and the local state apparatuses” relatively powerless to achieve their goals (Harvey, 1989, pp. 6–7). Central to a city’s long-term economic growth strategy is the blurring of public and private sectors (Cox & Mair, 1988; Harvey, 1989; Peck, 1995; A. Wood, 1998), as well as the adoption of “innovative processes of place promotion, marketing, and branding” as cities compete for capital in a globalizing world (Phelps & Miao, 2020). In practice, this takes the form of place branding and the conversion of cities into “cultural and consumer centres” through speculative public-private partnerships to further attract capital, tourism, and business, of which sports investment is not uncommon (Harvey, 1989, p. 13).

1.1.1: Entrepreneurialism in Europe?:

Hermann (2007) wrote, “A popular belief held by many Europeans is that Europe is an exception. The exceptional character is often said to be most evident in the stronger European commitment to social rights and equality” (p. 61). He continued, “European Union (EU) member states have their own distinctive (welfare) state traditions... European citizens, moreover, may still have greater expectations of the state and the social system than people in other parts of the world” (p. 61). However, despite these perceptions, neoliberal EU integration policies have trumped member state social and economic traditions, which have eroded European distinctiveness, especially when compared to the United States (Hermann, 2007).

To avoid reducing Europe to the sum of its parts, it is worth exploring economic patterns and differences across the continent. Mayer (2016) explored Europe’s “two-speed” policy for implementing neoliberal governance: “core countries” like France, Germany, and Britain adopted austerity policies around the same time as the United States, as early as the 1970s. Other peripheral nations had austerity forced upon them “much later by the EU, IMF, and the German government, in sudden and draconian ways, inflicting severe hardship on broad sectors of society” (p. 61).

Because market-based solutions to regulatory problems have been differentially adopted across the continent, Mayer (2016) emphasized that neoliberalization in European cities is context-specific because it depends on “local institutional and political legacies and struggles,” and often takes the form of “messy hybrids” (p. 61). She identified three distinct geographical regions in Europe affected by entrepreneurial governance (p. 63):

1. Northern European countries implemented austerity measures more slowly and less visibly. This region did not need to frame public service cuts as a response to the EU crisis. Levels of crisis consciousness and resistance were lower than in other regions.
2. Europe’s southern periphery faced the brunt of EU crisis policies as austerity governance was implemented swiftly and harshly. This led to strikes and civil disobedience throughout the region.
3. Central and Eastern Europe experienced a rapid and dramatic change from socialist regimes, leaving behind “hyper visions of neoliberal urbanism.” The legacy is a suspicion toward collective organizing and a greater culture of individualism.

One recent EU policy emphasizes both the entrepreneurial stance of European institutions and the context-sensitivity of member states. Anguelov et al. (2018) traced the adoption of the European Union’s Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas (JESSICA) initiative. JESSICA is “a policy program that could be aligned with urban entrepreneurialism,” and it aims to meet United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by “deploying financial risk assessment as a key decision-making tool for funding urban development projects, relying on the expertise of financial institutions to maximize returns across a portfolio of risky intra-urban investments” (p. 574). This top-down initiative puts the role of urbanization into the hands of financiers, “in the belief that these skills translate from picking stocks to picking urban development projects” (p. 583).

The Lozenets educational and sports complex in Sofia, Bulgaria, was one project that received JESSICA aid. This public-private partnership provided funding for “an elite private institution” whose annual cost was 2000 euros higher than the average per capita GDP in the city. The incompatibility of the funding scheme and the local public schooling system in Sofia led authors to conclude that the school’s “contribution to helping deprived youth, or to sustainable and inclusive growth more broadly, is much less than it seems” (p. 587) and the overall assertion that “the EU context has generalized a financialization of urban governance that differs in form, and in inter-scalar embeddedness, from that prevalent in the United States” (p. 589)

Nevertheless, Mayer (2016) articulated four dominant entrepreneurial policies that took hold across Europe after the 2008 financial crash (pp. 65-69):

1. Festivalization, urban spectacles, and signature events become primary measures in a “growth first” political strategy. Cities with financial struggles position themselves as “creative cities” to upgrade their cultural brand and attract tourists/investment.
2. Public infrastructure and services, such as transportation and social housing, are becoming increasingly privatized and exposed to market forces. Traditional European public institutions such as healthcare, childcare, schools, and universities face mounting economic pressures and wage stagnation as city budgets tighten.
3. Programs combating social polarization, such as neighborhood mix or revitalization efforts, have been replaced by displacement policies and initiatives focusing on select marginalized groups. Social housing and post-industrial areas are developed and upgraded, prompting a gradual shift in residents.
4. Entrepreneurial governance extends to more policy areas, leading to the development of specific areas in the city or the bidding for “mega-events such as the Olympics, World Cups, International Building Exhibits, or Garden Shows.” International investors and global developers have a greater role in shaping the urban environment than local actors.

1.1.2: Sports as Entrepreneurial Tools

Urban entrepreneurialism favors mega-events for their “key role in urban and regional tourism marketing and promotion as well as wider urban and regional development strategies” (C. M. Hall, 2006, p. 59). Traditionally global-focused programs such as World Fairs and international exhibitions, however, do not have the economic or cultural impact that they used to, which has led to the growth of sports events as tools for place promotion and urban development (C. M. Hall, 2006, p. 60).

A notable trend in the late 20th century that parallels the broader shift from managerial to entrepreneurial governance was the construction and renovation of sports infrastructure in cities hosting professional teams. Baade (2003) pointed out the “unprecedented” number of stadiums built in the United States from 1987 to 2003—during this time, about 80 percent of all professional sports venues were either renovated or replaced. (p. 588). From 1970 to 2021, 129 new or replacement stadiums opened in the United States and Canada, for a total of \$52.44 billion across the four major leagues, namely the National Football League (NFL), National Basketball Association (NBA), Major League Baseball (MLB), and the National Hockey League (NHL) (Humphreys, 2019, p. 264).

Paramio et al. (2008) outlined a similar “postmodern” shift that occurred in European stadium design. Facilities built from the 1990s onward are characterized by “the symbiosis between innovative design and commercial development” (p. 528). This increasingly meant that in European soccer leagues, “the role of architects has shifted towards a more entrepreneurial stance where architects...have to address one of the more demanding design challenges which focuses on creating useful and economically sustainable life” (p. 528). To justify the immense spending on stadium relocations and upgrades, postmodern European stadiums are increasingly extending their operations outside of the traditional soccer calendar and introducing new technology such as retractable roofs, color-changing façades, removable playing surfaces, and audiovisual innovations. In a review of the English Premier League, one of Europe’s “Big Five” soccer associations, Giulianotti (2011) found that “Since 1990, of the 20 largest English stadia, eight were newly built in 1995 or afterwards and the others underwent major redevelopment” (p. 3302).

The motivations for these projects vary in each case, but Gratton et al. (2005) argued that this stadium boom was largely focused on encouraging increased tourism, promoting investment in the host community, and rebranding the city’s outward image. Post-industrial cities

often use sports as an urban revitalization tool to both increase their national reputation and provide new platforms for investment and economic growth (Friedman et al., 2004; Mason, 2012; A. Smith, 2005). Indianapolis, Indiana, a United States Midwest capital city with a 2025 population just shy of 900,000, was one of the first cities to intentionally reshape its image through sports (Austrian & Rosentraub, 2002; Baade, 1996; Rosentraub, 1999). Rosentraub et al. (1994) studied Indianapolis following its 1977 formal sports strategy publication. The city, in the 1970s, is described as having “a declining job base, a deteriorating downtown core, and a very limited national image” (Rosentraub et al., 1994, p. 224). Austrian and Rosentraub (2002) described sports in Indianapolis as “a sort of glue holding a group of individuals, institutions, and corporations committed to improving downtown Indianapolis together” (p. 551).

The city’s 18-year downtown development plan allocated an unprecedented 12% of total capital investment to sports facilities and hotels to accommodate the expected tourism increase. Including related infrastructure such as Circle Center Mall and Union Station, direct and indirect sports-related investment comprised 27% of total downtown redevelopment spending (Rosentraub et al., 1994, p. 225). The plan also included financial support to attract amateur sports governing bodies. By 1989, seven national organizations had relocated their headquarters to Indianapolis, including the Amateur Athletic Union and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Indianapolis’s reputation as the amateur sports capital of the world was not accidental; rather, it reflects decades of sustained investment by a broad coalition of stakeholders.

Around this time, North American stadiums also began to return from the suburbs to city centers. Barghchi (2009) described how the construction of the Toronto Skydome (now Rogers Center), the home of the Blue Jays, reversed the trend of building stadiums in the urban periphery where land costs are cheaper, private car access is easier, and raucous fans would cause less disturbance (p. 188). This 1989 stadium development sparked “a massive return of sports stadia to the city center” near the turn of the century, both in the United States and abroad (p. 188). The intense capital investment into stadiums and supporting infrastructure to keep and attract professional sports teams at the end of the 20th century coincides exactly with a fundamental shift in the goals of cities from managerial governance schemes to more entrepreneurial ones.

1.1.3: Sports and Place Branding

One key characteristic of urban entrepreneurialism is the implication of “some level of inter-urban competition,” which manifests in several ways (Harvey, 1989, p. 10). Consumer attractions, which Harvey (1989) described as “the organization of urban spectacles on a temporary or permanent basis,” have risen in popularity as a means of improving a city’s competitive position (p. 9). In his essay, Harvey documents how Baltimore enhanced its city image through several intentional development projects.

The specific transition from urban managerialism to urban entrepreneurialism in Baltimore can be traced back to a 1978 referendum approving the use of city land to construct the privately owned Harborplace. This development catalyzed further construction of retail, entertainment, and cultural centers throughout the city, which “put Baltimore on the map in a new way, earned the city the title of ‘renaissance city’ and put it on the front cover of Time Magazine” (Harvey, 1989, p. 14). Another component of this entrepreneurial governance strategy was the construction of a new stadium to reclaim an NFL team that Indianapolis had lured away with its sports-for-development plan. This proposal eventually materialized as M&T Bank Stadium, which has hosted the Baltimore Ravens since 1998.

Decision-makers in urban governance regimes frequently use sports to promote a city’s image (Herstein & Berger, 2013). Sports teams, often bearing their host city’s name or icon, become significant symbols of a city’s local, national, and international identity. Baltimore’s Ravens, for instance, reference Baltimore native Edgar Allan Poe’s famous narrative poem.

Other cities, like Eugene, Oregon, integrate sports into their cultural identity and heritage. Eugene boasts titles such as “Track Town USA” and “The Running Capital of the World.” This city, with fewer than 200,000 residents, established an international reputation and has hosted both the Track and Field World Championships and Olympic Trials by deliberately cultivating an urban identity centered on track and field.

Howard-Grenville et al. (2013) identified two primary processes that forged Eugene’s international reputation: “(1) community engagement in the sport as reflected in the relational system that connected the city’s elites, residents, fans, and athletes,” and “(2) a sustained pattern of events that cultivated a unique track and field experience in Eugene and elicited a spirited emotional response from residents, fans, and athletes” (p. 120). Multiple stakeholders contributed to Eugene’s track and field reputation, and Dubinsky (2024) used the city as a case study to develop a multiscale model for city branding through sport (see Table 1).

Branding Level	Framework	Eugene Model
Local	• Create a collective identity around sport • Highlight local sporting legends and heritage (Bale, 2000; J. Wood, 2005)	• Yearly marathons, half-marathons, and 5k/10k races to allow for running access at all levels • TrackTown Tuesday connects residents and athletes • Hayward Field named after University of Oregon coach Bill Hayward • Diamond League “Prefontaine Classic” named after Oregon’s Steve Prefontaine
Regional	• Play on regional rivalries to solidify fandom and broader appeal	• Promote “Civil War” (Oregon-Oregon State rivalry) (Paul Buker, 2010) and Oregon-UCLA running rivalries (Hull, 2017)
National	• Achieve consistent athletic success and pattern of winning • Maintain sports traditions for area residents	• University of Oregon investment and success in track, football, and basketball • Continued support for community running events
International/Global	• Scale up processes/infrastructure • Bid for World Championships/Olympic Games • Invest in supporting infrastructure: hotels, airports	• N/A: Examples include Paris, London, Los Angeles

Table 1 –Sports branding framework followed in Eugene. Author’s adaptation from Dubinsky (2024)

A city following this sports-led branding framework is, as Harvey (1989) described, entering a sort of competition. An entrepreneurial city must, above all, “appear as an innovative, exciting, creative, and safe place to live or to visit, to play and consume in,” which serves as a means to the end of improving its position within the global hierarchy of cities (p. 9). Sports, either independently or in tandem with other institutions, act as lures for capital investment to signal a “good business climate” (p. 11).

The conceptual pairing of “major league cities” and “good places to do business” is well established. Herstein and Berger (2013) reasoned that “sports events can leverage a city’s image over the long term since they attract huge interest from many audiences, including...the

investors who see the events as a business opportunity” (p. 40). Crompton (2004) considered a sports franchise “a symbolic embodiment of the city as a whole,” which can be “symptomatic of a community’s economic and social health” (p. 45). Conversely, cities that have lost teams are seen as bad business environments, making them uncompetitive: “If a city loses a sports franchise, it may create the impression that local businessmen and politicians are incompetent; that the community is declining or a ‘loser;’ and that its residents lack civic pride” (Crompton, 2004, p. 45). In five of six United States cities that experienced “franchise flight” from the 1980s to the 2000s, “all but Los Angeles subsequently allocated considerably more public financing to attract a new NFL team than it would have cost to keep their old team” (Carlino & Coulson, 2004, p. 48). The branding advantages that sports can bring to a city may signal a good business environment, but only while the team remains.

City branding efforts, when performed collectively, also have the power to unify residents within a city. Harvey (1989) explained that if everyone in a city participates in creating an urban image, “then all can at least feel some sense of belonging to that place. The orchestrated production of an urban image can, if successful, also help create a sense of social solidarity, civic pride, and loyalty to place” (p. 7). Professional sports are often a “common denominator among people of different age, race, and income” (Austrian & Rosentraub, 2002, p. 550). The many groups of stakeholders involved in attracting and sustaining a professional team also represent an immense collective and contested effort. Herbold et al. (2020) identified tourism planners, event organizers, athletes, managers and marketers, local authorities, politicians, business owners and entrepreneurs, accommodation suppliers, and residents as invested stakeholders who collaborate to promote the local team and therefore contribute to the city’s outward brand.

Various international cities have also leveraged professional teams to shift their brand away from industry. For instance, Gratton et al. (2005) pointed out that British cities have used sports as an economic driver in formerly industrial cities not known as major tourist destinations. These urban centers invested in sports infrastructure to host large-scale events such as the 1991 World Student Games in Sheffield or the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester. The combined \$350 million spending between these two events was largely driven by “the need for a new image and new employment opportunities caused by the loss of their conventional industrial base” (p. 986).

1.1.4: Stadiums and Public-Private Partnerships

An entrepreneurial governance scheme also prioritizes public-private partnerships, which are business-minded because they are “speculative in execution and design” and oppose “rationally planned and coordinated development” (Harvey, 1989, p. 7). Unlike in Europe, where stadium construction is generally privately financed, the United States overwhelmingly leverages public-private partnerships to fund professional sports infrastructure development.

The nature of public-private partnerships often involves the public assumption of financial risk to produce private profit, which cities often leverage in sport branding processes. Rosentraub (1999) explained that professional leagues have a vested interest in limiting the supply of teams to create profitable hosting conditions for existing franchises: “Communities without teams must induce a move or satisfy the conditions stipulated for an expansion team,” which increasingly means that “the public sector builds a subsidized playing facility and permits the team to retain the vast majority of the revenues collected at the new ballpark, stadium, or arena” (p. 378). Critics of stadium public-private partnerships have, therefore, called the process “little more than public subsidy of private profit” (Eckstein & Delaney, 2002, p. 235).

Subsidizing the construction of stadiums and arenas is not a new practice. Coates and Humphreys (2008) summarized a brief history of public funding for athletic infrastructure. During the first US stadium boom between 1917 and 1926, local and state governments first began issuing grants to build stadiums and arenas. The basis of public-sector support has,

however, changed drastically. In the early years of stadium construction, the “implicit rationale was for the facility to serve the broad public interest by hosting pageants, parades, rallies, and festivals, as well as sporting contests of all sorts from track and field to football and baseball” (p. 294). The shift to allocating public funds for single-use, privately controlled facilities is a relatively new practice, which first began with major league baseball franchise relocations, namely the Braves moving from Boston to Milwaukee in 1953, the Browns moving from St. Louis to Baltimore in 1954, and the Athletics moving from Philadelphia to Kansas City in 1955 (p. 294). In the case of Baltimore, a new ballpark expansion added a second deck to Municipal Stadium and a restructured lease for the struggling St. Louis Browns (Rosentraub, 1999, p. 378). This construction of new facilities to lure an existing baseball team to a new market in the mid-20th century began the gradual shift of power away from cities and toward sports franchises in funding debates.

Each sports public-private partnership varies in the amount of funding contributed by various actors. Consider Indianapolis, a city with an established sport-for-development plan as part of its entrepreneurial urban governance scheme in the 1970s. The city government was responsible for less than one-third of the total investment because of large amounts of nonprofit and private investment, notably from Indiana University and the Lilly Corporation (Austrian & Rosentraub, 2002). Today, the host city often bears most of the cost through public funds. Cleveland, Ohio, is another US city that aggressively invested in sports for post-industrial revitalization efforts, but unlike Indianapolis, it utilized a greater share of public funds in the construction of three sports facilities. The city invested a total of \$600 million city dollars into these ventures (Austrian & Rosentraub, 2002, p. 561).

Harvey (1989), however, cautioned against investments of this sort, as they are “highly speculative” and “might not pay off” (p. 13). Building the infrastructure required to host the Olympic Games, for instance, does not guarantee a city the bid. The Los Angeles Coliseum construction as part of the city’s 1924 Olympic strategy did not pan out until the 1932 games, when the city was selected over both Cleveland and Chicago (who had also constructed venues—Municipal Stadium and Soldier Field, respectively) (Keating, 1999, p. 4). To date, neither Cleveland nor Chicago has hosted an Olympic Games, and Municipal Stadium became known as “The Mistake on the Lake” because it could not find a permanent team to host for over 15 years (Keating, 1999).

1.2: Urban Economics of Sports

1.2.1: United States Sports Economics

The use of public funds to develop sports infrastructure in the US inspired a new academic investigation of their economic effectiveness around the turn of the century. In almost every study performed across the nation, the monetary costs of hosting a professional sports team outweighed the benefits.

Cities often defend the mobilization of public funds to build large-scale sports infrastructure as “economic development projects, based on the explanation that associated commercial activity will spill over onto the surrounding community to stimulate economic growth” (Bradbury, 2022, p. 220). However, reviews of economic literature overwhelmingly conclude that professional sports infrastructure and events do not generate economic benefits in host cities (Baade, 1996; Bradbury et al., 2022; Humphreys, 2019; Siegfried & Zimbalist, 2000). Coates and Humphreys (2008) perhaps summarized the body of research most bluntly:

No matter what cities or geographical areas are examined, no matter what estimators are used, no matter what model specifications are used, and no matter what variables are used, articles published in peer reviewed economics journals contain almost no evidence that professional sports franchises and facilities have a measurable economic impact on the economy. (p. 302)

A multitude of studies have concluded that professional sports teams seldom deliver on promised increases in property values (Bradbury et al., 2022; Feng & Humphreys, 2018, 2012; Humphreys & Nowak, 2017; Joshi et al., 2020; Tu, 2005), wages (Baade & Dye, 1990; Carlino & Coulson, 2004; Coates, 2015; Coates & Humphreys, 1999, 2002, 2011; Lertwachara & Cochran, 2007; Miller, 2002; Prophet, 2012), or employment rates (Coates & Humphreys, 2003; Hudson, 1999; Islam, 2019; Rosentraub et al., 1994). In some cases, the overall spending on professional sports has a negative return on investment (Coates & Humphreys, 1999). In fact, in a study of economists titled “Do Economists Agree on Anything? Yes!,” the issue of sports subsidies was an issue of “exceptional consensus” with 86% of survey participants in agreement or strong agreement that “Local and state governments in the U.S. should eliminate subsidies to professional sports franchises” (Whaples, 2006).

Despite over three decades of academic research calling into question the economic productivity of stadiums, urban governance schemes continue investing in this infrastructure (Rosentraub, 1999). One reason for this is that the promised economic returns of stadiums and hosting a professional team often use faulty economic arguments to garner support for the project. Coates and Humphreys (2008) laid out five of the most common flawed arguments that are mobilized to support the construction or redevelopment of a stadium (see Table 2).

Misconception	Reality
A stadium alone brings vitality to an area	Moving a sports facility from one part of town to another will not automatically revitalize the new area. This thinking ignores the characteristics of the original host city that were key to the stadium’s success and integration.
Professional sports have a high local spending multiplier	Much of every dollar spent at a sporting event does not return to the community. Funds are re-routed to players and owners who generally do not live in the area and spend the money elsewhere.
Sports are the primary cultural attraction in a city because of their scale	Sports are just one of many cultural activities competing for cultural capital and attention in a city. Individuals with no interest in the local team are taxed to support infrastructure maintenance and improvement while other events do not receive nearly the level of subsidy (if any at all) of professional sports.
Sports deliver high rates of social return	The opportunity costs of spending public dollars on sports are unaddressed. Other public projects such as highways, hospitals, schools, or transit schemes could deliver a higher social rate of return than a stadium.
Government subsidization is an economically efficient fundraising method	Government subsidies are economically inefficient, often carrying burdens and administrative costs for fundraising.

Table 2 – Five economic stadium misconceptions. Author’s adaptation from Coates and Humphreys (2008)

Crompton (1995) argued that economic impact analyses of large-scale sports facilities and events also tend to omit costs such as “traffic congestion, road accidents, vandalism, police and fire protection, environmental degradation, garbage collection, increased prices,” and more (p. 33). Translating these consequences into negative economic values is, admittedly, challenging, but their willful omission results in an incomplete portrayal of the economic impact of professional sports. This study also finds that proponents of stadiums often claim total economic benefits rather than the benefits marginal to the city’s investment. For instance, a city’s \$1 million contribution to a \$3 million project should be credited with just one-third of the economic benefits. However, stadium supporters often attribute total benefits to public investments, arguing that without public funds, there would be no private investment and therefore no sports event.

The trend of public-private partnerships in stadium construction has been replicated across the United States in all four major league sports. Harvey (1989) argued that this quick imitation “designed to make particular cities more attractive as cultural and consumer centers” renders “competitive advantage within a system of cities ephemeral” (p. 12). Why, then, does this formula continue to play out? Owen (2006) claimed that voting for a stadium to keep the local team happy makes everyone a hero: “Team owners are providing the centerpiece for economic growth. City officials are creating a monument to their active pursuit of a great economic future for their community. Each fan is making his contribution to the city’s future as well.” (p. 341). The argument continues by pointing out that voters do not feel backed into a corner by team owners. Instead, they “are voting for it because it will benefit the entire community” (p. 341).

1.2.2: European Soccer Economics

Many economic investigations of European soccer focus on “enormous revenues” of clubs (Solberg & Haugen, 2010) and how UEFA’s Financial Fair Play rule affects the monetary landscape and competition of the sport (Caglio et al., 2023; D’Andrea & Masciandaro, 2016; Jakar & Gerretsen, 2021). Kesenne (2007) called the international economics of professional soccer in Europe “peculiar” because professional players are internationally mobile, but the product market is still nationally focused and protected. The consequence is that “teams of the small countries have to compete for the best players on an open European labour market with the teams of the large countries with budgets that are up to 15 times as large as their budgets.” (p. 389).

Unlike fixed membership in US leagues, which labels teams “franchises” and regulates the number of participants, the promotion and relegation system in European soccer allows for more open eligibility. European urban governance regimes, therefore, face less pressure to provide public subsidies or financial terms to retain or attract a team within a restricted market. Figueroa & Gil (2020), however, pointed out that national governments have incentives to create favorable hosting conditions for high-level soccer teams within: “National or regional governments show a desire to lend a helping hand to teams in their environments. This often takes place as a way of attracting foreign investors, who are enticed by the possibility of owning a football team” (p. 183). While EU law outlaws direct public aid or resource allocation to football clubs, Figueroa & Gil (2020) argued that differences in cost of living, tax rates, and differences in stadium construction and funding all provide indirect incentives to players and clubs. Cristiano Ronaldo’s 2018 move from Real Madrid to Milan’s Juventus, for instance, came with an almost 6% reduction in national tax rates, which reflects a financial advantage for Italy’s *Serie A*.

The issue of public subsidies in European soccer is of greater importance when hosting an international competition or tournament. Szymanski & Drut (2020) said that events such as the FIFA World Cup and the UEFA European Championship are “extensively subsidized” by governments in the form of infrastructure upgrades or transportation enhancement around the stadium, which is justified “on the grounds that while private benefits do not exceed the costs, public benefits are substantial” (p. 2). Having already established that public subsidies do not necessarily translate to wider economic benefits, this study asked whether private football clubs profit from this investment. The result is consistent with previous studies: “Our estimates suggest that only a small part of such expenditures is recouped by private benefits to the soccer clubs” (p. 19).

1.3: “Intangible Benefits” of Sports

In response to studies highlighting the economic shortcomings of hosting professional sports teams and one-time sporting events, many stadium supporters have shifted their approach to highlight the intangible advantages that sports bring to their host cities. Research into this topic is much more international in scope and suggests that residents of host cities find these

intangible benefits to be of equal or greater importance than economic ones. For instance, Mihalik and Simonetta (1999) found that Georgians, after hosting the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, “consistently rated the intangible benefits as more important than the economic issues,” suggesting that issues of property value, employment, and wages are secondary concerns to residents (p. 246).

The language and goals of current stadium proposals have also experienced a shift away from promises of economic return. A proposal in Cleveland would move the NFL’s Browns to a new facility 15 miles outside of the city center after their current stadium lease expires in 2028. Team ownership proposed a 50/50 public-private partnership on the \$2.4 billion project. City officials wrote, “The stadium is more than just a venue. The team represents the heart and soul of Northeast Ohio and reinforces our community’s identity and pride” (Withers, 2024).

Another recent proposal in Jacksonville will deliver a \$1.4 billion “Stadium of the Future” to fans of the NFL’s Jaguars (Jacksonville Jaguars, 2024). The rhetoric of “community development” has been central to the stadium’s planning, proposal, and approval process. NFL commissioner Roger Goodell emphasized the importance of the team to one of the smallest markets in the league: “To me, having a new stadium for our team is great, but I also am encouraged by the type of development that is happening in Jacksonville as a community. All of that makes us feel really good about the Jaguars’ future” (NFL, 2024). The collective language used in the marketing of Jacksonville’s stadium has served to justify 55 percent of its cost coming from public funds.

Today, the promise of community benefits dominates stadium construction discourse and proposals. Baade and Dye (1988), early in the urban economic discussion, argued that “the debate must turn to immeasurable intangible benefits like fan identification and civic pride” (p. 37). Early scholarship referred to these hard-to-measure consequences as “feel good” effects (Burgan & Mules, 1992; Kavetsos & Szymanski, 2010; B. J. R. Ritchie, 1984), but more common are terms such as social, community, or spillover benefits. Eckstein and Delaney (2002) predicted this “increasing focus on noneconomic issues in upcoming attempts to garner public dollars for stadium construction” due to “growing evidence, both through systematic research and anecdotal observation, that new stadiums simply do not create economic growth for the areas in which they are built” (p. 236). Indeed, shortly after the turn of the century, a new rationale for the public subsidy of professional sports was widely adopted.

Crompton (2004) articulated four primary “spillover” benefits that professional sports teams bring to their host cities that are not captured in traditional economic cost/benefit analyses. The first three positive effects listed in the study—increased community visibility, enhanced community pride, and stimulation of other development—focus on “*external* audiences, with the intent of encouraging their investment of resources in the community” (p. 49). These impacts, while important and multidimensional, do not capture the *internal* effects of a professional sports team on the community’s residents. The fourth benefit, psychic income, does just that. This concept was first articulated as “the emotional and psychological benefit residents perceive they receive, even though they do not physically attend sports events, and are not involved in organizing them” (Crompton, 2004, p. 49). The psychic income paradigm first outlined seven non-economic factors as new considerations for subsidizing professional sports:

- 1) Community visibility enhances community pride
- 2) Enhanced collective self-esteem from a “winning” or respected team
- 3) Civic pride from being a “major league city” with a “can-do” attitude
- 4) Pride in efforts to resuscitate deteriorated areas
- 5) Tangible focus for social bonding
- 6) Emotional involvement, “love affair” with a team
- 7) Excitement quotient from visitors.

Although originally proposed as a measure to justify public subsidy of professional sports *teams* in the United States, the true psychic income paradigm has primarily been applied to both large- and small-scale international sporting *events*.

1.3.1: Large-Scale Sporting Events

Massive sporting events such as the World Cup and the Olympic Games offer host cities unique opportunities to showcase their cultural identity (Garcia, 2008, 2011; Rowe, 2012) and to pursue opportunities for urban development and economic growth (Konstantaki & Wickens, 2010). These ventures can rightfully be deemed “entrepreneurial” due to their externally focused speculative nature. Large-scale sporting events are not all created equally. Müller (2015) grouped these events into three categories: major, mega, and giga events based on size, number of tickets sold, value of broadcast rights, total cost, and capital investment. According to these criteria, major events must be of “significant size,” but mega-events are currently the most common large-scale events held globally (Müller, 2015, p. 637). Giga events are rare. Examples include the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2012 London Olympics, and the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. Nonetheless, current trends, bidding processes, and host city proposals show an “upward trend in size,” which may lead giga-events to “become the norm rather than the exception” (Müller, 2015, p. 638).

While an event like the World Cup or the Olympics is a prime opportunity to show off to the world, its effects on residents and the host city should not be ignored. Herbold et al. (2020) concluded that “the involvement of stakeholders is a success criterion for sports tourism in general but especially for the sustainable development and generation of benefits for the local community” (p. 16). The importance of community engagement in maximizing local benefits is a topic explored in several mega-event case studies around the world. Gursoy and Kendall (2006) found that “local support and involvement are likely to increase the longevity of positive impacts on the local community” (p. 617). Using the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics as a case study, researchers argued that public discussions and democratic planning of the Olympic Games can determine both the success of the competition and its legacy.

Related studies have focused on resident perceptions of major and mega sporting events. S. S. Kim & Petrick (2005), for example, surveyed Seoul residents following the 2002 World Cup hosted in South Korea and Japan. Researchers identified five positive impacts, the strongest being “image enhancement” followed by “consolidation and interest in the foreign country or culture” (p. 35). Another notable conclusion from this study is that after the World Cup, surveyed Seoul residents largely agreed that “the World Cup made Koreans harmonious,” which is a unique finding in studies of this type (p. 36). A similar case study conducted by W. Kim et al. (2015) evaluated resident attitudes toward the Korea F1 race, which followed a \$275 million racetrack investment (p. 22). Survey data revealed that community visibility and image enhancement, as well as knowledge and entertainment opportunities, were more important than economic benefits (p. 29).

There is, thus, evidence of social, community, or “feel good” effects following large-scale sporting events, though other scholarship suggests that effects are short-lived. Kavetsos and Szymanski (2010) examined how major sporting events, specifically the Olympic Games, UEFA European Championships, and the World Cup, affected the “feelgood” factor of various countries. Their study reached a twofold conclusion. First, “hosting major events, in particular marquee football tournaments, is associated with increased reported life satisfaction in the period following the event” (p. 159). Crucially, though, they found “no evidence of a lasting happiness effect from hosting” (p. 159).

Other investigations across contexts have echoed these findings—benefits from hosting a one-time event tend to diminish over time. S. S. Kim & Petrick’s (2005) study of post-World Cup Seoul noted that “the fever became diluted,” with some residents changing their opinion of the event’s benefits within just three months (p. 37). Gibson et al. (2014) performed a pre-post

analysis of psychic income and social capital among South Africans following the 2010 FIFA World Cup. They expanded the definition of psychic income to include feelings of “increased patriotism and pride...by a determination to demonstrate globally that as a country they were capable of hosting the 2010 World Cup” (p. 119). While this psychic income faded within eight months of the tournament’s conclusion, the levels remained “significantly higher” than those reported in related studies by H. J. Kim et al. (2006) after the 2002 Seoul World Cup and Gursoy et al. (2011) after the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

1.3.2: Small-Scale Sports

Zawadzki (2020) noted that “the interests of researchers almost exclusively relate to the largest ones, referred to in the world literature as mega events, which include the Olympic Games or the most important football tournaments” (p. 290). Other researchers emphasize the need for research into smaller-scale sports because of the increased proximity between events and residents (Derom & VanWynsberghe, 2015; Ghaderi et al., 2023; Taks et al., 2015). Although limited, the existing body of research provides preliminary evidence that small-scale sports bring social benefits to the host community. Taks et al. (2015) contend that non-mega sporting events are more socially productive (more positive impacts and/or fewer negative outcomes) for host communities because of the “creation of tighter social networks and connectedness of the local population with the event” (p. 3). Djaballah et al. (2015) identified these specific benefits in their review of non-mega sporting event literature, categorizing them into six groups: (1) social capital, (2) sport participation, (3) well-being, (4) human capital, (5) collective identities, and (6) urban regeneration. Zawadzki (2022) also cited “social unity and cohesion,” “improved quality of life,” “motivation to lead a healthy lifestyle,” and “inspiration for the younger generation” as intangible benefits of non-mega sporting events (p. 306).

Several case studies highlight the opportunity for small-scale sports events to build community, especially through both volunteering and local participation. Derom and VanWynsberghe (2015) studied a canoe/kayak event in the Niagara region of Ontario, Canada, with around 1,000 athletes. The volunteers reported a heightened sense of community after the event because of the cooperation required for success. Researchers also found that small-scale sports provide a unique environment for community building because of the flexible nature of each role. Unlike a mega event where a volunteer’s role is fixed within a centralized authority structure, the community members in Ontario were recruited to perform many tasks. This “high degree of versatility” in responsibilities corresponded with the greatest pre-post event changes in themes of “Equity in Administrative Decisions,” “Common interest,” and “Social Spaces” (p. 87). Similarly, Schulenkorf (2019) found that residents of Spetses, Greece, before and after the island’s mini marathon, saw a change from a “self-centered, individualistic” mentality that “lacked collective structures” to one that was “collaborative and embracing” (p. 510). This was, in part, due to the community’s ability to “engage as participants and some as supporting volunteers” (p. 511). The researchers said that the 200 island volunteers were crucial to the success of the event’s parties, festivals, and workshops, which helped “leverage and maximize the event’s social utility” (p. 514).

The psychic income framework has primarily been applied to large-scale sporting events (Downward & Ralston, 2006; W. Kim & Walker, 2012; Oja et al., 2018). However, small-scale sporting events show potential for psychic income benefits. Ghaderi et al. (2023), in one of the first attempts to apply this concept to sporting events on a smaller scale, investigated how the yearly Choukhe Wrestling Tournament in Esfarayen, Iran, affected the community pride, community attachment, event excitement, cultural confidence, and community excitement of the local population. The results were generally consistent with the findings of W. Kim & Walker’s (2012) analysis of post-Super Bowl psychic income measures in Tampa Bay, just on a smaller scale. Community excitement for the Choukhe Wrestling Tournament does exist, just at lower levels than for mega events. This is not necessarily surprising, “given that sports event

excitement comes from many sources, and [small-scale sporting events] provide fewer ancillary activities than their mega-event counterparts” (Ghaderi et al., 2023, p. 481). Limited media appeal and the recurring nature of the wrestling event also contribute to the lower event excitement measure in the study compared to mega events. That is not to say that the locals are apathetic to the competition, but rather “(for lack of a better term) used to it” (Ghaderi et al., 2023, p. 481).

Smaller sporting events remain a conceptual blind spot in both sports and urban studies literature. The impacts of small-scale sports venues on their host community are equally understudied. Davies (2016) investigated the Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub (OJNH), which opened in 2012 under the direction of Sport England. The OJNH was built as a regeneration project on a brownfield site in the “deprived area of Warrington,” which “is ranked amongst the most deprived 10% in England” (Davies, 2016, p. 8). Although there were no explicitly stated social outcomes in the planning or development of the neighborhood hub, qualitative analyses suggest that residents have benefited. Davies (2016) drew three primary conclusions: The skate park reduced anti-social behavior in young people, the sports hub created new community groups with a volunteering focus, and the OJNH improved residential perceptions of the area.

1.3.3: Quantifying Intangible Effects

The study of intangible benefits of sports primarily quantifies the positive monetary consequences of hosting a professional team. The psychic income paradigm, originally focused on resident perspectives of intangible benefits that a professional team brings to the city, transitioned into a question of how much each resident would pay to keep the team in the city. Key research questions include: To what extent is the entrepreneurial public-private partnership justified from a taxpayer perspective? How much would each resident have to pay to keep their professional team in their city? Is this number greater than their willingness to pay? To offer a more comprehensive view of a stadium/team’s economic impact, both urban and sports scholars have departed from traditional input/output measures of capital in favor of the contingent valuation method (CVM). This economic tool “has been used to estimate the monetary value of public goods in an urban context” (Wicker et al., 2017, p. 3600).

Crompton (2004) paired his concept of psychic income with CVM, arguing that its “survey-based approach to eliciting the level of subsidy that individuals would be prepared to pay to support a new facility for a sports team” could be useful in analyzing public subsidization of sports stadiums (p. 52). CVM works by presenting respondents with hypothetical scenarios to “elicit people’s preferences for certain goods by discovering how much they would be willing to pay (how much is their WTP) for particular improvements in them” (Zawadzki, 2020, p. 293).

CVM is a tool used to answer two questions: “Are residents willing to pay the costs to draw a team to their community (through stadium investment)?” and “How much would residents be willing to pay to retain their professional team?” Johnson and Whitehead (2000) offered a notable example of the first question. Researchers investigated the willingness to pay (WTP) of residents in Lexington, Kentucky, to help fund a minor league baseball stadium in the late 1990s. Lexington, at the time, was one of the largest American cities without a professional baseball team, and a 1996 proposal to bring an AA team to the city was paired with a \$10+ million stadium plan. Researchers asked residents the WTP questions: “Would you be willing to pay \$1/\$5/\$10/\$25 per year out of your own household budget in higher taxes to help pay for a new baseball stadium?” and “What is the most you would be willing to pay out of your own household budget per year to make a new baseball stadium possible?” (Johnson & Whitehead, 2000, p. 52). Researchers found that “the aggregate annual WTP estimate for the baseball stadium is about \$592,000, while the lower bound estimate is about \$302,000 per year” (Johnson & Whitehead, 2000, p. 57). Over a 40-year use period, the study concluded that a stadium that

costs between \$3.6 and \$7.06 million could be justified in the eyes of the residents, well shy of the construction costs.

Another CVM study performed by Groothius et al. (2004) used CVM for its second purpose—to evaluate how much residents are willing to pay to keep their team from leaving the city. In the wake of the Pittsburgh Penguins declaring bankruptcy in 1998, researchers employed CVM to “address the public’s willingness to pay taxes to keep a hockey team in Pittsburgh” (Groothius et al., 2004, p. 515). This survey combined hypothetical WTP values with questions about how much the Penguins contribute to the image of Pittsburgh as a major city and what the loss of the franchise would mean for its national identity. The main survey question also explicitly asked: “Would you be willing to pay \$TAX each year out of your own household budget in higher city taxes to help keep the Penguins in Pittsburgh?” (Groothius et al., 2004, p. 519). These researchers determined that residents were willing to pay between \$1.9 and \$5.3 million per year to keep the Penguins in Pittsburgh, again shy of the \$180 million to \$200 million price tag of a new, publicly financed arena, even over a 40-year use period (Johnson et al., 2001). By employing CVM analyses, researchers have concluded that while major league sports teams do generate public goods for residents, the value of these benefits is not large enough to justify the amount of public subsidy spent, reinforcing the findings of economic studies focusing purely on capital flows (Johnson & Whitehead, 2000; Owen, 2006).

Collectively, psychic income, as a concept, has been primarily applied to evaluate the “intangible” effects of different-sized sporting events around the world. However, when this concept is mobilized to evaluate professional sports teams, the discussion reverts to economics, replicating the very issue it was designed to resolve. There is, thus, a need to explore the social and emotional effects of hosting a professional sports team through the eyes of residents, separate from topics of funding or return on investment.

2: Research Question and Conceptual Framework

Although psychic income was first applied in a professional sports context, the measurement tool has experienced two primary departures from its original goal. Crompton (2004) originally developed the psychic income paradigm in response to economic and external justifications for investing in professional sports: “Instead of relying on the wistful ‘spin’ that external sources will invest in the community as a justification for public subsidy of facilities, emphasis is shifting to measuring the benefits that accrue to existing residents living within it” (p. 55). This measurement tool, as applied by Crompton (2004), succeeds in refocusing the attention toward a community’s internal residents. However, it does not make the necessary departure from issues of funding and subsidies. By pairing this empirical tool meant to measure “emotional and psychological benefit residents perceive they receive” with contingent valuation methods, Crompton’s (2004) psychic income comes full circle. It remains focused on economics rather than the social and emotional effects that it originally targeted.

The second departure of psychic income relates to its application in sports literature. The concept was developed in response to the growing influence of professional sports teams, their infrastructural footprint in urban areas, and public subsidy debates. However, as a research tool, it has primarily been applied to one-time mega events such as the Olympics and the World Cup. A smaller body of research has also applied this framework to community-scale sporting hubs.

Thus, there is a clear need to apply the psychic income framework in the context for which it was originally developed: to evaluate how *residents* experience the *social and emotional* effects of *professional sports*. This study will expand upon Crompton’s (2004) psychic income paradigm, which was empirically tested and refined by W. Kim & Walker (2012) to address the following research question:

2.1: Research Question

How do residents and key stakeholders perceive the emotional and social effects of hosting a professional team in their community?

2.2: Conceptual Framework: Psychic Income

This study’s conceptual framework is based on Crompton’s (2004) psychic income paradigm, which was empirically tested and refined by W. Kim & Walker (2012) through surveys of residents in Tampa, Florida, after hosting Super Bowl XLIII in 2009. Through initial scale validation techniques, principal component analysis, and confirmatory factor analysis, the researchers found that “mega-event psychological impact can be examined using 22 items under five factors: (1) community pride as a result of enhanced image, (2) enhanced community attachment, (3) event excitement, (4) community excitement, and (5) pride in efforts to improve community infrastructure” (W. Kim & Walker, 2012, p. 1). The rest of this section will expand upon each of these five elements of psychic income.

2.2.1: Community Pride as a Result of Enhanced Image

The first dimension of psychic income combines Crompton’s (2004) categories of “community pride as a result of increased visibility” and “civic pride from being a major sport event host city.” Cities that host sports have greater opportunities to showcase themselves, and this (inter)national recognition creates internalized residential pride.

Cities that accommodate major sports infrastructure receive broadcasting attention and name recognition, both of which help promote the community to external viewers (Hiller, 1990). Crompton (2004) noted that sports broadcasts often include footage of the “views of a city and

its skyline,” which act as “the best advertising the city has” (p. 48). The wide variety of television audience members, which may include “convention planners, business CEOs, and relocation consultants,” are being sold a positive city image that “will serve as a magnet and attract general development” (Crompton, 2004, p. 48). W. Kim & Walker (2012) similarly pointed out that broadcasts like NFL’s Monday Night Football show “not only the game but also the city skyline, downtown, parks, and other civic attributes” which display both the city’s infrastructure and its community to external audiences (p. 94).

The conceptual pairing of a city/region with a sports team or event is also a strategic place branding strategy, which gives an area greater name recognition (Fan, 2010; Gratton et al., 2005; Swindell & Rosentraub, 1998). Referencing the host city alongside the team or event is another way communities gain recognition through professional athletic infrastructure. Oldenboom (2008) found that the international recognition of a city’s name is one of the most frequently cited benefits for a major league city. By associating a professional team with its city or region (e.g., Toronto Raptors, Cleveland Guardians, New England Patriots), the area benefits from greater identification.

Increased visibility as an impetus for greater investment and external recognition, however, does not entail community benefits for people living in the host city. How do residents internalize this outside attention as community pride? W. Kim & Walker (2012) explained that media coverage creates a “showcase effect” when it portrays community members having a “positive spirit” and “the ability to handle major missions” (pp. 94-95). Crompton (2004) noted that living in a city capable of managing professional sports “demonstrates to the rest of the world a positive ‘can do’ attitude towards major projects” (p. 55). Thus, community members adopt these characteristics assigned to their cities, internalizing them as reflective of themselves and their community.

2.2.2: Enhanced Community Attachment

W. Kim & Walker’s (2012) Enhanced Community Attachment dimension also combined two of Crompton’s (2004) original constructs: self-esteem and social bonding. Research on self-esteem has been primarily explored as an offshoot of social identity theory (Brown, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2000). Key to one’s understanding of self is the internal perception of which social groups one belongs to (in-groups) versus social groups where one does not feel welcome (out-groups) (Mullen et al., 1992; Verkuyten, 2021). More important to psychic income, though, is collective self-esteem, which concerns how highly members of a community regard themselves. This shared reflexivity has two important threads, which Eckstein and Delaney (2002) described: The first is “a highly symbolic notion about how people living in a community perceive their community. Do citizens think they reside in a third-rate town or in a first-rate, major-league city?” (p. 237). In this regard, residents reflexively consider how hosting a sporting event increases the collective morale of their community (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). The second thread “is a more external projection of a city’s image to outsiders;” is the city displaying “a major league reputation?” (p. 237). This secondary aspect of community self-esteem focuses on tourism and investment, but benefits return to residents in the form of “permanent additions to the community such as new businesses and new employees” (p. 238). These effects are, admittedly, “not completely noneconomic,” but they are “less direct than those economic benefits historically guaranteed by new stadium construction” (p. 238).

Community attachment is also made concrete through social bonding, which is often measured through the amount of interaction within one’s community. This is operationalized through the number and types of friendships one maintains, as well as by measuring participation in local events (Ohmann et al., 2006). Ingham et al. (1987) suggested that professional sports have two community-building roles. First, they act as a collective focal point for local community members “in a discontinuous and increasingly atomized society” (p. 460). Lipsky (1979) characterized sports as a “social life-world,” offering an alternative to the realities

of capitalist alienation. Citizens within a host city participate in civic rituals around their sports team “in the form of festivals, mass spectacles, and other cultural performances,” which “establishes links between individuals and the community as a whole” (Ingham et al., 1987, p. 455). This conception of community attachment is closely related to Turner’s (1974) three types of “*communitas*,” which connect people across socioeconomic and power structures in society. These collective experiences include spontaneous gatherings facilitated by a focal event, the community’s understanding of these short-lived reunions, and the long-term effort to permanently maintain the relationships afforded by spontaneous *communitas*.

Perhaps more obviously, though, major franchises “provide a sense of collective identity (a team’s name—the Cincinnati Bengals, the Dallas Cowboys, the New York Giants—implies a sense of collective proprietorship and collective predation)” (Ingham et al., 1987, p. 461). The inclusion of a city or region in the identity of a sports team creates a collective imagination of a unified community rallying behind the local team.

2.2.3: Event Excitement

Event excitement is perhaps the most concrete and easily understood aspect of psychic income. Crompton (2004) described event excitement as “the love affair” that host city residents have with the team. This dimension specifically refers to an individual’s enjoyment of attending, watching, or participating in auxiliary activities related to a professional sporting event. Goodger and Goodger (1989) differentiated between types of excitement that humans experience. The first excitement is less personally desirable and, in many situations, precarious—it occurs during “seriously critical situations, for example natural disasters or violence by strangers or by those regarded as socially superior” (p. 259). This type of exhilaration can cause the loss of control, risking the safety of oneself or others. The other type of excitement, which is more relevant for attendees of sporting events, is instead referred to as “safe” excitement, which appears during recreational events or activities. Also referred to as “mimetic” excitement (Elias & Dunning, 2008), these positive emotions result from contained excitement in a controlled environment, such as a field, stadium, or television screen, without the risks associated with other real-world activities.

Scholars researching excitement have identified several explanations for why sports provoke such intense fan emotion. The uncertain outcome allows for a tension that, with a win, creates a feeling of excitement (Edwards, 1974). This drama is boosted by the difficulty of the task and the potential for failure. The most exciting sporting events feature “technical demands that are challenging enough to prevent certainty of success and to allow for displays of prowess, but which are still possible to meet” (Goodger & Goodger, 1989, p. 260). Goal-line defenses in the NFL, blocked penalty kicks in soccer, and the potential for the opposing team to effectively negate a two-point basket with their next possession maintain tension in sports that can just as easily result in disappointment as in thrill. Competitions between teams of equal perceived skill or rivalries are key excitement factors (Goodger & Goodger, 1989), and many sport federations divide their product into leagues, divisions, and conferences to reduce the occurrences of blowouts or one-sided contests. Finally, Donnelly (1977) also found that the physical risk and athleticism of players in sports contribute to the excitement of fans who are far removed from the risk of harm.

W. Kim & Walker (2012) recognized that major sporting events generally take place in the evenings when the maximum number of people can attend, which provides a boost to an area’s nightlife. Residents in Tampa, Florida, also reported excitement from visitor interactions in their community (p. 104). Crompton (2004) argues that visitors increase the “excitement quotient” of residents in a host city, for “sometimes an ambiance of vibrance and vitality is created by a temporary influx of sports fans excitedly anticipating a game. This may be contagious and temporarily transferred to locals” (p. 55). Waitt (2003) termed the energy in

Sydney before and during the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympics as a community-wide “euphoria” driven both by the event itself and the enthusiasm of visitors from around the world.

2.2.4: Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure

Crompton (2004) explained that “psychic income also may be derived from a community’s effort to resuscitate a deteriorating area” (p. 55). In the United States, new stadium constructions and expansions often include some reference to “urban revitalization” or “mixed-use public space” in their plans as an appeal to both policymakers and host community residents. However, actual developmental outcomes may be less important to residents than manifested evidence of community investment. Crompton (2004) found that “the notion that ‘something is being done’ may alleviate the collective community conscience, irrespective of the degree to which the outcome is successful” (p. 55).

Stadium construction and expansion fall into one of three categories of urban revitalization: proximate development, complementary development, and general development. Proximate development refers to the infrastructure near a sports facility included in the original plan. Crompton (2004) called this an “integrated redevelopment package” that can “jump-start economic development around a stadium or facility which serves as the area’s focal point” (p. 48). Complementary development is not explicitly outlined in the sport facility’s redevelopment scheme. This change in the urban landscape refers to “the upgrading or initiation of businesses as a result of the demand for their services... In the case of most sports facilities, complementary development is likely to take the form of restaurants, bars, and souvenir stores” (Crompton, 2004, p. 48). General development refers to the decentralized changes that a city undergoes because of increased national attention. International businesses, hotel chains, and hospitality services may be drawn to a major league city’s friendly investment climate, which can spur development in downtown areas, commercial business districts, and city peripheries.

Across all three types of development, Crompton (2004) identified two mechanisms that allow professional sports infrastructure to act as a catalyst or “glue” for nearby or related community infrastructure. The first process mentioned is “a threshold level of cumulative attraction” (p. 46). Cumulative attraction refers to the positive feedback loop formed when entertainment attractions are located close together—clustering different leisure or recreational activities together boosts the individual traffic that each receives. Threshold refers to the desires and motivations of those who are going to visit these entertainment areas: “In order to persuade people to go downtown there has to be a threshold number or critical mass of complementary attractions, such as hotels, restaurants, specialty retailers, theaters, and other entertainment offerings” (Crompton, 2004, p. 46). A sports facility, however, only “operates” while a game is being played for a handful of hours each week. Therefore, investment in other entertainment and hospitality amenities can create the entertainment threshold required for visitors to come to the area when games are not happening, while maintaining the stadium as the area’s primary anchor.

Finally, Crompton (2004) asserted that the best practice for professional sport infrastructure is to incorporate it as part of “an integrated, coherent, master plan for downtown redevelopment, rather than an ad-hoc initiative which it is vaguely hoped may stimulate others to locate nearby” (p. 47). By incorporating a variety of stakeholders into the planning process, professional sports facilities can better complement the surrounding areas and serve as a “jumping off point” for development tailored to resident needs.

2.2.5: Community Excitement

The dimension of psychic income with the fewest measurable items found by W. Kim & Walker (2012) relates to a community’s collective excitement for the activities and entertainment that accompany a sporting event. In the case of Tampa’s Super Bowl, W. Kim & Walker (2012) pointed to “commercially sponsored activities, such as the Pepsi Smash, Taste of NFL, NFL Charities of Celebrity Golf Classic, and the Halftime show” as “notable sources of attraction for

visitors... beyond the core product (i.e., the game) itself” (p. 104). Leveraging a hallmark event to create smaller attractions is a common strategy, and many local governments use the influx of visitors to the city as an opportunity for new event programming and cultural celebrations (Kidd, 2013).

3: Methodology

This chapter introduces this study's cases, methods, and research timeline. This investigation combined quantitative and qualitative methods to examine two professional sports teams deeply embedded in their urban locales, enabling a four-factor analysis to address the research question: How do residents and key stakeholders perceive the emotional and social effects of hosting a professional team in their community? There has been some debate over what exactly constitutes a mixed-methods approach in academia (Creswell et al., 2004; Plano Clark, 2017; Von Soest, 2023). In social science research, mixed methods refer to using both qualitative and quantitative strategies of data collection in a single inquiry (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). Pairing these methods offers several distinct advantages over studies employing just one or the other. First, combining the two types of data into a single investigation allows for the strengths of each approach—greater response potential in quantitative data and greater depth in qualitative data—to cover the other's limitations (Kelle, 2006). Additionally, the multiple-method approach allows for greater internal and external triangulation to occur, which increases the validity of conclusions drawn (Von Soest, 2023). Finally, quantitative results can be expanded upon through qualitative insights, providing either an explanation or additional data unable to be captured through numerical means, and qualitative theories can be tested empirically through quantitative means, allowing for a dialogue between both methods and theory/empirics (Migiro & Magangi, 2011).

3.1: Case Descriptions

Professional sports are neither large-scale, one-time events like the Olympics, nor small-scale community competitions or recreation centers. In the United States, each NFL team hosts eight or nine games in its home stadium each season. In the NBA, each team has 41 home games in the 82-game regular season. MLB teams have 81 home games and 81 away games. In Spain's *La Liga*, there are 38 soccer matches in a season, with each team hosting 19 home games. Alonso and O'Shea (2012), therefore, classified professional sports as "community anchors" because of their recurrence and ability to create social networks in the host community. These descriptions underscore the complex nature of professional sports' identity. Stakeholders in a city differentially understand the role of a local team, which might act as a community anchor for fans but a movable pawn to bring profits for team owners and city officials.

Strategic selection of cases is important for both the generalizability of the results and the depth of information collected (Yin, 2014). Flyvbjerg (2006) advocates for information-oriented selection of cases rather than a representative case or random sample because "the typical or average case is often not the richest in information. Atypical or extreme cases often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied" (p. 229). Both cases selected in this study were identified as extreme (sometimes considered devious) and critical cases that challenge the framing of professional sports as primarily economic enterprises.

3.1.1: Green Bay, Wisconsin: Green Bay Packers

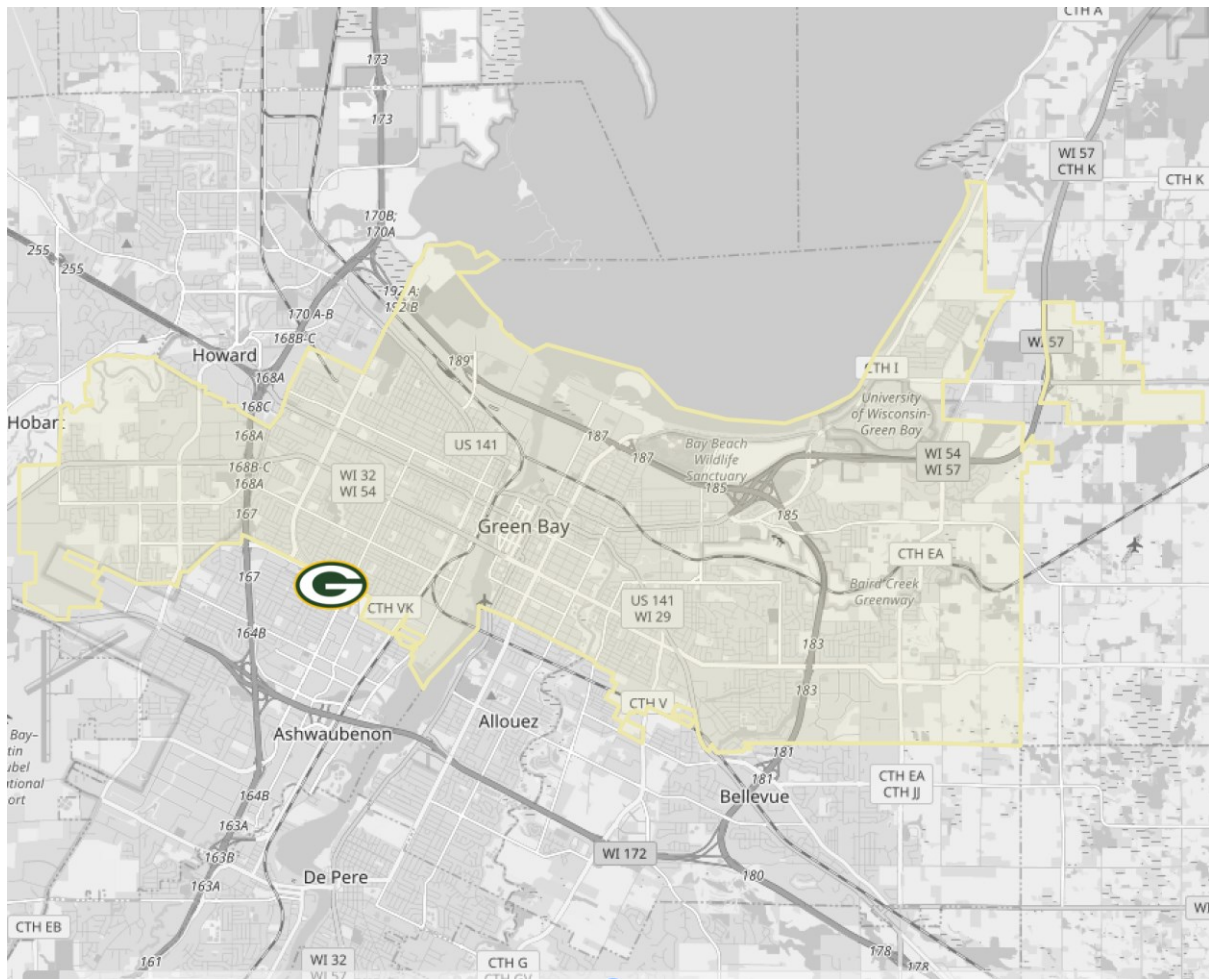


Figure 1 – Map of Green Bay with Lambeau Field Marked. Adapted from OpenStreetMap by author.

The Green Bay Packers are often considered “the most storied franchise in the National Football League” for their unique history, success, and geographical setting (Packers, 2025). The team was founded in 1919 in the rural Wisconsin town of Green Bay and joined the newly formed National Football League (NFL) two years later in 1921. Their name is a nod to the Indian Packing Company, the team’s original sponsor. Only two existing teams have a longer tenure in the NFL, namely the Arizona Cardinals (originally the Chicago Cardinals) and the Chicago Bears.

The Green Bay Packers are unique, both as a football team and as a professional franchise in the United States. The team has maintained a high level of championship success throughout its history, having won more NFL championships than any other team in league history (13). Since the Super Bowl era began in the 1966-67 season, the Packers have raised the trophy four times. These victories included winning Super Bowl I and Super Bowl II. This early success had two major effects. First, the Super Bowl trophy became officially known as the Vince Lombardi Trophy to honor the team’s head coach from 1959 to 1967. Second, Green Bay became known as the NFL’s Titletown, USA, a nickname given to cities that have enjoyed sustained athletic success.

Green Bay is also exceptional because of its location. Across all four professional leagues in the United States (NFL, NHL, NBA, and MLB), Green Bay is the smallest city to host a professional sports team, and it is not particularly close. Green Bay’s population is just over 105,000 people (United States Census, 2025a), which makes it the 139th-largest city in the United

States (Packers Wiki, 2025). When the team was founded, there were six Wisconsin cities larger than Green Bay (Packers, 2025). New Orleans is the next smallest city hosting a professional franchise (the NBA's Pelicans and the NFL's Saints), and it is the country's 51st-largest city with a population of 364,000 (United States Census, 2025b). Despite Green Bay's humble population, the Packers' venue, Lambeau Field, is the second-largest stadium in the NFL. With a capacity of 81,441, it is also the largest venue in the state of Wisconsin (Lewis, 2025). During this study, the city of Green Bay hosted the NFL Draft for the first time, which brought a crowd of 600,000 people in April 2025 (ESPN, 2025).

Finally, the Green Bay Packers are the only team in the NFL with a public ownership model, and they are the only nonprofit professional sports team in the United States (Davis, 2024). Although the NFL requires that all football clubs be owned by an individual or group with at least one-third stake in the team, the Green Bay Packers and their ownership model predates this league requirement. Today, the Green Bay Packers, Inc. has over 500,000 stakeholders and is managed by a Board of Directors. Importantly, these shares in the Packers do not carry any monetary value, nor will they ever appreciate—they are simply the manifestation of fan support in the team.

3.1.2: Vallecas, Madrid, Spain: Rayo Vallecano

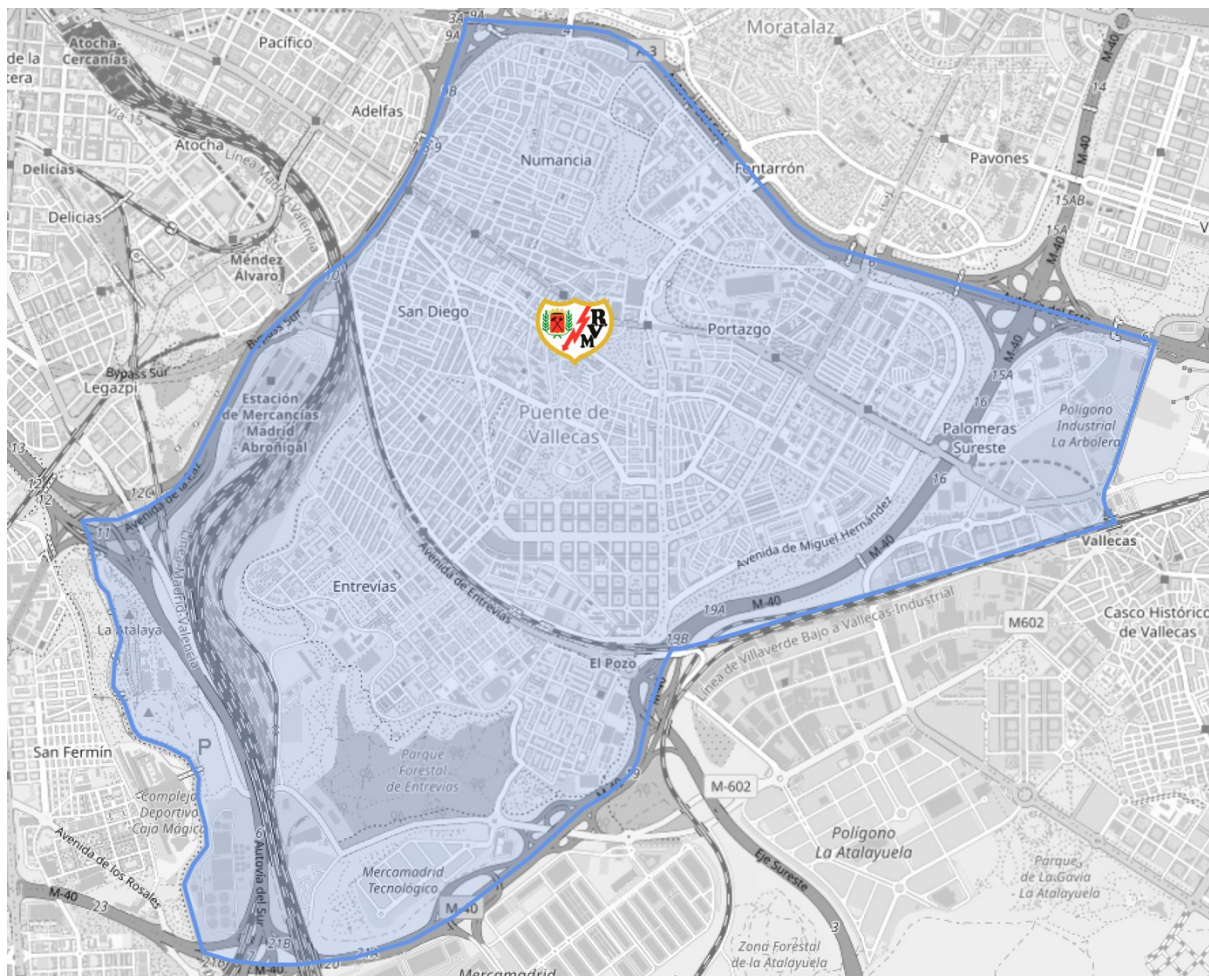


Figure 2 – Map of Vallecas with Estadio de Vallecas Marked. Adapted from OpenStreetMap by author.

Rayo Vallecano is one of five teams in Madrid that competed in the top division of Spain's *La Liga* soccer league in the 2024-2025 season. The club was founded in 1924 in Madrid's 13th district, *Puente de Vallecas*, which had an official 2020 population of 240,867 people

(Ayuntamiento de Madrid, 2020). The team's iconic red *rayo*, or lightning bolt, that crosses diagonally across jerseys, combines with its locale to give the team its name: Rayo Vallecano.

Rayo Vallecano plays in *El Estadio de Vallecas*, a venue that has stood in the heart of the neighborhood since the team's founding. It was re-opened after renovations in 1976 and today holds 14,708 spectators. Only two teams in *La Liga*'s first division for the 2024-2025 season have smaller stadiums, namely Girona's *Montilivi* (14,624) and Leganés's *Butarque* (12,454). Club president Raúl Martín Presa has publicly announced that the current stadium (and its location) is incompatible with the club's desire to grow and compete in Spain's football league (Murray, 2024). In February 2024, after a *La Liga* match against Sevilla, Presa declared that the stadium was "obsolete" and that there was "not enough space to grow," so the team would begin looking for a new site outside of the neighborhood (Barlow, 2024). This announcement was met with harsh opposition from fans and residents in the Vallecas neighborhood, and the conflict culminated in a 400-person human chain around the stadium to protest the move (Pattem, 2024).

The team's 100-year history in Vallecas and unique residential fanbase also make Rayo Vallecano an interesting case in Spanish soccer. Vallecas was an autonomous municipality of Spain until 1950, when it was annexed to become a part of Madrid (Agostinelli, 2024). The area has been referred to as "the rebel town of Madrid" (Madrid No Frills, 2017) and as "perhaps the most populous neighbourhood in Europe" (Todo Por La Praxis, 2025). The neighborhood's multiracial and working-class residents also have a reputation for left-wing activism dating back to Franco-era Spanish politics (McDonnell, 2021), which bleeds into the team's related fan organizations, particularly the *Bukaneros*, the team's group of ultra-fans. In an era of European soccer where ultra-fans are more closely aligned with the political right wing, Rayistas, or fans of Rayo Vallecano, explicitly align themselves with many leftist ideologies, including anti-fascism, anti-racism, anti-commercialization of football, and LGBTQ+ rights (Spaaij & Viñas, 2013). This has given the club a left-wing reputation, alongside clubs like Scotland's Celtic FC, Germany's FC St. Pauli, and Italy's AS Livorno, to name a few (Outside Write, 2016).

The writing of this report directly coincided with the end of Rayo Vallecano's historic 100th season, wherein, for the first time in 25 years, the team earned a spot to play European soccer. By finishing in eighth position in *La Liga*, Rayo will compete in the 2025-2026 UEFA Conference League against other clubs around Europe.

3.1.3: Case Selection Process

Both teams have exemplary and unique relationships with their host communities, but they exist on opposite ends of the precarious sports landscape marked by urban entrepreneurialism and "franchise flight." Green Bay's one-of-a-kind ownership scheme and resulting shareholder/board of directors framework are the reasons why the Packers will never leave Green Bay. Because there is no single majority owner or group of owners, any decision to leave the city of Green Bay would be met with strong institutional opposition. Rayo Vallecano, on the other hand, represents a rare potential case of "franchise flight" in European soccer. It's not uncommon for a European team to move across its host city or build a new stadium within the fan market—Atlético de Madrid did just that in 2017 with the opening of its 70,000 spectator *Metropolitano* stadium in the north of the city. Rayo Vallecano, however, proudly boasts its neighborhood in the name of its club, and team president Raúl Martín Presa is openly looking to move the team outside of Vallecas. Citing the lack of space for VIP seating (and its associated revenue) and administrative problems, Presa is looking for new opportunities to expand the stadium outside of the host community (García, 2025).

The unique characteristics of each professional team make them extreme cases in this study. Considering these as critical cases, however, requires a bit more elaboration. Flyvbjerg (2006) describes two different types of critical cases, the "most likely" and "least likely" cases, "likely to either clearly conform or irrefutably falsify propositions and hypotheses" (p. 231). For this study, both Green Bay and Vallecas are considered "most likely" cases because they are best

suited to falsification. In other words, if the object under investigation—in this case, social and emotional effects—is not valid for this case, then it is not valid for any (or only few) cases” (p. 230). Flyvbjerg (2006) also explains that there are no methodological principles that help researchers identify critical cases—they are found through experience. Green Bay was selected because of author awareness of its unique history, geographic setting, and ownership scheme. Rayo Vallecano was suggested by a Madrid professor familiar with the club’s reputation and stadium protests. After further investigation, it was added as a complementary case in this study.

3.2: Data Collection

3.2.1: Psychic Income Survey Design

In both Green Bay and Vallecas, psychic income surveys were developed based on W. Kim & Walker’s (2012) framework, which conceptualizes five categories of social and emotional benefits that residents received from hosting the Super Bowl. These include: (1) Community Pride as a Result of Enhanced Image, (2) Enhanced Community Attachment, (3) Event Excitement, (4) Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure, and (5) Community Excitement. These dimensions were further broken down into a list of questions specifically tailored to Tampa, Florida, and Super Bowl XLIII. For this study, the questions were adapted to reflect the unique contexts of the host communities under investigation (Green Bay and Vallecas) and their respective professional teams (The Green Bay Packers and Rayo Vallecano). Each survey was distributed in the local language of the corresponding case (see Appendix A).

Survey respondents were presented with an ordinal seven-point Likert scale. The option “1” was labeled “Strongly Disagree,” and the option “7” was labeled “Strongly Agree.” A 7-point Likert scale was used instead of a 5-point scale because the higher number of options was found to improve the accuracy of responses and reduce participant tendencies to select middle values (Russo et al., 2021). The Google Form survey was divided into six unnamed sections: one for demographic questions and five corresponding to the psychic income dimensions. A progress bar indicated participant advancement throughout the survey. All questions were voluntary, a point emphasized on the form’s title screen. At the end of each section, an optional open-ended question invited participants to elaborate on their responses. The survey was designed to take approximately 5 to 15 minutes to complete, depending on the extent of open-ended response participation.

3.2.2: Psychic Income Survey Distribution

Survey participants were recruited through several different online and in-person channels. One primary means of finding residents to participate in this investigation was through social media survey distribution. Murphy et al. (2014) calls social media survey distribution the “new wave” in survey trends, and Merrill (2011) found that social networks allow researchers to “gain preliminary data on trends” and “share the results” in a short amount of time (p. 45). An additional benefit of social media survey distribution is that the researcher can perform an online ethnography from afar, gaining “valuable insight into the communities from which he/she seeks information” (Merrill, 2011, p. 45).

Gatekeepers in Green Bay and Vallecas were especially important in amplifying the survey’s reach. Aaltonen and Kivijärvi (2019) define gatekeepers as “individuals who are instrumental in the successful recruitment of participants” (p. 622), and they are a useful resource when studying a “hard-to-reach population... which cannot be sampled easily” (Lamprianou, 2022). Random sampling, also called probability sampling, in quantitative research is considered “the gold standard” for the potential to generalize conclusions to the defined population (Acharya et al., 2013). However, in a study testing the reliability of gatekeeper-based survey methods, Lamprianou (2022) conducted the same research with university students using both random sampling and gatekeeper recruitment. The results between the two groups were “very

similar,” leading to the conclusion that “using any of the two samples would essentially lead us to the same substantive findings” (p. 7).

Because most of the data collection in Green Bay was conducted from abroad, psychic income surveys were primarily distributed online from October 2024 to March 2025. In this investigation, two primary online communities were tapped for respondents, specifically Reddit’s “r/GreenBay” where a description of this study was presented with a link to the survey, as well as Facebook’s “Green Bay Area Discussion.” These groups have 19,000 and 30,200 members, respectively, as of April 2025. Local gatekeepers in Green Bay also supported survey distribution. These individuals included interview informants, as well as personal and professional contacts in Green Bay. The nature of the survey was explained to each gatekeeper, either during the interview or afterward in a follow-up message that included a link to the Google Form. Several gatekeepers shared the survey multiple times over the course of the data collection period. Finally, surveys were distributed in person on December 22, 2024, during a field visit to the stadium. Flyers containing a QR code to the online form were handed out in the Titledown District, and leftovers were given to Packer Administration to distribute (see Appendix B).

In Madrid, surveys were distributed online and in person. Descriptions of this study and a link to the survey were published to Reddit’s r/RayoVallecano (371 members) and Facebook groups, including *Vecinos de Vallecas* (22,000 members), *Gente de Villa de Vallecas* (26,300 members), and *Vecinos de Vallecas (sin normas absurdas)* (6,500 members). Each of these Facebook groups features dozens of posts per day, which results in posts being quickly buried. Therefore, the survey was reposted three times in each group from January to May 2025.

Additionally, over 400 flyers with QR codes to the Google Survey (see Appendix A) were handed out throughout Vallecas metro stations (see Figure 3) and in the Rayo Vallecano ticket line (see Table 3). Gatekeeper individuals in Vallecas—interviewed residents and personal connections made during fieldwork—also helped expand the survey’s reach by sharing it within their networks.

Date	Survey Distribution Location
2/14	Portazgo Metro
2/15	Rayo Ticket Line: <i>Estadio de Vallecas</i>
2/20	Rayo Ticket Line: <i>Estadio de Vallecas</i>
2/27	Rayo Ticket Line: <i>Estadio de Vallecas</i>
3/25	Metro (1) Miguel Hernández, (2) Alto de Arenal, (3) Buenos Aires, (4) Portazgo, (5) Nueva Numancia

Table 3 – *Vallecas Psychic Income Survey Distribution Sites*

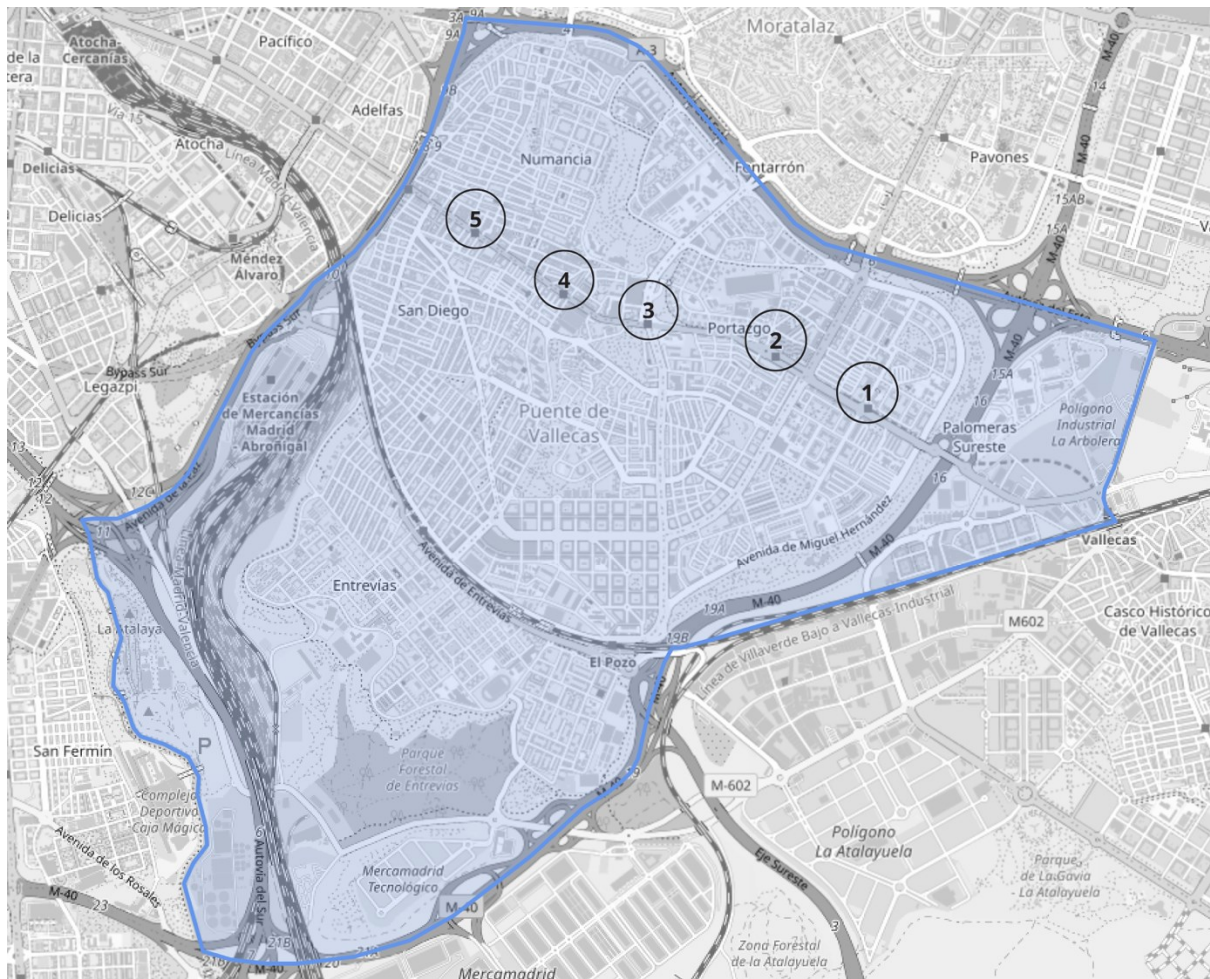


Figure 3 – Vallecas Survey Distribution Sites (Visualized). Adapted from OpenStreetMap by author.

3.2.3: Semi-Structured Interviews

This study collected two types of qualitative data. Each psychic income survey section ended with an open-ended question. This allowed respondents to justify their agreement or disagreement with section statements while also providing space for examples or additional considerations.

The bulk of qualitative data in this study, though, came from semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. These insights differ from the quantitative data collected in two ways. First, key informants were specifically recruited for interviews because of their heightened awareness of particular aspects of the team-city relationship, such as tourism, community engagement, philanthropy, or development. This allowed for a more expert-driven analysis than the general resident surveys. Second, qualitative insights from interviews extend the discussion beyond quantitative methods by encouraging key stakeholders to provide specific examples that inform their views, suggest improvements in the team-city relationship, and bring up topics not covered within the psychic income survey.

Semi-structured interviews are the most common data collection technique in qualitative investigations (Kallio et al., 2016), and they are characterized by their relative flexibility. They begin with a list of open- and closed-ended questions, but allow the conversation to naturally flow through follow-ups and unforeseen directions. Adams (2015) outlined best practices for these interviews. Interviews over an hour can lead to fatigue for both the interviewer and informant, so 60 minutes is generally considered a reasonable upper limit. Maintaining informant confidentiality throughout the data collection and reporting process is more likely to elicit honest

answers. For this reason, interview transcripts often cannot be made public. Finally, interview guides should be tailored to the positionality and expertise of each informant.

In this study, interviews ranged from 25 minutes to 80 minutes and were conducted both in person and online. Before starting each interview, the nature of the research and the research question were read aloud to the informant. Informants were assured that their names and identifying characteristics would be removed from the final report and that transcripts would not be released as part of this publication. Consent to record was then requested. All informants gave verbal consent to be recorded, either through the Voice Memos app (if in person) or through Google Meet conferencing (if online). All Green Bay thesis interviews were conducted virtually, which Von Soest (2023) considers an appropriate alternative to in-person expert interviews.

A unique interview guide was created for each semi-structured interview based on the informant's position. The sample question list, based on the five dimensions of psychic income (see Appendix C), was used as a starting point, with additional questions developed according to the informant's area of expertise. For instance, questions for tourism professionals focused on city promotion and place branding, while interviews with team administration explored internal community engagement strategies.

Recruitment: Key Informants and Residents

Finding informants to interview followed purposive, non-probability sampling methods, specifically leveraging key informant and snowball sampling techniques. Methodological literature uses several terms to describe interviewees with specialized knowledge, most commonly "key informant" and "interviewed expert." Marshall (1996) defined a key informant as someone who can provide "more information and a deeper insight into what is going on around them" due to their skills or societal position (p. 1). These informants ideally hold a prominent role in the community under investigation, possess knowledge of relevant processes, demonstrate a willingness to participate, can effectively communicate insights, and exhibit impartiality. Experts, by contrast, are defined by the depth of knowledge they possess, which may be acquired through education, professional experiences, or specific responsibilities (Van Audenhove & Donders, 2019). For this study, the two terms are used interchangeably, as several key informants may also be considered experts and vice versa. What remains consistent across both categories is that these individuals do not offer absolute truths. Instead, they are selected for their competence and ability to explore a given issue from multiple perspectives (McKenna & Main, 2013).

A list of prominent key informants was compiled for each case based on a range of stakeholder categories and their relationship to the professional sports team. Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) recommend, as a first step, compiling a list of key informants and then determining an appropriate means of contact. Accordingly, a list of individuals was made for both Green Bay and Madrid within the broad categories of city governance, team administration, academia, urban planning, tourism, city promotion/development, media, authors, and nonprofits. These individuals were identified primarily through institutional affiliations, often via "Contact Us" pages. Potential informants were also found through social media platforms, LinkedIn profiles, and existing personal connections. This initial list was expanded throughout the data collection period via snowball sampling. Informant introductions, fieldwork, and further integration into each case study revealed a larger network of potential key informants. Interview requests were sent through LinkedIn personalized connections, Twitter direct messages, Instagram direct messages, emails, and WhatsApp.

In Green Bay, nine interviews were conducted with ten different key stakeholders in the city over a four-month timeframe. All interviews were conducted virtually, and one interview was jointly attended by two tourism professionals (T1 and T2). All informants were residents of the Green Bay metropolitan area (see Table 4).

Informant	Stakeholder Industry	Interview Duration	Interview Date	Interview Format
P1	Packers Administration	60:25	Oct 10, 2024	Online
D1	Urban Design	46:09	Oct 17, 2024	Online
T1	Tourism	45:37	Oct 17, 2024	Online
T2	Tourism	45:37	Oct 17, 2024	Online
N1	Nonprofit	50:40	Oct 21, 2024	Online
G1	City Government	28:11	Oct 22, 2024	Online
N2	Nonprofit	35:32	Oct 25, 2024	Online
A1	Academia	37:29	Nov 6, 2024	Online
P2	Packers Administration	45:31	Nov 11, 2024	Online
G2	City Government	42:05	Feb 24, 2025	Online

Table 4 – Stakeholders Interviewed in Green Bay

In Madrid, eight interviews were conducted with Vallecas stakeholders. All informants except one (F2) were either current residents in Vallecas or ex-residents of the neighborhood (see Table 5).

Informant	Stakeholder Industry	Interview Duration	Interview Date	Interview Format
A2*	Academia	41:47	Jan 31, 2025	In Person
F1	Fan	61:37	Feb 2, 2025	In Person
F2	Fan	80:27	Feb 10, 2025	Online
F3	Fan	65:04	Feb 13, 2025	In Person
A3*	Academia	62:03	Mar 20, 2025	Online
F4*	Fan	41:45	Apr 1, 2025	Online
J1*	Ex-Jugador (Player)	25:03	Apr 24, 2025	Online
A4	Academia	44:56	Apr 24, 2025	Online

Table 5 – Stakeholders Interviewed in Vallecas. * represents interviews conducted in Spanish

3.2.4: Data Analysis

Psychic Income Survey: Quantitative Analysis

After closing each psychic income survey, the Google Form data was imported into Google Sheets to be processed and analyzed. Methodological literature has discussed the appropriateness of applying measures of central tendency to ordinal data (i.e., Likert scales). However, Sullivan and Artino (2013) provided a comprehensive review of this debate and concluded that parametric tests are “sufficiently robust to yield largely unbiased answers that are acceptably close to ‘the truth’ when analyzing Likert scale responses” (p. 2).

The mean and standard deviation for each psychic income dimension were calculated by averaging the results of each question within the corresponding survey section. This allowed for differentiation both between and within psychic income categories to determine where residents perceive the greatest social and emotional effects of hosting a professional sports team.

Finally, standard ranges were determined to reassign agreement levels to Likert-type averages at both the question and section levels. The interval was calculated by dividing the

difference between the highest possible response and the lowest possible response ($7 - 1 = 6$) by the total number of options on the Likert scale (7). The resulting value of 0.85 became the uniform range used to sort response averages into agreement levels.

Likert Scale Average	Level of Agreement
1.00-1.85	Strongly Disagree
1.86-2.71	Disagree
2.72-3.57	Somewhat Disagree
3.58-4.43	Neither Agree nor Disagree
4.44-5.29	Somewhat Agree
5.30-6.15	Agree
6.16-7.00	Strongly Agree

Table 6 – *Likert Scale Score Ranges and Corresponding Levels of Agreement*

Interview Coding: Qualitative Analysis

Interview audio files were first run through Gladia, an online transcription software, before undergoing two cycles of the inductive coding process. The first coding cycle functioned to manually correct transcription errors while inductively identifying themes within each interview, a process that Williams and Moser (2019) call “open coding.” Each interview’s themes were written down in a notebook, which was later compiled into an online codebook for sorting. A separate codebook was made and maintained for each case.

Each corrected transcript was then imported into Taguette, an online tagging software, for the second coding cycle. All discovered themes within each case were imported into a single codebook, and relevant quotes within each transcript were sorted into the appropriate codes, often falling into multiple categories. This allowed for the identification of patterns and discrepancies between interviews. The two codebooks and the quotes/themes within were then analyzed to find commonalities and differences between the two cases.

Inductive coding was chosen instead of deductively sorting quotes into psychic income-adjacent categories for a couple of reasons. First, the semi-structured interview guide grouped questions specific to image enhancement, community attachment, event excitement, community infrastructure, and community excitement, so informant responses were already aligned with the conceptual framework. Deductively coding these responses would make the sorting process little more than a matching activity. Second, the goal of the key stakeholder and resident interviews was to uncover emotional and social effects outside of the survey framework. By letting patterns in the data inductively guide the coding process, the analysis allowed for new insights and examples to emerge.

4: Results

This section reports results from both survey and interview investigations in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and Vallecas, Madrid. In both cases, residents agree that hosting a professional sports team in their community brings social and emotional effects. The type and distribution of these effects, however, differ in each case, which are further explained by presenting qualitative themes alongside corresponding psychic income survey data. Due to space constraints, only the most salient interview patterns are presented below; additional themes emerged during analysis but are not included here to maintain focus and clarity. Notable similarities and differences in both cases are presented and analyzed at the end of this section.

4.1: Green Bay

In Green Bay, 178 unique responses to the psychic income survey were recorded; however, 52 respondents reported that they lived outside of Green Bay's metropolitan area and listed suburbs. Therefore, 126 survey responses were kept for analysis. This data collection nearly achieved gender parity (see Table 7)—63 respondents were male, 61 were female, 1 was nonbinary, and 1 was an unlisted gender. 74% of all respondents were between 18 and 54 years old, and the 25-34-year-old range was the largest group at 34.3% (see Figure 4).

Gender Identity	Frequency
Male	63
Female	61
Nonbinary	1
Other	1

Table 7 – Green Bay Survey Gender Distribution

Green Bay Survey Respondent Ages

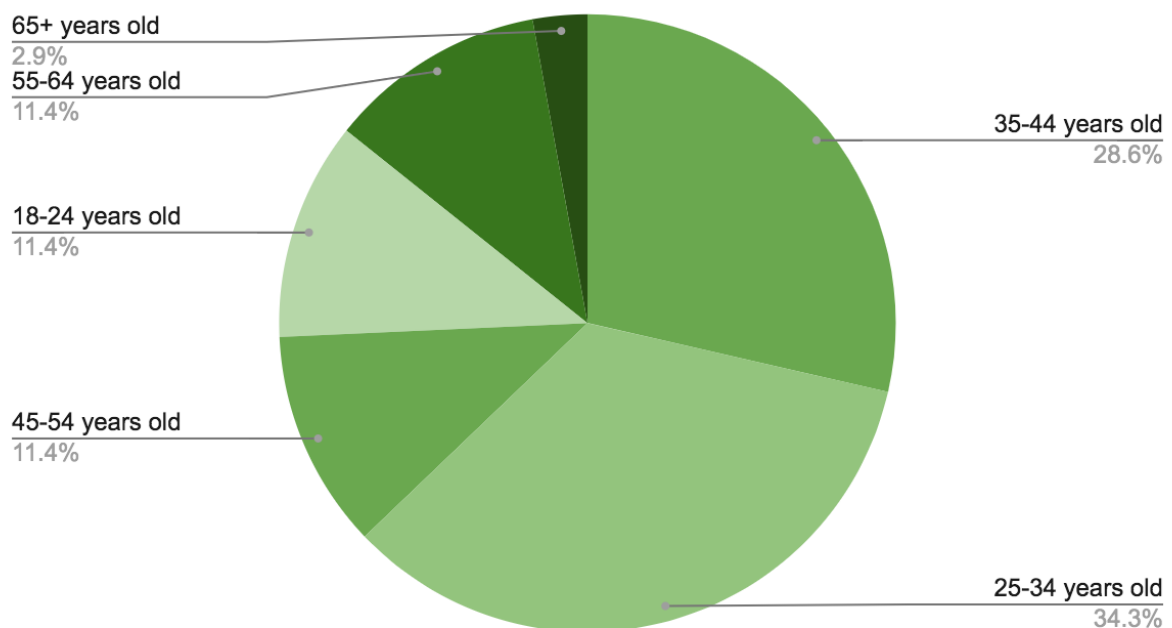


Figure 4 – Green Bay Survey Age Distribution

4.1.1: Community Pride as a Result of Enhanced Image

COMMUNITY PRIDE AS A RESULT OF ENHANCED IMAGE	MEAN	SD
CP1: GB Positive Image	6.262	1.067
CP2: GB Positive Recognition	6.524	0.836
CP3: Ability to Host a Major Sporting Event	5.825	1.278
CP4: Opportunities to Showcase the City	5.857	1.435
CP5: Helped GB Become a Nationally Known City	6.675	0.725
CP6: Can Host Other Major Sporting Events	5.048	1.653
CP7: Outsiders Know More About My Community	6.008	1.439
CP8: Gave My Community an International Identity	6.111	1.279
CP9: Enhanced Image as a Major City	5.659	1.581
AVERAGE	5.996	1.255

Table 8 – Green Bay Community Pride as a Result of Enhanced Image Results

Green Bay residents, overall, agreed (scores 5.30-6.15) that the boost in city image due to the Packers brings community pride. This psychic income section featured the second-highest average agreement level in Green Bay (5.996). Survey questions CP1, CP2, and CP5 revealed strong agreement (average > 6.16) that the Packers bring a positive image, positive recognition, and national awareness to Green Bay. Additionally, this section had the lowest average standard deviation, which represents a high level of consistency in resident agreement for this survey section.

Enhanced Image Effects:

Informants across stakeholder groups mentioned the benefits to city identification and branding that come from hosting the Packers. Several stakeholders explained that the team's full name, The Green Bay Packers, gives outsiders a general reference point for the city's location. G1 in the city government, for instance, said:

That's a wonderful thing for us not to have to kind of explain upon introduction where Green Bay is. You know, if we didn't have the Packers, it would be much less identifiable... It's just a kind of a time saver to say that you're from Green Bay, and people sort of immediately understand roughly where you are.

Green Bay also benefits from name recognition even among people who cannot necessarily place the city on a map. N1 mentioned that the Packers bring positive associations and acclaim for outsiders who have only heard of the city, both in the United States and abroad:

You can start a conversation and say Green Bay, and people will say, "Oh, the Packers." It doesn't matter where you are, right? Chances are someone's gonna say, "Oh, the Packers." So, from a perspective of opening the door for conversations, especially with people from outside of the immediate area or the state, the positive recognition that we have as a result of the Green Bay Packer franchise is helpful.

Interviewees also pointed out that the surrounding region and state also benefit from Packers recognition. A1 said that the team "help[s] bring some awareness of where Wisconsin is," and N1, in conversations with candidates looking to relocate to Northeast Wisconsin, starts with a conversation about Green Bay for its name recognition but then expands the discussion to the region: "It's a positive foundation to build upon."

However, several informants cautioned against relying too heavily on the Packers brand for place promotion, for its dominant cultural force can easily overshadow other amenities in the area. G1 called it a “tension” to be “simplistically branded as the home of the Packers:”

There there’s like a very obvious stereotype associated with Green Bay and the default brand of being the “Frozen Tundra” and “Cheeseheads.” Like that’s the only thing that we have. It’s like “Oh yeah, it’s like the Packers, and that’s pretty much it, right?” Well, obviously not. There’s a lot more that we have going on in town in addition to the Packers.

T1, a tourism professional in Green Bay, noted that the Packers “promote themselves and they promote their things. They really don’t promote the rest of the area... the Packers really aren’t promoting the Botanical Garden. I don’t think they’ve ever mentioned it.” A1, a University of Green Bay faculty member, similarly pointed out that the Packers have important “brand power, but they can’t be everything.” She argued that Green Bay has “good schools, places to shop, attractions for people to visit, nature trails” that are not amplified enough by the region.

Many residents realize that it would be “absolutely ridiculous” not to use the Packers for place promotion because “that is what sets [Green Bay] apart from everywhere else.” (D1). However, stakeholders working in tourism and place promotion say they must intentionally highlight other features of the area. T2 achieves this through a “Yes, and” strategy, where the city recognizes “*Yes*, we have the Packers, *and* many other assets.” N1, for example, mentions a few of the non-Packer advantages of the region:

[It’s important] to share all the other assets that we have, not only in Green Bay, but if you’re looking at Door County: the shoreline, the lighthouses, and the parks. I’m from Marinette County. It’s the waterfall capital of Wisconsin, so being able to talk about the number of trails and the different aspects that we have, and then all of the other cool stuff that comes from the New North region sometimes is sparked because of that initial statement of, “oh, the Green Bay Packers.”

A handful of informants reflected on what the city of Green Bay would look like without the Packers. Both D1 and N2 used the same word, “devastating,” to describe a situation where the Packers left Green Bay. D1, who works in urban design, said, “We’d survive, but we would be just another town, another midsized town.” At a separate point in the interview, he mentioned that Green Bay would lose its recognition:

If we let the Packers go, we’re just going to be just another mid-sized city in the Midwest. We’ll be, I don’t know why I say a city because I don’t want to have it be an insult, but we’ll be Huntsville, Alabama. Not many people outside of the South know anything about Huntsville, and that would be Green Bay, really, if we didn’t have the Packers.

Other stakeholders echoed the idea that Green Bay would lose status if the Packers left the city. P1 argued that “Green Bay, from a historical perspective, without the Packers, is probably no different than, let’s say like Oshkosh, Wisconsin. It’s about the same size. Or even Appleton. You could pick any similar-sized city, especially if they’re along a river.” G2 called this topic the “big debate” and wagers that 70-80 percent of residents think “Green Bay wouldn’t be anything without the Packers.” He hesitantly agreed, saying, “I don’t know, we’d be Gary, Indiana.”

Two informants suggested that losing the Packers would create an identity crisis for Green Bay. N2 asked, “Would the town dry up and go away? No, it wouldn’t, but it would lose its identity...I think there’s always a risk when you have such a dominant player for fear of what happens if they go away.” G2 brainstormed what could replace the Packers if they ever left a cultural void in the city:

Honestly, if they were to leave or be done, we'd have to try and get something there. I think the mayor had once talked about maybe expanding soccer. Maybe we can get some soccer team. Our season would be really short, or it would be really cold... I think there's an audience for it.

Pride Manifestations:

One point of residential pride in Green Bay comes from the relationship that the team and city have cultivated over the past century. Residents feel that Green Bay is special for being the smallest city in the United States to host a professional sports team. G2 explained the pride that residents feel: "Be proud of it. Say, 'hey, look what we're able to do as a small town. We're able to keep these guys here, and they love being here.'" Other informants likened the Packers to a family member or a friend whose achievements are celebrated by everyone in the city:

This is a member of our family when we're talking about the Green Bay Packers...and we take it personally if they don't play well. We take it personally if they do play well. If they win a Super Bowl, it's like we win the Super Bowl. It's very intrinsic to our well-being from that perspective. (N1)

Also important to local pride is the unique community ownership model that the team and city have balanced. D1 spoke about how special the Packers franchise is in a United States context:

All the sports networks talk about the fact that Green Bay is this small, tiny community, and that makes it special. And that they're owned by the community and there's not some rich billionaire owner... the Packers and the media have made a point to highlight that as a positive or as a uniqueness... I don't think that there would be as much diehard pride in the Packers if they were owned privately."

N2 reiterated this statement in her interview, too: "We're the only franchise—and this is all sports; this is baseball, this is hockey, this is soccer, this is football—where the community owns the team. And so, you have kind of a sense of pride." This pride is manifested through the proliferation of Packers G throughout the city. P2 said that she has never seen a team logo more widespread than the Packers' in Green Bay:

This is probably the only city I have ever lived in, in which it's a selling point for people to have the Packers logo in their bar, in their home. It is wild. Every single Friday, if not every single day, people are wearing the G logo. When you're in Green Bay, you must be a Packers fan. And if not, like, whose family are you from?

When she was house hunting, she was also surprised to hear that Packers merchandise was considered an additional amenity, which, to her, demonstrates a team-city relationship unique to Green Bay:

We're looking for a home, and the realtor is like, "You're going to love this home. The bar has the Packers emblem on it and green chairs. Oh, they'll leave the flag for you too," because they have the Packers flag on the outside... People have license plates. People sometimes have like the university on their license plate. Every other car here has a Packers logo, like I don't already know that you're a Packers fan. But there's just great pride. It's who they are. It's their brand that I've never seen anywhere else. Like, this is not normal in other places in the world, you know?

4.1.2: Enhanced Community Attachment

ENHANCED COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT	MEAN	SD
CA1: Helped Strengthen Friendships in my Community	4.806	1.723
CA2: Helped Residents Appreciate their Way of Life	4.581	1.749
CA3: Increased Sense of Well-Being	3.912	1.984
CA4: Increased Sense of Belonging in Community Groups	4.056	1.985
CA5: Increased Social Interactions Within Community	4.344	2.110
CA6: Increased Respect for the Community	4.347	2.012
CA7: Increased Cooperation Among Community Groups	4.384	1.887
CA8: Increased Community Confidence	4.468	1.880
AVERAGE	4.362	1.916

Table 9 – Green Bay Enhanced Community Attachment Results

Enhanced Community Attachment was the lowest-scoring section on the Green Bay psychic income survey. An average score of 4.362 reflects neither agreement nor disagreement (score 3.58-4.43) that the Packers' presence has increased residents' sense of belonging within the city or across different community groups.

Packers Community Events and Infrastructure

Informants mentioned that the Packers Organization has a long and established history of community outreach in Green Bay. The team's Halloween Spooktacular event was mentioned by two interviewed stakeholders, both inside and outside of the Packers Organization. P2, an internal employee, noted that most, if not all, the events the Packers put on are community-related:

Our community outreach does a lot of really great events for families. They just had Spooktacular, and literally inside Lambeau Field, are like five, six thousand kids, families all running around. And I think that's wonderful, but they also do other things, hosting a ton and giving a ton to organizations to support their existence here within Green Bay. I think those are pretty impactful in terms of what they do.

Besides events in Lambeau Field, residents positively associated the adjacent Titledown District with community engagement. P1, another Packers employee, said that the Titledown District's purpose is to "give back to the community. There's a 100-yard football field that can be used. They'll have kickball leagues and soccer, or they'll play special football games on it." Green Bay, Wisconsin, has notoriously brutal winters, but the space is also designed with that in mind. P1 continued to say, "The Packers recognized it. It was pretty smart. They have an ice-skating rink. So, people go ice skating during the holidays, and it's actually beautiful. They have heaters, and then they have a sledding hill...and you're looking at Lambeau field."

In the summer, the Titledown district hosts a wider variety of events. "They have live music, and they'll have farmers markets, so that's the way where it's evolving" (P1). This free-to-use, Packers-themed public space also allows for bottom-up community events to take place. P2 recalled one time the Titledown yoga class was canceled for rain, but the weather cleared up later in the day:

We had over a hundred people show up for yoga, even though we told them it was all canceled. And they decided to host their own yoga class. And I remember security calling

me saying, “I thought you canceled this yoga class. Do you want me to kick them out?” And I looked out the window, and I’m like, no, let them have their yoga class. Like it’s totally fine. That’s actually pretty awesome that these 100 people still came out, even though we canceled it, and didn’t have an instructor. They still just like, community-wise, held their own yoga class.

Family Packer Traditions

One theme across stakeholder groups was the importance of the Packers in maintaining generational and family connections. Because the Packers are one of the oldest franchises in the NFL and have never moved, P2 mentioned a “longstanding generational hold that gets passed...It’s like the people have grown up with the Packers because they literally have from like the time of their great-grandfather.” She also noted that there are Green Bay families “probably five generations deep. So, I can meet someone here who knows or is related to the people that made the Packers come to life. It’s not even a ‘six degrees of separation’ here. It’s like one or two.”

Other informants mentioned different Packers-related traditions that bring their family members together. One gameday ritual for families living close to the stadium is opening their lawns to visiting fans:

It’s just that kind of a family tradition. I think part of it, too, is because the stadium is built in the middle of a neighborhood where you have on-street parking for the most part. And you have homes, that’s how they make a lot of money. Every home game, they’re parking cars, you know, on their lawns, and then they get the kids involved and they all dress up in costumes and Packers attire, and you know it’s kind of a way of life. (N2)

G2 said that families around Lambeau “love having the Packers” because of this lawn parking tradition: “Families, their kids will grow up doing that and putting [the money] aside for college... And the joy and fun on game day of people coming in from out of state and out of town really is something to see.”

Another family tradition talked about in interviews is the passing down and registration for season football tickets. Lambeau Field season tickets have been sold out since 1960, and the Packers website calls their waiting list “legendary,” with over 150,000 names and a 30+ year wait time for an opportunity to buy (Green Bay Packers, 2025). When asked about his connection to Green Bay, one of the first things G2 said is that he is a season ticket holder with the Packers thanks to a ticket his grandpa passed down. P2 explained that the season ticket line is so long because “families have the right to transfer it to family members,” but “it has to stay in blood...It’s family relation... [The owner] has to transfer it to [their] biological kids.”

If somebody isn’t lucky enough to be grandfathered into season tickets, though, there’s another family strategy to acquire season tickets:

It’s pretty common even today, when people have a baby, one of the first things they do is put that baby’s name on the waiting list to get a Packer ticket... So, you hope that by the time your child gets to be a young adult, they have an interest, and they want those Packer tickets. (N2)

Opportunities for Improvement

Members of the city government and Packers employees gave conflicting opinions on how the field should be used. P1, a Packer employee, explained that “the Packers are very protective of that field and playing service, so they only have one event usually a year. It could be a concert... It has to be something special.” He said this “would definitely make [Lambeau] unique compared to most stadiums,” such as Fenway Park, where concerts sometimes directly

flank Red Sox game days. By avoiding setting up concerts on the field, the Packers can ensure that “the number one priority is Packers football” and that damage to the field is minimized.

Both members of the city government interviewed, though, expressed a desire to open Lambeau Field up to more community events. G1 explained that the City of Green Bay would “love to see the facility used even more than it is today. He reflected on the success of the Paul McCartney concert in 2019 and the exhibition soccer match between Manchester City and Bayern Munich in 2022. He noted that these were “great events” that “brought a lot of people into town.” G2, similarly, would like to put more pressure on the Packers to host more non-football-related events. He said that if the city gets “one every other year, we’ve been lucky.” He also noted, “Because we own [Lambeau Field], we could just tell them, ‘Hey, we’re going to hold a city-wide event here... I’m hoping we move forward with that.’”

4.1.3: Event Excitement

EVENT EXCITEMENT	MEAN	SD
EE1: Increased Interest in Football	5.349	2.056
EE2: Increased Fan Involvement with Football	5.048	2.244
EE3: Enjoy Watching More Football Games	5.302	2.125
EE4: Made Nightlife More Exciting	3.992	2.010
EE5: Contribute to Excitement of GB Visitors	6.262	1.291
AVERAGE	5.190	1.945

Table 10 – Green Bay Event Excitement Results

This section’s survey response average of 5.190 suggests that overall, residents somewhat agree (score 4.44–5.29) that hosting the Packers contributes to event excitement in Green Bay. However, specific question responses ranged from neutral to strongly agree, reflecting the largest variation within a measured psychic income dimension. EE4 (nightlife excitement) was neutral, EE2 (fan involvement) fell into the range for somewhat agree. Residents agreed with EE1 and EE3 (interest in football and watching more football games), and respondents were in strong agreement with EE5 (that the Packers contribute to the excitement of Green Bay visitors).

Scheduling Football Excitement

Green Bay residents mentioned that Packer football brings so much excitement and commotion to the city that other events must be planned around home games. D1 said that “In Green Bay, everyone, their schedules revolve around the Packer games... You can’t miss the game—you have to watch it.” G1 also mentioned that the city government plans around Packer games: “It’s a big part of how we structure our calendars, you know, during the fall and into the winter, and, you know, just how you go about your life.” N1 remembered when the Packers were in the playoffs in 2011 and went on to win the Super Bowl that season. She said that every time the team left Green Bay, there was a city-wide send-off from Lambeau Field. Her daughter, whose school was just two blocks from the stadium, would get out of class early to avoid traffic buildup. Looking back, she realized this is not normal for cities: “You altered your everyday activities to meet what was going on because of... the gameday experience... This is gameday. That’s what we do. This is how we do it differently.”

Some people in Green Bay find the prioritization of home games personally inconvenient, though. N2 said that the planning around the Packers can be a burden to residents because of increased price and demand in the city that day:

There are people that want to plan a wedding, and they want it in Green Bay, but yet they know when we have a home game, the price of the hotel stays dramatically increases. And sometimes it's a minimum of a two-night stay, and they can charge that because they know there's demand. But then it puts pressure on, you know, I'm not even going to the game. I'm going to Green Bay to celebrate my granddaughter's birthday, or whatever it might be, and you know it's going to cost me a lot more because it's falling on a home Packer game.

Stadium Excitement

Lambeau Field is considered the “Mecca” of NFL stadiums by fans and commentators, and stakeholders in this study recognize its importance for residents and visitors alike. P2 called a visit to Lambeau Field a “bucket list” item for fans of football: “Anyone can go to Los Angeles or New York and make their way to the stadium... But if you're coming to see the Packers, you are really committed.” N2 shared a similar perspective, saying, “There are six million visitors a year that come to Greater Green Bay, and the number one draw of those six million visitors is Lambeau Field. They want the tour.” Both the city and the Packers have worked to convert the stadium into a destination outside of the team's eight or nine home games each year.

G1 said, “Lambeau Field is now kind of a 365-day facility and operation... because it's Mecca for National Football League fans.” P1 credits the relocation of the Packers Hall of Fame to Lambeau Field as part of the stadium's 2003 renovations as one reason for its daily popularity, in addition to the daily tours of the stadium.

4.1.4: Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure

PRIDE IN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE	MEAN	SD
CI1: Improve Quality of Services	4.824	1.980
CI2: Improve Quality of Police and Fire	4.240	1.780
CI3: Improve City Public Facilities	4.680	1.880
CI4: Promoted Opportunities to Engage with the Community	5.424	1.670
CI5: Helped in Urban Development and Regeneration	5.104	1.950
AVERAGE	4.854	1.850

Table 11 – Green Bay Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure Results

On average, survey respondents somewhat agreed (score 4.44-5.29) that they feel pride in the Packers' efforts to improve community infrastructure in Green Bay. Respondents tended to agree somewhat with CI1, CI3, and CI5. Only CI2's (improved quality of police and fire) average response of 4.411 reflects neither agreement nor disagreement, whereas residents generally agree with CI4 (community engagement opportunities).

Titletown as Community Infrastructure

The most frequently mentioned Packers community infrastructure was the Titletown District just west of Lambeau Field. Informants across stakeholder groups held this mixed-use public space in high regard. P2 said that since moving to Green Bay, the biggest change she's seen in the team-city relationship is the “expansion of the Packers brand outside of football and leaning heavily into the community.” One key aspect of this growing community focus has been the development of Titletown:

Previously, Packers has always been a destination just to Lambeau Field. Now it's that plus the [Titledown] development here as being a pride point for the city, in which residents are so excited and happy to have visitors come in and show them their city, in which case, many times is a tour of Titledown.

N1 also mentioned that Titledown reflects the team's commitment to "helping the community around their stadium." She said that the "prime" location, which before 2017 was a parking lot, is being better used as "a destination for families to be able to go and enjoy at no cost." P2 said that truly open public spaces of this scale are new to Green Bay residents, which originally caused some confusion about the space's use:

Green Bay traditionally is very routine-focused, and having kind of a space that they were unfamiliar with took a while before people understood what it meant and how they can use it. A lot of the things that I think I encountered probably the first year was: 'Is this free? Can I come here for free?' And it's like, yes, it's free public space, free amenity. You can just come and enjoy it. 'Are the programs and events free?' Yes, it's free. When people got used to the idea that this is a space that's literally for them, it has exponentially grown, where it is an extension of their little community. Whether it's school, home, friend's house, now it's Titledown added in there, where it's a sense of pride for them.

P2 also explained that Titledown has a dual approach to providing space for community building in Green Bay. She said that the smaller-scale recurring events are the real way that the Packers "build our kind of community:"

You have your large events, which tend to drive tons of people. And I'll call that traditional marketing, right? You throw a very large experiential event, bring as many people as you can, get them to experience it. Hopefully they come back. But truthfully, the bread and butter of Titledown's offering is, I'll call it, weekly programs, where there's a constant routine attached to it, and people become invested.

Examples of these recurring events include "fitness programs that happen every single week," which P2 said are sustained even in the winter. Zumba is the "tried and true" class with 50 dedicated participants every week. Around 150 people attend Titledown's weekly yoga classes, and a new program called the Superhero Academy for Families has grown from five to around thirty kids plus their parents. P2 recognized how important consistency and dependability are for programs like these, and she looked at them through a hospitality lens: "If they have a good experience hospitality-wise, they'll continue to come and do it over and over and over."

Packers and Downtown Green Bay

While many stakeholders praised Titledown as an incredible asset for both Green Bay's residents and tourists, several people also recognized that the Packers' investment around the stadium has pulled attention away from other areas of the city, particularly Downtown. D1, a design professional, argued that "Green Bay could have been one of the coolest downtowns in the entire Midwest" because "it's like the fifth oldest settlement in the entire United States." However, the naming of the Titledown District creates conceptual confusion across different city districts:

Downtown gets lost in [the Titledown development] ... Downtown has had a resurgence in the past 20 years or so. But now [there's] the Titledown district, which is really confusing because what most people would think of as the Titledown District is where Titledown Brewery is. And it's a distinct area in downtown that people know. But the Titledown district next to Lambeau Field, Titledown Brewery is not there.

D1 continued to say that Titledown is “overkill” and “is in many cases drawing people away from the downtown because of that name recognition and Lambeau Field.” He posited that for tourists in Green Bay, “[Titledown] is their first stop. Whereas in most communities, downtown is the first stop. And then you might go and explore other areas. So, it’s kind of the opposite.” G1 similarly wished that the Packers would “diversify the way they think about real estate investment and development” by “taking a larger interest in our downtown.”

A couple of informants, however, were optimistic for a greater future connection between Titledown and Green Bay’s downtown. N2, who works at a non-profit, recognized that the stadium district is Green Bay’s “number one tourist draw,” and that there is a need to “better connect the stadium district with the downtown.” She is hopeful that the proposed Public Market downtown will allow for tourist “shopping and eating and staying in hotels” unrelated to the Packers. T1 also pointed out that the Packers Give Back program has donated money to the Public Market project. He sees this investment as a good example of the Packers’ “impact when it comes to projects throughout the community,” not just around Lambeau Field.

Packer Effects on Public Works

Although survey respondents neither agreed nor disagreed that the Packers’ presence has improved the quality of public works, several informants shared mixed insights on how the team affects city police and fire services. G1, a city government representative, recognized that the city has public safety responsibilities, and a Packers game day heightens risks: “Our police and fire department spend a lot of time and energy over at Lambeau.” He explained that the Packers “provide funding for police and fire on game days,” but the municipality is still picking up extra costs because of the team’s presence. “The Packers are paying for police and fire and EMS to be at the stadium, but once they leave the stadium, you know, then the municipality is picking up all of that cost.”

These costs, in his eyes, are justified because of the offsetting benefits of hosting the Packers, but they are still worth considering in the grand scheme: “Would [residents] trade it? No. They are glad that [the Packers] are here. But, you know, there is a cost to having them here.” G2, the other interviewed member of city government, similarly emphasizes the importance of holding the Packers accountable for public works costs: “We want to make sure we’re reimbursed for anything they use, whether police overtime, fire overtime, any damage that’s caused to streets, whatever. And making sure what they’re leasing from us is paid for.”

N2 said that the Packers’ development around Titledown adds value to the area, which boosts the quality of public works and education in the entire region through increased property tax revenue: “Those are for-profit entities that are paying their property tax. And that just allows the village of Ashwaubenon, city of Green Bay, to have money for police service, for fire service, to the school districts. And it’s just increased value.”

4.1.5: Community Excitement

COMMUNITY EXCITEMENT	MEAN	SD
CE1: Provided Entertainment	6.532	1.056
CE2: Brought Excitement	6.389	1.226
CE3: Provided New Activities	6.000	1.535
AVERAGE	6.307	1.272

Table 12 – Green Bay Community Excitement Results

Community Excitement was, on average, the highest-ranked psychic income dimension by Green Bay survey respondents. With a mean score of 6.307 across the three questions,

respondents strongly agreed that hosting the Packers contributes to community excitement. Specifically, CE1 (provided entertainment) and CE2 (brought excitement), with respective scores of 6.532 and 6.389, reflect strong agreement among respondents (score>6.16), and they were also two of the four highest-scoring questions on the entire survey. CE3 (provided new activities) also correlates with agreement among survey takers, with a score of 6.000.

Packers Training Camp

In stakeholder interviews, informants identified two different types of events that occur in Green Bay because of the Packers, namely NFL activities and non-football events that the city receives from its heightened status.

In late July, before the start of the NFL season, each team hosts a series of training camps to finalize rosters before the season, acclimate new players and coaching staff, build team chemistry, and fine-tune play calling. Informants say that the training camp is especially unique in Green Bay. This event came up in five interviews, with informants having overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the Green Bay tradition. N2 asked rhetorically, “Who would think people would fly in or plan their family vacations so that they can sit outside of the fence and watch a bunch of sweaty guys practice?” She credited the success of Green Bay’s training camp to the unique bike tradition outside of the stadium, which she called a “huge tourist draw:”

A Packer player will pick out a little kid with his bike or her bike, and the child gets to hold the Packer helmet while the player jumps on this little kid’s bike and pedals it across the street, through the parking lot, just to get to the practice field. And so, you have a row of kids who are all just, you know, smiling, and “pick me, pick me, pick me.”

P1 said that the ritual of NFL players riding bikes to practice started organically in the 1950s when kids would ride to the stadium to catch a glimpse of players before the season started. Somewhere along the way, players grabbed the small bikes and started riding between facilities with kids running alongside them. N1 also mentioned that the “proximity of Lambeau field to their practice field” allows for community members to interact closely with the Packer players, making this bike sharing possible. She called training camp “one of the coolest aspects about Green Bay.”

One reason for the success of the training camp in Green Bay is because of the bonds formed between kids and players. P2 explained that kids have “developed extreme relationships with the players that the players were like, ‘I’m picking you, Judy, as my training camp buddy. That I ride your bike every single day.’” P1 said that sometimes, the relationships between players and training camp visitors even extend beyond the month-long training camp period:

And I know I’ve seen players from Aaron Rodgers to whoever, where they actually get to know this kid, and they’ll ride their bike for the next five or six years. They’ll know them when they go off to college and stuff. They’ll stay in touch, and then it’s unique. The players, they keep tabs on them, and there’s just a special bond.

NFL Draft

In over half of the interviews conducted in this investigation, informants mentioned the NFL Draft, which Green Bay looked forward to hosting in April 2025. This annual event is put on by the National Football League and is officially known as the Annual Player Selection Meeting. Each year, cities interested in hosting the draft must submit a bid to the NFL, and then the 32 team owners vote on where the event will be held. 2025 is the first time Green Bay has ever hosted the NFL Draft, and N2 says that the uniqueness of both city and team was key to winning the bid:

In fact, that was one of the things, as I understand it, why the NFL decided to have the draft come to Green Bay next April. They looked at the uniqueness of our community.

And it's little things like that. The bicycles, the tradition, the smallest team in the NFL, community-owned, the foundation that the Packers have.

P2 also thought that Green Bay is a good host site because it's characteristic of many American towns: "We have the luxury, I think, of having such a small community that people resonate with." P1 explained that The Draft in Green Bay will look a little bit different than it ever has in bigger cities. Last year's draft in Detroit was in the metropolitan's downtown, which required visitors to "zigzag" between event locations on different blocks. He thought that Green Bay's compact football district would concentrate the excitement in one area to make a successful event: "It's going to be on this whole rectangle block from the arena to Lambeau Field to Titledown district, and it's like this straight shot. And because there are all these different activities, it'll be much more uniform."

One common sentiment is excitement to show off Green Bay on a truly global stage through the NFL Draft. T1, a tourism professional, for instance, points out the "importance of the media coverage" for Green Bay on Draft weekend:

You know, the NFL Draft, they're estimating 55 to 70 million people will be watching all over the world. I mean, how does a city our size get a three-day commercial that that many people are going to see around the world? It's crazy. And we wouldn't be getting it if it wasn't for having the team here in the stadium and the opportunity to host a draft.

N1 also looked forward to showing off Green Bay to a large new audience, and she said, "We're working hard to put our best foot forward." She echoed the importance of Green Bay's worldwide promotion to the excitement of the community:

It's talked about being on a world stage. The Draft is a big deal. And it's the work that's being done. And I think the excitement of the community, you know, to be able to host that, because who would have thought that Green Bay would ever get to host an NFL Draft? So that's super exciting.

New Events

Hosting the Packers generates greater city recognition and status, which brings more non-football events to the city. D1 said that many people are surprised to hear that Green Bay teenagers in the 1980s "created one of the best punk scenes in the country," and that "pretty much every touring punk band has played there in the past 40-some years." He admitted that this punk popularity is often overshadowed by the Packers, but he did recognize that the city's identification could be key to the music's popularity:

Maybe because of the Packers' recognition, maybe that's why these bands would go there. Because if they had never heard of the Green Bay Packers, they might have never heard of Green Bay. Not that most punk rockers are necessarily really into sports, but they're humans and they've heard. You know, they've heard of it probably because of the Packers.

Later in the interview, D1 listed other events that he credits the Packers with landing: "There are so many things that I think Green Bay gets, whether it be Korean musicians, major concerts. They would never come to Green Bay if it weren't for the Packers." Another event that takes advantage of Lambeau Field as an event venue is the New North Annual Summit. N1, a nonprofit employee, said that the event "used to move across the region," but Lambeau Field is "one of the only facilities in the region that can host that many people." Not only from a capacity standpoint does Lambeau Field bring events, but N1 says that the stadium itself is a key factor in creating excitement: "People want to, even to this day, people want to go to Lambeau, whether it's for a game or whether it's for an event."

4.2: Vallecas

In Vallecas, the psychic income survey received 115 responses. After eliminating all respondents who did not live in Madrid, a total of 103 survey responses were kept for analysis (see Table 13). 84 survey respondents were male, 18 were female, and 1 did not say. 80% of respondents were between 18 and 44 years old, with the most survey participation (32.7%) within the 25-34-year-old range (see Figure 5).

Gender Identity	Frequency
Male	84
Female	18
Prefer not to say	1

Table 13 – Vallecas Survey Gender Distribution

Vallecas Survey Respondent Ages

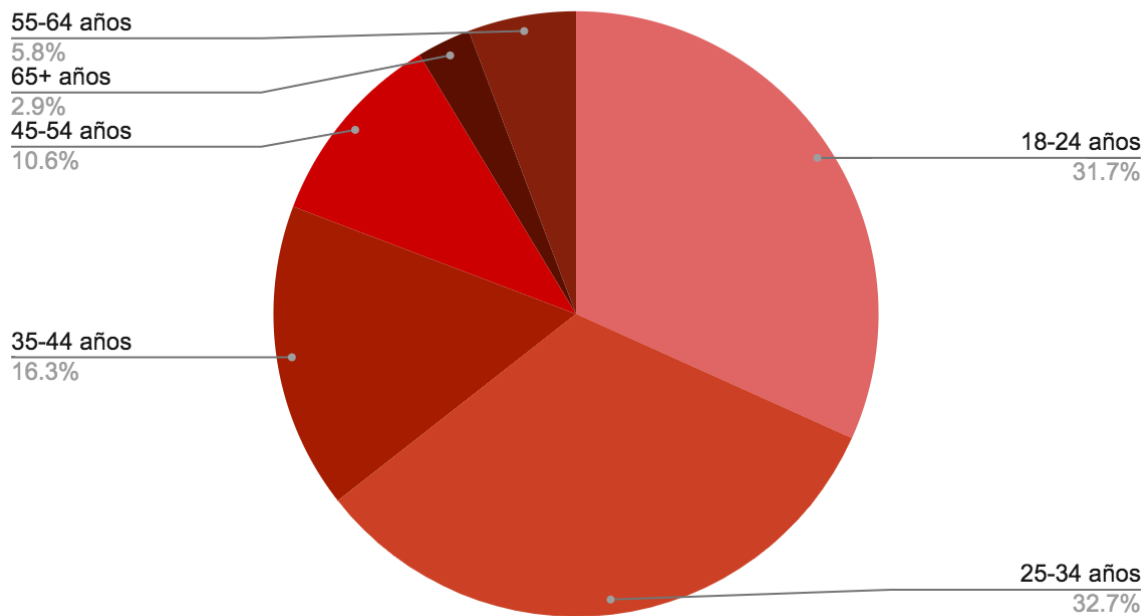


Figure 5 – Vallecas Survey Age Distribution

4.2.1: Community Pride as a Result of Enhanced Image

COMMUNITY PRIDE AS A RESULT OF ENHANCED IMAGE	MEAN	SD
CP1: Vallecas Positive Image	5.981	1.307
CP2: Vallecas Positive Recognition	6.125	1.212
CP3: Ability to Host a Major Sporting Event	5.375	1.644
CP4: Opportunities to Showcase the Neighborhood	6.183	1.180
CP5: Helped Vallecas Become a Nationally Known Neighborhood	6.481	0.945
CP6: Can Host Other Major Sporting Events	4.683	1.791
CP7: Outsiders Know More About My Community	5.750	1.327
CP8: Gave My Community an International Identity	5.353	1.608
CP9: Enhanced Image as an Important Neighborhood	5.612	1.381
AVERAGE	5.727	1.377

Table 14 – Vallecas Community Pride as a Result of Enhanced Image Results

In Madrid, residents, on average, agreed (score 5.30-6.15) that hosting Rayo Vallecano enhances the image of the Vallecas neighborhood. This psychic income section featured the second-highest average agreement score of 5.727, and CP4 and CP5 reflected strong agreement among survey respondents. CP1, CP2, CP3, CP7, CP8, and CP9 fell into the range of agreement, and residents somewhat agreed on CP6. This section of questions also featured the second-lowest average standard deviation, which reflects relative respondent consistency within this section.

Vallecas: Strong Standalone Image

One consistent theme across stakeholder interviews was the idea that the Vallecas, separate from Rayo Vallecano, has a unique neighborhood identity that residents are proud of. These exceptional characteristics for a Madrid neighborhood heighten resident pride and sense of belonging to the area, according to F4:

I think anyone who has lived there can tell you that it's a feeling of belonging...I think someone who lives in another neighborhood in Madrid won't tell you they live there when you ask them where they're from. They won't say they're from Hortaleza. They'll say they're from Madrid. Someone from Vallecas will always tell you they're from Vallecas.

J1 argued that “a Valleciano is not the same as a Madrileño” and continued to say that Vallecas has a strong identity on its own. A4, an interviewed professor, agreed: “I self-identify as Valleciano, and I do it with pride... When someone asks me, ‘Where do you live in Madrid?... I will often end up saying that I was born in Vallecas. So, there is the sense of pride, of identity.’” Because of Vallecas’s strong reputation, F2 does not think that Rayo Vallecano affects neighborhood recognition as much as other clubs might.

Vallecas has always been famous in Spain...We’ve always been associated with a number of things that were kind of bad. And everybody knew Vallecas because of that. So, it’s not like the team had to put us on the map for anything. We put ourselves on the map. Or people put us on the map before.

A4 admitted that Vallecas is already well-known in Spain, but Rayo might play a small role in its recognition: “Vallecas is known partially because of Rayo Vallecano. But as I said, it’s one of those few districts that are known all over Spain. People will have heard of Vallecas.”

The area’s activist, working-class reputation gives the neighborhood a strong external identity. F3 argued that Vallecas is known for its exceptional neighborhood characteristics in the city: “There’s nowhere like Vallecas in Madrid... The vibe is kind of dissatisfaction; the vibe is kind of protest... There’s this sense of rebellion or something about the neighborhood.” A2 chose to live in Vallecas because “it’s a working-class neighborhood. It’s a neighborhood of a lot of struggle, of a lot of collective action.” Later, he mentioned that the area hosts “many collectives related, for example, to housing, related to the queer community, related to feminism, with many other struggles” in addition to being “active in migrant and anti-racist groups.” A3 said that one of his favorite parts of Vallecas is its “political dynamism,” which he calls a “very strong” characteristic across the neighborhood.

Informants also noted that Vallecas is stamped by migration. A4 described the neighborhood as having a “migration background... hav[ing] mostly to do with national internal migration, people from southern central Spain... Now there is this very important element of international migration, mostly Latin American people.” A2 explained that within the neighborhood, “migrants have formed different communities... because they find people from their home countries [here].” J1, similarly, said that Vallecas hosts “people of all kinds, and here everyone is accepted as long as there is respect.” This diversity of resident population leads F1 to compare Vallecas to “Lavapiés in the center,” for both Madrid neighborhoods have a significant immigrant population and established arrival infrastructure.

Many stakeholders spoke about the feelings of humility and solidarity that pervade the district. F1 said, “The word in Spanish is *humilde*.” F3 also mentioned that there is a “solidarity ethic that is very prevalent in Vallecas... That kind of looking out for each other... If you can help your neighbor, you’ll help your neighbor.”

Rayo Vallecano Amplifying Neighborhood Values

Vallecas residents also perceived a congruence between neighborhood values and Rayo Vallecano initiatives, which amplifies the neighborhood’s reputation throughout Spain and beyond. A3 asserted, “There is a harmony between the neighborhood, between the people who make up the neighborhood, and the neighborhood’s football team. I believe that is articulated through the values of Rayo Vallecano.” F1 explained that “the club is very left wing, as well as Vallecas,” and later continued, “the values of the players and the values of the community are interlinked.” F2 argued that residents of Vallecas see their team “as an extension of who we are... We want to see humble people, we want to see hard workers. We want to see solidarity players that don’t feel they are different than normal people... We want to see inclusivity...” J1 said that “Rayo represents all of us. In the end, Rayo is what we’re most proud of.”

Informants also felt that Rayo Vallecano’s team values represented their personal beliefs. F4, for instance, contrasted the values of Rayo against the current landscape of Spanish soccer: “I feel like it does represent me, or at least it has ideals or values that are appealing... But beyond that, I think it’s a team that tries to integrate everyone.” A3, who admitted he was not a fan of soccer, even said that he sees his values in the team: “Rayo Vallecano is all of us, in some way... Maybe I don’t go to the games, and I don’t even watch them, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t part of my identity.” He argued that “sport is supposed to be more than just 11 guys kicking a ball around. It allows for values of equality that are desirable... I notice that Rayo Vallecano broadcasts them, and people connect with them.” F3 thinks that Rayo is an exceptional case in *La Liga* because of the harmony between team and community values: “I don’t think there’s any other fan group in Spain that is so intrinsically linked to their values.”

Because the tenets of Rayo Vallecano align so closely with the beliefs of the neighborhood, many residents feel that the team amplifies the image and characteristics of

Vallecas to new external audiences. F3 pointed out how the media exposure of Rayo Vallecano increases the outside knowledge of an already-strong Vallecano identity:

“What benefits does [Vallecas] gain? That for every second week, that neighborhood is beamed into millions of households across the world. The identity of Vallecas. People talking about Vallecas. People singing the praise of Vallecas. It’s one of the last neighborhood clubs, and it’s so unique in the middle of all these flats. Because Vallecas, you’ve been there. It’s not a particularly attractive area. It’s got no cathedrals. You wouldn’t go there as a tourist. You’re not gonna go to Vallecas to sightsee.

A2 also mentioned Rayo Vallecano and the appeal of *La Liga*, “creates an idea of the neighborhood from these media outlets and their broadcasts of the games and events. It influences how the discourse that Vallecas is a neighborhood of struggle, a neighborhood of political demands, is legitimized.” When Rayo Vallecano wins on the field, residents also feel that their neighborhood characteristics and political values have achieved victory as well:

When Rayo wins, the values of the neighborhood are amplified: Even those who aren’t big football fans say they want Rayo to win. It’s like a sense of neighborhood pride, you know? Even if you’re not very informed and you’re not a football fan, it kind of makes you feel a certain neighborhood pride. Because in a way, it’s like winning against another team that doesn’t speak out as openly about certain struggles (A2).

National/International Reputation

Stakeholders shared mixed opinions about how far Vallecas’s image travels around the world because of its neighborhood club. F3 said that Rayo’s position in the top division of *La Liga* gives the team and neighborhood a global audience, which is a point of residential pride:

[Rayo] has a stadium of a *La Liga* club. And it’s one of the highest-profile leagues in the world. So, like I say, every fortnight Vallecas is on the global map. So, what does it give to the fans? Source of pride. Source of huge community pride that our club is beamed into houses in Australia, in Austin, Texas, in Alaska, in, you know, the north of Russia, whatever. Vallecas is on the global map. People know it exists.

Other informants, however, questioned Vallecas’s recognition outside of Spain. F4 said, “I don’t think we have that much international impact.” She continued, “We don’t have many fans who come from outside. I think it’s because we’re a smaller team... Real Madrid, Barcelona, and Atlético Madrid...have more international impact.” F3 called these three clubs “the big three,” which dominate Spanish and international sports and news broadcasts. A3 also argued that the principal Spanish clubs overshadow Rayo Vallecano to non-Spanish audiences:

There aren’t many people outside of Madrid that I know who support or are fans of Rayo Vallecano. I’ve been to Mexico, and they always ask, ‘Well, are you a Barça fan? A Real Madrid fan?’ and then they list 60 teams. And I always tell them, ‘Well, I’m a Rayo fan.’ So maybe the external image is not as projected as these teams that have all the televisions broadcasting their games, like Real Madrid, Barcelona, or Atlético de Madrid.

A3, later, cautioned against equating unfamiliarity with negative team or place connotations: “Being unknown doesn’t mean having a bad image... I don’t think there are people who would say Rayo Vallecano is a bad team.” Within Spain, though, informants generally believed that Rayo Vallecano and Vallecas have a positive reputation. F2 said that because Rayo is a smaller, neighborhood club, “people tend to be nicer to you” and that fans “are generally very well received everywhere in Spain.” F3 wagered that “the average Spanish football fan would have a soft spot for Rayo because of what they represent...They never have a big budget. They play in a shit stadium. They’re the classic underdog.”

4.2.2: Enhanced Community Attachment

ENHANCED COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT	MEAN	SD
CA1: Helped Strengthen Friendships in my Community	5.641	1.297
CA2: Helped Residents Appreciate their Way of Life	5.422	1.367
CA3: Increased Sense of Well-Being	5.343	1.532
CA4: Increased Sense of Belonging in Community Groups	5.667	1.531
CA5: Increased Social Interactions Within Community	5.451	1.480
CA6: Increased Respect for the Community	5.686	1.528
CA7: Increased Cooperation Among Community Groups	5.263	1.632
CA8: Increased Community Confidence	5.314	1.635
AVERAGE	5.473	1.500

Table 15 – Vallecas Enhanced Community Attachment Results

Survey responses show that residents agreed (score 5.30-6.15) that hosting Rayo Vallecano contributes to enhanced community attachment in Vallecas (average 5.473). The average for every statement except for CA7 (Somewhat Agree) fell into the range of agreement (scores 5.30-6.15).

“Two Heads of Rayo:” Who Creates Community?

Rayo Vallecano’s effect on community attachment in Vallecas inspired clarifying discussions and comments in many stakeholder interviews. Informants made the distinction between Rayo Vallecano as an institution and Rayo Vallecano as a collection of fans and supporter groups when discussing the community-building impact of the team. The former has little to no effect on community attachment, and the latter is very involved in community-building processes. F3 described these as the “two heads to Rayo Vallecano:”

There’s Rayo Vallecano, the club that’s existed since 1994. And then there’s Rayo Vallecano, the business, which is currently being run by Raúl Martín Presa. I think the average person in Vallecas is in love with what Rayo Vallecano, the club, is. I mean, it’s like a super close symbiotic relationship. The relationship with Rayo Vallecano, the entity run and managed, the business, if you like, by Raúl Martín Presa, is a different kettle of fish. So, I’d say there’s an intense love affair with the club in the neighborhood. That love affair is very much absent when it comes to the relationship between the management of the club.

Other informants in this study shared similar negative feelings toward club leadership and the institutional lack of community engagement. F4 said that Rayo has never had wonderful presidents, “but this gentleman now...is not the most suitable for a team like Rayo.” She would like to see someone who “take[s] better care of both the fans and the players and everyone who is part of Rayo in general.” F1, bluntly, stated that Presa “doesn’t support Rayo. He’s just a businessman... Everybody hates him.” This tension between fans and team leadership, according to F3, stems largely from political differences, which negatively affect the community engagement potential of the club:

Raúl Martín Presa, political background, is right-wing... So, his political perspectives are not aligned with the supporters’ perspectives, and certainly not aligned with the

neighborhood. For him to get on board with all these initiatives, it's not gonna come naturally to him.

J1 mentioned that the political differences between club leadership and supporters are the main points of tension for fans. He said that the *Bukaneros*, Rayo Vallecano's group of ultra-fans, represent fan interests and lead the charge against club leadership: "The *Bukaneros* are the biggest representatives of Rayo, and without them Rayo wouldn't be what it is... They have anti-fascist ideologies..., and there's not a good relationship between *Bukaneros* and the president." Later in the interview, he thought, "There are people who either support the *Bukaneros* or support Presa."

F3 argued that the only way Rayo Vallecano could provide the institutional community building that fans demand would be to change owners: "It's so much easier to swim if everyone's going the same direction. At the moment, Presa's swimming against the tide." In his eyes, "Raúl Martín Presa has gone out of his way to avoid that. He doesn't do anything to form the building of community." F2 agreed, saying, "If we had a different guy in charge of the organization, it would be different. I don't feel that the team does a lot of things for the community institutionally."

F1 guessed that 90% of all community events related to Rayo Vallecano come from the fans. F3 took it another step to say that any community event of value is fan-organized, often by the *Bukaneros*: "Anything that's done outside... The perfect example, [Rayo] celebrated their centennial last year. All the interesting activities of exhibitions and talks, you know, looking back and creating murals and all that. All done by the supporters."

These fan-organized events are highly regarded by stakeholders in the neighborhood, and they often center on providing mutual support. J1 said, "In the end, football is football, but what's important sometimes is helping others and growing together... There are many people from Rayo who help others. For example, food collection... to build community and help us all grow." F1 pointed out that "because this is a neighborhood team, the fans are just closer... I think because it's such a small club, and because there's such a tight-knit community, yeah, the fans do most things. The fans organize." One event that F1 says consistently succeeds is the *previa* before home games in Vallecas, where "different groups of fans, different supporters... meet either in bars or outside bars or with cans or in the park." This pregame tradition is flexible, and he says that fans "just try to drink for a few hours, have tapas, eat a bit of food, sing Rayo songs."

Connections Across Groups

Residents in Vallecas also expressed the idea that Rayo Vallecano game days and fan group community programming bring together different groups of people for a common cause. F2, for example, relies on Rayo Vallecano to keep in contact with the community he grew up with but is no longer part of. He lives abroad now but explained, "The team is a way to be connected with all the people I love in my neighborhood." He mentioned his WhatsApp group, which he calls "basically a Rayo fan group" with all his friends:

We follow the team almost daily. Whatever happens daily on the team, it's going to be discussed. I think it's not only for me, but also a kind of social thing in Vallecas. You discuss what's going on with the team... You discuss everything. But it's a way of getting Vallecas together.

The pregame rituals in Vallecas and the gameday experience for fans are what F3 called a "community experience" because "it's the same faces you see week in and week out. You don't get that at the Bernabéu, and you're not gonna get that at Atlético Madrid, just because of the size." J1 echoed that the *previa* provides opportunities to see familiar neighbors: "At the *previa* for Rayo... we all know each other because everyone goes with their group. It's like everything comes together there, but inside, we all know each other." A3 argued that this physical

congregation is very important in today's social media landscape: "In this case, people gather in the same stadium...It seems very interesting to me in an era where this is being lost."

A couple of fans did admit that the soccer fanbase in Spain is relatively uniform. F1 said that "most of the fans that I see in the stadium are obviously men. In there, I'd say between 30s and 50s." F3, too, noted that Rayo's fan base is "still predominantly white, still predominantly male," but he says, "that applies to Spanish football everywhere."

In Vallecas, though, several informants pointed out that Rayo Vallecano events still encourage interactions between diverse groups. A2 noticed that on game days, "there's a lot of coexistence between Spaniards and migrants" because of migrant-owned business traffic: "The dynamic changes a lot when there's a game." J1 mentioned seeing "people of all kinds" supporting Rayo, and that differences are set aside "to go to the field and support." A3 has observed young fans especially united by Rayo Vallecano. When he goes to the municipal sports facilities next to the Vallecas Stadium, he sees "many young people who connect through Rayo Vallecano."

F3 and F1 also explain that fan groups program events specifically meant to encourage community building between different groups of people. F3, for instance, said, "Every year, Rayo does the *jornadas contra el racismo* and very few clubs will do this...This is all done by the fans. They rent the space, they organize the thing, they get a DJ, they do the flyers." F1 mentioned fan events honoring Wilfred Agbonavbare, a Nigerian goalkeeper for the team in the 1990s who "was a club legend" and then "went down as a martyr against racism" for Rayo fans to continue anti-racism programming.

A2, an interviewed professor, however, saw opportunities for improvement in inviting different migrant groups into soccer spaces. He called current fan initiatives a good first step:

The fact that [fan groups] speak out so openly against racism and that they paint murals and post it on their social media is very powerful. I think it's important because many of their followers don't know anything about this...Because when we put up a mural against racism, it's good for your followers to see it. It's a first step. That they dedicate a door to Wilfred or that they hold an event for Wilfred. That is very important. That's very symbolic. They have very high symbolic capital.

However, there is potential for more integrated and consistent immigrant participation in football spaces, which he argued are "designed for this idea of a white, cisgender, heterosexual family." He said that "including migrants goes beyond inviting you to talk about racism. It even includes other kinds of issues that have nothing to do with identity, but have to do with class struggle, with more issues from the neighborhood." He called for "more intention" from fans and Rayo Vallecano leadership "not only in anti-racism events, but also in party organization, in event organization, in rallies" in topics "related, for example, to housing, related to the queer community, related to feminism" to fully encompass "issues more from the neighborhood."

Finally, Rayo Vallecano provides a common ground for resident fans and non-fans alike to interact. Several informants mentioned that talking about Rayo Vallecano is a great way to start conversations between people living in the neighborhood. F2, for example, said that "Rayo kind of brings us together. And it's like a cocoon for us to start discussing something. And then you can talk about anything else, you know, but it's kind of always around them." F1, similarly, said that talking about Rayo is "kind of a way to start a conversation." He recalled people asking him, "Hey, you watch the game?" then following it up with a question of "By the way, how are you doing?" He said that "Everyone from Vallecas, they will have [Rayo] in mind every time they speak to someone." F4 told a similar story, saying that people in Vallecas, fans or not, know about Rayo and can use it as a talking point with their neighbors:

Almost everyone in Vallecas cares about or knows something about Rayo. Maybe not everyone will watch the games, obviously, but I think almost all the neighbors at some point either have gone to the stadium or know that Rayo plays. In general, people are

aware of what Rayo does. I don't know if everyone likes football. There will be people who are totally indifferent to the subject, but as a general rule, people know if there are games. In fact, whenever you leave the stadium, there are always people who ask you how the game went and so on, even if they didn't go to see it.

Rayo Vallecana Family Traditions

Interview data also suggest that Vallecana residents perceive strengthened family or generational connections through Rayo Vallecana. Several informants mentioned the team's family orientation, which encourages interactions between people of all ages. F3 said that within the Rayo fanbase, "you get a lot of families, too. You get a lot of kids." He called the team "reasonably family friendly—reasonably as much as any kind of big sport event...but it's the kind of place you take your kids and not be worried about them." F1, too, noticed that the *previa* can be a family event, too:

There'd be kids around playing football in the park, drinking Coca-Cola, eating sandwiches, whatever. So, it's like a family vibe as well. It's not just like guys in their 30s and 40s just like drinking cans. It's families and women and children as well.

Looking around the stadium during matches, he also sees fans of all ages. Most of the supporters are men between their 30s and 50s, but "there are like people in their 70s and 80s that would go, and they've been going for years. And there are a lot of kids who go as well." He thinks that the diversity of age is greater in Rayo than in other clubs. Other informants mention family traditions based on Rayo Vallecana fanhood. F3 called supporting Rayo Vallecana in Vallecana "a legacy being handed down... Some of the kids would support Vallecana because of their parents and their grandparents." F1, similarly, said that going to games with family can be a way to connect across generations: "I know people who like, they're bringing their kids. They went with their parents. They went with their parents. And it's going down."

4.2.3: Event Excitement

EVENT EXCITEMENT	MEAN	SD
EE1: Increased Interest in Soccer	5.933	1.490
EE2: Increased Fan Involvement with Soccer	5.942	1.708
EE3: Enjoy Watching More Soccer Games	6.019	1.545
EE4: Made Nightlife More Exciting	4.686	2.000
EE5: Contribute to Excitement of Vallecana Visitors	6.010	1.235
AVERAGE	5.718	1.596

Table 16 – Vallecana Event Excitement Results

Residents who took the survey agreed (score 5.30-6.15) that hosting Rayo Vallecana brings excitement by increasing interest in soccer (EE1), increasing fan involvement with soccer (EE2), enjoying watching more soccer games (EE3), and through the excitement of visitors (EE5). Respondents somewhat agreed (score 4.44-5.29) that hosting Rayo Vallecana has made nightlife more exciting (EE4).

(Non-)Importance of Winning

One theme that emerged from interviews was the relative non-importance of winning for Rayo fan enjoyment. Informants overwhelmingly agreed that athletic success is not the reason for their support. F2 stated, "We're not here for the trophies because otherwise we'll be Real

Madrid supporters.” He continued to say, “It’s very easy in Spain to support a winning team. You’re going to have a lot of fun with that.” However, Rayo fans “don’t want the team to be successful at all costs. We need to see the values first.” Indeed, F3 pointed out that despite being in the first division of *La Liga*, supporting Rayo Vallecano is not necessarily a “glamorous” experience: “You don’t go to see Rayo to see them lift trophies because they’re not gonna win. They’re not gonna win *La Liga*.” He added, “Rayo don’t have a bulging trophy cabinet. They’ve never won anything. They’ve won the second division, but that means nothing.”

Instead, informants said that Rayo Vallecano fans and Vallecas residents get their enjoyment from other sources. F3 called “the social side of going to games... every bit as important as the football.” He called the entire gameday experience a “package” that includes the “super important” pregame and postgame events.

Other fans said that playing a supporting role for the team is exciting and enjoyable. F3 argued that Rayo fans are “there to support the team through thick and thin, and it’s more thin in the case of Rayo.” From his perspective, fans attend games “because they believe that they can add their bit to supporting the team... When you win, you celebrate it because it’s not that often.” He credits the supporters for Rayo’s “brilliant” 3-3 draw against Real Madrid at home in December 2024:

I mean, it was just fantastic when you can go head-to-head with a team that has a budget maybe 30 times the size of yours. To compete on that stage, it’s just so satisfying... The supporters are always there. They’re the heartbeat of the stadium.

F3 also mentioned that Rayo fans are “not there to be entertained” like supporters of Real Madrid might be in Bernabéu. A3 conceptualized this difference in the source of enjoyment between Real Madrid fans and Rayo Vallecano fans by comparing each to a different type of cinema:

I think this is like the movies. There’s the commercial cinema, on the one hand, box office. It moves millions. The movies are seen by everyone. And then there’s auteur cinema, which few people will see, which doesn’t have as much funding, but which is of very high quality and is the one that wins awards. In Cannes or wherever, because I see it that way. I believe that quality is not necessarily characterized by the money it moves. And for me, the quality of a team doesn’t depend so much on how well the players are allowed to play. Not the sport, but how they win. Because if you win by cheating, if you win by lying, etc., well, maybe the work you do isn’t that desirable. I think those are the differences between Rayo and Real Madrid.

Stadium Excitement

The opportunity to surround and visit the historic *Estadio de Vallecas* is another reason for Rayo Vallecano event excitement among residents and visitors. A2 said that the stadium is unique in high-level Spanish soccer: “The stadium is so integrated into the material space that you can’t imagine it not being there.” F4 mentioned how the stadium is in a “historical location,” which creates “a lot of affection for Rayo.” If the stadium were to move from where it is in the neighborhood, “it would be a great loss, and it wouldn’t be the same Rayo.”

Other informants pointed out that the *Estadio de Vallecas* is so beloved and garners so much excitement because of its old-school authenticity. F1 called the stadium “a little vintage.” He articulated several amenities of the neighborhood venue: “There’s loads of bars here. It’s been there for years. Small streets. It’s easily accessible because of the metro and the buses. It’s just authentic. Like it’s a stadium in the middle of the neighborhood... It’s old school.” F3 called watching a game in the *Estadio de Vallecas* an intimate experience:

That’s the magic of Rayo. It’s that intimacy. It’s that sense of closeness to the players, closeness with the other fans. Everybody’s on top of each other. It’s in sort of this little

area poked in beside the flats. It's just, you know, all the ingredients are there for intimacies. And for me, that's one of the things that's magic about it.

F1 said that the *Estadio de Vallecas* is “a fortress...The stadium, the fans are really close to the pitch, and I think away teams are scared to come to Vallecas.” F3 stated that a sold-out game in Vallecas brings 14,000 fans. The excitement of the fans in a sold-out stadium led F3 to claim, “14,000 in Vallecas makes 10 times more noise than the 80,000 of the Bernabéu.”

4.2.4: Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure

PRIDE IN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE	MEAN	SD
CI1: Improve Quality of Services	4.257	1.736
CI2: Improve Quality of Police and Fire	3.931	1.710
CI3: Improve City Public Facilities	3.693	1.696
CI4: Promoted Opportunities to Engage with the Community	5.040	1.777
CI5: Helped in Urban Development and Regeneration	4.228	1.702
AVERAGE	4.230	1.724

Table 17 – Vallecas Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure Results

Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure was the lowest-scoring psychic income section in Vallecas, with an average section total of 4.230. Residents neither agreed nor disagreed (score 3.58-4.43) that hosting Rayo Vallecano has improved community infrastructure in the neighborhood. Every question except for CI4 (somewhat agree) corresponded with “neither agree nor disagree.”

Leadership Resistance to Community Investment:

Informants in this study pointed out the club leadership's unwillingness to invest in Vallecas, a pattern that is becoming more common in European soccer. F4 said that owning a soccer team is becoming “purely transactional,” and that “now, whoever buys your team basically has no interest in the team itself.” He lamented the lack of institutional programming in Vallecas: “I'd like to see more initiatives from the team... That they would improve the quality of the facilities and so on, because it's true that everything has fallen apart. I know the Rayo Sports City is in a sorry state.” F2 thinks that a greater purpose of a neighborhood team is to “serve the community they're a part of.” He asked a series of questions:

Why has this never happened? Why is there not a plaque in the street anywhere in Vallecas saying, “Rayo Vallecano gave the money to fix this. And now it's just a nice park because of the team.” Just to thank the community... They don't do anything, so it's a pity.

There was also a general agreement among interviewees that it would take a leadership change to see the type and level of community investment in Vallecas that they would expect from a neighborhood soccer team. J1, for example, complained that “[Presa] really doesn't do anything. He wants to move the stadium when he knows people don't want it moved.” Ideally, informants would like to see a president who invests in the existing host community rather than trying to move the team outside of Vallecas. F2 has hope that one day Rayo Vallecano will have a new owner that aligns themselves with the values of the team and the neighborhood:

Maybe one day we'll have a millionaire in Vallecas, and he will just buy the team. You asked me as well what are the things that I would like to see. Yeah, I don't know. As I

said, whatever helps the community. If it's just cleaning a park, like cleaning a park. If it's building more football grounds for the kids so they can play in the street, you know, like I want to see those things. I want to see things that, hey, there was nothing here. Now it's a playground. And kids are playing here every weekend. And there's like this plate there. Rayo Vallecano built this. It was not the Madrid government. It was not the central government. It was Rayo. So, it's us doing this through the team. That's what I want to see, you know. Whatever it is, it's not happening.

F3, similarly, described the tension between Presa and Vallecas as “one man's ego against a neighborhood, a fan base. And that's it in a nutshell.” He and F2 said that some fans even hope that Rayo Vallecano gets relegated to a lower division to encourage a leadership change: “There's times where a lot of Rayo fans have said ‘I hope we get relegated to *Segunda B* where the money dries up. He doesn't care anymore because he's not getting his pockets lined, and he leaves” (F3). He admitted that this would open the door to foreign ownership, but he said, “Anything's going to be better than Presa.” F2 said that some people he knows have “stopped supporting the team” and “want the team to disappear.”

4.2.5: Community Excitement

COMMUNITY EXCITEMENT	MEAN	SD
CE1: Provided Entertainment	6.320	1.040
CE2: Brought Excitement	6.404	1.029
CE3: Provided New Activities	5.460	1.636
AVERAGE	6.061	1.235

Table 18 – Vallecas Community Excitement Results

Finally, survey respondents, on average, strongly agreed (score>6.16) that Rayo Vallecano has provided entertainment to the neighborhood (CE1) and has brought excitement (CE2). Residents also agreed (score 5.30-6.15) that Rayo Vallecano has provided new activities (CE3). This section had the highest average score in Vallecas, as well as the lowest average standard deviation. This also points to high levels of consistency among respondents.

Rayo Vallecano New Events:

Two runs through the neighborhood were mentioned as successful team-adjacent events, namely the *Carrera del Rayismo* and the *San Silvestre Vallecana*. F1 and F3 explained that the former is a 10-kilometer race every year organized by the main fan club: “A couple thousand people do it and it finishes in the stadium. Then all the fans go for a beer at the end” (F1). F4 also mentioned the *San Silvestre Vallecana* in her interview, saying that the finish line inside the stadium makes it special. A4 said, “One way of expressing my identity as a Vallecana... is by running this race. I have done it with my partner for a few years...” He described a “sort of emotional attachment” he has with the race, too: “I think that the *San Silvestre Vallecana* helps project *el barrio*, but also the football club.

F1 said that Rayo's away games have provided him with opportunities to take a “mini holiday for the weekend” to travel to different Spanish cities and watch his team play. He recounted how he went to Sevilla before Christmas to watch a game, and he was recognized on the train back by Rayo players. Besides that, F1 cited several events in the neighborhood that wouldn't be possible without Rayo's presence. He said that the night before the interview, he was at the *Mercado de Numancia*, which is located right across the street from the *Estadio de Vallecas*, for a concert with a “real left-wing punk vibe” that “had nothing to do with football.” The *Mercado* was “packed” and that events like these have “gotten bigger because of Rayo”

Similarly, he posited that “a lot of the bars would not be here if Rayo weren’t here,” so there would be fewer social spaces for fans to meet and enjoy without the nearby team and stadium.

4.3: Analyzing Patterns Between Cases

4.3.1: Analyzing Green Bay and Madrid Similarities

When reviewing the quantitative results across both cases, several common patterns emerged that warrant explicit comparison in this subsection. In both Green Bay and Vallecas, several individual questions stood out for their exceptionally high agreement scores and low standard deviations, which points to the existence of common social and emotional benefits across different sporting and country contexts. These are “Pride from National Recognition,” “Community Excitement,” “Visitor Excitement,” and “Generational Connections,” derived from hosting a professional team.

Psychic Income Dimension	Green Bay Average	Green Bay Agreement	Vallecas Average	Vallecas Agreement
Community Pride as a Result of Enhanced Image	5.996	Agree	5.727	Agree
Enhanced Community Attachment	4.362	Neutral	5.473	Agree
Event Excitement	5.190	Somewhat Agree	5.718	Agree
Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure	4.854	Somewhat Agree	4.230	Neutral
Community Excitement	6.307	Strongly Agree	6.061	Strongly Agree
OVERALL	5.498	Agree	5.442	Agree

Table 19 – Comparison between Green Bay and Vallecas Overall Psychic Income Scores and Agreement

First, the psychic income survey asked respondents to gauge their agreement with 30 different statements along a seven-point Likert scale. In both Green Bay and Vallecas, one statement stood alone at the top with the highest average score. CP5 (helped become a nationally known city/neighborhood) elicited the highest levels of agreement in both cases (6.675 and 6.481, respectively). This finding suggests that the greatest benefit residents receive from hosting a professional team is heightened national recognition of the host community. Stakeholder interviews show that residents do, indeed, feel proud that their local team brings outside recognition. Both the Green Bay Packers and Rayo Vallecano include the host community in the team’s name, which projects basic information such as general location and the area’s reputation and identity. Interview data also imply that outsiders often have positive associations with communities that host a professional sports team, especially in an entrepreneurial climate of “franchise flight.” The collective effort and ability of many different actors in Green Bay and Vallecas to keep the professional team local (and, in Vallecas, in the top division of *La Liga*) reflect positively on the community as a whole.

Second, the only psychic income section that elicited strong agreement among residents in both cases was Community Excitement. In Green Bay and Vallecas, statements CE1 (brought excitement) and CE2 (provided entertainment) were two of the four highest-scoring responses in each survey. Interview informants in both cases alluded to the general exciting atmosphere during game days and team events. In Green Bay, training camps, the NFL Draft, and community tailgating before home football games were mentioned as events that bring excitement and entertainment to the community. In Vallecas, fans interviewed mentioned the importance of the pregame rituals at the *previa* for their positive gameday experiences. The festive

atmosphere of game days is created through the congregation and mixing of residents and outsiders, as well as through the support and crowding of local businesses. The opportunity to surround and visit the local stadium is another source of excitement for residents. Both Lambeau Field and The *Estadio de Vallecas* are beloved institutions in their host locale, each with over 50 years of history. Informants used terms like “the Mecca of the NFL” and a “bucket list item” to describe Lambeau Field, and residents of Vallecas call the stadium “intimate,” “vintage,” “old school,” and “magic” because of its location and layout.

Third, in both Green Bay and Vallecas, EE5 (contributes to excitement of visitors) was identified by residents as one of the greatest effects of hosting a professional sports team. This statement was the fifth highest-scoring result on the Green Bay survey and the seventh highest in Vallecas. In Green Bay, stakeholders mentioned in interviews that the opportunity to show off the professional sports infrastructure to visitors is a “pride point” for residents. Taking guests through facilities like Titledown brings residents personal excitement and happiness, and the tourism professionals mentioned that the number one draw to the region is Lambeau Field. In Vallecas, too, visitors in ticket lines expressed excitement to watch Rayo Vallecano play in *El Estadio de Vallecas*, especially in an era of groundhopping, the hobby of visiting stadiums. Interviewed fans said that supporting Rayo Vallecano is not necessarily a “glamorous experience,” and that visitor excitement derives from the social and community gameday rituals.

Lastly, informants pointed out that the Green Bay Packers and Rayo Vallecano help to maintain and strengthen family and generational connections. Because the Packers are one of the oldest NFL franchises and have never relocated, stakeholders recounted a “longstanding generational hold that gets passed” throughout a family, sometimes up to five generations deep. Many Green Bay families also have enduring traditions related to the team, such as passing down season tickets or opening lawns to visitor parking. In Vallecas, fans perceive Rayo Vallecano as a family-friendly team—people of all ages can be seen around the stadium before, during, and after the game. There is a similar sentiment of passing down support for the local team through one’s family in Vallecas. Attending Rayo matches at the *Estadio de Vallecas* as a family is a tradition that many Vallecano households have maintained across generations.

4.3.2: Analyzing Green Bay and Madrid Differences

Similarities between cases indicate that certain emotional and social effects of hosting a professional sports team transcend sport and community characteristics. Analyzing the differences between cases, on the other hand, adds nuance and context specificity to this discussion. Contrasting the perceptions of Green Bay and Vallecas provides insights about the strengths and weaknesses of each case’s team-community relationship through the eyes of the residents, offering place-based lessons to be applied within and beyond these examples. The three primary differences identified between cases are “Community Reputation Apart from Team,” “Community Investment Reflecting Ownership,” and “Importance of Winning in Excitement.”

First, it is established that residents in both cases internalize pride from hosting a professional sports team through community image enhancement. However, differences in how the Packers and Rayo Vallecano relate to their host community lead to the oversight of certain Green Bay characteristics and the heightened promotion of Vallecano values.

In Green Bay, interview informants reported that the presence of the Green Bay Packers sometimes overshadows the city and region’s other amenities. Several stakeholders lamented the loss of foot traffic to the city’s downtown, which in other places is often a first stop for tourists. The city’s vibrant punk scene and natural beauty are hidden behind the Packers’ dominant cultural presence. This leads many stakeholders to adopt a “yes, and” approach to place branding because the Packers “promote themselves and they promote their things. They don’t really promote the rest of the area” (T1). Survey data show that residents still take pride in the acclaim that the Packers bring the city, and interviewees across stakeholder groups agree that without the

Packers, Green Bay would lose the heightened status it enjoys from being a major league city. However, qualitative data suggest that there is also a desire for the Packers and the region to highlight non-football amenities.

In Vallecas, residents take pride in being from a nationally recognized place. Interviews suggest that Vallecas, separate from Rayo Vallecano, is already a neighborhood with a strong and well-known identity. Many stakeholders take immense pride in being from or living in Vallecas, often introducing themselves as from the neighborhood rather than from Madrid. Informants used adjectives like “humble, hardworking, immigrant, working-class, tolerant, friendly, and welcoming” to describe the community, which is a reputation that travels far across Spain. Rayo Vallecano as a club, as well as its fan associations, closely align with these neighborhood virtues and amplify them at home games, protests, community events, and on social media. Fans and non-fan residents alike, thus, derive satisfaction from their community’s reputation being promoted through Rayo Vallecano and *La Liga*.

The second notable difference between cases is the numerical disparity in community infrastructure pride. This is not necessarily a surprising result considering the current franchise embeddedness in each community. The Packers’ ownership structure has established the franchise in Green Bay. In Vallecas, team leadership has publicly stated its intention to leave the neighborhood. The differences in institutional investment strategies between cases provide a successful example of community infrastructure and resident suggestions for improvement.

In Green Bay, Titledown is praised as effective community infrastructure. Residents applaud the efforts of Packers President and CEO Mark Murphy and team administration for investing in mixed-use public space around Lambeau Field. This development is widely celebrated by different stakeholders across the city for its tourism, community engagement, and entertainment potential. Investing in Titledown and other community infrastructure in Green Bay is part of the “expansion of the Packers brand outside of football and leaning heavily into the community,” which is a direct result of the team’s unique community ownership structure that fosters a symbiotic relationship between team and city (P2). Informants in interviews also mention the Packers’ willingness to donate items for philanthropies and fundraisers, as well as their partnership on various boards and city initiatives, which further contributes to the more positive resident perception of their community investment.

Rayo Vallecano leadership and management, on the other hand, is seen by residents as hindering community investment and engagement opportunities. Fan and non-fan residents alike see President Presa as nothing more than a businessman looking to increase his wealth by owning Rayo Vallecano. Part of this strategy involves moving the team out of the neighborhood, which discourages any present investment in the area. Interviewed stakeholders also mention that Presa’s values are incompatible with the neighborhood and fans, which creates an inertia for investing in physical or social community infrastructure. Residents in Vallecas would like to see more visible examples of Rayo Vallecano’s investment in the neighborhood in the form of improved street and park infrastructure, which would prove to them that the team is a productive neighborhood stakeholder.

One final difference between Green Bay and Vallecas relates to the source of event excitement. In Vallecas, residents reported higher levels of event excitement stemming from Rayo Vallecano than Green Bay residents do from hosting the Packers. This result is surprising considering the Packers have sustained a relatively high level of sporting success, being tied for the third-most Super Bowl wins by any NFL franchise and having the record number of all-time championships. Rayo Vallecano’s most impressive trophy comes from winning the second division of *La Liga*. Interviewed fans say that Rayo Vallecano’s main goal is to survive in the first division, and if they wanted to support winning teams, they could easily be fans of Real or Atlético Madrid. This result suggests that supporting a winning team (or even a good team) is not necessarily the source of event excitement for residents in Vallecas.

Interview data suggest that the enjoyment and excitement from watching Rayo Vallecano come from the fan rituals before, during, and after the game. The *previa* and postgame events were called “every bit as important as the football” in the overall gameday experience (F3). Additionally, fans perceive a close connection to the team and players, both because of shared values and physical proximity to the stadium and the field, which makes the entire supporter experience feel more intimate. There is no expectation of winning in Vallecas. Fans are “there to support the team through thick and thin, and it’s more thin in the case of Rayo” (F3).

Taken as a whole, these findings raise critical issues that will be explored in the following section. The common emotional and social effects of hosting a professional sports team, coupled with context-specific advantages and drawbacks, suggest that sports operate as more than just an entrepreneurial tool—they shape local identity and attachment in ways that reflect a deeper role in urban life.

5: Discussion

This investigation combined over 13 hours of interviews with 229 survey responses to evaluate the perceptions of residents and key stakeholders regarding hosting a professional sports team. Bringing together findings from Green Bay, Wisconsin, and Vallecas, Madrid, this chapter highlights three key insights—methodological, conceptual, and practical—that will be explored in detail below.

5.1: Methodological Insights: Collecting Resident Perceptions

Psychic Income, as a methodological tool, is often used to measure resident perceptions of major sporting events. This economic concept was first applied to sports by Crompton (2004) as an alternative rationale for allocating public funds to professional sports teams in the United States, but it has since been mobilized in studies of the Olympic Games (Liu, 2017; Mourão et al., 2022), World Cups (Gibson et al., 2014), regional sporting events (Cai, 2022; W. Kim et al., 2015), and, more recently, small-scale community sports (Ghaderi et al., 2023). In all these studies, however, only quantitative methods are employed via Likert-type surveys, which limits the specificity and generalizability of the findings. The conclusions of these studies are limited to answering closed-ended questions (is there evidence of psychic income benefit?) rather than the more useful conclusions identifying the factors or circumstances giving rise to emotional or social effects.

Commonalities between psychic income scores in Green Bay and Vallecas point to the conceptual strength of psychic income in capturing shared social and emotional perceptions in very different professional sports contexts. However, the differences between cases provide critical insights into the framework’s contextual sensitivity and methodological boundaries. The comparative nature of this study emphasizes the importance of combining quantitative psychic income data with qualitative methods to provide context-specific examples or explanations of the discovered numerical patterns.

Psychic Income Dimension	Green Bay Average	Green Bay Agreement	Vallecas Average	Vallecas Agreement
Enhanced Community Attachment	4.362	Neither Agree nor Disagree	5.473	Agree

Table 20 – Comparison between Green Bay and Vallecas Enhanced Community Attachment

Consider, for instance, the disparity between community attachment in Green Bay and Vallecas. This psychic income section had the greatest numerical difference between cases (1.111), which is a notable and surprising finding. Why do Green Bay residents feel that the Packers, a permanently embedded team, contribute less to feelings of community attachment than Vallecans do with a soccer club that has an uncertain future in the neighborhood? If psychic income surveys were the only method employed in this investigation, there would be no way to begin answering this question. The only conclusions that could be drawn are that residents neither agree nor disagree that the Packers have enhanced friendships, feelings of well-being, social interactions, cooperation, and respect within the community, whereas in Vallecas, residents agree.

Interview data in this investigation provide a potential explanation for this finding. In Vallecas, residents feel a close alignment between team and neighborhood values: “Rayo is the neighborhood, and the neighborhood is Rayo” (F1). This harmony of working class, activist, and migrant values both within the team and the neighborhood allows for residents to feel an intimate attachment to the team, its events, and other fans. Compare this finding to Green Bay,

where key stakeholders acknowledge that the Packers' extraordinary cultural presence can overshadow other local assets, including Downtown Green Bay, the city's punk scene, and the region's natural beauty. The greater discord between characteristics of the Packers and Green Bay can help explain the difference between community attachment scores in this study.

Evidence from this thesis, therefore, suggests that quantitative measures of social and emotional effects, both within and outside of the psychic income paradigm, are best paired with qualitative data that can suggest explanations for resident (dis)agreement. Methods such as ethnography, interviews, media analysis, and focus groups offer context-specific examples that broaden a binary inquiry into the existence of psychic income effects into a more exploratory investigation of how such effects emerge. This suggestion is not exclusive to studies of sporting events or teams—it can be applied to any quantitative study focusing on resident perceptions, if time allows for a mixed-methods approach.

5.2: Conceptual Insights: Redefining Professional Sports

Professional sports teams are primarily positioned in society as economic institutions meant to generate value for their host community and/or owners. This conceptualization contributes to the current era of “franchise flight” in the United States and the growing prevalence of foreign ownership of soccer clubs in European leagues as teams pursue favorable conditions for capital investment. Academic investigations of professional sports, indeed, often mirror this framing, focusing on the economic “worth” of hosting a team through land value assessments, employment metrics, or average wages.

This investigation, however, provides evidence that it is both valid and necessary to understand professional sports teams as more than mere instruments of economic or entrepreneurial gain. Data from both psychic income surveys and interviews support the assertion by Mihalik & Simonetta (1999) that residents are less concerned with the economic performance of professional sports teams and instead focus more on the social and emotional effects that come from hosting. Several commonalities observed between Green Bay and Vallecas help answer the central research question: How do residents and key stakeholders perceive the emotional and social effects of hosting a professional team in their community? Patterns between cases offer preliminary evidence that certain social and emotional dynamics are particularly present in team-city relationships. This study demonstrates that hosting a professional sports team promotes resident perceptions of national pride through image enhancement, community-wide excitement, internalized visitor enthusiasm, and generational connections, which are considered the primary effects.

Results from this investigation, then, raise the question, “What kind of *thing* are professional sports teams?” Insights from residents suggest that these institutions play meaningful social and emotional roles in their host communities, which warrants expanding traditional understandings of teams as capital-driven economic institutions, either for entrepreneurial urban governance regimes or club owners looking to turn a profit. The remainder of this discussion section will position professional sports teams primarily as geographically embedded cultural institutions and examine the funding implications of this reframing.

The definition of cultural goods has been the focus of extensive scholarly inquiry, but a one-of-a-kind study by Sumida et al. (2015) argues that sports teams are rightfully considered a cultural institution. By studying fan perceptions of *Sagan Tosu*, a professional Japanese soccer club, researchers conclude that the voluntary nature of fandom contributes to feelings of psychological ownership of the team:

Taking this insight to its logical conclusion, academic researchers must understand sports teams as more than organizations that simply provide entertainment; teams are cultural

institutions and nodes in the complex web of human culture that some fans feel a very real sense of ownership towards. (p. 162)

This study distinctly defines *Sagan Tosu* beyond its economic potential and challenges the traditional notion of fans as merely “belonging to a team, akin to other assets in the balance sheet” (p. 144). Positioning professional sports teams as cultural institutions gives rise to five key characteristics identified by Sumida et al. (2015), each of which also emerges in the cases of Green Bay and Vallecas, reinforcing this cultural framework through new empirical evidence (see table 21).

Sport Cultural Characteristic	Green Bay	Vallecas	Both
Teams act as a “locally shared possession, evoking the geographic pride and identity of individual fans” (p. 154)	Community ownership and partnerships emphasize team as locally shared asset	Neighborhood values and local identity expressed and amplified through team and fan clubs	- Increased pride from recognition - Fluid definition of “locality” extends to metropolitan area and fans abroad
Individual experiences, shaped by other community members, contribute to psychological ownership	Individual experiences	Individual experiences	“First game” as a rite of passage
Team brands, including players, colors, rivalries, and the stadium contain meaning	- Packers emblem in city logo - Adoption of Packers colors/logo into private life - Titletown as community space	- Hardworking, humble values reflected in players “Derby” games within Madrid and historic rivalries	- Stadium affection - Pride expressed through team colors - Murals in host community - Importance of team history/icons
Sporting rituals allow for fan expression and collective cooperation	Tailgates, Family Night, Training Camp, Season Opener	Banner creation, stadium protests, mural painting, <i>previa</i>	- Team Chants - Family Traditions - Host community gameday accommodation
Psychological ownership and processes that create team meaning are collective	- Family traditions: lawn parking, season tickets - Team community engagement efforts	<i>Bukaneros</i> and fan clubs as leaders - Bottom-up fan organization - Attendance as lending team support	- Generational and family connections - Social mix at sporting events

Table 21 – Author’s Adaptation of Sumida et al.’s (2015) *Characteristics of Sports as Cultural Institutions with results and examples from Green Bay and Vallecas*

Reframing sports as a cultural institution has retrospective effects—it helps explain why previous economic analyses have failed to adequately capture the value of professional sports, contributing to the prevailing academic view that they are economically unproductive. Indeed, Hasitschka et al. (2005) argue that “economic analysis fails to understand the cultural sector because it neglects the complexity of the sector” (p. 157). Instead, cultural institutions studies call

for a “synthesis of various insights,” embracing an “explicitly interdisciplinary context” to understand cultural goods as meaningful and worthwhile entities (p. 149).

This reframing also has future practical implications for the funding and governance of professional teams. Understanding professional sports teams as cultural institutions rather than entrepreneurial engines for actors in urban governance regimes shifts the conversation away from narrow cost-benefit analyses and toward a richer understanding of their public value. This, in turn, calls for rethinking the rationale for investment patterns in professional sports.

5.3: Practical Insights: Toward New Funding and Ownership Frameworks

Psychic income, along with growing attention to intangible benefits, emerged from funding debates in professional sports. Crompton’s (2004) argument was even titled “Beyond Economic Impact: An Alternative Rationale for the Public Subsidy of Major League Sports Facilities.” In the United States, a key issue in sports and urban policy is the inability of economic impact studies to justify large-scale public investment in stadiums and professional teams. In Europe, the growing financialization of soccer clubs raises concerns, as emerging ownership models can serve to alienate teams from their host communities. Profit-seeking owners, as seen in the case of Rayo Vallecano, undermine the deeply rooted sense of locality that has historically defined European soccer clubs. The erosion of this embeddedness threatens to obscure the social and emotional benefits these teams generate. This final section revisits the funding debates that initiated this line of inquiry, exploring how reconceptualizing professional teams as cultural institutions opens new pathways for justifying public support in the U.S. context and for rethinking ownership alignment in European football.

In the United States, rather than viewing teams as mobile entities that can be “bought” through infrastructure investment or tax incentives to stimulate local economic development, there is value in recognizing them as place-bound cultural institutions whose contributions to residential pride, attachment, and excitement offer a more meaningful justification for public support. This reframing positions sports teams alongside museums, theaters, and public parks—entities that receive public support not because they generate profits, but because they serve collective purposes in their host communities. As this study has shown, residents in Green Bay describe the team-city relationship in a way that draws on history, identity formation, generational connections, and civic pride. Using this lens, public funding for sports can be reassessed by shifting away from cost-benefit accounting toward questions of community benefits and well-being. If we accept that other cultural institutions warrant public funding without the expectation of generating profits, then professional sports teams, given the psychic income and intangible benefits they generate for residents, should be afforded similar recognition and consideration.

Of course, justifying public funding under this framework carries a couple of important implications. First, if professional teams are conceptualized as cultural institutions worthy of public dollars, then they must also bear greater responsibility to serve their host communities meaningfully. This involves engaging with residents to identify area needs, investing in effective community infrastructure and events, and actively contributing to the area’s cultural environment outside of the stadium district. Lessons from Green Bay highlight stakeholder interest in opening Lambeau Field for more community-wide events, along with a growing emphasis on enhancing local amenities such as the city’s downtown. In Vallecas, residents advocate for increased investment in neighborhood parks and public infrastructure, as well as greater institutional support for fan-organized community engagement initiatives. These cases demonstrate that each host community is unique, and inclusive collaboration requires teams to incorporate residents’ insights and respond thoughtfully to their context-specific needs and desires.

Second, it is worth acknowledging that publicly financing professional teams also benefits private ownership interests. Team owners stand to gain from increased franchise value,

new or upgraded sports infrastructure, and enhanced reputation, which would be funded, in part, by public tax dollars. This, however, does not necessarily invalidate the case for supporting professional sports as a cultural institution. Rather than framing the debate as a binary between public good and private gain, this framework draws upon a both/and approach. Public subsidies can deliver shared value when they are used to support teams that foster psychic income benefits, such as increased attachment, local pride, and community infrastructure, outcomes that residents themselves identify as meaningful.

In Europe, most professional soccer teams do not rely on public funding in the same way United States franchises do. Instead, these clubs increasingly operate under financial models that prioritize private investment and global reach. Indeed, the broader aim of many soccer clubs is to ascend from local and national leagues to international competition. This ambition is evident in the case of Rayo Vallecano, which, in its 100th anniversary season in 2025, secured qualification to compete in the UEFA Conference League. These trends in European soccer have led to the growing concern that many teams are shifting away from their community-rooted values. Rayo Vallecano exemplifies this pattern. Residents in Vallecas take great pride in their team, viewing it as a reflection of the neighborhood's distinct identity and values. However, club president Raúl Martín Presa, widely seen as out of touch with the local community, has raised concerns by threatening to move the team from its historic locale to a new stadium with greater potential for capital accumulation.

The tension between fans and residents on one side and club leadership on the other highlights a key insight for European professional soccer: when a team is deeply embedded in its local community, its value cannot be fully measured by profit margins. Understanding sports as cultural institutions rather than businesses helps explain why residents in Vallecas continue to support their team through infrastructural challenges, ticket frustrations, administrative disconnect, or poor on-field performance. In this case, the team's value to residents lies not in its economic solvency, but rather in the emotional and social benefits it generates: neighborhood pride, the source of community rituals, and ways to connect different groups of people.

Rather than calling for public subsidies, the takeaways in Europe have more to do with protecting the community values of soccer clubs in the face of global and financial pressures. The value that clubs bring, as understood through a cultural institution framework, can be protected through governance. Ownership models that include fans, local partnerships that ground teams in their locale, and policy tools that prioritize local benefits over commercial expansion can help ensure that teams reflect and serve their host community.

In sum, reframing professional sports teams as cultural institutions rather than economic tools offers a more complete understanding of their role in urban life. As seen in both Green Bay and Vallecas, teams foster pride, connection, and local identity in ways that traditional economic evaluations cannot fully capture. Recognizing these social and emotional dimensions not only helps explain why communities continue to invest in and support their local teams but also opens the door to more thoughtful approaches to funding and governance.

6: Conclusion

6.1: Limitations

As is true of any academic undertaking, there are some research limitations in this study worth outlining. First, this project, as the capstone of a master's degree, placed time constraints on data collection, analysis, and reporting. This study was the result of two years of planning, literature review, fieldwork, and writing, and it truly went up to the wire. Of course, this research could have been conducted over a longer timeframe, which would allow for greater survey and interview participation, especially within and beyond the identified stakeholder groups.

Sampling was also a particular challenge within this study. Almost the entire investigation took place across Europe, so the processes of survey distribution and connecting with interview informants in Green Bay were especially difficult. The reliance on gatekeeper individuals and social media channels to distribute the Green Bay survey from abroad may have excluded certain resident groups or populations from participation in this study. Additionally, the inability to physically attend community or team events inhibited potential key informant introductions and snowball sampling methods.

Finally, as with all case study research, there are concerns as to the generalizability of findings, especially within these unique cases. Future studies in this vein or relating to these cases may help to add context, nuance, or support to the findings in this paper.

6.2: Future Research Directions

This study specifically addresses two gaps in academic literature while answering the central research question. First, the psychic income framework described by Crompton (2004) and expanded upon by W. Kim & Walker (2012) has never been applied to professional sports in a true sense. Instead, this survey tool has been paired with CVM analyses to determine the “willingness to pay” in different major league cities around the United States, reducing the tool to economics and falling into the same trap that it set out to resolve. Psychic income surveys focusing solely on emotional and social effects have been used to evaluate sporting *events* around the world, but never to a professional team. This study exists in the unexplored area between these lines of inquiry. A truly psychic income paradigm based only on emotional and social effects is applied to two professional sports teams in different countries, markets, and sport frameworks. Second, this study's cross-cultural focus helps fill a significant gap in urban sports research by investigating a European case, which remains a relatively understudied region in this field still dominated by U.S.-centered analyses.

There are many potential directions to expand upon this research. The Green Bay Packers and Rayo Vallecano serve as “most likely” cases, purposefully selected for their potential to generate social and emotional effects within their respective host communities. Similar studies could evaluate residential perceptions within more “typical” case studies to determine the role and residential effects of professional sports teams in various urban contexts. These might include larger host cities (in population and geographic size) or teams with more peripheral stadiums. This would allow for further discussion about the appropriateness and usefulness of considering professional sports teams as cultural institutions. Does this classification hold true in all cases? What host community characteristics give rise to (or preclude) this conceptualization? And how do these differences affect broader issues of sports funding and governance?

Other future investigations might spatially analyze the social and emotional effects of hosting a professional team by comparing resident perceptions across different neighborhoods in the host community or based on physical proximity to sports infrastructure. There are also opportunities to compare the emotional and social ramifications of hosting a professional team

within a sports league. How do two different baseball teams, for instance, interact differently with their host community, and what insights emerge about understanding professional teams as cultural institutions? Also interesting would be the investigation of professional teams within a sport's various leagues (e.g., *Bundesliga* vs. *La Liga*). How do different governance frameworks (Germany's 50+1 rule, local ownership, fan ownership, or external ownership) affect resident perceptions and, in turn, the role of these institutions within host communities? Finally, further research could explore the similarities and differences in intangible benefits associated with multiple professional franchises within the same city, such as the Milwaukee Bucks (NBA) and the Milwaukee Brewers (MLB).

6.3: Conclusion

As cities around the world compete for capital and status, investment in professional sports infrastructure will likely remain a favored entrepreneurial urban governance strategy despite substantial academic evidence calling into question its economic return. This study, however, argues that professional sports teams are more holistically understood as cultural institutions that produce social and emotional effects within their host community. These include internalized pride from image enhancement, community excitement, visitor excitement, and the formation of intergenerational bonds, all of which emerged in the cases of Green Bay and Vallecas.

Reframing teams in this way not only helps to explain why past economic analyses have struggled to justify public subsidies, but it also provides a new framework for professional sport funding and governance in both the United States and Europe. Rather than evaluating teams solely through their financial performance or ability to attract capital, urban governance actors and academics alike might instead consider how teams contribute to the host community's cultural life and social and emotional well-being. This shift in understanding challenges both how value is measured and for whom that value is intended to serve.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Psychic Income Survey Questions

Table 1: Green Bay Psychic Income Survey Questions

Psychic Income Dimension	Survey Question
Community Pride as a Result of Enhanced Image	CP1: Green Bay has gained a positive image because of the Packers
	CP2: Green Bay has gained positive recognition because of the Packers
	CP3: Green Bay has shown the ability to host a major sporting event
	CP4: The Packers have given opportunities to showcase the city of Green Bay
	CP5: The Packers have helped Green Bay become a nationally known city
	CP6: Green Bay can host other major sporting events besides football
	CP7: Outsiders know more about my community because of the Green Bay Packers
	CP8: The Packers gave my community an international identity
	CP9: The Packers have enhanced the image of Green Bay as a major city
Enhanced Community Attachment	CA1: The Packers have helped strengthen friendships in my community
	CA2: The Packers have helped residents appreciate their way of life more
	CA3: The Packers have increased my sense of well-being
	CA4: The Packers have increased my sense of belonging in various community groups
	CA5: The Packers have increased my social interactions within my community
	CA6: The Packers have increased my respect for the community
	CA7: The Packers have increased cooperation among groups in my community
	CA8: The Packers have increased my community confidence
Event Excitement	EE1: The Packers have increased my interest in football
	EE2: The Packers have increased my fan involvement with football
	EE3: The Packers have made me enjoy watching more football games
	EE4: The Packers have made nightlife more exciting
	EE5: The Packers contribute to the excitement of Green Bay visitors
Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure	CI1: The Packers' presence has helped to improve the quality of community public services
	CI2: The Packers' presence has helped to improve the quality of police and fire services
	CI3: The Packers' presence has helped to improve city public facilities
	CI4: The Packers have promoted opportunities to engage with the community
	CI5: The Packers have helped in urban development and regeneration
Community Excitement	CE1: The Packers have provided entertainment to the community
	CE2: The Packers have brought excitement to the community
	CE3: The Packers have provided new activities to the community

Table 2: Vallecas Psychic Income Survey Questions (Spanish)

Psychic Income Dimension	Survey Question
Community Pride as a Result of Enhanced Image	CP1: Vallecas ha ganado una imagen positiva gracias al Rayo Vallecano
	CP2: Vallecas ha ganado un reconocimiento positivo gracias al Rayo Vallecano
	CP3: Vallecas ha demostrado la capacidad de albergar un gran evento deportivo
	CP4: El Rayo Vallecano ha dado oportunidades para mostrar el barrio de Vallecas
	CP5: El Rayo Vallecano ha ayudado a Vallecas a convertirse en un barrio conocida a nivel nacional
	CP6: Vallecas puede albergar otros eventos deportivos importantes además del fútbol
	CP7: Los extranjeros saben más sobre mi comunidad gracias al Rayo Vallecano
	CP8: El Rayo Vallecano le ha dado a mi comunidad una identidad internacional
	CP9: El Rayo Vallecano ha mejorado la imagen de Vallecas como un barrio importante
Enhanced Community Attachment	CA1: El Rayo Vallecano ha ayudado a fortalecer las amistades en mi comunidad
	CA2: El Rayo Vallecano ha ayudado a los residentes a apreciar más su forma de vida
	CA3: El Rayo Vallecano ha aumentado mi sensación de bienestar
	CA4: El Rayo Vallecano ha aumentado mi sentimiento de pertenencia a varios grupos comunitarios
	CA5: El Rayo Vallecano ha aumentado mis interacciones sociales dentro de mi comunidad
	CA6: El Rayo Vallecano ha aumentado mi respeto por la comunidad
	CA7: El Rayo Vallecano ha aumentado la cooperación entre los grupos de mi comunidad
	CA8: El Rayo Vallecano ha aumentado mi confianza en la comunidad
Event Excitement	EE1: El Rayo Vallecano ha aumentado mi interés por el fútbol.
	EE2: El Rayo Vallecano ha aumentado mi implicación como aficionado con el fútbol.
	EE3: El Rayo Vallecano me ha hecho disfrutar viendo más partidos de fútbol
	EE4: El Rayo Vallecano ha hecho que la vida nocturna sea más emocionante
	EE5: El Rayo Vallecano contribuye a la emoción de los visitantes de Vallecas
Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure	CI1: La presencia del Rayo Vallecano ha ayudado a mejorar la calidad de los servicios públicos comunitarios
	CI2: La presencia del Rayo Vallecano ha ayudado a mejorar la calidad de los servicios de policía y bomberos
	CI3: La presencia del Rayo Vallecano ha ayudado a mejorar las instalaciones públicas del barrio
	CI4: El Rayo Vallecano ha promovido oportunidades para interactuar con la comunidad
	CI5: El Rayo Vallecano ha ayudado en el desarrollo urbano y la regeneración.
Community Excitement	CE1: El Rayo Vallecano ha proporcionado entretenimiento a la comunidad
	CE2: El Rayo Vallecano ha traído emoción a la comunidad
	CE3: El Rayo Vallecano ha proporcionado nuevas actividades a la comunidad

Table 3: Vallecas Psychic Income Survey Questions (English)

Psychic Income Dimension	Survey Question
Community Pride as a Result of Enhanced Image	CP1: Vallecas has gained a positive image because of Rayo Vallecano
	CP2: Vallecas has gained positive recognition because of Rayo Vallecano
	CP3: Vallecas has shown the ability to host a major sporting event
	CP4: Rayo Vallecano has given opportunities to showcase the neighborhood of Vallecas
	CP5: Rayo Vallecano has helped Vallecas become a nationally known neighborhood
	CP6: Vallecas can host other major sporting events besides football
	CP7: Outsiders know more about my community because of Rayo Vallecano
	CP8: Rayo Vallecano has given my community an international identity
	CP9: Rayo Vallecano has enhanced the image of Vallecas as an important neighborhood
Enhanced Community Attachment	CA1: Rayo Vallecano has helped strengthen friendships in my community
	CA2: Rayo Vallecano has helped residents appreciate their way of life more
	CA3: Rayo Vallecano has increased my sense of well-being
	CA4: Rayo Vallecano has increased my sense of belonging in various community groups
	CA5: Rayo Vallecano has increased my social interactions within my community
	CA6: Rayo Vallecano has increased my respect for the community
	CA7: Rayo Vallecano has increased cooperation among groups in my community
	CA8: Rayo Vallecano has increased my community confidence
Event Excitement	EE1: Rayo Vallecano has increased my interest in football
	EE2: Rayo Vallecano has increased my fan involvement with football
	EE3: Rayo Vallecano has made me enjoy watching more football games
	EE4: Rayo Vallecano has made nightlife more exciting
	EE5: Rayo Vallecano contributes to the excitement of Vallecas visitors
Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure	CI1: Rayo Vallecano's presence has helped to improve the quality of community public services
	CI2: Rayo Vallecano's presence has helped to improve the quality of police and fire services
	CI3: Rayo Vallecano's presence has helped to improve neighborhood public facilities
	CI4: Rayo Vallecano has promoted opportunities to engage with the community
	CI5: Rayo Vallecano has helped in urban development and regeneration
Community Excitement	CE1: Rayo Vallecano has provided entertainment to the community
	CE2: Rayo Vallecano has brought excitement to the community
	CE3: Rayo Vallecano has provided new activities to the community

Figure 1: Sample Psychic Income Survey Question Format

Green Bay has gained a positive image because of the Packers								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

Green Bay has gained positive recognition because of the Packers								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

Green Bay has shown the ability to host a major sporting event								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Strongly Disagree	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Strongly Agree

Appendix B: Psychic Income Survey Flyers

Figure 1: Green Bay Psychic Income Survey Flyer



Figure 2: Vallecas Psychic Income Survey Flyer



Appendix C: Stakeholder Interview Guide

Table 1: Green Bay Stakeholder Interview Guide

Question Category	Interview Question List
Introductory Questions	Can you tell me a bit about your personal and professional relationship with Green Bay?
	How have you seen the relationship between the city and the team evolve throughout your time in Green Bay?
	Is there anything that makes the Green Bay Packers unique or exceptional compared to other NFL teams?
	What role do the Packers play in shaping the local identity of Green Bay?
Community Pride as a Result of Enhanced Image	How do the Green Bay Packers affect the city's recognition on both national and international scales?
	How do the Packers contribute to the city's identity apart from just being a football team?
	What nicknames does Green Bay have, and how does these affect its perception?
	Are there any risks or challenges associated with using the Packers to promote the image of Green Bay?
	How do outsiders and/or the media view Green Bay because of the Packers? Are these accurate perceptions?
Enhanced Community Attachment	How would you describe the connection between the Green Bay community and the Green Bay Packers?
	How do you think the Packers affect resident sense of belonging in Green Bay?
	What Packer events do you think have the greatest impact on building community in Green Bay?
	How do you think the Packers have affected the quality of life for residents in Green Bay?
	How, if at all, have the Packers contributed to social unity or cohesion in Green Bay?
	Can you think of any long-standing Packer traditions that bring together Green Bay residents?
Event Excitement	What Packers-related events (beyond gamedays) created the most excitement for Green Bay residents?
	How do you think the excitement around the Packers compares to other major events in Green Bay?
Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure	Can you describe any recent development projects that have been influenced directly or indirectly by the Packers?
	How do residents perceive infrastructure projects like Titledown?
	What effect do the Green Bay Packers have on public works and public services?
	How would you say fans and non-fans of the Packers differ in their perceptions of Packer-related infrastructure projects?
Community Excitement	How have the Packers, either directly or indirectly, contributed to new events happening in Green Bay?
	How, if at all, do the successes or challenges of the Packers contribute to the wellbeing of Green Bay residents?
	Have you noticed differences in engagement or excitement for Packer activities among different groups in Green Bay?
Miscellaneous	Are there any challenges or tensions you've noticed between Green Bay residents and the Packers that are worth mentioning to fully understand the team's role in the city?
	What opportunities for improvement do you see in the relationship between the team and the city?
	Are there any particular stakeholders or institutions that benefit the most from the Packers' presence in the city?
	How would you describe the distribution of benefits and burdens across Green Bay of hosting the Packers?
	Can you think of any personally memorable moments related to the Packers?
	As Green Bay continues to grow, what role do you envision the Packers playing in the future development and promotion of the city?

Table 2: Vallecas Stakeholder Interview Guide (Translated)

Question Category	Interview Question List
Introductory Questions	Can you tell me a bit about your personal and professional relationship with Vallecas?
	How have you seen the relationship between Vallecas and the Rayo Vallecano evolve throughout your time in Vallecas?
	Is there anything that makes Vallecas unique or exceptional compared to other professional football clubs?
	What role does Rayo Vallecano play in shaping the local identity of Vallecas?
Community Pride as a Result of Enhanced Image	How does Rayo Vallecano affect the neighborhood's recognition at both national and international scales?
	How does Rayo Vallecano contribute to the neighborhood's identity apart from just being a football team?
	What nicknames does Green Bay have, and how does these affect its perception?
	Are there any risks or challenges associated with using Rayo Vallecano to promote the image of Vallecas?
	How do outsiders and/or the media view Vallecas because of Rayo Vallecano? Are these accurate perceptions?
Enhanced Community Attachment	How would you describe the connection between the Vallecas community and Rayo Vallecano?
	How do you think Rayo Vallecano affects resident sense of belonging in Vallecas?
	What Rayo Vallecano events do you think have the greatest impact on building community in Vallecas?
	How do you think Rayo Vallecano has affected the quality of life for residents in Vallecas?
	How, if at all, has Rayo Vallecano contributed to social unity or cohesion in Vallecas?
	Can you think of any long-standing Rayo Vallecano traditions that bring together Vallecas residents?
Event Excitement	What Rayo Vallecano-related events (beyond gamedays) created the most excitement for Vallecas residents?
	How do you think the excitement around Rayo Vallecano compares to other major events in Vallecas?
Pride in Efforts to Improve Community Infrastructure	Can you describe any recent development projects that have been influenced directly or indirectly by Rayo Vallecano?
	How do residents perceive infrastructure projects sponsored by Rayo Vallecano?
	What effect does Rayo Vallecano have on public works and public services?
	How would you say fans and non-fans of Rayo Vallecano differ in their perceptions of Rayo Vallecano-related infrastructure projects?
Community Excitement	How has Rayo Vallecano, either directly or indirectly, contributed to new events happening in Vallecas?
	How, if at all, do the successes or challenges of Rayo Vallecano contribute to the well-being of Vallecas residents?
	Have you noticed differences in engagement or excitement for Rayo Vallecano activities among different groups in Vallecas?
Miscellaneous	Are there any challenges or tensions you've noticed between Vallecas residents and the Rayo Vallecano that are worth mentioning to fully understand the team's role in the neighborhood?
	What opportunities for improvement do you see in the relationship between the team and the neighborhood?
	Are there any particular stakeholders or institutions that benefit the most from Rayo Vallecano's presence in the city?
	How would you describe the distribution of benefits and burdens across Vallecas of hosting Rayo Vallecano?
	Can you think of any personally memorable moments related to Rayo Vallecano?
	As Vallecas continues to grow, what role do you envision Rayo Vallecano playing in the future development and promotion of the neighborhood?