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Sport, Modernity, and the Body

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Abstract

Over the past three decades, the important role that anthropological theory has bestowed on the body, modernity, nationalism, the state, citizenship, transnationalism, globalization, gender, and sexuality has placed sports at the center of questions central to the discipline. New approaches to the body, based on practice theory, view the sporting body as more than just a biological entity, allowing us to observe sports as they "travel" transnationally and illuminating issues relevant to such dynamics as colonialism, globalization, sport mega-events, and labor migration. A distinctly anthropological approach, with its unique research methods, approaches to theory, and holistic thinking, can utilize insights from the constitution of sport as human action to illuminate important social issues in a way that no other discipline can. On this foundation, the anthropology of sport is now poised to make significant contributions to our understanding of central problems in anthropology.

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INTRODUCTION

Sport is a human activity in which the body is the object of most intense scrutiny: trained, disciplined, modified, displayed, evaluated, and commodified, the sporting body is the focus of not only the person who inhabits it but also spectators, trainers, and "owners." Before the postmodern turn in the 1980s, treatments of sport in British and American anthropology centered on the body as a primarily biological entity. Concurrently, an interest in "traditional" sports and games, primarily based in folklore and in continental Europe, remained wedded to a unilinear modernization paradigm. Both approaches had limitations. The postmodern turn foregrounded the body as a cultural construction, overcoming the limitations of the biological paradigm. It generated a more complex understanding of representation, turning away from essentializing sports and games as the embodiment of a national or ethnic character and replacing modernization paradigms with more complex theories of social development. Although sports are boundary crossers in ways that few realms of social life are, exploring this quality became possible only when sports were unleashed from essentialized concepts of national character anchored in biologized bodies.

By "rescuing sport from the nation" (to paraphrase Duara 1995), new approaches located sports in transnationalism and observed them as they "traveled" across boundaries, drawing attention to colonialism, globalization, sport mega-events, labor migration, and so on. Furthermore, over the past three decades, the important role that anthropological theory has bestowed on the body, nationalism, modernity, globalization, transnationalism, the state, citizenship, gender, and sexuality has placed sports at the core of questions central to the discipline. A distinctly anthropological approach, with its unique research methods, approaches to theory, and holistic thinking, can utilize insights from the constitution of sport as human action to illuminate important social issues in a way that no other discipline can. On this foundation, the anthropology of sport is now poised to make significant contributions to our understanding of our increasingly global society.

This article, which highlights ethnographically informed works, focuses on the conceptual gains that have accumulated since the late 1980s and aims to provide a research agenda that will further centralize the anthropology of sport. Prior research overviews and attempts to define the field have surveyed what an anthropological approach adds to an understanding of sports (Blanchard & Cheska 1985; Carter 2002; Dyck 2000; Harris & Park 1983; Jonsson & Holthuysen 2011; Palmer 2002; Sands 1999, 2001; Sands & Sands 2010). Here we are equally concerned with what a focus on sports contributes to an understanding of broader anthropological concerns.

LIMITS OF THE BIOLOGICAL PARADIGM

In the early days of the discipline of anthropology, play, games, and sport were located along an evolutionary continuum from "savage" to "civilized" (see Games and Sport in Exhibition Anthropology, sidebar below). "Salvage anthropology" endeavored to record games and sports along with other cultural practices before they disappeared. Native Americans received particular attention: such practices as Mesoamerican ball games (Whittington 2001), the ritual running race of the Tarahumara (McDougall 2009), and Cherokee stickball (Zogry 2010) still capture anthropological imaginations.

As the twentieth century progressed, increasing numbers of studies were located within a structural-functional framework, answering to the functionalist imperative to explain human activities that seemed nonpurposeful. Play became a source of significant theoretical insights in anthropology and in other disciplines (Avedon & Sutton-Smith 1971, Caillois 1979, Csikszentmihalyi 1975, Huizinga 1970, Roberts et al. 1959, Turner 1982). The Association for the Anthropological Study of Play was founded by Cheska in 1974; it led

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to the publication of *The Anthropology of Sport* (Blanchard & Cheska 1985), the first attempt to define the field. These works tended to identify the purpose of play in biological models of "adaptation," an approach that increasingly became the province of scholars in education and human development. It never found a central place in anthropology, which turned to more cultural approaches (e.g., McMahon 2009).

THE INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

Arising out of the same period, work by Geertz and Turner on the cultural meaning of play had a more enduring legacy. Geertz's (1972) analysis of Balinese cockfighting as "deep play"—play in which the stakes (in this case, gambling bets) are so high as to seem irrational—remains the classic essay of the era. Explaining that what is at stake in Balinese gambling is not money, but status, Geertz (1972, p. 26) turns functionalism on its head by arguing that the cockfight's primary function is interpretive: It is "a story [the Balinese] tell themselves about themselves."

Thinking of sports as a story that people tell themselves is thought provoking. One version of this insight, often echoed in popular sports media, is that distinctive playing styles represent "national character" (Archetti 1999; Bellos 2002; Lever 1984; Whiting 1977, 1989). In popular discourse, it is inscribed in fans' identification with local teams and in global marketing, as illustrated by the New Zealand All Blacks' performance before each rugby game of a haka, a spectacularly masculine dance borrowed (not without strident controversy) from indigenous Māori people (Jackson & Hokowhitu 2002). But this version of the interpretive approach also magnifies its deficiencies—its lack of attention to the power structures that silence some stories in favor of others, eliding the fact that stories arise out of the interplay between interested actors (Kelly 1998, 2009). In fact, the comparison of playing styles with dominant ideologies can offer surprising results: In Samoa, a society that places high value on communalism, young men play the national sport, rugby, with a movement style that foregrounds individualism (Clément 2009).

Turner (1969, 1982) developed his theory of liminality and communitas to characterize the different phases of a rite of passage. Liminality, the state of being "betwixt and between," is characterized by freedom from the constraints of social structure, opening up creative possibilities; this "antistructure" enables initiates to form an egalitarian social bond, "communitas." He argued that liminality and communitas also characterize modern "performance genres" like theater, art, music, games—and sports; however, he stopped short of characterizing sport as a liminal genre and instead developed an evolutionary schema in which traditional rituals evolved into multiple "liminoid" genres in modern societies. Although liminality and communitas remain influential concepts, the

GAMES AND SPORT IN EXHIBITION ANTHROPOLOGY

An exhibition of world games at the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago, organized by Stewart Culin, one of the founders of the American Anthropological Association (established in 1902), was very popular. W.J. McGee, the association's first president, co-organized "Anthropology Days" at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, a "scientific" experiment in which the athletic performances of "savages" on display at the fair were recorded for comparison with those of "civilized men" in the Olympic Games (Brownell 2008a). Parezo (2008) has argued that the folly of the "experiment" helped to push American anthropology away from McGee's evolutionary paradigm and toward the cultural anthropology advocated by his rival, Franz Boas.

In the twenty-first century, traditional sports and games are regarded as "cultural heritage." To preserve "ludodiversity" in Flanders, Roland Renson (one of the early members of the Association for the Anthropological Study of Play) led the movement to create the "Sportimonium," a museum that combines Belgian Olympic history with folk games (which can be played on the grounds or for which the equipment can be checked out). In 2011, it became the first sports-related program to be inscribed in the UNESCO register of best practices for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.

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evolutionary schema did not survive the test of time (Brownell 2001, pp. 30–33).

Turner's student MacAloon (1984, 2006) cautioned against invoking the concept of ritual too indiscriminately. Distinguishing ritual from other types of cultural performance, he melded Turner's concept of performance genres with Bateson's (1972) concept of the "metacommunicative frame" to create "ramified (or nested) performance theory." It distinguishes four interpretive frames that, if not universal, are at least commonly employed cross culturally to give meaning to different performance genres: spectacle, festival, ritual, and game. They embrace each other in a series of concentric frames, with spectacle as the most inclusive and game at the center. The Olympic Games can be understood as a neatly ordered system of nested frames constituting a "performance system." MacAloon's theory has been influential in sport studies, but it never gained widespread traction in anthropology.

THE PROBLEMS OF TRADITION AND MODERNITY

The unilinear modernization paradigm maintained a fundamental separation between "traditional" (or "folk") and "modern" sports, raising the question of whether athletic contests could be lumped together under a single label. Comparative works typically observed that the English word "sport" did not acquire its contemporary meaning until the late-eighteenth century and that, everywhere in the world, the word "sport" had come to refer to Western sports upon their adoption.

It turned out that even characteristics that at first glance appear central to what a sport is, such as a focus on winning, are not always present in activities that are otherwise sport-like: For the Waiwai on the Guyana-Brazil border, what is primordial in archery is the framing of the masculine body as a social being (Mentore 2005, pp. 211–18); kinship relations figure prominently in the way in which Navajos played basketball (Blanchard 1974); and the Gahuku-Gama of the Papua New Guinea Highlands reconfigured rugby football as a substitute for intertribal feuding, with competitions ending when elders of the opposing groups agreed that a tie has been reached (Read 1965, pp. 150–51). Lévi-Strauss (1962, p. 44) used this last example to distinguish a ritual—an activity in which the goal is to bring participants together—from a game.

One result of the modernization paradigm was that anthropologists ignored sports considered to be "modern" inventions until the shift of the 1980s ended the disciplinary convention of focusing exclusively on cultural practices regarded as premodern. An anthropologically minded historian, Guttmann (1978, 1990), came up with an evolutionary schema that resembled Turner's, arguing that premodern sports had a ritual character that disappeared with the emergence of industrial society, replaced by an emphasis on achievement, as seen in sports records and economic productivity. The "from ritual to record" theory has been a topic of heated debate (Carter & Krüger 1990, Hum. Kinet. 2001) but still has its adherents.

Anthropologists contributed to this debate by relativizing both "tradition" and "modernity" as cultural constructions, prompting researchers to examine the ways in which Western sports in many parts of the world occupy a privileged position in the imagination precisely because of their identification with modernity. As a result, "traditional" sports sometimes become emblems in struggles against Westernizing modernization. In this vein, Eichberg (1990, 1998) argued that modern sports have made record-setting itself into a ritual so that what Guttmann considered to be a "tradition" displaced by modernization, in fact, continues to flourish.

The sport forms that emerged in nineteenth-century Europe radiated out from two European centers, each of which linked sports with masculinity, nationalism, and colonial aspirations. Using gymnastics and calisthenics, the Continental European tradition (the German Turner movement was

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most influential worldwide) linked physical education to national strength and racial purity. The British tradition showcased ball games and racing and was imbued with the doctrine of muscular Christianity. Proponents of this doctrine saw the cultivation of the body as a means to an end that consisted of not only Christian faith, but also moral rectitude; racial purity; masculinity; and action in the service of God, country, and empire (MacAloon 2007, Mangan 1981). Many British public schools were run by devotees of muscular Christianity, hence the particular association of sports with public schools and the elite universities into which the latter fed. The British model was exported to North America, where sports found a home in elite universities; the American version evolved and spread along with U.S. imperialist expansion (Dyreson & Mangan 2007, Gems 2006).

In the encounter with "modern" sports, "folk" sports met various fates: They died out, as did Tutsi high jumping (Bale & Sang 1996); they were rationalized as modern sports, as were Chinese martial arts (Brownell 2008b, pp. 49–72); or they became the ground of fierce resistance to colonial hegemony, as did wrestling in India (Alter 1992). Some folk sports have had a complex history of successive disappearance and revival, appropriation and reappropriation, as is the case with surfing, which survived proscription by Calvinist missionaries in nineteenth-century Hawai'i to eventually become an international competition sport, one of the most exalted symbols of the culture of leisure, and, back in its birthplace, the locus of political struggle over indigenous rights (Finney & Houston 1996, Walker 2008).

The threat to the survival of sporting activities outside of the Western-dominated international performance system has continued to be a concern of scholars since the days of salvage anthropology. This concern linked up with the multicultural movement in Canada to create the Arctic Winter Games in 1970 and the North American Indigenous Games in 1990, both of which feature traditional as well as Olympic sports (Paraschak 1997). The National Games of Ethnic Minorities of China has been a showcase of ethnic policy since 1952; but at the twelfth installment in 2007, they had fallen into disrepair as a result of the attention paid to the upcoming Beijing Olympics, and most of the participants in the sports were Han students from sports institutes recently recruited to learn the sports just for the Games (Brownell 2011, p. 186). The end of state-supported sport after the fall of socialism produced a backlash in Europe, where sport festivals celebrating alternative local and ethnic identities multiplied rapidly (Eichberg 2008, pp. 360–69).

Supporting the reaction in anthropology of the past two decades against totalizing characterizations of modernity, sport has served as a perfect illustration of the fact that modernity is not a monolithic entity disseminated around the world in a one-way flow. Some sports, such as Gaelic football and hurling, remain deeply local; others, such as soccer football, have become spectacularly global; while yet others, such as baseball, are very important in some regions of the world but not others (Eriksen 2007, Kelly 2007, Klein 2006). The "ownership" of particular sports brings to the fore complex questions of authenticity and appropriation (Kohn 2010). Sport displays an extraordinary malleability as it "travels" across the world and within societies. People readily hybridize sports with different origins, appropriate and reinvent the history of particular sports, and utilize sports to challenge their former colonial masters (Appadurai 1995, Armstrong & Giulianotti 1997, Carter 2008, James 1963). In the annals of anthropology, the most celebrated example—owing to the enduring popularity of the documentary film about it—is the Trobriand Islanders' appropriation of cricket, originally introduced to them by Methodist missionaries (Leach & Kildea 1975; but also Foster 2006 for a critique). People everywhere actively engage with the new possibilities and new constraints of globalization and configure the modern in accord with the local—a view captured in the coined term "glocalization" (Giulianotti & Robertson 2004, 2007a,b).

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SPORT IN POSTCOLONIALISM

Meanwhile, an increasing number of historical works on sport in colonialism and imperialism resolved the conundrum of the definition of "sport" by exposing the complex array of material and ideological factors that underpin the making of categories and boundaries. The endeavor to merely define "traditional" and "modern" sports masked the reality that the "tradition" in traditional sports was made into a problem by the onslaught of different sports backed by powerful interests, and so "tradition" is more usefully viewed, not as an unchanging quality, but as a product of globalization. An exploration of the classification of "sport" amounts to an exploration of the nature of modernity. Indeed, the emergence of modernity, the emergence of the modern state as a regulatory entity, the ascendance and naturalization of capitalism, and the concomitant ideological transformations of the body and self all figured centrally in the colonial project. Everywhere, the spread of organized, competitive, and team sports was tied to these processes (Bale & Cronin 2003; Besnier 2011, pp. 160–204).

Although the rules of sport may stay constant, meanings diverge. MacAloon (1996, 2006) called sport an "empty form"—a form that has been deracinated and decontextualized through the active suppression (or, minimally, the passive forgetting) of history and context, enabling "refilling" with local meanings. MacAloon's optimism echoes that of Guttmann (1994) and Maguire (1999) in asserting the potential for the creation of cultural differences through standardized sports. However, it is an open question whether the optimism of Western-based scholars is shared outside the developed West; the Chinese critic Lu (2010, p. 82) argues that Western sport culture has, "like a lawnmower, mowed down the cultural diversity of world sport into neat and tidy rows" (Brownell 2010, p. 72–74).

In fact, closer examination reveals that the struggle to be defined as a legitimate "sport" belongs not only to "traditional" sports, but to "modern" sports as well. Is bodybuilding a "legitimate" sport or simply the obsession of a small coterie of insecure narcissists (Klein 1993, Linder 2007, Rapport 2010, Stokvis 2006)? Are cockfighting and fox-hunting sports or the barbarous pastimes of Balinese villagers and English aristocrats, respectively (Geertz 1972, Marvin 2010)? Are the sports popular with women that do not conform to the masculine archetype, such as figure skating and gymnastics, truly "sports" (Adams 2011, Kestnbaum 2003)? Where do we place Brazilian capoeira: a martial art, a dance form, or a sport (Aceti 2010, Downey 2008)?

Nowhere are the economic and political interests vested in these questions more exposed than in the political maneuverings surrounding the introduction of new sports into the Olympic Games, which have become increasingly fierce due to the media coverage and financial revenues that the Olympics bring: Advocates of the inclusion of different sports are organizations backed by sporting-goods companies and event sponsors or governments that want their "national" sport to take its place on the world stage, as in the case of Chinese wushu (Brownell 2008b, pp. 49–72) and Indian kabbadi (Alter 2000).

THE TURNING POINT

Mired in questions about definitions, essentialized ethnic and national characteristics, and biological imperatives, the anthropology of sport remained peripheral to the discipline as a whole. A little-recognized turning point occurred in 1988, when Korean anthropologist Kang, together with the American MacAloon, garnered considerable support from the Seoul Olympic organizing committee to organize a large international conference (Kang et al. 1988). Many prominent theorists in different disciplines were invited, including the anthropologists Edith Turner, Sahlins, Bourdieu, Hannerz, and Appadurai. These theorists seemed to benefit from first-hand observation of a sport mega-event in progress, as they produced influential articles out of the papers first presented there (Appadurai 1995, Bourdieu 1988, Hannerz

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1990). The anthropology of sport benefited from finally receiving the attention of leading thinkers, but it was not until two decades later that the disciplinary mainstream, aided by developments in sports history, caught up with the approaches outlined by these scholars. A general approach to sport that was grounded in a cultural theory of the body and performance finally cohered, taking into account transnationalism, colonialism, and globalization. This multifaceted approach had moved the study of sport to the center of the discipline.

THE SPORTING BODY

Both Mauss (1934) and Elias (1939) utilized the concept "habitus" in their work, but it was its hardly acknowledged borrowing by Bourdieu (1978, 1988, 1999) that finally placed the sporting body at the center of social scientific interest. Habitus refers to a system of enduring dispositions, a habitual way of being, that becomes inculcated in the body as a result of the objective conditions of daily life; it is the "history incarnate in the body" (Bourdieu 1990, p. 190). Bourdieu approached sport as part of his larger quest, synthesizing the work of Mauss and Merleau-Ponty for an understanding of how the body and its practices articulate agents' embeddedness in structures.

Bourdieu's practice theory is a deeply politicized analytic program and, as a result, is almost diametrically opposed to the symbolic approaches of Geertz or Turner, in that it posits sporting activities as divisive rather than integrative. Bourdieu's interest in ongoing social structures meant that he had little to say about the periodic sports events that punctuate them. By contrast, Turner felt that one-off events such as ritual practices, theater performances, and sporting events were more important for the anthropologist than "habits," because these are the ways in which participants in a culture try to articulate its meaning (Bruner 1986, p. 13).

In his writing on sport and class, Bourdieu sought to understand the way in which different sports inscribed social class onto the body. Even though agents perceive recreational interests as a matter of "personal taste," these interests are deeply structural in nature (Laberge & Kay 2002). Although he denied that there is an "objective realism" at work, he explicitly linked the physical attributes of particular sport activities with class habitus. Thus sports such as boxing, football, and rugby express the "instrumental relation to the body itself which the working classes express in all the practices centred on the body" (Bourdieu 1999, p. 438). By contrast, middle-class sports (e.g., walking, jogging, gym work) treat the body as an end in itself and generate a "body-for-others."

However, the relationship of specific sports (and associated body practices) to specific class locations is historically and spatially unstable. Amateur boxing, for example, was a gentlemanly sport in nineteenth-century Britain (Boddy 2008), whereas in urban North America it is today strongly associated with race and underprivilege (Wacquant 2003). In 1895, rugby fissioned along class lines into two separate sports in Britain, rugby union and rugby league, ostensibly over disagreements about whether players could receive money for playing (Collins 2006). Where they are both practiced, the two sports continue to connote different class positions to this day.

Sport reinforces not only social-class hierarchies but also other forms of social inequality. Sport has played an important role in maintaining the sex-gender system in the West, bolstered by muscular Christianity and its legacy. Although sport's relation to sex and gender may be configured differently outside the West (Brownell 1995, pp. 213–17; Joo 2012), engagement with the Western-dominated global sports system is inevitably shaped by the fact that the lion's share of sport industries is marketed as a hypermasculine spectacle for global consumption (Bolin & Granskog 2003, Burstyn 1999, Hartmann-Tews & Pfister 2003). This has the effect of muffling expressions of non-normative genders and sexualities. The veritable obsession in international sports with gender dimorphism, in the form of stringent "sex verification" to ensure a clear separation of the sexes, is well-known (despite the presence

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of several mixed-sex sports on the Olympic program). Whether recreational or professional, sports tend to be deeply hostile to lesbian and gay participants (Anderson 2005). This homophobia motivated US decathlon Olympian Tom Waddell to found the Gay Games in 1982, but the organization was successfully sued by the U.S. Olympic Committee in the 1980s to prevent it from using the trademarked word "Olympics," which it had granted permission to some other groups to use, such as the Special Olympics (Symons 2010, pp. 55–58).

The structure of sports often has the effect of circumscribing racial and other minority identities. The exclusion of nonwhite players from rugby football in Apartheid South Africa is well-known (Nauright 2010), but discrimination generally takes more subtle forms, particularly if members of these minorities are essential to the business of the sport. Even when minority identities dominate a particular sport, which is the case in most professional sports today, they are problematized. For example, the stereotypical hypervirility of Polynesian rugby players, on which New Zealand rugby depends (along with the enormous economic interests tied to it), is also yoked in the eyes of the white public with savagery, a lack of discipline, and a propensity to "show off" (Hokowhitu 2004, Teaiwa & Mallon 2005). Politicians and the media in France transformed its multiracial national soccer team, winner of the 1998 World Cup, from a symbol of the success of integrationist republicanism (Dubois 2010), into a pack of arrogant and unpatriotic racialized hoodlums in the 2010 World Cup.

Yet, sport also creates arenas for displays of resistance against social hierarchies, sometimes spectacularly, as illustrated by the memorable Black Power raised fists by US sprinters Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics in the midst of the Civil Rights movement (Bale & Cronin 2003, Hartmann 2004). More subtly, sport can contradict, if not quite subvert, power dynamics in the society in which it is embedded, as illustrated in Rabinowitz's (1997, pp. 119–45) ethnography of the dynamics between Israeli athletes and a Palestinian coach on an Israeli basketball team.

One of the deficiencies of practice theory for an anthropology of sport is that it lacks a well-developed concept of culture that can account for the ways in which practice is culturally organized by cultural schemas, myths, symbols, rituals, and so on (Ortner 2006, pp. 11–12). For this reason, "body culture" is a better tool than habitus, because it draws on the anthropological concept of culture to contextualize the body within the local meanings that are significant to the people whose bodies are in question. Brownell (1995, pp. 17–21) built on Eichberg's (1998) formulation to define body culture as everything that people do with their bodies (recalling Mauss's "body techniques"), together with the cultural context that shapes the nature of their actions and gives them meaning. Body culture reflects the internalization and incorporation of culture; it is "embodied culture."

SPORT AS CULTURAL PERFORMANCE

Sport involves both ongoing practices and periodic performative events in a complementary relationship, and the performance of sport presumes an audience. Spectatorship can take different forms, from cheering a school game to watching broadcasts of the Olympic Games alongside billions of others, but it invariably involves a strong emotional component (Cash & Damousi 2009). It also includes being witness to the scandals that befall celebrity athletes with particular frequency, particularly if they have crossed racial or other kinds of social boundaries (Baughman 1995, Krause 1998, Starn 2011).

Although practice theory and postcolonial theory opened up new perspectives on everyday body practices, they had less to say about sport events as a performance genre. Recuperating the fact that sport continues to be ritual, symbol, and play, designed to create liminal spaces in which power and inequality are (at least temporarily) sidelined, allows us to create a more well-rounded theory, which is ignorant

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of neither power nor the fact that human beings can still transcend difference and inequality, and strive for communitas—the best example of which include the Olympics, the FIFA (International Federation of Association Football) World Cup in soccer, and comparable events.

Although anthropological theories of ritual have been influential among communications and media scholars studying the Olympic Games and major sports events, anthropologists have been slow on the uptake. One reason is the undertheorization of the "event" in ritual theory: Since the 1980s, ritual theory has been increasingly expanded to the point that even the everyday habits that Turner once disdained are now labeled as "rituals." For inspiration, we need to turn to communications scholarship, such as Rothenbuhler's (1988) ethnography of American television viewers' "living room celebration" of the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games. Similarly, the "media event"—a live broadcast of an historic occasion that transfixes a national or worldwide audience, which does not merely watch the event, but celebrates it—draws heavily on Turner's ritual theory (Dayan & Katz 1992, pp. 1–24). Roche (2000, pp. 1–5) used the term "mega-events" to describe large-scale cultural events that have a dramatic character, mass popular appeal, and international significance.

In short, anthropological theory combined with empirical cases drawn from the world of sport has made important contributions to communications and media studies, yet anthropologists have not taken up media events and mega-events as topics for study (exceptions are Horne & Manzenreiter 2002, 2006; Manzenreiter & Spitaler 2011). Because they are not based in ethnography, the existing theories lack concrete analytical categories derived from the actual experiences of the participants, and the labels "spectacle" and "mega-event" are overused as a "loose, imperial trope for everything dubious about the contemporary world" (MacAloon 2006, p. 15). It is the performance quality of sport, and sport mega-events in particular, that gives it such powerful popular impact, and the anthropology of sport still awaits the development and systematic application of a fully articulated theory of cultural performance.

SPORT, TRANSNATIONALISM, AND LABOR

We live in an ever more densely connected world in which growing numbers of problems have global impact, such as financial crises, climate change, and social unrest. The scale of these issues requires social scientists to develop better frameworks for analyzing systems and processes on a global scale. International sport provides a valuable lens into globalization because the webs that constitute world sport are a microcosm of those that constitute transnational society as a whole. The threads of this web are composed of sport-governing bodies (typically nongovernmental organizations), nongovernmental organizations concerned with issues other than sport, national governments, corporations, and other institutions; the production chains of sport-merchandise companies and the migration routes of athletes and coaches; the dissemination of television images and media reports of major sport events; and the grassroots networks of fans.

Because these are transnational actors in a world system of sovereign nation-states, sport provides insight into the national structures that still limit transnational action. For example, do supranational bodies such as FIFA and the International Olympic Committee "see like a [territorially bounded] state" (Scott 1998), or do they operate in a completely different paradigm? The European Court of Justice's landmark 1995 "Bosman ruling" against the bodies that regulate professional soccer football in Belgium and Europe—which ended clubs' monetary demands in the transfer of players as well as some citizenship restrictions on team compositions—demonstrated that in some ways the sport system was more restrictive of transnational mobility than the labor law of the European Union (Lanfranchi & Taylor 2001, pp. 213–29).

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Klein's meticulous ethnographies of baseball in Dominican Republic academies (Klein 1991) and on the US-Mexico border (Klein 1997) provide rich material about the interplay of nationalism and transnationalism, but owing to sport's marginality in the discipline, his work did not gain the attention that it merited. The theoretical explication of transnationalism and globalization in sport has been largely undertaken by sociologists (most notably, Giulianotti & Robertson 2004, 2007b, 2009; Maguire 1999, 2005), but the development of theory has been hampered by a lack of areal expertise and on-the-ground fieldwork in non-Western and developing societies. The anthropology of sport still awaits a truly global synthesis of theories of transnationalism and globalization with ethnographic case studies.

Athletes and trainers form an increasingly mobile category of migrant labor facilitated by a transnational network of agents in multiple locations, including teammates, recruiters, managers, trainers, and other brokers, as well as relatives, friends, covillagers, religious and secular leaders, state agents, other institutional authorities, and members of the public. In the last decades of the twentieth century, universities, clubs, and teams began searching for athletic talent across a much broader swath of the planet. This expansion of the talent pool coincided with the much-heralded emergence of globalization, but it was also motivated by the increasing corporatization and commodification of sport, which had gradually turned the competition for athletes into a matter of money and often lots of it (Bale 1991, Bale & Maguire 1994, Kelly 2006, Lanfranchi & Taylor 2001, Taylor 2006).

Many of the resulting migrations reversed former colonial linkages by drawing athletes from the global South to the global North (Magee & Sugden 2002). European clubs run "football farms" in West Africa, and North American teams run "baseball farms" in the Dominican Republic. However, there were also some spectacular indicators of the shift in the global balance of power from East to West, such as the increasing prominence in Japanese sumo of wrestlers from Mongolia, countries of the former Soviet Union, and the Pacific Islands (Tierney 2007).

Unlike other forms of migration, sport migrations invoke dreams of sudden success and wealth, which the migration of laborers or domestic workers never invokes, but which articulates with the millenarianism of "casino capitalism" (Comaroff & Comaroff 2000, Strange 1986). The resulting politics of hope has a number of distinctive characteristics: It is grounded in the very physicality of the athlete's body; it targets material rewards of millenarian proportions; and it is fueled by the possibility of popular recognition on an "even field" by citizens of the industrial world, who in some cases are the symbolic heirs of former colonizers. In many cases, this politics of hope rubs shoulders with the reality of disappointment and exploitation. Young hopefuls are exposed to exploitation in the form of human trafficking, including clandestine border crossing, procurement of faked documents, and deceitful promises of employment (Alegi 2010; Carter 2007, 2011; Darby 2000).

The migration of athletes can represent different things for different agents: West African soccer national teams' decrying of what Bale (1991) memorably termed the "brawn drain" contrasts sharply with the Tongan state's enthusiastic investment in the production and export of rugby talent (see Andreff 2006, Besnier 2012, Hoberman 2007). These different positions refract different ways of conceptualizing citizenship, migration, and development.

SPORT, NATIONALISM, AND CITIZENSHIP

More than in any other field, sport as spectacle is a means through which the state displays its legitimacy to other states and other societies as well as to its own citizenry. Theorists such as Foucault (1977, 1978) can further extend our understanding of the global ethnoscapes of sport with their insight that the state is more than just national governments. State projects to "integrate," "modernize," and "empower"

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ethnic minorities, poor people, and other "embarrassing" groups through sports segue into the complicated questions of citizenship and national belonging that surround professional athletes and star athletes who "represent" nations in the Olympics and other global competitions. Some scholars have hailed the power of sports as a vehicle for the integration of immigrant and other minorities into dominant society (Henry 2005, Inst. Sport Leis. Policy 2004, Kennett 2004), although others have also demonstrated the limitations of this position (Cronin & Mayall 2003, MacClancy 1996, Shor & Yonay 2011, Sorek 2010). The assumption is that partaking in sport activities is a matter of the individual rights of citizenship that should be guaranteed to members of minority groups (and which they are supposed to embrace enthusiastically). Conceptualizing access to sport as a matter of rights emerged out of the anti-Apartheid movement (Nauright 2010), and it was later extended from issues of race to issues of gender and, in the context of mega-events such as the Olympics, to the rights of all those whose lives were affected by these events.

The European Union's view of sport as a means of assimilating immigrants by extending this individual right of citizenship to them is in direct opposition to the original North American conception of multiculturalism, which was a reaction against the traditional "melting-pot" approach to assimilation. Thus, the Arctic Winter Games and North American Indigenous Games manifested the Canadian use of sport as an expression of ethnic self-determination.

Nowhere is the intertwining of nationalism (and localism) with masculinity rendered more visible than in sport, the site of what Billig (1995) terms "banal nationalism" and a prime instrument for the socialization of children to both nationalism and gender (Dyck 2010). It is seen in the convergence of extreme forms of masculinity, nationalism, and xenophobia in football hooliganism (Armstrong 1998, Buford 1993); martial sporting events in the service of the nation in Nazi Germany, the USSR, and China; or Western European efforts to promote recreational sports as an integrative mechanism to defuse the youthful masculinity of "problematic" minorities (Silverstein 2000).

At the same time, the configuration of professional sports in late capitalism poses two thorny contradictions for masculinity, nationalism (or localism), and sport. The first is the purchase of local teams by corporations or owners with no particular attachment to local contexts; these teams may then be transformed into products to be consumed transnationally, their ties to their country or city of origin having become only a minor aspect of this consumption (Miller et al. 1999). Thus Manchester United, the Chicago Bulls, and the New Zealand All Blacks, while ostensibly representing particular locations, are primarily products that can be purchased in the form of fan-club memberships anywhere in the world or through clothing-label franchises. The second is the contradiction embedded in the fact that teams are now staffed by large numbers of migrants (or the offspring of migrants), yet they symbolize a deeply local masculinized identity that continues to be central to their marketing due to fans' identification with local teams, which translates into sales of tickets and licensed products, fan-club subscriptions, and TV ratings.

Both contradictions have important implications for our understanding of the relationships among transnationalism, nationalism, and localism as well as masculinity and belonging in the contemporary world. These issues are rarely tackled in a sustained fashion and have never been posed from the perspectives of migrant team-sport athletes who embody the pride of local and national communities that are not necessarily benign to them. The tense politics of autochthony and belonging that dominates the public sphere in France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, among others, easily rears its aggressive head when a racialized foreign player misses a goal on the soccer football field, for example.

CENTRALIZING SPORT IN ANTHROPOLOGY

The institutions that govern sport crosscut local, national, regional, international, and

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global structures in ways that highlight important theoretical issues. Sport is an important realm of anthropological inquiry because it provides a nexus of body, multiplex identities, and multilayered governance structures, combined with a performance genre that possesses qualities of play, liminality, and storytelling, that enables us to explore the connections among these dynamics in a unique way. Recent works have been concerned with what anthropology can bring to sport, but this essay draws attention to what sport can bring to anthropology. Reconceptualizing the body as a cultural construction makes it possible to look at how sport "travels" across boundaries and opens up a space for examining how sport creates connections between peoples at the same time that it strengthens local and national identities.

Sport provides a novel angle for the investigation of fundamental questions in contemporary anthropology. A synthesis of the two approaches to sport represented in the history of anthropology—sport as play and sport as the serious life, sport as cultural performance and sport as everyday practice—provides the key to unlock the study of sport and allow it to move to the center of the discipline in this global era.

FUTURE ISSUES

1. Much work currently exists on the body within the nation-state, but the body in structures beyond the state remains to be explored.
2. We need more ethnography exploring the dynamic in which bodies and capitalism mutually construct each other: How do commodification and corporatization shape the bodies that are valued, and how does the valuation of bodies shape commodification?
3. We also need a more truly "global" synthesis of theories of transnationalism and globalization with ethnographic research on non-Western and developing societies to complement the primarily historical, Western, and macrosociological focus of existing work.
4. The anthropology of sport still awaits the development and systematic application of a fully articulated theory of cultural performance. Ethnography has much to contribute to the understanding not only of the organization of sport mega-events, but also of their "legacy" (to use the current jargon word) for everyday people in host cities and countries.
5. What is the place of play and pleasure in this lucrative, competitive field?
6. As a research method, ethnography could contribute to understanding the social problems in sport, such as doping, homophobia, sexism, exploitation of migrant and child labor, the loss of "traditional" games and sports, and so on.

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