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JOSÉ M. ALAMILLO, *Deportes: The Making of a Sporting Mexican Diaspora*. New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark, New Jersey, and London: Rutgers University Press. 2020. 279pp

As José Alamillo remarks, sport often feels 'ghettoized' (4) in research on history, with historians ignoring how sport has been a significant part of socio-historical processes. Investigation on sport and society in Latin America is growing, however, though there has been a tendency to focus on the relationship between elite sport (especially soccer) and nation-building processes conducted within national borders. This book, however, makes a novel, important contribution, focusing on how sports, such as boxing, baseball, softball and basketball, played by men and women at grassroots and professional levels, served the Mexican American diaspora primarily in Southern California in the first half of the twentieth century. Alamillo examines how transnational sporting networks were created across the US-Mexico border, with a particular focus on tensions between US authority use of sport for assimilation of Mexican-Americans and as part of the Good Neighbour Policy, and Mexican-American use of sport as a site of resistance against discrimination at the time of the Mexican Problem and Zoot Suit Riots. With a range of engaging examples, the author illustrates how Mexican-American diasporic communities formed sporting organizations, and, championed by the Spanish-language local press, rallied around their sporting representatives to promote a more positive identity of Mexicans in the USA, to provide opportunities for Mexican-American youth, and reduce delinquency stemming from marginalization.

Work on sport and marginalized communities in the USA has understandably focused on the discrimination of African-American communities, so Alamillo's book is a timely contribution that visibilizes many forgotten Mexican-American male and female athletes. Building on Carrington's work on black sporting diasporas, Alamillo conducts a chronological study of sporting participation by Mexican-Americans across six chapters that mostly focus on a single sport (e.g. boxing in chapter two, and baseball in chapter three), which are underpinned by five dimensions of focus, namely: 1) US imperial hegemony that led to physical, political and economic displacement of the Mexican diaspora; 2) the creation of political, community and family networks that strengthened a sense of a cross-border sporting diaspora; 3) the importance of seeing this sporting diaspora as a racial project; 4) sport being a gendered experience that perpetuated gender inequalities; and 5) the formation of a diasporic consciousness that produced hybrid cultures and identities (4-9). Alamillo is meticulous in establishing his arguments in the introduction and at the start and end of each chapter, displaying a writing style that makes this book appealing for scholars and undergraduates alike. The clarity of prose, rigorous research and historical contextualization, in addition to the fascinating stories and experiences of various male and female athletes and teams, makes this an engaging read throughout.

There are some especially noteworthy features of the book worthy of mention. The first is the focus on the distinct roles of the diasporic sporting community network, privileged over highlighting the relationship between national

institution and professional sport team or individual around a specific national or international triumph. Though Alamillo does discuss the importance of the 1932 Los Angeles Olympic games for Mexico and Mexican Americans, and national success of athletes such as Richard 'Pancho' González and Baldomero Almada, of equal importance is the research on the impact of community organizers, coaches, sponsors and organizations such as the Mexican Athletic Association of Southern California (MAASC) and the Mexican Athletic Union (MAU). The promotion and organization of grassroots sport receives comparatively little critical attention, particularly in the Americas, and is even more important to highlight when there are defined social needs to which sport is deployed at a community level. How the community mobilized and united to find spaces for play and resistance in Los Angeles and elsewhere, supported by prominent Mexican-Americans such as Hollywood stars and Mexican consuls, adds important detail to knowledge about race relations in the US and sport's potential as a site of minority representation and demanding equal rights. The different ways that racism and repression (for example immigration policy, and denial of recreation space by the Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation) were countered through sporting performance of identity, and how hegemonic white media narratives were contested and reshaped by the likes of *La Opinión*, is discussed effectively across the book. Similarly, Alamillo dedicates space in each chapter to the experiences of Mexican-American women athletes, demonstrating their battles against multiple discrimination based on race, class and gender, emerging from the dominant culture and their own.

A sometimes erratic use of accents aside, this book has very few weaknesses; I can only point to issues that I would like to have known more about (for instance, more on soccer and contests between American and European sports), rather than any problems with its content and aims. Alamillo's work should, without doubt, provide guidance of how to approach research on the use of different sports in other minority / diasporic communities elsewhere in the USA and Latin America.

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