

Hear me roar ©
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It may be crass, insulting, vulgar, or all of the above, but what it is not, is homophobic. True, being amidst a sea of screaming Mexicans swept by their emotions in a nail-biting, cliffhanger of a soccer match would turn even the toughest nerves of steel into jelly. I do understand why someone can and will misconstrue their shouts as targeting a specific group. Fortunately for everyone, they are not. It is a culture thing.

The use of the much-criticized rude word spewed at everyone and anyone in the field, contrary as it seems, is nonsensical. Even though if during the Mexico-Brazil match the audience seems to have vitriolically hurled it to both goalies, it does not mean much. It is a fact that *puto*, *chinga tu madre* and *wey* have become *THE* trending words in Mexican culture during the last decade. They no longer carry the negative connotation they used to have years ago. Being called any of the above, or other slur words, is no longer an insult, especially in a social event like the World Cup. It has been documented that these words became popular during Chivas de Guadalajara's soccer matches and later on during the 2004 Athens games.

It seems that FIFA turned a blind eye when it originally started, much as a parent does when the rebelling preteen starts acting out. FIFA failed to admonish decisively in its beginning, and as any parent of a rebellious young adult knows, what you do not nip in the bud, is nearly impossible to do so at a later stage. We are at a later stage.

FIFA officials are not the only ones who have been absent. Long gone are the days when a married couple on TV only sat at the foot of their bed; now, viewers are subject to something short of porn when they turn on their screens. Censors too have been silent. Or maybe, life has changed and evolved. In every culture. In every country. In every language. Just consider the pervasive use of the word *bitch* in English.

I may not like it. I may not agree. I would prefer no slurs, profanity or crassness in public places, and I am not alone in this wish. But make no mistake, if I were to be amongst a crowd of cheering fans rooting for Mexico during the World Cup's quarter-finals, I would certainly be chanting *puuuutooooo* like everyone else. Caught in the thrill of the moment, the last thing on my mind, and the least of my intentions, would be gaybashing.