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2019-04-09

Deposited version:

Pre-print

Peer-review status of attached file:

Unreviewed

Citation for published item:

Martín-Díaz, E. & Cuberos-Gallardo, F. J. (2016). Public spaces and immigration in Seville: building citizenship or reproducing power relationships?. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. 39 (6), 1089-1105

Further information on publisher's website:

[10.1080/01419870.2015.1105987](https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1105987)

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Public spaces and immigration in Seville: Building citizenship or reproducing power relationships?

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|------------------|---|
| Journal: | <i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i> |
| Manuscript ID: | RERS-2014-0541 |
| Manuscript Type: | Original Manuscript |
| Keywords: | Hegemony, Public Space, resistance, Immigration, Seville, Power Relationships |
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9 **Public spaces and immigration in Seville: Building citizenship or reproducing**
10 **power relationships?**
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15 **Abstract**
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17 Many studies have focused on the importance of immigrants participating in the
18 public spaces of the cities where they have settled in order to become integrated.
19 Our research, in contrast, demonstrates the importance of contextualizing
20 participation within the framework of the power relationships that justify and give
21 meaning to certain practices of discipline and control. We look at one concrete
22 example in Seville (Spain): the regulation of the Latin American sports leagues of
23 San Jeronimo. This case demonstrates the central role of public space in
24 monitoring and controlling immigrants and in the dynamics of resistance they
25 develop.
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38 **Key words**
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40 Hegemony, public space, resistance, immigration, Seville
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44 **Main text**
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46 In 2004 coinciding with a period of major growth in Latin American immigration to
47 Spain, immigrants from Ecuador, Colombia and Peru began to organize sports
48 competitions in San Jeronimo, a peripheral neighborhood in Seville. Over time these
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9 games attracted an increasing number of immigrants. Within a few years, the sporting
10 fields of San Jeronimo, which had been abandoned for many years, became an
11 emblematic space among the Latin American immigrants of the city. At these fields,
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13 people could play football, basketball and other sports, but they could also listen to salsa
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15 and *bachata*, drink with their friends and share typical foods from their countries; in
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17 short, they could recreate their own, different way of socializing. However, everything
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19 would change when a local NGO, Anima Vitae, arrived and began to take part in
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21 managing the installations. As the NGO began imposing new norms on the use of the
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23 fields, the immigrants began to express their dissatisfaction, first delegitimizing the
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25 NGO's presence and later abandoning the space and moving their competitions to
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27 neighboring Amate Park.
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33 The sports leagues of San Jeronimo are an example of a failed experience in the
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35 management of public space as a tool for the integration of immigrants. In this case, the
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37 agents of political intervention – the NGO and the municipal government – tried to
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39 transform the forms and meanings of an initiative begun by immigrants, but would be
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41 met with opposition. Based on this example we emphasize the need to rethink
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43 established approaches on public space as a space of inclusion. Based on Gramsci, we
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45 understand public space as the setting for a dynamic struggle between hegemony and
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47 resistance in the conception of the city.
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The debate on public space: Hegemony, resistance and participation

The study of the processes involved in the appropriation of public space reached a significant level of development in the 1970s. Of particular importance in this field of study was the theory of the *social production of space*. Authors such as Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* (1991), Castells in *The Urban Question* (1977), Harvey in *Social Justice and the City* (1973), and Lojkin in *Marxism, the State and the Urban Question* (1981) described a scenario in which, under the dominance of industrial capitalism, social classes fought for the control of resources, including space, and in particular public space, as both a resource and as the framework in which these struggles were carried out. As the Fordist model was replaced by the current model of globalisation, leading to the overwhelming dominance of the financial economy over the productive, new theories appeared that took into account the dynamics of this model of a new global cultural economy (Appadurai 1990). Harvey, in *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989), criticised the advance of what he called late capitalism and the expansion of post-modernist philosophy accompanying this advance. This represented a wake-up call regarding the changes taking place in the economic and cultural model and in the development of the social sciences. Saskia Sassen in *The Global City* (1991) emphasized the need to study social processes – including the social production of space – using new methodologies to grasp the multiple dimensions of the processes of globalisation and localisation. She proposed developing maps that would reveal the

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9 complexity of these processes. According to Sassen, “After a long period of history
10 marked by the predominance of the nation-state, the re-dimensioning of economic
11 elements to a global scale has returned the city to its condition as a strategic public and
12 economic space” (2003, 109).
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17 Phenomena such as international migrations are connected to transnational political and
18 economic processes and, at the same time, translate into new urban problems, making
19 cities again of vital importance in these processes (Castles 1998, 7). It is cities which
20 must deal directly with the needs of their new residents, and it is in cities where systems
21 of power articulate concrete forms of exclusion. It is also at this geographic level where
22 immigrants develop strategies of resistance (Castells 1997, 366-367; Sassen 2003, 113).
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24 Today, the city is a much more concrete political space than the nation (Sassen 2000;
25 Isin 2000), and in this context, the management of urban space takes on new forms and
26 meanings.
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31 The debate over public space has acquired central importance in the field of urban
32 studies. Many authors have described urban public spaces as areas of social relations
33 conducive to the integration of immigrants. This vision of public space in the urban
34 context explains the exceptional potential some scholars have suggested it has in local
35 integration policies. The assumption is that through the controlled management of
36 public spaces, local authorities can create models of interaction with immigrants that
37 will accelerate and consolidate the integration process at the local level.
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Grassroots sport programmes have been conceived as a tool to promote participation and active collaboration between these actors. Sports such as football and basketball are attractive to broad sectors of the population and a favorite activity of many immigrants (Author 2 and Author 1 2012; Jiménez, Durán, and Domínguez 2009; Maza 2004; Llopis and Moncusí 2004; Moncusí and Llopis 2005). From the standpoint of urban space and integration, many authors have looked at the potential role of sport in the different dimensions of the migratory process (Lleixà and Soler 2004). It is assumed that through playing sports together, autochthonous residents and immigrants can develop closer relationships that will strengthen the process of integration.

Today this understanding of public space as a space for the creation of citizenship has gained in importance, imposing a vision of public spaces as builders of citizenship in line with Habermas (1991). In contrast to this integrative perspective, there are other approaches that understand public spaces as spaces of struggle over power, in line with the dialectic of hegemony and resistance developed by Gramsci (1971). This perspective is related to that of Foucault (1977), for whom public spaces were spaces of surveillance and control, although his concept of power differs substantially from that of Gramsci. In the use that we give to both theories in this article, power is not considered exclusively in Gramscian terms, as the expression of the class struggle over the social production of space, but nor is it exclusively Foucaultian, present in all social relations beyond ethnic, class and gender determinants. Throughout this article we show how

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9 structural variables of ethnicity and social class intersect, generating discourses of
10 resistance to power, but also others that internalize and legitimate hegemonic discourses
11 in the defense of private interests that are in conflict among persons belonging to the
12 same social class but of different ethnicity.
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17 Our research falls within those currents that understand public space as the setting for
18 this dialectic of hegemony and resistance (De Certeau 1984). However, we think it
19 would be an error to place the dynamics of resistance at the same level as strategies of
20 surveillance and control. Mechanisms of resistance are influenced by these strategies in
21 such a way that we cannot consider them to be two opposing projects – the
22 disciplinarian and the resistant. Instead, we must consider these mechanisms to be an
23 adaptation of resistance to conditions imposed by power, an adaptation which, in this
24 process redefines the cultural uses and symbols of public space, and ultimately, may
25 lead to its abandonment if it becomes impossible to turn it into a space of resistance.
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30 Conceived originally as spaces for the public, squares, parks and sports fields, as well
31 meeting spaces, are also the setting for and the expression of relationships of
32 domination and the resistance of subaltern groups (Winchester, Kong, and Dunn 2003,
33 9). By giving public spaces new uses and meanings, immigrants subvert and/or negate,
34 politically and symbolically, their own social exclusion. It is precisely this proactive
35 response that sets the surveillance and control mechanisms of political power in motion.
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40 These mechanisms are aimed at redirecting these spaces toward their prescribed and
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9 legitimated uses. The resistance of immigrants to this process offers us a privileged
10 framework for an analysis – *from below* – of both the mechanisms of power as well as
11 the response of subordinate groups.
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14 Applying an ethnographic methodology is especially good for addressing these
15 processes. The immersion of the researcher within these spaces, which because of their
16 public nature are accessible without violating the privacy of informants, facilitates
17 registering the spatial manifestations of power relations, such as authority figures,
18 surveillance tools, and codes regarding the use of public spaces. Analysis through direct
19 observation, although not without its difficulties, is especially interesting because it
20 often reveals the expression of cultural values not usually verbalized by systems of
21 power (Hannerz 1980, 343; Author 1 1999, 10-11). Following Foucault (1977), we can
22 consider these practices as the infinitesimal mechanisms underlying the control of
23 immigrants in their incorporation into the city.
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37 It is necessary to emphasize that our case study reflects certain dynamics of hegemony
38 and resistance that do not enter into the classic dynamic of the class struggle. As we will
39 see, the conflicts that we examine are between local powers and immigrants, between
40 long-term neighborhood residents and new immigrant residents, and between different
41 immigrant groups. In this sense, we do not offer a reductionist or simplistic perspective
42 on the social production of space and the dynamics of hegemony and resistance as a
43 struggle between "natives" and immigrants. The issue is much more complex, and refers
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9 to the hegemony of a discourse on the ordered use of public space that has been
10 internalized by both hegemonic and subaltern groups in the city of Seville, and which
11 clashes with the different conceptions of this space and its use that characterizes urban
12 spaces in areas where immigrants reside. In addition, the ideology that impregnates
13 sporting practice, its form and substance, is clearly incompatible with the social
14 representations of the different sectors involved, as we will see in what follows.
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24 **Latin leagues in San Jeronimo: from abandoned space to ethnic space**

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26 The Latin American leagues were very popular among immigrant populations in
27 Seville. Every weekend more than forty futsal teams competed in men's and women's
28 championships that attracted hundreds of athletes. The games were started by a group of
29 immigrants from the central sierra of Ecuador. Not only did they come from the same
30 country, but most of them were from the same city, Salcedo, or the neighboring town of
31 Latacunga. These were networks of immigrants with origins confined to a very specific
32 place, the province of Cotopaxi. In this province of Ecuador, some had previously been
33 involved in organizing popular sporting competitions, which are of considerable
34 importance as a form of socialization among the local population. The reproduction of
35 these leagues in the migratory context, reflected a desire to continue social networks and
36 forms of sociability common to immigrants' country of origin.
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9 Beginning in 2000, and coinciding with the significant growth of the presence of
10 Ecuadorians in Seville, this population tried to organize their games in centrally located
11 sporting fields, in the heart of the Macarena District of Seville. These fields were easily
12 accessible to immigrants, as they were located in a neighborhood with a significant
13 presence of Ecuadorians. But very quickly, the long-term residents in the area opposed
14 their presence, complaining about the hours and the way the Ecuadorians used the fields
15 (Author 2 and Author 1 2012). This population pressured public institutions to police
16 the use of these fields, so that Latin American immigrants quickly found it difficult to
17 maintain their competitions.
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22 It must be taken into account that in this area of the Macarena district, as has happened
23 in the majority of European cities - in contrast with the model of segregation typically
24 found in North American cities - residential segregation of immigrants has been
25 influenced more by class than by other factors, such as race or ethnicity (Musterd and
26 DeWinter 1998, 672; Arbaci 2007). As a consequence, the arrival of the immigrant
27 population generated a pluri-ethnic neighborhood in Macarena, where the long-term
28 population continued to be a majority. It is important to note, on this point, that the
29 original population was a notably more aged population than its immigrant neighbors,
30 which was reflected in its clearly differentiated uses of the same public spaces. The
31 aging long-term residents of these neighborhoods spent the majority of their time in
32 their homes and were fearful and distrustful of the intensive use that the immigrant
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population made of public spaces. As a result, in these neighborhoods this long-term majority supported establishing controls over public spaces, such as installing fences to discourage use of these spaces outside of a strictly limited time (Author 2 2014). This control would also be installed around the neighborhood sports fields, which would lead the immigrants to abandon their use.

In this context, the promoters of the Latin leagues would look for an alternative space where they could organize their activities autonomously. Ultimately, in 2004, this group discovered some semi-abandoned playing fields in San Jeronimo where they could practice sports on weekends. In these fields, isolated between a municipal cemetery and an industrial site, they were able to restart their leagues, which more and more of their compatriots then joined.

The process of occupying these fields on the city outskirts involved the immigrants restoring the space, which not only had been abandoned for many years but had been the object of inappropriate uses and acts of vandalism. The immigrants had to organize clean-ups to rid the fields of weeds and shrubs that had grown up, and garbage that had accumulated over many years, and had to provide basic equipment - balls and nets for the goals. All this work was carried out collectively and voluntarily by the immigrants themselves, often through traditional institutions imported directly from their country of origin. It is worth noting the use of the minga, a pre-Columbian tradition of providing voluntary work to benefit the community. Through the minga, Ecuadorians gathered the

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8 labor needed to clean up a space that, after years of abandonment, was now needed by a
9 growing population in need of a space of its own. This process of restoring the fields
10 would have great symbolic value for this Latin American population, and would be
11 behind their claims for legitimate control over the space.
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20 "[San Jerónimo] was the only space we found. At that time, seven years ago, it had
21 weeds, where the immigrants went and got rid of the weeds, and made it a field
22 where the government could then pave it and leave it in good conditions. And for
23 the immigrants, I wasn't there at this time, based on what they told me, they say
24 that they wanted to take it away, but there was a fight with the government: that
25 they leave them this space. And they did and now it's a sports center". (Ricardo,
26 Bolivian, Blooming team)
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36 The *new* fields of San Jerónimo were rehabilitated by the immigrants, and they would
37 turn them into an ethnicized space, in other words: a space of reference for the
38 Ecuadorian, and by extension, Latin American, population of the city, which found in
39 the fields the possibility of reproducing modes of sociability tied to their culture of
40 origin. Once the space was restored, it would become very popular among this
41 population, which would convert it into a center of reference for meeting during
42 weekends and a space with a strong symbolic meaning for immigrants. After a long
43 time in which these fields had been invisible, they would again become part of the city
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9 map, this time as a place for Latin Americans: a place where immigrants would go to
10 reaffirm their cultural origin and their desire to reproduce their own customs.

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13 The rapid growth of the sporting competitions would result in strengthening the
14 promoting group, which adopted new and various functions. This group was in charge
15 of the schedule for games, deciding on which teams would play on the two available
16 fields and managing the economic funds of the leagues. These funds came primarily
17 from the registration fees paid by the teams, as well as from small contributions from
18 vendors selling food and beverages at the games on the weekends. The vendors were
19 typically members of immigrant families who, through selling cold drinks and home-
20 made food to their compatriots, managed to complement their wages, while at the same
21 time providing participants and supporters with a taste of their countries of origin,
22 contributing in this way to reinforcing the strong ethnic component of the space. In
23 short, the practice of sport was guided by the same patterns as would have been
24 followed in their region of origin.

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40 The leagues were originally organized by a group of middle-aged Ecuadorian men.
41 Most of them had already been involved in organizing grassroots sports activities in
42 Ecuador before emigrating to Spain. We are therefore not talking about social networks
43 that were initiated with the arrival of their participants in Seville. Rather, these were
44 forms of sociability already present in these networks before migration that were
45 reactivated in Seville for the purpose of enjoying weekend leisure time. This continuity
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9 in social practices was clearly reflected in the rules of the championships, as well as in
10 the presence of music, food and beverages from Ecuador. With sports to draw them in, a
11 growing number of Ecuadorians attended the games, where they found a space for open,
12 relaxing and free entertainment. At a time when the majority of Ecuadorians were recent
13 arrivals to Seville, the sports fields made it possible to bring together in the same space,
14 migrant networks based on kinship, neighborhood, and peasant origins. Thus, the space
15 took on a notable importance in channeling both information of interest to the
16 immigrants and as a form of mutual aid. Immigrants could meet others at the fields and
17 in this way address problems regarding their insertion into the city in better conditions,
18 especially in regard to issues such as access to employment and housing, as well as
19 administrative issues linked to their status as foreign residents in Spain. The sports
20 fields provided a meeting place for many persons with similar problems, taking on an
21 important function that went beyond their value as a place to practice sports.
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40 "You could go to share, whether to just share a meal or something else, and it was
41 relaxed. It was good, because it was the only place you could go to talk, to be with
42 a lot of people from your country, or other countries, to eat,... because there is no
43 other place like it here." (Ricardo, Bolivian, Blooming team)
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50 Local and regional identities would soon criss-cross the leagues. The teams that made
51 up the leagues were formed around migratory networks, composed primarily of persons
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9 from the same cities or region of origin. This would lead to teams taking their names
10 from teams in their cities of origin and their neighborhoods, or even from famous
11 people connected to their local-regional culture. Thus, among the oldest teams in the
12 leagues, we find references to counties such as Pedro Carbo - Guayas Province - and
13 neighborhoods such as Calderón - a district in Quito.
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19 These identities were particularly important in the initial years of the leagues, when the
20 majority of participants were from Ecuador and it was the local and regional references
21 that permitted them to organize their different teams. Over time, immigrants from other
22 Latin American countries joined in the games. These new immigrants were primarily
23 Peruvians, Bolivians, Paraguayans and Colombians who had settled in the same
24 neighborhoods that had been occupied primarily by Ecuadorians: Macarena, Amate,
25 Triana and Distrito Sur. Little by little these immigrants started forming their own teams
26 and demanding a more important role in the organization of the championships.
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9 through local/regional networks and identities, came to be alternated with new "world"
10 competitions, occasional tournaments in which the players reorganized themselves
11 around "national" teams. All these competitions allowed immigrants to create their own
12 space as well as reproduce local, regional and national identities directly from their
13 countries of origin. The growth of these competitions and the conversion of the playing
14 fields into a "Latino" space would soon become known throughout the city of Seville.
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21 The social visibility acquired by the immigrant sports leagues led to the arrival of a new
22 actor on the playing field, the local grassroots NGO, Anima Vitae, founded by third
23 sector professionals in 2000. This association, whose work was based on a diffuse and
24 paternalistic concept of philanthropy, had as its fundamental objective, the integration
25 of heterogeneous groups, which were generically lumped together under the terms
26 marginalized or *excluded*. Anima Vitae came to San Jeronimo from El Vacie, a nearby
27 shanty town occupied primarily by foreign gypsies. It came to the Latin playing fields in
28 order to implement the *Immigrant Integration Program through Sports and Culture*, a
29 program funded in 2005 by the Ministry of Interior of the Government of Andalusia. It
30 is worth noting that in the same year, 2005, Anima Vitae received one of the Popular
31 Sports Awards, awarded by the Municipal Institute of Sports of Seville, and a special
32 mention in the 2005 Migration Prize, awarded by the Ministry of Interior of the
33 Government of Andalusia. A year later, in 2006, it received the Migration Prize and the
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9 Andalusian Youth Award, awarded by the Andalusian Youth Institute, evidence of local
10 institutional support for the integration policies implemented by this NGO.

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12 The aim of this association was to use sports to provide support for the integration of
13 three excluded groups: children in the shantytown, El Vacie, through a weekday
14 program; a group of mentally disabled persons, through a basketball team in which
15 members of the NGO also participated, and the group of Latin American immigrants
16 participating on the local playing fields on weekends. In the discourse of *Anima Vitae*,
17 these heterogeneous groups were all linked because each belonged to the ambiguous
18 category of *excluded* groups. This shared diagnosis logically led to the same therapy for
19 all of them.
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23 It should be noted that it was the regional government, with competencies over the
24 integration of immigrants, which not only financed but also rewarded the involvement
25 of this NGO in a space that the immigrants had managed to make their own. Their
26 involvement was, and at that same time was perceived as, a deligitimization of the use
27 made of the public space by the social sectors the city was trying to integrate. In the
28 same way, rewarding an initiative that grouped together immigrants, marginal persons
29 and persons with disabilities in the same sector permits us to appreciate that not only for
30 the NGO, but also for the regional government, the immigrants were objects of
31 preferential attention, and not subjects with their own strategies.
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Friendship games: from ethnicized space to public space

The NGO tried to develop a project for integration through sports in San Jeronimo. The directors of Anima Vitae were committed to improving the image of the immigrant population and supporting their integration in the city. They were especially concerned about the way the immigrants who frequented San Jeronimo were perceived by the broader society. The consumption of alcohol at the playing fields, the illegal sale of food and the custom of hanging out to the early hours of the morning were criticized by the NGO and considered to be dysfunctional forms of participation. With the support of the municipal government, Anima Vitae took control of the playing fields and assumed the goal of adapting the championships to a participation model based on respect for city regulations, the co-presence of non-immigrant teams on the playing fields and the promotion of healthy forms of leisure. This model would be reflected in the development of the Friendship Games, championships organized by the NGO and supported by public subsidies.

The introduction of these new games onto the playing fields, and legitimized by institutional support, relegated the immigrant championships to second place. Anima Vitae urged the immigrants to get involved in the Friendship Games and offered some of them places on the board of directors of the NGO. The idea was to absorb the Latin American championships into a larger structure guided by a healthy integration project.

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9 The implementation of the new competition model would also involve a radical
10 transformation in the way of conceiving the San Jerónimo playing fields as a space.
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12 Until then, the Latin American immigrants had constructed these fields as an ethnicized
13 space, whose primary aim was to serve as a meeting place for members of specific
14 national groups and to contribute, in this way, to strengthening the differentiated
15 identity of these groups. Hereafter, the Anima Vitae NGO would fight to transform the
16 fields into a public space through a discourse of *cultural neutrality* that would combat
17 their symbolic association with Latin American minorities. Beneath this project is the
18 idea that an excessive visibility of the cultural otherness of immigrants in public space
19 contributes negatively to their integration.

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21 To carry out this transformation, the NGO would assume the key role in organizing the
22 competitions, and would take advantage of this power to foster a series of
23 transformations in the management of the playing fields. Basically, we can divide this
24 transformation into two processes:
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- 42 a) Transformation in the profile of the users of the sporting fields.

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44 The significant concentration of Latin Americans on the playing fields was the basis of
45 the ethnicization of the space that, from the perspective of Anima Vitae, contributed
46 negatively to its representation from outside as a ghetto. For this reason, the NGO
47 would make the inclusion of local athletes in the competitions a priority; this would
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9 reduce the role of immigrants and facilitate the establishment of intercultural relations
10 within the sporting competitions.

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12 To achieve this objective, Anima Vitae would take advantage of the networks it had
13 constructed over the years, promoting the convergence on the fields of all those groups
14 with which it had been working through its foundation. It incorporated representatives
15 from the other groups it worked with into its championships: Gypsies from El Vacie and
16 some of the players with disabilities from the teams also formed by members of the
17 NGO.
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28 b) Standardization of uses: regulating the correct use of the space.

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30 The NGO took the perspective that, to obtain satisfactory results in the process of
31 integration, the immigrants had to make their cultural differences visible only and
32 exclusively through standardized patterns and subordinated to a series of principles
33 defined as being of *general interest*. Thus, the Latino championships, traditionally
34 organized by immigrants, would be generically sanctioned as a negative form of the
35 visibilization of cultural otherness, and Anima Vitae would propose their substitution
36 by a different model of sporting competition. Within this new model, the immigrants
37 had to strictly comply with municipal regulations for sporting facilities, and had to stop
38 any use of the sporting fields that differed substantially from that considered in the
39 regulations.
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11 Anima Vitae asked the Ecuadorian leaders to make a greater commitment to the
12 principles of the integration project. A significant number of them initially accepted
13 participation in the Friendship Games and formally accepted the proposal of the NGO.
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15 However, problems soon arose between the immigrants and the directors of Anima
16 Vitae. There were multiple problems but they can be categorized around two major
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18 issues:
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26 a) Problems related to the presence of the new actors in the space.
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28 The presence of these new actors was not well-received by many of the immigrants.
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30 Some of them complained and said that they were afraid to play with the team from El
31 Vacie. Others were upset about having to compete with persons with disabilities.
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33 Therefore, the presence of new groups on the playing fields did not result in the positive
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35 intercultural coexistence expected by the NGO, but rather in a number of
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37 misunderstandings between groups with very diverse profiles and whose coming
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39 together was not voluntary, but rather a result of the regulations imposed by the NGO
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41 with the support of municipal institutions.
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49 b) Problems related to the use of the space.
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9 As the championships developed, the leaders of Anima Vitae discovered that the
10 Ecuadorians that had organized the futsal league were continuing to charge registration
11 and refereeing fees. They were making a significant amount of money, which offered a
12 high profit margin since the financial support for the games was then being provided by
13 the NGO. In addition, the leaders of Anima Vitae criticized the Ecuadorians for their
14 lack of cooperation in stopping the sale of food and beverages at the playing fields, as
15 well as the gambling surrounding the practice of the sport, *ecua-volley*¹. All of these
16 practices were interpreted differently by immigrants and the NGO. The former
17 continued to reproduce practices developed over years, which they also considered to be
18 important in connecting with an identity whose preservation was a priority. For Anima
19 Vitae, however, all these activities constituted misuses of municipal sporting facilities,
20 which could result in a stigma over the facilities and those groups that used them.
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37 Conflict between some of the immigrants, who saw the fields as their own space and
38 closely linked to their culture of origin, and the NGO that fought to reconvert the space
39 into a standardized public space, were constant. In order to force a change in attitude
40 among the immigrants, the NGO introduced more and more rules for the use of the
41 sports installations. First, it centralized the administration of sporting materials, which
42 were paid for with the subsidies the NGO was receiving. At the same time, there was
43 greater monitoring of the use of the installations and a clamp down on what was
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9 considered undesirable behavior. Thus, the NGO's work consisted more and more of
10 surveillance and punishment of immigrants who consumed alcohol and made bets on
11 the games. Anima Vitae also increased control over the hours, closing the facilities at
12 midnight; they would even call the police on occasion to get people off the playing
13 fields by midnight.
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19 As the months passed, the disagreements between the NGO and the immigrants turned
20 into open conflict that included verbal confrontations, mutual accusations and even
21 formal complaints against each other. The directors of Anima Vitae accused the leaders
22 of the Latin American leagues of not wanting to participate in upholding common rules
23 for use of the installations. Curiously, the NGO discourse regarding sport as a healthy
24 practice would also be adopted by a minority of immigrant athletes, who would try to
25 channel it in benefit of their own interests. This was the case for a small group of
26 Peruvians, who tried to utilize it to counteract the central role of the Ecuadorians,
27 accusing them of being responsible for the inadequate use of the facilities. From this
28 perspective, they drew a clear distinction between good and bad immigrants. They
29 harshly criticized the Ecuadorians as those who opted to maintain the Latin leagues as
30 before and accused them of trying to illegitimately take over the the playing fields:
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48 "The problem started when they [*the Ecuadorians*] thought that they were the
49 owners of the fields! They say this is for the Ecuadorians. You know that it can't
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9 be like that. This sports complex belongs to the state, and they have, everybody has
10 the same responsibilities and rights to use the facilities. But they don't want it to be
11 like that. They say, "this is ours". Then they want to do whatever they want, when
12 they want. Well, I think there are rules, right? You have to follow the rules."
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17 (Fernando, Peruvian, Anima Vitae).

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21 This discourse was clearly held by a minority among the immigrants, and in reality,
22 expressed the interests of a very concrete group². At the same time, and in contrast to
23 this discourse, the promoters of the Latin leagues asserted that their form of using the
24 playing fields was part of their culture, and they demanded they be allowed to continue
25 organizing their games as they had before Anima Vitae got involved. Claiming their
26 rights over the playing fields for having arrived first and for having worked to
27 rehabilitate them, they openly questioned the legitimacy of the NGO to control this
28 space. In their discourse they denounced the role of this organization, which they
29 considered to be an intruder that had inappropriately arrogated for itself the right to
30 control the playing fields. In this situation, disobeying the rules imposed by Anima
31 Vitae appears as a form of resistance to an illegitimate attempt to deprive them of use of
32 their space.
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47 What we observe here are two different ways of understanding sports as a mechanism
48 for integration. Both supported the value of immigrant participation. However, each of
49 the parties to this conflict bestowed different meanings on this concept. For the
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9 organizers of the Latin leagues, the right to participate included the possibility of using
10 the playing fields in ways and at times that differed from what the NGO considered
11 normal. From the perspective of the latter, participation had to begin by accepting all of
12 the rules of use established for municipal sports installations. The immigrants demanded
13 the autonomy to participate in their own way. In the actions of Anima Vitae we can see
14 the exercise of disciplinary power (Foucault 1977), manifested in a discourse on the
15 health of practicing sports that discredited the identitarian practices of the immigrants,
16 which did not fit in with the preconceived ways of practicing sports according to the
17 hegemonic perspective.
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21 The end result was that the Latin leagues abandoned the San Jeronimo playing fields
22 and moved to a new public space, Amate Park. By 2011, most of the teams had already
23 moved to this park, which was also located on the outskirts of the city. After the failure
24 of the resistance (Gramsci 1971) undertaken by the Latin leagues' directors, all that was
25 left to do was to abandon the playing fields as an act in defiance of the hegemonic
26 power exercised by governing authorities through their discourse on regulations and
27 uniformity in the use of the sports installations.
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45 46 **Conclusion**

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48 The current literature primarily identifies public spaces as places to exercise freedom
49 and build citizenship. However, the ethnographic example we have described provides
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9 evidence that compels us to question this assertion. It has demonstrated how in the
10 process of appropriating and using public space a dialect of constant conflict was
11 created between the actions and discourses of the hegemonic forces and the groups
12 resisting those powers in order to defend their interests and identities.
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17 Through the example we have seen how a healthy discourse on the “correct” way to
18 practice sports discredited an original collective project that was trying to reproduce the
19 associational and recreational models of families and social groups from their home
20 country in their country of destination. The result was a confrontation in which it
21 became clear that hidden behind the powerful ideas of *interculturality* and *integration*
22 was a disciplinary model seeking to assimilate and control the Latin American sports
23 associations, without offering any room for negotiation over the expression of identity
24 and, thus, negating the interculturality and integration it was supposedly defending.
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30 From this ethnographic example we can see that the practices of resistance carried out
31 were weaker than the hegemonic socio-spatial practices, which had the capacity to
32 impose totalizing models of integration that were exclusionary. As a result, participating
33 immigrants and their associations were marginalized, as they had to *accept* that the lack
34 of social integration and citizenship they experienced in their daily lives was blamed on
35 their supposed inability to manage the “correct” cultural codes for participation in
36 public spaces.
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As suggested by the recent work of Sassen (2003), consideration should be given to a critical review of those approaches that look at public spaces as privileged spaces for the construction of citizenship. This review should analyse the strategies of public powers in the design and implementation of policies designed to integrate the immigrant population in these spaces. We think that an approach of this type would be of great interest since, as we have demonstrated, some of the strategies that are presented as examples of good practices and that have received recognition and social distinction, are heading in exactly the opposite direction of the objective these powers are trying to achieve.

Notes

¹ A term used by Ecuadorians and the majority of Latin Americans for a game similar to volleyball, which differs by the number of players on each team – three instead of six – as well as by the possibility for a player to briefly hold the ball when it is touched.

² In this sense, the field work has shown us that it is common to find individuals or minority groups among the immigrant population that adopt the discourses of power to reinforce their own positions in benefit of their own personal interests.

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