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INTRODUCTION

THE SUMMER 2016 OLYMPICS in Rio de Janeiro will be a historic event marking the first time the games have been hosted by a South American country and only the second time that they have taken place in Latin America.¹ Also noteworthy was Brazil's role as the site of the World Cup championship in the summer of 2014. Despite the heated debates surrounding the government's immense expenditures, and despite the Brazilian team's horrific loss in the semifinals, the 2014 tournament was the second time the country had been selected to host by FIFA.² Taken together, the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympics symbolize the country's growing stature on the world stage, and serve as a propitious backdrop for this edited volume's examination of the role of sport and athleticism in the region. Here, I introduce the field of Latin American(ist) sports scholarship to delineate the contributions in this book. In lieu of summaries of individual chapters, I outline three larger threads of inquiry that conjoin these studies of different countries from the late nineteenth century to the present.

Scholarly interest in sports in Latin America emerged as a notable subfield in the 1980s through the work of Latin American(ist) historians and cultural analysts, such as Joseph Arbena and Eduardo Galeano, and coincided with a growing preoccupation with popular or mass culture in

various disciplines.³ Historians traced trajectories (e.g., the arrival of particular sports and their institutionalization through clubs and federations) and examined the relation of sports to other social phenomena (e.g., urban life, class relations). In addition to establishing overarching timelines, many studies examined sports to rethink nation building and modernization as long-term processes influenced by popular practices rather than as merely the result of elite decision making in political and economic realms. For their part, many sociologists and cultural critics addressed sports from a different angle. Paying particular attention to soccer, these scholars analyzed this immensely popular pastime as a means to better understand the behavior of large sectors of the population or what sports historian Tony Mason has called “the passion of the people.”⁴

During that same period, sports were also a growing concern for scholars working on and in other regions. Notable among them was J. A. Mangan, who established a “Sports in Global Society” book series and eventually coedited a book on Latin America with Brazilian sports studies specialist Lamartine DaCosta.⁵ As with the abovementioned work by Latin Americanists, Mangan and DaCosta’s 2002 *Sport in Latin American Society* placed particular attention on the notion of “modern sport”—that is, on physical activities imported into the region (soccer, boxing, baseball, basketball, volleyball, cricket) in the mid- to late 1880s during a period that coincided with economic and political modernization.⁶ Arbena and others were interested in the ways in which the proliferation of such sports helped to support modernization processes by disciplining bodies in new ways.⁷ Mangan was particularly concerned with questions of origin (or, as he put it, the “‘infancy,’ ‘adolescence,’ and ‘maturity’ of modern sport on the subcontinent”) and in tracing the essential role of the British middle class in the growth of modern sport in Latin America.⁸ Even while acknowledging the numerous merits of Mangan’s work on the history of sports around the world, there are certainly limitations to his perspective (discussed in greater detail below). Unfortunately, the notion of Latin American sports as derivative may have played a role in the general disregard for the region despite the subsequent proliferation of “global sports studies” during the first two decades of the twenty-first century.⁹

Within this context, the present edited volume offers a timely contribution by, first and foremost, expanding our knowledge about athletic activities in particular periods and places in ways that complicate (and at times challenge) our understanding of the past. More than ten years after the Mangan-DaCosta and Arbena-LaFrance anthologies appeared, we are still in need of case studies.¹⁰ Many chapters included herein are social histories or ethnographic studies that enhance our understanding of the

historical trajectory of particular athletic pursuits such as boxing, gateball, soccer, and equestrian activities. These studies attend to the specific practices of participants and spectators as well as to processes of institutionalization. There are macroanalyses of star athletes and sports as national spectacles and of the political impact of specific sports at given historical junctures, as we see in Michael Donoghue's study of Panamanian boxing in the mid- to late twentieth century, which reveals how Roberto Durán's professional trajectory functioned as national allegory for the country's rising fortunes under General Omar Torrijos. Other authors offer micro-studies of community-based sports and fandom that employ a more bottom-up approach to examine the neighborhood-based allegiances of soccer fans (Raanan Rein's chapter) or the importance of regional histories in shaping the trajectories of athletes and the loyalties of spectators (David M. K. Sheinin's chapter).

Taken together, the case studies broaden the scope of inquiry beyond "modern sports" and their "evolution" (i.e., to the arrival of European games and their subsequent adaptation to local conditions and traditions). In this edited volume, chapters on boxing and soccer are placed alongside others focusing on "home-grown" physical activities (such as the use of bolas) and on those bearing the influence of non-European nations, including capoeira (introduced by African immigrants) and gateball (introduced by Japanese immigrants). In so doing, this book offers a broader assessment of physical practices in the region from the nineteenth century on, along with a more Latin American-centric perspective. The inquiries emerge from local, national, and regional problematics even as the chapters recognize and address the importance of transnational contact.

In the process of furthering what we know about the history of sports, the chapters open up new windows onto overlooked aspects of Latin America's past (and present). In so doing, they hold the potential to upend established chronologies and historical narratives. This is perhaps most evident in the way these contributions challenge traditional forms of social history—a point made explicitly by Raanan Rein in his chapter on the Atlanta football (soccer) club in the Villa Crespo neighborhood of Buenos Aires. Rein argues that analyzing fandom is a means to get at the past of "nonaffiliated ethnics" who are left out of studies that rely on the records of religious establishments, community organizations, or other ethnic-based associations. Aside from getting at the past of un(der)represented groups of people, examining sports in Latin America can also serve as a lens to better understand everyday life and daily practices. In his analysis of gateball played by Japanese-Brazilians in São Paulo, anthropologist Joshua Hotaka Roth outlines how the sport functions in the lives of

the elderly, who often arrive hours before matches to rake leaves and drag the courts in preparation for the competition. His account of these mundane routines acknowledges the role of gateball in positioning the elderly as vital community members and as mediators between that community and other Brazilians. According to Hotaka Roth, the elderly maintain a tradition specific to post-World War I Japan while, at the same time, staking a claim to Brazilian citizenship through their efforts to reclaim and restore public space.

Hotaka Roth's chapter exemplifies a second notable contribution of this edited volume: the ability to conjoin innovative historical studies with insightful cultural analysis.¹¹ This might be expected in the ethnographic studies of Hotaka Roth and fellow anthropologist Katya Wesolowski, who traces the historical trajectory of capoeira from the nineteenth century to recent debates in the early 2000s about its proper categorization (as sport or cultural practice) and the merits of regulation. Yet this cultural turn is also present in the chapters written by such trained historians as Carolyn Ryan Larson, Ageeth Sluis, and Ken Lehman, who situate sports and discourses about physicality as sites of mediation between the foreign and the national, the rural and the urban, the traditional and the modern, and between marginalized and dominant groups. In analyzing nineteenth-century travel narratives by Argentines and non-Argentines, Larson relates the depiction of indigenous physicality (as natural, unique, and uncivilized) to the construction of national identity in the postindependence period. In her study of postrevolutionary Mexico, Sluis links local press discourses on sleek, athletic women to the growing numbers of unattached women in urban areas; while celebrating the modern woman, such discourses also encouraged the disciplining of the female body (through diet, exercise, and the purchase of specific products) in ways that promoted consumption. For his part, Lehman suggests that the growing interest in *cholitas luchadoras* in Bolivia in the 2000s relates to the spectacle's symbolic function as a microcosm of the contemporary struggle between the indigenous and the Western; between the rural, subsistence economy and urban market forces; and between the national and the foreign.

In pulling together historical and cultural analysis, the contributors have located new sources (outside of those traditionally used in a particular disciplinary tradition) and approach them in a fresh way. Trained historians (Donoghue, Lehman, Rein, Larson, Sheinin, and Sluis) ably respond to historian Robert Levine's call to "dig deeper into untouched archives and other sources" to more fully understand Latin American sports.¹² For example, Rein uses club minutes and lists of board members

of a local sports organization to unearth the history of unaffiliated Jewish-Argentines.¹³ Sluis turns to government records about public works projects, the curricula of architectural schools and professional journals, among other sources, to better understand state-of-the-art design standards from early twentieth-century Mexico linking Art Deco bodies and buildings. For her discussion of capoeira, anthropologist Wesolowski supplements ethnographic fieldwork with discursive analysis of written works by a nineteenth-century folklorist as well as pamphlets produced in the early twentieth century by capoeira practitioners.

These inventive methodologies recognize the importance of documenting sports as material practices, while also scrutinizing how those physical activities are represented and the discourses that surround them. Many of the historians consult less traditional sources (such as novels, films, paintings, manuals, advertisements, and blogs) as a means to understand the sociocultural significance of particular physical activities. Even those who rely on staple sources such as newspapers (local and foreign; mainstream and specialized) and legal documents are mindful of their nature as discourse. In other words, even while mining such sources for information about what may have occurred in the past, the authors laudably recognize newspaper articles, laws, travel accounts, and oral interviews as positioned articulations produced by given sectors and aimed at specific audiences for particular purposes. The authors are attentive to the way in which such documents produce meaning, even as they may serve as a partial record through which we can more fully understand the past.

At first glance, it may appear that the chapters utilize these resourceful methods and approaches in service of discrete case studies that have little relation between them. However, running through this collection are three significant lines of inquiry with broader implications: (1) the examination of the relationship between sports, the state, and national identity; (2) an interest in the interface between athletic activities, material bodies, and larger discourses about ethnicity, race, and gender; and (3) the exploration of sports as spatialized ritual. Some of these issues are not new to sport studies scholarship.¹⁴ However, they are addressed in this book in ways that are particularly complex and nuanced given the authors' tendency to exploit the strengths of the disciplines in which they were trained (e.g., the historians' systematic use of archival material; the anthropologists' thick ethnographic research) while drawing on the insights of cultural analysis. Not every chapter addresses all three threads; nor do the chapters deal with the issues in the same way. Nonetheless, the three lines form a notable theoretical substrate.

SPORTS, THE STATE, AND THE NATION

As evident in international competitions such as the FIFA World Cup, world boxing championships, and the Olympics, star athletes and sports teams often serve as stand-ins for nations, encouraging spectators to avow nationalist sentiments visibly and audibly, whether in stadiums, on street corners, or in living rooms. Whereas this potential has long been recognized, the roles of the state and the media in establishing and/or mediating the relationship between sports, citizens, and discourses about the nation merit greater scholarly exploration. Several chapters in this edited volume address those dynamics, while others examine the importance of larger discursive networks in publicizing the supposed distinctiveness of particular athletic activities practiced within a country's borders to bolster a sense of national identity.

In numerous Latin American countries, the state has provided concrete support for the promotion of sports, often as part of nation building and modernization processes. Its role is multifaceted and often involves the enactment of particular policies and the administration of public works as well as the singular actions of key state officials. Since the late nineteenth century, the state has often positioned itself as the guardian of the nation's health and integrity—measured not only in terms of economic growth but also in terms of the psychic and physical well-being of the citizens.¹⁵ In 1890s Brazil and in 1920s Mexico the state promoted physical education as a means of fortifying the nation (discussed in chapters by Wesolowski and Sluis). As part of its efforts to support the working classes that were increasingly concentrated in Buenos Aires, the administration of President Juan Perón built recreational facilities in numerous urban neighborhoods in the late 1940s and early 1950s.¹⁶ The Torrijos administration did something similar in Panama in the 1970s, constructing “gymnasiums and boxing arenas in the capital and Colón to encourage more youthful participation in the manly art” of boxing (discussed in Donoghue's chapter). In the late twentieth century, the promotion of sports became the center of the Mexican state's “youth policies” under the Salinas administration.¹⁷ The political rhetoric in various eras suggested that state support for healthy bodies led to healthy citizens (literally and metaphorically) and thus a healthy nation.

Such state expenditures have tended to garner popular support for a particular administration. This is evident in transitional eras: during the establishment of a republic (Brazil in the 1890s), the consolidation of a postrevolutionary state (Mexico in the 1920s and 1930s), and the formation of a dictatorship (Panama in the 1970s and 1980s). Thus it is not surprising

that key state officials (presidents, dictators) at times lay claim to particular sports heroes to bolster the politician's own popularity. In these cases, the athlete's professional trajectory is positioned to illustrate political narratives touted by politicians and/or the local press. As noted in Donoghue's chapter, General Omar Torrijos supported the training of Roberto Durán in very concrete ways, as the boxer's success in the ring served as a symbol of Panama's ascent on the international stage. More particularly, in echoing the general's own tough-guy reputation, Durán's physical dominance in the boxing matches against foreign competitors seemingly exemplified the way in which Panama had thrown off the legacies of U.S. intervention and regained its stature as macho nation.

Other chapters remind us that the positioning of sports narratives as national allegories is not always the result of the maneuverings of politicians. In his piece on Colombian boxing, Sheinin argues that Pambelé's professional rise and fall has frequently been understood as a symbol of the fate of the nation, as it became increasingly torn apart by violence in the 1980s. Pambelé's subsequent personal decline (into alcoholism and drug abuse) seemed to mirror Colombia's social degeneration given the escalating brutality of the drug trade and the increasing visibility of government corruption. The conflation of athlete and nation was less the result of the boxer's ties to particular politicians than of the ability of (particular) sports and (particular) competitors to achieve recognition on the international stage, for themselves and their country. This was clear in Pambelé's victory over Panama's Alfonso "Peppermint" Frazer and Roberto Durán's win over Scotland's Ken Buchanan in World Boxing title matches in 1972 (explored in Sheinin's and Donoghue's chapters). The significance of such victories becomes even greater when they coincide with momentous geopolitical events, such as Durán's 1980 win over U.S. fighter Sugar Ray Leonard in the aftermath of Panama's successful treaty negotiations with the Carter administration (in Donoghue's chapter).

Domestic media often play a key role in plotting the ties between individual and nation. In the effort to articulate the larger significance of specific bouts, games, or tournaments, local newspapers and specialized sports magazines often forge metonymic connections between individual athletes and more encompassing entities (geographic regions, socioeconomic classes, and racial and ethnic groups) by drawing on existing master narratives. In Panama, accounts of Durán's fights in the local press included recurrent references to his lower-class background and to a story about his early defense of his mother, who was being physically assaulted by two U.S. servicemen (in Donoghue's chapter). In crafting such narratives to amplify the meaningfulness of sports, the local press often helps to

reinforce particular identities (regional, class, racial-ethnic, gendered, national). Although these identities can emphasize differences and promote conflict within the nation, the articulation of a shared national identity becomes paramount in sports narratives when athletes and teams perform in international competitions. Thus it was the media depiction of Durán's rise from a tough neighborhood along the Canal Zone that celebrated the power of "the people," while the portrayal of his protecting his mother signaled his ability to overcome foreign rivals—as well as Panama's capacity to successfully defend its own interests in the face of U.S. aggression.

The media play an important role in promoting particular athletes and sports as national symbols. However, several chapters in this collection remind us of the significance of other forms of representation, including various types of art (poetry, novels, paintings, and film) and expository writing (from travel accounts and popular histories to scholarly tracts within evolving disciplines). Mapping this complex discursive network allows the authors to reveal how multiple social agents (elite and nonelite, state and nonstate) use athletic activities (as practiced locally) to help forge national mythologies. In some cases, a sport becomes a sign of the nation, having seemingly concretized certain traditions or a way of life that are understood as unique. As noted in Larson's chapter, in the late 1800s creole Argentines (along with foreigners) became enthralled with indigenous physicality in the pampas. Through travel accounts and protoethnographic studies, they expressed a fascination with the physical abilities of local horsemen—in particular, their strength to ride bareback and their skill at using bolas. At times, they tried to emulate these abilities during their journeys through the provinces. For creoles in particular the use of bolas came to symbolize a "truly Argentine" skill born of the necessities of life on the pampas—an autochthonous sign of "national virility," even while those same authors delimited the attractiveness of indigenous physicality by characterizing it as savage and uncivilized. In this doubled discourse, the *criollos letrados* could claim a distinct national tradition while justifying the eventual expulsion of indigenous people from the southern frontier (during the so-called Conquest of the Desert in the 1880s) and securing creole dominance in political and economic realms as a civilizing force.

A similar gesture of appropriation can be seen in the case of capoeira, as recounted in Wesolowski's chapter, where a physical activity practiced by marginalized groups (in this case, Afro-Brazilians) becomes a national symbol. Although debates exist about whether capoeira was invented in Brazil or emerged out of traditions brought from Africa, popular histories agree that practicing capoeira successfully depends upon *malandragem*—a way of behaving that is seen as uniquely Brazilian, an outgrowth of the na-

tion's particular historical trajectory. Wesolowski discusses malandragem as a response by subaltern groups (including Afro-Brazilians) "to a highly hierarchical, inegalitarian, and paternalist society in which getting things accomplished requires working one's social connections in creative and not always honest ways." According to this line of thinking, while capoeira requires practitioners to master particular physical maneuvers, it also is governed by a certain type of mental agility that emerges out of the "training" one acquires in everyday transactions on the streets of Brazilian cities. If this behavioral disposition is less easily discernible to the uninitiated, capoeira's distinctiveness as physical practice has made it a particularly useful icon of *brasilidade* (Brazilianess). Nonetheless, President Getulio Vargas's recognition of capoeira in the 1930s and the state's more general celebration of "Afro-Brazilian cultural manifestations as part of national identity . . . did nothing to improve the lives of Afro-Brazilians." Indeed, the gradual institutionalization of capoeira—from the establishment of studios (or academies) in the 1930s through more recent efforts in the early 2000s to regulate it by creating strict licensure requirements for *mestres* (capoeira instructors)—has often meant the increased marginalization of Afro-Brazilians from their role as experts whose knowledge maintains traditions and whose artistry creates new possibilities.

The use of bolas and the practice of capoeira are examples of how physical activities serve as markers of national identities because they are understood as unique expressions of geographical and historical specificity. But "imported" sports such as soccer can also be claimed as "national" in terms of the style of play. As noted in Rein's chapter, starting in the early twentieth century the Argentine press began to popularize the idea that Argentines practiced football *al estilo criollo*. This localized variant of the game epitomized "the art of dribbling which showcased the individual player's ability and creativity [and stood in] contrast to the supposedly rigid, robotic style of the British players."⁸ The unique *estilo criollo* was (and still is) understood as a product of a localized type of craftiness and cunning to shift and dodge through existing obstacles. In emphasizing how a particular way of being (arising from discrete historical circumstances) influences the practice of preexisting sports, such discourses not only link sports to an imagined community but also underscore the very strength and integrity of the nation given its ability to inflect the practice and trajectory of sports that were initially developed elsewhere.

BODIES AND IDENTITIES

The chapters in this edited volume demonstrate how sports function in the public sphere to make manifest particular interfaces between bod-

ies and identities in ways that complement or go beyond the nation. As a socially recognized form of ritualized embodiment, sports are practices and activities that materialize (or seem to materialize) existing knowledge about identities. At the same time, sports can serve a generative function—that is, a means by which to construct discursively and materially bodies that hold meaning in new ways, changing understandings of national, ethnic, racial, and gendered identities.

In some cases, this involves advancing ethnic and gendered identities along with national ones. As noted in chapters by Rein and Hotaka Roth, nondominant ethnic groups have used sports to assert ethnic identity while stressing their community's integral place within the larger nation. Starting in the 1940s, soccer became a means by which Jewish-Argentines, through their affiliation with the Atlanta football club, could become part of the larger national community by participating in a shared pastime, even as this leisure activity served to maintain intergenerational ties between second- and third-generation Jews. As Rein explains, for Jewish-Argentine fans of Atlanta, participation in club soccer can “strengthen their identities as Jews and as Argentines.” In the late twentieth century, among Japanese-Brazilians, gateball became a site of articulation for community-produced discourses of identity dependent in part on the sport's perceived ability to represent their specific historical experience. Invented in post-World War II Japan as a team version of croquet and brought to Brazil in 1979, the sport highlights the importance of working as a collective—a characteristic understood as central to Japanese identity.

At the same time, as practiced in São Paulo, gateball features a high level of “conflict and discord” in the form of constant negotiations between individual team members, their fellow teammates, and their captain about how and where to place the balls. Thus, according to Hotaka Roth, while tied to a tradition from the country of origin, the sport can also “dramatize [the players'] self-narratives of suffering and overcoming” as immigrants (or children of immigrants) who have struggled for control over their lives in adverse circumstances. Moreover, by drawing people of various ages together as participants and spectators (including those born in Japan and those born in Brazil), the sport strengthens ties between different generations. The sport made the Japanese-Brazilian community visible to others in a new way—through leisure activities in public parks that differ from the more typical encounters in shops and market stands. Even while helping to define Japanese-Brazilians as an ethnic community in São Paulo, gateball has become the means by which members have claimed their role as exemplary Brazilian citizens, whose civic-minded behavior (in restoring public spaces through the process of creating ade-

quate gateball courts) could serve as a model for “current interactions in São Paulo’s urban spaces.” The ability of sports to demarcate and conjoin identities thus involves not only the practice itself (and the symbolic potential of its participants or athletes) but also the surrounding actions and behaviors of fans and spectators.

Sometimes serving to mediate the relationship between ethnic groups and national identity, sports can also “play” in constructing and reconstructing racialized and/or gendered bodies in particular ways. In their nineteenth-century travel accounts of physical activities on the pampas (herding cattle), creole Argentines and foreigners characterized indigenous men as muscular bodies formed through the nomadic struggle for existence on the savage plains (explored in Larson’s chapter). While portraying Argentina as a uniquely virile nation given its roots in such practices, these depictions bolstered creole claims to power by drawing on contemporary anthropological studies to position creoles as cerebral counterparts: less physically adept than the native people of the territory but more intellectually advanced and thus capable of leading the nation into the modern age. Sluis’s chapter looking at 1920s and 1930s Mexico provides an even more clear-cut example of how the promotion of specific forms of athleticism and specific body types coincides with larger social, economic, and political dynamics. The celebration of the “Deco body” was part of a push to position Mexico as a modern nation. Producing new types of bodies through diet and exercise, this physical regime also encouraged urban Mexican women to buy into a new consumer economy through the purchase of magazines (to learn more about being a “modern” woman) as well as cosmetics and new fashions (to dress like one).

Whereas the chapters by Larson and Sluis reveal how athleticism (and its depiction) helped to shore up hegemonic agendas, Lehman’s study of *lucha libre* in contemporary Bolivia underscores how ritualized physical activities also hold contestatory potential. Coincident with the rise of indigenous-identified President Evo Morales, and the increasing presence of *mujeres de pollera* (women of indigenous heritage who dress in full skirts) in other areas of the public sphere (e.g., holding political office in Evo’s administration, working as news anchors, and so on), the growing visibility of cholitas luchadoras is “helping to redefine what it means to be a cholo and what it means to be female in this rapidly changing Bolivia.” According to Lehman, the spectacles function as sociopolitical allegories in which the cholas stand out as solitary fighters against the “invariably corrupt [and] perpetually unfair” referees, who represent nonindigenous Bolivian society. “Enlisting the spectator as coparticipant,” the bouts position the wrestlers as acting out “‘a representative rebellion’ against the

impositions of social order outside the arena.” While the luchadoras exemplify the growing presence of indigenous forces in public life, they also challenge patriarchal norms. The cholas’ long-standing reputation for market savvy becomes transformed in the ring into the exercise of physical strength and dexterity. Through such physical displays as well as their recognition as successful professionals (within and outside of Bolivia), the luchadoras have disrupted “elite constructions of the chola as productive, connected, but ultimately sexually and racially subordinate.” Taken together, the contributions in this book demonstrate how modernization often depends upon sports and the ability to construct and reconstruct bodies in ways that are politically, economically, and socially efficacious.

SPACE AND PERFORMANCE

Many chapters in this collection underscore the role of sports in the discursive construction of particular spaces and spatial identities.¹⁹ International athletic competitions help define nations just as team sporting events at a subnational level can serve to demarcate particular regions, states/provinces, cities, or neighborhoods. While acknowledging sports’ symbolic potential, I want to turn our attention to their role as spatialized performance—in other words, to sports as a shared ritual that takes place in given material spaces and as a situated enactment that carries out significant sociocultural work. To do this is to acknowledge, as several chapters do, the stadium, the arena, and the field as sites of encounter—the locus of clashes and/or community building.

Both Rein and Wesolowski remind us in their chapters of the work of previous scholars who have characterized sports in terms of ritualized conflict between individual athletes or between specific teams as well as between the neighborhoods, cities, regions, and nations that they often represent. As a public battle between two units, sports are regulated by established sets of rules and authoritatively adjudicated by a small group of referees or umpires. Taking place in a communal space, the athletic struggle unfolds according to a pattern recognized by the athletes and the referees/umpires as well as by the spectators, who themselves are encouraged to behave in customary ways (e.g., by sitting in particular locations, cheering at particular moments). The popular press and televisual media often contribute to the depiction of sports as ritualized conflict by recounting long-standing rivalries between teams as well as by highlighting the outrageous behavior of the *barras*, *hinchas* or, more generally, the dedicated fan base that supports particular teams. Yet Rein and Wesolowski underscore the degree to which such ritualized conflict occurs in a highly circumscribed fashion. Rein argues that the football stadium is a place

where social norms are transgressed temporarily. *Chacarita* fans may hurl anti-Semitic epithets at their Atlanta rivals, whose fan base may respond by yelling racist slogans about the other neighborhood's Bolivian immigrants. Citing geographer Christopher Thomas Gaffney, Rein contends that these and similar homophobic insults are performative gestures—less a function of deep-seated hatred and bigotry than a means of articulating rivalry.

Placed within the confines of the stadium, the athletic ritual “manages” such interactive verbal transgressions yet ultimately dictates the return to normalcy. Wesolowski has a slightly different perspective, arguing in her chapter that at least some types of physical contests (such as capoeira's *roda*) take place in community spaces that are less sealed-off from everyday life in both literal and metaphorical ways. Providing a retreat from mundane stress, the open-air capoeira studio nonetheless “stands in a relationship of osmosis with the external world”—a place of discussion about personal and social issues as well as a site of “unpredictable situations and potentially volatile bodies” that can mimic the arbitrary violence of the street. Despite their differences, Wesolowski and Rein both underscore the sociocultural work that is accomplished through the physical struggle between two athletes or teams and through the verbal and performative battles between different groups of fans.

Lehman's study of *lucha libre* in Bolivia points out that sports, as ritualized conflict, can stage a more abstract struggle over “the rules of the game.” In his account, theatrical wrestling functions on an allegorical level for the audience by situating the referees as representatives of the corrupt and unfair dominant social order. The ring allows the *cholitas luchadores* not only to battle each other but also to triumph despite the irregularities of the larger system as personified by the referees. Although the rules are not overturned in these staged battles, the biased nature of their referees' decisions is made visible, time and again, for the assembled spectators. Whereas Rein suggests that sports events are carried out in ways that circumscribe social conflicts, Lehman proposes that such contests offer a means to publicly recognize the systemic inequities of society itself understood as a “game” that has particular rules.

Rein, Lehman, and other authors in this edited collection argue that even while functioning as ritualized conflict, sports can pull spectators together in an integrative gesture. In some cases, the ritualized nature of spectatorship can foster a sense of belonging at a local or community level. For Rein, club soccer stadiums tied to particular neighborhoods are “a place for community interaction, a repository of collective memory, a locus of strong identities . . . [and a place where] the República de Villa Crespo,

[including the Jewish population] renewed communal bonds.” According to Hotaka Roth, the gateball court serves as an informal site of collective memory—one that is parallel to official monuments and memorials. Gathered there as players and as spectators, Japanese-Brazilians are reminded of their shared bonds through the game’s origins in post-World War II Japan. Although less conducive to the production of a common narrative about that history than the formal ceremonies conducted at monuments, the weekly use of the gateball court allows for a more constant feedback loop to commemorate and actualize ethnic identity.

Sports as shared rituals can also nurture a sense of national belonging, weaving together citizens in ways that go beyond the activities’ symbolic cachet to include their physical enactment and shared practices of spectatorship. Implicit in Rein’s discussion of fan culture is the acknowledgment that being/becoming a devotee involves, at least to some degree, taking part in shared behaviors and routines: reading sports columns, keeping track of statistics about particular athletes and/or teams, watching televised matches, debating the merits of players and teams, and attending specific events. Some of these behaviors may occur at home through the actions of a lone enthusiast or among family members. Even when taking place in private spaces, these practices allow fans to form part of an imagined community that is actualized through a set of shared behaviors and routines that attenuate the differences between Argentine Jews and Gentiles, between Japanese- and non-Japanese-Brazilians, or between Afro- and non-Afro-Colombians.

Along with promoting a sense of national belonging, sports as specialized ritual can make claims to citizenship more visible in ways that are particularly important for nondominant groups (whether in the role of spectators or athletes). Stadiums, courts, rings, and arenas are exemplary locations wherein collective claims to citizenship can be staged in a public way that calls for recognition. Sitting in the stands alongside fellow spectators becomes a means to form (and to be perceived as) part of a larger collective as one of the many fans of a particular team (and in opposition to those supporting rival teams) or as part of the cultural lifeblood of a city, region, or nation.

Claiming a rightful place through sports can involve more than participating in widely shared rituals as fans. In the relatively localized sport of gateball, Japanese-Brazilians transform public spaces in ways that allow them to assert their importance as citizens. Hotaka Roth’s analysis hooks into larger debates about the relationship between democracy, citizenship, and urban space taking place among such Brazilianists as Teresa Caldeira and James Holston as well as communications scholars and cultural

analysts like Jesús Martín Barbero and Beatriz Sarlo. Expressing grave concerns about the increased segmentation of Latin American cities, the growth of gated communities, and the emptying out of shared public space, these scholars suggest that such trends are contributing to the weakening of democratic practices. People have fewer opportunities to encounter and therefore learn how to negotiate with fellow citizens from diverse socio-economic classes, ethnicities, and races. Without entirely dismissing such arguments, Hotaka Roth contends that in fostering a heightened sense of community and in reclaiming “dangerous” urban spaces, gateball challenges us to gain a more nuanced understanding of how public space relates to democratic possibilities.

Engaging with similar issues, Wesolowski notes that capoeira groups often see the activity as a means of contesting marginality and “recovering citizenship.” While mentioning the role of capoeira in public spaces, her chapter focuses on the more metaphoric ways in which capoeira provides opportunities for nondominant groups to gain a recognized public presence by promoting social integration in a variety of ways. In discussing recent efforts to professionalize capoeira, Wesolowski notes that the 1998 state initiative requiring instructors to achieve certification allowed Afro-Brazilian capoeira masters to gain access to a worker’s card for the first time in their lives—at least in theory. As an official document that guarantees “some minimal job security and benefits,” the worker’s card holds the promise of increased economic power and consequently of becoming a “true” or “full” citizen. But this promise has not been realized; in practice, state regulation threatens to further isolate Afro-Brazilians who do not have the necessary funds to get certified. The cases explored by Hotaka Roth and Wesolowski demonstrate that any account of the role of sports in bolstering claims to citizenship must acknowledge the limitations of spatialized ritual and pay careful attention to the place of the state.

WHAT’S IN A GAME?

The diverse chapters in this collection guide us toward profitable paths for future investigations. They demonstrate the usefulness of broadening the scope of inquiry beyond “modern sports.” This involves studying athletic practices as they occurred before the nineteenth century and bringing the work that already exists (e.g., ball games in indigenous Mesoamerica) into conversation with studies of later periods to move away from the Eurocentric, evolutionary model proposed by scholar J. A. Mangan in the early 2000s. Widening the range of investigation also means analyzing other phenomena (as do Larson, Sluis, and Hotaka Roth in this volume)—from regulated spectacles (such as rodeo) to community-based practices

(such as gateball or bocce ball) to fads. In recognizing the significance of other pursuits that fit more comfortably under broader categories (such as physical activities or athleticism), scholars can begin to trace the history of the body in Latin America.

Another fruitful avenue of research involves the study of sports as played at the amateur or neighborhood level—both in the past and in the present. This could entail the examination of institutional contexts from schools, to athletic clubs, to gyms. Of equal interest (if more difficult to document from a historical perspective) would be the type of informal, casual activities that regularly take place in neighborhood plazas or city parks—from pickup soccer games among friends to group activities like tai chi that draw together people who would otherwise be strangers. On one level, this could augment existing social and urban histories (of social classes, ethnic groups, and neighborhoods) and potentially overcome some of their limitations. By using unconventional sources less associated with identity-based sociocultural behaviors or political practices (as Rein does in his chapter), future studies can rethink the nature and roles of economic, social, and economic affiliations over time. On another level, a scalar shift in Latin American(ist) sports studies might also allow for a fuller grasp of how everyday practices or low-level civic engagements related to sports shape political conduct. Present in previous work by anthropologist Jeffrey Tobin and historian Brenda Elsey, this concern is evident here in the chapters by Hotaka Roth and Wesolowski.²⁰ Future studies by historians would add needed depth.

Finally, a third area that merits greater attention is fandom and spectatorship. Although there are growing numbers of studies by anthropologists (such as Carter and Tobin), communication scholars (such as Sandoval Garcia and Rodriguez), and sociologists on contemporary practices, there is much more to be done about how people in the past watched sports.²¹ This type of investigation would help to determine with greater precision the popularity and influence of particular sports, while also furthering our understanding of how people interpret what they see and the degree to which their perspectives resonate with those found in the public statements of state officials, the media, and other representation forms. Only in this way will we be able to speak with greater authority about what sports mean in given societies in any particular period. As with the other paths for future research, this one demands the creation of novel methods and the discovery of new sources. Of course, those are the frequent challenges of carrying out forward-looking scholarship. I hope the chapters in this edited volume will provide needed inspiration.