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Decolonizing the barrio: The spatial politics of culture in Chicago's Paseo Boricua

In the current neoliberal climate that has stoked an intense intercity competition for internationally footloose capital, many cities with global aspirations are encouraging urban redevelopment projects that brand and promote heterogeneous cultural enclaves as destinations for leisure and tourism consumption. Oftentimes, such enclaves emerge as "ethnoscapes" that ostensibly express the cultural identity of its residents, usually immigrant populations. In Chicago, municipal policies aimed at enhancing a visitor economy have been instrumental in the creation of the Paseo Boricua, a Puerto Rican "ethnoscape". This study examines the intersection of Chicago's urban redevelopment policies and the spatial politics of culture that unfold in the streets of the Humboldt Park neighborhood. Here, Puerto Rican nationalists have pursued an agenda to decolonize their spaces by subverting the intended consequences of the city's ethnoscaping process in acts of contestation, resistance, and transgression.