



# American or Spanish? It's a question of taste!

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*'Hey Juan, listen, I've got Number 1980... I wanna get into the room!'*

The social worker barely looked up at the drug addict and wrote down the number on a small notebook. He was trying to keep track of the drug users by registering them all. At the moment there was still free space and 'Number 1980' walked in. On the other side of the door a nurse asked him for additional information. "Hi Pepe, what's your number again? Did you already consume something today? What do you want to take?"

*"Hi, I'm number 1980! Yep, I took methadone this morning, and a couple of pills. I just wanna do some coke... give me the stuff, please!"*

Number 1980' walked in and sat down in the corner, then pulled up the sleeve of his sweater. "What do you prefer, Spanish or American?" He replies, "Give me the American bud, my veins suck today." The social worker says, "Take that, Pepe... pot, filter, water and smart!"

Number 1980 quickly prepared the white powder, pulled up his sleeve and turned his back to the room. At the other side of the room two drug users were finishing their fixes when Manu and Clara showed up at the door. The same scenario: "Hi Juan, we're Number 2787 and Number 2365... We're clean, so give us the stuff and a *maquina* each, please." The social worker replied, "Which one you want?" They responded, "Spanish! We're gonna split the dose between the two of us!"

Spanish or American, it's largely a matter of taste. Yet, as shown on the right side of the above image, the American version comes with a thinner needle, which



makes the fix easier. The Spanish has a longer and larger needle, and you can remove the cannula as shown on the left side of the picture.

Both versions have advantages and weaknesses from the point of view of the users. The needles of 'the Spanish fix' are thicker and thus, if blood coagulates into the cannula, it is easier to remove the syringe and to release the clot. 'The American' enables a more accurate fix, but when the syringe clogs, it's harder to keep injecting.

Beyond these technical details, the utilization of clean syringes aims to reduce and prevent blood-borne diseases among drug users, who otherwise usually share their consumption material with each others.

In Barcelona, these strategies are fuelled by various harm reduction policies. These policies are also behind these drug consumption rooms, *a pied a terre* in the struggle against the generally poor conditions in which drug consumption otherwise occurs in the city.

Previous AVMoFA entries on this project: [here](#) and [here](#)