

EMBODYING SCALES OF FILIPINA/O AMERICAN SPORTING LIFE:  
TRANSNATIONAL SPORTING CULTURES AND PRACTICES  
IN THE FILIPINA/O DIASPORA

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Anthropology  
in the Graduate College of the  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015

Urbana, Illinois

Doctoral Committee

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## Abstract

This multi-sited ethnographic study examines how Filipina/o Americans take up sporting cultures and practices in Southern California in the twenty-first century. Sporting cultures and practices broadly refers to playing, actively engaging, and consuming sports. Filipina/o Americans have long been involved in sports since the onset of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines and throughout their migration to, and settlement in the U.S. Despite this legacy, scholarly accounts have thus far neglected how sports are central to the Filipina/o American experience.

I emphasize how sports figure prominently in the everyday lives of Filipina/o Americans by documenting the multiple sporting spaces they navigate, including internet sports websites, basketball gyms, sports tournaments, Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao family fight nights, Pacquiao boxing matches, and social media spaces. In particular, my work explores how power circulates across intersecting categories of difference, including, race, class, gender, and sexuality as they correspond with sport discourses, embodied meanings/gestures, spatialized practices and sporting ideologies and traditions. I argue that Filipina/o Americans’ involvement in sports provide complicated ways of understanding formations of identity, feelings of belonging, and claims to nationalism.

Juxtaposing everyday sporting spaces and arenas, I move to the spectacular sporting body of Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao, an eight-time world boxing champion from the Philippines. Drawing from fieldwork conducted in Las Vegas, NV, Arlington, TX, and Southern California, I examine how Pacquiao functions as a transnational icon for Filipina/o Americans. Pacquiao’s success in the “manly art” of boxing has fundamentally challenged stereotypes of Asian bodies as “inferior,” “weak” and “effeminate.” In this way, Pacquiao embodies the literal and

metaphoric possibility of Filipina/o American transnational belongings and desires; through affective desires for fulfillment, success, and self-realization. It is through these transnational and digitized renderings that Pacquiao's racialized masculinity simultaneously becomes a site of celebration, conflict, and contradiction.

To my grandmother Lucia Castillo “Nanay” Realiza  
and  
my mother Beulah Arnaldo-Dionson  
Thank you for spirit, faith, and unconditional love

## Acknowledgements

There are so many people to thank in this dissertation. If I omit anyone, I apologize in advance. First off, I thank Linda España-Maram for encouraging me to pursue a Ph.D. I first met Linda as an undergraduate student taking her *Filipino American Experiences* class. She saw in me a promising young scholar who could contribute to Filipina/o American scholarship. She reminded me that the voices and narratives of ethnic minorities mattered and has been a source of unconditional support since then. Without her asking, “Have you ever thought of pursuing a Ph.D.?” I probably would not have gone to graduate school. I am indebted to her for mentorship and friendship and owe a lot to her for having unwavering faith in me.

Throughout my graduate school journey, I’ve been blessed to have a network of friends and colleagues who’ve been there for me, who understand the ups and downs of graduate school life and who have encouraged me to stay on the path. I want to thank the “cool kids” crew who I met at the University of Hawai’i Manoa’s American Studies department from 2004-2006—Johanna Almiron, Darlene “Daya” Mortel, Lorenzo Perillo, and Lani Teves. Thank you for making my transition to Hawai’i smoother and for providing a critical and intellectual space. I left Hawai’i knowing that the friendships and bonds I have with each of you will last forever. I am especially thankful to Lorenzo Perillo for imparting words of advice when I was writing. “Writing a dissertation is about making peace with the last 9 years of your life. It’s hard to explain, but the dissertation is a product of growing, developing, and what you’ve gone through.”

My first two years at UIUC were tremendously difficult and I would not have survived had it not been for graduate students in the anthropology department. Special thanks goes out to Brian Montes and Teresa Ramos. Brian and Teresa were the first people I met when I flew into the cornfields. Thank you for inviting me to watch “Heroes” (even if the storyline didn’t seem to

go anywhere), watch movies, or go out to eat. I always looked forward to doing something other than read for seminars or write papers. Stanley Thangaraj was especially supportive. From the minute we met at the Association for Asian American Studies Conference in New York, we connected because of our shared sporting interests—not only because we loved to play sports, but also in terms of writing about America’s favorite pastimes in a critical and conscious way. To this day, Stan always offers words of encouragement and affirmations. He has been a true role model and someone I respect deeply. I also want to thank Aide Acosta, who always seemed to be in the right place whenever I felt frustrated and frazzled during my first year.

Members of the Asian Pacific American Graduate Student Organization (APAGSO) provided a community of scholars committed to social justice within and beyond the Asian American community. I also want to thank them for providing a social space outside of the university. Shouts go out to Yaejoon Kwon, Merin Thomas, and Shantel Martinez for inviting me to hangout at places like Radio Maria, Boltini’s, and High Dive! The Filipina/o American cohort of graduate students deserve special recognition. Genevieve Clutario, Tessa Winkelmann, Paul Michael Leonardo Atienza, Xavier Hernandez, Mark Sanchez, Christine Peralta, and Sasha Mobley. Your scholarship is a reminder about the urgency and need to write about Filipina/o Americans. Thank you for invigorating me with your presence and scholarship.

I couldn’t have asked for better roommates in Champaign. During my first couple of years, Daniel Wong graciously welcomed me when I first moved to the Midwest. I thank him for being patient with me as I was trying to make sense of being in a new place. I also want to acknowledge Anthony Jerry who became my roommate in 2009. I appreciate our conversations about life and sharing the ups and downs of graduate school. I especially want to thank him for making Champaign much more bearable during a particularly turbulent time in my life. Finally,

my roommates Gabi and Abel Romero. I'm not sure how we managed to make it work with four people in the apartment, but we did! Thank you for being my "taste testers" while I cooked new dishes! Of course, my furry friends Rosita and Smokey, thank you for providing me with "self-care."

I thank Karoliina Engstrom who carefully read drafts of my chapters, provided critical feedback, and pushed me to become a better writer. I also thank her for reminding me to be "kind-sighted." David Coyoca was someone who I could count on to help me think about writing obstacles. I always appreciate his practical advice about writing and our conversations about sports, race, and society. Throughout the writing phase, I shared multiple drafts with Ariana Ruiz and Carolyn Randolph. Both of them provided critical and valuable feedback from a women of color feminist perspective. I can't thank them enough for their friendship and collegiality.

Of course, I don't think I would have completed my dissertation without the direction of my committee. From the outset, Martin Manalansan was generous with his time, gracious with his feedback, and was always checking in to see how I was doing both personally and professionally. I could not have asked for a better advisor. During the initial stages of writing my dissertation, I recall telling Martin, "I think I have writer's block. I can't seem to get started on my dissertation." Martin matter of factly replied, "You know, there is no such thing as writer's block. The best way to go about writing your dissertation is to start with a story. And the best ethnographies start with a story." These words of advice, along with countless others Martin provided were crucial to my completing this dissertation. I must have read, *Global Divas* (especially "Biyuti and Drama), 20 times to emulate Martin's ethnographic voice and analytical lens. Thank you Martin, for expanding my critical analysis, your excellent mentorship, the

countless times you have treated me to lunch and dinner, and for always being the kind of advisor that cares about me as a person and as a scholar.

From day one, Junaid Rana pushed me to think about how sports is inextricably linked to race, the body, and everyday life. I thank him for his thought provoking comments and questions, and for shaping my critical lens. I am grateful to have Lisa Cacho's mentorship. She equipped me with the tools to think about race comparatively while also ensuring that my writing was empathetic and critical. I appreciate her unconventional approach to teaching and learning: from Edward DeBono's *Six Thinking Hats*, to mind mapping and brainstorming my ideas, I am in awe of her innovative pedagogical style. She has a gift for breaking down complex theoretical frameworks into clear and accessible language. I hope to one day emulate her style. Alejandro Lugo "sold" me on coming to Champaign-Urbana. He made my decision to come because he expressed faith in my ideas and my potential as a young scholar. He always provided sage words of advice, especially during my first 2 years when I was struggling to navigate the expectations of a graduate student. As his teaching assistant in the spring 2008, Alejandro taught me so much about how to engage with students using popular culture (Madonna) and personal narratives. I will always remember "The Pretzel Story." I thank Ricky Rodriguez for agreeing to serve on my committee in a moment's notice. His book, *Next of Kin: The Family in Chicano/a Cultural Politics*, was profound in my development as a young scholar interested in gender and cultural nationalism. I feel fortunate to have had Martin, Junaid, Lisa, Alejandro, and Ricky on my committee. They truly are an all-star cast.

The Department of Anthropology's administrators and faculty welcomed me whenever I entered Davenport Hall. I especially thank Liz Spears for helping me with my random questions about second year graduate student reports, filing my dissertation, or responding to my random



inquiries. Thank you Karla Harmon and Julia Spitz for processing my timecards and for patiently putting up with my missteps. During spring 2014, the anthropology block grant allowed me to put the finishing touches on my dissertation. I thank the committee for awarding me. It was an honor to T.A. for Andy Orta. He had such great command of the topic and was brilliant in how he lectured to students about Latin American cultures. I also want to acknowledge Ellen Moodie for her patience while working through complicated social theory texts.

In the department of Asian American Studies, I want to acknowledge Mary Ellerbe for her tireless commitment to serving the department. Mary is a jack-of-all-trades and she is one of the main reasons why Asian American Studies runs so smoothly. Pia Sengsavanh and Viveka Kudliagama were also valuable to the workings of the department. Thank you also goes out to Christine Lyke, especially for helping me with my paperwork. I had the honor of TA'ng for a number of professors in Asian American Studies. Susan Koshy, Soo Ah Kwon, Esther Kim Lee, Yoon Pak, and Junaid Rana all shaped my critical pedagogy in Asian American Studies. I also want to thank Fiona Ngo for her practical advice about lecturing to a large class. Augusto Espiritu and Anna Gonzalez created a space for Filipina/o American scholars to come together. When Christina Chin was a postdoctoral fellow in Asian American Studies, we bonded over our shared research interests and I owe a lot to her for reassuring me that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

To the Long Beach/SoCal crew, thank you for always making me feel like I never left the LBC. Despite time and distance, they always welcomed me back and provided a home away from home. I especially want to thank Robbie and Jeanette Rogan for housing me after completing my first year of graduate school. It was nice to decompress and to relax during summer 2008. During the summer of 2009, Lani Desembrana graciously let me stay at her place

while I conducted preliminary summer fieldwork. Aiza Galdo was especially generous for being my roommate during my first nine months of fieldwork in 2011 and 2012. It was comforting knowing I could count on her as a friend and confidant. I value our friendship and am forever indebted to her for reminding me that there is a finish line to graduate school madness. From May to August of 2012, Lori and Eric Cruz opened their home and welcomed me into their home while I finished the last leg of my dissertation fieldwork.

My family has been a source of unconditional love and support. There were times I didn't think I'd finish. But a simple phone call, text, or Facetime conversation with them reminded me that the stakes were too high to give up. I could always count on my brother Chris for always finding the right words of encouragement. I appreciate his unstinting confidence in me. My brother Nat's positive energy, spirit, and always-optimistic attitude kept me inspired to embrace the daily act of writing a dissertation. My sisters-in-law, Dianne and Orchid's support kept me grounded and reinforced the importance of thinking about education beyond my generation. To my nieces and nephews, Marley, Maxwell, McKayla, Caleb and Chloe, I thank you for youthfulness, energy, and curiosity. Ruben, my stepfather doesn't say a whole lot but shows with how much he gives with his heart. Although my uncle Daniel "Danny" Mendoza passed away during the writing of this dissertation, I know that he would have celebrated my accomplishment. He was one of the first to share his knowledge of Filipina/o American experiences and was a living testament to the pursuit of knowledge. I miss him dearly. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my spiritual advisers and greatest teachers; my late grandmother Lucia Realiza and my mother, Beulah Arnaldo-Dionson. They have taught me more about life more than any book or author I have read, and have inspired me to be the best teacher, educator, and person I can be.

To my partner Norma Angelica Marrun. She has truly made everyday life in Champaign-Urbana easier. I want to thank her for providing a space to freely share my ideas and for challenging me when those ideas needed refinement. More than anything, she has taught me to trust and believe in my own scholarship because the stakes are too high in our own communities not to. More than anything, I thank her for being patient, kind, caring, and selfless. You embody the kind of person and scholar I strive to be. What a long, arduous journey it has been! Thank you for sharing it with me. Te quiero mucho!

Lastly, the rich narratives of this dissertation come as a result of the generosity of my research participants. Thank you for being so gracious with your time, sharing your stories, and for trusting me to incorporate your sporting experiences. Your voices and experiences are the heart and soul of this research. I am forever grateful.

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## **Introduction**

### **Filipina/o American Sportsclapes: Locating Filipina/o American Sporting Spaces and Place Making Politics**

#### **Overview of Dissertation**

“Before I met you, I was telling myself, ‘I really feel sorry for this guy.’ I didn’t think I had anything important to tell you about sports,” admitted Louise, a second-generation Filipina American elementary school teacher. We had just concluded our two-hour long interview at a coffee shop in Glendale. Her preconceptions were understandable given her admission that she did not consider herself “athletic” and she had, for the most part, been excluded as a serious player and participant in sports. Suffice to say, her participation in sports did not conjure positive memories. As I thought about our interview, however, I realized that her story revealed much more than what she considered unremarkable sporting experiences. Countering her own humble assessments, Louise’s story was ripe with meaning, contradiction, promise, and hope. She shared some of her most intimate thoughts, feelings, and experiences that left me in awe of how sports informed, and continues to inform her life. Important themes such as family relationships, including intergenerational relations, gender, and race emerged as Louise shared her story. Louise explained that her father is an immigrant who worked as a busboy and later on as a hotel maintenance person. He came to the U.S. with the hopes of providing “a better life” for Louise and her family. Yet, upon his arrival, he experienced racism, and emasculation as a busboy not unlike his countrymen who worked in the service sector industries in Los Angeles in the early 1920s (España-Maram, 2006). It could very well be that sports, particularly basketball fandom was one way in which Louise’s father could participate privately/domestically in the process of Americanization, to integrate in America, because for him, racism posited him as an outsider in

the work place. Perhaps basketball was an escape from the daily verbal barrages of, “You’re stupid, you can’t do this job” despite earning a college education in the Philippines.

Louise’s father faithfully roots for the Los Angeles Lakers. In fact, she got to know to him by observing how he cheered for his favorite team:

I knew that my dad loved the Lakers so much. To this day, whatever affects my dad when it comes to the Lakers, affects me directly. I never really talked to him about sports other than, “Yay they won!” Those were our exchanges. But it was a lot of observation for me. I got to know him through observations, how he felt, what he said but not direct conversations.

The absence of verbal communication with her father about sports is telling. Yet, a kind of affective disposition (e.g., emotional connections) works as a surrogate to link her and her father’s sporting experiences. In a revealing moment during our interview, Louise explained how her father reacted to the news that Magic Johnson had contracted the HIV virus. She recalled that her father was saddened and devastated. “I knew that I was really, really affected when Magic Johnson announced that he had AIDS.” She continues:

I don't know how old I was but I was obviously not old enough to spell “believe” because I remember when it [the news] came out I didn't really fully understand what it was. I just knew that he [Magic Johnson] was sick but my dad was really sad and so what I did to make him feel better was, I made one of those pennant shaped things in purple and yellow, and I put something like, “We believe in Magic,” and then I put it on my wall above my bunk bed and my dad was like, “That's very good anak [child]. Now change your spelling for believe.” We didn't have a conversation about it. When he'd want to point out something, he points it out like, “Magic Johnson said that he’s not going to play for the Lakers anymore.” And that's pretty much it in and then I made that pennant, so I never really talked about how it affected him but again going back to how I just observed my dad, he just got really sad. And I don't know if he was sad because he was sick and feeling bad for him or I don't know if he was sad because Magic wasn't gonna to play anymore and that's his favorite player. But his way of being was that he was really down, similar to when they [the Lakers] lose championships.

In this narrative, Louise’s story uncovers how rituals of leisure—in this case, sporting cultures and practices—are embodied, lived, and affectively felt in the day-to-day life of her family. Far from discussing her sporting experiences through actual play, Louise’s experiences

underscore how basketball spectatorship through an American sports team enabled her to emotionally connect with and understand how her father negotiated the parameters of *Americanness* while simultaneously staking claims to belonging. For Louise, her father was an important figure in how she narrated her relationship to the sports world. In this way, colonialism, intergenerational connections, race, gender, and sports are inextricably linked. Louise's story is a "portrait" as Daniel Miller (2008) would have it, among many others that animate this dissertation. Portraits, in this case, are representations of people's lives that contribute to a larger understanding of the modern world. As we see in Louise's story, such portraits convey "relationships which flow constantly between persons and things" (p. 6), between her father, a pennant, an athlete and the fostering of their social relationship. Louise exemplifies but one way in which Filipina/o Americans participate in, and engage with sports.

This dissertation examines Filipina/o Americans' sporting experiences. In particular, it examines how intimate, private, mundane, as well as spectacular sporting spaces and events highlight the diverse ways in which sports are inextricably linked to their social lives. I examine a diversity of sporting participation which includes day-to-day consumption patterns via social media posts including Facebook and Twitter, reading sports blogs and websites, conversations, sports spectatorship (in the private space and in mass, public spaces), and temporal moments drawn from informants' sports memories. The bulk of this ethnography takes place in Southern California, while acknowledging that it is multisited in nature (Marcus, 1999). My research topic and the pool of informants directed me to places like Las Vegas, NV, Arlington, TX, and Washington, DC and the interactions and observations that occurred in between the various nodes of my fieldwork sites signals the mobility of my informants, ideas, bodies and commodities that circulate in the various *sportscapes* (see below). In the field of Asian American

Studies, I follow Martin Manalansan's (2000) directive that to conduct ethnographies in Asian American communities is, "always and already a multisited process," that moves beyond physical locations (Manalansan, 2000, p. 5).

As a popular cultural form and leisure activity, sports contain its own system of meaning making processes that travel beyond the sporting spaces and into social life. Such practices produce affect and pleasures that facilitate how Filipina/o Americans think about themselves in relation to others. Durham and Kellner (2006) put forth, "Likewise, media and consumer culture, cyberculture, sports, and other popular activities engage people in practices which integrate them into the established society, while offering pleasures, meanings, and identities. Various individuals and audiences respond to these texts disparately, negotiating their meanings in complex and often paradoxical ways" (2006, p. xi). I argue that sports are an important cultural practice because it provides vantage points to study issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality that exist within and outside of the Filipina/o American community. As Blanchard (1995) puts it, "sport always reflects the basic values of the cultural setting within which it is actually performed and thus functions as ritual or as a 'transmitter of culture'" (1995, p. 53). Within the U.S. cultural milieu, Filipina/o Americans resist, negotiate, and, at times, accommodate the various levels of cultural meanings in private and public sporting spaces. Beyond their actual play, Filipina/o Americans have varying degrees of sporting participation; they are simultaneously athletes, fans, coaches, and trainers, and their experiences are shaped and informed by their past and current sporting lives. In other words, sports is an intrinsic part of the lives of Filipinas/os in various and divergent forms and degrees of involvement.

One of the ways Filipina/o Americans engage with sports is through their day-to-day interactions with sports. In this way, I investigate just how much sporting cultures and practices



are embedded in Filipina/o Americans' everyday lives. From casual conversations about sports, narrating familial relationships through sports memories, to their actual play, Filipina/o Americans' sporting experiences at the everyday level provide meaning beyond wins and losses. Such everyday practices reveal a range of paradox and possibility that are framed within questions of cultural citizenship, identity, and belonging and provides important understandings of Filipina/o American selfhood that do not emerge in other areas of their everyday lives.

But beyond their everyday engagement with sports, there are also ways in which to examine what the everyday reveals—that is, through such day-to-day activities of sports, their narratives and stories uncover the often obscured ways in which power circulates through Filipina/o American bodies and the sporting spaces they maneuver. I argue that these everyday sporting experiences are rife with meaning, as limited access to sporting spaces, gendered ideologies of sporting practices, and privileged heterosexism remain firmly entrenched. Thus, while sport is often celebrated as democratic ground for inclusion and absent of power, my work explores how power circulates in and through the body as it intersects with categories of difference, including race, class, gender, and sexuality. As such, I examine how power dynamics interact with sport discourses, embodied meanings and gestures, spatialized practices, and sporting ideologies and traditions. It is through these differential levels of experience where the sporting arena becomes a site of negotiation, consumption, accommodation, resistance, and at times, complicity to normative sporting cultures and practices. Therefore, I point to embodied everyday sporting practices as a site of possibility, tension, and exclusion to the democratic appeal of sport, a site where racial inequality, sexism, homophobia are elided in the process of celebrating corporeal achievement and mastery.

Moreover, while examining Filipina/o Americans' routine and mundane sporting cultures and practices are one part of the story, I also examine how they consume the spectacular sporting body of Filipino boxing sensation, Manny "Pac-Man" Pacquiao. Consuming Pacquiao's body enables readings and analyses of nationalism, masculinity, diaspora and co-ethnic bonding within transnational practices.

Pacquiao is an eight-time world champion boxer from the Philippines and is considered a "national hero" to the diasporic Filipina/o community. He is one of the most celebrated athletes in the world and at one point was considered one of the best, "pound-for-pound"<sup>1</sup> fighters in boxing. In the twenty-first century, Pacquiao literally and digitally traverses both the Philippines and U.S. national borders through the sport of boxing. Pacquiao is more than just a Filipino athlete. In many ways, he is synonymous with boxing and is frequently referenced as one of the most celebrated boxers over the last 10 years. His name carries an appeal that is likened to retired African American boxer Muhammad Ali, a kind of cultural cachet that is consonant with star power and success (Andrews & Jackson, 2001). This is especially so given his sponsorship with Nike, one of the preeminent sporting apparel companies in the world. This kind of branding relationship between Pacquiao and the sporting apparel conglomerate only heightens his popularity among Filipina/o Americans; his star power circulates throughout the world. Marie, a second-generation Filipina American shared how she saw his brand:

Oh, I saw one in Vegas. It was the weekend of November 11. It was the Nike store. There was this huge poster of him and you would never see that in Ohio. So I took a picture of it [on her phone]. That was tight [cool] and then there [were] the shoes, sneakers and the Filipino flag colors. That was tight. And then they were selling that. You know, not only Filipinos walk into FootLocker. Not only Filipinos, non-Filipinos are seeing this and just the fact that it's catching their eye, like, "What is this? To what country does that belong, those colors belong to?" It's really increasing the awareness of Filipinos everywhere. I think that was tight.

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<sup>1</sup> "Pound-for-pound" is a mythical title given to boxers and mixed martial arts fighters and is often used as a talking point to argue who the best fighter is, irrespective of weight classes.

Marie's observations at the Nike store underscore how she felt about being invisible to the mainstream; seeing Pacquiao's branding with Nike conveys a mass-mediated message of the Philippines.

It is an understatement to say that Pacquiao is famous. His commodified body is consumed all over the world, and changes in global technology have only increased his popularity as images and videos of him abound on the internet. In the U.S., he sings Bee Gee cover songs like "How Deep is Your Love" on ABC's *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, performed renditions of songs like *La Bamba* at the House of Blues in Las Vegas at his post-fight party, and teamed with original song writer and singer Dan Hill to sing "Sometimes When We Touch."<sup>2</sup> Pacquiao has seemingly permeated all aspects of popular culture. He has been referenced in songs from pop artists like Bruno Mars, "Bad Meets Evil," hip-hop mogul Jay-Z in, "Thank You," and in Pitbull's, "Get It Started." Angelica, a second-generation Filipina American expressed, "It's fabulous! It's fabulous, because for us it's like, 'Oh our uncle is on' [singing karaoke]. It's interesting, like a cool thing to see you know? He's a part of pop culture, it's great!"

In this dissertation, Filipina/o American fans in Southern California claim Pacquiao as both Filipino and American and he embodies the literal and metaphoric possibility of Filipina/o American transnational belongings and desires; through affective desires for fulfillment, success and self-realization. It is through these transnational and digitized renderings that Pacquiao's racialized masculinity simultaneously embodies a site of celebration, conflict and contradiction. In other words, Pacquiao's body is rooted in a kind of cultural, commodified iconicity that resonates with Filipina/o Americans in complex ways. For Filipina/o Americans in Southern California, Pacquiao embodies global perils and possibilities: he is a symbol of Philippine

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tAeJiSIdRK4>

nationalism and a receptor of social meaning and simultaneously embodies a laboring, commodified, racialized, gendered, sexualized, and class inflected body. My research builds upon critical sports studies scholarship that examines the role of the media, the creation of celebrity athletes, and the storylines that figure prominently around them (Andrews, 2000; Andrews & Jackson, 2001). At the same time, Pacquiao's global reach complicates this scholarship because of the ubiquitous presence of Filipinas/os in the diaspora. Pacquiao therefore embodies the quintessential global Filipino (Okamura, 1998). As an accumulation strategy (Harvey, 2000) Pacquiao's body is also a laboring body, much like the rest of the Filipina/o diasporic population who are dispersed and disseminated throughout the world. While he does not fit the occupational categories considered as "typically" Filipina/o, Pacquiao's occupation as a boxer depends and demands that his body labors. Consider a *Time Magazine* article, "The Meaning and Mythos of Manny Pacquiao" that situates Pacquiao within a diasporic framework of Filipina/o laboring bodies to understand the condition and precarity of their lives and the hope for a better future:

The broad outlines of his history—his legend—have made the boxer a projection of the migrant dreams of the many Filipinos who leave home and country for work. About 10% of the Philippines' GDP is money remitted from overseas Filipinos: nurses, nannies, sailors, singers, doctors, cooks, X-ray technicians, mail-order brides, construction workers, prostitutes, priests, nuns. Some spend decades abroad, away from the ones they love, for the sake of the ones they love. Everyone in the Philippines knows a person who has made the sacrifice or is making it. Pacquiao gives that multitude a champion's face of selflessness: the winner who takes all and gives to all. "To live in the Philippines is to live in a world of uncertainty and hardship," says Nick Giongeo, who covers Pacquiao for the daily Manila *Bulletin*. "Filipinos are dreamers. They like fantasy. And what is more of a fantasy than Manny Pacquiao?" (Chua-Eoan & Tharoor, 2009)

## Postcolonial Sporting Arrangements and Engagements

One might assume that Filipina/o Americans have only recently begun to engage with sports; that their participation with this quintessentially American pastime began *in America*. A more critical account however, must acknowledge the Philippines' long historical, colonial relationship to the United States and how these legacies shape contemporary Filipina/o Americans' sporting experiences. Studies of the relationship between sports and globalization however, document how the emergence of sports as a global phenomenon was central to the colonizing process and served as a vehicle for cultural imperialism (Gems, 2006; Giulianotti, 2007; Guttman, 1994; James, 1984; Miller, 2007). Revolutionary transformations in global mass media however, have led to changes in how we think about global communities. While sports were once a vehicle of colonialism, such sports are now taken up as a practice of national expression.

A postcolonial framework is an important jumping off point to discuss Filipina/o American sporting experiences. This dissertation broadly engages with postcolonial scholars concerned with questions of race, gender, nationalism, and representation (James, 1984; Said, 1994). In his canonical text, *Orientalism*, for example, Edward Said argues that the Western discourse has defined the East in diametrically racialized and gendered ways: the West, as masculine and superior, and the East as effeminate, passive and exotic. These Orientalist underpinnings have remained to this day and are a residual part of mapping race, gender and sexuality onto Asian American athletic bodies (Yu, forthcoming). In *Beyond a Boundary* (1984), CLR James importantly documents how sports, nationalism, and gender were bound up in the sporting politics of cricket and the contradictory messages of "morality" and "virtue" vis-à-vis the sport as promoted by the English colonizers. James reflects, "The British tradition soaked

deep into me was that when you entered the sporting arena you left behind the sordid compromises of everyday existence. Yet for us to do that we would have to divest ourselves of our skins” (1984, p. 66). For James, the British tradition was a contradiction in terms where everyday life could not be divorced from cricket arena. Rather, sports and social life were inextricably linked to ideologies and practices of racism by the British colonial forces. Sports in the twenty-first century continue to invest in romanticized notions of merit, democracy and work ethic that dovetail with sports mass-mediated forms (Joo, 2012).

In more recent years, scholars have sought to locate the “postcolonial” within sporting narratives (Bale & Cronin, 2003; Carrington, 2010; Lazarus, 1999; MacAloon, 2008; Wagg, 2005), acknowledging the enduring presence of athletic bodies in the former colonies that engage with acts of resistance, agency and national belonging. As Carrington elaborates,

Sport, in short, was viewed within such accounts as a contested site wherein the play of power could be found, a cultural site of class domination “from above” as well as the location for forms of symbolic and material resistance “from below.” (2010, p. 25)

These works, however tend to emphasize postcolonial sporting bodies within the periphery, ignoring for example, how their experiences are located in the U.S. metropole. Moreover, many of these studies tend to focus on the sport of cricket and to a lesser degree, rugby, often overlooking not only other imperial sanctioned sports in general, but completely leaving out any mention of the Philippines. Despite this, my dissertation acknowledges these important works while also specifically drawing upon Pacific Islander Studies scholars concerned with U.S. colonialism’s role in the institutionalization of sport. The Philippines, along with Samoa, Hawai’i, and Guam were U.S. imperial outposts where sports were an important part of the colonial building process. Such legacies produce distinct kinds of contemporary social formations—particularly race and masculinity—that complicate postcolonial identities (Diaz,

2002; Hokowhitu, 2003; Tengan, 2002; Tengan & Markham, 2009; Uperesa, 2010) and are situated *within* the U.S. national borders. Therefore, postcolonial sports studies scholars acknowledge how the transmission of sports, while once a vehicle of colonization, are now taken up by former colonized peoples in ways that enable a reconfiguration of diasporic selves amidst global and transnational processes. Because of changes in global technology, diasporic communities throughout the world engage with diverse forms of mass media to express being a part of an imagined community despite one's physical location (Appadurai, 1996). In this dissertation, I situate the Filipina/o American sporting experience against the historical backdrop of 1898, a year which marked the inception of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines and where the institutionalization of sports, along with American style education, economics and politics were entrenched in Filipina/o social life. Indeed, throughout the U.S. colonial period in the Philippines, racializing discourses of the Filipina/o body were central to institutionalizing sport. U.S. colonists viewed Filipinas/os as "inferior," "uncivilized," "savage," and incapable of self-government. Working in tandem with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), U.S. colonists believed that institutionalizing sport would transform Filipina/o bodies into "good colonial subjects" (España-Maram, 2006) which were seen as docile, passive and malleable to the exigencies of colonialism (Foucault, 1975). In this sense, Filipina/o and Filipina/o American bodies have been inextricably linked to sports through U.S. colonialism's processes. In the contemporary period, Filipina/o bodies in the Philippines and abroad continue to be racialized, sexualized, gendered and classed in particular ways (Fajardo, 2011; Tadiar, 2004). Following this trajectory of U.S.-Philippines colonial and postcolonial relations, sport is therefore an important site upon which Filipinas/os address the historical and contemporary framing of their bodies in contradictory and empowering ways.

Moreover, postcolonial studies in sports also afford us the opportunity to examine transnational frameworks. Thus, I gesture to scholars concerned with an understanding of flows and currents of capital, commodities, people, labor and goods that move within and beyond borders and boundaries in the post-colonial moment (Appadurai, 1996). I apply Appadurai's neologism of world landscapes, or "–scapes" that emphasizes the divergent ways in which the intensity of information has accelerated flows and currents of cultural, social, economic and political life in nearly every corner of the globe. Given this context, I highlight the transnational nature of Filipina/o American sporting practices that engage with complicated questions of diasporic identity, belonging and nationalism particularly through the figure of Manny "Pac-Man" Pacquiao. These various –scapes enable renderings of Pacquiao that draw upon a form of vernacular sporting practices (in Appadurai's sense of the word) and creativity that can at times, thwart the intended goals of U.S. colonial cultural forms like sports.

### **Sportscapes, Transnationalism and Globalization**

This dissertation utilizes a multisited ethnography and a historically grounded interdisciplinary approach to examine how Filipina/o American sporting cultures and practices are framed within multiple sites of sporting contexts and practices: the transnational, the national, and the local. These sites are situated within and connected through the long historical relationship between the United States and the Philippines and what I would call (culling from Appadurai, 1996) the *sportscape*. *Sportscape* is the expansive flow of ideas, images, practices, bodies and institutions in sports in an increasingly global cultural landscape. In the U.S. broadly, and in Southern California, I argue that Filipina/o American sports practices are registered, disseminated and performed through a series of gendered, racialized/ethnicized, sexualized, and



class inflected scripts that shed light on the complexities of Filipina/o American selves and identities.

In this vein, the concept of transnationalism informs how this dissertation is framed.

According to Basch et al. (1994), transnationalism can be defined,

as the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their society of origin and settlement. We call these processes transnationalism to emphasize that many immigrants today build social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders. (1994, p. 7)

Far from a universalizing process, transnationalism grapples with the particularities and specificities of global currents and flows and its interconnectedness to social, political and economic formations which include commodities, capital, and people (Grewal, Gupta, & Ong, 1999). Filipinos have long been a part of transnational sporting practices. Filipino boxers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for example, participated in transnational boxing circuits that took them to places like the United States and Australia, while baseball players traveled to the United States and Japan. These late nineteenth and early twentieth century transnational sporting enterprises serve as a historical backdrop by which to situate Pacquiao's contemporary boxing exploits (Antolihao, 2012; Sheehan, 2012; España-Maram, 2006).

Furthermore, Pacquiao's boxing matches in Las Vegas, NV, Arlington, TX, and Macau, China are not only boxing spectacles that take place in global cities (Sassen, 2002), but are also reconfigured transnational sites where diasporic Filipina/os consume and engage with questions of nationalism through his body; of home and diaspora, belonging, success and failure. Grewal, Gupta and Ong (1999) consider how:

Media representations of migration, themselves shaped by the need to address diasporic markets, then significantly influence the reimagining of the nation and its inhabitants. Diasporic populations, because of the growing importance of emerging markets and of remittances and investment to newly liberalized national economies, create new

categories of belonging. Transnational media and capital reshape the nation while they are transforming the diasporic experience. (1999, p. 657)

Writing about the Filipino seafaring masculinities within the context of transnationalism, globalization, and diaspora, I find Kale Fajardo (2011) use of “transportation” useful not only to invoke notions of physically moving between and among borders and boundaries (as diasporic Filipinas/often do), but also in terms of how cultural memories “move” people. A kind of movement that that draws upon mental and emotional registers. Such movements are about,

different spaces, places, and moments of temporality, affect, and memory. This kind of transportation can take place in (port) city streets, on ocean waves, and currents, on rivers and rails, on walking/hiking trails, on road trips, and in other forms of journeying as an act of remembering, reflecting and meditating. (Fajardo, 2011, p. 158)

I would argue that these different places and spaces and the act of remembering are mobile, and evoked in sporting temporal moments while also recognizing that the “trans” Fajardo puts forth are also about, “movement between and across culturally constructed racialized and classed sex/gender, that is, female/male, manhood/womanhood, masculinities, and femininities” (Fajardo, 2011, p. 159).

While transnationalism can help us think about processes of consumption through institutions like sports, I also deploy Pacquiao’s body as a pivot to underscore how his transnational, mass-mediated image also informs local practices of reception and meaning making that contribute to ways of thinking about Filipina/o American communal formations and identities. In this way, I seek to understand how his transnational reach informs translocal social formations—that is, how Southern Californian Filipina/o Americans read him and his body that fundamentally address issues of race, gender and sexuality.

Drawing upon concepts of transnationalism and globalization requires one to look at theories of nationalism. According to Benedict Anderson (1991), “the nation” itself is socially

constructed and imagined, “because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion” (1991, p. 6). Indeed, Arjun Appadurai follows Anderson’s lead and stresses the importance of the “work of the imagination” when placing national belongings and desires in our global world. Anderson’s important insights of nationalism allow me to investigate how transnational experiences and practices enable particular kinds of imaginings of how Pacquiao’s body links ideas of nationalism to imagine communities as social bodies. At the same time, such ideas point to the multiple interactions of the body: in this way, the social body shapes how the individual body becomes a receptor of meaning for expressions of nationalism. Taking cues from studies of the globalization of sport, transnational studies and anthropological research on the body, I advance understandings of the body/embodiment and the multiple contexts and scales it is embedded in.

I weave research in globalization and sport and transnational studies with interdisciplinary and anthropological scholarship on the body<sup>3</sup> to examine how Filipina/o Americans’ embodied practices in sporting cultures are shaped by the intersecting phenomena of local, global and transnational processes and outcomes. I underscore the importance of looking at sport as an embodied cultural activity that is influenced by and engages with the exigencies of diaspora, transnationalism and globalization. I deploy the body as a central feature of globalization and transnationalism to consider how the Filipina/o diasporic community as a social body is inextricably tied to the global service industry.<sup>4</sup> Filipinas/os embody the

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<sup>3</sup> Mascia-Lees (2011); Lock & Farquhar (2007); Scheper-Hughes & Lock (1987).

<sup>4</sup> Fajardo, Kale, *Filipino Crosscurrents: Oceanographies of Seafaring, Masculinities, and Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011; Rodriguez, Robyn. *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2011.

transnational laboring body that literally, physically and metaphorically crisscross borders and boundaries.

Similarly, sports studies scholars have examined embodied sporting practices to understand how such practices make and remake selves (Alter, 1994; Archetti & Dyck, 2003; Brownell, 1995; Hargreaves & Vertinsky, 2007; Wacquant, 2004; Woodward, 2009). I assert that Filipina/o American sporting bodies, both individual and collective, provide vantage points with which to understand how bodies are represented and deployed in the sporting arena. Thus, Filipina/o American sporting bodies, as Alter (1994) suggests, “may be seen, not simply as a signifier of meaning, but as a subject actor in a larger drama of culture and power” (p. 24). The body is central to understanding relations of power in sport and the processes upon which issues of race, gender, sexuality and class converge upon it. My project is situated within these scholarly concerns with an understanding that the body is historically produced, socially constructed and carries particular meaning across communities, cultures, and societies.

### **Sports as a Racialized and Gendered Social Institution**

With the ubiquitous nature of sports in American society, attending to sporting cultures unpacks how Filipina/o Americans interact with and consume mainstream popular culture. Participating in sports are never an isolated incident but one that involves engagement with aspects of mainstream America (Kirsch, Harris, & Nolte 2000),<sup>5</sup> an understanding of identity formations as well as contours of membership within and outside the category of Filipina/o America. Therefore, sports are also important social arenas to understand how they interpret and experience their worlds beyond the competitive logics of wins and losses. By looking at Filipina/o Americans’ participation in sporting spaces in various temporal moments, this

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<sup>5</sup> Interestingly, this encyclopedia makes no mention of the Filipina/o community’s engagement with sports.

dissertation also illustrates how gender, race, sexuality, and class are further negotiated within this cultural form. As sport has often been uncritically understood as a “masculine preserve” (Theberge, 1987), the presence of Filipina American sporting cultures details important information about how they perform gendered politics to construct particular social arrangements. The flexibility of gender, for example is evoked through the figure of the Filipina American athletic tomboy. In other words, a Filipina/o inflected tomboy discourse is mapped onto Filipina Americans who play sports primarily because sports in the U.S. context are seen to be a masculine activity. Thus, Filipino parents place markers of *tomboyiness* onto their daughters demonstrating how their athletic performance and sporting interests work in relation to ideas of gender, where Filipina Americans “embody transgressive sex/gender and/or identities” (Fajardo, 2011, p. 154). As the experiences of Filipina Americans demonstrate, their participation in sport disrupts conventional notions of Filipina American femininity. Therefore, I demonstrate the social construction of sporting identity and the relation of these identities to power.

Moreover, the pleasures of sporting self are also political constructions of communal boundaries. The chapters attend to how such boundaries are consolidated by excluding various gendered, sexual, and racial others. Therefore, the very categories of *Americanness* and Filipina/o American identity are always in flux and work in relation to other communities. Both the moments of claiming *Americanness* and exclusion of others showcase the complicated patterns of interaction, contradiction, and possibility among my Filipina/o American participants. As España-Maram argues (2006), “popular culture exposes contested meanings and illustrates a multivocal struggle within society” (España-Maram, 2006, p. 9). These contested meanings and struggles are applicable to how sports provide meaning for Filipina/o American sporting bodies as they operate within U.S. racial formations (Omi & Winant, 1994) and the racial schema of

sport (Bloom & Willard, 2002; Carrington, 2010; Hokowhitu, 2003; Sheehan, 2012). In this way, sports provide contradictory processes and outcomes whose meanings generate a complicated racial matrix of contestation, negotiation, and collaboration within the fabric of American society. As Hartmann (2003, p. 265) would have it,

Sport exhibits both progressive and conservative racial forms and forces, that it is best understood as an cultural form [(MacAloon 1995)], a social site where racial images, ideologies, and inequalities are constructed, transformed, and constantly struggled over rather than a place with specific and determined racial politics or ideals.

In this way, I remain convinced that the terrain of culture (sports) can be utilized for a kind of critique of social norms, values and ideologies that can provide grounds for resistance while also acknowledging that such acts of resistance are never guaranteed (Hall, 2006). The Filipina/o Americans in this dissertation do not always subscribe to a kind of overt resistance or challenge to existing stereotypes about them. Many times their experiences and reflections of their sporting selves are ambivalent, and paradoxical while providing alternative understandings of how sports can enable different ways of being in the world.

### **The Body and Embodiment**

Playing, watching, and *feeling* sports are an embodied cultural activity. As a focal point, this dissertation considers how the body is fundamental to understanding social phenomena. The body in sports performs, represents, and is a site of inspection. It is disciplined, evaluated and commodified (Besnier & Brownell, 2012). Anthropological approaches to embodiment have explored the dynamic ways in which meanings and practices of the body are contingent upon a host of social and cultural meanings and values in sporting spectacles and in everyday life (Geertz, 1973; deCerteau, 1984; Lefebvre, 1991). The body is a biological and social entity, intersects with nature and culture and is produced in various historical moments (Scheper-

Hughes & Lock, 1987, p. 7). Other scholars have examined how people embody social, collective and individual identities and produce meanings across societies, cultures and communities (Lock & Farquhar, 2007; Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987; Shilling, 2003). Similarly, in the anthropology of sports, scholars have examined embodied sporting practices to understand how such practices make and remake selves (Alter, 1994; Brownell, 1995; Archetti & Dyck, 2003; Hargreaves & Vertinsky, 2007; Wacquant, 2004; Woodward, 2009). I argue that Filipina/o American sporting bodies, both individual and collective, provide vantage points with which to understand how bodies are represented and deployed in the sporting arena. The body is central to understanding relations of power in sports and the processes upon which issues of race, gender, sexuality and class converge upon it. In this regard, my project contributes to studies of the anthropology of the body that have failed to ethnographically capture embodied sporting practices and its interconnectedness to local, transnational, and global formations. In this dissertation, the Filipina/o and Filipina/o American postcolonial sporting body is represented through sporting spectacles, fandom, everyday sporting practices, and labor and is structured through a variety of transnational movements including mass-mediated images, ideas, bodies, and commodities. In this context, the individual body becomes a receptor of social meaning and a symbol of society (Shilling, 2012 [citing Douglas, 1966]). Beyond the individual body are ways to engage the discursive formations and ideas about *bodies* and *embodiment* that are crucial to this dissertation. In other words, Filipina/o Americans are discursively individual bodies and social bodies that comprise a body politic (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987). Yet a body politic is also about power and control and as I discuss throughout this dissertation, the Filipina/o American body politic regulates athletic behaviors, styles and social deviants who are considered threats to conventional notions of Filipina/o Americanness (Scheper-Hughes & Lock, 1987,

p. 24). If we acknowledge Margaret Lock and Judith Farquhar's contention that bodies are, "contingent formations of space, time, and materiality, [which] have begun to be comprehended as assemblages of practices, discourses, images, institutional arrangements, and specific places and projects" (2007, p. 1), we can very well apply these criteria to sporting cultures and practices that are anchored by and circulated through the nodes of Filipina/o diasporic life.

### **Third World Feminism/Diasporic Queer Theory**

This dissertation is also informed by women of color feminist scholars and a queer diasporic critique to underscore intersectionality—how race, gender, sexuality and class produce heterogeneous identities and experiences in Filipina/o American sporting life. I take gender (like race) as a social construction, and how it intersects with other categories of difference including race and sexuality. Gender, according to Judith Butler is therefore performative, and "an identity constituted through a stylized repetition of acts" (1990, p. 272). But gender is also fluid and does not follow a formulaic notion of maleness to masculinity, or femaleness to femininity, as Judith Halberstam (1998) reminds us and as some of my Filipina American informants experience.

Feminists/lesbians of color in particular have questioned the tendencies and assumptions of a universal feminist project, often ignoring how issues of race, gender, sexuality class, legacies of colonialism and conquest have informed women's experiences. Thus, women of color feminists recognize that power-laden fields always intersect to produce heterogeneous experiences (Moraga & Anzaldúa, 1983; Anzaldúa, 2007; McClurin, 2001; Kondo, 1995). For example, feminist scholarship on sport (Bolin & Granskog, 2003, *Athletic Invaders*) fails to attend to the complexity of race, ethnicity, and histories of colonialism that have structured and represented the Asian and Asian American athletic body, which presumes that the white middle-



class female is the metonymic of all women. My dissertation refuses to perpetuate these racial, gendered, and sexual binaries by teasing out the complicated social experiences of Filipina American athletic bodies. While I am not an ethnic woman, I am in agreement with, and find Yevonne R. Smith's (1992) argument that, "To fully understand and appreciate the experiences of women of color in sport, more scholarship is needed on and from ethnic women with different cultural backgrounds" (p. 246) a useful and timely intervention in scholarship about women of color in sports. As this dissertation will show, while Filipina Americans disrupt dominant gender norms of sporting performance—as athletic female bodies—they continue to be excluded in sporting arenas deemed masculine while at other times, collaborate with dominant practices of gender inequality in sporting activities. At the same time, I take an explicit approach to analyzing gender not solely in terms of women's experiences, but as an encompassing category that takes into account how both "women and men live together in the world" (Lugo, 2003, p. 97). In this way, I point to how Filipino Americans also perform particular scripts of masculinity that depend upon normative gender codes in sporting spaces, and in expressions of fandom particularly in the context of examining how meanings are produced through Manny "Pac-Man" Pacquiao's body. Thus, while challenging a failed Asian American masculinity (as simultaneously an effeminate masculinity, non-athletic, nerdy and/or the model minority (Tiongson et al.) there are also practices and processes of disavowing the queer and the feminine, a strategy that enables Filipino Americans to recuperate and affirm their heterosexual masculinity at the expense of excluding women and queers. In this sense, I utilize a queer of color diasporic critique to complicate how contemporary Filipino American masculinity simultaneously occupies positions of normative *and* subordinate masculinities. Thus, I follow Manalansan's (2012) lead when he puts forth that, "'queer' is both an anti-normative signifier as well as a social category produced through the

‘intersectionality’ of identities, practices, and institutions” (2012, p. 530). In this sense, sports, as a social institution is also an arena where the category “Filipina/o American” is policed by members within the community in the service of normative expectations,<sup>6</sup> or what Gayatri Gopinath (2005) terms, “the ethnic and religious absolutism at the center of nationalist projects” (Gopinath, p. 7). In addition to deploying women of color feminism, this dissertation also draws upon work that examines race relationally. In other words, Filipina/o American sporting cultures take shape in relation to dominant racializations, experiences of U.S. society, particular understandings of “home,” and identity formation through participation in sports. In this dissertation, Filipino Americans fashion specific Filipino American inflected identities that take cues from African-American popular cultural forms. In the same way that España-Maram (2006, borrowing from George Lipsitz’s “cultural indeterminacy”), would argue that these young men are, “picking and choosing from many traditions to fashion performances and narratives suitable for arbitrating an extraordinary complex identity” (2006, p. 3). A comparative racialization framework (Cacho, 2012; Hong & Ferguson, 2011; Rana, 2011) allows us to examine how the formation of Filipino American identities take shape *in relation* to various racial groups, how relational categories are bound up with other categories of difference, and the processes of valuation that are negotiated within structures of power (Cacho, 2012; Jun, 2011). A comparative racial analytic framework looks to how value depends on the devaluation of others, and how “value is made intelligible relationally” (Cacho, 2012). This framework enables us to see how the formation of Filipino American masculinity—in the boxing spectacle in Las Vegas, NV, and in everyday sporting arenas—is recuperated and affirmed in the service of normative logics.

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<sup>6</sup> Manalansan also states, “sexuality is disciplined by social institutions and practices that normalize and naturalize heterosexuality and heterosexual practices including marriage, family, and biological reproduction by marginalizing persons, institutions, or practices that deviate from these norms (2012: 530).

## **Methodology**

This dissertation draws upon qualitative research methods and utilizes a multisited approach (Marcus, 1998) to gather data in a variety of settings. Preliminary, exploratory research led me to researching sport as a viable dissertation project. In Summer 2009, I was awarded a summer stipend from the Department of Anthropology to conduct fieldwork in Southern California at an eskrima studio in Torrance. In addition, I draw upon data from an anthropology methods course in Fall 2009 as part of my preliminary dissertation research. The bulk of my research was based in the Los Angeles and Orange county regions of Southern California. I also conducted research in Las Vegas, Nevada as well as Arlington, Texas. I draw upon ethnographic methods including participant observation and structured and semi-structured interviews and oral histories. In addition to gathering data through ethnography, I also conducted close textual analysis of new media such as Facebook and Twitter posts and YouTube videos. While collecting data started in Summer 2009, the bulk of my fieldwork was from August 2011 to August 2012. I continued to conduct interviews (via phone and Skype) after moving back to Champaign, IL. This dissertation sought to interview and observe both male and female Filipina Americans. Such an intentional approach however, did not always prove equivalent. In some ways, Louise's confession that, "I didn't think I had anything important to tell you about sports," reveals the kinds of assumptions that girls and females have nothing to contribute to sports. Such assumptions are symptomatic of sports being only for, by, and about boys and men.

**Recruitment.** My approach to recruiting participants for my study came in a variety of ways. I asked friends and family to disseminate my information to obtain diverse age groups and life experiences and relied on the snowball technique to build my recruiting base for potential

participants. In addition, I attended Filipina/o sponsored community events<sup>7</sup> and college-aged Filipina/o student organized sports tournaments. I also contacted the sports coordinators and presidents of student organizations in the Los Angeles and Orange county regions and asked permission to speak to their general membership. There were however, limitations to accessing participants from some of these student organizations. Because many of these organizations held their meetings on campus, I was required to seek approval from their Institutional Review Board (IRB). This was a tedious process and at times took weeks to finalize because of the back and forth process of filling out paperwork. Because of distance, time, and limited finances, in some instances I made the decision not to recruit at certain schools. Since I had friends that knew members of some of these organizations, I managed to circumvent the institutional red tape and contact the student leaders directly. Once I received approval from the leaders, I went to their general meetings and spoke to their members about my research. While I was hopeful that at least 20 people would sign up, the number of sign-ups was lower than I expected and the majority of the people who did sign up did not respond to my initial email or phone call asking them about their availability. Still, I was pleased that the interviews I did garner were valuable to this dissertation.

For the first nine months of my fieldwork, I lived in Walnut Grove,<sup>8</sup> a city in Orange County that was situated within a 3-mile radius of a local community college and state college. My neighborhood sat in the heart of the city's busy downtown area, with coffee/teashops, bars, restaurants and clothing stores lining the streets. I did not anticipate recruiting participants for my study in public spaces. However, if the opportunity arose, I would recruit participants. Through naturally occurring conversations, I introduced myself, told them about my research,

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<sup>7</sup> FPAC is in San Pedro.

<sup>8</sup> Walnut Grove is a pseudonym for the city I lived in.

and asked if they would be willing to participate in my study. As result, I managed to obtain three interviews with males. While I did interact with potential female participants, one of them took down my information but never contacted me.

**Participant observation.** To best understand the lived experiences, social interactions and meaning making processes of the Filipina/o American sporting community, I collected some of my data through participant observation, which occurred in different contexts, settings and phases. One such setting involved observing fan cultures by attending Manny “Pacman” Pacquiao’s boxing matches. On March 10, 2010, I attended a boxing match titled, “The Event” between Pacquiao and Ghanian boxer Joshua Clottey in Dallas, TX. During the weekend of November 12, 2011, I traveled to Las Vegas, NV and attended a closed circuit boxing match in the Mandalay Bay Garden Arena hotel between Pacquiao and Mexican fighter, Juan Manuel Marquez. And on June 9, 2012, I watched a Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao vs. Timothy Bradley with one of my female informants and her family. Because Pacquiao split his training time between Los Angeles and the Philippines, I drove to Wild Card gym located in Los Angeles. There, I also met and spoke with Filipina/o and non-Filipina/os. In addition, I spoke to Filipina/o and Filipina/o Americans

In addition to observing boxing fan cultures, I also played recreational basketball five to six times a week at a 24 hour fitness center in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. I also played in a Filipino club sponsored sports tournament, and in a Sunday night, Asian American, male basketball league heavily populated by Filipino Americans. When my team was not playing, I sat in the stands as a spectator and observed interactions between players, friends, family members, and their significant others. I also observed an undergraduate, student sponsored sports

tournament in Northern Los Angeles County and attended an annual Filipino community event in the city of San Pedro.

**Interviews.** To complement my participant observations, I also conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews with first, 1.5, second and third-generation<sup>9</sup> Filipina/o American activists, students, parents, and professionals who hail from various cities and regions of Southern California. Interviews took place in interviewees' homes, coffee and teashops, athletic clubs and in one instance, a store. In addition, if participants could not meet with me in person (because of time or distance), I conducted phone interviews. I also conducted a Skype conversation with one, second-generation Filipina American. During the weeks leading up to Manny Pacquiao's fights, I would drive to work in Los Angeles county and listened to sports talk radio. Because I was commuting to and from Orange and LA counties (roughly 25 miles) in my car, I scheduled interviews with participants to maximize my time. After interviewing my participants about Pacquiao, I kept in touch with some of them via texts messages and emails. For example, on the day of Pacquiao's fight (June 9, 2012), against Timothy Bradley I asked some of my informants—who I interviewed about Pacquiao—if and where they were watching his fight. Without fail, all of them stated that they were either watching with their families in their, or their family's home, or with friends.

**New and traditional media consultation.** Revolutions in mass technology have transformed communication spaces across the globe (Appadurai, 1996). Since, 2004, I have followed Pacquiao's boxing career by watching his fights in boxing arenas and homes with family and friends. I have read boxing magazines, newspapers, blogs, websites and had formal and informal conversations about him with strangers, friends, family and colleagues. I conducted

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<sup>9</sup> By first-generation, I mean Filipinas/os born in the Philippines. By 1.5 generation I mean Filipinas/os born in the Philippines but came to the US as children. And by second- generation I mean US born Filipinas/os.

close textual analysis of secondary sources such as videos, newspapers, magazine articles, and utilized primary sources through social media websites such as Twitter and Facebook to gauge how participants respond to Pacquiao and the discourses surrounding his boxing, political and personal exploit. To get a sense of the trends and storylines surrounding Pacquiao, I signed up for Google alerts,<sup>10</sup> a service that offers its users news and notifications about the Filipino pugilist from blogs, news to videos.

**A note on the insider/outsider researcher.** Although I identify as a second-generation Filipino American, my access to the Filipino American community was in some ways limiting. For example, I was met with suspicion by some members of the community, which I elaborate on in chapter 3. Women for example, were reluctant to speak to me about sports. On a number of occasions, I walked into Filipino owned establishments like restaurants and stores to ask if the employees or owners would be willing to talk to me about their sporting experiences. One afternoon, I walked into a Filipino store/restaurant in Anaheim and I introduced myself to a middle-aged Filipina and her daughter. I introduced myself to her and asked if she would be willing to talk to me about sports. She did not seem all that interested and admitted that she was not really into sports. She then replied, “You can talk to my husband.” She proceeded to write down the store’s phone number and handed it to me. I thanked her for her time and walked away disappointed. On another occasion, I sought to talk to Filipinas about Manny “Pac-Man,” Pacquiao. One May evening, around 8:00 p.m., I walked into another Filipino restaurant hoping to recruit more women to interview. Another middle-aged Filipina was standing behind the counter, and I introduced myself to her. I told her about my research and asked if she was interested in talking about Manny “Pac-man” Pacquiao. She told me that she was not interested,

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<sup>10</sup> <https://support.google.com/alerts/answer/175925?hl=en>

that she'd rather play bingo and watch NBA basketball games than boxing matches. I purchased a beverage and went on my way.

My interactions with these Filipinas reflect the kind of limitations I encountered when situating it within a gendered and generational context (Võ, 2000). This ultimately shaped the kind of data I was able to gather. At the same time, as a male, I have had the privilege of playing and watching sports and had relatively easy access to the sporting spaces I traversed. For example, I was granted permission to play in an all male Asian American basketball league. My 5-6 times a week playing recreationally at a 24 Hour Fitness gym was overwhelmingly a male dominated space. While I do have a reasonable number of female interviews, I did not directly observe Americans playing sports, other than a boxing session with a first-generation, middle-aged, Filipina American in her home. Filipino American bodies were therefore disproportionately represented in the spaces of actual play. Despite these limitations, the narratives in the interviews I conducted with Filipina Americans provide meaningful ways of understanding their complex sporting experiences.

**Situating myself in this dissertation.** Sports have been a part of my life since I was 5 years old. I continue to stay involved in them to this day; as a fan, athlete and casual spectator. Growing up in the bay area of California, I was a fan of the local baseball, football, and basketball professional teams. As a child I attended the San Francisco Giants and Oakland A's baseball games with my family while also cheering on the San Francisco 49ers and the Golden State Warriors.<sup>11</sup> My parents enrolled my brothers and I in sports like baseball and soccer—and later on in our childhood and young adulthood we played football, basketball and volleyball. I continue to play sports, albeit recreationally and still cheer for bay area professional teams.

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<sup>11</sup> The San Francisco Giants and the Oakland A's are Major League Baseball (MLB) teams. The San Francisco 49ers are an National Football League (NFL) team and the Golden State Warriors are a National Basketball Association (NBA) team.



My knowledge and past sporting experiences in the Southern Californian Filipina/o American community allowed me to tap into networks that I was familiar with. As an undergraduate student, I was active in the Filipina/o American student community and maintained friendships and relationships with a vast network of people along the way. I was a member of a large Filipina/o American student organization and I voluntarily played in annual Filipina/o undergraduate student organized sports tournaments. I also played in these tournaments as an alumnus. These childhood and adulthood sporting experiences in Northern and Southern California are used as a fluid template to frame this dissertation in ways that are not explicitly stated but were/are nonetheless fundamental to shaping the kinds of questions I asked, the sporting spaces I examined, and the people who I sought to participate in my study.

**Itinerary of dissertation.** As mentioned above, Filipina/o Americans have long been involved in sports since the onset of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines and throughout their migration to, and settlement in the United States. This chapter sets the historical context for the rest of the dissertation. It highlights how U.S. colonialism was fundamentally tied to Filipina/o immigration. This chapter is also a spatial and temporal jumping off point of Filipina/o American sporting cultures and practices. It situates their experiences within important historical transformations occurring in the U.S. which had to do with the changing ideas of masculinity in relation to U.S. nationhood (Bederman, 1995) and how they were linked to leisure formations and the subsequent institutionalizing of sports. The chapter then moves from a macro, to a micro level perspective of Filipina/o American sporting life and argues that Southern California is a particularly interesting site because of how the body is framed in the popular American imagination. Filipina/o Americans have long been associated with sporting cultures and practices in the U.S. From the pedestrian to the spectacular, such practices have contributed to the

formation and sustaining of their communities. Therefore, this chapter sets the historical foundations for the rest of the dissertation. In chapter two I emphasize the concrete, everydayness of Filipina/o American sporting cultures and practices and how sports figure prominently in their everyday lives; it demonstrates the diversity of their sporting involvement in temporal moments—from recreational play, fandom, mundane conversations, and the family narratives that emerge in recollecting their sports experiences. This chapter argues that sports cannot be divorced from, but is rather enmeshed in their everyday lives. At the same time, everyday life is also fraught with contradiction, nuance and tension that make visible how sports, as a social institution reproduces social hierarchies. Thus, this chapter provides a segue way to chapter three. In chapter three, I provide ethnographic accounts of Filipina/o Americans' participation in sports to reveal the process by which gender and race converge to produce contradictory and paradoxical outcomes of Filipina/o American sporting life. In this chapter, I argue that involvement in sports is a “contested terrain” (Hartmann, 2003) and power relations are implicated in and through Filipina/o American sporting bodies and the sporting institutions they navigate. Gender, particularly masculinity is also where we see how it is imposed upon, and articulated by Filipina/o Americans.

Juxtaposing the everyday sporting spaces, I move from the quotidian, to the spectacular sporting spectacle of Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao. Drawing from fieldwork conducted in Las Vegas, NV, Arlington, TX, and interviews conducted in Southern California, I examine how Pacquiao's boxing matches are not only about scripts of masculinity inside the ring, but also among a multi-racial cast of spectators attending his fight via closed-circuit television. In addition, I point to how the formations of a Filipino American masculinity depend upon normative codes of masculinity that simultaneously distances itself from women and queers.

In the conclusion I reflect on the future directions of this dissertation and acknowledge and take stock of the limitations of this study.

Throughout the dissertation, you will find the centrality that sporting cultures and practices play in the lives of Filipina/o Americans. It has enabled them to craft memories about their lives, connect and sustain familial relations and experience pleasure and express desire through play and fandom. In the pages that follow, one finds a community that is not always in agreement about sports as a system of meritocracy and the virtues that it uncritically possesses. Some of these narratives are political critiques about the ways in which sports structure their experiences along the axis of race, gender, sexuality and class. They also have different emotional, physical and leisurely investments that do not always form a consensus about what sports mean to them. They claim different ways of belonging and have a varied set of responses to sports and sporting icons.

This dissertation does not intend to create an “either/or” grand narrative that reinforces binaries of sporting participation. Rather, it examines the tensions, complexities, contradictions and promises that sport affords a marginalized population in the U.S. national fabric. It argues that sports matter to Filipina/o Americans who participate in it for a variety of reasons. They are simultaneously empowered and disempowered, critical and complicit and provide a compelling ethnography in the anthropology of sport that has so far, been unexamined. In this sense, the sporting industry is a social and cultural institution that is inherently contradictory; it simultaneously creates peril and possibility while reinforcing and challenging social norms.

For Filipina/o Americans, sports matter because it allows them to speak to and against dominant narratives that have historically and contemporaneously framed them and their bodies in ways that have racialized, gendered and sexualized them. In other words, sport allows them to

literally embody something more than just what the historical and contemporary record tells us. Sports, therefore, are used as a vehicle to create and imagine alternative pathways of cultural citizenship, ethnic and national identity and belonging to the American national fabric while also reinforcing power hierarchies. At the heart of this dissertation is a complicated story intricately bound up with power, ideology, discourse and practice. It is a story of how and why Filipina/o Americans take up sporting cultural practices that traverse time, space and memory. Despite this, “sports have indeed become a critically important cultural terrain on which most racialized groups have contested, defined, and represented their racial, national, and ethnic identities” (Bloom & Willard, 2002, p. 1).

## Chapter 1

### **Brown Bodies at Play in Southern California: Filipina/o American Sporting Cultural Practices**

This chapter's title, "Brown Bodies at Play in Southern California Filipina/o American Sporting Cultural Practices" is an attempt at making sense of the seriousness and "playful" nature of Filipina/o Americans' involvement in sports. I use "play" not only to emphasize how one enjoys participating in sports casually and/or recreationally, but to also deploy it to signify sports as performances, as in the unfolding of a dramatic narrative (MacAloon, 1984) and the interactions between differently situated social bodies. Thus, bodies at play are on the receiving end of racialization and sexualization. In other words, play erupts as serious business. With this seriousness come implications that transcend notions of play and at times a sense of "deep play" (Geertz, 1973). "Deep play" is about unpacking meaning and practice in a cultural event or performance such as sports. As such, this chapter exfoliates the layers of history and culture in the establishment of Filipina/o American communities in general and Filipina/o American sports in particular, within the contexts of empire and migration.

This chapter lays out the historical and cultural themes and foundational processes that constitute the Filipina/o American presence in America in general, and in Southern California in particular. I first discuss how Filipino immigration routes to the United States were tied to the processes of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines, primarily through education, labor, the military, and to a lesser degree, sports. I discuss how Southern California operates in the American imaginary, as a region that celebrates multiculturalism and diversity while also detailing its own histories of racial hierarchies and racial differentiation.

In the second part of the chapter, I discuss how in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the U.S. was confronting its own anxieties about American culture, particularly in

terms of nationhood. These anxieties were manifested in questions over what to do with its elite, white, male citizens as the Civil War ended and the “western frontier” closed. Concerns over nationalism and manhood remained at the heart of U.S. political discourse. I argue that it is precisely this moment—in the processes of industrialization that debates over U.S. national identity and the emergence of leisure—that the U.S. sought to extend its power and reach as an imperial power. To resolve these issues over its loss of masculine nationhood, the U.S. looked overseas to places like Guam, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Samoa. It also used sports to revitalize its “manhood.” Thus, the resuscitation of manhood and nationhood converged and sports in the U.S. and the Philippines became one of the arenas to work out these anxieties.

Filipina/o American experiences are situated within these historical moments and the sentiments that shaped their engagement with sport historically and in the contemporary period. In the last part of the chapter, I discuss how sports enabled expressions of Philippine masculine nationalism through Filipina/o American sporting icons prior to 1965, which sets the context for the emergence of the twenty-first century Philippine national icon, Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao and the everyday sporting practices that inform Filipina/o American lives which I discuss in the next chapters.

### **Filipina/o American Immigration**

Filipina/o migration to the U.S. mainland occurred as early as the sixteenth century. In 1521, Filipinas/os serving as laborers came to the U.S. territory as a result of the Spanish crown’s imperial enterprise. Wanting to extend its powerful reach through the accumulation of gold, religion and political power, Spain sought to accomplish this through the Manila Galleon trade, a yearly excursion that sent sailors and Filipino laborers on a ship that traveled from

Acapulco, Mexico to Manila, Philippines (Fajardo, 2011; Fajardo forthcoming; Fujita-Rony, 2003). To escape bondage and the harsh treatment by their captors, some of these laborers jumped ship and settled in Louisiana and Mexico. While the numbers of Filipino galleon trade laborers in the U.S. were small, the more significant migratory streams occurred once the U.S. colonized the Philippines in 1898.

Filipino migration to and settlement in the United States prior to World War II is inextricably tied to the consequences of U.S. colonialism. One of these processes included the institutionalization of compulsory public education on the islands. To ensure that its imperial interests were carried out, the U.S. sent Filipinos to the United States to train their wards in American education. For example, under the U.S. Pensionado Act of 1903, one of the earliest groups of Filipinos to migrate to the United States involved *pensionados*, a group of mostly male students who hailed from wealthy and prominent Filipina/o families. Funded by the U.S. colonial administration, these students studied at various American universities, were expected to learn U.S. bureaucratic style political procedures and represented the future of Philippine governance. Once their American educational training was complete, they traveled back to the Philippines and were selectively placed in influential positions with the expectations of fulfilling their duty and obligation to the U.S. by supporting its colonial policies. (Bonus, 2000; España-Maram, 2006). Approximately two thousand of these *pensionados* studied in various cities throughout the U.S. including Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle and Washington DC. The majority of these students eventually made their way back to the Philippines where they fulfilled their obligations by working in private businesses, holding governments positions, or taking posts in educational fields (Bonus 2000). While *pensionados* were government sponsored, an additional group of self-supporting students also made their way to the U.S. Numbering approximately

fourteen thousand, these students worked as domestics and in restaurants to support their education (Bonus, 2000; España-Maram, 2006).<sup>12</sup>

In 1906, the more significant wave of Filipino migration to the U.S. stemmed from the needs of large-scale agribusiness. This, coupled with the failing economy from the ravages of wars and the U.S.'s colonial influence on the islands (politically and economically) all contributed to Filipinos looking to the United States as the "land of opportunity." The large agricultural businesses enticed and recruited mainly young, single Filipino laborers to work as unskilled laborers on sugar and pineapple plantations in Hawai'i.<sup>13</sup> The passage of anti-Asian exclusion laws prompted Hawai'ian and West Coast labor recruiters to target the Philippines as the only viable option to replenish its labor pool. As U.S. nationals, Filipinos were exempt from the anti-Asian exclusion laws that targeted their Chinese and Japanese counterparts. Once their work was completed in Hawai'i, some of these laborers re-emigrated to the U.S. mainland and worked in the agricultural fields of the west coast and Pacific Northwest (California, Oregon and Washington) and in Alaskan canneries. Considered "cheap" and "docile" laborers, Filipinos constituted a racially stratified labor force, were often paid extremely low wages, lived in deplorable housing conditions and combatted the divide and conquer tactics (through differential pay to various ethnic and national groups) of the plantation lunas in Hawai'i and the west coast's farm owners.

In addition to the U.S. institutionalizing American style education and its large-scale agribusiness that facilitated emigration, the U.S. military presence in the Philippines also contributed to Filipino migration to the U.S. Once anti-imperialist Filipino resistance fighting

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<sup>12</sup> See also Baldoz, (2011), Choy (2003), Espiritu (2005), Espiritu (1995), Okamura (1998), Fujita-Rony (2003), Guevarra (2012), Lau (2006).

<sup>13</sup> The Hawaiian Sugar Plantation for example, actively sought out Filipinos to replace the Chinese and Japanese laborers who went on strike.



was for the most part, quelled, the U.S. military installed its first military bases in the Philippines and used these bases as recruiting stations for potential Filipino naval stewards. The Military Bases Agreement, signed in 1947, allowed the U.S. to install 23 military bases throughout the archipelago, rent free for 99 years (Espiritu, 2003). As early as 1901, as a result of President William McKinley signing General Order Number 40, the U.S. enlisted approximately five hundred Filipinos to the U.S. Navy. Serving as stewards to white naval officers, or mess boys, these men eventually migrated to the U.S., and settled in naval towns such as San Diego, Long Beach, Seattle and Philadelphia (Fujita-Rony, 2003; Guevarra, 2012).

The dictates of U.S. colonialism—educationally, militarily and through labor recruitment—and the ways in which it shaped Filipino immigration is reflected in the settlement patterns in various parts of the U.S. As mentioned above, because the majority of Filipinos came to the U.S. in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century as laborers, many of them settled in Hawai'i, Seattle, and in the Northern and Southern California regions. With a large presence of Filipinos in California, Filipinos formed ethnic enclaves called “Little Manilas” which enabled them to sustain community, as well as protect themselves from a racist host society. The more prominent Little Manilas were located in Seattle, Washington, Stockton, California, and Los Angeles, California (España-Maram, 2006; Mabalon, 2012).

**Immigration Act of 1965.** The Immigration Act of 1965 signaled a watershed moment in U.S. immigration legislation. Abolishing the National Origins Act of 1924, which previously restricted European and Asian immigration to the United States, the 1965 Act eased these racially charged barriers. In particular, the Act removed the provisions that privileged immigration from northern and Western Europe, established a quota of 20,000 immigrants per country, and created a preference for people who fell under the categories of professionals,

skilled workers and family members.<sup>14</sup> The upsurge in Filipina/o migration to the U.S. came as a result of these three categories. They came as skilled workers and/or professionals or were petitioned by family members already living in the U.S.

Further, U.S. medicalization practices in the Philippines have contributed to the residual legacies of U.S. colonialism—educationally, economically, and culturally—as well as the Philippines’ global status as a “labor brokerage state” (Rodriguez, 2010), have all contributed to Filipina/o migration throughout the globe. Catherine Ceniza Choy’s *Empire of Care* (2003) discusses how the nursing profession was created in the Philippines under the guidance of colonial administrators. Citing American colonial discourse of Filipinos being “weak,” and “unfit” for self-rule, Choy posits, “health care personnel contributed to the overall U.S. colonial project of preparing Filipinos for self-rule through the introduction of American medical practices. American medicine, they believed, would transform Filipino bodies into a people capable of self government” (2003, p. 20). Since the U.S. needed highly trained professionals to fill the labor pool vacuum, Filipina nurses migrated to the U.S. by the thousands.

As a result, the changes in U.S. immigration policy facilitated a rise in the overall Filipina/o American population. Currently, Filipinas/os constitute the second largest Asian group in the U.S.—second to Chinese—comprising close to 3.5 million (Census, 2010). Significant Filipina/o American populations reside in states such as Arizona, California, Hawai’i, Illinois, Nevada, New York, and Washington (Census, 2010). California constitutes the largest population of Filipinas/os, approximately 43 percent.<sup>15</sup> In Northern California, Filipinas/os are highly concentrated in the bay area, constitute a smaller population in central California and are

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<sup>14</sup> Of course, as Mary Dudziak (2002) argues, changes in U.S. immigration policy were also made possible by its connection to the civil rights era and the larger international concerns in the context of the Cold War.

<sup>15</sup> Hawai’i being the second at 10 percent. See Census, 2010, *State Distribution of Largest Detailed Asian Groups: 2010*.

heavily populated in Southern California. Prior to the 1965 Immigration Act, in 1960, Filipinas/os in Los Angeles numbered approximately 12,000. Five years later, the population had grown to approximately 33,400 (Alsaybar, 1999). Since then, the population has steadily trended upward and now number in the millions. For example, “By 1990, 1.4 million Filipinos were in the United States (in 2000, 1.9 million), of whom 64 percent were born overseas” (cited in Vergara, 2009, p. 3). Since then, the Filipina/o Los Angeles county population has grown to approximately 366,000. Pockets of Filipina/o communities are spread throughout LA County in suburbs such as Carson, Cerritos, Eagle Rock, Long Beach and West Covina. In neighboring Orange County, Filipinas/os constitute approximately 83,048 of the population with the majority of them living in Anaheim, Buena Park, Fullerton, Garden Grove and Irvine (Census, 2010).

### **California: Uneven Racial Landscapes**

Southern California, or colloquially “SoCal” is a stretch of land that extends over 40,000 square miles with crisscrossing freeways sprawling across mountainous, desert, coastal and valley terrains. With San Diego and Los Angeles comprising its metropolitan areas, SoCal is bordered by Mexico to the south and the state of Arizona to its east. While SoCal has a total of 10 different counties,<sup>16</sup> this dissertation is mostly concerned with Los Angeles and Orange counties, where the majority of my fieldwork took place. In Los Angeles County, its population comprises close to 10 million people, and Orange County has a population of about three million. This vast stretch of land limits the kind of transportation a tourist or resident of SoCal wishes to navigate. An automobile is essential to traversing its various cities and locales. It is also part of a culture of consumerism that, “charges objects with meanings and identities beyond

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<sup>16</sup> These counties include: Imperial county, Kern County, Los Angeles County, Orange County, Riverside County, San Bernardino County, San Diego County, San Luis Obispo County, Santa Barbara County, and Ventura County.

their immediate utility” (Gartman, 2004, p. 1; see also Best, 2006; Bright, 1991; Kwon, 2004; Tatum, 2011).

SoCal is distinctly imagined in contrast to the rest of the continental United States. Most people for example, conjure SoCal through the picturesque images of beaches, ocean front properties, palm trees lining the streets, and the many theme parks that attract millions of people every year. In this sense, California is imagined as a space of leisure and comfort, or as a place where labor is secondary to recreational activities and pursuits. Indeed, when one thinks of Southern California, one might imagine a particular geographical place in which people can relax, enjoy the year round beautiful weather and partake in the many activities that the region has to offer. “Why would you move back to the Midwest when you can stay in SoCal?” I was often asked after telling my informants I planned on moving back to the Midwest after my fieldwork was completed. In contrast, some of my students would ask, “Why on earth would you want to come out *this way* after living in Southern Cali?”

These dominant images and representations are taken up by the media as SoCal is propagated as an ideal region for tourism, offering an idealized portrait of SoCal life. For example, a YouTube video uploaded by user, MonoerosPowerup titled, “Misconceptions-Visit California Commercial,”<sup>17</sup> touts California as an ideal place for tourism. In the commercial, celebrities and lay people are prominently featured making quick blurbs about California. Southern California resident and reality television star Kim Kardashian initiates the commercial. She is wearing a pink bikini sitting poolside with a martini resting on a side table to her right. With an open book in hand titled, “Quantum Physics,” she states, “People have a lot of misconceptions about California. None of them are really true.” Then the clip quickly moves to what appears to be a father and son in a kayak paddling near a shore with a backdrop of the pier.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZAwqumoO0Ds>

The father completes Kardashian's sentence. "None of them." Throughout the thirty-second clip, other celebrities (musicians like The Jonas Brothers, actress Betty White and celebrity Chef Michael Chiarello) and lay people intervene and make references to the perceptions of California's population:

They think we're all surfers, or celebrities, that we're all into yoga, or that everyone owns a winery. Or skateboard. And that we all drive convertibles. Where do they get these ideas? Like how we all live in bikini's. And act like rock stars. If you wanna know the truth about California, get out here, we'll show you how we roll. Start your trip at [visit.California.com](http://visit.California.com).

These quick statements are made against visual backdrops featuring California's landscapes: Palm trees, beaches, snow capped mountains, and the Golden Gate Bridge. While the backdrops feature some of Northern California's picturesque scenery (including the Napa Valley the Redwoods and the aforementioned Golden Gate Bridge), it also features Southern California's cultural landmarks including the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, Disneyland in Anaheim and the Warner Brothers studios in Burbank. The commercial presents a particular version of California, one that obviously caters to folks looking to visit and consume the best of what it has to offer. Yet, not everyone agrees with this commercial's rendition. For example, in the comments section, YouTube-user "Ruben G" states that, "Not many Latinos/Hispanics or African Americans in this ad? Yes there is a misconception about this ad and the truth of the people there." Another user, Stincil chimed in stating, "Where are the browned skin people? This ad is nonsense." Ruben G and Stincil's comments force its viewers to confront the commercial's absence of California's racial/ethnic populations; namely its Latina/o and African American communities and the various spaces they inhabit. For Ruben G, his comments in particular provide an ironic twist to the invisibility of California's marginalized populations. While there are indeed people of color appearing in the commercial, it is important

to underscore how it targets a particular group of classed consumers who can afford to “visit” California for recreational and leisure pursuits. In addition, the comments above force us to reckon with the racialized and classed disparities of Southern California, particularly in how its geographic landscape belies the spatial discipline that demarcates the region.

**Uneven historical and contemporary racial geographies.** To understand just how Southern California figures in the popular imagination, one must look to the ways in which historical formations of race and conquest were part of the region’s development as a leisurely space and a fixture of social life (Culver, 20010; Almaguer, 2009). In the American popular imagination, Hollywood, California is synonymous with extravagance, fantasy, and celebrity culture. Established in the 1920s, the birth and proliferation of the Hollywood dream also coincided with the first significant wave of Filipino immigration to Los Angeles (Montoya, 2008). Away from the glitz and glamour, and largely obscured from dominant representations of Hollywood figures are predominantly young, Filipino men who constituted the labor force. As Hollywood surged, developments in housing, bars, clubs and restaurants paralleled its growth. According to Montoya (2008), “As the film industry blossomed over the next decade so did the [Filipino] community” (Montoya, p. 7). Culver (2010) posits that, “By the 1920s, 100 million Americans attended films at least once a week, and the films and newsreels they watched showcased the bungalow neighborhoods, the beaches and mountains, and the seemingly carefree resorts of Southern California” (2010, p. 6). The growth of Hollywood spurred this popular imagery while also producing service oriented jobs in need of workers to fill its labor demands. Because of this, Filipinos worked in studios as movie extras to fill roles as a “short ‘native’ type[s]” (Montoya, 2008, p. 12) assistants, and chauffeurs. Given the socio-economic factors occurring in the 1920s (particularly racism and the Great Depression), Filipinos taking on these

roles were one of the few avenues to earn more than the \$1 daily wage (España-Maram, 2006). They also worked as bartenders, busboys, cooks, and waiters (España-Maram, 2006) in the surrounding area. Thus, while their laboring presence was ubiquitous throughout Los Angeles, they were marginalized in relation to the mass mediated representations shown in Hollywood among the white population. Nowhere is this evident than in a picture taken of Dorothy Lamour, a white-American actress with a group of friends at an outdoor luncheon. Standing among a group of five white people sitting at a table is Genaro Manantan, a Filipino American who worked for Lamour as a houseboy and chauffeur in the early 1940s (Montoya, 2008). Out of the six people in the photo, Manantan's brown face is the only one that is literally scratched. This is a telling snapshot because it symbolizes the racist sentiments toward Filipinos and their low status in American society (Montoya, 2008; España-Maram, 2006). While they were invisible to dominant representations of Hollywood, their labor was ubiquitous and only when their brown bodies became objects of hate and racism where they became visible. The persistence of Filipina/o Americans' invisibility in Hollywood is captured in Lou Diamond Phillips' sentiments about being classified as unambiguously non-white. In the celebrity chef competition, "Rachael vs. Guy: Celebrity Cook-Off," Phillips introduced his "off-white" salad to the diners stating that, "This, I'm calling an off-white salad. Throughout my career, 'Oh ok, if we're not gonna go too ethnic, we'll go with Lou Diamond cause he's off-white.'"<sup>18</sup>

The City of Los Angeles is currently home to approximately four million people and constitutes a heterogeneous population of racial, ethnic, and immigrant communities. In a much broader sense, it is important to think of Los Angeles as a major player in the global economy; while the city itself is localized in SoCal, it is also structured by the very movements of labor and capital in the global exchange processes (Sassen, 2005). The city itself is promoted under the

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<sup>18</sup> Rachael vs. Guy Celebrity Cook-Off 2013, episode 6.

guise of multiculturalism, which claims a celebratory narrative of “difference.” This narrative however, obscures the racialized, material realities of the poor, working class people of color.

Lisa Lowe (1996), for example, critiques the annual Los Angeles festival as a mode of multicultural containment. She argues,

None of the productions of multiculturalism reckons with the practical relationships between heterogeneous and economically unequal racial, ethnic, and immigrant communities in Los Angeles, a city that is already home to more people of Mexican descent than any other city outside Mexico, more Koreans than any other city outside Asia, and more Filipinos than any city outside the Philippines. (1996, p. 89)

But beyond the year-round warm-weather climate, and the narratives of multiculturalism that extend its logic, SoCal is also fraught with geographic and material contradictions— informed by the racial and classed realities of the more than 13 million people that comprise Los Angeles and Orange Counties alone. Dating back to World War II, dramatic changes took place in Southern California that influenced the transformation of race relations in the region. During this period, interrelated factors including increased population growth, economic development (particularly in the military and in the aerospace industries), Japanese American internment, urban sprawl, and returning World War II veterans all led to shaping Southern California’s racial hierarchy (Pulido, 2006). Thus, Los Angeles’ sordid past is marked by its racial conflicts. During World War II, for example, young men of color (African American, Filipino American, and Mexican American) were often violently targeted by white sailors and the police (España-Maram, 2006; Alvarez, 2008), culminating in what is commonly known as the zoot riots. In the 1950s, Chavez Ravine, located in Northern Los Angeles is a site where a predominately working-class Mexican American community was expelled to make room for freeway construction and the professional baseball team, Los Angeles Dodgers. And in 1965, an African American man was the target of police brutality in South Central Los Angeles. This triggered an



angry response to the LAPD's repression and led to what is commonly framed as The Watts Riots of 1965.

As a result of the increased population growth starting in World War II, by the 1970s, Los Angeles became one of the largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. While the region primarily constituted a white population, the Latina/o and African American populations were among the largest groups of color (Pulido, 2006). And while people of color enjoyed social and economic advancement as a result of the changes during World War II and the Civil Rights movement, racially differentiated experiences and its hierarchies continued to place poor African Americans in the bottom rungs of society. The internal migration of poor, rural African American Southerners and White American Southerners during the war years redrew Los Angeles' racial lines along a black/white racial paradigm. Mexican Americans and Asian Americans, outside of the racial paradigm, were virtually left alone and were granted some degree of advancing toward "whiteness." Because white Southerners brought their black/white racial ideologies from the South, they clearly targeted their African American contemporaries. As Pulido states,

In addition, the war drew many southern whites to the region in what Leonard calls "the southernizing" of Los Angeles. White southerners brought with them the foundations of the southern racial order. Asians and Mexicans did not readily fit in that order, so southern whites were more willing to tolerate them and instead directed their racial animosity to the "other" they were most familiar with, Blacks. (p. 43)

The shifting nature of race was particularly evident in the Mexican American and Japanese American communities. For Japanese Americans who were once thought of as "treacherous" and "spies" for the Japanese empire during World War II, now became the "model minority," a moniker used to celebrate their success while demeaning Latinas/os and African Americans.

While Los Angeles was once a hotbed of manufacturing and a thriving economy in the immediate post war era, in the 1950s, it started to witness severe economic displacement as factories closed and poverty worsened. Los Angeles' spatial structure dramatically changed as a result of the "outmigration of industry" (Pulido, p. 52). As firms such as Hughes, Northrop and Lockheed moved their industries outward, their white employees went with them, simultaneously creating white suburbs in places like Irvine. As Robin DG Kelley (1994) notes, "Deindustrialization, in other words, led to the establishment of high-tech firms in less populated regions like Silicon Valley and Orange County" (Kelley, 1992; see also Kling, Olin, & Poster, 1991).

Thus, as Los Angeles experienced intense economic decline brought on by deindustrialization and white flight, Orange County transformed into a highly developed region and witnessed the expansion of digital technology as well as an increase in population growth, transforming itself from an agricultural region to a postindustrial society (Kling, Olin, & Poster, 1991). Since its transformation, Orange County's space has become highly racialized, with more upper-middle class whites living in South Orange County (Dana Point, Laguna Beach, and San Clemente), Asian Americans, primarily Vietnamese, living in Garden Grove and Westminster, and a predominantly Latino population in Santa Ana.

Orange County can be described as a "postsuburban" area (Kling, Olin, & Poster, 1991). Characteristics of this term stem from Orange county's low-density suburban population and its multi-centered specialized clusters comprised of vast residential tracts, industrial centers, shopping malls, and campus-like offices that more often than not, require the use of automobiles. Driving along the 5, 405, 22, or 91 freeways, one can find various ethnic, working class enclaves, commercialized malls, strip malls, beaches, beach towns as well as civic, and cultural

centers. But, as mentioned above, it is a region that encompasses tracts of land that is spatially segregated along racial and class lines. Within North and Central Orange County for example, are several communities of color that constitute the region's labor market. Working in these industries are African American, Latina/o, and Asian ethnic groups who perform the manual labor for a region that is one of the nation's leaders in service sector, electronic, high-tech manufacturing and medical technologies (Kling, Olin, & Poster, 1991). As Kling, Olin and Poster contend,

Although they have customarily been perceived primarily as agricultural labor, a significant number of Latinos and especially Asians are in fact employed in the industrial and high-tech sectors, where they often form the core of an army of assembly-line workers who construct computer and biomedical equipment and other products in the electronics and instruments industries. (p. 15)

**Southern California and the “cult of the body.”** Cultural productions like the YouTube commercial featured above also represent the “cult of the body” in SoCal. In this way, the body is seen as a meaning-making symbol that links a particular kind of body aesthetic to the SoCal space. Here, space and embodiment are linked to produce idealized bodies. In an article published in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1988, titled, “The Cult of the L.A. Body: In the Land of the Obsessed: Los Angeles Is the Mecca for the Cult of the Body. How Far Can the Fanaticism Go?” the author discussed how Southern California is often imagined as the “mecca” of an idealized body culture, and a population that “obsesses” over the body, as, “lithe, athletic and innocently voluptuous” (Calistro, p. 1). From cosmetic surgeries, diet crazes, muscle bound bodies on beaches, to the proliferation of fitness trainers, SoCal is the body culture trendsetter for the rest of the nation to follow (Calistro, 1988).

Apart from the rest of the mainland U.S., the commercial purports SoCal to be a distinct region in and of itself—it holds a unique set of lifestyles, ideas and mindsets privileging leisure

over work. Lawrence Culver (2010), in his work on the history of leisure in Southern California argues that changes in leisure patterns in the region served as a template for the rest of the nation that would eventually, “remake attitudes toward leisure and nature, and alter the course of urban growth and architecture across the United States” (p. 2). While other regions of the United States offered similar leisure pursuits, they were temporary and fleeting. In contrast, Southern Californian leisure was considered a “permanent way of life” (Culver, 2010, p. 3). These sets of practices and ideas work in relation to SoCal’s habits, customs, and the everyday practices of leisure that are inscribed onto the body. Therefore, the body is central to the leisure pursuits of SoCal’s imagined community and it hallmarks how SoCal’s social body is imagined and reinforced in these cultural artifacts. Bodybuilding gyms in particular showcase the physical appearances of tanned and physically fit, healthy bodies. Alan Klein (1993) notes how Southern California is the mecca of bodybuilding subculture for the European and North American elite bodybuilding circuit. One can find heavily muscled men and women pressing and squatting hundreds of pounds of weight and honing their physiques on Venice Beach’s Gold’s Gym, one the most renowned gyms in the world.

Idealized images of “Hollywood” literally and figuratively also contribute to how cult of the body is constructed. Hollywood is the hub of the movie industry and is geographically located as a district in Los Angeles. Further, renditions of the “Hollywood” type also abound and are imagined as a set of lifestyles, behaviors and the glitz and glamour associated with it. Red carpet events for movie premiers or award shows highlight how bodies become the focus for consumers, and the paparazzi are the all too willing participants who act as local surveillance of these celebrities’ bodies (Redmond & Holmes, 2007; Turner, 2004).

The cult of the body is also tied to the spectacle of the body for mass consumption (Silk, 2012; Mazer, 1998; King & Springwood, 2001; Andrews & Jackson, 2001). Sporting bodies—including athletes, trainers, coaches, fans and owners—interact to produce this spectacle. SoCal in particular has a long, enduring legacy of producing sporting spectacles.<sup>19</sup> Stadiums like the Staples Center, the Rose Bowl,<sup>20</sup> LA Coliseum, Dodger Stadium, Angel Stadium and the Home Depot Center house thousands of fans for college and professional sports games including baseball, basketball, football, soccer, and boxing matches. Athletes' bodies on center stage become the focus for fans and casual spectators to gaze towards their bodies, as these athletes become heroes and icons for their excellence on the fields or courts of play. Therefore, leisure—in this case sports—and its link to the body work in relation to the ideologies of SoCal's imagined landscape. In this way, the social and cultural practices that work in tandem with the mindsets, romanticizations and the leisured, sporting practices set SoCal apart from the rest of the mainland U.S. Moving from the contemporary moment of the Southern California landscape, I trek back to historically situate Filipina/o American sporting cultural practices. I do so by foregrounding and highlighting the complex interplay of the cultural, social, and political currents that started to transform late nineteenth century American social life, which eventually led to the U.S. emerging as an international imperial force.

## **Sports in America**

With industrialization permeating Europe, and with the United States not far behind in industry and commerce, concerns over nationalism, middle-class values, gender and sexuality were beginning to take hold in Germany and England. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth

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<sup>19</sup> For example, Los Angeles hosted the 1984 Summer Olympic Games in 1984.

<sup>20</sup> Steven A. Riess (1995) notes how the Rose Bowl in Pasadena was built in 1922 in order to promote tourism and to strengthen its image.

centuries, as industrialization transformed German and English social life, middle class anxieties over respectability took hold and led to the formation of a particular kind of nationalism foregrounded by ideas of heterosexual masculinity. The bourgeoisie class who had contributed to these rapid changes were now lamenting the transformation of cities where vice was thought to promote abnormal, sexual behavior. According to George L. Mosse, who documents the links between gender, sexuality and nationhood in modern Europe, the modern city was imagined as a space where “Jews, criminals, the insane, homosexuals” lived (Mosse, 1985, p. 32). Such ideas were also pivoted upon how the human body was regarded as a receptacle of meaning—and it was part of Europe’s attempt at grasping what it meant to be a nation that was struggling to hold onto its own nationalist ideas of “decent” and “correct” moral manners. Such moral manners were promoted to help control sexualized and racialized (Jews in particular) ideas about sexual behavior. Homosexuals were considered effeminate, and less manly than heterosexuals who exercised restraint and self-control. Thus, German and English nationalism adopted ideas of manliness to help control members of its population for its supposedly sexualized impulses and desires. Self-control, restraint, manners, morals and chivalry were all deployed to symbolize national superiority; heterosexual masculinity was idealized as the foundation of German and English society (Mosse, 1985). Women too were idealized as national bearers of the community but only to the extent that their status was immutable and her femininity was firmly upheld. For example, if women played sports, they were thought to infiltrate the world of masculinity, categorized as manly and thus violating the codes of femininity that were expected of them. According to Mosse (1985), “Activism in sports was also thought to be a masculine preserve. Those women who measured up were evaluated in masculine terms” (p. 102). While these ideas of gendering the nation as masculine were proliferating in Germany and England in the late

nineteenth century, they were also starting to emerge in the U.S. in the mid nineteenth and through the early twentieth centuries.

The origins of sports in America can be traced to the mid-nineteenth century, or what Steven A. Riess (1995) calls, “pre-modern” sporting activities. Pre-modern sporting activities were primarily taken up by an exclusive group of upper class white men who held more discretionary income and free time. These activities were agrarian in nature, particularly because the outdoor landscape was largely accessible for these men to match wits with other men, and to test their strength and courage through combat sports like wrestling, “blood sports,” and smaller scale sporting spectacles like horse racing. Boxing (then an illegal activity) was occasionally taken up to demonstrate “courage and other manly traits” (Riess, 1995, p. 3).

Like their European counterparts, ideas of nationalism and sexuality were linked to space, gender and sexuality. As an emerging imperial power, the U.S. was in a crucial moment. Industrialization, immigration and urbanization were transforming American society. The “western frontier” was now closed as a result of westward expansion through Native American genocide (Stannard, 1993) Mexican conquest (Acuña, 2004) and the importation of Asian “coolie” labor was used to replace former African slave labor (Jung, 2006). Fearing the inevitable decline of American culture, White Anglo Saxon, middle class reformers looked to sports to resolve these anxieties. As such, the new frontier was now imagined through sport (Gems, Borish, & Pfister, 2008), and subsequently became a vehicle for these reformers to institutionalize it with the hopes of quelling anxieties and fears about America’s urban centers, which were heavily populated by newly arrived, working class immigrants. These calls for reform were also buttressed by the formation of competitive sports and its link to capitalism; winning was emphasized to reflect not only the outcomes in the sporting arenas, but also in the

character of American social life. By the late nineteenth century, industrialization and population increases in urban spaces created a mass appeal of sport for the larger swath of the American population. And the notion of “leisure” gained more traction. While the elite and upper class continued to garner relative free time devoted to leisure, industrialization enabled middle class members to have “the time, money, and access to athletic facilities that enabled them to enjoy sport” (Riess, 1995, p. 7). In this sense, industrialization created a temporal sphere of labor vs. leisure/sports. And the body needed to be restored as a result of working outside of the home. Thus, leisure was marked outside the confines of labor and time/tempo was anchored to the workday. Furthermore, leisure activities took on particular kinds of masculine ideologies: competitiveness, individualism and aggressiveness that transformed the national character of the United States.

Through public education, sports like basketball, baseball and football were implemented with the hopes of assimilating the newly arrived, ethnic working classes. Football especially became popular as a means to re-masculinize American society. Fearing the “feminization” of America, football emerged as a popular pastime for working and middle class participants. Thus, the football field was transformed into a battleground, linking its playing space, combatants and terminology to metaphors of war (Gems, Borish, & Pfister, 2008), and thus to reassert white male virility, aggressiveness and toughness that had characterized America in the Civil War years. President Teddy Roosevelt, for example, saw football as a necessary antidote to the increasing “feminization” of American society (Gems, Borish, & Pfister, 2008). Boxing too was considered to embody, “courage and manly traits” (Riess, 1995).

While sports was one sphere in which to regenerate white male bodies as masculine, the larger scope of concerns rested in anxieties over male degeneracy in U.S. cities. Much like their



European contemporaries, the U.S. was also confronting dramatic changes as the industrial age took hold and the U.S. was confronting modernity's effects. Domestic military conquest was completed and thus, martial culture, so prevalent during the Civil War years had declined. In order to resolve these concerns, U.S. political proponents of empire sought to reassert their perceptions of American masculine national character not only in the realm of sports, but also in terms of overseas military conquests. The complex workings of city spaces, concerns over race, and the anxiety over the U.S. failing as a virile, masculine nation collided with the consolidation of the U.S. as an empire, constructions of nationalism, the revitalization of American masculinity and sporting cultural practices. And the mid nineteenth, through the early twentieth centuries are a formative moment in America particularly in the creation of sports as a pastime. In this way, sports inflected notions of the pastime worked concurrently with the creation of temporal and physical spaces.

Moreover, sports worked in tandem with the discipline of anthropology to provide evidence of progression along an evolutionary continuum from "savage" to "civilized" (Besnier & Brownell, 2012). At the turn of the twentieth century for example, indigenous Filipinos were taken from their villages in the Philippines and placed on reservations for fairgoers at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. There, athletic performances of "savages" on display at the fair were recorded for comparison with those of "civilized men" in the Olympic Games (Brownell, 2008a; see also Besnier & Brownell, 2012; Fuentes, 1995; Parezo & Fowler, 2007).

### **Filipinos and Sports**

Filipinas/os' engagement with institutionalized and organized sports can be traced to the U.S.'s colonial efforts in the Philippines. Under Spanish colonialism, organized sports through

rules and regulations did not exist as a cultural institution. Evidence suggests that cockfighting and card games were two of the more popular activities Filipinas/os engaged in (Reid, 1988). Clifford Geertz (1973) discusses how cockfighting in Balinese society reflected notions of gendered spaces, particularly in terms of masculinity and performances of manhood.<sup>21</sup>

Whereas the Spanish colonizers maintained their presence primarily around the capital of Manila, the U.S. sought to extend their colonial powers throughout the archipelago through sports (España-Maram, 2006). According to Anthony Reid (1988), “One Spanish friar considered that Filipinos love their cocks more than their wives and children” (p. 194). The sphere of sports was made possible through U.S. colonial, state driven policies in the Philippines. Thus, for Filipinos, participating in America’s national past times and absorbing its sacred values did not begin when the first Filipinos arrived in the U.S. Rather, sports worked interdependently with U.S. colonialism to teach Filipinos the value of America’s morals in the Philippines.

Cockfighting, once considered a favored activity during Spanish colonial rule, was now relegated to the category of vice practices. As España-Maram (2006) states,

American teachers and missionaries went to the Philippines determined to eradicate what they considered the Filipinos’ “reprehensible vices,” especially gambling and cockfighting, through American institutions that they believed inculcated the “character building” values of democracy, industry, thrift, good sportsmanship and patriotism. (p. 83)

These sports and its American value system were expected to transform Filipino bodies into “good colonial subjects.” Once Filipinas/os reached American shores, the values they learned through sports in the Philippines were expected to be carried out in the U.S. But much like the people of color before them, Filipinos in the U.S. were also institutionally barred from playing sports with other white Americans. This did not mean that Filipinos did not practice their

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<sup>21</sup> See Kale Fajardo in *Filipino Crosscurrents: Oceanographies of Seafaring, Masculinities, and Globalization* for a critique of cockfights in the Philippines as only being a heterosexual, and masculine domain.

own form of sporting leisure, or participate in meaningful sporting activities outside of the professional ranks or in the everyday institutions that generally excluded them and other people of color.

Sports in the Philippines can also be traced to the intersecting relationships between sport, religion, masculinity, U.S. military interests and the arrival of the United States as an imperial power at the end of the nineteenth century (Diaz, 2002; Wakefield, 1997). Within the same time frame (1898-1899), the U.S. also annexed Hawai'i, and ceded Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Guam from Spain. In the aftermath of the Philippine-American war, the U.S. military, “intentionally created opportunities for soldiers and sailors in Cuba and in the Philippines to play baseball, to run track, and to experience other types of athletic competitions” (Wakefield, 1997, p. 1). The growth of the U.S. as an international imperial force necessitated a growth for expanding the U.S. military to send American troops to Cuba and to increase its military pool to fight against Filipino revolutionaries resistant to yet another imperial power. Once the U.S. occupying forces settled in Cuba (after defeating the Spanish) and fortified their control in the Philippine islands, sports like baseball and boxing were taken up by U.S. soldiers and were laterally introduced to the civilian population (Gems, 2006; España-Maram, 2006; Wakefield, 1997). As with their British colonial brethren, the U.S. also introduced sports to their Filipino colonial subjects, albeit in different ways.

The institutionalization of sports through public education in the U.S. was also part of the colonial process in the Philippines. Following a dogmatic belief in “manifest destiny,” and ideologies of racial superiority over Filipinos (Kramer, 2006), U.S. colonial administrators worked with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) by institutionalizing sport to “civilize” the racially “inferior” Filipinos. Under the aegis of the U.S. education system

(primarily through the category, “physical education”), sport and recreation was part and parcel of the U.S. educational, colonial process. According to España-Maram (2006), “E. Stanton Turner, Chief Executive of the Philippine YMCA, claimed that the physical workout not only improved the strength and moral fiber of young Filipinos but also facilitated the growth of the average Filipino male by more than three inches” (2006, p. 84). Through outdoor activities, and the promotion of physicality embodied by white, muscular Christian men, it was believed that sport could transform the “effeminate,” “inferior” and “savage” Filipino bodies into “good colonial subjects” (2006, p. 84). In other words, according to U.S. logic, Filipinos lacked the manliness that would allow them self-rule; only through the colonial process would the Philippines develop the moral fiber and “muscular Christianity” to eventually carry out self-government. While White American males were the standard bearers of “unrestrained patriarchal power,”<sup>22</sup> Filipinos were seen as part of the “savage lot,” racialized alongside African American, Native American, and Pacific Islander bodies. Thus, U.S. imperial imperatives were driven in part by these racialized and gendered ideologies.

U.S. colonial beliefs about Filipinos’ supposed lack of moral fiber was attributed to their physical *and* mental constitution. It was also during this time that ideas about the body merged with cultural changes throughout the U.S. Industrialization, mass productions in printing and photography and visual culture contributed to the heightened awareness of the body “as a modern social construction (Runstedtler, 2012, p. 34). In a thesis published in 1932, George Edward Goss emphasized the YMCA’s role in “developing” Filipino bodies. He posited, “The object of the Physical Department of the Young Men's Christian Association is to promote by means of exercise, recreation and education the highest physical, mental and moral efficiency of

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<sup>22</sup> See Nerissa S. Balce, borrowing from Frances Harper and Anna Julia Cooper, “Filipino Bodies, Lynching, and the Language of Empire.” In *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006) 45.

men and boys essential to the development of the best type of virile Christian manhood” (Goss, 1932, p. 68). Here, ideas about modernizing Filipino bodies came into practice through training logs, measurements and tests. These disciplinary measures used in the early 1900s by institutions such as the YMCA are akin to what Michel Foucault (1975) terms, “docile bodies,” whereupon Filipinos’ moral fiber, through the institutionalization of physical exercises, coupled with U.S. colonial discourse reaffirmed practices whereupon bodies were “subjected, used, transformed, and improved” (Foucault, 1975, p. 136). In this way, sport became a modern technology of discipline. Rather than outright domination of the body, the efficiency of discipline through sport allowed a degree of social control through evaluation, repetition and training regiments to produce a more efficient and subjugated body. These discourses and ideologies about the body merged with existing ideas of social Darwinism or, “survival of the fittest.” The muscular, fit and white Christian body then became the medium through which modernity and white civilization was imagined (Foucault, 1975, p. 136).

The historian Gail Bederman (1995) notes that white middle class Americans believed that civilization embodied “superior traits” of self-discipline, powerful will, and strong character; all characteristics that touted the so-called superiority of white middle class manliness. Such concerns about moral fiber applied not only to the colonized Filipino bodies in the Philippines, but also to other non-white peoples in the Pacific. These concerns about colonial subjects, termed “hemispheric anxiety” (Diaz, 2002, p. 180) by Pacific Islander studies scholar Vicente Diaz, circulated in and through the United States’ new colonial possessions. Writing on the relationship between American football and the U.S. imperial project, Diaz discusses how at the onset of U.S. colonial rule in Guam, the potential for moral degeneracy in the tropics preoccupied the minds of U.S. colonizers—which served as the impetus to institutionalize sports

such as football, baseball, basketball, tennis and volleyball in Guam—all in attempts to promote physical exercise and thus fulfill the national imperative of creating a virile, U.S. masculine nation (Diaz, 2002).

Imperial sports have long held a distinct relationship with the processes of colonization. Cricket, for example, served not only to promote white masculine athletic superiority, but also to inculcate white moral discipline (Mangan, 1992). In his semi-autobiographical account, political theorist and avid cricket fan, CLR James (1984) notes how in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, cricket, along with the institutionalization of slavery, arrived in the West Indies with the British colonial forces. James recalls how British cricket and religious conversion were fundamental to the ways West Indians were expected to live by the “puritan code.” As colonial subjects, West Indians were taught the value of fair play and keeping a stiff upper lip in competition, despite the obvious unequal racial and class divisions prevalent in the larger political, social and economic context of the colonial West Indies. Despite these inequalities, West Indians were expected to adhere to these moral standards on the cricket field. As James reflects, “The answer is in one word: Puritanism; more specifically, restraint, a restraint in a personal sense. But that restraint, did we learn it only on the cricket field” (1983, p. 47). Here, the interrelated forces of empire, sport, and religion in the colonized West Indies carried meaning within and outside the boundaries of cricket. In other words, cricket was not supposed to inspire political and social discontent but a means to cement British control over its colonized subjects. Despite these colonial desires, the colonized appropriated cricket for their own use and served as a stage on which to critique power relations and challenge their place in the colonized, racial hierarchy by the very techniques and skills introduced by the colonized. This, in turn, provided an arena for the expression of nationalist sentiments (James, 1983). As Grant Farred notes (1996), “In the

process of re-encoding the codes cricket becomes simultaneously a site of pleasure, resistance and ideological contestation” (Farred, 1996, p. 181). As such, nationalist expressions became available through the colonized, brown, and black bodies in the context of cricket in the West Indies. In this way, sports as avenues of social, political and national expression are fundamental to examining how Filipina/o Americans also draw upon cultural forms like sports. Drawing from James’ work, and extending Farred’s analysis, expressions of masculine nationalism are also enabled through the sporting body of Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao. In chapter four, I examine how Pacquiao facilitates nationalism for the Filipina/o diasporic community in ways that generate meaning far beyond his wins and losses.

Despite U.S. colonial attempts at pacification through benevolent assimilation, Filipinos recognized that their own experiences of racial oppression were also part of a larger global phenomenon; boxing in particular inspired Filipinos to embed these racial grievances through the sporting body of Jack Johnson, the first African American heavyweight champion. In Reno, NV, on July 4, 1910, Johnson fought white-American Jim Jeffries in, “The Fight of the Century.” At the time, the idea of a successful black boxer defeating white boxers did not sit well with the established white boxing community who held on to the coveted title of heavyweight boxing champion as the epitome of white masculinity. Johnson punished Jeffries from the outset, delivering devastating blows to his white opponent and, after fifteen rounds, Jeffries’ corner threw in the towel, signaling an end to the lopsided bout. The bout was significant because while it was held in the U.S., the fight extended across various parts of the globe, allowing non-white communities to identify and connect with Johnson who fought in a context of global white supremacy (Runstedtler, 2012). For Filipinos, cheering for Johnson became a rallying cry to air

out their own grievances against racism brought on by the U.S. colonists. According to historian Theresa Runstedtler, who documents Johnson's transnational influence argues,

Regardless of the risks involved, Johnson's expanding fan base soon reached across the Pacific to the US colony of the Philippines, where Filipinos embraced his racial triumph as their own, using it as a rallying cry for self-determination. Many were longtime fans of the black champion. . . . Thanks to the efforts of visiting US pugilists and promoters, by 1910 boxing had also become a favorite Philippine pastime. It was especially popular among poor and working-class men in Manila, who used the sport to assert their masculinity at a moment when white Americans cast them as effeminate boys desperately in need of white tutelage. Catering to the growing demand for boxing reports, local newspapers provided front-page stories of the Jeffries–Johnson fight. The Manila Times even promised to post the fight results as soon as they arrived by telegraph from Reno.

Apart from being critical consumers of the boxing spectacle, Filipinos were also participating in their own spectacles of the transnational boxing enterprise. First traveling to Australia, and then to the United States, Filipino pugilists used their boxing skills to publicly disrupt, and contest the racialized and gendered hierarchies of the time. Starting in 1919 for example, Filipino fighter, Silvino Jamito fought against Australian boxer, Vince Blackburn in front of more than 10,000 people at Sydney Stadium in Australia. Filipino boxers soon followed and fought in Australia until 1923. Throughout their tenure in the Australian boxing circuit, Filipino boxers were called racial epithets including “coon,” “nigger,” and “yellow peril,” while their skills were attributed to their “primitive” and “uncivilized” nature rather than discipline and training (Sheehan, 2012). Nonetheless, Australian boxing fans “cheered for Filipino boxers even when they were winning, a vocal demonstration that audiences cared more about courage and good fighting than about a boxer’s racial heritage” (Sheehan, 2012, pp. 447-448).

While Australia was one transnational boxing arena in which Filipino pugilists defied racialized expectations of them and their bodies, they also fought in the United States, where a predominantly young, male working class culture embraced these pugilists as their “heroes.” As early as the 1920s and throughout the 1930s, sports (boxing in particular), provided a



predominantly male, working class Filipino community an opportunity to claim the sporting space, and to challenge assumptions of race, masculinity and athletic ability in the midst of a racist, host society. In her pioneering work on working class Filipinos in Los Angeles's Little Manila, historian Linda España-Maram documents how the boxing ring symbolized affirmations of masculinity for Filipino laborers who were routinely targets of white mob violence, experienced racial slurs like "little brown brother" and "monkey" (Pascual, 1994) and occupied feminized positions as domestic workers. The boxing space transformed into a significant social space for Filipinos to produce counter narratives for themselves and about themselves and provided them a temporary reprieve from the everyday indignities they endured as racialized subjects. España-Maram contends,

Despite the marginalization of Filipinos, these athletes legitimized a space for self-definition by defying the dominant society's assumptions about race and ability. Pugilists became symbols of Filipino aspirations, and the ring emerged as an important cultural space wherein ethnic laborers created their own heroes, who in turn became a part of the stories that Filipinos told themselves about themselves. (España-Maram, p. 11)

While boxing served as one of the few public arenas for Filipinos to assert, perform and claim a heterosexual masculinity, some laborers used private spaces to preserve aspects of their cultural identity through a distinct Filipino martial art known as arnis/eskrima, a close range fighting system that uses hands, sticks or any available hand weapon for combat. In fact, its history is tied to a Philippine national narrative of resistance to colonialism. The mythology follows that Lapu-Lapu, the indigenous chieftain of the Philippines fought and defeated Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer who sailed under the Spanish crown.<sup>23</sup> Given the hostile nature of their host society, practicing arnis/eskrima was risky; thus, these practitioners performed their martial art outside of the purview of the white, local community who constantly targeted Filipinos. As Antonio Somera (2001) recalls growing up in Stockton, CA,

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<sup>23</sup> See Wiley (1996) for a question of arnis/eskrima's origins.

But, what I did not know at the time was that many of these men who belong to these powerful social groups were experts in the arts of arnis and escrima. Most of those knowledgeable in arnis did not teach or share the art with anyone; it was secured and held in the highest regard. In fact, they would only share their knowledge with the select few, and often their own family members did not know why they were arnisadors. All of the “playing” was done either behind closed doors or deep in the fields and orchards of Stockton, to maintain the secrecy of this Filipino martial art. (Somera, p. 66)

This practice continued throughout the first half of the twentieth century. I speculate that these practitioners kept it a secret to not only preserve its practice for Filipinos, but also because performing a martial art in the context of a racist, white society could have potentially heightened the sense of fear among the white population. It was not until the late 1960s when arnis/escrima was introduced to the general public (Somera, 2001). While arnis/escrima was preserved and practiced by a very select few of male practitioners, Filipinos throughout Chicago, Philadelphia, Seattle, California and Hawai’i, sought to build communal bonds by creating organizations, mutual aid associations and social groups. The formations of organizations (fraternal, cultural and otherwise) not only played an important role maintaining communal ties, they in turn, created leisure spaces for the Filipina/o community. Given that people of color were institutionally excluded from participating in mainstream sporting spaces (Burgos, 2007) in the pre-war era, the Filipino community was no exception. Despite these exclusions, Filipinos collectively found ways to engage in leisure activities by organizing tournaments, leagues and annual events. Sports ranged from basketball, baseball, ping-pong, softball, tennis volleyball; they collectively formed tennis and golf clubs and took part in sporting spectacles by becoming a community of fans for their Filipino sporting icons. During the 1920s in Hawai’i, for example, Filipinos played baseball against other Asian-ethnic teams (Franks, 2008; Cisco, 1999). And on the mainland U.S., Filipino community baseball teams were formed in Chicago, Southern California and San Francisco (Franks, 2008), with some of these teams playing against their

fellow Filipinos throughout California. These sporting interactions created friendly regional rivalries between the teams (Pin@y Educational Partnerships, et al. 2011). In addition to intra-ethnic competitions, baseball also enabled Filipino baseball teams to compete with other Asian ethnic groups; namely Chinese and Japanese baseball teams (Franks, 2001). The presence of U.S. colonialism in the Philippines enabled young Filipino men to form Filipino US Navy baseball teams. For example, in its “Images of America” series, Arcadia Publishing published a book titled, “Filipinos of Greater Philadelphia.” One particular portrait shows 10 Filipino men posing in their baseball uniforms with one of the men wearing a “Filipino” team jersey (Silva, 2012).

But for the children of these immigrants who were born and being raised in American society in the early twentieth century, sports took on particular significance for this coming of age group. While forming mutual aid organizations and associations enabled their parents’ generation to participate in sporting leisure, Filipina/o youth sought to connect with their generation by creating their own set of sports clubs and tournaments. As American born Filipinos, they had a different set of priorities; they were exposed to American popular culture, spoke English and yet were still locked out of white spaces because of their race (Jamero, 2006; Mabalon, 2005). They were also trying to negotiate their place within the U.S. national fabric and in their own ethnic community. With the leadership of young people like Peter Jamero, and other Filipina/o Americans, these young Filipinas/os created sports leagues and athletic clubs throughout the bay area of California. This enabled them to create their own “social world” (Mabalon, 2005), forge a uniquely Filipina/o and American identity and created lifelong friendships and relationships with their fellow, second-generation Filipina/o Americans.

One of the most prominent youth clubs to create peer networks in Northern California was, “The Filipino Mango Club.” In an unpublished thesis titled, “Growing up Brown in America: The Filipino Mango Club,” Annalissa Arangcon Herbert chronicles how in 1938, Filipino youth created the aforementioned club in San Francisco. American citizens by birth, these Filipino youth initially founded the league in order to play in citywide basketball tournaments. However, they were also met with racial exclusion by mainstream society and sought to create a haven for themselves that merged sporting events, social activities and alternative spaces of belonging within their own generation. Soon the Filipino-Mango Club garnered widespread prestige throughout the Filipina/o community in Northern California (Herbert, 1996). As a result, other Filipina/o youth either started their own youth clubs in parts of the bay area like Stockton, Vallejo, Antioch and Fremont. They also sought membership to join the Filipino-Mango Club by writing letters to its existing members. The club, which lasted well into the 1960s, also sought competition with other Asian American ethnic groups and represented the Filipina/o community in annual, “All Oriental Basketball Tournaments” in parts of California (Herbert, 1996). While these tournaments did not necessarily promote a politically based pan-ethnic ideology, they at the very least provided spaces for interracial interactions that served as reminders of the racial barriers they faced when trying to access mainstream sports (Mabalon, 2005).

In a memoir reflecting on his youth, bridge generation member Peter Jamero (2006) recalls how,

Young Filipinos turned to one another mostly because they had to fend for themselves. It was natural for us to form youth clubs focused on sports and social interaction. Sports were part of American mainstream culture, and social interaction gave us the opportunity to know one another as Filipinos. We organized and funded our own activities, and, in doing so, we learned the importance of self-sufficiency, support systems, a strong work ethic, and getting along with another. The last quality had its roots in the Filipino value of

*pakisama* (maintaining harmonious relationships). Everything we learned became essential to us in our adult lives. (pp. 307-308)

The burgeoning youth culture of the 1940s also enabled young Filipinas to establish themselves as serious athletes. While the Filipino Mango Athletic Club was founded by young boys, Filipinas also started their own youth athletic club. In Stockton for example, Filipinas formed The Filipina Athletic Club. Dawn Mabalon, who writes about the Filipina/o American experiences in Stockton states, “Second-generation Pinays played softball, volleyball and tennis, participating wholeheartedly in organizing area-wide tournaments with other second-generation women in California communities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles” (Mabalon, 2005). The Filipina/o Americans who participated in this dissertation did not explicitly experience the kind imperial control or overt racism that their ancestors faced. However, they are heirs to this historical trajectory and the legacy of sports that began in the Philippines.

The outcome of the United States’ role in institutionalizing sports in the Philippines has enabled and intensified deterritorialized sporting spaces for diasporic Filipinas/os (Appadurai, 1996). These spaces comprise different, interconnected locations and are in constant transnational circulation. Thus, the following section acknowledges the slippages and blendages of different sportscapes (I discussed in chapter one) in which Filipina/o sporting icons inhabit and navigate.

**Filipino and Filipina/o American sporting icons.** Part of the Filipina/o American sporting landscape includes not just the physical sporting sites and spaces, but the people who have become sporting icons as a result of their athletic excellence. Filipina/o American sporting icons represent, among other things, symbols of achievement, evidence of athletic mastery and exemplars for expressions of national self-identity, empowerment and ethnic pride. Some of these icons have also symbolized struggle by overcoming perceived athletic limitations and

excelling in their respective sports during periods of overt racism. As early as the 1920s, for example, boxing provided a platform for Filipino laborers and students to claim Filipino pugilists as their heroes. One of the first Filipino sporting icons was Francisco “Pancho Villa” Guilledo, a flyweight boxer and the first Filipino champion to gain notoriety when he defeated Johnny Buff via knockout in 1922 to capture the American Flyweight title. Villa unexpectedly died in July 1925 and left a void for potential successors. While there were a number of successful boxers in the immediate post-Villa era, no other boxer accomplished Villa’s success until Ceferino Garcia burst onto the scene in the 1930s. A middleweight boxer, Garcia was (and still is) the only Filipino boxer to fight in the middleweight class. Known for his “bolo punch,” Garcia used the punch to defeat then champion, Fred Apostoli on October 2, 1939 to capture the world middleweight title. During this period, Garcia’s status as a world champion spoke volumes for a predominately male, Filipino population in the U.S. As a boxer, his brown, athletic body, coupled with his boxing excellence made him a popular hero for Filipino laborers who were routinely the targets of racism by their host society. His body and the boxing ring became a site for Filipinos to create and affirm their masculinity where they were previously denied in other realms of their everyday lives. Both Villa and Garcia and other Filipino boxers, “challenged the stereotypes of the ‘little brown brother’ uttered by the colonizers in the homeland in the image of the dirty lazy ‘brown monkey’ deployed in the racist language of their adopted country” (2006, p. 76).

Racism continued to shape Filipina/o American sporting icons well passed the 1930s and into the 1940s. In addition to boxers, Filipino sporting icons have also participated in the Olympics as representatives of the United States. In 1948, diver, Victoria “Vicky” Manalo Draves won gold medals in the ten-meter platform and the three-meter springboard diving

competitions. Forced to deny her Filipino heritage during the 1940s, Manalo Draves adopted her mother's surname, "Taylor" because, according to Barbara Posadas (2001), the Fairmont Hotel swimming pool in San Francisco, "did not allow a teenager with a Filipino name to use its pool" (p. 100). In 2010, the former Olympian passed away. However, her legacy remains. In October 2006, the City of San Francisco honored her name, dedicating the South of Market Recreation Center, "Victoria Manalo Draves Park."<sup>24</sup>

From this history of Filipino sporting icons and those that have followed this trajectory to the contemporary period emerges eight-time world boxing champion, Manny "Pac-Man" Pacquiao. Perhaps no other athlete of Filipina/o descent has appealed to the diasporic Filipina/o population than Pacquiao. As one of boxing's most popular stars, Pacquiao is considered the "national hero" of the Philippines garnering fame, fortune and success and capturing the imagination of Filipinas/os throughout the world. His undeniable success in the boxing ring has brought about unparalleled media attention and is one of the most recognized athletes in the world. In 2009, he graced the cover of U.S.'s *Time Magazine* and *Time Magazine Asia* as one of the "100 Most Influential People." Pacquiao's athletic prowess and success in the boxing ring, coupled with his success in the "manly art" of the boxing ring has fundamentally challenged centuries long stereotypes of Asian bodies as "inferior," "weak" and "effeminate." With signature wins over British fighter, Ricky "The Hitman" Hatton and Mexican-American, Oscar "Golden Boy" De La Hoya, Pacquiao's image and persona continues to resonate among the Filipina/o American community and Filipinas/os throughout the globe. Throughout the Philippines' long engagement with sporting cultures and practices, Filipino sporting icons have provided members of the Filipino community representations of success, worthy of heroic celebration brought on by collective memory that is reinforced in stories, oral histories and in

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<sup>24</sup><http://sfrecpark.org/destination/victoria-manalo-draves-park>

material establishments like parks and murals. The legacy of these sporting icons are important because they place the Filipino American community at the center of these narratives which become part of the story for Filipinas/os to collectively remember.

The continuity of Filipina/o American everyday sporting cultures and practices, and the persistence of Filipina/o sporting icons remains with the diasporic Filipina/o community to this day. In the next chapter, I examine just how much sports are entrenched in the lives of Filipina/o Americans.



## Chapter 2

### Beyond “Par for the Course”: Filipina/o Americans’ Everyday Sporting Life

Erik, a second-generation Filipino American from Orange County shared his earliest sports memory with me: “An actual sports memory probably would be basketball. Putting up a hoop on the door and just playing basketball when I was probably around 2 or 3.” I asked Erik to clarify what kind of basketball hoop was in his house: “The Nerf ones that you put on top of your door and you just shoot, or it sticks onto the door like a suction cup. You just shoot and that’s pretty much the first sport that I played other than kicking a ball.” The conversation above demonstrates how sports, like basketball, are intertwined with objects, memories, and private spaces of the home as well as the domestic pleasures that arise when engaging with leisure activities like sports. In this way, leisure time is spent beyond attending a sporting spectacle.

In the previous chapter, I argued that sports are fundamental to the fabric of Filipina/o Americans’ daily lives in Southern California. I appropriate a popular golfing idiom, “par for the course,” to speak to the ways in which Filipina/o Americans’ everyday sporting cultures and practices produce meaning making processes that go beyond wins and losses. “Par for the course” refers to what is expected or normal in golf. If a golfer’s play is par for the course, it means that she/he hit the ball within the expected number of strokes to make it in the hole. I argue that while everyday life can be seen as “par for the course,” or what is considered typical and unremarkable, what I found is that Filipina/o Americans engagement with sport at the everyday level reveals important processes of belonging and identity that speak to their experiences as ethnic Americans. For Filipina/o Americans, sports activities extend beyond organized leagues or in the practice of consuming sporting spectacles. Sporting activities are entangled in the very routines and habits of the quotidian and reveal just how much it is

enmeshed in Filipina/o Americans' every day lives. This chapter highlights spaces—private/domestic, public and virtual—and the diverse sporting activities that enliven them. These spaces demonstrate the varying degrees by which Filipina/o Americans actively and passively participate; through their play, spectatorship and consuming the seemingly perpetual sports news cycle on their mobile phones, laptops, and computers. Within the private spaces are materials of everyday life; objectified in sporting artifacts including memorabilia such as trophies and certificates to celebrate achievement and success. Basketball hoops are cemented in backyards, Nerf ball hoops are placed on bedroom doors, and an ensemble of helmets, balls, and mitts littered family rooms and garages. Team pennants and posters of athletes are pinned to walls to demonstrate team loyalty and affinity, and to show admiration for the athlete's talent and athletic ability.

In addition to traversing sporting spaces and the popular culture items that pervade their homes, part of Filipino Americans' daily lives also entail conversations that revolve around sports. These conversations are as banal as debating the merits of athletes or imagining what their favorite team's needs are in the upcoming draft or free-agent pool. At the same time, these conversations are also about cultivating and sustaining relationships with friends, family, significant others, and peers, and disrupting commonly held assumptions of sports conversations as a male preserve. While everyday sports are ingrained in Filipina/o Americans' lives through spaces, objects, consumptive patterns and conversations, anchoring their sporting experiences are the family narratives that emerged in the recounting of their earliest sports memories.

I conducted an interview Marco, a second-generation Filipino American. The narrative below provides an interesting window of Marco's life. Themes such as family, religion, and sports intersect with affective moments, pleasure, temporality and space. In a much broader

sense, these themes are also common themes that resonate with some of my informants. While my other informants' experiences are not universal, I see Marco's story as a template to explore broader themes of space and the commonplace and how Filipina/o American routines and rhythms of daily life are interlinked with sporting cultures and practices.

Marco, a second-generation Filipino American grew up in Riverside County in a one-story, four-bedroom house with his parents, two brothers, sister and grandmother. His grandfather lived with his cousin's family in the same neighborhood. Admittedly, he thought it was "a little weird" that his grandparents did not live together, and to this day, he does not know why. Marco told me that his parents migrated to the U.S. and worked as farmworkers picking grapes in places like Delano, before saving enough money to buy a house in Quintana in 1988. Currently, Marco's father works for the local water district while his mother works at an office job. In vivid detail, he shared the spatial layout of his 1,200 to 1,500 square foot house, the living arrangements, and the areas of the house where his family spent most of their time.

While Marco's parents and siblings were away at work and school, his grandmother spent her time tending to the garden in the backyard. His father grew up as a farmer in the Philippines; growing a garden in the U.S. allowed his father to maintain his cultural practice because "it went back to his roots." I asked him what kind of vegetables his family grew. He remembered, "It would rotate between tomatoes, eggplant, bitter melon, green beans. And then we'd have marungay. We say marungay but in Tagalog it's malungay. It's a leafy tree almost like bamboo." In addition, the backyard grew citrus fruits including a calamansi tree (native to Asia and widely grown in the Philippines), orange and lemon trees, as well as peach and apple trees. Some of the vegetables harvested in the garden were used to cook Filipino meals like pinakbet. Marco chuckled when I asked him if he or his siblings helped tend the garden. He recalled, "A little bit.

But more so after, [we cemented in] a small little basketball court, so I would help any time our ball would break something. We would try to fix it before my dad would find out [laughs].”

Inside the house, Marco shared that most of their family time was spent in the living room, in part because, “That’s where the TV was.” One of his earliest sports memories involved his parents sitting in front of the television and “watching Laker games every single time they were on TV. And then they were big Dodger fans growing up. For whatever reason they latched onto Fernando Valenzuela and Kirk Gibson, those guys growing up.” Dinner was served at 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. at the dining table and it was “expected that all of us were there for that.” Marco described the house’s interior with “typical decorations, pictures, mementos of some kind,” including family portraits, religious symbols and imagery. He described some of his family photos. He remembered,

In the Philippines I don't know if you have seen these where they would frame [pictures] on to an actual block of wood. Like a decorated piece of wood, a picture would be framed to it. I don't know where we got this idea from or who was the first one to do it.

Marco shared that his mom

Went to the Philippines [and she would] grab a bunch of pictures and she got it all done and then brought that all back with her. We had a couple family pictures. Kind of like pictures of us growing up, like one at age 5, age 7, age 10. And so that was a little bit of a progression so all the pictures were pretty funny to look at now that I think about it, but it was really unflattering when my friends would come over and see all my pictures [chuckles].

In addition to family photos, Marco’s house also included some religious objects that mark a stereotypical Filipino household. Filipino Catholic symbols and imagery were either hung on the walls or placed on tables, a daily reminder of their faith, devotion and commitment to God. These symbols served as a kind of moral compass for Marco and the rest of his family. He described, “There was one table where we had the Santo Nino, a crucifix, and a rosary on one corner of the living room. And then we had the last supper and the Ten Commandments [plaque]

hanging. We also had this plaque that said, ‘God bless our home’ which hung over the door.” He admitted that he used to get in trouble for playing near, or around the religious symbols with his “Hot Wheels or other stuff.” He emphasized he did not play with the symbols themselves because, “I think we were scared of them.”

In addition to religious objects and family photos, Marco told me that his parents placed a display case, or what he described a “trophy case,” in the living room. Placed inside the trophy case were his and his siblings’ academic and athletic achievements, including trophies, sports frames, medals and certificates. For Marco’s parents, the trophy case represented their pride in their children’s accomplishments. Marco also told me that, “I think the other reason was, they don’t want to admit it but to try to motivate us to get more.”

He continued,

A lot of our trophies would get put up or certificates and stuff would get put up in different places. We had a little trophy case that we ended up making or buying and then all of our stuff getting put up in there. My sister was in the band so all of her medals and trophies would go up. Once we all started playing sports my brother's medals from wrestling tournaments, my stuff, those sorts of things would get put up.

While Marco’s brothers, neighbors and cousins played basketball in the backyard, his interest in other sports was evidenced by the number of sporting objects that littered his house.

We had everything from balls, bats, [and] gloves, stuff that we would normally play with would be wherever we got lazy and just leave it. And if my mom would clean it up before we would, it would be hard trying to find stuff because she would just put it up wherever she wants and then [we would] try to explain it to her and she wouldn't remember where it was, or she wouldn't know what you were describing [chuckles]. So all of the sports stuff had to stay outside. So the stuff we would play with all the time basically stayed outside, either in the garage or in the backyard. Inside the house, we didn't really bring any of that stuff in.

Marco’s neighborhood community comprised of a mix of Mexican, Filipino and White families, with “one African American family living in the whole neighborhood.” He recalled his

neighborhood experiences positively, and stated that he was “pretty close” with members of his community. While the neighborhood kids played with each other, the adults congregated at their local Catholic Church, which also reflected the demographics of the community. Marco recalled, “All of us all knew each other.” He described his childhood days as “typical,” and nonchalantly delineated his daily routine. He remembered that his parents would wake up as early as 5 o’clock in the morning—his father would have to be at work at 6 o’clock, while his mother would pack their father’s lunch and then make breakfast for Marco and his siblings before leaving for work at 8 o’clock. Marco and his cousin would walk to school,

because it was pretty close. We would walk to school [chuckles and repeats himself], when we would walk to school, my grandpa would actually walk to the corner. It was the end of the corner of the neighborhood and he would watch us basically walking to school from there. So he would wait till we got to school. We would come back and then [my grandfather] would wait at the corner and then we'd all walk back.

Then, he would come home between 2 or 3 o'clock, depending on the sport schedule.

And then my dad would get home from work around 4 and then my mom would get home around 5ish. And then typically we'd have dinner between 5:30 and 6 until it was expected that all of us were there for that. And then, before then we would try to sneak off and play basically, from 4 to 6 would be our time to actually go outside and play, but they would always try to get us to do our homework before then. So we'd pretend we got it all done before that and then we would go and play from 4 to 6, come back, have dinner and then I would do homework if we had it or we would end up at somebody else's house to play video games until about 7:30, 8 o'clock and then we would have to be home. And then pretty much do it all over the next day. And typically after 8 o'clock we'd scramble to finish homework until about 9 or 10 or 8 or 9 and then do it all over the next day.

These days, Marco works as a head athletic trainer for a private college in Southern California. He lives alone in a two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment, a few miles from where he works. Marco’s apartment is a space of the commonplace. He describes his apartment as “Pretty simple. The only things that are up are sports memorabilia [chuckles].” I asked him what other items he used to decorate his apartment. Along with sports memorabilia, he also put up

family portraits on his shelf and a religious symbol in his bedroom. He told me, “I have a [Jordan] wings poster that’s hanging. A picture of [Michael] Jordan and Magic [Johnson] hanging up. I have a Jordan jersey hanging up. And then other stuff. A helmet, a ball, those sorts of things.” Each of the other sports memorabilia he described were tied to the places he went to school, worked, or the sporting events he attended. He shared,

I have a couple balls. A football [where he went to graduate school] that’s up. I have a couple [of] baseballs that are up. I got a World Series baseball from when I went to the College World Series with [the school where he briefly worked]. I have that on the shelf. I have a regional ball when we went to the regionals [college baseball playoffs]. And then I have a baseball from the World Baseball Classic when it was in LA.

Marco also placed a few family portraits on his shelf. And he placed a Jesus figurine, a gift he received from his mother during high school, atop his dresser in his room. I asked him why he kept the figurine in his apartment. He told me, “It was a gift and growing up religious, I felt it is right to have it.” Marco admits that placing the figurine atop his dresser serves as a symbol of his faith. While he did not share his innermost thoughts, he did state that the figurine serves as a visual reminder of sorts. The Jesus figurine conjures notions of sacrifice, selflessness, and care for others. It also holds special meaning because it was a gift he received from his mother. He explained that the figurine,

Sits on my dresser so since I’m near my dresser I see it. I think those are some of the interactions that I have with it. I just look at it and think about certain things. Whether it be thinking about what’s going on in my day or going on with others that might be present issues or that sort of thing. It’s just a visual reminder. And just seeing it, I wouldn’t say that I say anything out loud to it but more so just the thoughts and maybe those sorts of things as far as that.

Marco does not attend church as frequently as he used to because his work schedule requires him to work on Sundays, which conflicts with Catholic mass. Yet the Jesus figurine serves as a spiritual anchor and reflects Marco’s religion. To Marco, the religious symbols,

familial portraits, and sport memorabilia are items of affective value, that serve as mnemonic devices to recreate or carve out a sense of the commonplace, comfort, and familiarity in his apartment. In addition, these objects and items are part of his self-expression. Such mundane objects are part of the minutiae of everyday life, or what Daniel Miller (2008) posits, “gradually accumulated as an expression of that person or household” (Miller, p. 2) that convey how objects are linked to, and constitute familial relationships. While attending Catholic mass is not part of his weekly schedule, he maintains ties to religion and his family through the intimate thoughts that emerge out of his daily routine; seeing the Jesus figurine on his dresser serves as a moral compass to guide him throughout the day. His self-expression is also rooted in the fact that he is a sports fan, evidenced by the sporting paraphernalia that littered his childhood home and in his current apartment.

In addition to describing his living quarters, I also asked Marco to narrate his typical routine. In almost rote fashion, he enumerated the time he woke up, went to work, worked out and performed his daily duties as head athletic trainer. He starts off his day by waking up at 6:00am, followed by reading various athletic training articles, personal growth articles, and Twitter posts. He commutes to work about five miles away and arrives at his office between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. He then works out for about an hour and a half before opening his clinic at 10:00 a.m. His work routine consists of providing treatment for athletes including icing, taping, and rehabilitation. He also meets with coaches to discuss athlete ailments and injuries, and attends practices. He leaves work at 7:30 p.m., eats dinner by 8:00 p.m. and goes to sleep between 9:30 and 10:00 p.m.

I was amazed how deliberately Marco laid out his routine and how he emphasized the “typicality” of his living quarters. In fact, for most of the interview, his responses were monotone



and straightforward descriptions of his daily life in his childhood and in his current life. This is not to say that his life was/is completely regulated by the banal or boring, especially since common understandings of everyday life are habitual or unremarkable. In fact, throughout our interview, Marco's reflections were interrupted by particular moments and affective responses that produced a slight chuckle or subtle smile, especially when his recollections evoked a feeling of nostalgia when talking about his family.

For Marco's parents, their "American Dreams" were realized in part through fulfilling familiar scripts of the immigrant narrative of working hard, and materialized in the purchase of their home. Here, the home is a symbol of achievement, status and prosperity as well as a claim of belonging to America. At the same time, the house is also the marker or symbol of the color line in America. Dianne Harris (2013), for example, notes how, "The monetary value attached to whiteness has been measured significantly in terms of homeownership, which in turn is linked to notions of citizenship and national belonging" (Harris, 2013, p. 31). Inside the home are Marco's parents' unspoken reminders or an emphasis of pursuit, demonstrated by the trophies, certificates and ribbons placed in the home. Further, the home's space also conveys a sense of *Filipinoness* by the Filipino fruits and vegetables grown in the backyard, the Filipino dialect spoken in the home and the religious symbolisms that typify a Filipina/o household. At the same time, Marco's household is not just a space that is uniquely Filipino. What we find are negotiations of Filipino *and* American cultural practices and how he and his family navigate different ways of being, belonging and becoming Americans. In other words, while familiar cultural practices such as speaking Ilocano, growing and eating Filipino foods and the constant religious repertoires placed in the home marked their *Filipinoness*, Marco and his family also participated in a quintessential American pastime: sport spectatorship in the form of amateur and professional sports and in

Marco's case, sporting involvement as a spectator and athlete. Marco's story is therefore a story of everyday life and sports are fundamentally a part of it.

### **The Everyday**

Everyday life is filled with routine, repetition and the banal, where people habitually and unconsciously navigate social worlds. The body is implicated in everyday life, such that thoughts, feelings and experiences are affectively felt, lived, and interpreted (Highmore, 2002). Scholars have posited that everyday life through sport offers a reprieve from the "real world," and a respite from the drudgeries of work (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). Yet, as Henri Lefebvre (1991) reminds us, everyday life is also enmeshed with consumer culture, "thoroughly penetrating the details of daily life" (1991, p. 75), and a cultural institution like sport is no exception.

For Filipina/o Americans, participating in sport was both active and passive and took place in formal and informal settings. Following the lead of Kremer-Sadlik and Kim (2007) who put forth that sporting participation can be, "divided into two: active participation and passive participation. Active participation includes formal and informal sports activities." Formal participation, "refers to activities hosted by a sports organization and governed by the hosting body's conventionalized rules and regulations." Some of my informants were enrolled in a number of these organizations including little league baseball or Pop Warner football. Informal sporting participation,

refers to activities not provided through an organization, but instead organized and regulated by the participants. These include holding backyard pick-up games, shooting hoops at the park, playing catch and striking pucks. Passive participation refers to sport-centered interactions that do not entail physical play. (Kremer-Sadlik & Kim, 2007, p. 37)

Filipina/o Americans' formal and informal participation varied—they played indoors in garages, in high school and fitness gyms and arenas. They played outdoors in the streets and sidewalks, in their backyards, driveways, concrete basketball courts, in public parks and grassy fields.

### **Narratives of Family and Sports**

For many of my informants, sports became a site for family interaction; their sports memories and experiences were shared across generations. Fathers in particular introduced them to certain sports, encouraged them to join and played with them outside. Cynthia, a second-generation Filipina American recalled how,

Both my parents played tennis and I was named after [a famous female tennis player]. I mean, my dad always played sports with me growing up so everything from just playing basketball or [riding] the bike, roller blade, racquetball was big. I just remember playing tennis as a kid, back and forth and then I would formally take lessons. I think because my dad was athletic and exposed me to movement. I think he did martial arts also so he kind showed me a little bit of that.

Often perceived as the carriers of sports knowledge who pass it on to their children, fathers played an important role in using sports to bond and interact with their daughters (Willms, 2009).

Parents supported their children's sporting activities by attending their games. Some mothers were often the most vocal spectators. Lani, a second-generation Filipina American recalled how during her basketball games,

My mom was the one yelling and screaming. I do remember someone next to her [say], "Oh is that your daughter?" Which is obvious because she was probably the only Asian lady there too and I'm the only Asian girl. So they were like, "Oh your daughter is good." Stuff like that. I just remember I was so embarrassed of my mom. She was so loud.

Marco, for example shared how his parents initially did not understand why he and his brother liked sports. However, they grew to enjoy watching professional baseball and basketball teams like the Los Angeles Dodgers and Lakers. He recalled, "My parents loved watching [sports]."

Growing up, I still remember watching Laker games every single time they were on TV. And then they were big Dodger fans growing up. For whatever reason they latched onto Fernando Valenzuela and Kirk Gibson.” Sport spectatorship spanned several generations. Everisto, a 1.5-generation Filipino American shared that his earliest sports memory involved him and his grandmother watching, “The Lakers. Every single game.”

In addition to sports spectatorship, some informants shared how their fathers had the greatest impact in their initiation and socialization into sports. For example, Jenilyn remembers how her father, “is the biggest influence in sports for me. I think I ended up loving sports because of him. I could see his passion in sports.” Her sports memories included countless stories about her father playing basketball in the Philippines. One story resonated with her:

Actually, before 8 years old I do remember my dad playing sports in the Philippines. My mom and him would tell me stories about how he would actually play for money back in the Philippines. And then [he] and his brothers would have their own team and they would play pick up games and that they would gamble. I just remember one story they always told me that whenever they would win, because they would win all the time. They played with each other so well that it was kind of basically their court and they would hustle people and they would pretend, “We just want to play a pickup game.” And then they would win and people would get upset because they cleaned them out of their money, they [their opponents] would chase them. That's what they would say and my mom would say, “I was pregnant with your sister,” and they would get into fights that we would have to run home and she'd be pregnant but she'd have all this money in her pocket because my dad would give her the money all of the time they would win.

Sports spectatorship continues to be a communal experience for Filipina/o American families, especially when they gather to watch Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao fights. In other words, part of Pacquiao’s fight nights are tied to rituals of gathering and an important part of their routines. Informants shared that they attend or host their family members for his fights. Family members cut across generations; grandparents, parents, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins come together to watch the Filipino born pugilist via pay-per-view television in their

homes. This collective gathering of Filipina/o Americans parallels the kinds of gatherings taking place in the Philippines.

Cynthia shared how,

Every Filipino restaurant's [customers are] clapping, catering orders for the house party. It's an exciting day when Pacquiao fights. We haven't missed it ever since that first fight. And just the timing in our family, it's always worked out, my dad orders it and everyone comes over because it was either my birthday or his birthday.

Here Pacquiao fight nights merge with celebrating significant events like birthdays. Beyond the localized level, this notion of “gathering” however, is not just reserved for the friends and family in Southern California. Informants discussed the diasporic connection that Pacquiao evokes.

Francisco, for example, posited that Filipinas/os throughout the world are watching. He explained, “Thinking about it, I'm pretty positive mostly every single Filipino makes a big event every time there's a Pacquiao fight going.” He reiterates,

Everybody [watches]. Whether it's here or over there, every Filipino stops and takes notice. Like I said earlier I'm pretty sure every Filipino, even in Europe, Australia, and maybe even in Africa kind of just makes it an event, sits around the TV and watches him fight.

Philip, a 1.5-generation Filipino American went so far as to say, “It became a holiday every time Pac-Man fights. It's like, ‘Everybody come! There's going to be food!’” One afternoon, on June 9, 2012, the day Pacquiao was set to fight Timothy Bradley, I was texting some of my informants and asking them if they were a) watching the Pacquiao fight and b) with who. Not surprisingly, many of them shared that they were watching it with friends and/or family. Marie, a second-generation Filipina American replied, “Hell yeah!” and that she was watching the fight with her family in Northern California. Then she ended her text with, “National holiday!” Placing Pacquiao's fight nights within the context of a holiday marks Pacquiao's fight along the lines of a festival, celebration and even time off from work. While

fight night spaces are part of the routine gatherings, their statements are also laced with national implications. In other words, acknowledging these fights as holidays allow Filipina/o Americans to insert themselves into the U.S., if not, global imaginary and to address the perceived absence of *Filipinoness* into U.S. historical and cultural memory. In concert with Martin Manalansan's (2001) use of the performative aspects of the quotidian for Filipino diasporic subjects in the U.S., I find his statement useful, and one that parallels my informants' sentiments:

More importantly, these quotidian acts highlight the eccentric locations of Filipinos in the United States, as Oscar Campomanes (1995) has so convincingly stated. Despite the colonial and postcolonial political, military, economic, and cultural connections between the Philippines and the United States, Filipinos are not legibly memorialized or adequately represented in the U.S. national imagination. The very notion of "Filipinos in the United States" in fact dramatizes the ironic displacement that haunts Filipinos living, working and trying to survive and "settle" between America's shores and borders. (p. 169)

Therefore, part of experiencing Pacquiao fights in localized fight night spaces is simultaneously a site of celebration through communal spaces as well as claiming a sense of belonging to America. Francisco exclaimed, "I mean come on, [he's] our first superstar in America." Indeed, these Pacquiao fight night spaces are also a way for Filipina/o Americans to maintain transnational ties, create communal spaces, and to collectively root for their "national hero." Such expressions of community are interconnected to ideas of globality, in which Filipinas/os throughout the world gather.

### **Accessibility, Sports and Class**

The Filipina/o Americans in this dissertation hail from a diverse range of class backgrounds. These class-based distinctions are drawn from interviews, observations, and how my informants described the type of sports they had access to, their neighborhood, and their or their parents' immigration histories and occupations. Informants grew up in suburban

neighborhoods in Orange County, San Diego and the San Fernando Valley, while some shared that they grew up in predominantly working class communities in Los Angeles and Riverside Counties, thus self-identifying their class status. Marco's mother and father for example, first migrated to the U.S. in the early 1980s and worked as farmworkers alongside Mexican and Filipino laborers. He characterizes his neighborhood community as "blue collar" and told me that some of his neighbors worked as groundskeepers on golf courses.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time, Filipina/o Americans' class standings are connected to sports in complicated ways. For some of my informants who grew up in working-class communities, involvement in sports served a socio-economic necessity. Those who grew up in working class communities participated in sports through state and federally funded programs like after school programs because parents could not pick them up from school. Iris, a second-generation Filipina American shared that her initial involvement in sports was an important institutional resource. She shared that her earliest sports memories involved an afterschool program during elementary school. She grew up in a single-income, working class household with her mother who worked nights. She remembers, "My mom couldn't pick me up because she worked so I had to do an afterschool program." Sports also provided a safe space to protect working-class children from negative aspects of their environment. Benny, a second-generation Filipino American who grew up in New York recalls,

[the] neighborhood [I grew up in] used to be an Irish neighborhood when they first settled in there. Slowly but surely by the 80s and 90s, in my classroom we had Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Ecuadorians, Venezuelans, all South American countries were represented and then in the projects of course we had the black kids.

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<sup>25</sup> This disparity is especially jarring when examining the sport of golf. Orin Starn (2011) notes, "Nowadays, whether in Las Vegas or South Carolina's lowlands, you'll find five-star trophy courses for vacationing corporate moguls only a few miles from the run-down trailer parks where the Latino workers who do most of the course upkeep live" (2011: xv-xvi).

For Benny, playing sports like baseball through the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) was a kind of haven or a shield to protect him from getting heavily involved with his neighborhood friends. While his friends were,

doing graffiti, [and] causing trouble, I think [sports] kept me from that aspect. That's how the kids in the neighborhood knew me. I did have friends that tagged up on the walls and they had their little gangs. Every park had their own little set [crew of friends] and any time the neighborhoods clashed, they knew I wouldn't get involved in that. I would just be like, "Alright guys, I'll see you guys later," and I would go my way. And they never had a problem with that because some of those kids were on my teams so it was all good. So for the most part, sports just kept me out of all that trouble.

Benny also shared how his mother rarely, if ever watched him play because she was busy working. He shares,

If we had a Little League season that was about fifteen games, she [Benny's mom] probably showed up to one or two. That's it and that was if it was a home game and she wasn't working that particular time on that weekend but very rarely would she be out there.

Class also shaped the kinds of sports Filipina/o Americans had access to. Those who grew up in working class neighborhoods primarily played basketball because one only needs a basketball and an outdoor playing surface. Thus, the costs of playing are relatively affordable.<sup>26</sup> Phillip, a 1.5-generation Filipino American moved to San Vicente, a working-class neighborhood in Orange County with his father. One of the first things that Philip looked for was a basketball court.

I moved to San Vicente and the funny thing is, the first thing I noticed when I moved here was that I saw a park and a basketball court. I was like, "Ahh, this neighborhood is perfect." And that was it [laughs].

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<sup>26</sup> This does not mean playing basketball is always accessible, especially in terms of distinguishing between playing casually, and playing in organized basketball leagues. The Asian American male basketball league I played in was marked across class lines. Team registration was \$665, not including team uniforms. I had six other teammates so each of us paid \$95. I asked to pay the league organizer in installments because I could not afford to pay the registration fee up front. He obliged. I was also forced to purchase a team jersey that cost me another \$30-\$50.



Phillips story corresponds to what Todd Boyd (2003) argues about space and basketball in his book, *Young, Black, Rich and Famous*. According to Boyd,

Basketball, though is a game uniquely suited to the urban environment. First of all, it requires very little space, and the space that it does require can often be found in public parks or community gyms. The equipment needed is minimal also. (Boyd, 2003, p. 11)

For informants who grew up in middle class communities, their participation in sports reflected their middle-class status; they had a range of choices and their parents enrolled them in sports that required membership and registration fees. For them, sports provided an entry into mainstream social capital (Bourdieu, 1984). In other words, middle class Filipina/o American parents encouraged their children to play and participate in sports to accrue resources through social structures, and the networks one needs to generate in order to receive recognition and access to an upper class status. In fact, Gabriela, a second-generation Filipina American, admitted that if she has a daughter, she would encourage her to play certain sports that reflect a middle to upper class status:

I mean I [would] put my daughter in dance but I definitely think I would be like, “Golf and tennis, the sport of the rich!” That's what I call it. How is she gonna be the CEO of a freaking major fortune five hundred company if she doesn't play golf? I want her to have that advantage where she can be man-to-man or up to par with a [male] CEO so she can play golf then can be in that conversation where deals are getting made on the golf course. That's how I feel.

Gabriela's comments demonstrate how she desires a particular kind of future for her daughter, one where her daughter will tap into sports like golf that are typically considered a privileged arena where CEOs make important deals and negotiate business transactions. Here, the sport of golf is seen as a sport for the powerful (Starn, 2011) and one that Gabriela's daughter will successfully navigate. In doing so, her daughter will not only achieve and sustain middle and upper class status, but will also disrupt the masculine golfing space not only with her play, but also with her presence in the business world.

Moreover, Filipina/o Americans' access to sports was also shaped in relation to available sporting spaces, time, and resources necessary to play or participate. Middle-class Filipina/o Americans, for example, shared that the community they grew up in afforded them the opportunity to play in fields, parks, gyms, driveways and backyards. Arnel, a 1.5 generation Filipino American fondly recalls:

We were very fortunate. We lived in a community called The Greenbelt Park in Oakwood City where everyone plays. They had a park in the middle of the entire complex and everybody in fact from the surrounding cities would go to Greenbelt Park just to play basketball or play in the fields because it was pretty safe. It was guard gated and the who's who of kids wanted to play around there. And right after school until sundown [we would] go play ball year-round. That was cool.

A number of my informants shared that their parents enrolled them in sports like Little League baseball, basketball, tennis, soccer, lacrosse and volleyball. Other than basketball, these sports are typically associated with middle class status (Bloom & Willard, 2002; Fisher, 2002; Grasmuck, 2004).

Sporting cultures and practices also shaped how some of my informants navigated their current class position. Citizenship status, occupation, time, and household resources differed between a recently arrived working-class Filipino, and a 1.5 generation Filipino American. For example, Victor, a middle-aged Filipino came to the U.S. in 2005 and was an undocumented immigrant until very recently.<sup>27</sup> We first met at a 24 hour fitness basketball gym located near a middle to working class community in Los Angeles county<sup>28</sup> and we were waiting our turn for another basketball game to finish. When Victor agreed to participate in my study, it had taken a few weeks for me to schedule the interview because he worked long hours as a valet parker so his time was limited. Victor's 18-year-old son, Julius, had just flown in from the Philippines to visit his father and without my prompting, asked Julius if he would like to participate in my

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<sup>27</sup> Victor recently received his permanent resident card.

<sup>28</sup> After speaking with Victor for about a half hour, I asked if he would be willing to participate and he agreed.

study. Both okayed for me to interview them together. Our interview took place in Victor's 900-square-foot<sup>29</sup> trailer home. While one can see how Victor's class position was reflected in his job, the sport he played, and where he lived, he also has a different kind of investment in sports. Because Victor could not afford to pay for his son's education, it was their hope that Julius could play well enough to earn a basketball scholarship. "To be honest, my dad can't pay for college. If I'm gonna study college, I'm going to have to work [by playing basketball] and pay for it by myself." Eventually, Julius plans on moving to the U.S. to gain citizenship and at the time of the writing this dissertation, the paperwork had already been submitted.

Contrasting Victor's experience is Arnel (whom I discussed above), a 1.5 generation Filipino American financial planner from Orange County. Whereas Victor only has the access and time to play basketball, Arnel plays golf, basketball, and football. He recently shared that he played at Augusta National Golf Course in Augusta Georgia, one of the most prestigious golf courses in the world. He organizes golf tournaments, attends NASCAR races, plays Xbox video games with his friends and family, and hosts family parties for sporting events like the Super Bowl and Los Angeles Lakers games. Arnel said, "I've got a bunch of TVs all over my house. We got a big party house, man. Every weekend is probably 50 to 100 people at my house."

The examples above demonstrate the heterogeneity of the Filipina/o American community in relation to class and sports. While some of my informants disclosed their class status by describing where they grew up, they also had divergent ways of experiencing how and why they participated in sports. While this is not a complete representation of all of my informants, it gives us a complicated and nuanced understanding of how playful and serious sports can be for middle, and working-class Filipina/o Americans.

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<sup>29</sup> My approximation.

## **Consuming Sport in Everyday Life**

The Filipina/o Americans I interviewed in this dissertation actively and indirectly participated in a range of sports; from the more popular and well-known sports such as baseball, basketball, boxing, football, golf, martial arts, or volleyball, to less popular ones such as bowling, cycling and wrestling. “Street” sports such as skateboarding and BMX bike riding were also sports that my informants participated in. Boxing was the sport that many of my informants watched (primarily because of the boxer, Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao), and basketball was primary the sport that was played and watched.

Filipina/o Americans engage with lively debates and discussions with their friends, families and peers about the team they root for, the players they admire and the unfolding narratives and storylines that shape fandom and sporting cultures. One May afternoon day, I was sitting in a teashop in Orange County doing some work on my laptop. About an hour into my visit, a Filipina and Filipino American sat next to me. For the most part, I was minding my own business ignoring their conversation until the subject of the boxers Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao and Floyd “Money” Mayweather Jr. came up. They were talking about if and when the two boxers were going to fight since both of them were the two most popular names in boxing. The Filipino American was directing most of the conversation about the pugilists. He was describing the merits of each fighter’s attributes: “Mayweather is fast but Pacquiao is stronger,” and how they present themselves and are represented in the media: “There’s nothing humble about Mayweather. Pacquiao is the good guy, Mayweather is the bad guy.” The moment above illustrates how conversations about sports permeate Filipino Americans’ day-to-day lives; such conversations resonated with many of my informants. More than just actively playing, spectating, or reading sports online, mundane conversations about sports are part and parcel of

Filipina/o Americans' leisure activities. One of my informants, Carlos, a 1.5-generation Filipino American nursing student admitted that while he reads sports on the internet, "almost every day," he also converses with his girlfriend about the Los Angeles Lakers. He told me that, "Me and my girlfriend, she's a big Laker fan so it is really cool I could talk basketball [with] her. So we argue about who is the better player and all that." In addition to talking about the Lakers with his girlfriend, I also asked Carlos if he talks about sports with anybody else. He shared, "Yeah, all my friends, most of my friends are NBA fans." Carlos shared that the majority of his friends are Filipina/o American.

Philip, a 1.5-Filipino American echoes Carlos's experiences. He shared that he has conversations with his friends, both male and female all the time. He then admits, "to be honest we all wouldn't have been friends if we all didn't play sports. Like all of my friends, I met them through basketball." Beyond daily conversations with significant others and friends, sports-centric conversations enable some Filipina/o Americans to sustain familial relationships.

Vanessa, a second-generation Filipina American explained that while her father initiated her into sports, she continues to talk about it with him, "All the time. It's kind of our connection. It's something that my dad can't talk to with his new wife or any of my other sisters." Gabriela, a second-generation Filipina American described her typical, everyday conversation about sports which include her boyfriend, father, roommate and colleagues:

A typical conversation would be about, "Who do you think the Lakers should trade for so that we could win the next championship?" And mine is, "If only Derrick Rose didn't get hurt this season, we'd be in the championship right now. I know it for sure." And then, "What are we going to do while Derrick Rose is hurt, who should we get?" So those are my conversation. And his conversation is basically, "Who should we trade so that the Lakers could win?" So that's usually, at least twice a week that conversation comes up. And then I'll talk about it with my dad, my former roommate we'll talk about it a lot too. Casually with coworkers, men coworkers. Or colleagues or something like that. I'll talk about something I know about sports, about trade rumors. Or boxing. People always ask me about, my non-Filipino friends will always ask me, certain people at school asked me

what did you think of Manny's fight? I know tomorrow they're going to say something to me about it. I know for sure they'll say something about it. And it's funny because a lot of people at school will say, "What's up with Manny?" Because I'm the only Filipino they will all talk to me about it. And I'm so prideful about it. I know if I see them they're going to say something tomorrow about it for sure.

As revolutions in Internet technology increased Filipina/o Americans' access to information, their participation and consumption of sports were redefined by the advances and innovations of this now global technology (Goggin, 2006). For some, sport is now a part of the rhythm and routine of their day-to-day lives—they use their mobile phone devices and computers to check scores, see updates and find out about the latest sporting trends. They visit home pages like ESPN, NBA, NFL, and the various other blogs and websites that cater to their respective teams and favorite players. They use social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to engage with the virtual world by sharing and re-posting messages about players they admire, the teams they root against and/or the ethical and moral dilemmas that emerge in sport narratives (Boxill, 2003; Stevenson, 1999).

Beyond watching and playing sports in the privacy of Filipina/o Americans' homes, informants participated in sports through fandom in places like restaurants, sports bars, and neighbors' houses. Iris (who I discuss more extensively in chapter 3), a second-generation Filipina American college student is a fan of the NFL team, the Philadelphia Eagles. Sometimes she watches the Eagles on television at a local Philadelphia themed, "subs"<sup>30</sup> restaurant in Orange County. She shared how she interacts with some of the loyal fans and patrons and got to know them by watching the games:

We were watching the game so a lot of comments about what was going on. And since it was a subs place, what kind of food was good there, how long [they have been] going to this place, [its history] and the history of the Philadelphia Eagles fans because they were telling me their stories and they wanted to know who I was, when I went to school, those kinds of things.

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<sup>30</sup> "Subs" means sandwich.

Iris's reflections about this restaurant demonstrate how some Filipina Americans are part of football fandom culture not only through consumption, but also by negotiating the processes of group membership and belonging in public places, and the levels of meaning-making involved in being part of a community of fans. While Iris did not share the profile of these fans (race, gender, age), her experiences do suggest that she disrupts commonly held views about female participation in sports because, women, and feminine things in general—are constituted as subordinate and marginal through myriad everyday popular sporting practices and discourses (Hardin & Whiteside, 2012).

Moreover, Filipina/o Americans were also active athletes in public sporting spaces like parks, fitness gyms, driveways, in Asian American basketball leagues and Filipino American student sports sponsored tournaments. The Asian American basketball league I played in, for example took place on Sunday afternoons or early evenings at a public middle school basketball gym in Orange County. The majority of the players were Filipino American, some of whom participated in this study. This league was part of my and my male informants' weekly regimen. None of my female participants were part of an organized sports league. In addition to organized basketball leagues, I also witnessed Filipina/o Americans playing in a 24-hour fitness basketball gym. In chapter 3, I demonstrate how everyday sporting spaces like the 24-hour fitness gym is a site where Filipino American masculinities are negotiated, resisted and struggled over. Some informants shared how they currently play basketball in their community parks or university recreation centers. Philip, a 1.5-generation Filipino American reflected how at one point, he was consumed with practicing and playing basketball. Nowadays, he plays once a week:

I play full-court basketball. I just go to the park and play basketball. On Mondays, today I normally don't have work. Mondays are normally just run around my block and just [work at his] job. But then that's recently because I'm trying to lose weight, my New

Year's resolution [laughs]. But dang, before I was a freak man, I would get out of practice, right after practice I would go to Bally's and play more basketball and leave at 10. That was my sophomore year [in high school]. So it was like practice, and that's with lifting weights and doing the drills and stuff. Get off work, or get off school at 4 and then go straight to Bally's and play more basketball. And that was Monday to Friday for me.

Moreover, playing sports in a non-organized league continues to hold significance for some of my informants. Isiah said:

When it comes to sports right now, because I don't play competitively so the only time I actually get to play is going to the rec center, just when I'm available when I have down time, just go to the rec center and play basketball, play some pickup basketball. But as far as watching sports, ESPN, [is] your source for all sports right now, so I'm on my phone constantly looking at the news, following the lockouts, stuff like that. And then also when you're watching this stuff like ESPN, it gives you an interest in other sports as well which is why I've kind of gotten to watch MMA [mixed martial arts] or more college football. We don't have a college football team here which kind of sucks. But yet it keeps you interested in other sports too.

**Virtual sporting spaces.** While the spaces described above constitute spaces of private/domestic and public consumption of sports through actively playing and spectatorship, a third space is taken up by Filipina/o Americans in the form of virtual arenas like Twitter, Facebook and various sports-centric blogs and social media outlets (Hugenberg et al., 2008; Miller, 2011). I see these virtual arenas of sports consumption as alternative recreational spaces for Filipina/o Americans to gamble, participate in sporting fandom, and at times, connect with other fans.

Some of my Filipina/o American informants were only interested in accessing the online sports world to garner information for gambling purposes. For example, a few of my informants admitted to gambling on sports, so accessing games online allowed them to track if they won or lost their wagers. Julian, a second-generation Filipino American nursing student shared that he,

[goes] over to MLB.com [but] you have to have an account. Sometimes I go on the illegal websites that actually show the sports [like] ADHDD.net kind of thing. So by any means I was doing that because I was sports gambling. Otherwise I'm not caring to watch a game.



In addition, Vanessa shared how she gambles on football games. A few days before the games begin, she goes on ESPN's website to do her homework so to speak, and to gather as much information as possible before placing her wager. She shared, "You find out who's hurt, you find out [is it a] home or away game, find out the weather, the conditions, how they're gonna play, but mostly, who's hurt. That's what you really look at." Then, Vanessa gives her money to a group of friends, who in turn, place their bets in Las Vegas.

For some of my informants, websites like Facebook and Twitter act as news feeds, and are key spaces to gather information about Manny "Pac-Man" Pacquiao. For example, Angelica, a second-generation Filipina American admitted that she regularly follows Pacquiao and his trainer, Freddie Roach on Facebook and Twitter despite their minimal posts. Facebook also allows her to keep up to date with news about Pacquiao through a "Facebook friend" whom she claims is a "fanatic." She shared, "I have this one friend and he's a fanatic. He goes to every Pacquiao fight. He is always posting things about Pacquiao. It's amazing and I really appreciate it so when he posts things like that, I like it, I'm a 'liker' on Facebook."<sup>31</sup> Angelica admitted that she does not actively play sports and outside of getting updates on Pacquiao, only casually watches big events like the Super Bowl with family and friends.

Using mobile devices are another way that Filipina/o Americans retrieve sports-related information. Gabriela, a second-generation Filipina American who works full time and attends law school part-time, told me that she goes online to check scores and to read the latest sports news every day. "Once in the morning and once in the evening to see if anything changed from this morning to this afternoon." She referenced websites like, "ESPN, NBA.com, [and] the

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<sup>31</sup> According to Facebook, "When you click **Like** on a Facebook Page, in an advertisement, or on content off of Facebook, you are making a connection. A story about your like will appear on your Timeline and may also appear in your News Feed. You may be displayed on the Page you connected to, in advertisements about that Page or in social plugins next to the content you like." See <https://www.facebook.com/help/131263873618748>

Chicago Tribune [online]. LA Times when they used to not block me for the usage. The LA Times [has] a purple and gold blog. And LA Times has a Clippers blog too [and], the New York Times.” Similarly, Marie, a second-generation Filipina American college student reads basketball updates, including scores and news about players. She retrieves her “updates on my phone so that's how I get my updates and on NBA Yahoo! I save that on ESPN under my Internet browser.” I asked her how frequently she reads about sports. She continued,

About basketball, I'd say every day. Just read about it, not into depth but I check up [on] who won, blah blah blah. Who got the high score or who scored the most points, players mostly. Football, only during the season when I don't have much to do. So basketball on a daily, maybe college just when my brother would bring it up. And then football, in season.

More than gambling or reading sports-related news online, Filipina Americans actively participate in a virtual community of fandom on social media platforms like Facebook. Recent postings for example show how they express their excitement, cheer for their team, or share what other fans might be experiencing. From December to January I for example, I noticed a trend of Filipina/o Americans posting comments about the NFL teams they root for. One Sunday afternoon, on January 5, a few Filipina American Facebook users posted real time comments to talk about the professional football teams they cheer for. After the San Francisco 49ers defeated The Green Bay Packers in a playoff game, Charice posted to the Facebook community, “Thank you Lord Jesus for the Niners win!!! Praying on my knees in front of the TV!!! I have no more voice and I am out of breath!!! Woo-hoo!!!”<sup>32</sup> After her post, five of her Facebook friends<sup>33</sup> joined in to comment on her post. One of her friends simply replied with, “Calm down,” while

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<sup>32</sup>Thank you Lord Jesus for the Niners win!!! Praying on my knees in front of the TV!!! I have no more voice and I am out of breath!!! Woo-hoo!!!” “Charice.” [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from Facebook.com.

<sup>33</sup> I am not sure if they are her friends, acquaintances or family members so to stay within the Facebook cultural vocabulary, I use “Facebook friends.”

another stated, “I threw up . . . Twice.” Charice followed up with, “Bryce<sup>34</sup> Lol!!! It's cuz you're a true fan!!!!” Finally, in a telling conversation about fan interaction, one of her Facebook friends replied with, “i want your niners and my chargers to go to superbowl! cali style! haha!” Charice excitedly wrote, “That would be sweet!!!!,” clearly a friendly gesture to acknowledge the potential match up between two Californian teams.

A few weeks later the San Francisco 49ers and San Diego Chargers lost, dashing hopes for a Californian style Super Bowl. This did not deter Charice from posting her thoughts about the Super Bowl matchup between the Seattle Seahawks and the Denver Broncos. She posted, “Super Bowl Sunday this year is about spending time with friends, eating good food, watching commercials, and seeing Bruno Mars kill the halftime show . . . Who cares about who actually wins! (Bitter Niner fan party of one!).”<sup>35</sup> While the San Francisco 49ers were not playing in the Super Bowl, she re-asserted her fan loyalty while also using the event to spend time with friends and family and watch Bruno Mars—of Filipino, Puerto Rican, and European descent—perform at one of the most watched sporting events in the U.S.

Another example involved Zeny, a San Diego Chargers fan. On January 14, she posted a picture of herself at Qualcomm Stadium, the Chargers’ home field. She is stoically staring at the camera and wearing San Diego Chargers paraphernalia while holding a sign that clearly looks like it had been soaked from the rain. The sign reads, “Rain, Snow, or Shine, CHARGERS fan till I die!!.”<sup>36</sup> A Facebook friend comments, “You are the true fan.”

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<sup>34</sup> Bryce is a pseudonym.

<sup>35</sup> Super Bowl Sunday this year is about spending time with friends, eating good food, watching commercials, and seeing Bruno Mars kill the halftime show. . . . Who cares about who actually wins! (Bitter Niner fan party of one!).” [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from Facebook.com

<sup>36</sup> “Zeny.” (2014 January 14). Zeny changed her profile picture. [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from Facebook.com

In another post dated, January 5, Zeny aired out her frustrations at the Chargers' inability to generate any offense. "Ok . . . so we see that conservative crap did NOTHING for us in the 2nd Quarter!!! THROW the ball and WIN this damn game already!!! #jussayin."<sup>37</sup> These Facebook posts among many others, occur simultaneously as Filipina/o American fans watch their teams play. Moreover, the posts above demonstrate how Filipina Americans themselves engage with sporting activities not only through cheering for their teams, but actively engaging with other fans via social media platforms. As Hardin and Whiteside (2012) argue, "Online sport communities create spaces for fans to encourage and converse in public forums that are easily accessible" (p. 152). Whereas, "new-media, cyberspace conversations, for the most part, replicate themes in established discourses that reinforce sport as a masculine domain and position women as inferior interlopers [(Hardin, Zhong, & Corrigan, 2011)]," (Hardin and Whiteside, 2012) the Filipina American Facebook users participate in a cultural practice that can disrupt dominant discourses of thinking about female fandom (Hardin & Whiteside, 2012). At the same time, while Filipina Americans have autonomy in how they engage with sporting fandom cultures and practices, they continue to experience exclusion when accessing certain sports marked as masculine preserves. In chapter 3, I discuss how the gender order is reinforced through discourse and practice.

To conclude, the ethnographic scenes of Filipina/o American sporting activities—passive and active, formal and informal participation—are part of the contours of their everyday lives. It shows how sports are entangled with their routines, the mundane and habitual activities of everyday life, in their memories and objects that offer affective value to their lives. Far from the current literature that documents participation in sporting leagues, or how communities

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<sup>37</sup> "Zeny." (2014 January 5). Ok . . . so we see that conservative crap did NOTHING for us in the 2nd Quarter!!! THROW the ball and WIN this damn game already!!! #jussayin." [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from Facebook.com

participate in sport in institutional settings, this chapter demonstrates how sports are taken up informally, in the daily, habitual, mundane and how pleasures emerge in their leisure pursuits. It is precisely in this way that “sports matters” (Bloom & Willard, 2002) to Filipina/o Americans. In this way, sporting participation does not just take place in the spectacle of the sporting activity itself. They are ingrained in the very spaces they traverse including private/domestic, public, and virtual spaces, the objects that mark affinities with teams and athletes, the casual sporting conversations that occur and the sporting memories evoked that give texture and meaning beyond wins and losses.

If (Arnold et al., 2012) put forth that, “Leisure includes entertaining, playing games, watching TV, video gaming, exercising, playing time with kids, playing sports, snacking, smoking, drinking, playing with pets, doing crafts, whistling, chatting, mid-day napping, and relaxing” (p. 71), the same can be said about the majority of my informants who participated in sporting activities in various ways. Following Arnold et al.’s lead, I see Filipina/o Americans’ sporting time blurring the lines between leisure and work, as evidenced by the ordinary, routinized actions of sports conversations or the constant checking in of sports websites and blogs. In the following chapters, I see everyday life in sporting spaces as social spaces where commonality and social differences are affectively lived and where relations of power are dialectically related (Highmore, 2002; Lefebvre, 1991). In this way, such differences (e.g. race, class, gender and sexuality) through everyday sporting spaces and practices offer potential for critique. This does not mean however, that such critiques overturn existing power relations. Rather, as the informants in the following chapters demonstrate, critiques of the everyday are also reinforced through the dialectical process of power relations that operate in relation to their,

and other sporting bodies. Taking cues from Lefebvre, I describe “moments” when Filipina/o Americans recall and experience sports. For Lefebvre,

“moments” are those instances of intense experience in everyday life that provide an immanent critique of the everyday: they are moments of vivid sensations of disgust, of shock, of delight and so on, which although fleeting, provide a promise of the possibility of a different daily life, while at the same time puncturing the continuum of the present. (Highmore, pp. 115-116)

In other words, while these quotidian spaces may appear to be ordinary or unremarkable, they are also meaningful spaces of conflict, contradiction, and exclusion. It is through the spontaneous acts of embodied sporting activity where social norms and conventions are disrupted or reaffirmed.

In the next chapter, I examine how Filipina/o American navigate and negotiate everyday sporting spaces. In particular it investigates the contradictory and promising appeal of sports through the social matrices of race, gender and sexuality. While one of the appeals of sports has to do with the utter sensuous, excitement, and joy found in sports fandoms, play, and the spontaneous nature in which sports produces particular emotions. Sports’ spontaneity also reveals moments of power where athletic bodies are simultaneously empowered, disempowered, included and excluded.

## Chapter 3

### **Crossing Over Masculinity: Examining the Gendered Perils and Possibility of Sports Cultures and Practices**

The title of this chapter, “Crossing Over Masculinity” evokes movement of bodies, ideas, and practices in Filipina/o American sportscares. While the “crossover” is a basketball move performed by an offensive player (which I discuss below), I also intend to use it as a metaphor to discuss how Filipina/o Americans cross over into realms that can, at times, disrupt normative sporting logics, ideologies, discourses, and practices, both transnationally and in local, site-specific settings. For instance, Filipina Americans disturb conventional notions and ideas of Filipina femininity by using their bodies as athletic bodies in ways that transgress gender boundaries.

In this chapter, I demonstrate how Filipina/o Americans engage with the sporting cultural institution at the everyday level. In particular, I examine the various sites and spaces (public and private) my informants deemed meaningful, as well as those that I participated in and observed. Instead of celebrating sport as the bastion of merit, this chapter uncovers the gendered, sexualized, and race-inflected politics within everyday sporting spaces that Filipina/o Americans navigate.

As I have discussed in chapter one, organized sports emerged as a U.S. cultural institution in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly through public education and the spread of mass mediated commercial entertainment. It has also thrived as a colonial institution to inculcate the colonizer’s value system to the colonized (España-Maram, 2006; James, 1984). In the twenty-first century, sports have gained accelerated coherence as a form of leisure and entertainment, driven by global, commercial market forces and sporting institutions that transcend national borders and boundaries (Appadurai, 1995; Farred, 2006; Joo,

2012). In addition, sports contain their own systems of operation, structure, myth, and ideology, and are constituted by the symbols through which participants make sense of themselves in relation to others (Barthes, 2012). These are enabled by mass media sport; an assemblage of images, people and institutions (Carter, 2006; Joo, 2012; Oriard, 1993). Through these powerful mediums, the dissemination of meanings and messages are consumed by its participants and materialized in sporting spectacles and in daily sporting practice. On one hand, sport reproduces narratives of morality, and cultural values of teamwork and work ethic—it is often celebrated because it influences social conduct far beyond the field, arena or court. Overman (2011, p. 4) explains that the protestant work ethic, so prevalent in economic activity and behavior, has become, “the dominant social and cultural force that influenced American values and shaped the nation’s institutions—including sport.” On the other hand, sports reveal social processes by which its participants narrate their relationship to the social world. These processes are informed by intersecting power relations such as race, gender, sexuality, and class, and are imbued in private and public sporting spaces (Birrell & McDonald, 2000; Carter, 2006; Messner, 1992; Wellard, 2009; Pringle, 2005).

Sports enable the Filipina/o American community to build and sustain ethnic communal spaces (Bonus 2000) of belonging, and to create a Filipino ethnic and national “cast of heroes” (España-Maram, 2006; Pasquil & Edralin, 1994).<sup>38</sup> However, inverting racializations through sporting practices and claiming them as Filipina/o American does not mean that they refrain from using the same problematic configurations of the categories of race, gender, sexuality, and class that initially marginalized them in U.S. (sporting) society. Furthermore, the discourse of sport as a system of “meritocracy” (Gorn & Goldstein, 1993; Yep, 2012; Zirin, 2008, 2005) that

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<sup>38</sup> See also Stanley Ilango Thangaraj’s (2010) dissertation on South Asian American basketball players “inverting mainstream idols.”



directs sporting practices allows participants to gloss over the subsequent contradictions and justify their place-making politics. By highlighting these practices and their subsequent contradictions in Filipina/o American sporting arenas, I convey important information about identity formation within sporting cultures and practices, and their consequent pleasures. It is through such leisure practices like sports, where pleasures refract power dynamics. In this way, I argue that sports occupy an important and contradictory place in the socialization of the Filipina/o American community.

The spaces where these practices unfold include college-level, Filipina/o American club sponsored tournaments, Greek letter organized sporting tournaments, an Asian American basketball league, and the day-to-day sporting activities in public places like health club basketball courts. I argue that these sites are not just places of leisure, pleasure and play, but that they also function as important arenas to understand how Filipina/o American sporting bodies resist mainstream racializations of them as un-athletic, emasculated (King, 2006), or hyper-feminized. At the same time, these sites are also critical venues to explore how they negotiate the parameters of *Americanness* as claims to belonging through their athletic performance, and the formation of identities. Further, examining sports through Filipina/o Americans' daily lives also reveals tensions and fissures that reinforce boundaries of exclusion (e.g. race, gender, sexuality and national identity) while critiquing the very spaces, bodies, and ideologies that seek to exclude them.

Ethnographically informed sports studies scholarship has neglected approaches to the everyday, instead centering their narratives to particular sports and settings, and focusing on specific racial/ethnic, and male-centered groups (Brooks, 2009; May, 2007). These works have tended to emphasize the black-white racial paradigm in the scholarship on sports. As previously

mentioned, Filipina/o American communities have a long history of connection to sports in the Philippines and in the United States, and sports have been fundamental to the development of Filipina/o American communities since in the late nineteenth century. In this chapter, I intervene in these scholarly discussions by emphasizing the different ways in which racialized and gendered athletic bodies converge. Thus, following historian George Lipsitz (2006), popular culture practices like sport,

open up for sustained analysis the everyday life activities of popular culture consumers, youth subcultures, and ethnic minorities. Most important, they provide sophisticated and convincing arguments about the ways in which the commonplace and ordinary practices of everyday life often encode larger social and ideological meaning. (Lipsitz, 2006, p. 51)

In addition, focusing on the quotidian aspects of sports reveals how the mundane is rife with moments of contestation, negotiation and tension. It also reveals how play is embedded in sport memories and the affective responses that reveal processes of race, gender and sexuality. It is within this context of sporting cultural institutions that Filipina/o Americans navigate, interpret and embody the possibilities and contradictions of sports themselves. Thus, as Jarvie and Maguire (1994, p. 124) remind us, sport as a field of culture does not “simply happen at the level of political ideology, but that it also involve[s] common sense experiences and struggles over patterns of everyday thinking.”

Participation in sports, particularly through play and its subsequent pleasures, are often considered a male preserve (Dunning, 1986). For the males in my study, labor and leisure are situated in complicated ways, especially when analyzed through gendered practices. Such acts of pleasure and labor constitute “asymmetrical ideologies of gender” (Bolin, 2003, p. 7), between Filipina and Filipino American sporting bodies. In this way, sporting tournaments sponsored by a college-level Filipina/o American club reflect these power relations. I highlight how Filipina Americans’ investment in sport, primarily through their labor, is obscured and therefore made

invisible. Conversely, while Filipino Americans' labor is also part of the organizing of sporting events they more often than not occupy leadership positions and are rewarded with leisure, play and the pleasures that come with competition. My past experiences as an undergraduate student and alumnus participating in annual sporting tournaments confirm my fieldwork observations.<sup>39</sup> Filipina Americans, therefore, embody a gendered and sexualized source of labor and are expected to perform roles that do not completely challenge the racialized and gendered practices in sporting spaces. As the vignette below will demonstrate, Filipina Americans occupy marginalized positions in sports tournaments that reflect their subordinate status and the kind of gendered labor and expectations that occur in Filipina/o American households. For example, Filipina Americans are expected to perform unpaid household duties, feed their husbands, and maintain cultural traditions and family ties (Espiritu, 2003).

At the same time, participation in sporting cultures and practices offers ways for Filipina Americans to challenge these gendered norms by obliquely critiquing what is possible in terms of gender, ability, and the associated pleasures and desires associated with sporting experiences. In other words, Filipina Americans are not just powerless actors in sports. Rather, within the limited channels and resources made available to them, they exercise some form of agency while still working within the differential fields of power (Brown, 2006). What we find are processes and outcomes that limit and constrain full participation on the part of Filipina Americans and the moments in which gendered practices and ideologies are temporarily challenged and displaced.

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<sup>39</sup> Many of the Filipina/o American clubs' sports coordinator positions are almost always held by men and served as the most "knowledgeable" and "authoritative" voices in sports.

## **Women as Laborers, Objects, Fantasy and Bearers of Tradition**

Literature on Filipinas in the diaspora has documented their presence as a global, migratory labor pool for export to first world countries (Rodriguez, 2010), as available mail-order brides, sex workers (deJesus, 2005), entertainers (Okamura, 1998) and nurses who migrated to the United States after being trained by U.S. colonial educators in the Philippines (Choy, 2003). The Filipina global presence speaks to both visibility and invisibility, and is summed up by Melinda de Jesus (2005). She argues,

Despite our ubiquitous presence throughout the diaspora, Filipinas remain contingently visible: as nameless, faceless overseas contract workers, sex workers, and mail-order brides scattered across the globe. We are seen as objects of a sexist, imperial ideology, yet we remain invisible as subjects and agents. Filipinas are simultaneously everywhere and nowhere. (2005, p. 3)

The figure of the Filipina is also shot through globalized images of her as a domestic helper, prostitute, and as a mail-order bride (Fajardo, 2011; see also Tadiar, 2004). In the U.S., literature on Filipina Americans in particular, and Asian American women in general has represented them as the “model minority” (applicable to Asian American males as well) or in ways that emphasize their gender, race and sexuality, often by representing them as passive, exotic, hyperfeminized, and exploitable. In popular cultural practices for example, Soo Ah Kwon (2004) demonstrates that Asian American women in the import car scene are often depicted as sexual objects and hood ornaments wearing scantily clad outfits to appease the heterosexual male gaze. While these women attempt to enter the import scene as “girl racers,” they are fetishized by the male participants and are often framed in relation to heterosexual masculine desires.

In Filipina/o American families, Filipina Americans are expected to perform conservative gender roles, maintain ideals of “Filipino womanhood that is chaste, modest, nurturing, and family oriented” (Espiritu, 2001). As the paragons of morality for their families, Filipina

Americans are expected to maintain the status of the family, perform reproductive kin work and are often restricted from certain activities that their brothers are allowed to do. Such expectations only serve to reinforce patriarchal family relations. As a point of departure from the above-mentioned works, this chapter adds to the literature by focusing on the agency and subjectivity of Filipina American athletic bodies as they engage in sport cultures and practices. I reveal the gendered dynamics that take place in predominantly masculine, or male-dominated spaces and the ways in which their presence and athletic feats challenge existing racial and gendered stereotypes about them as passive, exotic and demure.

### **Gendered Sporting Labor: The Invisibility of Filipina American Work**

*On a dry, hot summer day in late August 2011, I attended an annual sports tournament, titled, "The North Valley Invitational," organized by "Filipino American Cultural Alliance," an undergraduate student driven Filipino club at a teaching institution in Northern Los Angeles County. The tournament takes place on campus and the basketball gyms, baseball, soccer and football fields are reserved for hundreds of Filipinas/os to experience leisure and play through various sports and its localized sporting spaces. I walked toward the main entrance of the basketball gym and two Filipina Americans were in charge of the registration table. They were checking athletes in, looking up their names and confirming their identities. I approached the table and introduced myself to the women. I explained that I was a graduate student conducting research on sports in the Filipina/o community and that I was interested in meeting their sports coordinator. As a male researcher, I assumed that these women were not in charge. They replied that he was walking around and that they would tell him about me. After calling the sports coordinator, Marlon, from their two-way radios, they directed me to where I could meet him. I*

*Lingered a few minutes to converse with the women. I asked them if they would be interested in participating in my study and they both agreed. They wrote down their information on my sign-up sheet and I thanked them for their time. I then turned around to meet Marlon in the open field area across from the gym. After the obligatory introductions, I told Marlon that I was interested in speaking to him more about my study. As I was speaking to him, he excused himself and told me that he needed to respond to his colleague, one of the women at the registration table. While I tried not to eavesdrop on their conversation, I overheard my name being mentioned. I was curious about what was being said but I did not want to intrude so I patiently stood next to him minding my own business. Then, Marlon tersely replied, "Relax, he's harmless," an obvious reference to my presence. Because my attire indicated that I had no intention of playing and was not representing a team or organization, and the fact I introduced myself as a person only interested in conducting research at the tournament, I surmise that they were cautious of my presence and were interested in protecting their community, especially since they did not know how my research findings were going to be used. Linda Trinh Vo (2000) reminds us in the dangers of hardening insider outsider boundaries without considering our own sets of differences within the very same communities from which we hail. While these Filipina Americans held a certain level of power as the gatekeepers of the tournament space, their relative power did not completely overturn the material realities of women in the tournament and its existing gender hierarchies.*

*After meeting Marlon, I decided to walk around the tournament spaces to observe the rest of the athletes, spectators and organizers on the baseball and football fields, as well as the basketball and volleyball courts inside the gym. I noticed that two of the sports, flag football and basketball, featured all male teams while volleyball and softball were co-ed.*

The vignette above demonstrates that while Filipina-Americans were part of the Filipina/o club's organizing team and served as important figures in volunteering to help register athletes, their presence was absent from some of the male-dominated sports like basketball and football. So, while their labor was part and parcel of the daily operation of the sports tournament, their opportunities for leisure and pleasure were limited to certain sports marked acceptable for female involvement (Adams, 2011; Grasmuck, 2004 [looks at baseball]; Thangaraj, 2010). Such sports like volleyball are deemed appropriate sports for female involvement because it does not rely on physical contact and power over another body and "aggressiveness" prevalent in sports like basketball and football. In addition, social conventions designates sports "as activities which are especially appropriate for boys and men, and inappropriate or questionably appropriate for girls and women. Swimming and volleyball would not qualify as masculine sports" (Vetterling-Braggin, 1982, p. 270). I would also add that dress code, in this case practice gear and team uniforms also emphasize the femininity of the female body. Tight fitting short shorts and jerseys accentuate and objectify her thighs and upper body.

Filipina Americans literally and figuratively stayed on the periphery as their labor was made invisible while the males' play and its accompanying pleasures and desires became the site of masculine privilege. In other words, the only way they were afforded opportunities to participate in sport was through their labor and the limited sports made available to them. Such masculine pleasures are therefore made possible by the Filipina Americans' labor. Additionally, I found their reaction to me particularly interesting in part because while I was an "insider" to the sporting space as a co-ethnic Filipino, I was also met with skepticism by these women as an "outsider" attempting to gain entry into their tournament space. Because my attire indicated that I had no intention of playing and the fact I introduced myself as a person interested in conducting

research at the tournament, I surmise that they were cautious of my presence and were interested in protecting their community, especially since they did not know how my research findings were going to be used. In addition, these Filipina Americans held a certain level of power as the gatekeepers of the tournament space but not in ways that completely overturned the material realities of women in sport and its existing gender hierarchies. They “maintained” the functioning of the tournament by performing the necessary labor to ensure that the athletes were registered, tournament brackets were updated and maintained communication with the sports coordinator. Setting up the weekend-long tournament also involves arriving hours before the tournament begins. This involves setting up the registration table, place marking the designated fields, delegating tasks to other volunteers and standing for hours at a time. This kind of labor is akin to what Stanley Thangaraj (forthcoming 2014) calls, “caring labor,” a type of labor that South Asian American women perform in Indo-Pak basketball tournaments, a South Asian American, heterosexual masculine space. While these South Asian American women served as the organizers of the tournament and were instrumental in its daily operations, their labor was not valued, celebrated or recognized and instead were considered an afterthought in relation to South Asian American masculine bodies playing basketball where their masculinities and play were revered, celebrated and iconized.

As early as the 1970s, sports studies scholars have critically assessed the different power dynamics that have continued to privilege masculine ideologies and practices in the institution of sport and in the field of play. As a result, we find that normative behaviors constrain and limit those who fall outside of its rigid boundaries. These studies often highlight how gender in general, and masculinity in particular, and their associated practices figure prominently in the



maintenance of power as women and queer subjects' desire to play is stifled when they attempt to enter the sporting space (McKay, Messner, & Sabo, 2000; Pronger, 1990).

At the same time, to focus on masculinity as a problem through the privileging of male bodies obscures how Filipina Americans navigate these gendered channels in private and public spaces. Although they are institutionally locked out of certain sports that are marked masculine, Filipina Americans circumvent these exclusions by participating in these male-dominated arenas through alternative measures. In doing so, Filipina Americans not only claim spaces for themselves in the face of masculine domination, but they also challenge racialized and gendered stereotypes and discourses of Filipina Americans as passive, hyper-feminine and exotic (deJesus, 2005; Espiritu, 2001). In this regard, I posit that Filipina Americans do not simply reproduce existing racialized and gendered stereotypes in sport. Rather, they, at times, are active agents in the constructing of their identities that transgress expected Filipina American femininities, and make claims to belonging through their own set of sport practices, gestures and meaning-making processes.

### **Filipina American Tomboys**

*I could play football with the boys. So I guess I was a tomboy. So I remember that. Formal sports, whatever they did offer we would play. But my earliest memory was probably tossing the football back and forth with the boys 'cause whatever the girls were doing was too easy [laughs].—Cynthia, second-generation Filipina American*

*I've seen a lot of baby pictures but even when I was a toddler I already had a basketball in my hand so my dad was already just, I guess you know being the firstborn and I was a girl, I was daddy's girl. So I remember just playing with the ball all the time. I guess in a way I was also from him I was like a tomboy so I just did a lot, I just liked sports. If you watched the game I was with him so I just remember having a ball in my hand. And it was a basketball.—Lani, second-generation Filipina American*

The reflections above offer a recurring theme in the interviews I conducted with Filipina Americans. As Cynthia and Lani shared their earliest sports memories, they did so by acknowledging that their athletic identities were anchored to notions of what they considered masculine sporting practices. In this way, their bodies act as, “social memories,” a way in which they learned, refined, recognized, recalled and “evoked dispositions to act” (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994, p. 186). Linking their bodies to social memories, I see how their memories offer us windows to glimpse at how gender, family and sport infiltrate their everyday lives.

In her chapter titled, “We Don’t Sleep Around Like White Girls Do,” Yen Le Espiritu (2003) discusses how Filipina/o American families regulate their daughters’ behavior by grounding their beliefs through Filipino cultural values. These values attempt to counter perceptions of white women as sexually promiscuous, while simultaneously reproducing patriarchal structures within the family. Yet for some of my Filipina American respondents, in some ways, participating in sports enabled a different way of seeing themselves in relation to their parents.

For example, Lucy, a second-generation Filipina American recalls her childhood sporting memories as a tomboy. Whereas anthropologist Kale Fajardo, defines the tomboy as one who, “broadly refers to Filipino masculine or male-identified fe/males who generally have sexual/emotional relationships with feminine females,” the tomboys highlighted in this ethnography were ones that embodied tomboy features precisely because of their participation in sports that were considered masculine, while maintaining sexual/emotional relationships with boys/men (see also Ordon, Stewart & Ubaldo, 1997). In an interview, Lucy recalls how in elementary school and junior high, she “learned to be a tomboy,” in order to “hang out with boys,” and found that sports was one of the ways to do so. She recalls,

During lunchtime, during recess, me and these three girls were kind of like the tomgirls/tomboys and we'd always play the sports during lunch time with the boys because they were funner to play with. The girls would play hopscotch or foursquare or something boring and the boys would always be playing sports during recess or lunch.

I pressed further about what she meant by being a tomboy. She states,

I guess I just was really more interested after learning about football, about really just getting out there, in our school you know tomboys were playing sports and hanging out with the guys. I grew up in the cul-de-sac where there were five boys and two girls on the street and me playing every day so I think hanging out with them playing hide and seek or whatever on my block. Not just playing sports with the guys. We were hanging out with guys. I just had more fun with it.

I asked Lucy if she named herself a tomboy or if the boys she was playing with did. She admitted that her parents were the ones who named her in part because her sister was the “girly one.” She remembers that because of this, she “went to that world [sports] more. I think I realized I'm not good at what [her sister] does so this kind of sets me apart because she doesn't really play sports.” While Lucy embraced typically masculine activities like playing football and hanging out with boys, her sister embraced conventional femininities. She remembers how her sister was,

Good with her hair, good with her makeup, really like[d] to play with dolls. With the hair and makeup growing up I didn't really care about that. I mean I was interested in boys growing up but [she was] getting them the girly way. You know like wearing dresses. I think like me, I felt comfortable like well, “I'll hang out with them [the boys] by playing sports.” She would play but I think she just thought whatever something you do in school, but I really enjoyed it and really had fun doing it.

She also recalls her interactions with playing with boys as, “Good, it wasn't bad. It wasn't a bad thing to play with them. It was positive reinforcement.” Her positive experiences playing with boys suggests that she held some level of “power and prestige” (Paechter, 2006; Pascoe, 2007) as well as respect from the boys and did not recall feeling alienated from her peers.

Lucy's recollections, and the quotes above suggest that sports enable alternative ways in which gender interacts with sporting practices in the Filipina/o family. These gender practices

are akin to what Kale Fajardo (2011) identifies in looking at figure of the tomboy in the Philippines and in “Filipino crosscurrents.” Fajardo states, “Tomboy can also be understood as a form of transgenderism or transexualism where tomboys enact or embody transgressive sex/gender practices and/or identities” (p. 154). In Lucy’s case, her parents define her body as masculine both in relation to her more feminine sister as well as due to her desire to participate in masculine sporting activities with boys. In her own way, Lucy also rejected feminine activities while still maintaining heterosexual desires. At the same time, Lucy’s parents could also be using cultural frameworks (e.g., language) transported<sup>40</sup> from the Philippines that might further complicate her identity. Since Lucy’s parents’ first language is Tagalog, it is entirely possible that they might apply their own cultural lenses to identify Lucy’s embodied gender identity as a tomboy. Since the Filipino language is gender neutral, tomboy connotes different meanings in Tagalog than it does in English. In other words, Tagalog is gender inclusive; it does not differentiate between sex and gender. Therefore, the parents’ own cultural lens informed how they interpreted and labeled her gendered performance that is distinct from a white-American context (Fajardo, 2011). While Filipina Americans transgress gender boundaries by embodying tomboy attributes, they also disrupt sporting gestures in predominantly masculine spaces and sports, particularly basketball.

### **“Ooh, She Crossed You Over!” The Basketball Crossover: Disrupting Gendered Gestures in the Basketball Space**

In this section, I use the term, “crossover” to highlight a popular basketball move. I also transpose it by demonstrating the ways in which expected gender performances in sports are “crossed over” by female masculinity (Halberstam, 1998; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003). Thus,

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<sup>40</sup> I emphasize “transport” to highlight Fajardo’s use of transportation to discuss how “Filipina/o peoples *and ideas* flow back and forth between the Philippines and diasporic locations.

the crossover is an appropriate term to expose how Filipina American sporting bodies cross over common sense understandings of masculinity as simply a male domain. Indeed, sports, as a social institution are often considered a male preserve (Dunning, 1986) and a site upon which the conferment of masculinity is normalized through bodily practices, expressions, and ideologies that reaffirm the gendered status quo. In particular, heterosexual masculinity constitutes the normative aspects of sport, leaving others, particularly female and queer bodies on the margins (Anderson, 2003; Caudwell, 2011).

One of the ways in which masculinity is reaffirmed in sports and the sporting landscape are its reliance on deploying the male body in “forceful and space-occupying ways” (Wenner, 1998). The male body in these sporting spaces is predicated on gendered performances that naturalize the link between the male body, its bodily performance and execution. But open closer investigation, Filipina Americans challenge the assumptions that sports are simply a male domain, or that their bodies cannot perform feats that are typically considered masculine. I follow Judith Halberstam’s (1998) lead, who argues that masculinity is not simply about maleness, or that it is always embodied by male bodies—rather, masculine scripts are performed in complicated ways by women through discourse and practice. For Filipina Americans, their experiences performing masculinity is further complicated by their race *and* gender. Yet a recent work highlighting a Filipina American performing and embodying masculinity ignores how intersections of race and gender inform her identity. For example, in an insightful analysis on the formation of gender and sexual identities in a high school setting, C.J. Pascoe (2007) documents how “Michelle,” a Filipina American informant “acts like a boy” by playing a predominantly male sport like basketball, wore boys’ clothing and performed a “cool” hip-hop aesthetic. Through her interactional style, musical choice and clothing aesthetics, Michelle and the rest of

her female masculine friends were praised by their peers for their overtly masculine behaviors. In this way, Pascoe reveals how high school girls can embody masculinity that does not threaten the gender order. But Pascoe inadvertently holds these female masculine figures as uniform for all women who perform masculinity or who have same sex desires. Pascoe obscures how Michelle's ethnic identity (informed by cultural values and gendered expectations within the Filipina/o family) and female masculinity is complicated outside of the school setting. Further, Pascoe does not take into account how the Filipina/o community receives her non-normative body, nor does she ask how her own family considers her gendered identity. Let me elaborate my point further in the following interview.

I interviewed Jenilyn, a 30-year-old high school teacher from Los Angeles County. Jenilyn went to a University of California school in northern California where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science with a minor in education. Then, she earned a Master of Arts degree with a teaching credential at a private university in southern California. She is currently teaching high school English. Jenilyn was first introduced to sports by her father, which is a common theme among many of my female respondents. In our conversation, Jenilyn told me that her earliest sports memory is watching the Los Angeles Lakers with her father when she was 8 years old. Her father was an avid basketball fan and used to play recreationally in the Philippines and later, in the United States in an all Filipino, male basketball league. Throughout elementary school, Jenilyn continued to play organized sports such as softball and basketball. However, she did not play in middle school, other than recreationally with her male friends from church and in parks with her father. In high school, she ran track and played volleyball for 2 years while she played basketball all 4 years. I was curious about her experiences playing sports against other males and if she remembers any comments directed to, or about her. She states,

Yeah, every time whenever I would play in the league, or pickup games, whenever I would cross over a guy and everybody would just go, “ooh, she crossed you over!” They would make a big deal out of it. Or if I make a shot in front of their face or something like that, even if they block me, they would prosecute that guy for blocking me. That would be the general reaction.

Jenilyn’s crossover is a basketball move that relies on “quickness and fakery,”<sup>41</sup> and is performed in one, fluid motion. In basketball vernacular, to perform the crossover is akin to “ankle breaking,” whereupon the defender falls because she was not expecting a quick and sudden move. The crossover starts with the offensive player dribbling hard with her right or left hand. For the sake of continuity, we will assume that the player is dribbling with her right hand. As the offensive player is dribbling, she simultaneously looks and leans toward the right side, lowers her right shoulder, and takes a hard step with her right foot, acting as if she is moving in that direction. This forces the defender to slide their feet toward the direction of the offensive player to stop them from going past them. Then, in a quickly timed sequence, the offensive player instantly stops, “crosses” the ball over in front of her body (or in between her legs) to her left hand, and if executed properly, dribbles by the defender for an easy pass or score. The defender’s ankles are “broken” because he/she either falls and/or loses balance. Whereas shooting a basketball is more of a mechanical function (e.g. off-hand placement, elbow and wrist at ninety degrees), performing the crossover is unpredictable and takes a level of imagination and creativity in order for it to be effective (Thangaraj, 2013).

The crossover move was popularized by a number of former and current African American NBA players such as Pearl Washington, Tim Hardaway, Allen Iverson, Dwayne Wade

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<sup>41</sup> “The crossover “is a difficult move in part because a player must have complete hand control over the ball. In order to have control of the basketball one must perfect the technique by conditioning the hands, fingers and forearms. This is done through repetitiously dribbling the basketball thousands and thousands of times. I remember trying to perfect the crossover when I was in intermediate and high school, to no avail. See for example some of the NBA pioneers of this move: “The Crossover: Genealogy of One of Basketball’s Most Vicious Moves” <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/05/13/sports/basketball/the-crossover-genealogy-of-a-vicious-move.html>

and Chris Paul. In the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) African American players like Seimone Augustus, Dawn Staley, Ivory Latta and Epiphanny Prince are also part of this elite group recognized for perfecting this difficult move. According to Jenilyn, when she executed the crossover against her male defender, the rest of the players reacted in surprise: "Ooh she crossed you over!" The reaction to her move was met with shock and awe by her male counterparts. What is interesting is that "she" is emphasized, and thus becomes the conduit for the other males to target the male defender without directly engaging with her. "She" becomes the feminine subject who violates the masculinist space. In some ways, her move and the subsequent response by the males in the gym emasculated her defender by assuming that a woman was not supposed to perform such a difficult move against another male. It also chastises the male player for not being able to keep up with a female body that is already seen as an subordinate body in relation to the expected skillful male body. Yet the crossover in and of itself is considered an act of masculinity. It is a type of discipline and control whereupon her bodily movements; the crossover move and the ability to control her defender's body and the basketball is dictated how her male defender's body reacted—in this case, she forced him to lose his balance.

Her bodily gestures therefore run counter to the normalizing discourses of gender and ability, and in turn, disrupts conventional thinking of basketball skill in particular, and bodily movements in sports in general. At the same time, consider again the male reaction. Their reaction persistently underlies masculine ideologies and behaviors in sport discourses and reaffirms the norms and practices upon which women confront in the basketball space. Her body was framed and measured against the male body. This parallels what Brown (2006) states, with "regards [to] the female sporting body as having considerable potential for generating a material



*and* symbolic subversion of masculine domination that challenges the gender orthodox ‘gaze’” (p. 164).

Although the female athlete is celebrated, it is done so with the emphasis on the basketball (dis)ability of the male player. Thus, while this may disrupt ones thinking that a woman’s basketball movements and gestures are not on par with men, it is clear in this instance that one can.<sup>42</sup> To be sure, Jenilyn’s abilities to flawlessly execute the crossover is a result of hard work, practice, repetition, and knowledge of basketball that makes her move successful. Therefore, when we situate Jenilyn’s crossover in the larger context of sporting performance, one sees how biologically deterministic assumptions and perceived gendered limitations in a typically masculine sport challenge conventional views of male bodies as the ultimate performers of athletic ability.

Furthermore, Jenilyn did not see the reaction of her male counterparts as sexist in part because she, “grew up with these guys and so I don’t really take it personal.” Indeed, when she was recalling this moment, her tone was casual and did not seem to think that their reactions were troubling. I pressed further and asked Jenilyn about her thoughts on their comments. She states, “I would just laugh. I mean, I could see how it could be a bit sexist. It’s like, why can’t I cross them over because I’m a girl, they highlight the fact that I’m a girl.” Jenilyn is well aware that her gendered physical performance subverts these men’s ideologies of masculine practice. Her female body violates an expected performance of masculinity to be performed by men.

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<sup>42</sup> Resistance to gendered norms and practices have also taken place at the professional level. Consider for example, “The Battle of the Sexes,” a tennis match on September 20, 1973, in the Houston Astrodome between female tennis player Billie Jean King and the male tennis player, Bobby Riggs. Known for his gambling tendencies, Riggs initially challenged King to a tennis match but she refused. Then, he turned his sites on Australian, Margaret Court, the then number one tennis player in the world. She accepted and they played, with Riggs thoroughly defeating her. In the aftermath of Riggs’ victory over Court, King reconsidered her refusal to play him and thus set up the match deemed the “Battle of the Sexes,” which took place in Houston, TX in front of approximately 30,000 people. (Ware 2011) King defeated Riggs 6–4, 6–3, 6–3, winning \$100,000 and more importantly, provided a watershed moment for gender equality in sport.

Jenilyn does not necessarily subscribe to a feminist agenda and in our conversation, she did not express a kind of explicit feminist politics that critiqued normative sporting behaviors. Jenilyn's response echoes what Carpenter & Acosta (2005) suggest, that

Many, and perhaps most, female athletes do not self-identify as feminists and do not perceive themselves as signing onto a feminist agenda when they play sports. Women's sports advocates work at the periphery of the feminist movement, and many of the athletes and fans who benefit from their work show little interest in broader feminist projects. The reasons for this divide are complicated, but surely it is influenced by the cultural contradictions triggered by women's participation in a traditionally masculine endeavor such as sport. If playing sports—especially playing masculine sports and playing them well—threatens to compromise women's culturally valued femininity, disavowing feminism can help women athletes reclaim a more acceptable feminine identity.

For Jenilyn, the fact that she talks about her opponent being “prosecuted” for blocking her speaks to David Brown's (2006) notion of “masculine legitimacy.” Thus,

sportswomen (and sportsmen) undoubtedly can come to embody the generative potential for symbolic and material challenges or *subversions* to the naturalized ascriptions and legitimations of the gender order. The body in sport and physical culture thus remains a “battleground” for the exercise of symbolic masculine legitimacy and domination, where the naturalized gendered bodies are policed in both conscious and unconscious ways, and where the legitimate types of bodies and uses of bodies are constantly at stake. (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 177)

In the same way that women crossover gendered boundaries and athletic expectations, there are also unspoken, gendered discourse that Filipina Americans confront in institutional settings.

### **Institutionalized, Unspoken Codes of Masculinity**

Iris was born in Los Angeles, but was raised in Sierra, a city located in the San Gabriel region of Los Angeles County. In contrast to Jenilyn's experiences, whose father introduced her to sports, Iris's father left her and her mother when she was a child and thus, lived in a single parent, single income household. Because her mother was working as a secretary for a textile

company and could not immediately pick her up after school, Iris was enrolled in an afterschool program. In this program, Iris was first introduced to sports, where she played basketball, softball, track, volleyball and “powder puff” football. She is also an avid fan of the National Football League (NFL) team, the Philadelphia Eagles. When Iris was in high school, Iris recalls attending a freshman sports orientation. In this orientation, coaches spoke to her group about the different sports that were available for them to play. She said that she wanted to play football but did not sign up because it was already implied that girls were not allowed to play. While Iris did admit that she “kind of fulfilled [playing football] when I joined the powder puff team in high school” she was also critical of the fact that the coaches “say the girls can play football but they don't really want them to play football. I felt that vibe.” I pressed Iris further about “the vibe” she received from the coaches and asked why she felt like football was not for her. She states,

Well as far as my freshman year there was an orientation to sports and I ended up taking the route of volleyball because I knew, I always enjoyed football but when it came to talking about football the coaches made it seem like, “oh it's just for men, you know for males, if you want to learn how to be a man you join football.” I felt like the only position I could play was the punter so yeah it just didn't work out.

In American football, male athletic activity and achievement is celebrated, as these athletes become the symbol of strength, power, and dominance over other men. Women, however, literally and figuratively occupy the margins as their participation in football is relegated to the status of “cheerleaders” and/or spectators. As Rowe, McKay and Miller (2000), citing Messner state,

football, based as it is on the most extreme possibilities of the male body, . . . is clearly a world apart from women, who are relegated to the role of cheerleaders/sex objects on the sidelines. . . . In contrast the bare and vulnerable bodies of the cheerleaders, the armored bodies of the football players are elevated to mythical status, and as such give testimony to the undeniable “fact” that here is at least one place where men are clearly superior to women.

Thus, while women are part of the larger production of football activity, their bodies become hyper-feminized and consumed through compulsory heterosexual desires within particular gendered practices such as cheerleading. And, when women are part of the team, they are placed in the position of a punter, a position that is typically not regarded as physical, and thus “less masculine.” Iris’s observations clearly reflect the inequitable gendered practices and the ideologies that persistently prevent girls and women from having a chance to fully participate in “contact sports” (Brake, 2010) such as football. While Title IX’s legislation requires opposite-sex teams to allow equal opportunity for women to tryout, the implications are such that girls and women are not necessarily welcomed. Here, Iris’s experiences speak to sport as being “a fundamentally sexist institution” (Theberge, 1991) even if the coach did not explicitly state that women were not allowed to play football.

Not to be mistaken with what is commonly known as “tackle football,” Iris’s only option available for her to play was “powder-puff football.” “Powder-puff football” is a time-honored ritual event in the totality of high school football (Foley, 2010). In this game, a “ritual of inversion” (Foley, citing Babcock, 1978) takes place whereupon females dress up in football gear and play touch<sup>43</sup> football against each other, while males dress up in cheerleader outfits and mockingly act out cheerleader techniques and choreography on the sidelines. Foley (2010) describes powder-puff football is a playful activity between male and female participants, even if the women take the competition seriously. I would add that it is only through the normative practices and ideologies associated with football that gender inversion can take place. Because masculine codes and practices are entrenched in football ritual activity, the threatening of such gender norms are kept at arms length through parody and irony. As a result, the mocking of

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<sup>43</sup> Touch football is different than tackle football in that is less physical. The defensive player usually tackles the offensive player. If a defender “touches” the opponent with two hands, then that person is considered “down.”

cheerleader roles through over the top behaviors of “femininity”—thus a topsy-turvy, carnivalesque parody—and the drag attire worn by male football players only serves to reinforce what is already normative in football cultures and practices.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, Iris’s experiences also reflect how volleyball becomes an acceptable form of femininity, and is not considered a “contact sport.” Unlike in volleyball, the gender identification in football and basketball relies on male-to-male relations and homosocial bonding which are in turn, reproduced as masculine and distinct from femininity. Volleyball does not meet these requirements (Vetterling-Braggi, 1982; Nylund, 2007).

Finally, on the everyday level, the gendered practices in sport are very clearly articulated and evident through the unspoken gestures and implied expectations of female participation in football. For Iris, her high school memories of football were memories of exclusion and disappointment. And yet, she continues to participate in football through pleasure and football fandom as a Philadelphia Eagles fan. Iris recalls the first time she was introduced to professional football in seventh grade. She was at her friend’s house waiting for her friend to get ready to go out. Her friend was “taking forever” so she decided to watch television. She recalls watching the Philadelphia Eagles playing and immediately became interested in the team. She told herself, “I’m going to keep watching this,’ so I trained myself to watch it.” Since then, she watches football every Sunday and Monday, especially if the Philadelphia Eagles are playing. She continued to learn the nuances of football by attending high school football games in person. So, although Iris was excluded from participating in football as an athlete, Iris finds sources of pleasure through fandom, which is typically associated with masculine activity. More studies are needed however, to flesh out the ways that sport fandom replicates and normalizes masculinity or serves to disrupt it altogether (Joo, 2012). Following Joo’s lead (2012) in complicating notions

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<sup>44</sup> This idea was further developed through my personal conversation with Stanley Thangaraj.

of “pure” sport fandom, it is further important to look beyond female football participants who merely serve as “objects” on the sidelines or as “irrational” fans who only watch sports for the valuation of men’s bodies (Mewett & Toffoletti, 2012) or to “spend time with family and friends” (Hartmann, 2003). Though Iris did not express a type of feminist politics in sport, her decisions, reflections and own analysis of her engagement with football suggest that she is, at the very least, disrupting commonly held assumptions about female participation (Brake, 2010; Heywood & Dworkin, 2003). While she expresses forms of agency through her desire to play and subsequently critique the masculine order, one of my other informants utilizes her position as a fifth grade public school teacher to counteract emergent gender expectations among her students.

In the narratives above, the workings of gender have produced conflicting and contradictory experiences for Filipina Americans. But gender also intersects with sexuality in ways that reinforce heterosexual masculine scripts. These scripts are not only produced through heterosexual, and hypermasculine discourse and practices, but also through masculine tropes of national identity, particularly through language. In the following section, I detail how Everisto, a self-identified, queer Filipino American reflects on the tensions and fissures within the Filipina/o community and the limited parameters of understanding what it means to be part of a team.

### **“You’re such a F.O.B.” Intraethnic Tensions and the Self-Policing of a Sexual Identity**

There is an assumption that playing sports bonds teammates, and that differences and tensions get muted in the name of accomplishing a team goal. My interview with Everisto belies this assumption, particularly when placed in the context of intraethnic relations—in this case, between members of the Filipina/o community. In this section we see how Everisto’s experience demonstrates how intraethnic tensions are played out at the everyday level between teammates.

One afternoon, I sat down with Everisto, a 1.5-generation Filipino American (born in the Philippines but came to the U.S. at a young age) to discuss his sporting experiences with me. I asked him if he could recall a moment in which a teammate, coach or spectator angered him. He told me that during his junior year in high school, one of his teammates, a Filipino American bullied him on “more than one occasion.” He said that his teammate targeted him because of his Filipino accent. His teammate,

just made fun of me all the time. So there was a little bit of bullying going on and I didn't let it bother me until one time I'm like, “What the hell? What's wrong with this dude?” I don't actually remember what he did. He was the annoying one that made me that angry at times.

It seemed as if Everisto was a little cautious about revealing too much about the nature of his teammate's bullying. I was curious about what he meant so I pressed him further and asked him to clarify. He continues,

I think he was making fun of my athletic skills. I was a little heavier, on the heavier side, compared to other people who were more fit than I was. Also part of that was me having a Filipino accent. He was Filipino American himself born in the U.S. but he made fun of me, on how I say things, how I would pronounce some things when we were communicating during practices and what not. He did a lot of that as well.

Here Everisto's Filipina/o American teammate projects expectations of an ideal, male athletic body. The ideal athletic body's attributes are a lean, tightly muscular frame. But by his teammate's estimation, Everisto's body was soft, and admittedly, “a little on the heavier side” even if he “still had enough hops to reach higher, high enough to be able to hit the ball.” Everisto's body did not convey characteristics of a physically strong and powerful body, and therefore he represented a kind of failed masculinity incommensurate with an ideal, muscular physicality. Earlier I discussed how volleyball was not considered a masculine sport and therefore deemed appropriate for female involvement because it does not enable sporting bodies to perform aggressively, which are typically regarded as masculine attributes. Yet to counter

volleyball as an unmasculine (Pronger, 1990) activity and thereby counter emasculation, perhaps Everisto's teammate sought to re-masculinize himself by ascribing gendered discourses onto Everisto's body. While Everisto spoke English with a Filipino accent, it is precisely his accent that marks his ethnic and national body foreign, and therefore unassimilable. This then reinforces a particular embodiment of Filipino *American* masculinity—one that contains the requisite cultural codes of belonging—such as English without an accent to the U.S. national fabric.

Despite the long history of English being taught in the Philippines as a result of U.S. colonialism, tensions between recently arrived Filipinas/os versus U.S. born Filipinas/os expose the intraethnic relations manufactured by the ongoing issue of speaking with a Filipino accent and the subsequent exclusion that takes place within the community (Espiritu, 1995). Whereas Shilpa Davé (2005) argues that South Asian accents connote foreignness, class and cultural privilege through “brown voice,” Everisto's accent further marginalizes him within the Filipina/o American community and thus does not garner the same kind of cultural privilege or value in relation to South Asian Americans. Everisto's teammate was participating in a kind of identity performance (Reyes & Lo, 2008) of inclusion/exclusion where Everisto became the marked, “FOB” vs. the unmarked, and assumed superior category of Whiteness already existing but highly invisible (Reyes & Lo, 2008; Talmy, 2008). To speak with an accent, and to be ridiculed by another member of the Filipina/o community is also about negotiating the language of citizenship and belonging (Manalansan, 2003). Talmy (2008), on his observations of high school ESL students in Hawai'i, describes how the figure of the FOB is a form of Othering, “a label signifying a recently arrived, monumentally uncool, non-English-speaking rube of mythical, and for some, hilarious proportions” (Talmy, 2008, p. 348). Thus, the FOB serves as an exaggerated form of Otherness that fundamentally relies upon on distancing through language, race and class.



Group membership is policed because the FOB figure, “speak[s] undeniably ‘limited’ English, they are unfamiliar with the cultures, styles, and practices of the United States and its schools; they are, in short, ‘fresh off the boat’” (Talmy, 2008, p. 358). The issue of language, or “lengua” as Anzaldúa (1999) reminds us, is not only relegated to the Filipina/o community but rather shaped by multiple forces of oppression—including histories of colonialism—that have shaped linguistic practices.

Yet Everisto’s identity is also complicated by the fact that he self identifies as queer. Though he “wasn't out in high school,” and “couldn't figure it out though [he] probably knew,” he had a strong sense that he was gay and felt that if he did come out, he would have faced even more instances of bullying. We talked about moments in which the pervasiveness of “locker room talk” (Curry, 2001) contributed to Everisto’s self-regulating and how it prevented him from engaging his teammates in ways that negated the normalizing discourses that promoted affirmations of their heterosexual masculinity. Curry discusses how locker room talk is used to “promote homophobia, sexism, and aggressive behaviors” (Eitzen, 2001). In fact, Everisto was well aware of these discourses and chose not to participate in them. And other than in the competitive arena, he usually kept to himself, sitting either in front or in the back of the team bus and always away from his teammates that perpetuated their sense of hyper masculinity. He shares,

I think when there are times that when the hyper masculinity is happening, people talking about girlfriends. Guys in high school want to be known as “the guy” you know? And I would not participate so I just [thought], “ok, that’s fine, you guys do that. You have girlfriends, cool. Invite them to the games and whatnot.” I just don't. So keeping it to myself. I wouldn't necessarily go out of my way to show them different things out there or to hang out with them outside of volleyball or outside of classes.

Key to Everisto’s experiences are his attempt at steering clear of the kind of fraternal bond that promotes inclusion through particular acts of heterosexual male bonding and exclusion

by way of promoting heterosexual desires. This concurrently works by distancing themselves from the queer subject by deploying homophobic undercurrents and sexual conquests. Thus, masculine identification is materialized not only through distancing oneself from the feminine, but also through the queer subject particularly in the context of homosocial male spaces (Butler, 1995). Here I find Curry's work relevant to Everisto's experiences because it echoes the ways in which his teammates "do gender." Curry states,

The fraternal bond is threatened by inadequate role of performance, quitting the team, or not living up to the demands of masculinity. Consequently, fear of weakening the fraternal bond greatly affects how athletes "do gender" in the locker room and influences the comments they make about women. In this regard, locker room talk may again be characterized both by what is said and what is not said. Conversations that affirm a traditional masculine identity dominate, and these include talk about women as objects, homophobic talk, and talk that is very aggressive and hostile toward women.

I asked Everisto if he attempted to steer the conversations away from explicitly talking about women but he stated that, "I don't think I would have known how to during that time. And part of that also was being afraid, being rejected, being bullied. Because if you're out, there were certain repercussions that I have to watch out for." These repercussions Everisto alluded to were laced with homophobic reactions and, "people talking crap about you when I may not feel comfortable with my own sexuality at that time. Those were some of the things that I have to watch out for." Again, Everisto was already being targeted for his Filipino accent. To compound his experiences by coming out would have only worsened his already fraught experiences (Anderson, 2005; Caudwell, 2011). Assuming that Everisto's teammate was part of the locker room talk above, Everisto's own experiences demonstrate how Filipina/o communal spaces are not necessarily inclusive of recently arrived Filipinos, nor are they accepting of queer Filipino Americans. If we apply Richard T. Rodríguez's (2009) critique of heteropatriarchy in the context of Chicano/a cultural nationalism, we may very well see how Everisto's body is "queered" and

therefore “Othered” by the Filipino community as it is shot through normative underpinnings of language, nationalism, ethnic identity and sexuality. Thus, in agreement with Rodríguez, “But since la familia seems so consistently to invoke masculinity identity politics and heterosexual imperatives, I struggle for ‘something more’ than either an essentialist or an antiessentialist vision of family,” or in this case, the Filipina/o community (Rodríguez, 2009, p. 11).

### **Competing Racialized Masculinities**

In the following section, I narrate how everyday sporting spaces reveal moments of tension between racialized masculinities, particularly between white, African American and Filipino American men and between Filipina American and white women.

*During my fieldwork, I played basketball at 24-hour fitness basketball gyms 5-6 times a week, for one to two hours a day—two of the gyms were located in Orange County and one in Los Angeles County. I chose to frequent these spaces not only to play basketball and stay in shape, but also to interact with and observe the people (the majority of whom were male) who played in these basketball spaces. One early evening, I walked into the basketball gym and I observed a five on five, pickup basketball game<sup>45</sup> between two groups of men in progress. Team “A”<sup>46</sup> consisted of two Filipino Americans, one South Asian American, a Latino and a white player. I noticed that one of the Filipino men on this team was wearing an Ateneo de Manila<sup>47</sup> basketball jersey. Team B consisted of three African American men, a Latino and a white man. The atmosphere surrounding the game was lively; both teams were motivating their teammates,*

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<sup>45</sup>A pickup basketball game is a recreational game played indoors or outdoors on a full, or half court basketball floor. Games range from 1 on 1 to 5 on 5. The gyms I frequented were full court and the games more often than not consisted of 5 on 5. Players generally followed an unspoken gym rule where games were structured on a first come first play basis. Players who wished to play in the next game waited on the sidelines or shot around and formed their teams with friends or with other gym members who wanted to play.

<sup>46</sup> To maintain continuity in the narrative, I have named these two teams, Team “A” and Team “B” respectively.

<sup>47</sup> Ateneo de Manila is a university in the Philippines.

saying things like, “C’mon, let’s go!” and “Let’s D up!,” followed by quick, loud claps to signal a made basket. Both teams struggled to make baskets, which was a common occurrence in games I played in, and in those that I observed. Team A eventually won the game when one of its members hit the game winning basket, a 10-15 foot jump shot to close out the game. After the made the basket, the Filipino American teammate loudly proclaimed, “Yes!” followed by what appeared to be a celebratory gesture.<sup>48</sup> He was undoubtedly excited that his team had won. He high-fived his South Asian American and Filipino American teammates while Team B dejectedly walked off the floor and over to the drinking fountains. Generally, after pickup games, both teams perform a ritual of sportsmanship through a customary “good game” remark followed by a handshake or low-five. After this game, neither teams obliged, perhaps illustrating the tension between the teams and an unwillingness by Team B to acknowledge defeat.<sup>49</sup> After the game ended, I walked over to the Filipino American wearing the Ateneo de Manila jersey who was sitting down against the gym’s walls drinking Gatorade after what, in my estimation was an intense and tenuous game. I introduced myself to him and he in turn, told me his name was Julian. I asked him about his jersey because I was curious about where he got it. He told me he got it from his cousin. We engaged in small talk for a few more minutes before I told him about my research and asked if he would be interested in participating in my study. He agreed.

A couple of weeks later, Julian and I met at a local Starbucks to conduct the interview. I was interested in the pickup basketball game he played a few weeks prior in part because of his reaction after his team had won and the fact that he was wearing a Philippine inspired jersey. Julian shared that he was with two of his friends; his South Asian American friend, Vijay, and his Filipino American friend, Derek. They needed two players to fill out of the rest of his team to

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<sup>48</sup> I cannot recall what kind of celebratory gesture it was. Nonetheless, it was clearly a moment of celebration.

<sup>49</sup> In my interview, Julian posited that the reason why Team B didn’t shake their hands was, “Maybe because they were upset that we won.”

play in the next game so he sought out the two African American players on Team B. Vijay asked them to play but they declined, “because they didn't think they were going to win the game [with us]. So they stay [on the sidelines], we pick up my friend Derek, the other Filipino guy and then some random other guy and just went off and won that first game.” In the second game Julian and his friends played against Team B, the team with two of the African Americans. He remembers,

And [then] we got on and we played against them and we jumped onto ‘em on [a] big start and got to the point where they started panicking. Their best shooter, this white guy wasn't doing it for them. He was missing shots that could've gone in but he was just missing them. And of course we're not gonna let them just take it in even though they were all bigger than us by like 6 inches. We fouled them so no matter what they had to at least shoot a shot. It was a good experience to beat them because after, when we needed people to join our team my Indian friend was like, “Hey you wanna run with us?” And he straight up said, “Nah we don't wanna run with you.” I guess they felt like, “I'm not gonna run with the team that beat us especially when we should have beat them.” Things like that. It's always good to feel like that. That sense of enjoyment I guess.

I followed up by asking Julian why he thought these two African American men did not want to play with him and his friends. He continued, “I think they didn't want to play with us because they just thought we were gonna lose. They didn't think we were big enough maybe because we weren't tall. Maybe they thought we weren't good enough either.”

The vignette above and the subsequent interview I conducted with Julian reveals the ways in which everyday sporting practices and its leisure spaces are rife with racial and gendered encounters. More than just a space for leisure and play, the game I witnessed was framed by the black, brown and white male bodies playing in the gym and the spirit of the competition that produced Julian's affective reaction to winning. For Julian and his South Asian American and Filipino American friends, the basketball space was a kind of racialized and gendered athletic proving ground. As Asian American bodies, their athletic ability, in particular, to play basketball was called into question by the African Americans and the subsequent marginalization they

witnessed as their athleticism was considered foreign to basketball. Here, race works on differently situated bodies. Dominant discourses of African American bodies as athletes par excellence are not only oversaturated in media sport, but also permeates in everyday sporting publics like the 24 hour fitness gym I frequented—black male bodies are hyper-masculinized subjects and are considered the norm for embodying athletic performance while Asian American bodies are considered un-athletic and unmasculine. According to Julian, these African Americans stereotyped their Asian American bodies in such a way where height trumped basketball skill. While black bodies were racialized as “athletic,” there are also assumptions of the kinds of basketball skill placed upon white bodies. While Julian references the white male as the “shooter” on the team who was inexplicably missing shots, he is also placing racial signifiers on his body. Shooting a basketball is generally associated with white players who do not carry the “natural athletic” gifts of African Americans (Brooks, 2010). The assumption is that while white males do not have the requisite athletic skills, they rely on fundamentals and technique—namely shooting to compete on the basketball court. Thus, according to Scott Brooks, “If white men can’t jump, meaning their athletic achievements and skills do not come naturally, then the implication is that they become good athletes as a result of hard work, discipline, and a level of intelligence” (Brooks, 2010, p. ix). While the fundamentally sound shooter is White, the athletic African Americans are the ones who “take it in,” by jumping over their Asian American counterparts.

In a sport where the majority of the athletes are African American, white, and in the NBA, increasingly international players from Europe, the fact that Julian’s team defeated Team B demonstrates an act of racialized, masculine dominance. Their physicality; running, jumping and shooting are acts of physical mastery that concurrently works with performing, asserting and

affirming their own scripts of masculinity. While these moments may appear to be innocuous, Julian's statement that, "It only makes us feel better to think like that, even though that might not necessarily be the case. Because we get confidence off of it or something like that or just make a story out of it," tells us that these stories are also about being the underdog, and about being "known" for something outside of dominant representations of Asian Americans as the "model minority," or athletically inferior. These stories can be explained in part by the fact that,

getting or being known is based on action, involving what a person does to another person(s) or how they dominate them, and is dependent upon the response and evaluation by others. When kids play, they are potentially creating stories that can be retold by others. (Brooks, 2010, p. 32)

Just who Julian shares this story with is besides the point. What is revealing is the fact that he considered his own team as underdogs on the court. And embraces how Filipino athletic bodies are perpetual underdogs in the sporting arena. By defeating the other team, he is also garnering what Eric Anderson (2005) posits as, "masculine capital," the idea that Julian and his friends have proof of athletic conquest over other African American and White basketball bodies.

Julian's reflections of masculine sporting performance must also be analyzed through a comparative, racial analytic (Cacho, 2012). In other words, it is only through Black, White and Latino bodies where Julian makes sense of his Filipino American masculinity, where "corporeal power relations" (Wellard, p. 22) are struggled over. In this way, a certain kind of value informs how individuals reflect upon their brown bodies in relation to their competitors. As Ian Wellard (2009) puts it, "social value placed upon competition, creates an environment where there is constant need for individuals to contemplate their bodies in relation to other bodies" (Wellard, p. 22).

In addition to these competing racialized masculinities, this gym is also a site where Julian claims and affirms his ethnic identity, while still staying with the current basketball style

of wearing Nike basketball shoes and baggy shorts. Wearing a Philippine university inspired team jersey, as opposed to an NBA jersey signals Julian's desire to assert his own kind of basketball style that ethnically marks him as Filipino, which in turn, allows him an avenue to express his cultural identity in a sporting context, and to actively rework and configure his own version of a distinct, *Filipino American* sporting masculinity.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have examined how Filipina/o Americans participate in the everyday sporting landscape in ways that betray the celebratory logics of sporting cultures and practices. While sports are often promoted for their democratic appeal, celebrated for their meritocracy and therefore absent of power differentials, what we find are gendered, sexualized, and racialized inflected experiences that have shaped Filipina Americans' sporting memories and experiences that are conflicted, contradictory and at times limiting. In addition, we also find moments in which women challenge gendered expectations of basketball gestures and performances of football fandom. While these experiences no doubt expand the narrowed possibilities for women to participate in sport, there is much work to be done in terms of equal participation, as evidenced by Iris's desire to play football, to experience her own physicality and to be fully accepted as a serious football player. Sporting memories are also rife with contradiction within the Filipina/o community as issues of speaking "English with an accent," intensify tenuous relations between Filipina/o American teammates. In addition, affirmations of heterosexual masculinity through "locker room" talk in sport naturalize links between heterosexual male teammates, which leaves very little room for queers to participate in supposedly democratic sports spaces. Finally, through competing scripts of racialized masculinities, we find that while a



Filipino American basketball player claims athletic conquest over other racialized men, he does so by making sense of his body in relation to other men of color and white men. This chapter illustrates that “Sport is neither completely separate from everyday life, nor is it quite *ordinary*<sup>50</sup> life as usual.” (Miller, 1998, p. 89) In this way, the non-ordinariness has to do with the heightened scrutiny or spotlight on the racialized, gendered, and sexualized bodily comportment in sporting spaces and ideologies.

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<sup>50</sup> Emphasis author's.

## Chapter 4

### **“I’m Thankful for Manny”: Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao, Pugilistic Nationalism, and the Filipina/o Body**

In chapters two and three, I examined the various ways in which Filipina/o Americans participate in sports—in temporal moments, the sporting spaces they traversed, both physical and virtually—and the kinds of issues that emerged in these sporting spaces. Beyond Filipina/o Americans’ everyday sporting spaces, I move to the sporting spectacle of Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao. In this chapter, I examine the discursive nature of Pacquiao’s racialized masculinity, vacillating between an assimilable masculinity and one that transgresses these ideas. In lines with Dyson (2004), Andrews (2000) and Farred (2006), I see Pacquiao’s commodified body as a symbol of possibility that concurrently works to de-politicize race as well as reproduce normative understanding of Filipina/o American selves. While Pacquiao is presented as a “post-racial” hero, my interviewees interpret his body in ways that at times, betray this dominant narrative. At the same time, I also link how his presence creates spaces of intimacy, diasporic collectivity and a sense of belonging between and among Filipina/o friends and families. I close with an account of my participant observations at a closed-circuit television fight between Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez in Las Vegas, NV.

Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao is an eight-time world boxing champion from the Philippines and the twenty-first century embodiment of the Philippine nation. Considered the “national fist” (Poole, 2011) of the Philippines, and the “savior of boxing” (Howard & Tharor, 2009), Pacquiao has become the national hero for the “Filipino ringside community,” (Costello, 2009) and a global celebrity for boxing fans. His image is highlighted by his undeniable success in the boxing ring, and a carefully crafted media persona (Andrews, 2001; Carrington, 2010; Whannel, 2002) that literally and digitally traverses national boundaries. He has graced the cover

of *Time Magazine Asia*, and in 2009 was named as one of *Time Magazine's* "100 Most Influential People." Pacquiao has undergone a number of hyper-masculine nicknames including the racially charged, "Mexecutioner," bestowed upon him when he was taking on, and defeating a number of Mexican fighters, "The Destroyer," and more recently "Pac-Man." His current nickname stems from Namco, a 1980s, Japanese owned arcade game of the same name. The game features a pizza slice navigating a maze and eating everything in its path including dots and ghosts (Barton & Loguidice, 2009). In the same way, Pacquiao figuratively defeats opponents who stand in his way.<sup>51</sup> As an international sporting celebrity and a "national hero" to the Filipina/o diasporic population, the specter of Pacquiao aids in our understanding of the Philippine "national body" as simultaneously racialized, gendered, sexualized and classed.

Despite the fame, fortune, and celebrity status that Pacquiao has garnered, his occupation as a boxer requires that his laboring body operates as a commodity in ways that are not unlike the rest of the Filipina/o diasporic population. Of course, Pacquiao's value as a brand generates a disproportionate amount of earning potential in relation to the experiences of the global Filipina/o labor force. As a commodity, his popularity has led to endorsements by No Fear, Nike, Hewlett-Packard, Hennessey, Monster Energy, Wonderful Pistachio, and San Miguel Beer. Many of the aforementioned companies are based in the U.S. and reflect the broad power and appeal of their marketing reach. In his last fight with Brandon "Bam-Bam" Rios, in which he scored a unanimous victory, Pacquiao earned \$18 million, not including pay-per-view buys, which could have easily trended upward of \$30 million.<sup>52</sup> He currently ranks 14<sup>th</sup> on Forbes'

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<sup>51</sup> I emailed Pacquiao's publicist, Fred Sternburg to find out when and how Pacquiao received the permanent nickname, "Pac-Man." Sternburg never responded to my email attempts.

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.pep.ph/news/41294/manny-pacquiao-to-earn-as-much-as-30-million-after-bout-with-brandon-rios-says-arum>

*Highest Paid Athletes* list.<sup>53</sup> Nonetheless, his value and worth are generated by his labor and perpetuated by his brand; his *Filipinoness*—in the form of national symbols (the Philippine flag and its colors), and cultural cues like religion and language—are appropriated to maximize his worth and to make him even marketable.<sup>54</sup> Over the last several years, Pacquiao’s global exposure has exponentially increased as emerging flows of global technology—social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter and the easy availability of search engines—have accelerated new forms of mobility across the global landscape. These flows create new opportunities for the consumption and production of cultural forms and practices, and consequently encourage and spur nationalist claims made by Filipina/o Americans. This, in turn, shapes the kinds of mediated interpretations and responses Filipina/o Americans have when making sense of Pacquiao’s image.

In many ways, Pacquiao can also be read alongside what Michael Eric Dyson (2004) terms, “The Pedagogy of Desire.” Writing about retired N.B.A. basketball player Michael Jordan, Dyson examines the figure of Jordan as a cultural icon against the historical, social and cultural backdrop of twentieth-century American life. Dyson posits that Jordan’s body works in contradictory ways, as his athletic mastery reflects elements of African American cultural imagination and a symbol of “personal possibility, creativity, and desire” for African American youth (Dyson, 2004, p. 462 ). But Jordan is also a product, whose body is commodified, packaged, valued and distributed through the culture of consumption. In this way, Jordan’s athletic excellence and body, work as a signifier that subsumes any critical discussions of race and racism, inevitably offering up “proof” that we live in a post-racial society (Andrews, 2000).

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/athletes/list/>

<sup>54</sup> There is a high price to pay however, if one decides to “buy” into Pacquiao fan culture. The same weekend I attended “Pacquiao vs. Marquez III,” I walked into a Nike store and saw a “Team Pacquiao” Nike jacket priced at \$400.

Drawing parallels to Michael Jordan, Pacquiao too, is a product of the cultural and market forces of the day. Like Jordan, Pacquiao is a global icon who enjoys a cult-like following from Filipinas/os and non-Filipinas/os throughout the world. And like Jordan, Pacquiao is configured as a post-racial “white hero,” as his racial identity becomes palatable to a white public.

### **Marketing Pacquiao’s Assimilable Masculinity**

It is in this context where dominant mainstream media representations produce Pacquiao’s masculinity as an assimilable one. He is often celebrated for being humble, selfless, soft-spoken, a family man and a good person, while also performing in a sport that requires masculine attributes and behaviors such as toughness, aggression, and overt physicality (Gorn, 1986; Oates, 1987; Wacquant, 2004). These ideas of Pacquiao’s assimilable masculinity are inextricably tied to immigrant narratives and corporate logics. It follows that Pacquiao’s success and viable commercialism are evidence that as long as poor or marginalized groups dedicate and commit themselves to work hard, they too can earn their way out of their low socio-economic position (Joo, 2012). As Woodward posits, “The rags-to-riches, ghetto-to-the-mainstream stories are part of boxing’s imaginary, and underpin identifications that are made with heroic public figures” (Woodward, 2007, p. 118). However, such narratives absolve the structural and institutional barriers that have shaped marginalized groups’ experiences and ignore how sporting media conglomerates capitalize on these storylines (Klein, 1991).

Additionally, while Pacquiao performs hyper-masculine practices expected of a boxer, he is also considered respectable because he exhibits high moral values through his religious devotion to God and his sportsmanship in the ring. Indeed, part of the narrative of heroic boxers

involve what Woodward calls, “moral trajectories” (Woodward, 2007, p. 101). For example, in his fight against Antonio “*El Tijuana*” Margarito, Pacquiao was handily defeating Margarito to the point where Margarito’s right eye socket swelled. Instead of battering his opponent and targeting Margarito’s eye, Pacquiao “pulled” his punches so as not to cause further, possibly permanent damage.<sup>55</sup> When one of media members asked Pacquiao about pulling his punches in the post-fight press conference, Pacquiao explained, “I did not want to damage him permanently. That’s not what boxing is about.”<sup>56</sup> In the process of admitting that he did not want to permanently damage Margarito, Pacquiao invokes codes of morality and sportsmanship that constructs his masculinity as an acceptable one.

Moreover, Pacquiao’s masculinity works discursively and can be framed in relation to black and white bodies. This approach allows us to understand how his masculinity is made meaningful by drawing comparative racializations to other boxers. In other words, Pacquiao’s assimilable masculinity is made legible through black and white sporting bodies. For example, Pacquiao’s poor and working class background are neatly framed in relation to notions of respectability that often square with “respectable” white, working class fighters. For example, Kelly “The Ghost” Pavlik and Ricky “Hitman” Hatton, both of whom hail from the working classes of the U.S. and Great Britain respectively, are considered “heroes” to their communities and nation (Rhodes, 2011). According to Rhodes, “Respectability’ connotes a form of ‘moral authority,’ representing a means through which groups and individuals distinguish themselves from ‘other’ social and symbolic positions—not only between but also within groupings” (2011,

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<sup>55</sup> See commentary on: Brian Floyd. “Pacquiao Vs. Margarito Results: What’s Next For Manny, The Filipino Phenom?” <http://www.sbnation.com/2010/11/14/1812966/pacquiao-vs-margarito-results>

<sup>56</sup> Dan Rafael. “Antonio Margarito to have surgery,” November 15, 2010, <http://sports.espn.go.com/dallas/news/story?id=5805223>

p. 360). Pacquiao's position as a family man is often highlighted as evidence of such moral authority. For example, blogger, Will Osgood suggests,

And probably most importantly, he is a loyal family man. He and his wife, Maria Geraldine "Jinkee" Jamora, have four young children—two boys and two girls. He is the epitome of responsibility, after being raised in an environment that didn't exactly support such a thing.<sup>57</sup>

At the same time, these narratives also work in relation to African American masculinity that consequently creates distance between racial groups. These examples are part of a "model minority" discourse that positions Asian Americans as the preferred minority in relation to African Americans and Latinas/os. While Pacquiao is not Asian American, he nonetheless embodies the model minority through "close-knit [normative] family and its values" (Joo, 2012, p. 80). For example, in a veiled commentary on African American athletes, Daine Pavloski, a featured columnist on Bleacher Report<sup>58</sup> writes,

Whether it's someone changing their name to something ludicrous, a whiny wide receiver doing sit-ups in his driveway, or another player getting into an altercation at a nightclub, professional athletes spend more time looking like idiots than anything else. Thankfully for the sports world—and the sanity of sports fans—there are guys like Manny Pacquiao.<sup>59</sup>

In other words, Pacquiao is respectable because he is not what other professional athletes—specifically African American ones—are: petulant, self-absorbed and inherently violent. This in turn, adds to Pacquiao's popularity among the mainstream media because he is not *one of them*.

Beyond the mainstream constructions of Pacquiao's assimilable masculinity are Filipina/o American interpretations that defy these dominant narratives. Pacquiao has become a vehicle for members of the Filipina/o diaspora to claim him in ways that speak to alternative

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<sup>57</sup> Daine Pavloski, "Manny Pacquiao: The Definition of a Respectable Athlete in Today's Sports World." *Bleacher Report*, December 6, 2012, [://bleacherreport.com/articles/1435798-manny-pacquiao-is-definition-of-a-respectable-athlete-in-todays-sports-world](http://bleacherreport.com/articles/1435798-manny-pacquiao-is-definition-of-a-respectable-athlete-in-todays-sports-world)

<sup>58</sup> Bleacher report is an online sports media company that covers a wide range of sports. It is owned by Turner Broadcasting System.

<sup>59</sup> Pavloski, <http://bleacherreport.com/articles/1435798-manny-pacquiao-is-definition-of-a-respectable-athlete-in-todays-sports-world>

conceptions of Filipino masculinity. I argue that the mainstream narrative of Manny Pacquiao as the Filipino underdog with an assimilable masculinity is at odds with how Filipina/o diasporic fans view and interpret him. I highlight how Pacquiao's masculinity defines and negotiates Filipino masculinity through African American culture, machismo, and religious masculinity. I set Pacquiao's body against the historical backdrop of the U.S.-Philippine colonial relationship to trace the genealogical mapping and marking of the Filipina/o body through sports. From here I move to the contemporary period to examine how the dispersal of Pacquiao's body and image is influenced by, and engages with, the exigencies of diaspora, transnationalism and globalization.

Pacquiao's contemporary reach follows a historical arc that began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which was set in motion by the onset of U.S. colonial rule. When the United States colonized the Philippines in 1898, part of the colonizing process involved the implementation of American-style government, education, and sport. Following a dogmatic belief in "manifest destiny" and ideologies of racial superiority over Filipinos (Kramer, 2006), U.S. colonial administrators worked with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) by institutionalizing sport. This collaboration was driven by the idea that sport would "civilize" the racially "inferior" Filipinos. Under the aegis of the U.S. education system (primarily through the category of "physical education"), sport and recreation was part and parcel of the U.S. educational, colonial process. Through outdoor activities and the promotion of physicality embodied by white, muscular Christian men, it was believed that sport could transform the "effeminate," "inferior" and "savage" Filipino bodies into "good colonial subjects."<sup>60</sup> Such ideas

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<sup>60</sup> Such concerns about moral fiber applied not only to the colonized Filipino bodies in the Philippines, but also to other non-white peoples in the Pacific. These concerns about colonial subjects, termed "hemispheric anxiety" by Micronesian studies scholar Vicente Diaz, circulated in and through the U.S.s' new colonial possessions. Writing on the relationship between American football and the U.S. imperial project, Diaz discusses how at the onset of U.S. colonial rule in Guam, the potential for moral degeneracy in the tropics preoccupied the minds of U.S. colonizers—which served as the impetus to institutionalize sports such as football, baseball, basketball, tennis and volleyball in



about Filipino racial inferiority and white racial superiority were challenged in the early twentieth century by Filipinos who achieved success as pugilists in places like Australia and the United States. In this way, Filipino boxers and spectators engaged with the processes of masculinity learned in the Philippines and the U.S. by transforming the boxing space to affirm their manliness in organized boxing events. (España-Maram, 2006; Runstedtler, 2012). España-Maram's groundbreaking study on working class Filipinos in Los Angeles' Little Manila from the 1920s through the 1940s, for example, demonstrates how Filipino working-class laborers attached meanings of masculinity to Filipino boxers to create a "cast of heroes" for themselves and their community. As she argues, "athletes legitimized a space for self-definition by defying the dominant society's assumptions about race and ability" (España-Maram, 2006, p. 92). Boxing in the U.S. has long been seen as a way for working-class youth to advance their socio-economic status in part because it rejected Victorian notions of manliness through alternative masculinities (Riess, 2007). Such alternative masculinities particularly resonated with Filipino working-class laborers who worked in occupations considered "feminized" such as domestics. Thus, boxing served to validate their masculinity "as virile men" (España-Maram, p. 94). More recently, professional boxers like Oscar De La Hoya, Amir Khan, and Barry McGuigan have inspired other ethnic communities to claim fighters as one of their own (Burdsey, 2007; Delgado, 2005; Hassan, 2005; Rodriguez, 2002). In this way, ideas of the Filipino body became part of Filipino popular and cultural memory, not only historically but also in the contemporary moment. At the same time, iterations of race and gender emerge through Pacquiao's body, and residual effects of U.S. colonial discourses remain. Like Mimi Nguyen's (2007) analysis of Bruce Lee's body, Pacquiao's "body is a built body, a carefully constructed instrument. His body

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Guam—all in attempts to promote physical exercise and thus fulfill the national imperative of creating a virile, U.S. masculine nation.

is also a historical situation and valued commodity, a technologized collection of words, sounds and images that ‘stands for’ the person who is the star” (Nguyen, 2007, p. 288; Onigiri, 2005). Following Nguyen’s lead, I see Pacquiao’s body as a transnational, digitized rendering of Filipino masculinity, whose physicality runs counter to dominant discourses of the infantilized, weak, effeminate Asian body. Boxing, long considered “the manly art” (Gorn, 1986) has relied on physical attributes in the ring such as strength, power, speed and quickness. Pacquiao’s boxing achievements challenge how these physical attributes are not fit for Asian bodies precisely because Asian male bodies have historically been constructed as antithetical to the premises of a sport that requires aggression, strength, speed and power (Burdsey, 2007; Joo, 2012).

At the same time, as I have discussed in chapter 1, the historical context by which Pacquiao’s laboring body emerges comes out of the fact that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, colonial practices, first initiated by Spain and perpetuated by the U.S. necessitated his desire to take up the sport of boxing. As Kale Fajardo (2011) argues, following Neferti X. Tadiar’s lead, “the racialized, classed, gendered, and sexualized disempowerment of the Philippines, manifested through political and economic emasculation or feminization, historically developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a result of colonial and postcolonial structural inequalities and ‘fantasy-productions’” (2011, p. 10 [Tadiar, 2004]).

In the contemporary period, Filipina/o laborers can be found in almost every corner of the globe, embodying the symbol of global labor in the twenty-first century (Okamura, 1998; Rodriguez, 2010; Tyner, 2004), prompting one scholar to classify Filipinas/os as “migrants for export” (Rodriguez, 2010). While Pacquiao’s labor is different from ordinary Filipinas/os working abroad, he embodies a kind of pugilistic labor that moves in transnational spaces (not

unlike his historical predecessors) including Las Vegas, NV, Arlington, TX and more recently, Macau, China. Indeed, the Philippine state encourages its own citizens to “sacrifice” their labor, and time away from family to work abroad and send remittances to the Philippines. As Fajardo (2012) argues,

Manila’s strategic role in the global economy, or Manila’s “economic advantage” as a global city, is its surplus of labor. For the Philippine state, this “surplus,” of course, generates significant revenue for the national economy in the form of “hard currency” or foreign exchange remittances, sent back to the Philippines by OFWs (Fajardo, 2012, p. 70; see also Guevarra, 2009; Rodriguez, 2010)

In this way, Pacquiao’s masculinity dovetails with the Philippine state’s desire to create a narrative of sacrifice in conjunction with Christian suffering. In Christian doctrine, the narrative pivots upon Jesus Christ’s life, death, and eventual resurrection, and the sacrifice he makes so that all who believe in him will achieve access to the kingdom of heaven. This narrative works as part of Filipino working-class seamen. As Fajardo (2011) contends, “although notions of sacrifice play a big part in (Philippine) state's interpellation narrative, notions of Christian suffering and sacrifice also ‘color’ Filipino seamen's perceptions, experiences, and understandings of seafaring/maritime time-space in the global economy” (2011, p. 147). Despite the parallel themes of labor and the body in relation to Pacquiao and the Filipina/o global labor force, Pacquiao’s own labor is obscured by the embrace and promotion of his star image. Thus, the image of sacrifice is materialized in digitally circulated, Nike sponsored images and videos.

One of the key features to marketing Pacquiao is not only through his success as a world-class boxer, but also through a marketing campaign that emphasizes his Catholic religion. Nike capitalizes on this by deploying advertisements that position Pacquiao’s body through tropes of sacrifice, selflessness and humility, which sets out to appeal to a global audience. Such religious symbolism invites consumers to identify with its overtly Christian meanings. This is particularly

significant when placed within the context of the socio-political climate of the “war on terror” in which Arab, Muslim and Sikh communities have been subjected to increased state surveillance in the aftermath of 911 (Silk, 2012; Rana, 2011). Pacquiao’s Catholicism is asserted to create a “particular definition of nation and of ‘other’” to “legitimate certain national subjects over others, offer support for a state-led ‘war on terror’ and (re)affirm the (neo)imperial trajectories of the neo-liberal market” (Silk, 2012, p. 4). In this vein, Pacquiao serves as an icon—a symbol of virtue, morality and civilization.

As a Catholic practitioner,<sup>61</sup> dominant media representations frame Pacquiao as an icon in religious contexts. He is regularly seen kneeling, praying, and performing the sign of the cross or holding the rosary inside and outside of the boxing ring. Indeed, during his, part of his ritual involves gesturing the sign of the cross before the start of every round. These symbols and gestures of Catholicism mark him in ways that allow for commodity forces to perpetuate his brand. One Nike sponsored video commercial, for example shows Pacquiao squaring off against two different Latino pugilists. The video looks to be a compilation of Pacquiao’s two fights against Mexican fighters Marco Antonio Barerra and Erik Morales. The video has a grainy look to it, appearing in vintage black and white, highlighting only the color red. The video opens with a close-up shot of Pacquiao’s face. He is looking up, his body language speaks of exhaustion as if contemplating his assumed and eventual defeat. The clip then moves towards Pacquiao on the defensive, absorbing devastating right hooks to the head, coupled with a smattering of punches by his opponent. Eventually Pacquiao gets knocked down, and falls flat on his back. The second

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<sup>61</sup> Recently there has been a transformation of sorts in terms of Pacquiao’s “personality and faith.” While still performing his religiosity, it has been reported that Pacquiao has been steering away from the rituals and traditions of Catholicism and more towards evangelical Christianity. This in turn, has proved worrisome for Pacquiao’s fans and boxing promoter. See: <http://blogs.bettor.com/Bob-Arum-concerned-about-Manny-Pacquiao-change-in-personality-Boxing-News-a154521>; <http://thebiofile.com/2012/12/manny-pacquiao-the-rosary-and-the-sign-of-the-cross/>

shot is similar to the first—Pacquiao is sitting on a stool in the corner, this time his right eye is now bloodied. His trainer is placing a Q-tip inside the flesh of the cut to prevent blood from dripping. Again, Pacquiao has the look of exhaustion. He is looking down, signaling that his opponent has broken his will to fight. The video then cuts to the final scene and the apex of the video. This time, it is Pacquiao throwing the punches despite a bloody eye. He throws and lands a right jab, followed by a left hook. More punches ensue and his opponent falls to the canvas. The final shot is of Pacquiao kissing his right glove, looking up and raising both of his arms in triumph. He then looks down and back up, as if relieved that he won the fight. The final clip shows the Manny Pacquiao logo in red followed by the patented Nike swoosh. The video conveys references to sacrifice and how Pacquiao embodies a kind of defied status, while still carrying with it the human element, as shown in the shedding of his own blood. The fall and rise of Pacquiao from the depths of despair follows the Catholic tradition of Jesus Christ's passion, or what historian Reynaldo Ileto (1997) terms, "the pasyon," where the treatment of male heroism in Filipino culture—Bernardo Carpio and Jose Rizal—are deified in relation to Jesus Christ's suffering, death and resurrection. Spain colonized the Philippines for over 350 years—and with colonialism came the inculcation of Catholic beliefs, traditions and values, perpetuated throughout the colonial process. In this narrative, Pacquiao's brand is mediated through religious imagery that evokes the Catholic tradition of sacrifice and redemption, death and rebirth. Some of my respondents have placed Pacquiao in deified realms: "Religious," "spiritual," and "humble" were adjectives consistently used to describe Pacquiao. Biblical references to David beating Goliath are woven into an unfolding narrative of Pacquiao defeating opponents who are supposedly bigger and stronger than him. Two, second-generation Filipina-Americans went so far as to say, "I'm thankful for Manny," referencing the Catholic tradition of "Thanks be to God"

during Catholic mass. In fact, Nike, Pacquiao's sporting apparel sponsor, created a website that drew upon imagery equating his body to that of Jesus Christ, bringing Pacquiao's body into full-deified view.<sup>62</sup> In the ad, Pacquiao is kneeling down in the corner of a boxing ring, his head bowed with his back turned to the gaze of the viewer. His arms are spread out as if to emulate bearing the cross. He is in full boxing gear with his gloves, shorts and boxing shoes. The ad appears in red lettering, that reads, "Give us this day," followed by the date in white lettering, "12-06-08," the date Pacquiao was scheduled to fight perennial title contender, Mexican-American, Oscar "The Golden Boy" De La Hoya.

As some of my informants have shared, Pacquiao's body is more than just a commodity, and the way they read, interpret, and subsequently make meaning out of him is far more complicated than simple consumption patterns. Following Carrington (2010), who cautions us about the dangers of relying on critiques of sporting industries only from a "top down ideological" approach, he urges us to consider that the process of "cultural consumption and identification cannot be reduced to the circuits and flows of commodity spectacle. There is always an element of creative consumption and reworking of cultural texts that need to be acknowledged even if we are to avoid a 'top down ideological account' of how cultural meanings are produced, decoded and then used" (Carrington, 2010, p. 113). Given this understanding, I now turn to private, communal, diasporic spaces with one Filipina/o American family.

### **Creating Diasporic Intimacy in Fight Night Spaces**

In this section, I detail how sporting spaces are materialized as a result of Pacquiao's global presence. While thousands of Filipinas/os travel to Pacquiao's actual fight nights—

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<sup>62</sup> <http://nike.com.ph/giveusthisday/?ref=phlanding&sitesrc=phlanding>

whether it be in Las Vegas, NV, Dallas, TX or more recently, Macau, China—Pacquiao’s transnational reach creates diasporic nodes of Filipina/o and Filipina/o American fight night spaces throughout the world. Thus, penetrating the everyday lives of Filipina/o Americans (see chapter two for a more extensive discussion on everyday sporting cultures and practices).

For some Filipina/o diasporic families in Southern California, Pacquiao is a means to negotiate and perform a diasporic identity through what I term, “Pacquiao fight night spaces.” Pacquiao fight night spaces are places where Filipina/o Americans gather to watch the Philippine born star in the privacy of their, or their friend’s or family’s homes on the actual nights that he fights. In the vignette below, I describe one such night in the vignette below.

*In the days leading up to Manny Pacquiao’s fight against Timothy Bradley on June 9, 2012, I sent text messages to a handful of respondents who I had previously interviewed. I asked them if and where they were watching the fight. And, as expected, many of them stated that they were either hosting family and friends or watching it at another house. One respondent told me that she was attending her cousin’s cotillion<sup>63</sup> on fight night, but she was hoping the hotel where the cotillion was held would have another room with a television so that they could get round by round updates. Although I did not anticipate getting invited to watch the fight, I received one text from Celia, a first-generation, Filipina-American middle-aged woman who I had interviewed a few weeks prior. She asked if I would like to watch the fight with her and her family. I immediately accepted and prepared a food dish to bring to the gathering. The house is located in Trinity city, a suburb that borders both Orange and LA counties. I drove up to the gated community and told the security guard I was visiting the Santos family. The guard acknowledged my visit and handed me directions to the house. I arrived at approximately 7pm and the television was already on, featuring the NBA Eastern Conference Finals between the Miami*

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<sup>63</sup> A cotillion is an event for Filipina and Filipina Americans to celebrate their eighteenth birthday.

*Heat and the Boston Celtics. Celia's brother in law (the owner of the house) was in charge of the remote control flipping between the fight undercards and the basketball game. The family gathering was smaller (12) compared to the number of people (as high as 50) that my other interviewees have told me. The family was comprised of 6 females and 6 males, all of whom were Filipino except one, older white male who is married to Celia's sister. The ages of the group ranged from 30 to 80 years old. Celia encouraged me to eat, and I was offered a beer by Celia's son. We ate a mixture of regional Filipino food, including tahong, pinakbit, and American food like pork sliders, and Mexican dishes such as chips and salsa, and guacamole. Once the fight started, I sat on a stool in the back of the living room next to one of the uncles. In the beginning of the fight, the family was talkative with each other, speaking in Visayan (a regional dialect of the Philippines), English and Tagalog simultaneously. Ayon na, ayon na! [There you go! There you go!] Throughout the fight, our mood ebbed and flowed with each passing round. We were calm one minute and excited the next, especially when Pacquiao landed significant shots to Bradley's body and head. In between rounds, slow motion replays show Pacquiao hitting Bradley. The family concurrently reacts with, "Oooh, booom!" as Pacquiao is about to punch Bradley. At other times, we were bored when the action stalled. As the fight continued, the commentators were heavily favoring Pacquiao and it looked as if he would win rather convincingly. The overall sentiment was that it was just a matter of time before he would either knock Bradley out, or the fight would go to a decision, with Pacquiao winning the fight. In between rounds, slow motion video replays of Pacquiao's punches showed the champion was in full control of the fight and an undercurrent of confidence and swagger emerged from the group. "There you go, there you go" Jacob said, as if to encourage Pacquiao to keep throwing his punches. In between rounds, HBO cameras showed Bradley's trainer, Joel Diaz, imploring*



*Bradley to “ignore his fuckin foot” (Bradley had badly twisted his foot in the beginning of round 2). Celia mimicked him, sarcastically saying, “Ignore your fuckin foot!” and chuckles from a few members of the group ensued. I noticed too, that Pacquiao’s boxing shorts had more corporate advertisements on his shorts than I had ever seen before. I stated out loud, “Wow, Pacquiao has a lot of ads on his shorts.” I did not hear a reply so I left it alone. Perhaps this was not a point of concern or interest for the viewers. Perhaps because they were more invested in the corporeal and symbolic attachments of Pacquiao. When the fight ended, we waited for the formality of the fight to end with the expectation that Pacquiao was undoubtedly going to win. We sat in shock, however, as Michael Buffer, the ring announcer announced the scores. Bradley was announced the winner by split decision. After the scores were read, confusion and disappointment followed—we were puzzled at what had transpired. “What? What the hell? Wow. Are you serious? Anong yang yare? [What happened?] I didn’t think it was a split decision. Terrible, bogus decision.”*

The vignette above provides a snapshot of the kind of gatherings that take place during Pacquiao fight nights. More than just watching a boxer of Filipino descent fight, Filipina/o Americans create spaces based on ethnic and national fandom that are inextricably linked to the process of identity formation. Thus, the Pacquiao fight night space I detail above, and those that my informants have shared, echo how space becomes important in the production of selves and identities. As Rick Bonus (2000) would argue,

Along with other spaces, such as the barber shops, beauty salons, and video stores adjacent to these stores, they are spaces where Filipino Americans reconstitute their identities, as productive and multilayered, and in active conversation with those who otherwise render them as Orientals. In consequence, they reconfigure the spaces of the “Oriental” stores as such stores become part of their sense of who they are. (Bonus, 2000, p. 22)

In the same way, the fight night space I document above reveals how they are fundamentally a part of who they are through the familiar scents, smells and cultural cues that mark their version of Filipinoness (Bonus, 2000). Thus, these spaces are ritualized, hybrid spaces where Filipina/o Americans merge sporting practice with familiar notions of performing what it means to be Filipina/o and American. In other words, these spaces mark one's sense of *Filipinoness* in the U.S.—that is, through a sense of familiarity where social interactions among family members including aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and extended family take place, the sounds of regional, Filipino dialects spoken (including Tagalog, Ilocano and/or Visayan, or a mix of Taglish<sup>64</sup>), and the taste and smells of certain Filipino food from those regions of the Philippines. There is a recurring theme as to why Filipina/o respondents cheer for Pacquiao: “Because he’s Filipino,” declared one respondent, puzzled as to why I would ask such a banal question.

Pacquiao’s national origins and representativeness of the Philippine nation is understood to offer viewers unique versions and interpretations of being Filipino into their own lives. For them, seeing Pacquiao on television or watching videos of him on the Internet brings them closer to “home,” even if “imagined” (Anderson, 1991). Therefore, these fight night spaces become moments of diasporic intimacy through Pacquiao’s body. For some Filipina/o Americans, sports spectating is transformed into a desire for Pacquiao’s Filipino body, which subsequently creates co-ethnic bonds and diasporic collectivity. In other words, his ethnic and national body, behaviors and cultural rituals breathe an air of familiarity to Filipina/o Americans. Thus, the act of watching Pacquiao’s fights, and seeing his image materialized on the television screen allow Filipina/os to collapse distance and time. Without traveling to the homeland, Pacquiao, as the embodiment of the Philippines is brought into the living rooms of diasporic Filipinas/os. For

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<sup>64</sup> See Rick Bonus, *Locating Filipino Americans: Ethnicity and the Cultural Politics of Space* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000).

some of my respondents, seeing Pacquiao on television allows a reflection of themselves and to embody his success. Iris, a second generation Filipina American college student recalls that after Pacquiao wins a fight, she'll say,

Yeah we won the fight, "go Filipinos," or afterwards, I remember me and my cousins were talking, I remember our freshman and sophomore year we just felt like we were so cool, "nobody is going to mess with us now because they think we can fight" [laughs]. That kind of attitude.

Thus, through the constant repertoire of media imagery, Filipinas/os interpret Pacquiao and creatively place a constellation of meanings that is reworked through their own practices of ascription and aspiration. In these meaning making practices, Filipinas/os express a certain kind of belonging within the larger landscape of American social life. A recurring sense of being invisible to the white mainstream permeates the discourses about why my respondents hold Pacquiao in such high esteem.

I move from the private/domestic fight night space to the public spectacle of Manny "Pac-Man" Pacquiao fights. And while the private/domestic spaces encourage Filipina/o Americans to gather and therefore provide co-ethnic solidarity and diasporic belonging, there are also ways in which Filipina/o diasporic subjects utilize the public space to create nationalist gatherings that reveal the complications of such identification through Pacquiao's masculine body. I elaborate my point further in the vignette below.

### **Squaring Off: Masculine Nationalism Through Pugilistic Bodies**

On May 8, 2004, Manny "Pac-Man" Pacquiao and Juan Manuel Marquez squared off at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas, NV, in a flyweight title fight. Pacquiao came out the aggressor, throwing powerful straight left hands, sending Marquez to the canvas three different times in round one. Marquez survived the three knockdowns and staged a furious

comeback with counterpunches to combat Pacquiao's go forward boxing style. The match went the 12 round distance, with each boxer believing they earned the hard fought win. However, the judges scored the bout a draw. This fight initiated one of the biggest rivalries in recent boxing memory as the fighters fought each other three more times spanning 6 years. In their rematch in 2008, titled "Unfinished Business," Pacquiao knocked down Marquez with a short left hook in the third round to clinch his split decision win over the Mexican born fighter. After the decision, Marquez called for an immediate rematch and felt that he was cheated out of a win while Pacquiao believed he won the fight fair and square.<sup>65</sup>

While Marquez and Pacquiao did not meet again until 2011, the media buildup to their trilogy was circumscribed by scripts of masculinity as both men sought to prove their superiority and thus, their manhood. In their promotional tour, Marquez was often outspoken about the draw in their first fight and his split decision loss in the second. Prior to fighting Pacquiao for the third time in 2011, Marquez fought and defeated Michael Katsidis on November 27, 2010 by technical knockout to secure the win. In his post-fight press conference, Marquez wore t-shirts, with the words, "Marquez Beat Pacquiao Twice!!" and "We Were Robbed," emblazoned on the front, an obvious dig at the previous decisions. After Pacquiao and Marquez agreed to a third fight, during their promotional tours in the Philippines, Marquez continued to wear the t-shirt, which angered Pacquiao. Pacquiao vowed to put the controversial decisions to rest when they met in 2011.<sup>66</sup>

Pacquiao stated,

I have never been so motivated as I am for this fight . . . I almost can't wait for the fight. I want to prove that he (Marquez) was wrong in wearing that T-shirt claiming he won the

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<sup>65</sup> Las Vegas Review-Journal (Nevada) November 9, 2011. "Pacquiao-Marquez worth wait." "Their 2008 rematch ended with Marquez losing his WBC super featherweight title to Pacquiao via a 12-round split decision. Marquez was livid and immediately wanted a third crack at Pacquiao. So did Marquez's trainer, Nacho Beristain, and his promoter at the time, Richard Schaefer of Golden Boy Promotions. They campaigned at the postfight news conference like politicians running for office."

<sup>66</sup> [http://espn.go.com/los-angeles/story/\\_/id/7180689/manny-pacquiao-motivated-fight-juan-manuel-marquez](http://espn.go.com/los-angeles/story/_/id/7180689/manny-pacquiao-motivated-fight-juan-manuel-marquez)

last two fights. So this is kind of a special fight, the most important fight in my boxing career, because I want this fight to be the answer to all the doubts that have been raised.<sup>67</sup>

While Marquez drew Pacquiao's ire by wearing his shirt, Marquez firmly believed he defeated Pacquiao. To silence any talk of controversy, Marquez stated, "Lots of people saw the last two fights end controversially. This time I'm looking for a knockout with more intelligence and patience."<sup>68</sup>

The pre-fight buildup demonstrates how masculinity framed Pacquiao and Marquez's third and (what was supposed to be<sup>69</sup>) final fight. For both men, the strictures of masculinity called for them to defend their manhood, honor and nation; to admit to losing to the other fighter would violate the competitive spirit that foregrounds codes of masculinity in sport culture; a hyper competitive sense of superiority through male bodies, a "win at all costs" attitude and expected behaviors of proving one's dominance. In this sense, both men refused to acknowledge failure or loss (Messner, 1992).<sup>70</sup> For Marquez, his claims to superiority over Pacquiao rested on claims of incompetence by the judges and public support. For example, one newspaper stated, "Marquez has been quite successful in conditioning the minds of critics and fans saying he was cheated in the scoreboards on both fights. He claimed he won on points in their first encounter despite the three knockdowns."<sup>71</sup> For Pacquiao, the fact that Marquez kept insisting that he won, coupled with Marquez publicly embarrassing him by wearing the t-shirts was an affront to Pacquiao's manhood. To defend his honor, Pacquiao sought to "shut this guy's mouth."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> "T-shirt insult fires up Pacman" The Star (South Africa). 28 October 2011.

<sup>68</sup> International Business Times News. "Manny Pacquiao: 'I Still Feel Young and Strong'" September 15, 2011.

<sup>69</sup> At the time of writing this dissertation, Pacquiao and Marquez fought for the fourth time on December 8, 2012. Marquez knocked Pacquiao out with a straight right hand. It was the most devastating knockouts I have ever seen.

<sup>70</sup> The New York Post September 7, 2011. PACQ-MAN POLITICKING FOR MAYWEATHER FIGHT. "I think my style is a difficult one for him to figure out . . . You have to make him think about what he wants to do. I've been able to do it for 24 rounds and I know I will be able to do it again."

<sup>71</sup> *Digital Journal*. "Will Juan Manuel Marquez beat Manny Pacquiao for the third time?" August 15, 2011.

<sup>72</sup> Agence France Presse. "Boxing: No more Mr. Nice Guy as Pacquiao girds for battle." September 8, 2011.

### **Navigating National Masses: Marquez vs. Pacquiao III**

On November 11, 2011, a day before Juan Manuel Marquez took on Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao at the MGM Grand Garden Arena, in Las Vegas, NV, I took a cab from my hotel to the MGM Grand Garden Arena to catch a glimpse of the weigh-ins between the Mexican and Filipino pugilists. The MGM lobby was not what a normal lobby area looked like with a few patrons waiting to check-in. Upon entering the MGM hotel, I noticed a miniature version of a boxing ring placed in the lobby. A statue of the MGM Grand Hotel lion was placed in the middle and an advertising poster “Pacquiao Marquez III” promoting the fight was wrapped around the ring. Throughout the lobby it was clear that the fight was about to take center stage; fight posters were placed on posts, stand alone posters were strategically placed throughout the lobby, and videos featuring Pacquiao and Marquez were shown behind the lobby’s check-in desk. Yet none was more jarring than the appearance of the crowd filling the lobby area. It was astonishing. A majority crowd of Latina/o, Filipina/o people were walking around, mingling, and taking pictures of themselves next to the ring. As I walked through the lobby, throngs of fight fans permeated the area and it was clear where their allegiances laid. I saw Filipinas/os wearing windbreakers and jackets with Philippine national symbols. And Mexican and Mexican Americans wearing the Mexican flag draped around their shoulders. A Filipino/Filipino American man was wearing a red headband with “Pacquiao” in white lettering and a red Pacquiao themed Nike shirt. He was holding a double-sided sign that read, “P4PKing” and underneath it was, “Mayweather, know your rank,” an obvious reference to African American boxer, Floyd Mayweather Jr., Pacquiao’s boxing contemporary and his biggest rival. Accompanying the phrases was an image of quasi-naked Pacquiao sitting stoically, his upper body was shown with a superimposed image of the Filipino sun’s rays extending out on his

upper body. The image showed Pacquiao staring at the viewer with a piercing gaze. On the other side of the poster read, “The Filipino is worth fighting for” accompanied by an image of Pacquiao hitting a boxing speed bag. A Filipina and Filipino were also decked out in Pacquiao inflected gear, wearing navy blue bandanas with “Pacquiao” in white lettering. They too were holding a sign. The sign read, “Congrats Manny! Truly the Greatest Ever!” It was obvious that Filipina/o and Filipino/o Americans were there to support Pacquiao. It was also obvious that there were as many Mexican and Mexican American fans cheering on Marquez. I was a little overwhelmed at the site of hundreds of people inside the lobby. As I navigated the sea of brown bodies and made my way to the weigh-in, I overheard synchronized chants of, “Olé, Olé, Olé<sup>73</sup>, Marquez, Marquez!” as a group of Mexican or Mexican American men were waving a Mexican flag. I also overheard songs being sung in Spanish. The closer I got to the entrance of the weigh-ins, the louder the crowd became. I heard chants of “Manny, Manny, Manny” as one Filipino or Filipino American waved a Filipino flag. Then, chants of “Mexico, Mexico, Mexico!” while I heard a lone voice, faintly chant, “Boo.” Soon after, more chants of “Marquez, Marquez, Marquez!” emerged from the crowd and in response, “Pacquiao, Pacquiao, Pacquiao!” Another Filipino or Filipino American man shouted, “Viva Filipino, Arriba, Arriba Viva Filipino!”<sup>74</sup>

I waited in line to attend the weigh-ins when one of the MGM’s security guard bellowed, “Alright listen up! We gotta clear the hallways, the event is full, no one is getting in. Please exit towards the hotel if you want to watch it on TV! Go to the sports book! The arena is full!” One patron yelled back, “We’re trying to get in!” Despite these orders, the largely brown crowd did not disperse, lingering in the lobby of the entrance to the weigh-in. Disappointed at not being afforded the opportunity to attend the weigh-ins, I too lingered around with the fans. After about

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<sup>73</sup> This chant is generally used in soccer games.

<sup>74</sup> Arriba is literally translated to, “up.” In the context of rooting for someone or a team it is meant as a cheer or encouragement to, “let’s go!”

an hour and a half, and after the weigh-ins concluded, I snuck in to the weigh-in area to check out the weigh-in space. I witnessed a number of reporters and journalists wrapping up the event and even noticed a few familiar faces from watching ESPN and other sports sites. It was clear that I was witnessing what it meant to be in the “fight capital of the world.”

The vignette above signals the ways in which Marquez and Pacquiao generate a discourse of the body produced through national pride and affiliation that is profoundly linked to masculine identification. The diversity of bodily discourses through fandom cultures is expressed in the chants and shouts, is also objectified in the various national symbols including flags, shirts and the various accessories sold in the lobby area. In this way, both boxers are representatives of their respective national bodies. The mass of Mexican/Mexican American and Filipina/o/Filipina/o American crowd were in many ways represent, “a unified national body” (Joo, 2012, p. 53). In concert with Thomas Carter (2006), one can also see how the city of Las Vegas is:

A city engaged in the Sport of Cities necessarily involves two parallel production systems: the production space, with its synergy of capital investment and cultural meanings, and the production of symbols which constructs both social identity and currency for commerce. Rather than rendering localities irrelevant, however, such competition reconstitutes the significance of space and place. (Carter, 2006, p. 1)

We can think here of the MGM Grand Garden Arena and Las Vegas as spaces constituted on multiple scales that simultaneously interact globally, transnationally, nationally, and locally, while also recognizing that its inhabitants are diasporic populations (Appadurai, 1996). These brown bodies are in many ways, vying for social power vis-à-vis nationalist tropes, while also configuring what it means to be a certain type of ethnic or national subject in relation to their respective communities. In the ethnographic moment above, it is clear that the MGM Grand



Garden Arena lobby is a publicly appropriated, space-specific site for complicated expressions of nationalism.

### **Affinity and Distance: The Cultural Complexities of Masculinity and Nationalism**

On November 12, 2011, I attended a closed circuit boxing match between Juan Manuel Marquez and Manny “Pac-Man” Pacquiao at Mandalay Bay arena. The live event took place at the MGM Garden arena but tickets for the live fight were sold out. So instead of watching the fight at a bar with other boxing fans, I thought I would try my hand at attending the fight via closed circuit jumbotron with a friend. About an hour after taking our seats, I left to grab a few snacks at the snack bar:

*As I was standing in line, in front of me to my right, about 15 feet away, I saw a Filipino American, approximately 25-30 years old with long, braided hair wearing a bright yellow, Nike branded t-shirt and a pair of blue jeans. On the front of the shirt was Pacquiao’s signature “MP,” and two boxing gloves in the front forming a heart. With what looked like a beer in his hand, he was off to the side and conversing with two white people; a male and female. As he was speaking to the white people, his voice was loud enough for me to hear. He was animated in his gestures, emphasizing his points with his arms and hands. He was talking about Pacquiao and the failure of the potential fight between Floyd Mayweather Jr., Pacquiao’s “rival” and boxing contemporary. He was also speaking about Mayweather in derisive ways, calling Mayweather a “fag” and a “pussy.” He did not think that Mayweather wanted to fight Pacquiao because he was “scared” of him. He went on to talk about how Mayweather avoided fighting Pacquiao and that what Mayweather did was a “bitch move.” The white people asked why the fight never materialized between Pacquiao and Mayweather. The Filipino American explained that the*

*boxers were expected to fight, but that Mayweather demanded too much money and that Pacquiao wasn't willing to give in to drug testing. Throughout their interaction, the Filipino American was doing most of the talking, the white people only interrupting for clarification.*

The vignette above demonstrates how race, gender, and sexuality mobilize in the service of performing what it means to be a certain kind of American man. The Filipino American locates Pacquiao as a signifier to ascribe a particular type of manhood that is laced with contradictions. In order to understand how this is configured, it is important to frame Pacquiao's racialized masculinity in relation to, and in opposition to Mayweather's. Ben Carrington (2010) suggests that pervasive images of the black male athlete represent him as tough, violent and aggressive and therefore perpetuate depictions of them as a "primitive" hyper-masculine subjects (Burstyn, 1999). The Filipino American, however, in his attempt at distancing Pacquiao's masculinity from Mayweather's, reproduces the "specter of the fag" (Pascoe, 2007) aimed at Mayweather despite the fact that Mayweather participates in a sport considered masculine. To name Mayweather a "fag" is to police the boundaries of masculinity. In other words, the claim that Mayweather is "scared" to fight Pacquiao suggests that Mayweather is not "manly" enough and therefore not tough enough to fight the Filipino pugilist (Kimmel, 1994). To the Filipino American, Mayweather stood in for the "fag" in part to emphasize Mayweather's "femininity," and "weakness" and therefore places a premium on Pacquiao's masculinity. Like CJ Pascoe's (2007) work in which the "fag" is used to reject feminine attributes, and therefore weakness, the gender and sexual order is solidified as a result of this discourse. Additionally, the feminine *and* queer subject stands in direct opposition to the process of heterosexually masculinizing Pacquiao. Thus, it is only through a disavowal of the queer and the feminine, where the masculine subject (Pacquiao) can be rendered legible, and therefore superior to Mayweather's

racialized, abject masculinity (Butler, 1995). In addition, homophobia and sexism work in tandem in the construction of Pacquiao's masculinity. The Filipino American's use of the sexual epithet, "fag" and the sexist term, "pussy" and Mayweather's "bitch move" places Mayweather in an inferior position (occupied by women) along the gender hierarchy. Moreover, the Filipino American at the snack bar is also asserting his own definitions of what it means to be a certain type of man, and more particularly, a certain type of Filipino American man. Whereas the presence of black and white sporting bodies predominate the sporting landscape, the fact that Pacquiao can stand in for an idealized form of sporting masculinity positions him in dominant ways. In other words, to position himself and Pacquiao as heterosexual and masculine suggests that to be a Filipino American, one must perform and posture a kind of tough, aggressive and overtly heterosexual<sup>75</sup> and hypermasculine persona.<sup>76</sup>

While the above analysis focuses on the Filipino American's use of language, he is also engaging in a type of "presentation of self" (Goffman, 1959) by appropriating a particular kind

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<sup>75</sup> I hesitate to assign sexual orientation to this Filipino American because he could very well be performing what Richard T. Rodriguez calls, "Queering the Homeboy Aesthetic" among Chicano/Latino gay men and that he was policing the boundaries of Mayweather's black masculinity. This does not however, absolve him of how he perpetuates the denigration of women and queers in relation to straight men. See Anthony Ocampo's article on performances of masculinity among Latino gay men (2012).

<sup>76</sup> Homophobia was also articulated by Pacquiao himself. On May 2012, in response to U.S. President Barack Obama's stance on same sex marriage, Manny "Pacman" Pacquiao spoke to the *National Conservative Examiner*, stating that, "God's words first . . . obey God's law first before considering the laws of man. God only expects man and woman to be together and to be legally married, only if they so are in love with each other. It should not be of the same sex so as to adulterate the altar of matrimony, like in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah of Old." This comes as no surprise given Pacquiao's Catholic convictions, a religion institutionalized when Spain colonized the Philippines in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Since his homophobic comments, members of the online community, Change.org created a petition to end Nike's sponsorship with Pacquiao and compiled over 4,000 signatures. Furthermore, Pacquiao's comments gained traction in the national media and Pacquiao went on full retreat to clarify his comments by stating:

I didn't say that, that's a lie . . . I didn't know that quote from Leviticus because I haven't read the Book of Leviticus yet. I'm not against gay people . . . I have a relative who is also gay. We can't help it if they were born that way. What I'm critical off, are actions that violate the word of God. I only gave out my opinion that same sex marriage is against the law of God.

Regardless of his backpedaling attempts outside of the ring, Pacquiao's initial comments about maintaining institutional forms of heteronormativity and reinvestments in heterosexism remain. Here, Pacquiao acts on behalf of the nation, as the "Godfather" mediator between state sanctioned, "acceptable" forms of marriage while neutralizing the potential for usurping social and political change.

of black aesthetic rooted in hip hop culture. His clothing choice, while clearly indicating a national affinity towards Pacquiao and the Philippines, also reflected a working-class African American style.<sup>77</sup> While there are certain ways in which he appropriates a cultural blackness, he is not entirely embracing it in part because of his Pacquiao t-shirt marks him as a distancing from blackness and embracing of either his *Filipinoess* or Asian Americaness that simultaneously is about “contestation and redefinition” (Wong & Elliot, 1994),<sup>78</sup> that perhaps contests Filipino Americans’ subordinate status in the sporting industry, and a redefinition of masculinity through contradictory and complex usages of clothing style, and the deployment of racialized and gendered orality. Ultimately, as a diasporic public space, the fight night at Mandalay Bay involves an investment of normative conceptions of masculinity that comes at the expense of queers, African Americans, and women (Gopinath, 2005). In addition to the religious motifs that are attributed to Pacquiao’s masculinity, there are also U.S. popular cultural forms, particularly hip-hop culture that inflect and shape Pacquiao’s masculinity as a tough masculinity.

### **Thug Passion of the Christ**

Through appropriating blackness via hip-hop culture, Manila Ryce,<sup>79</sup> a third-generation Filipino American artist and activist used art as a creative outlet to convey the disruptive, transgressive, and revolutionary character of Pacquiao for Filipina/o American communities. Manila Ryce, an artist and activist told me he has been doing art his whole life but that he started taking art more seriously in in college. He introduced me to a piece, entitled, *Thug Passion of the Christ* (Figure 1), created out of oil and laser on a lightly colored maple wood. The maple wood

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<sup>77</sup> This was a recurring theme among a number of my male informants who shared their love of hi hop, adopted black cultural styles on the basketball court and even admitted to mimicking particular styles generally associated with cultural blackness.

<sup>78</sup> I am thankful to Richard T. Rodriguez for recommending Wong & Elliot’s article.

<sup>79</sup> Manila Ryce is my informant’s artist name.

is shaped to resemble the weapons of Moroland plaque from the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. On the top, middle portion of the shield appears the Philippine sun's rays extending upward and outward. Right below the sun, on the left and right margins are leaves and stars. In between the leaves and stars are seven hands that meet in the middle; three appear on the left, and three appear on the right while a "West Coast" hand gesture is placed in between. In the middle of the shield features Manny "Pac-Man" Pacquiao's chiseled, naked upper body. He is wearing a bandana on his head with his arms placed behind his back, as if he is shackled. He is also wearing a cross around his neck nestled in between his chest muscles. His pose is similar to that of the late Tupac Shakur, an African American hip-hop artist who was shot in Las Vegas, NV in 1996. Pacquiao has a number of tattoos marking his body, all of which resemble the famous ones Shakur's body.<sup>80</sup> The lower left portion of the ribbon reads "makibaka" (Tagalog word for struggle) while on the lower right side is inscribed with freedom. Both the Tagalog and English words are written in babayin, a pre-colonial Philippine writing script.

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<sup>80</sup> On Pacquiao's left chest muscle, the phrase "2PAC" is inscribed, with a side profile of Queen Nefertete, an Egyptian Queen, appears with the phrase "2.DIE.4" below it. On Pacquiao's sternum, the number "50" sits on top of an AK-47 assault rifle. Tattooed in his lower abdominal area are the words, "THUG LIFE." He appears to be wearing shorts or sweats. Underneath his torso appears another star with the phrase, "2pacquiao" appearing below it. Framing Pacquiao's upper body are four downward facing guns on each side. A ribbon lines the lower portion of the shield.



Figure 1. *Thug Passion of the Christ*. Credit: Manila Ryce.

Manila Ryce was inspired to create *Thug Passion* (Figure 1), using “a combination of [Pacquiao’s] emblem which is a take off the weapons of Moroland.” He states:

With this image it's more modern-day you know weapons of resistance and it's maybe more of what I wish Pacquiao was rather than what he is because similarly Tupac was a figure like that. Where he was seen as an idol of the people who's larger-than-life, larger than what he actually was. But he was associated with this revolution and consciousness, and with Pacquiao, he's an inspiration but he's an icon and it kind of stops with that. He's not really an advocate for any specific direction or liberation and so with this piece, I want to take the old weapons of Moroland and kind of update it and use a figure who is iconic that can kind of be the spokesperson for that.

Here, Tupac Shakur’s political blackness is appropriated and transposed onto Pacquiao’s body in order to reconcile the failure of Pacquiao’s radical consciousness. The fact that “he’s an inspiration and it kind of stops with that” emphasizes the limitations of Pacquiao’s iconicity.

This artwork also represents a kind of hyper-masculine, Filipino nation inflected by and laden

with the politics of blackness, consciousness and revolution, all of which were cultivated throughout Shakur's life, perhaps a gesture to the Afro-Asia connection as documented by (Prashad, 2001).

Manila Ryce creates an image that is linked to popular culture representations of the late Tupac Shakur,<sup>81</sup> while deploying Filipina/o inflected cultural cues. The babayin writing script, the Philippine sun, Pacquiao's body and the "2pacquiao" appearing below are appropriated to make it uniquely Filipina/o. Yet the marking of Pacquiao's body vis-à-vis Tupac Shakur's tattoos, the placing of a bandana on Pacquiao's head, and the familiar pose and the gaze by Pacquiao reflect the same kind of imagery circulated about the slain rapper—an imagery that projects a tough, working-class, hyper-masculine aesthetic. Thus, rather than catering to the dominant narrative of Pacquiao as a cultural icon neutralized by multiculturalist discourse, and made possible by transnational corporations like Nike, Manila Ryce actively subverts that image by taking cues from Tupac Shakur's iconicity, whose music, style and performance of masculinity create alternative renderings of Pacquiao and the *possibility* of something more than just an icon.

Pacquiao embodies a powerful image of Filipino masculinity in ways that directly challenge the emasculated Asian male stereotype (Burdsey, 2007). Digitized and traditional mass-mediated images represent Pacquiao in masculine ways (Nakamura, 2008). These images show Pacquiao performing a "most muscular pose," a bodybuilding pose that emphasizes the muscularity of the upper, front torso of a person's body. In one such popular image, Pacquiao appears half naked with abdominals flexed, his sinewy muscle fibers accentuating his upper body. Pacquiao's gaze is striking; he is staring at the camera with his head slightly tilted

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<sup>81</sup> See Kevin Powell, "Tupac Shakur [1971-1996]: The Strange and Terrible Saga." *Rolling Stone*, 1996 Accessed: February 5 2012.

downward.<sup>82</sup> Pacquiao's muscular body from these still images comes to life in an HBO documentary titled, *24/7*.<sup>83</sup> The documentary features Pacquiao and his opponent four weeks before the match, mixing in storylines to capture the viewers' interest. In many of the episodes, Pacquiao is shown working out, highlighting his training regimen—a mix of circuit training, boxing workouts and sparring sessions. These moving images emphasize Pacquiao's muscular, lean and dynamic body, emphasizing his disciplined workout routines. Indeed, respondents have described Pacquiao's physicality as strong, powerful, quick and fast. Jenilyn, a second-generation Filipina-American describes Pacquiao as a powerful puncher with a left hook that consistently catches the attention of his opponents.

[Pacquiao] has a strong left hook or something, not hook but left hand. There's power. Every boxer that they interviewed that fought against him, they always talk about the power of his punch. And Freddie Roach, his coach, seems to have a lot of faith in him. So I could see it, I could see it in some of his fights, his power punches, you see his opponents definitely go down.<sup>84</sup>

Pacquiao's preparation through his vigorous training is culminated in his performance in the ring. And key to Pacquiao's status as a perennial pound-for-pound best fighter is his reputation for moving up in weight classes and defeating bigger and stronger fighters. In fact, Pacquiao is known to invite pain, encouraging his opponent to test his chin by allowing his opponent to hit him. Francisco, a second-generation Filipino American college student is well aware of these attributes and Pacquiao's role as a showman, and senses that Pacquiao knows full well that the cameras are following his every move.

When the camera's on he's being distracted by the press, still being determined [by] what he's doing. Even during the fights he's smiling. I remember he was already high on the points, he's just taunting the guy, "C'mon let's fight, let's put on a good show." I remember one time he snapped his gloves together and smiled, and when [his opponent]

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<sup>82</sup>“Photos: Manny Pacquiao Ripped, Training in Beast Mode,” BoxingScene.com, October 26, 2011, <http://www.boxingscene.com/photos-manny-pacquiao-ripped-training-beast-mode--45376>

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.hbo.com>.

<sup>84</sup> Interview with author, Torrance, California, January 24, 2012.



hit him he would smile after he would get hit. He's a showman as a boxer, he wants to put on a good fight.

Here, Pacquiao's toughness is animated by his willingness to absorb punches; as if an aura of invincibility seemingly surrounds him in the ring. These observations also signal a larger discourse of reinventing Pacquiao's body as a strong, hard, powerful, courageous, Asian male athletic body, representing the possibility of Filipino and Asian American masculinity and physicality by remasculinizing him in ways that are aggressive and tough and thus challenges European constructions of the Orientalist Asian male figure as soft, weak and effeminate (Burdsey, 2007). For example, when I interviewed Manila Ryce, noted:

I think with Filipina/o Americans, because in America the culture is more heterogeneous and Asian males are emasculated as seen as emotionless robots who do good on their SATs and that's about it. And it's kind of similar to Jeremy Lin saying right now is that to see an Asian in sports who's actually doing well and doing better than the stereotypical over what people think is supposed to be what constitutes a good basketball player, what constitutes a good boxer, that they're actually breaking these barriers brick by brick, dismantling this idea that Asians are emasculated. I think mostly that's what it is for mostly Asian Americans to have a role model who isn't an accountant or a doctor or somebody like that. It's empowering in that sense.

Manila Ryce emphasizes dominant orientalist stereotypes of Asian bodies as rote and mindless while also pointing out how race and gender intersect to produce and imagine an emasculated Asian male body. Additionally, Manila Ryce is also critical of the pervasive stereotype of Asians as the "model minority," a discourse that frequently praises Asian Americans for their high-achieving success in education, business, science and competitiveness in the global world. In addition, Manila Ryce cites dominant representations of athletes along the black and white paradigm while simultaneously inserting, and therefore recuperating failed Asian masculinity through sports.

The constitutive elements of hip-hop and its progressive strands enable Filipina/o Americans to adapt, create and affirm a positive Filipina/o American identity through Pacquiao's body. But appropriating hip-hop images and aesthetics force us to question how it might fall short of its liberating potential. Issues of homophobia, gender tensions and outright misogyny within hip hop culture are enduring issues that must be assessed critically because (Hill & Ramsaran, 2009; Rose, 2008; Thangaraj, 2012) its aesthetics, while no doubt rooted in resistance strands (Kelley, 1994), are also complicit in its own set of gender and sexual hierarchies and exclusions.

To conclude, Manny "Pac-Man" Pacquiao's global presence and transnational reach transcends his boxing exploits, especially for members of the Filipina/o diaspora. Indeed, the rituals, familiar sights, smells and sounds of *Filipinoness*, create diasporic bonds that are part and parcel of Pacquiao fight nights. His racialized masculinity, as a powerful, strong, dynamic and athletic body challenges historical and contemporary stereotypes of "race and ability" (España-Maram, 2006) particularly as he works in relation to Asian, African American and White male athletic bodies. The recruitment of popular cultural forms like hip hop further provide alternative imaginings and political possibilities that extend beyond the realm of Pacquiao's sanitized, corporate image. But his body also produces complicated meanings of identity, diasporic intimacy, national belonging and the possibilities *and* contradictions that are mapped onto it. At the same time, such alternative possibilities also reinscribe social hierarchies that continue to affect certain members of the Filipina/o community. The scenes described in this chapter are also about spaces and the mobility, indeed flexibility, of Pacquiao's image. His specter looms large in transnational, national, and local settings that bleed into private, public and cultural spaces. This often generates national sentiments, national rivalries and the creation of identities that are

empowering *and* disempowering which reveals the fractured nature of the Filipina/o global diaspora and transnational “community.”

## **Conclusion**

### **Filipina/o American Sporting Practices in the Diaspora: Reflecting on Sports Perils, and Possibilities**

This dissertation examined how sports function in the lives of Filipina/o Americans in ways that transcend notions of “play” and that move beyond the sporting logics of wins and losses. Sports are often celebrated and promoted as a system of meritocracy where politics are neutralized and the field of play only sees “athletes” instead of simultaneously racialized, gendered, and sexualized bodies (Yep, 2012). Anchoring this dissertation are the experiences of Filipina/o Americans who, knowingly or not, challenge this apolitical view of sports. A more critical account of their experiences reveals how sporting cultural practices served as a site for a messy arrangement of meanings that are shifting, complicated, and contradictory. In other words, their participation in sports produced a complex spectrum of experiences that were informed by, and reinforced through, relations of power—race, gender, sexuality and class. In the process of negotiating these power relations, Filipina/o Americans took up sports in ways that disrupt historical and contemporary representations of them and their bodies while also recuperating normative understandings of self and nation that inevitably exclude others who do not fit such normative criteria.

The majority of this ethnographic project took place in “SoCal” (chapter one) a colloquial term primarily used by those who live in the Southern California region. SoCal is a spatial and temporal site that works discursively in the American popular imagination. Popular sentiments understand SoCal as a site that celebrates the body, promotes celebrity culture, and purportedly offers an infinite number of leisure pursuits. Yet SoCal is also an unequal site of power hierarchies predicated upon a number of important historical, economic, political, and social transformations that have carried on through the contemporary moment (Vargas, 2007). It is a

racialized space and the people living on the margins—namely, Black and Latino bodies—are equated to static representations of criminal behavior (Cacho, 2012; Kelley, 1994).

My analysis builds from the everyday to the spectacular level to discuss how sports are taken up in a multitude of ways. In chapter two, I foregrounded Filipina/o Americans' everyday sporting practices which ranged from sports memories, daily conversations, routines, habits, the various sporting spaces they traversed and the sporting objects that are embedded in their identities. Rather than seeing these activities and routine moments as unremarkable, I argue that these practices are important vantage points by which to understand how sports are enmeshed in Filipina/o Americans' daily lives, the pleasures that arise from participating, and the desires that enable co-ethnic and national belonging. By approaching this dissertation through the pedestrian and the spectacular, I make important contributions to the formation of bodies and identities at the intersection of global, transnational and local flows. For the Filipina/o Americans in this dissertation, asserting themselves as athletic bodies is in many ways a response to the racializing discourses of them as non-athletic and to their marginalized status in terms of their athletic invisibility to the mainstream. Such marginalization is expressed in the sporting politics of the everyday discussed in chapter three.

In chapter three, I teased out the deeply embedded gendered practices in sports. In this way, I have shown how gender, as a category of analysis shifts across space and time and is manifested in the arena of sports particularly when examining the intergenerational relations between fathers and daughters. While gendered, social conventions in the Philippines do not, for the most part, celebrate the Filipina athletic body, my Filipina American participants reveal that they are less likely to be restricted in terms of playing sports, or accessing sporting cultural practices. At the same time, because parents' mark playing sports as a primarily masculine

activity, Filipina Americans bend the gendered rules of Filipina femininity by participating in sports. Consequently, gender dynamics are reconfigured in the U.S. Nowhere is this more evident than in the narratives of the Filipina Americans. Filipina Americans have also shown how the fluidity of masculinity works in relation to female bodies. Jenilyn's crossover, a creative basketball move that relies on the manipulation of her own and her opponents' body shows how masculinity is not always equivalent to male bodies (Halberstam, 1998). In this way, one sees how sporting cultural practices bring to the fore, a disruption of both the gendered movements and expectations in sporting spaces, as well as resulting ideologies and conventions that exist within and outside of Filipina/o communities.

Moreover, it is through sports that Filipina/o Americans raise the stakes of their own sense of belonging to the U.S. that complicate a monolithic view of sporting participation within the confines of America. In other words, while their everyday sporting experiences primarily took place in the U.S., understandings of self were also enabled by and transcended through the transnational boxing sensation, Manny "Pac-Man" Pacquiao (chapter four). Here, transnational processes of consumption contribute to the formation of a diasporic Filipina/o identity, an identity that takes its cues not only in local settings, but globally as well (Appadurai, 1996). Thus, Filipina/o Americans look to Pacquiao's body not only in terms of feeling a sense of ethnic pride that someone of Filipina/o descent has made a visible presence to the white mainstream, but also as a way to critique depictions of Filipino American (and Asian American) masculinity as an essentially effeminate or failed masculinity (Eng, 2000). In this way, Pacquiao's masculinity is created through a complex amalgamation of cultural forms like hip hop, through narratives of a pre-colonial Philippine history, and through normative conceptions of gender that produce a Filipina/o American masculinity. In doing so, nationalism that is recuperated through

Pacquiao's body employs a decidedly rigid, heterosexual, nationalist lens. Furthermore, applying a comparative racial analytic and a women of color feminist framework, I have demonstrated how Filipino American masculinity is expressed in relation to African American bodies. For example, the vignette at the boxing match I attended in Las Vegas shows how Filipino American masculinity is consolidated through categories of race, gender and sexuality to the detriment of Black masculinity, queers and women. Thus, in order to redeem a Filipino American masculinity, it must rely on disavowing the queer and racialized subject to solidify itself as hypermasculine.

More than just with their "play" or fandom, Filipina/o American sporting practices demonstrate that "sports matter" beyond an ephemeral activity. There are emotional investments of winning or losing games. Filipina/o Americans' sporting cultural practices reveals a complicated narrative of belonging to both the U.S. and the Philippines, capturing the promises and limitations of what "community" means to them and the ways in which a boxer of Filipino descent can enable co-ethnic belongings and desires.

### **Limitations**

While I tried to capture the experiences of both Filipina and Filipino American sporting experiences, my data did not yield an equal amount of male to female interviews. In fact, I actively sought to interview more Filipina Americans once I realized that my participants were starting to skew toward men. In addition, as I discussed in the introduction, I did not play with Filipina Americans, or actively observe them playing sports. When I did observe Filipina Americans in sporting spaces, they were working to maintain the smooth functioning of the sporting space (chapter three) or cheering on their boyfriends, brothers and husbands from the

stands.<sup>85</sup> When I was frequenting the 24 Hour Fitness basketball gyms in Orange and Los Angeles Counties, I did not see Filipina Americans playing basketball. They were literally and figuratively situated at the margins of the sporting spaces. These examples continue to demonstrate how sports are an “arena of masculinity” (Pronger, 1990). This does not mean, however, that Filipina Americans are powerless agents in their sporting participation, or that they are denied particular kinds of pleasures as fans. For example, in the weekly basketball league that I played in, Filipina Americans instructed their partners or friends to “box out,” “play defense,” “get a stop,” and “spread the floor!” Such examples illustrate that while they were not allowed to play in the basketball league,<sup>86</sup> they exercised their agency by supporting their husbands/boyfriends. It also demonstrated their knowledge for the game of basketball. Nonetheless, my analysis could have been enriched had I observed and experienced how Filipina American athletic bodies negotiate the sporting space with their play.

Moreover, issues of sexuality in Filipina/o American sporting practices are another limitation. While I tried to provide a balance set of interviews between male and female participants, I recognize that this dissertation provided very minimal analysis on Filipina/o American queer athletic bodies and/or their sports participation more broadly. This stems in part from my methodology. I did not ask Filipina/o Americans about their sexual orientation or how they self-identified primarily because issues of sexuality are a sensitive topic in the Filipina/o American community (Ocampo, 2014; Manalansan, 2003; Root, 1997) and thus affected recruitment and access to queer Filipina/o Americans. While I did interview Everisto, a self-identified queer Filipino American, my overall data set was limited in terms of a wider range of identities represented in this study, which could have provided for a more complex and nuanced

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<sup>85</sup> This reflects how sporting spaces continue to be masculine spaces (Brown 2006).

<sup>86</sup> I interviewed the league organizer and he told me that he did not allow women to play because of insurance reasons.



analysis. For example, how do Filipino American gay men negotiate the masculine parameters associated with sports, and in what ways do they “do gender” that might challenge, or reproduce normative gender roles in the sporting arena (Ocampo, 2012)? Additionally, how might queer Filipina American sporting experiences figure into the Filipina American tomboy I discussed in chapter 3? How might their experiences complicate and expand upon notions of race, gender, and sexuality in sporting spaces? While recognizing these limitations, these are also opportunities to explore these further and can very well be part of my future research considerations.

### **Future Research Considerations**

One of the themes that surfaced throughout my fieldwork was the intergenerational nature of sports between children and parents, particularly between fathers and daughters. Most of my interviews were with 1.5, and second-generation Filipina/o Americans and some of them had children of their own. In my future research, I want to consider what kinds of generational continuities or discontinuities exist between parents and children, both of whom are/will be socialized into a U.S. context. I want to consider how do second-generation Filipina/o American parents use sports to interact with their children in ways that might diverge from those of their immigrant parents. More specifically, how might race, gender, sexuality and class complicate or add a different dimension to my existing research?

Recognizing that this dissertation is transnational in its approach, I also hope to further explore the complications that arise when thinking about ideas and performances of race, class, gender and sexuality in Philippine sporting practices. In particular, the emerging Asian market for professional fighting.

In a recent “media scrum,”<sup>87</sup> Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC)<sup>88</sup> president, Dana White was asked if the UFC was coming to Asia. Dana White replied, “Asia? Oh hell yeah.” He emphasized how the Philippines was one of the key Asian markets that the UFC was trying to bring fights to. He claimed:

This is what I try to tell these guys. Everybody's saying, “You guys [the UFC] are doing too many fights. We're not doing enough fights,” There's places that are starving for it. And that's what we basically set up for this year. This year we're traveling all throughout Asia. [We] wanna get down to the Philippines. We *know*<sup>89</sup> it'll be huge in the Philippines. Years ago we were gonna go to the Philippines and it all fell apart. We're gettin closer and closer now. Obviously, what we're doing over in China now, Philippine is next.

I am not surprised that the UFC is trying to establish a market in the Philippines. The company and its sport have exponentially grown in the last 20 years, expanding their events to North American places like Canada, Central and South America, as well as European, and Asian countries. At the same time, with new transnational markets come new ways of thinking about how MMA shapes social formations, namely gender, race and sexuality. Recently, for example, the UFC created a new female bantamweight<sup>90</sup> and is in the process of adding a strawweight division.<sup>91</sup> Whereas men continue to dominate the gendered landscape in MMA, the sport's newest and perhaps brightest star is none other than “Rowdy” Rhonda Rousey, a white American, and former Olympian in the sport of judo who parlayed her athleticism to MMA. She is currently the women's bantamweight champion. I wonder then, given how women are now granted greater access to participating in sports like MMA, what it will do to the gender dynamics in the Philippines once the UFC entrenches itself as a major sporting institution there.

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<sup>87</sup> A media scrum takes place during or after UFC events and involves a collection of reporters asking Dana White a series of questions that range from inquiring about fighters to upcoming UFC events and other news stories that crop up during the week.

<sup>88</sup> The UFC is the largest mixed martial arts company in the world. MMA is a relatively new combat sport that emerged in the 1990s. It features fighters in a ring or cage trying to defeat their opponent by utilizing a number of combat styles including, but not limited to, boxing, wrestling, ju-jitsu, tae kwon do and karate.

<sup>89</sup> Emphasis his.

<sup>90</sup> 126 to 135 lbs.

<sup>91</sup> 106 to 115 lbs.

Given this context, I hope to conduct future research in the Philippines and examine how the sport of MMA sanctions particular kinds of gendered sporting bodies and how it affects local spaces and communities. This is assuming of course, that the Philippines will allow female fighters to participate in MMA. Recent scholarship for example, has focused on the “precarity of masculinity” (Besnier, 2012a; Besnier, 2012b), documenting how male youth’s bodies circulate within transnational circuits and through global sporting institutions. Conventional views of masculinity expect male youth to provide for their families in traditional forms of labor. However, as Besnier argues, “free-market competition, economic downturns and the feminization of the global post-Fordist labour markets,” male youth are now confronted with a crisis that prevent them from, “reproducing the sociality and the sense of belonging that guided their fathers through life, generating a malaise that affects equally and interchangeably masculinity, youth, and economic life in general” (Besnier, 2012, p. 3). While this is no doubt still a fundamental aspect of sporting labor in the global landscape, I anticipate that the relentless pursuit of the UFC to come to places like the Philippines will dramatically alter how the precarity of masculinity is mapped beyond just male bodies. The UFC is following an established path of bringing another type of sport to the Philippines that already has colonial ties to sports, particularly basketball and boxing.

To conclude, this dissertation contributes to an emerging body of scholarship that critically explores how sporting cultures and practices advance new ways of understanding Asian American communities, formations of identities, diasporic belonging, and the messy and often contradictory set of arrangements that these communities negotiate and manage (Thangaraj, Arnaldo, & Chin, forthcoming; Chin, 2012; Thangaraj, 2014; Yep, 2009). Throughout this dissertation, I demonstrated how residual legacies of empire, global flows, ideas, and

commodities, penetrate local spaces and shape Filipina/o Americans' everyday lives. I have also shown how the specter of Manny "Pac-Man" Pacquiao looms as a global presence, powerful national symbol, and spectacular sporting body that can, at times, provide "oblique critiques"<sup>92</sup> to legacies of empire at the intersection of race, class, gender and sexuality, (trans)nationalism and diaspora. At the same time, this dissertation also recognizes that these same critiques may not always emancipate us from the very same categories we wish to transform.

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<sup>92</sup> I borrow this phrase from Filipino American Studies scholar, and cultural critic, Theodore Gonzalves. See Gonzalves (2009).

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