

tion of zones or areas for play, the caring presence of young and involved coaches, or the training offered to the school staff? Surely it is some combination, but there is a difference between documenting a general program that helps and a social scientific study of the variables at play.

I wish London had provided more here about play itself—and more words by the players, namely the children in each of these schools. Play is their domain. How might they rethink recess? The book reflects its adult bias: recess is for safety and for teachable moments in sharing. But what of children's expressive culture and their right to their own self-organization? What of the unconstrained break, with stimulating props, safe spaces, and good-hearted adults to cheer them on?

The book includes sections on understanding recess today, improving recess for all children, and supporting recess through policy and practice. The center of the book itself reflects the author's own studies of the Playworks program. I would consider this book a reasonable starting place for educators but would hope a more critical discussion could follow. For those seeking more about the topic, I recommend the American chapter of the International Play Association, the U.S. Play Coalition, The Association for the Study of Play, and back issues of both the *International Journal of Play* and the *American Journal of Play*. There is more to this story, much more.

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—Anna Beresin, *University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA*

### **Transnational Sport in the American West: Oaxaca California Basketball**

*Bernardo Ramirez Ruiz*

London: Lexington Books, 2019.

Acknowledgments, introduction, conclusion, bibliography, and index. 141 pp. \$90 hardcover. ISBN: 9781793600820

Basketball in the barrios of the Southwest is as old as or older than *fútbol*—soccer—and played more than any other sport. In San Antonio, Mexican Americans were playing high school ball in the 1920s, and city leagues composed mostly of these young players on numerous other teams from the city, the region, and even outside the state. In fact, a number of all-Mexican American teams actually won national titles in Mexico where the game was also widely popular. One young man from San Antonio was even recruited to play for the Mexican Olympic team, though he eventually had to decline the offer.

So, it is not surprising that Mexican immigrants from Oaxaca played basketball and sponsored tournaments. The fact that they built full cultural events around them and created a sports conduit between countries and communities is significant within the sport. Researchers have already shown that other sports such as soccer and baseball, did attract big crowds—families came out, spent most of the day, and created a market for vendors of all kinds—but rarely have these scholars written a transnational sports story and shown its value in creating culture, not only in one nation but in two. Bernardo Ramirez Rios has done just this in an interesting and innovative work about Oaxaqueños who play basketball on both sides of the border.

Delving into the meaning of the sport among Oaxaca immigrants in California, the author allows us to learn how

immigrants carry their culture with them, how this culture keeps them together as a community, and how it maintains their indigenous identity and creates a welcoming environment for other Oaxaca immigrants. The work also allows us to see how transnational migration keeps the Oaxacan immigrants connected to their homeland. Young men—and some young women—born in the United States, and older men who once migrated from Mexico, go back to the state of Oaxaca to play in basketball tournaments. There they reacquaint—or meet for the first time—relatives they left behind. Having similar tournaments—named the same, with the same rules and same prestige—allows them to maintain a cultural bond with those on either side of the border.

Combining personal stories with discussions of basketball tournaments and providing history of the communities on both sides of the border, the author tells an immigrant sports story that has rarely been heard. He also reveals the value of sports for creating communal cohesion and the value of community to sport. Communities are better when they play together, and sport is better when it becomes a communal ritual. Oaxacan community basketball also keeps families together and allows parents to connect with their sons and daughters in an activity that connects the whole extended family. In this way, this particular community fights against the parental-child alienation common in many immigrant communities in which the young deassimilate from their familial culture while failing to fully assimilate into the dominant one.

In a number of ways, this book offers a significant contribution both to work on

immigrant cultural maintenance and on the effects of sports in the construction of ethnic communities. There are, however, a number of shortcomings with the work. First of all, the editing fails to strengthen the work because some statements and assertions by the author are repeated several times almost verbatim. The separation of the dialogue from the text by italicizing the phrases and sentences fails to appeal to the eye, especially since these conversations take up only a few lines.

Also, when writing about sports, it is important to say something about the game itself. We learn very little of the interaction among the players and between them and the coaches. Even when the author interjects himself as player participant, we pick up very little of the Oaxaqueño version of the American-founded sport. The author provides very little on the long history of the sport in Mexico and does not engage the history of the sport—and other sports—in the Mexican communities in the United States, where sports served to maintain cultural and social cohesion. Although his concluding chapter attempts to speak to the influence of the local on transnationalism, it proves too short and lacks a deep enough analysis to make it a significant contribution to the literature.

The work is concise, provides some interesting research nuggets, allows us to understand the lives of a number of Oaxacan immigrants through case study, and can help us learn about sport and community in the Southwest and among ethnic communities. This should make it a must-read for scholars interested in sport, community, and immigration from Mexico.

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—Ignacio Garcia, *Brigham Young University, Provo, UT*