#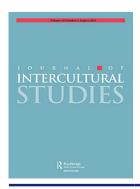 Co-Ethnic in Private, Multicultural in Public: Group-Making Practices and Normative Multiculturalism in a Community Sports Club

Co-Ethnic in Private, Multicultural in Public: Group-Making Practices and Normative Multiculturalism in a Community Sports Club

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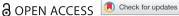
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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how multiculturalism is enacted and negotiated among Brazilian and Portuguese migrants at a football (soccer) club in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The authors use the lens of everyday multiculturalism to analyse the tension between public expectations about intercultural 'mixing' and actual intercultural engagement in practice. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, we discuss how club members negotiate the national discourse that recognises cultural differences yet prescribes intercultural mixing in the public sphere. The findings show that meeting co-ethnics is one of the club members' primary motivations for participating in the football club, whereas interacting with people with culturally diverse backgrounds is not a leitmotif. Everyday group-making practices among Portuguese and Brazilian players reinforce group boundaries and constrain intercultural interaction, thereby challenging normative multiculturalism that prescribes ethnic mixing. The paper concludes that members' multicultural presentation of their club provides a socially accepted environment for ethnically concentrated sport participation.

Introduction

Multiculturalism has been facing public criticism in several western countries over the past decades. Although some political commentators have proclaimed that multiculturalism, as public policy and political discourse, is on the decline (Entzinger 2003; Prins and Slijper 2002), this study builds on previous research that shows its ongoing everyday currency (Kymlicka 2010; Modood 2008). A focus on everyday practices is part of a shift in academic research that has taken place over the past decade from a normative, political understanding of multiculturalism to an interest in multiculturalism as a lived phenomenon that takes shape in everyday life (Berg and Sigona 2013; Nagel and Hopkins 2010; Wise and Velayutham 2009).

Sport is one social sphere in which ideals around multiculturalism are given meaning, offering an everyday space where people with different cultural and national backgrounds

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meet and interact. Its effectiveness as a means of encouraging and facilitating multicultural-
ism is contested. Policymakers and scholars portray the sport as valuable, but proble-
matic, space for intercultural engagement and integration (Agergaard 2018; Krouwel
et al. 2006; Walseth and Fasting 2004). Others point to the value of sport to bring together
dispersed people and as a place where people with a shared national or ethnic background
can meet and feel 'at home' (Spaaij and Broerse 2019; Joseph 2014; Tiesler 2012). From
this perspective, ethnic concentration is seen as an opportunity for positive social
bonding. However, against the backdrop of public concern regarding integration, ethnic
concentration is also described negatively as segregation, which is said to constrain inte-
gration (Wiertz 2016).

At a deeper level, research shows that sport and multiculturalism is a contested terrain
(Carrington 2013; Joseph 2014). As a social field, the sport continues to perpetuate both
everyday and institutional racism (Farquharson et al. 2018; Hylton 2018). It also displays
assimilationist tendencies regarding the terms upon which migrants and, in particular,
visible minorities are expected to participate and 'belong' in mainstream sports (Agergaard
2018; Donnelly and Nakamura 2006; Smith et al. 2018).

In this paper, our aim is to move beyond assessing to what extent sport stimulates ethnic
concentration or intercultural engagement. Rather, the aim is to provide insight into how
normative discourses on multiculturalism and integration are enacted and negotiated in
the everyday life of a community sports club. The empirical focus of this study is the football
(soccer) club Forte Portugal, located in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Depending on the
context, members and visitors describe the club as Portuguese, and at other times as multi-
cultural. Board members and players attach value to and consciously present the club and its
culture as multicultural, rather than exclusively Portuguese. The club hosts both male as
female teams. Despite what its nation-specific club name might suggest, members of Forte
Portugal have diverging national backgrounds: Portuguese and Brazilian (the two majorities),
Dutch, Turkish, Moroccan and Spanish. As a micro-public space (Amin 2002), the club
offers opportunities for gaining a better understanding of (the relationship between) two con-
current processes: ethnic concentration and intercultural mixing. In doing so, this study pro-
vides further insight into sport and multiculturalism as a contested terrain.

Based on six-month ethnographic fieldwork, we argue that members have incorporated
a dominant multicultural ideal in the Netherlands that involves the promotion of intercul-
tural mixing and the belief that ethnic concentration leads to segregation. However, the
opportunity to participate in a co-ethnic environment is the main reason for members
to join the club, allowing them to socialise with people from a similar ethnic or cultural
background and to give meaning to their cultural identity. Consequently, grouping behav-
iour based on national cultures is prominent within the social life of the club. This reveals a
paradox of cultural recognition: although various cultures (both nationality-based cul-
tures, ethnicities, and various cultures within one ethnicity) are recognised and accepted,
group formation based on cultural identity is not accepted because it challenges the incor-
porated normative multiculturalist ideal. The results of this study show the constant
struggle club members are involved in: how to enact and give meaning to Portuguese/Bra-
zilian identity while simultaneously satisfying national multicultural ideals.

This paper is structured as follows. We first discuss the two conceptual orientations that
guide the study: everyday multiculturalism and grouping practices. This is followed by a
synthesis of the historically evolved political and social stances on multiculturalism in the

Netherlands. We then discuss the research methods and the study's main findings regarding grouping practices and how multicultural ideologies are lived by members of Forte Portugal.

Everyday Multiculturalism and Group Making

Traditionally, multiculturalism has been studied primarily to examine policies concerned with the management of diversity by nation-states. Scholars have introduced various conceptions of multiculturalism to capture the spectrum of states managing diversity, with assimilation on the one end and segregation on the other end. Vertovec (2012) describes eight forms of multiculturalism, while Hall (2000) distinguishes six multiculturalisms, and Delanty (2003) identifies nine varieties. These lists of multiculturalisms refer to what Colic-Peisker and Farquharson (2011) call the ideological or management corners of multiculturalism. In contrast, multiculturalism can also be viewed as a demographic reality and as everyday interaction practices. This theorisation of multiculturalism, especially the latter which foregrounds everyday lived experiences, moves beyond the state perspective and suggests that all corners are inter-related (Colic-Peisker and Farquharson 2011).

In this paper, we examine multiculturalism through the lens of everyday multiculturalism. Wise and Velayutham (2009: 3) define everyday multiculturalism as 'a grounded approach to looking at *everyday practice* and lived experience of diversity in specific situations and spaces of encounter' (italics in original). These and other authors have investigated how people live together in mundane spaces such as shopping areas, parks and housing estates (Neal *et al.* 2013; Semi *et al.* 2009; Watson and Saha 2013; Wessendorf 2013, 2014). Everyday multiculturalism focuses on how social, cultural and political processes filter 'through the realm of everyday practice, exchange and meaning making' (Wise and Velayutham 2009: 3). Just as broader processes enter into everyday practices and meaning making, so do personal histories. Personal and collective labelling conventions regarding empathy or aversion towards others 'flow into the moment of encounter' (Amin 2012: 5). In this study, we adopt the everyday multiculturalism lens to examine how people make sense of situations of cultural or ethnic differences and the strategies people adopt to bridge and live with these differences.

Closely related to everyday multiculturalism is Gilroy's (2004) concept of conviviality. Gilroy (2004) uses the term to highlight that multiculture has become an ordinary feature of peoples' lives. In super-diverse contexts (Vertovec 2010), conviviality towards diversity is used as a strategy by people both to 'engage with difference as well to avoid deeper contact' (Wessendorf 2014: 392). Conviviality is considered to be a welcoming critical concept in the everyday multiculturalism approach as it 'addresses popular media and political caricatured characterizations of multiculturalism' (Sealy 2018: 15).

The concepts of everyday multiculturalism and conviviality imply interaction between and within 'groups' and 'cultures'; that is, group dynamics and boundary work. It is through these interactions that collective and individual identifications and categorisations are articulated and reproduced. In the last three decades, cognitive perspectives have replaced approaches that conceptualise these categories as primordialist and all-decisive. This cognitive turn emphasises that ethnicity or culture is 'not a thing *in* the world, but a perspective *on* the world' (Brubaker *et al.* 2004: 32; italics in original), constructed through social interaction. Taking 'ethnicities' and 'groups' as unproblematic points of

departure would 'neglect the everyday context in which ethnic and national categories take on meaning and the processes through which ethnicity actually 'works' in everyday life' (Brubaker 2004: 21).

Still, a 'groupist' (Brukaber 2004) approach has proven useful. Wessendorf (2013) purposefully takes a groupist approach in her study of everyday multiculturalism in a London neighbourhood. Similarly, Semi *et al.* (2009: 82) seek to go beyond a 'celebration of processualism' by combining actors' essentialist views with a processual approach. In this paper, we approach ethnicity 'as a skilled practical accomplishment … [in which] categories are made relevant' (Brubaker *et al.* 2004: 35), both in a processual and essentialist way. How do members of Forte Portugal make (emic) categories such as 'Portuguese' and 'Brazilian' meaningful in daily encounters? And how do these practices relate to the various 'corners of multiculturalism' (Colic-Peisker and Farquharson 2011)? The next section discusses the changes in debates around multiculturalism in the Netherlands, and the methodology used to empirically examine these questions.

The Dutch Context: Multiculturalism and Multiculturalisation

The experiences of members of Forte Portugal need to be understood within the context of immigration, multiculturalism and citizenship debates in the Netherlands. The Netherlands has a long history of immigration that, in conjunction with its history of slave trading and colonialism, explains the country's culturally diverse character. Portuguese migrants began to arrive in the Netherlands in larger numbers as part of the post-war influx of labour migrants from Southern Europe. From the 1980s, Brazilians increasingly migrated to the Netherlands, mainly for educational and economic purposes (Van Meeteren and Pereira 2013).

In the 1980s, multiculturalism in the Netherlands became a central way to describe the status of migrants and ethnic minorities (Meurs and Broeders 2002). The starting point was the publication of the *Minderhedennota* (the Minority Memorandum) in 1983 by the House of Representatives. This was the first time in the management of ethnic diversity that politicians 'pleaded for a coherent minorities policy' that contains the right for minorities to maintain their 'own' identity and culture (Essed and Nimako 2006: 287). This interpretation of multiculturalism gave recognition to visible cultural differences and by doing so made cultural difference a public matter, rather than something practiced in the private sphere (Joppke 2004).

From the mid-1990s, a turn in the dominant discourse took place which questioned the multicultural model and maintenance of migrants' 'own culture'. Policy language changed towards demanding that immigrants familiarise themselves with the 'Dutch ways' (*Inburgeringswet* [Integration Act]). Integration came to be thought of as 'cultural assimilation' and newcomers were expected to incorporate 'Dutch culture' and keep their 'home culture' to a minimum.

A third turn in the dominant multiculturalism discourse can be identified from the early 2000s onwards: post-multiculturalism. Post-multiculturalism sought to replace the 'failed' multicultural model and continues to place strict assimilation demands on newcomers (such as citizenship and language courses), but includes recognition of cultural (and other) differences that are publicly voiced and institutionally embedded (Gozdecka *et al.* 2014; Uitermark *et al.* 2005). This ideology tries to fuse left and right wing political ideas.

Post-multiculturalism, however, is a contested and ambiguous term. Kymlicka (2010: 105) posits that the 'post-multiculturalists' narrative of a retreat from multiculturalism is overstated and misdiagnosed' and argues that it strives towards the same values as the multiculturalism model. Although the questioning of the 'multicultural model' came to public attention in the mid-1990s, in reality the model has always competed with alternative frames offered by conservative political parties and organisations (Duyvendak and Scholten 2012; Gozdecka *et al.* 2014).

Moreover, critical voices state that policies on ethnic minorities 'never straightfor-wardly promoted immigrant cultural and/or religious identities' but were rather focused on improving migrants' socio-economic position in Dutch society and/or facilitating re-migration to migrants' (guest workers') home countries (Duyvendak 2011: 88). Paulle and Kalir (2014) argue that an inevitable result of the dominant multicultural model is top-down ethnic group-making practices. This 'ethnic shoe-boxing' is based on the unchallenged assumption that integration 'should be based on internally homogenous (and dichotomous) ethno-cultural blocks' and leads to the construction of ethnic bound-aries (Paulle and Kalir 2014: 1356).

What does this look like in the public sphere? Alongside anxiety towards cultural diver-sity, there is a growing recognition and celebration of ethnic and cultural difference in the public domain. Van der Horst (2010: 4) denotes a shift within ethnically based festivals that adopt multicultural ideologies. Such 'multiculturalisation' is also evident in sports events such as the Amsterdam World Cup and Kwaku festival in Amsterdam. Whereas the Kwaku festival started as a Surinamese football event and over time came to include other activities and incorporated a multicultural attitude, the Amsterdam World Cup started in 2011 as a multicultural football event with teams that each represent a nation of origin. Financially supported by the Municipality of Amsterdam, the Amsterdam World Cup explicitly promotes intercultural contact and thereby reinforces dominant pol-itical ideologies (Burdsey 2008; Müller *et al.* 2008).

The historical account of migration management and the current tensions between mul-ticultural frames sketches the complex Dutch context and raises the question how migrants navigate between their ethnic background and (post-)multicultural ideals. Dutch Portuguese and Brazilians are largely invisible in public and policy debate and little is known about how they produce and make sense of multiculturalism in everyday practice.

Methods

Everyday multiculturalism, as a category of analysis, brings with it a specific epistemologi-cal stance that prioritises direct observation, listening and devoting attention to strategies of meaning-making in encounters of difference. Observations and participation in the daily life of respondents in their natural setting, both at the football club and outside of sport (for example, home environment and social events), were central to this study.

Participant observation took various forms over the course of one football season: as a player in the newly established female team, as a volunteer in the canteen during training, on match days, at social events and to a lesser extent as a volunteer administrative assist-ant. Performing these roles helped the first author establish contact with players, visitors and volunteers. Being an official member of the team also meant acquiring 'carnal know-how' (Wacquant 2015), including familiarising herself with playing football and

participating in training, matches and team meetings. In collaboration with the club's board members, an official introductory statement was posted on the club's website and Facebook page to introduce the researcher and the study.

To complement the observations, the first author conducted 13 formal, in-depth interviews with players, visitors and volunteers. These semi-structured interviews mostly took place in the club's boardroom, at public libraries or at respondents' workplaces. Eleven respondents were male and two were female. Although this ratio reflects the gender composition of club, the low number of female respondents was due to language barriers (informal conversations were more suitable) or to players and visitors' lack of availability for a variety of reasons, including general unavailability (busy work/school schedule) and reluctance to formally talk due to tensions within the female team and between players and board members. In her role as volunteer, the first author had many informal conversations with other female volunteers; formal interviews were considered unnecessary. The first author also conducted informal conversations with other male and female players and volunteers.

The epistemological stance we take in this research is based on the recognition of the anthropologist's personal experiences in the field. Subjectivity is part of the anthropological narrative (Vale de Almeida 1996) and as a participant in the field the first author influenced the research in various ways. For example, in interviews and informal conversations, members used her presence to illustrate the ethnic diversity present at the club and as 'proof' of their openness towards other cultures. The first author's positionality (as a white Dutch female) contributed to the lived experiences of the interlocutors that are mediated through our interpretation and presented in this paper. Born in the Netherlands, speaking the Dutch language and being familiar with the Dutch sports club volunteering system enabled the first author to perform volunteering tasks generally taken up by Portuguese members. This, in combination with shared identity markers of high educational attainment and employment opportunities, resulted in closer rapport with Portuguese members and activities on both a research and a personal level, compared to with Brazilian members. Although the first author never became a full member of the Portuguese ethnic 'group' (e.g. her Dutch background was often emphasised by members when introduced to others and in conversations and jokes about national differences), she was systematically drawn to this 'group', whereas engaging with Brazilian and Surinamese members required more effort. Reflexivity towards her positionality strengthened our findings around group-making processes.

The first and second author collaboratively analysed the interview and observational data using ATLAS.ti software. Interview transcripts and field notes were coded using thematic analysis techniques. The first author read the data and coded passages of text, first, using an open (or initial meaning code) and, second, an axial (or categorisation of open codes) coding scheme. The second author reviewed the coding. Dialogue among the authors resulted in intersubjective agreement on the interpretation of the identified passages and codes. The first author then coded the transcripts line by line. The next three sections present the main findings.

Forte Portugal and Group Making

In this section, we discuss the club context and members' motivations for engaging with the club. In contrast with (board) members' emphasis on intercultural mixing, club

members' main motivation to play at Forte Portugal is to socialise with other Portuguese or Brazilian migrants. By exploring how club members use ethno-cultural terminology, we seek to avoid slipping into essentialist 'groupism', while at the same time giving recognition to members' everyday use of such terminology, in order to understand group-making processes at Forte Portugal. The 'Portuguese', 'Brazilian' and 'Surinamese' teams are considered as ethnic self-identification (Paulle and Kalir 2014) and thereby as categories of *practice*, and are not simply taken as categories of *analysis* (Brubaker 2004).

The club was established in 1994 with one team, which mainly consisted of players of Portuguese and Turkish background. Over the years, more players of both Portuguese and other backgrounds joined the club. At the time of research, the club hosted six teams in total: two veteran teams, three selection teams and one youth team. The youth team is the most diverse in terms of ethnic and cultural background. Although none of the adult teams is completely homogeneous, these teams are organised in everyday language along national lines. In everyday conversations, the veteran teams are referred to as the 'Portuguese teams', the Saturday selection team and the women's team are referred to as 'Brazilian teams'; finally, the two Sunday teams are addressed as the 'Surinamese teams'. Because teams train and play competitions at different times throughout the week, they would only cross paths at the club occasionally which contributes to a strengthening of team based, and thereby ethnically based, boundaries.

Most veteran players of Portuguese and Surinamese origin were born in the Netherlands or have been living there for over two decades. This means that most players are familiar with the Dutch language and, as players explain, are seen as integrated into Dutch society. In contrast, Brazilian migrants at the club have recently arrived in the Netherlands and are experiencing early settlement challenges, such as learning a new language, acquiring legal status and finding employment and suitable housing. Sebastian, a veteran player of Spanish origin in his fifties, explains that these differences in 'integration stages' strengthen ethnic clustering because 'Brazilian players are not yet very integrated … they talk about different things'. Interactions between Portuguese and Brazilian members were twofold. The shared language enabled conversations newly arrived migrants would otherwise not have with others. It also resulted in Portuguese members (as the established, 'integrated' migrants) stimulating Brazilian migrants to learn the Dutch language, to embody perceived 'Dutch' values of fairness, self-discipline and autonomy, and to explain how to function in the Dutch system.

The reference to football teams in national terms illustrates the most clearly visible group-making practice at Forte Portugal. Outside the football field, in the canteen for example, Portuguese, Brazilian and Surinamese migrants also socialise mainly within separate groups. Most members join the club to meet other migrants with similar backgrounds and migration trajectories. Laurenco, male in his twenties and former player and frequent visitor of Portuguese origin, explains that the main language at the club is Portuguese and he sometimes forgets he is in the Netherlands: 'But it gives a nice feeling, especially because you're among people from your own group'. Most weekends at the club end with a shared barbecue dinner. Chico elaborates on the importance of traditional dishes as a reason to join Forte Portugal, rather than another football club in Amsterdam closer to where he lives:

Portuguese beers, bifanas, the barbecues. These kind of things are different than a Dutch football club, where you eat croquettes. A croquette bun doesn't make you happy [laughter], but bifana, piri piri chicken or grilled fish from the barbeque does. (Chico, male, 40s, veteran player of Portuguese origin)

Lena explains why she joined the club:

I had the feeling I was defending my country, it was that, the feeling I might be in a different country, but still I can wear my flag and support Portugal, because I am very proud of being Portuguese. (Lena, female, 30s, player of Portuguese origin)

The interview with Lena clearly illustrates the dynamic nature of ethnic identification. At the time of the interview, Lena had been living in the Netherlands for two years. As the quote shows, she enjoys representing 'her country' by joining Forte Portugal and wearing the Portuguese coloured outfit. Directly after noting that most of her friends are of Portuguese origin, she emphasises the social connections she has with non-Portuguese and thereby challenges the importance of her friends' ethnic background. She explains: 'when I consider myself being part of a group I feel limited, you know?'

For Brazilian players, the club provides a 'safety net'; a place for newcomers to socialise and create a network with co-ethnics. Jorge, a regular visitor of Forte Portugal of Brazilian origin, explains that some players cannot even play football, but became members to be together with other Brazilian migrants. Members help each other to find housing and jobs. There is a stronger sense of community belonging and diasporic practices in the 'Brazilian' teams compared to the veteran teams. Jorge explains the function of the club for him personally as follows:

It is like you're married or in a relationship, so every now and again you have to go out for dinner, give a present, tell them they look beautiful. The same is with culture, you must go to your volk [people], to feel that I'm Brazilian. (Jorge, male, late teens 18, regular visitor of Brazilian origin)

Jorge explains that 'culture' requires attention and care like a beloved person, otherwise you might lose it or feel incomplete. In this way, members are concerned with expressing their cultural background among co-ethnics who understand what Brazilianness really involves. Participation in the club and socialising with other Brazilians give meaning to members' lives and helps them navigate other social contexts outside Forte Portugal. The narratives of players of both Portuguese and Brazilian origin show the importance of meeting one's 'own' people and practicing one's 'own' culture.

In contrast to the Portuguese and Brazilian members, players of the Surinamese teams spent much less time in the canteen. Training sessions and sometimes matches had to be cancelled due to a shortage of players and, halfway through the season, the two Sunday teams were reduced to one. The players of Surinamese origin knew each other already and met mostly outside the club. For these players, the club does not play a key function in bringing them together. This is in contrast with two Surinamese coaches of the selection teams, who spend considerable time at the club and play an essential organisational role. What does the relative absence of the players in the canteen and on the football field (and therefore in this study) tell us about everyday multiculturalism at the club?

Our findings reveal how gender and culture intersect at the club. The women's team, too, struggled for survival and proved to be short-lived. After playing in the local

competition for four months, the team continuously struggled to recruit a full team; consequently, matches and trainings were cancelled with increasing regularity, eventually resulting in the disbandment of the team. Insufficient support from the club was a contributing factor, with board members expecting the team to prove itself before it would receive the required support, such as adequate coaching and sports gear. The women's team was ethnically mixed but, after dismantling, it was mainly the Brazilian members who continued visiting the club in order to socialise with and support male Brazilian players, and to attend dance parties and dinners. At such events, the women typically prepared food in the club's kitchen, while men prepared meat and fish on the barbeque outside.

When respondents (of any background) were asked to describe the club in multicultural terms, the 'Surinamese' team was always mentioned. In practice, however, members of these teams were not really part of daily life at the club. The language was not only a barrier on the football field but also off the field as information on the Facebook page and the club website was communicated mainly in Portuguese. While uniting Portuguese and Brazilian members, these language practices were a source of exclusion for non-Portuguese speaking members, especially the Surinamese players. This shows group-making practices are layered and in constant flux, with group boundaries depending on the context. Whereas the differences, or boundaries, are emphasised between Portuguese and Brazilian players based on national origin and migration trajectory, these players are 'one' in opposition to the Surinamese players based on language. Portuguese and Brazilian cultural expressions dominate, making the club environment exclusionary for members of Surinamese origin. Through participating in an ethno-cultural 'group', members create a space to practice and confirm their cultural identity, rather than enhance intercultural mixing. Thereby, the dominant ideal of creating a multicultural club culture that is recognisable to all members and visitors, is challenged. In the next two sections we explore the dominant multicultural ideal and how these ideals around ethnic mixing co-exist with ethnic concentration.

Normative Multiculturalism at Forte Portugal

Previous studies in the Netherlands have discussed the importance co-ethnic sports clubs attach to creating a multicultural environment (Krouwel et al. 2006). These studies describe the incorporation of multiculturalist ideologies on a local and personal level within the sports context, but the underlying motivations and challenges remain unclear. Members of Forte Portugal engage in similar multiculturalisation practices and ideologies that we will further explore in this section.

Board members and players publicly present Forte Portugal as multicultural rather than solely Portuguese, as it was originally established. The club's website formally states its aim is to create a 'multicultural club culture' that recognises and accommodates cultural differences. Although the majority of respondents were not aware of this mission statement, they did share similar normative multicultural ideals. Sebastian, player in one of the veteran teams, sees intercultural mixing as the ideal situation:

> Different spiritual energy, different culture, they feel good together. Why not? Look, it would
> be nice if everyone could mix. That would be ideal, but it's not in their or our culture. I'm not

saying that it would clash, but the cultures are just two different ones. (Sebastian, male, 50s, player of Spanish origin)

Based on the observations and interviews, we identify four reasons for this preference for intercultural mixing among members of Forte Portugal: (1) as an opportunity for intercultural learning; (2) mixed settings are believed to facilitate integration into wider society and prevent ethnic segregation; (3) members seek to establish and maintain a positive public image; and (4), to enhance the club's sustainability. With regard to the latter, due to the stagnated influx of new members of Portuguese origin, the club is dependent on players of diverse ethnic backgrounds in order to field full teams, build volunteering capacity, and make the club financially sustainable. Shivam, a male volunteer in his sixties, explains: 'You know, if you want [the club] be sustainable, you will have to welcome everyone'. We discuss and illustrate the three additional motivations below.

Acceptance of ethnic difference and conviviality towards diversity is the dominant ambience between players in social interactions at the club. First, Ruan explains as follows why he thinks the club is multicultural:

> Portuguese and Brazilians are two different cultures that come together. There are Dutch players who play here. You [first author] come here too. There is Fatih, he's Moroccan and player in the selection team. That is multicultural. (Ruan, male, 30s, player in selection team of Brazilian origin)

Like most interviewees who discuss the club's multicultural character, Ruan refers to the factual national backgrounds of players that come together at the club to explain the club's multiculturality; that is, players are seen as representatives of a certain 'culture'. Members appreciate the multiplicity of national backgrounds of other members and visitors because it provides an opportunity to share Portugueseness with others and learn about other cultural practices such as celebrations and traditional dishes. Laurenco, for example, explains 'we want to share Portuguese treats and beers with everyone … and we can learn from others'.

An encounter between Ana, a female volunteer of Portuguese origin in her forties, and a visiting player (male, forties) provides an illustration of the portrayal of a mainstream multicultural agenda at Forte Portugal. On a busy Saturday, Ana was bar tendering and a group of football players from a visiting team of Dutch origin ordered some drinks. One of the men asked Ana whether she also has Portuguese food and drinks, because of the club name. Ana, nodded and explained that they have Portuguese snacks and drinks and subsequently added that they offer much more: 'We also have cheese buns, croquettes and minced-meat hot dogs [typical Dutch snacks] and Brazilian soft drinks'. The visiting player responded that he was interested in trying a Portuguese beer. In this scene, Ana emphasised the culinary variety to prove that Forte Portugal is more than only Portuguese, while the Dutch player was eager to consume a Portuguese beer (and culture). The typical Portuguese, Brazilian and Dutch food and beverages serve a dual function: as a source for intercultural learning on the one hand, and to demonstrate a mainstream multicultural agenda on the other hand.

The perception that ethnic concentration leads to undesirable segregation and inhibits integration into the wider Dutch society is the most common reason respondents articulate for preferring a multicultural club. This perception directly reflects broader societal and political discussions in the Netherlands around the integration of newcomers. For many

respondents, this perception is based primarily on negative news items around Moroccan and Turkish football clubs, which feed their strong opposition towards ethnic concentration. This perception is also based on personal experience; in informal discussions, Ana repeatedly portrayed the idea captured in the following quote: 'Portuguese and Brazilian people tend to stick to each other, but then it is hard to get out of that social circle'.

Closely linked to a preference for a culturally mixed setting for integration and segregation reasons, is the third reason: the perceived need to establish a positive public image. Ethnic concentration, club members argue, not only hinders integration but might also give the club a negative reputation:

> If you would say, 'you're not welcome here', the club will be seen as discriminating. They don't accept us as players, they discriminate us. Here, that's not the case, everybody is welcome. (Miguel, male, 20s, regular visitor of Portuguese background)

Board members and players emphasise the importance of being open towards outsiders rather than being mono-ethnic. Hans, a Dutch player in his fifties, adds: 'I think it's a healthy way for the outside world to see the club'. Members are well aware of the potential risk of being seen as a discriminating or self-excluding club. Their views resonate with Krouwel et al. (2006), who report a similar tendency among respondents to express aversion to mono-ethnic sport activities by minority ethnic groups, and specifically Dutch Turks and Moroccans.

Club members' multicultural preference further resonates with national policies and discourses on intercultural mixing. Following Vertovec (2012) and Arnaut (2012), this suggests that national discourses 'get under people's skin' (Arnaut 2012: 10); that is, they are incorporated and practiced in the local context by individuals outside the policy realm. Members of Forte Portugal, especially those who have been living in the Netherlands for more than two decades, are well aware of integration expectations placed on newcomers. Members continuously navigate between societal expectations of intercultural mixing and personal motivations to join the club and participate in culturally specific activities. It is this latter concern that we will now turn to.

Co-ethnic in Private, Multicultural in Public

In the previous sections, we have described the concurrent practices of incorporating multiculturalist ideologies and ethno-specific group-making practices. In the remainder of this paper, we elaborate on the relationship between these practices by examining the club as a site that variably functions as an associational/public space and a private space. Every now and again, Forte Portugal's canteen and football field function as an associational, or public, space where people of varying backgrounds meet and interact in relative harmony. It is a place where members of Forte Portugal and members of visiting teams, all of varying backgrounds, meet and interact and can familiarise themselves with each other's cultural backgrounds. At other times, Forte Portugal functions as a more private space in which co-ethnic interaction takes precedence and bonds among in-group members are strengthened.

The previously described encounter between Ana and the Dutch player in the canteen is an example of the club as a public space where intercultural interaction and learning takes place. Another telling example is how a new veteran team player is introduced to the team:

> Just before the players head towards the football field, a new player enters the canteen. He looks around inspecting the canteen and approaches the group of veteran players. In Dutch he asks for Ferreira. A player sitting on a bar seat says 'hi' and asks 'the Brazilian or Portuguese one?' The new player doesn't know and he explains he is here for the first time. Now the other players who are part of the circle say 'hi' and welcome him, and leaving his question unanswered. After a short silence, one player with a Surinamese background explains the composition of the team: 'We have Portuguese, Spanish, Turkish, Surinamese and Dutch players'. (Field notes, 18 October 2016)

This excerpt illustrates how new players are introduced to and socialised into the importance of ethnic references in everyday language as well as an acceptance of difference and the celebration of the team's multicultural character. The following excerpt illustrates the other side of the club, as a place for visitors to participate among co-ethnics in a more private sphere. On this occasion, the club hosted a dinner and party to celebrate São Martinho, also referred to as Portuguese Saint Martin or the chestnuts celebration:

> Around 11pm Brazilian players get up from the couch and start to leave. They leave how they spent the evening: collectively. Only some volunteers, veteran players and me are left in the canteen, around ten people in total. After the Brazilian players leave, something changes. Portuguese songs from decades ago are played and this time, Portuguese members come closer to the part of the canteen that functions as a dance floor and some start to dance. There is loud laughter, wine glasses are refilled with caldo verde and more Portuguese songs are played that are reminiscent of the players' youth. This is the first time I see Portuguese members moving their hips, singing along with the music and exchanging memories related to the songs. (Field notes, 11 November 2016)

After the Brazilian team players left, the dynamic changed; whereas before the dance floor area was dominated by Brazilian players and 'their' music, afterwards players and visitors of Portuguese origin started dancing, drinking and take up bodily space on the dance floor.

The last excerpt is an example of how the club as a meeting space is used in different ways and changed into a private Portuguese space. The club has different functions and different meanings are given to the space depending on who is present and who is not. The dominant normative discourse around multiculturalism is mainly given meaning and presented by Portuguese migrants in relation to Brazilians and members of other origins. Normative multiculturalism is challenged by group-making practices that take place in the public sphere but is irrelevant when the club turns into a 'private' space.

Wessendorf's (2013) work on intercultural encounters in the public realm enables us to make sense of these diverging norms regarding ethnic mixing in various spaces. Wessendorf (2013) refers to the 'ethos of mixing': in culturally diverse settings, people accept each other's differences and expect others to mix in public and associational spaces. Furthermore, cultural diversity is seen as an opportunity to learn from each other. In this way, differences are accepted and celebrated. However, as soon as a certain culture is practiced among 'members' in group form and they 'are blamed for not wanting to mix' (Wessendorf 2013: 407), it becomes problematic. In general, Portuguese members expect Brazilian newcomers to mingle and openly disapprove Brazilian concentration at the club.

The club's social setting can be seen as a microcosm of Dutch society in general. Commonly, Portuguese members are perceived as 'integrated', whereas Brazilian members are primarily portrayed as newcomers and expected by established members to assimilate to

the existing rules, norms and values. National discussions on migration and newcomers focus predominantly on how migrants can and should be assisted in their integration process and how it can be made sure that that they understand, respect and incorporate Dutch 'norms and values'. Even though cultural maintenance is supported, there is a limit to being culturally different and traditions have to be in line with the restrictions imposed by the dominant power relations (Dandy 2009; Knijnik and Spaaij 2017). Dandy (2009: 231) argues that the dominant group members have a certain 'desire to place limits on the extent and nature of that 'cultural content''. Group dynamics between 'us' and 'them', established and outsiders, and who decides what kind of (culturally driven) behaviour is acceptable or not, is reflected in broader Dutch society, where members of the cultural majority decide how cultural assimilation should take place and set limits on the extent of acceptable difference visible in public.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study shows the everyday importance of internalised multiculturalist ideals of intercultural mixing. It shows the desire of sport participants to meet these expectations, even though mixing is not their primary motivation to join the sports club. Based on ethnographic data and following Vertovec (2012), we describe how multiculturalist ideals that involve recognising singular 'cultures' combined with a preference for intercultural mixing in the public sphere, are incorporated on a local, everyday level in the sports context by migrants of Portuguese and Brazilian origin.

In the Netherlands, there have always been parallel discourses around multiculturalism and integration. Duyvendak and Scholten (2012) propose two explanations as to why the dominant multicultural image or 'frame' persists. First, discontinuity in official policy frames 'has not entirely trickled down to the levels where these formal paradigms are implemented' (Duyvendak and Scholten 2012: 277). Second, although since the early 1990s the national government has formally adopted a colour-blind citizenship-approach, local practitioners continued with group-specific projects dating from previous policies to be able to 'reach' the policy target groups (Duyvendak and Scholten 2012). This study offers a third explanation and stresses the importance of studying how dominant multiculturalist ideals are incorporated and occupy a decisive role in people's imagination as 'good' citizens and thereby upholding the dominant multicultural model.

The only acceptable way to 'do and be' Portuguese or Brazilian is to include members and visitors from other backgrounds and to embed activities that reflect a national multicultural agenda. A 'trouble free' co-ethnic club is contested in club members' everyday interactions and conflicts with the definition of post-multiculturalism that aims to foster both recognition of diversity and a strong collective national identity (Kymlicka 2010; Vertovec 2010). Being a 'good' Dutch citizen includes being multicultural, rather than emphasising one ethnic background. In this regard, Gozdecka et al. (2014) describe post-multiculturalism as 'power by freedom' and explain that all it is, is a new form of racism and dis-empowering racialised subjects, rather than empowering and inclusive. The legacy of previous interpretations of integration, namely as assimilation, still holds sway. As long as ethnic concentration is seen as leading to segregation, it will be very difficult to enact post-multiculturalism, as the two aspects inherently exist in tension.

Our findings indicate that through emphasising the club's multicultural characteristics and ideals, a socially accepted environment is created for co-ethnic sports organisations. Forte Portugal exemplifies how sports clubs can provide a space for the simultaneous, and sometimes contradictory, promotion of multiculturalism and intercultural encounters on the one hand, and ethnic concentration and the other hand. These findings align with previous studies that argue that the importance of separate ethnic spaces should not be underestimated, both for newcomers and for established migrants (Janssens and Verweel 2014; Spaaij and Broerse 2019). They also demonstrate how sports participants navigate sport and multiculturalism as a contested terrain by publicly embracing, yet privately rescinding, broader multiculturalist ideals.

Although everyday multiculturalism has been critiqued for not adequately interacting with macro-level multiculturalism (Sealy 2018), this paper has shown that the macro- and micro-levels are closely linked through the incorporation of broader ideals and political discussions into micro-level encounters at the club. How multiculturalism is enacted at a micro-level is connected to national discourses on how we ought to share (semi)public spaces and what is expected of newcomers in terms of integration. To what extent club members are able to claim a certain ethnic identity depends on the local context (public vs. private space) and on how singular ethnicities are perceived in broader national discourses. This study shows that segregation is discursively linked to ethnic concentration, which makes it politically laden and socially unacceptable to openly claim a public space in ethnic terms. This points to the importance of how normative ideals around multiculturalism are incorporated and 'get under people's skin' (Arnaut 2012: 10). Recognising these crucial yet subtle processes extends to research outside the context of sport and is indispensable for all areas intersecting with integration, interculturality and migration.

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Disclosure statement

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