Repression at the Ballpark: 
Sport, Socialization, and the Birth of a New Stadium Etiquette

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This article explores the construction, implementation, and enforcement of behavioral codes in Major League Baseball's ballparks. A qualitative and quantitative examination of this issue suggests that such codes do not exist to maintain safety and legality, but to create an ideal type. We investigate the dichotomy between evidence suggesting that today's ballparks are safer and more fan-friendly now than ever before and the expectations of well-mannered spectators in this most popular arena. We contend that ballpark regulations are part of a broader effort on the part of elites to reign in a supposedly wayward populace, imposing high-culture rules of decorum and redefining the boundaries of personal autonomy.

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And now a word from your local jaundiced cynic. Reason and the Human Race by and large is an oxymoron. When the top of the bell curve goes to a baseball stadium and boos the well-executed play of the rival team that would be cheered if the home team made it, is there any question that the majority of humans are demented?

—respondent posting on Goosing the Antithesis, 2006

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