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Le football et la fabrique des territoires. Une approche spatiale des pratiques culturelles — Source link

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Soccer and the Making of Territories: A Spatial Approach to Cultural Practices

Julien Sorez

What is a soccer stadium? Although the question may seem odd, this well-identified monument and site of fanfests is the outcome of a long history, the principal stages of which are recounted here by Julien Sorez. As a historian, the author begins at the very ground level, inviting us to closely examine the subtle stages of this construction, which recalls the significance of the territorial dimension in the establishment of modern-day soccer. In keeping with studies dealing with the "spatialization of cultural practices" – and therefore sports in this case – the author shows how the risks involved in these territories, which are both tangible and relevant, are certainly reflections, but above all actors in the anything-but-linear shaping of modern-day soccer.

Although, at the beginning of the 1990s, soccer was a "new territory for the historian,"[1] it is obvious that works devoted to the history of the sport somewhat lagged behind the study of places in which sports were practiced. The first research devoted to sports space related to public policies in connection with the proliferation of equipment and infrastructures after 1910.[2] This approach highlighted the consideration of hygiene concerns in the town council programs between the two world wars, and enabled identification of the successive steps to be carried out by the various actors concerned in planning a sports space. Furthermore, works dealing with the history of sport tend to give preference to studies focused on large spectator sport complexes,[3] competitive sporting events,[4] or, more recently, the architectural dimension of sport facilities under authoritarian regimes.[5] These works thus enable us to understand the political and ideological issues that come into play as a result of and within stadiums and other sports complexes. However, it seems to us that, in order to grasp the complexity of how a cultural practice like soccer came into existence, the historian cannot be satisfied with confining his thoughts to a space that is primarily devoted to the activities of sports associations and characterized

(1) Alfred Wahl, "Le football, un nouveau territoire pour l'historien," *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'Histoire* 26 (April-June 1990): 127-132.

(2) Jean-Paul Callède, *Les Politiques sportives en France: éléments de sociologie historique* (Paris: Economica, 2000); "Le sport et la ville," edited by Pierre Arnaud. *Spirales* 5 (1992).

(3) Alain Ehrenberg, "Aimez-vous les stades? Architecture de masse et mobilisation," *Recherches* 43 (April 1980): 25-54; Alain Ehrenberg, *Aimez-vous les stades? Les origines historiques des politiques sportives en France (1870-1930)* (Paris: Recherches, 1980).

(4) André Gounot, Denis Jallat, and Benoît Caritey, eds., *Les Politiques au stade: études comparées des manifestations sportives du 19e au 21e siècle* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007).

(5) Daphné Bolz, *Les Arènes totalitaires: fascisme, nazisme et propagande sportive* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2008).

primarily by sporting competitions and mass gatherings. Therefore, the locations for practicing sports informally and for sports-related social activities, just like the many fields and stadiums of anonymous players, should be associated with any consideration about the establishment of a sport. When conducting research on soccer in the Seine Department,[1] we were led to question the way in which soccer created territories during its development, thereby enabling it to become firmly established in the French sports landscape. The fact that the space within this department was already saturated at the very moment when the practice of soccer first appeared, and was being developed immediately, raises a question about the ways and means by which it was established and the means by which the stakeholders in soccer put up with a short-lived and uncertain occupation of the spaces that were temporarily granted to them. Therefore, by studying soccer from its appearance at the end of the nineteenth century to the end of the period between the two world wars, we have used the notion of territory to understand the complexity involved in establishing this sport in an urban environment.[2] On the one hand, this calls for emphasis to be placed on a topographic approach focused on the type of terrain, its location, and the immediate environment, all of which are determining factors in its practicability and visibility. On the other hand, the notion of territory draws attention to the emotional and identity-related dimension at the core of the relationships between individuals and social groups and the places they develop and occupy. This territorial approach thus hopes to highlight another concept of the sports space by taking a closer look at the perceptions created by contemporaries for their own purposes. It also provides an opportunity to see how, with the involvement of institutional and political actors starting around 1910, a new, more restrictive relationship to the sports space was developed, which, by recovering the emotional and identity-related potential of the prior uses for the sports space, made them a concrete reality. Thus, a territory-focused approach shows us that the spatial dimension of soccer is not only essential to establishing and spreading soccer, but likewise makes it possible to show that the space and its social issues are key actors insofar as they define soccer as a practice, shape the contours of sports-related social activities, and serve as a basis for building and mobilizing collective identities at association and municipal levels alike.

The Uncertain Territories of the Seine Department

During the first half of the twentieth century, Parisian soccer, like other cultural practices of the previous century, developed essentially in public spaces which, due to their size or configuration, enabled several teammates to compete with one another. The Bois de Boulogne

(1) Julien Sorez, *Le football dans Paris et ses banlieues. Un sport devenu spectacle* (Presses universitaires de Rennes, Rennes, 2013)

(2) The works that most inspired our approach were those that insisted on the territory as something constructed – and therefore on the processes – rather than those works that considered it as something acquired. Guy Di Méo's approach, or the pioneering work of Joël Bonnemaison, both of whom offered a culturalist perspective on the issue, were among those who provided the most inspiring contributions on the subject. See Guy Di Méo, *Les Territoires du quotidien* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997); Joël Bonnemaison, "Voyage autour du territoire." *L'Espace Géographique* 4 (October-December 1981): 249-262; and Joël Bonnemaison, Luc Cambrezy, and Laurence Quinty-Bourgeois, eds., *Les Territoires de l'identité: le territoire, lien ou frontière* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999). As concerns the gradual integration of the notion of territory into the social sciences and its various challenges, such as that of validating the logic of actors involved in the "spacialization of social activities," reference can be made to: Marie-Vic Ozouf-Marigner, "Le territoire, la géographie et les sciences sociales: aperçus historiques et épistémologiques," in *Territoires, territorialité, territorialisation: controverses et perspectives*, ed. Martin Vanier. (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009), 31-35.

and Bois de Vincennes, the public gardens in the center of Paris, like those of the Tuileries or Luxembourg Gardens, were prized spaces because they were free of all the constraints of the built-up areas during a period when the overwhelming majority of companies lacked the means to acquire land or develop sports infrastructure. The same spatial system was used in the peripheral communes. In the 1900s, the young people of the commune occupied the Place des Tilleuls in Saint-Maur-des-Fossés to play the first soccer matches,[1] while Pierre Chayriguès, a famous soccer goalie in the early twentieth century, played on the church square in Levallois prior to World War I, using a rubber ball.[2] Purchasing or leasing land was quite often out of the question for economic reasons. Even when sports associations relied on social relationships, as did the short-lived British club, the White Rovers,[3] or benefactors, as in the case of the Racing Club de France,[4] acquiring a lease from an individual or private company did not guarantee permanent use of the playing field. Besides the real estate pressures and speculation that impacted a portion of the private land used by the soccer teams in the department,[5] the dangers associated with the ball being thrown, as well as the municipal priority of providing walkways in public gardens and wooded areas, contributed to a spatial marginalization of soccer as a sport that had been rapidly growing since the beginning of the twentieth century. Outside certain pockets of resistance, such as a portion of the Tuileries Garden, the majority of public spaces either prohibited ball games, as did the Luxembourg Gardens,[6] or confined them to little-used and often low-quality spaces like the exercise area in the Bois de Vincennes and the lawn areas in the Bagatelle Gardens.[7]

This spatial marginalization determined to a significant extent the conditions under which the first players practiced the sport. Whether they were occasional soccer players who played with classmates, friends, or coworkers, or players who participated in the first formal soccer competitions of the association, the players of the first two decades of the sport were often forced to deal with outside elements. While the wild-boar statue in the Tuileries Garden presided over the informal matches played by the young workers of the quarter,[8] the trees planted in the middle of the fields in Bécon-les-Bruyères also had to be avoided by the players of the West Parisian clubs.[9] These two types of practices especially deal with spaces that do not allow any long-term development. The stories told by players during the early times testify to the great difficulty involved in installing the goal-cage posts prior to the start of games, and how they had to be dismantled and stored once the game was over, despite their advanced state of fatigue.[10] In the same way, informal games played by groups of young people in the streets made use of objects or

(1) La Vie au grand air de Saint-Maur, July 1921.

(2) *Match l'Intran*, September 6, 1927.

(3) Henry Blount, who was the manager of the British club, was also the director of the Compagnie du chemin de fer de l'Ouest, which enabled the White Rovers to take advantage of the company's field in Bécon.

(4) Dr. Lauling, a member of the Racing Committee, advanced the sum required to lease a soccer field. See the archives of the Racing Club de France, minutes of the Racing Club de France's Committee meeting held on May 7, 1910.

(5) Many soccer fields were sold for the construction of investment properties at the end of the nineteenth century.

(6) Ball games were prohibited in the Luxembourg Gardens following an order by the Questure of the Senate on March 12, 1906, after a senator's hat was hit by a ball.

(7) *Archives départementales (AD) de la Seine*, Pérotin 106/53 55 "Bois de Boulogne. Autorisation de jouer [permit to play]"; *AD de la Seine*, VM90 8, "Autorisations [permits]: Bois de Vincennes." These two archival records attest to the progressive spatial marginalization of the practice of soccer, which the government restricted to the most unpleasant spaces in the respective "Bois."

(8) *L'Auto* (a former French sports newspaper), February 16, 1938.

(9) Géo Duhamel, *Le Football Association, ses débuts* (Angoulême: Imprimerie de la Charente, 1931, 1959).

(10) Duhamel, *Le Football Association*.

monuments on-site by changing their original function. The iron chairs in the Tuileries Gardens[1] or the central arch of the Arc du Triomphe du Carrousel, on top of which Napoleon sits,[2] were thus transformed into goal cages at game time.[3] Sometimes, making use of the personal effects of the players, such as caps, to mark the field or indicate the location of the goal cages also served as markers for this one-time appropriation of the space. On the vacant lot owned by Pierre Chayriguès, "the goal posts were missing! However, three caps on one side and a jacket on the other took their place,"[4] while Lucien Gamblin and his teammates marked off the "woods[5] with caps, goal lines and sidelines with caps, and the center of the field was marked by the referee's cap . . . "[6] The fact that a physical location for playing soccer was rarely created within commercial enclosures and given little consideration by city councils illustrates this lack of recognition by society. However, by caring for the spaces used for playing sports and sports-related social activities, it appears that the short-lived nature of the spaces in no way prevents them from being appropriated. The sporadic occupation of the playing fields is offset by certain practices and uses for the spaces, which counter the precarious situation in which casual players and those belonging to associations find themselves. The marking off of public spaces using personal effects, the ability to repurpose monuments or public objects, or the repeated transport and installation of goal cages function as markers of a territory which, though not permanent, nevertheless becomes familiar.

This temporary use of space likewise illustrates the adaptability of soccer in its early days. This can be explained by the fact that the majority of the players were young people, high-school students, university students, or apprentices and employees working under often difficult conditions in a rapidly developing tertiary sector in Paris.[7] Consequently, the first soccer spaces, which were characterized by the precarious nature of the facilities, a lack of permanency in terms of the locations, and a scarcity of lasting and specific arrangements, are both a result and reflection of the social standing of the early players. Due to their age or social status, they occupied a position that was socially subjugated, and did not have the personal means to spatially impose their practice in an area subject to strong real estate pressure. At the same time, this tenuous standing of soccer explains its ability to endlessly adapt and free itself from the need for social and political recognition in order to develop. Like bandstands involved in popularizing musical culture among the French,[8] one might venture to say that the nomadic and precarious nature of soccer fields contributed to them becoming socially popular. Practiced in open spaces, in view of all, soccer is visible to those passing and strolling by who, for the moment, are to varying degrees initiated into the game.[9]

Along with this impact on the spreading of the sport within society, the absence of fences made soccer matches highly susceptible to outside interferences. Games played in

(1) *L'Auto*, November 9, 1929.
(2) *L'Auto*, November 9, 1929.
(3) *L'Auto*, February 16, 1938.
(4) *Match l'Intrans*, September 6, 1927.
(5) The "bois" (woods), in the language of the soccer players of the period, designated the soccer goal cages, which were made of wood during the first half of the twentieth century.
(6) *L'Auto*, February 15, 1938.
(7) Lenard R. Berlanstein, *The Working People of Paris, 1871-1914*. London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984.
(8) Marie-Claire Mussat, "Kiosques à musique et urbanisme: les enjeux d'une autre scène," in *Le Concert et son public: mutations de la vie musicale en Europe de 1780 à 1914 (France, Allemagne, Angleterre)*, ed. Hans Erich Bödeker, Patrice Veit, and Michael Werner (Paris: Éditions de la MSH, 2002), 317-332.
(9) See, for example, the story by Frantz Reichel on the success of soccer in the Bois de Vincennes, which appeared in *Le Sport Universel* on December 24, 1898.

public spaces are often interrupted by foreign elements such as animals passing through or interfering, and more frequently yet by other users of the space being occupied.[1] Besides such impromptu interruptions occurring in these non-specific locations, many matches are the site of heavy interaction between the playing field and the public, which is often along the sidelines due to the lack of bleachers or separation barriers. At the end of the nineteenth century, it was extremely common for specatators to invade and occupy the field, and the game was heavily influenced by the public. The public was even an integral actor in sporting events, whether during informal social events among players and spectators, which marked pauses in the game, or in the form of cheers or even fighting over play-related incidents. This overcrowding of the space was made possible by the small number of specatators and the low stakes of these early sports competitions. Therefore, until WWI, the spectators and players were frequently indistinguishable from one another in that the spectators were quite often players who had come to encourage their friends or boo their rivals. These early matches likewise created a highly conflictual relationship between the soccer players and the local residents not involved in the sport, primarily truck farmers in the Parisian suburbs and residents living close to the fields. Contrary to the social regulation governing relationships with spectators along the sidelines, within the context of a "peer-group sport," the impact is often head-on when it comes to other users, since soccer is perceived as a harmful activity. Admittedly, the absence of fencing or the ineffectiveness of wooden barricades bothers local residents considerably, who are therefore constantly besieged by the arrival of balls on their property, which leads them to routinely confiscate or puncture balls when they experience repeated damage from them.

The soccer match thus functions as a space for both integration and exclusion. By making itself visible to all, it does indeed enable a sort of privileged acculturation to the practice of soccer. In particular, during a period when the spectator is above all a player or member of a sports association, the unmarked field has the ability to mobilize and integrate into the game those individuals situated along the sidelines, who function as both social interfaces and regulatory boundaries. Moreover, other users of the space, who are often insulted by the players, are expelled from the field. The fact remains that this conflictual relationship, paired with the nuisances created by it, contributes to the identification of a territory under construction. Far from being created exclusively around the fields that it occupied temporarily, Parisian soccer ultimately established itself in the locations that gave life to sports-related social activities. One of the cornerstones of soccer clubs was the café [2] which, depending on its location,[3] served as a locker-room, meeting room for managers, and favorite location for association banquets, since few associations had headquarters or facilities. As a space for socializing, the café made it possible to cultivate ties between the sports sections of the club, between the various teams, and obviously between the players and managers to the same degree that the movements of the teams and the regular changes in play-

(1) *L'Auto*, February 15, 1938; *Les Jeunes*, March 31, 1906.

(2) We provide a broad definition of the café here, which ranges from the ordinary bar to the grand Parisian brasseries.

(3) The "locker-room cafés" were primarily situated near the soccer fields or spaces, while cafés serving as association meeting locations tended to be located close to train stations, such as the Café de Rome close to the Saint-Lazare station, or else communication nodes, such as the Café du Tambour in the Bastille district.

ing fields worked to break apart those ties. By offering the opportunity to the association members to consume alcohol and tobacco frequently and to play cards and billiards, cafés were not only a space that reinforced the masculine dimension of sports practices,[1] but were also a way for managers to maintain influence over their members. Besides being a place of association social events, the soccer cafés seemed to be the place to make administrative and sports-related decisions, since the various managerial committees responsible for selecting, convening, or even penalizing active members met there on a weekly basis. This being the case, these association spaces, like the playing fields, were short-lived spaces. If it were not for the meetings and weekly evening events attended by the members, it is unlikely that the sports association would have kept the drinks flowing for long. The names of the cafés, which were often neutral, did not in any way indicate the regular presence of sports-related social activities, and changes in particular cafés as association headquarters continued to occur very frequently. In other words, although the café was an enclosed space conducive to creating and strengthening ties between members, it did not amount to a territory in which the identity of the club could be established. Nevertheless, it turned out that a portion of these places for socializing were able to operate as "peddlers of association identity"[2] due to the length of time the club had been established, the presence of the owner as part of the management committee, their location in the district in which the club originated, or their proximity to the playing field. Above all, the weekly association meeting in the cafés, livened up with alcohol and tobacco, etc., could be thought of as another form of ritual. Thus, for a time, it marked the association presence and helped to build its identity, taking over the rites of planning and appropriating the playing field or those associated with public involvement during the meetings.

Thus, prior to the First World War, soccer was indeed a marginal practice in the Seine Department. However, soccer players and club managers established a number of collective rites that authorized this short-lived appropriation of space. These rites of appropriation required and strengthened, in the majority of cases, the solidarity and regular attendance of members both on the field and off. As repeated events, based on the weekly rhythm of the association, these rites united the members. In these first decades of soccer playing, what counted more than the actual territorial anchoring was the ability of the association to create territory, even if temporarily.

The Creation of a Sustainable Territory

Although, since the 1900s, some sports associations enjoyed having permanent facilities, it was not until the period between the two world wars that soccer would become firmly established in spaces specifically dedicated to the sport. This upswing was the result of the increasing integration of soccer into the commercial stadiums of the Seine, such as the Parcs des Princes or the Vélodrome Buffalo, but also the multiplication of association, sponsor-owned, and especially municipal stadiums during the 1930s. Soccer assumed a central place within these sports spaces, both in terms of the spatial organization (since the central turf area

(1) In this regard, the use of the café for sports purposes was an extension of the republican circle of Maurice Agulhon. See Maurice Agulhon. *Le Cercle dans la France bourgeoise, 1810-1848: étude d'une mutation de sociabilité* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1977).

(2) This expression takes inspiration from that of Sharon Zukin, which relates to the role of nearby businesses in territorial identities. See Sharon Zukin, "Où sont passés les cafés du coin?" *Ethnologie Française* 4 (2006): 749-752.

was routinely laid out as a soccer field[1]) and in terms of the majority of sports complexes, which combined various sports fields (since the soccer field came to dominate from a numerical standpoint[2]). Besides this spatial expansion, which is a reflection and outcome of the spread of soccer within society, the period between the two world wars bore witness to a great upheaval in the relationship between soccer and space, in particular due to the sustainability of sports facilities. Marketing, patrimonialization, and municipalization were the three new soccer field "factories" in the Seine Department.

First of all, the increasing media coverage of soccer in the 1920s and the multiplication of international sports events in Paris and its nearby suburbs, as well as the professionalization of the sport in 1932 gradually propelled soccer into the ranks of sports having strong commercial potential. Soccer matches grew in number in the large sports complexes. This marketing process was the result of the initiative taken by "entertainment promoters" consisting of velodrome and stadium managers who were organized into corporations and often associated with a national newspaper headquartered in Paris. However, it should be noted that even though soccer was thereby given more media attention, its path was more restricted in terms of establishing the sport and crystallizing a territorial identity. Indeed, contrary to the development of British soccer – where the stadium and the team that played there were so much a part of the identity of the neighborhood that John Bale used the term "topophilia" to describe the nature of the bond associating these elements with one another[3] – the stadium in its commercial version did not result in such an identity-based membership in the Seine Department. For profit reasons, the managers of velodromes and stadiums gave preference to highly attended matches rather than remaining loyal to a team having an uncertain future and attracting a limited segment of the public. For their part, being sufficiently successful, the club managers often opted for ambiguous spatial strategies. For example, the Racing Club de Paris, a professional branch of the Racing Club de France as of 1932, played when opportunities were presented and financial agreements were reached with the press and the managers of sports complexes. As part owner of the Stadium of Colombes from the moment when the 1924 Olympic Games were organized, the Racing Club organized matches there, starting in the 1930s, against the Arsenal FC and to commemorate the First World War. At the same time, President Jean Bernard-Lévy, one of the organizers of a tournament associated with the Colonial Exhibition of 1931, chose the municipal track of Vincennes as a field, following his strategy to set up as close as possible to the international event. Finally, when, in the context of the French professional championship, his team was received, he preferred the service offered by the Parc des Princes of Henri Desgrange, Editor of *L'Auto*. Marketing provided further media visibility of soccer, but, in actual practice, it did not break the nomadic cycle of the early years.

The community of soccer players, who for a long time were at the mercy of short-term spaces, gradually gave way to the multiple acquisitions of association fields during the 1910s, and especially after the First World War. The precariousness of the start of the century gave way to a sort of stabil-

(1) Alex Poyer, "La France s'éveille au sport," in *Histoire du sport en France: du Second Empire au régime de Vichy*, ed. Philippe Tétart (Paris: Vuibert, 2007), 5-23.

(2) Bagatelle and La Courneuve comprised a large majority of soccer fields.

(3) See in particular John Bale, *Landscapes of Modern Sport* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1994); and John Bale, *Sport, Space and the City* (Blackburn: The Blackburn Press, 1992).

ity, which had a lasting effect on the relationship between soccer players and space. This development owed partially to the greater legitimacy and visibility of French soccer which, with the establishment of the Fédération Française de Football (FFF) in 1919, was institutionally emancipated from the multipurpose federations governing pre-war soccer. In this context, the increasingly stringent requirements for competitions, in terms of safety and comfort, required the clubs to invest in sustainable infrastructures.[1] From that time on, one saw the emergence of an emotional relationship with the space in question. Indeed, the acquisition of a field quite often required considerable work to make it usable. Due to their shape, size, or topography, many sites were poorly suited to playing soccer. This explains why, quite often, the sports association had to provide utility services to its field after acquiring it.[2] For example, in Suresnes, the Soccer Club of Suresnes, which had been evicted from Le Haras due to the construction of a workers' housing development, found "an extensive potato field" that they rented in the commune of Rueil, thanks to personal funding by their president.[3] The "cute little stadium," displayed on dedication day, was the result of a weeding and leveling operation carried out by the junior teams "assisted by all of the gangs of kids from the city who removed the stones and debris."[4] Mobilizing active members as a labor force is a frequent recourse for these associations often having limited resources, like development of the former quarry by the working-class sports club of Gennevilliers, who mobilized all of their comrades to "put their hands to the shovel in order to have a suitable field."[5] The harshness of the development work was in many cases compensated for by the determination of all the members of the association, even when the field held nasty surprises. This collective approach makes it possible to at least partially explain the emotional attachment of the members of the association to their field. This is why, in order to confront rumors that the Saint-Maur City Hall had to buy back their land, the managers of the Étoile Sportive de Saint-Maur recalled that, after the war, "the trouble we went to, without anyone else's assistance, means that this field is truly our own."[6] More than the efforts actually made, it was the account of how the land was used that made it possible to measure the importance of this rite of appropriation in the memory of the association. The vignettes that relate this episode often represent the point of departure of a historical account of the association, whether it be part of a single article dedicated to the *Club sportif ouvrier* of Gennevilliers, as published in the *Le Travailleur de la banlieue ouest*, or a series of articles such as those of the youth sports organization of Puteaux, as published in the *Bulletin municipal* of Puteaux. Therefore, land development is an essential step in the history of the association, because it serves as something that sparks collective life. The fundamental role attributed to land development in these accounts even makes it appear to be a sort of birth certificate serving as a substitute

(1) Among the conditions required by the Parisian soccer association league for advancement to Division 1, clubs had to own a field enclosed by a continuous fence consisting of interconnected planks. In addition, the playing field had to be separated from the public by a handrail located at a minimum of 1 meter above ground and positioned a minimum of 1.5 meters from the sidelines and goal lines, not including the fact that a lockable locker room had to be available to each team, with sufficient water for cleansing, as well as a separate locker room for the referee. See *Annuaire de la Ligue parisienne de football association*, 1920-1921.

(2) See, for example, the outfitting of the youth club's field in the Épinettes neighborhood of Paris in *Les Épinettes*, November 15, 1908; and that of the Étoile sportive de Saint-Maur in *La Vie au grand air de Saint-Maur*, February 1920.

(3) *Le Suresnois*, August 25, 1934.

(4) *Le Suresnois*, August 25, 1934.

(5) *Le Travailleur de la banlieue ouest*, February 4, 1938.

(6) *La Vie au grand air de Saint-Maur*, July 1921.

for filing articles of association with the prefecture, and yet it was an actual instrument of establishment of the association. The land brought life to the association because, above all, it was what was at stake in order for it to survive. In terms of a collective experience directing the solidarity of the members and their attachment to the material well-being of the association, this rite of appropriation was the true birth certificate of the association, which, outside the legal framework, thought of itself as a sum of devoted individuals. The acquired space then became the conquered territory as a result of collective work and the telling of its story. Contrary to the previous spaces, the association stadium was no longer a place temporarily occupied by collective rituals; it was henceforth fully incorporated into the social identity of the association. Moreover, these lands, which the land development story assists in transforming into an association heritage, often carry a strong local identity. Beyond the attachment of the players and managers to the converted space, the presence of a large, regular, and often lively public attending the matches played by the Football club de Suresnes and portrayed in La Vie au grand air de Saint-Maur shows us that the stadium can function as an interface between the sports association and the residents of the commune, who are identified by their presence and their cheering for the home team.[1]

In the examples presented, the sports association, by developing its stadium, became an integral part of the communal landscape. For sports associations outside the commune, this capacity of the space to imprint itself upon the memory of a group was instead made manifest in the erection of monuments or the installation of commemorative plaques, starting in the 1920s. As a matter of fact, the participation of sports associations in the First World War and the fact that a portion of their members died in combat helped to provide the sports world with a spatial anchoring. The post-war challenge was to get the public authorities to recognize the sports world's involvement in the war effort, which resulted in the allocation of subsidies but also the development of playing fields where young French people could exercise. Like many associations, the sports associations adopted a politics of memory focused on their involvement in combat. Starting in the 1920s, many events during the period between the First and Second World Wars were thus marked by war memories, such as the match between Arsenal and the Racing Club de France in Paris. However, this politics of memory was predominantly marked by the erection of commemorative monuments and stones during the 1920s, a powerful emotional force that sealed the existence and legitimacy of a sports territory. In 1921, the Racing Committee decided, in the case of Colombes and Croix-Catelan, to install commemorative plaques.[2] The monument erected in 1926 by the Athletic Club of the 14th *Arrondissement* in the Montrouge stadium is even more significant in that the ceremony was presided over by a representative of the Ministry of War, Commander Breyer, with whom the municipalities of the 14th *Arrondissement* of Paris and Montrouge were associated, as well as the mayor of Bourg-la-Reine.[3] As for the monument erected by the Club de l'Étoile des deux lacs, it was inaugurated in 1923 in the stadium of the Marche de Vaucresson in honor of the "103 glorious missing" in combat, in the presence of Henri Paté, High Commissioner of Phys-

(1) Regular allusions to the devotion of a sometimes overenthusiastic local public can be found in the sports columns in the *Suresnois* at the end of the 1930s and in *La Vie au grand air de Saint-Maur*.

(2) Archives of the Racing Club de France, minutes of the meeting held by the Racing Club de France Committee on April 14, 1921.

(3) *L'Auto*, February 12, 1926.

ical Education, and Cardinal Dubois.[1] The erection of monuments celebrated the involvement of sports in the First World War and had the effect of inscribing this sacrifice within the space occupied or even acquired by the associations. The dedication ceremonies strengthened the well-being of the sports associations, especially when they provided an opportunity to invite public figures who lent additional credibility to the associations' contribution and consecrated the process of morally legitimizing the space. The memory of veteran athletes inscribed in the stone memorial outside the stadium or at the entrance gate firmly established the association within a specific space. That being said, the majority of the dedications related primarily to associations outside the commune in which they were established as a sport. Among those associations concerned with remembering their athletes are the Stade français in Saint-Cloud and the Racing Club de France in Colombes, which were clubs that recruited primarily within the Paris region after the First World War, the Club athlétique of the 14th *Arrondissement* in Montrouge, and finally, l'Étoile des deux lacs in Vaucresson, a youth club associated with the parish of Saint-Honoré d'Eylau in the 16th *Arrondissement*. The national dimension of the memory of the First World War, and its celebration, might have overtaken the expansionist nature of these privileged societies established in suburban communes. In particular, the monument dedicated to the dead and its list of athletes who had fallen for France harkens back to the participation of *la petite patrie* (the little homeland) – the sports association, in serving the greater homeland – the nation. It enables the stadium or association field to insert itself into national commemorative space, thereby offering it greater spatial legitimacy.

Thus, the association football territory is built on heritage values that make it possible to legitimize and strengthen the tie between the space and the association. This also falls within the context of personalizing the careers of players. As a matter of fact, during the period between the two world wars, the ties between individuals, association, and managers weakened to the extent that growing financial concerns superseded devotion and attachment to the association. Land-use planning, and especially the way in which it was relayed in the club newsletter or local newspaper, made it possible to firmly establish the territory in an association memory which thereby strengthened its presumed identity and the attachment of its members. Likewise, the erection of monuments commemorating the First World War enabled long-term occupation of the territory and strengthened the commitment of the members to the association. In order to grasp the complexity of the social stakes of this territorial anchoring, nothing remained but to pay attention to those who supported and defined the "heritage" space. According to Guy Di Méo,[2] due to growing financial concerns, any granting of heritage status has a genealogical dimension based on the idea of a "shared filiation," and enshrines the notions of preserving or even passing on the goods in question. On the association level, the actors responsible for defining a heritage sports space are the managers. In fact, it is they who, when the land was acquired, mobilized the members of the association to carry out various types of work; and it was they, above all, who were responsible for the ups and downs of this founding moment. In the same way, after World War One, the managers of the soccer associations took the initiative to commemorate those athletes who had died in combat. The personal stories along with the perspective on the past

(1) *Les Jeunes*, May 14, 1923.

(2) Guy Di Méo, "Processus de patrimonialisation et construction des territoires," in *Regards sur le patrimoine industriel de Poitou-Charentes et d'ailleurs* (Poitiers: Geste, 2008), 1-18.

lives of these pre-war players and managers place a "generational debt" on the sports territories. In fact, for the sports world, the First World War resulted in a strong demographic renewal which, besides the human losses, manifested itself in a younger group of players. The memorial significance of a sports territory is a way of highlighting the comparative advantages enjoyed by the new generations, but it also strengthens their attachment to the space in which they play, while taking stock of the human and material sacrifices made in acquiring them. This approach drove a portion of the sports territory's roots into the trauma of war. In fact, the patrimonialization process often refers to a "generational break," a traumatic triggering event, which makes the space a place of refuge and of rebuilding identity.[1] However, the previous uses of the space, this new approach of a heritage space, creates a common focus. It is about the ability to transmute uses of the space into social values. While appropriation laid down rules based on the solidarity of the members in order to set up temporary fields, it still remains a very present force in the sustainability of soccer spaces. That being said, while relying on lasting spaces, this same solidarity is now generational and allows for a more comfortable management headquarters than did the café benches.

The Municipalization of the Sports Space

Finally, the emergence of a lasting soccer territory came in the wake of the municipalization of communal spaces that was at work in many suburbs of the Seine Department, whereas in the 1920s, few municipalities were open to the idea of building sports complexes; the 1930s marked an important milestone in municipal sports policy. Up until the end of the 1920s, many communes did not have permanent soccer fields, as documented by the inventory of stadiums and fields taken by M. Hémlot, head of the Physical Education Department of the Seine, for the military government of Paris.[2] This document dated 1929 gives an early idea of the sports space within the department. Even though it points out the predominant place held by soccer in the Seine, since all of the sports equipment inventoried mentions a facility dedicated to soccer, it especially provides us with a glimpse of the distribution of departmental facilities. Of the one hundred eleven fields listed in the Seine suburbs, thirty-three were municipal properties, ten of which belonged to the city of Paris. These communal fields were sparsely equipped, since only five communes had facilities described as an "equipped stadium" (to which one might add Le Perreux which, at the time, was still not for municipal use). Two points bear noting here. On the one hand, many suburban communes of the Seine were completely devoid of any sports facilities. Real estate pressure was partially responsible for the lack of any sports facility in Neuilly-sur-Seine, Vincennes, or Levallois for want of open spaces and land prices that had rapidly become prohibitive. This is what the president of the Sports Union of Neuilly lamented when interviewed by *L'Auto* in August 1929,[3] as did Louis Rouquier, mayor of Levallois and M. Vendrin, General Councillor of the Seine Department who, in a report to the Prefect of the Seine Department, pointed out that Levallois, a city of 75,000 inhabitants living on 242 hectares, had no playing field, while this workers' housing development had fourteen sports associations comprising 2,000 members.[4] On the other hand, mention must be made of the considerable influence of outside sports associations in the spaces of the

(1) Di Méo, "Processus de patrimonialisation," 18.

(2) *Archives nationales*, F[17] 14460.
(3) *L'Auto*, August 25, 1929.
(4) *L'Auto*, November 16, 1926.

Parisian suburbs. This situation was the result of the allocation policy of the city of Paris and the Seine Department, which gave preference on their suburban fields to long-term concessions to associations capable of paying a substantial rent and of countering the more costly facilities, i.e., the Parisian clubs having solid economic capital, such as the Club Athlétique de la Société Générale and the Stade Français. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, this policy was fulfilled by the acquisition of playing fields and stadiums in the suburbs of the Seine Department by numerous associations, businesses, or companies who were driven by the availability and cost of the land. Thus, the Crédit Lyonnais in Drancy, the Union Sportive du Métropolitaine at Croix-de-Berny (the site of a former racetrack) in Antony, or the Compagnie des chemins de fer du Paris-Orléans in Vitry owned fields, while the majority of their members and their managers lived outside the commune in question.

As a result of this dispossession of real estate, the building of municipal stadiums and fields served to spearhead the empowerment of a communal sports territory and to thereby affirm a suburban identity. The land in question was often acquired to the detriment of associations outside the commune or close to the city of Paris, the department, or even the Ministry of War. The municipalization process was even brought to a climax during the ceremonies that marked the many stadium dedications and enabled the sovereignty and modernity of the suburbs to be asserted while consecrating the current political leadership, as in the case of La Courneuve in 1920 or Thiais in 1934.[1] It can be noted that these types of practices at sports venues were common to all municipalities, irrespective of their political orientation, like the other aspects of the cultural policies of the municipalities of the Seine Department suburbs studied by Sylvie Rab.[2] From a spatial viewpoint, municipalization was certainly the strongest guarantee of securing the future sustainability of soccer in a department subject to significant real estate pressures. From the moment when the soccer field incorporated communal republican buildings and regularly participated in mayoral festivities, the game was granted a prominent place in the suburban sports culture. However, this place "under the municipal sun" of the French Third Republic was also challenged by the association sports culture and association rituals. Often infiltrated once they granted privileged access to the municipal stadium by the council members, sports clubs lost their autonomy, despite the fact that their association status was upheld under the regime governed by the law of 1901. Their head office became the city hall or the stadium, which short-circuited the sports associations' traditional ways of socializing. This administrative supervision extended as far as the practice of the sport, in that the municipal stadium, as an extension of the sovereignty of the town council, became a place of "municipal order," where the power of elected officials was exercised and displayed.[3] Body postures, like the players' clothing, were hence subject to drastic municipal regulatory provisions, as in the case of the Saint-Denis stadium:

> All events or discussions of a political or religious nature are strictly prohibited of anyone (players, managers, trainers, judges, referees, members of the public, etc.) inside the stadium during training or competitive events. Since the municipal stadium is open to all public officials, shouts of a political nature are likewise prohib-

(1) For Thiais, see *Banlieue sud*, October 7, 1933, and for La Courneuve, *Le Journal de Saint-Denis*, September 11, 1920.

(2) Sylvie Rab, "Les municipalités ouvrières et le sport dans les années trente: exemple de trois municipalités socialistes françaises (Boulogne, Puteaux et Suresnes)," in *Les Origines du sport ouvrier en Europe*, ed. Pierre Arnaud (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994), 247-265.

(3) Thus, the municipal stadium regulations stipulated that elected officials had a permanent right to enter the facilities.

> ited; only the customary exclamation "hip, hip, hip, hurrah!" will be tolerated within the context of sporting events, in order to greet the opponents.[1]

This "disciplining" of the body, which, during the twentieth century, was part of increasingly regulated social behaviors, attests to the tendency of sports practices to rather quickly incorporate rules of social life laid down by the powers-that-be. This process, which occurred far from the parliamentary arenas or municipal deliberations and debates, was orchestrated by the municipal commissions where the power of the elected officials was exercised fully. Studying municipal stadiums thus offers the possibility of rethinking the way in which a power that is in the process of asserting itself attempts to impose the norms that it lays down and shows us that local political institutions weighed heavily in this "controlled liberation of emotions."[2] The introduction of political and social influence, spatial requirements, and methods of securing sustainability undoubtedly contributed greatly to determining the recreational activities of individuals, more so than had ever been thought or written down.

The description of the sports territories of the Seine Department reveal strong disparities in the way soccer was established. Although the process of municipalization was driven by elected municipal councils and a mayor, and enabled many suburban communes of the Seine Department to equip themselves with soccer fields and stadiums, the marketing rationale, such as accessibility and the potential spectator threshold, limited its territorialization to those spaces well serviced, such as the Parc des Princes, the Stade de Colombes or the Buffalo de Montrouge velodrome. In the same way, the limited means of many sports associations of the Seine Department induced them to gradually incorporate the municipal structures that managed access to these spaces. At the end of the period between the two world wars, only the lawn areas in the Bagatelle Gardens and the playing field at Issy-les-Moulineaux continued to welcome both casual soccer players and those assembled as sports associations who still, to this day, carry the vague but strongly connoted title of "Sunday soccer player."

Thus, the development of soccer in the first half of the twentieth century moved in the direction of permanently establishing sports in increasingly numerous enclosed and specific spaces. However, the study of a sports practice must go beyond this linear and institutional reading in an attempt to unearth the multiplicity of social stakes that accompanied such an evolutionary development. The establishment of collective rites, the emergence of a filial relationship, or else the political and social instrumentalization of a winning sports space shows us that this space was not just the result of regulating an established practice. This being the case, the space comprises not only a privileged mirror of the collective portrayals of the men who planned it and use it, but likewise offers the possibility of rethinking the importance of the territory in the building and identification of social groups.

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(1) Municipal Archives of Saint-Denis, 6M 15 "Construction stade du Barrage 1932-1939."

(2) Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Sport et Civilisation: la violence maîtrisée* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).

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Abstract

— While work on the history of sport has mainly dealt with the construction of public sports facilities, this article uses the example of soccer to revisit the way the Seine Department worked to build a sports space during the Third Republic. Using the notion of territory, this study analyzes how institutional or informal sports practice locations, meeting places, or "old-timers" sports associations are part of the production, identification, and recognition of a sports space.