"Keep the petulant testosterone off the court!": A critical discourse study on the (re)production of sports machismo in social media

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Abstract

This paper examines how machismo is negotiated and enacted between and among men in competitive sports (i.e., basketball), and how it is (re)produced in social-media discourse. By employing van Dijk's (2016) sociocognitive approach to critical discourse study, the polarization strategies and the ideologies built in the norms and values in discourse were subjected to micro- and macro-analysis. This paper addresses the gap in research as most critical studies in gendered language in sports are centered on male domination over females, and less academic attention is given to the materializations of machismo between and among men. This paper reveals significant and interesting findings on how the social constructions of masculinity become problematic, especially when men are placed under public scrutiny.

Keywords: Basketball, critical discourse study, machismo, sociocognitive approach, sports discourse

1.   Introduction

This paper examines how machismo is negotiated and enacted between and among men in competitive sports. Machismo is mainly viewed in the negative concept that promotes domestic violence where men dominate women in terms of gender roles in different contexts such as in relationships at home and in the workplace. According to Estrada, Rigali-Oiler, Arciniega, and Tracey (2011), there are two types of machismo. The first type is the traditional one, which includes men's domination, oppression, and abuse over women. The second type relates to the term *caballerismo*, or being a gentleman, which includes characteristics of a nurturing personality toward women. In feminist studies, the former is often studied and highlighted. Ongen (2006) asserts that this machismo attitude starts in the education of young boys when they learn to take on challenging jobs, and young girls avoiding such tasks that are overly challenging for their physique and mental capabilities. This makes it difficult for women to excel later on in life and results in imbalance of power in the workplace. Several women in different cultures learn to be submissive of their husbands, brothers, male bosses, and the elderly.

　　　Other perspectives on machismo are discussed in the Social Dominance Theory

(henceforth, SDT). Machismo, according to the SDT, refers to the orientation of high-status group members (men), enacting dominance over low-status groups and demonstrating general preference for hierarchies and inequalities (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). This is often exhibited in the culture of governments where men are assigned to positions of highest power such as presidency and vice presidency in democratic societies, prime ministers in a parliamentary form of government, and kings and emperors in monarchies. Men in these positions are often assertive, strong, and overbearing, which are characteristics found in machismo.

Although the term *machismo* is often associated with sexism and misogyny of men over women, it is viewed in this paper as a complex psychological construct of being aggressive and hypermasculine. It is a culturally constructed (Ceballos, 2013) concept that is not only characterized by its negative traits but also positive descriptions such as responsibility, honor, respect, and courage (Perilla, 1999). Men usually negatively externalize machismo when it is threatened, such as when they fail to receive respect from other members of social groups whether ethnic, religious, national, or racial; they tend to react with aggression to prove and assert power and dominance over females or other males.

In this paper, I argue two things: (1) that machismo may be reproduced between highly competitive groups in male-dominated fields such as basketball, where players feel the need to defend their honor as members of a basketball group, as citizens of a sovereign nation, and ultimately, as men; and (2) that the culture of machismo is constructed through discourse that places men in problematic situations where the line between social uprightness and defending their egos is blurred.

1.1   Background of the Study: The FIBA Fiasco

On the evening of July 2, 2018, social media was abuzz with live clips and commentaries on the bench-clearing brawl in the Fédération Internationale de Basketball (FIBA) qualifier game between the Philippine and the Australian basketball teams. The said brawl all started with flagrant fouls between the players that quickly escalated to chaos, which involved not only the players but also cameramen, crew, and fans. Videos of uniformed men bearing their respective countries' flags punching and kicking each other street-fighter style quickly became a shocking spectacle among local and international basketball followers, and a trending issue in social-networking sites. Toward the end of the scuffle, the Australian players were visibly hurt holding their heads and jaws as they walked out of the court. With nine Filipinos and only four Australian players ejected, the latter expectedly dominated the scoreboards and won the game.

In a highly celebrated media sports such as basketball where sportsmanship should transcend color, race, and otherness, the incident obviously met with criticism from international sports reporters and analysts. Television networks were appalled, and rightfully so, as the incident hit the headlines the morning after. CBS sports described it as "scary" (Skiver, 2018, para. 7); Fox Sports commentator Matt Russell pronounced it "sad, disgraceful, and deplorable" (Waterworth, 2018, para. 2); ABC News called the "wild brawl," "sickening" (ABC News, 2018, para. 4). Consequently, those involved in the scuffle were suspended from playing a maximum of six games and were charged with stiff fines, sending a message that such unsportsmanlike behavior would not be tolerated.

Having more members banned from playing, losing the game, and all things considered, the Philippine team seemed to have more reasons to feel sorry for. However, the team members showed odd reactions in the aftermath of the event. Despite the loss, the Filipino players were seen taking selfies and recording a video of themselves sniggering and audibly saying "*Di niyo kami kaya, boy*" loosely translated as 'You can't handle us.' In addition, one of the members posted on Twitter defending their act saying, "*Kami mag kakateammate sa loob kailangan namin mag tulungan. Hindi namin pwede pabayaan yung isat isa...*" (Romeo, 2018) (We need to help our teammates. We can't let each other down. If you think we're embarrassing, why don't you convert to being Australian.)

Exchanges on social media were clear on who is to blame—the Philippine team. Perhaps, because there were more Australians hurt than Filipinos, there were more Filipino players who joined the fight; the Philippine staff and fans got themselves involved in the fray, and it all happened inside the Philippine home court. However, in a media interview after the game, the Philippine team's coach defended his team's actions:

> I understand the disappointment, I understand that some are embarrassed, but you don't know what happened. You have to be in the team, you have to be in our circle to really understand what went down…It's up to FIBA in the end, but we have to face those consequences because it is what it is, but one thing that they have to know about this team is that we're not going to back down. This team remains solid, we have each other's back and we have each other. (Reyes, 2018)

The coach basically blamed the Australians for brewing bad blood between the national teams. He explained that his players endured so much physical and verbal abuse and only retaliated from the bullying of the bigger team.

The coach's framing of the issue shifted the role of the Philippine team in the eye of the viewing public from the offenders to the bullied, the weaker team, the underdogs who decided they had enough. Physical assault in this framing becomes a more complicated construct than black-and-white, right-or-wrong judgment. Apparently, there is a certain level of physicality involved in the sport that makes it acceptable in the eyes of the viewing public. Intentionally hitting someone in the court is more than a seemingly straightforward negative act. There appears to be a difference between elbowing an opponent and punching them in the face. In effect, this divided the discussions on social media. There were those who defended the Philippine team, and those who still condoned the act. These are the subjects of analysis in this paper. Such rhetoric, I argue, seemingly stems from and is reflective of the machismo culture in sports.

1.2   Filipino Basketball: More than a Mere Game

Despite the relative lack of height, Filipinos have high regard for basketball. It is considered as the most popular sport in the Philippines despite it being a tall man's game (Stevenson, 2010). Sweaty men, in all ages and sizes, are seen playing under makeshift hoops in local backyards and along busy streets. It is a sport that has become an avenue to express school

spirit and nationalism through intercollegiate, inter-*barangay*, and professional basketball competitions. Local governments even organize basketball events and encourage young men to play the sport in a bid to keep them away from drug addiction and instill positive values such as camaraderie, health, and responsibility. Because of the low-maintenance quality of the sport—that is, it requires little space and no expensive gear—it carries well across the poverty-stricken country (de la Cruz, 2017). Basketball has become so much a part of the culture in the Philippines (Stevenson, 2010) and has transcended its fun-and-play nature.

Basketball has also become a regular fixture in the Philippine media. Among the regular televised local competitions are the UAAP or the University Athletic Association of the Philippines, which is a basketball organization for university varsity players; and the PBA or the Philippine Basketball Association, which is the professional basketball league of Philippine company-branded franchised teams; and the Philippine national team for basketball usually come from these two leagues' roster of players. A nationwide survey shows that around 73.5 percent of the total population of Filipinos ages 18 years old and above follows basketball (Sandoval & Abad, 1997, as cited in Antolihao, 2010) and watch their favorite players in the court as a popular pastime.

Beyond this, the sport has become an avenue for expressing national pride and identity. In 1960, the Philippines won the bronze medal in the FIBA World Championship, which is the highest finish to date of any Asian nation in the game (de la Cruz, 2017). With large following and vast market, national team players become symbols of "modern patriotism" (Tavares, as cited in Boyle & Monteiro, 2005, p. 241) promoting national unity, and to some extent, associating basketball achievements to emancipation from poverty and marginalization (Antolihao, 2010).

The recent national team of the Philippines, *Smart Gilas Pilipinas*, is popular for emanating nationalism through representing the country in the international basketball court. Their slogan, *Puso!* (heart), which quickly became a catchy mantra among fans, is a symbolism and, at the same time, an expression of their passion for the game. The name is a combination of the team's company sponsor, Smart Communications, and the word *gilas*, which is a semantic combination of pride and prowess.

The team started in 2009, which consisted of 12 amateur players. Later on, the organizing staff managed to put together professional players from the PBA league, and naturalized players from the National Basketball Association (NBA). The initial idea of the team was to qualify for the 2012 London Olympics by winning the 2011 FIBA Asia Championship and secure a sole spot reserved for national teams that come from that continent. As the team makes noise in the Asian arena, winning championship trophies against Asian giants such as China and Japan, the Filipino following also expands, and the love for basketball intensifies.

In effect, these basketball players are naturally given celebrity status across the nation, and every move is constantly under public scrutiny. Having been associated with a sport that exudes positive values of diligence, obligation, duty, and nationalism, the players are naturally expected to exhibit these values on and off the basketball court, especially when they wear uniforms bearing the Philippine flag and representing the national identity.

1.3   Social Media as Constructive Discourse

Social media discourse and its nontraditional communicative influence is becoming a significant source for the (re)production of discursive power in society (Tornberg & Tornberg, 2016). To date, studies on the discourse of basketball mainly consist of the social and ideological representations of the sport in traditional media (i.e., press and broadcast).

One study exploring the media coverage of basketball in the Philippines reveals that Filipinos' favoritism on basketball is, in fact, a product of deliberate coverage of the local media. Through content analysis, the study revealed that the significant disparity in press coverage of basketball as compared with other sports is driven by the editors' bias and preference to the sport (Santos, 2012). Another study on Philippine basketball is a textual analysis of the songs released in the media as an ode to, arguably, the most celebrated basketball team in the Philippines, *Barangay Ginebra*. The songs are *Pag Natatalo ang Ginebra* (When Ginebra Loses) and *Pag Nananalo ang Ginebra* (When Ginebra Wins). Apparently, the appeal of the team and of Philippine basketball in general lies in its representation as a game of the masses, which embodies the ideals and sentiments of the poor and marginalized. Consequently, while the Filipino viewers cheer for their favorite team (i.e., Ginebra) because of their underdog image, they also cheer for themselves and for the several other real underdogs outside the basketball court (Antolihao, 2010). While these are noteworthy and welcome contributions to the sociology of the sport, I think that addressing the research gap on the discursive value and communicative power of social media could unveil significant findings in the construction and reconstruction of the ideologies in the sport such as, in this case, machismo. The interactive and participatory nature of discourse in social media has, in fact, unveiled "several multi-layered and multi-functional new spaces of (communicative) power" (Khosravinik & Unger, 2016, p. 211), which have become a unique source for studying sociocultural and political constructs of human behavior. In addition, the decentralization of the communicative power of traditional media to a more individualistic and user-centered discourse allows a more dynamic view of mental paradigms and critical analyses of the linguistic representations of social constructs.

1.4   CDA, Masculinity, and Sports

Most critical studies centered on gendered discourse in sports are about how women are underrepresented and disempowered in various sports across nations. Furthermore, male domination and gender discrimination are often identified and described in media and sports policy representations.

A recent critical discourse study on the portrayal of female hockey players in the media during the Olympic Games 2016 revealed that the coverage on female players are filled with narratives based on hegemonic masculinity. The results of the content analysis of news reports in this study show that women are more likely to be depicted with minimized athleticism by comparing them with their male counterparts, thus presenting them as the weaker and inferior sex (Schwarz, 2017). Inequality was also the central issue in the analysis of gendered discourses in the *Gender Bowl*, where men viewed women as having physical, intellectual, and cultural deficiencies, referring to gender stereotypes that exclude women

from playing American football (McDowell & Schaffner, 2011).

Another study that used critical discourse analysis among female Greek judo athletes revealed that although athletes allow the negotiation of multiple identities in martial arts discourse, they still perpetuate gender stereotypes that oppress women (Kavoura, Ryba, & Chroni, 2015).

In these recent studies, women are often seen at the receiving end of oppression in the patriarchal world of sports where comparative analyses target binary gender groups. However, there seems to be a lack of research interest on how society's view of males in cultures where they are expected to exert dominance and superiority but, at the same time, decency and respect are ideologically constructed through discourse. While there are several qualitative methods designed to analyze language, I intend to use Teun van Dijk's (2016) critical discourse analysis, which is one of the few established methods in the field.

1.5   Theoretical Framework

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a general term that encompasses a variety of methods for social critique (Blommaert, 2005). van Dijk's (2016) sociocognitive approach in CDA views discourse as characterized by the Discourse-Cognition-Society triangle:

> A sociocognitive approach claims that such relations (i.e. the relation between discourse and society) are cognitively mediated. Discourse structures and social structures are of different nature and **can only be related through the mental representations of language users as individuals and as social members** (emphasis, added). Thus, social interaction, social situations, and social structures can only influence text and talk through people's interpretations of such social environments. And conversely, discourse can only influence social interaction and social structures through the same interface of mental models, knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies. (p. 64)

He explains that when doing critical discourse analysis in any forms of discursive materials, the research should aim to identify, analyze, and synthesize "…language users' cognitive representations or inferences from actually occurring discourse or conduct…" (van Dijk, 2016, p. 65). Thus, for the linguistic analysis to be meaningful, it should examine the discursive and semiotic structures of the text in relation to social structures and the society's mental models of discourse processing (van Dijk, 2004). In order to explain these social structures, one has to examine the micro and the macro levels of social cognition. On the one hand, the micro level surveys the personal mental models of the society; on the other, the macro level examines the socially shared knowledge of communities, groups, and organizations.

Hence, this paper aims to analyze first the personal interactions of basketball fans through the social-media platform (micro), and then synthesize these commentaries to determine the shared knowledge (macro) that unveils the discursive materialization of machismo in Filipino basketball.

Specifically, this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

(1) How are polarization strategies used in the (re)production and negotiation of machismo in social-media discourse?
(2) What are the explicitly or implicitly expressed norms and values that perpetuate machismo as constructed in discourse?

2.   Method

2.1   Research Design

This paper utilizes qualitative analysis in examining the data as it aims to create comprehension from the data as the analysis proceeds (Richards, 2015) using the sociocognitive approach to critical discourse study. To describe and explain how ideological structures may be involved in the reproduction and materialization of sports machismo in social-media discourse, this paper takes a social constructivist perspective to create a comprehensive analysis of the data.

2.2   Data Collection and Sampling

The source of data for critical analysis is primarily social-media posts (i.e., Twitter), which were collected for one week from July 2 to 8, 2018. The posts, or in social-media term, tweets, were purposively collected through typing the keywords *brawl, FIBA, Philippines*, and *Australia* in the search tool and using the advanced search tool of the application. The issue died down after a week, and there was not much discourse in social media about the topic. Subtweets or replies to tweets and full message threads were also included in the data collection. The 1,022 tweets collected were generally posted by Australian and Filipino Twitter users. These tweets were anonymized in the discussion part of this paper to preserve the users' privacy. These were subjected to sociocognitive analysis by identifying the polarization strategies, norms, and values reflected in the indirectly organized linguistic features and structures.

2.3   Data-analysis Procedure

The data were analyzed by identifying the ideological structures and strategies reflected in the local units of the text. In his discussion of the sociocognitive approach, van Dijk (2016) offered analytical categories, which may be used in identifying the underlying attitudes and ideologies of social groups. Two of these are:

(1) *Polarization strategies* are the positive representation of ingroup and the negative representation of the outgroup. As people normally identify with certain groups and organizations, polarization strategies are observed in the descriptions of the self and the other.

(2) *Norms and values* are the explicitly or implicitly expressed standards of good conduct or principles and ideals of what should be striven for. In this context, the author identified the norms and values commonly attributed to machismo (or manliness, manning up).

In this paper, the polarization strategies, norms, and values were identified by analyzing the tweets on the lexical level. A micro-analysis of the grammatical units, such as nouns, pronouns, and modifiers, was done in relation to the cognitive and social components of the discourse. Thus, existing psychological and sociological theories were also employed in the analysis. These analyses were then integrated and synthesized to develop a thematic representation of the macrostructure of the socially shared knowledge and social mindset on the concept of sports machismo.

As van Dijk (2016) affirms, discourse analysts do not need their own theory of the structures of discourse. Critical discourse studies may go beyond structural theories of discourse to describe and explain how discourse is involved and enabled in society.

2.4   Inter-rater Reliability

Two inter-raters were asked to check the accuracy of the analysis. One is a master's degree holder in English Language Teaching and the other is a Ph.D. candidate in Linguistics. They are both teaching Linguistics subjects in a state university in Manila, the Philippines. Prior to the evaluation of 30% of the data, they were both given orientation on van Dijk's micro- and macro-analysis of data prior to inter-rating. Where discrepancies occurred in the analysis of the data, the inter-raters discussed them and agreed to a more appropriate way of analyzing the texts. Thus, the researcher deemed it unnecessary to compute for an inter-rater reliability test as both the inter-raters and the researcher reached an agreement regarding the micro- and macro-analysis of the data.

3.   Results and Discussion

This section thematically presents the analysis of the data. Thus, the discussions on the polarization strategies, and norms and values are embedded in the discussions of each theme.

3.1   Marginalized Machismo of Filipino Basketball Players

Traditional gender norms of machismo include male characteristics of toughness and dominance. According to the Social Dominance Theory, group-based oppression, which includes racism and classism, involves essentially particular instantiations of a more general process through which dominant groups establish and maintain social and economic supremacy over subordinate groups. Sidanius, Van Laar, Levin, and Sinclair (2003) assert that there exists an arbitrary set system of group-based social hierarchy. This is a hierarchically organized set of group distinctions that emerge from contextually evolved power and status differences between races and classes. This is also reflected in sports where some groups exercise dominance over other groups.

In the case under study, the Australian team naturally has superiority over the Philippine team being the taller players and having professional NBA players in their ranks. This basketball supremacy of the Australian team is emphasized and framed negatively in the social-media discourse, as indicated in the following tweets:

@username1 (Twitter post, July 2, 2018)
Australia is **racist**. **Arrogant**. No apology yet from these **bullies**: "Elbow" Kickert and "Leflop" Goulding. #FIBAWC #Boomers #GilasPilipinas

@username2 (Twitter post, July 3, 2018)
Daniel Kickert is the culprit of everything. What a **complete assh*le.** #FIBAWC

@username3 (Twitter post, July 6, 2018)
*Goodmorning sa pagmumukha mo. Para saken tama lang yung ginawa ng GILAS. Para malaman **ng mga dayo** na marunong din tayong magflying kik!! Akala mo kung sino nakatataas **amoy sinigang sa bayabas** naman sila!*
(Good morning to your face. For me, GILAS did the right thing. These outsiders should know that we can also do flying kick! These smelly guys think too highly of themselves.)

@username4 (Twitter post, July 4, 2018)
yes the brawl between #gilas vs aus kindda embarrassing.. but after i saw the warm up videos etc., i think it was the right thing to do to those **Bullies**!!! #GilasVsAustralia #puso

@username5 (Twitter post, July 4, 2018)
*Sa **Manlulupig** Di Ka Pasisiil* #LabanPilipinas #WeStandPH
(You don't succumb to the oppressors' oppression.)

One salient ideology the abovementioned tweets explicitly reproduce is the disenfranchisement of the ingroup (Filipino players) from the materialization of the mainstream manhood of the outgroup (Australian players). Employing negative lexicalization such as the use of negative personality adjectives (i.e., racist, arrogant, bullies, *amoy sinigang sa bayabas* 'smelly,' culprit, *dayo* 'outsiders,' and *manlulupig* 'oppresor') and the use of expletives (i.e., complete assh*le) to describe the outgroup perpetuates an Us vs. Them ideology, with the ideological 'them' or *sila* being on the dominant side and the ideological 'us' or *tayo* as the dominated.

This semantic derogation highlights the masculinity of the outgroup (*sila*), which was utilized to justify the ingroup's (*tayo*) misdeed. The externalization of this hegemonic masculinity between men may be explained by understanding the socially constructed male ego, or in Filipino terms, *nakakalake*.

However, in the sports realm, physical assault as a materialization of machismo is not unidimensional. Apparently, in sports such as basketball, some forms of physicality are accepted and considered as part of the game. Simon (2005) calls this strategic fouling. This occurs when an athlete deliberately and openly breaks a rule expecting to be penalized and showing willingness to accept a penalty. Thus, intentional and flagrant fouls, which involve violent contacts that could injure a player, are acceptable and are normally seen in professional basketball games.

> @username6 (Twitter post, July 3, 2018)
> Keep the petulant **testosterone** off the court. That's my take. Can't play like **gentleman** then get off the court. Can't stand the game anyway but a brawl is a brawl and a disgraceful image for professional sports.
>
> @username7 (Twitter post, July 3, 2018)
> Look… I know Kickert **elbowed** that guy which wasn't on. But the carry on and **escalation** by the Philippine team AFTER was **out of control, dangerous and ludicrous behavior**.
>
> @username8 (Twitter post, July 2, 2018)
> **A foul is normal** in such games. It is indeed an intemperate response to a regular foul a foul did not start the scuffle, but an undue response to it did.

As evident in these twitter posts, playing the game "like a gentleman" means staying inside the constitutive rules of the sport. Therefore, deliberately "elbowing," with all the intentions of hurting the opponent, is acceptable because it is "normal" in such a game. Conversely, it is no longer appropriate when a player goes beyond what is normal. To illustrate, elbowing is tolerable, but throwing a punch or a flying kick to an opponent is not.

Therefore, the actualizations of masculinity may be even made more complicated depending on the constitutive rules of social environments. One manifestation of physical violence may be considered as a typical response to a threatened male ego, but another may be viewed as a projection of "petulant testosterone," which is unbecoming and ungentlemanly.

In sum, because Australian players are generally perceived as the tougher and more dominant basketball players, Filipinos are evidently viewed as the marginalized 'us' group. Thus, when the male ego is threatened by the abusive exercise of strength by other men, it is important to show resistance and avoid showing signs of weakness, especially between race groups.

3.2   Social (Dis)Approval of Basketball Street-Fighting

Academically, reckless behaviors that result in violence and physical confrontations are viewed as a negative feature of hyper-masculinity. Even in the Filipino context, the society's rationalization of such behaviors manifests by simply saying *lalaki kasi* 'because they are men,' signifying a normative expectation of unfavorable gendered behavior. However, dominant discursive trends in social media reveal that there are some instances when resorting

to physical violence is justifiable, that is, (a) when one's 'family' is hurt and threatened, and (b) when there is too much bullying. These are exemplified in the following tweets:

> @username9 (Twitter post, July 2, 2018)
> Question: If you see your brother being knocked out, are you just going to sit down and watch? If you say yes, you're not human! Dear @ BasketballAus, you can live safely, but make sure not to comeback. This is our home. #FIBAWC

> @username10 (Twitter post, July 2, 2018)
> Looking for sportsmanship when your teammate gets a elbow in a face? Come on now. Even at the start of the game they didn't even look us with respect.

> @username11 (Twitter post, July 2, 2018)
> *Nasan yung sportsmanship na hinahanap mo naman sa aus? Siko? Flop? Ibang usapan na kase yan brad parang di ka lalake*
> (And where is that sportsmanship in the Australian team? Elbow? Flop? That's a different story, bro, as if you're not a man.)

> @username12 (Twitter post, July 2, 2018)
> *Binubully sa sariling bansa. Sportsmanship pa rin? Sinapak na kateam mate mo? Sportsmanship pa rin? Bastos bunganga sportsmanship pa rin? Porket dayuhan kinampihan na? Crab*
> (Bullied in our own land, punched your teammate, talked trash to us, and you still want sportsmanship? You're siding with them because they're foreigners? You're a crab.)

> @username13
> It is more "Embarrassing" if you let your Bro beaten by Foreigner #GilasPilipinas #FIBAWC

Three things are realized in the polarization strategies in the aforementioned posts: (1) foregrounding the physical and verbal bullying of the outgroup (i.e., the Australian team) to the ingroup (i.e., the Philippine team), (2) backgrounding or de-emphasizing the misconduct of the ingroup, and (3) framing the ingroup as part of a family.

The outgroup in these texts is negatively represented by emphasizing their abuse of their physical superiority in the basketball court, which makes them the dominant team in this discourse framing. The ingroup, on the other hand, is represented as the underdogs, the victims, the ones on defense. Therefore, retaliation as a response to bullying, no matter how unprofessional or unsportsmanlike it may be, is believed to be justified, especially if one's *brothers* or *teammates* are hurt. These polarization strategies shape the normative expectation for masculinity; that is, it is natural for men to resist intimidation and maltreatment and protect their own kin.

However, not only should men make themselves capable of protecting themselves and their family, but they should also do so with class and responsibility. These are implied in the following Twitter posts:

@username14 (Twitter post, 2 July 2018)
They are supposed to be professionals carrying our flag. By showing this behavior they are telling the world Filipinos have no class.

@username15 (Twitter post, 2 July 2018)
I don't care who started it BUT as a Filipino, that blue and red flag is bigger than any sport and I aint gonna do anything to bring shame to that.

@username16 (Twitter post, 3 July 2018)
…Patriotism and courage, however, must mean more than giving vent to our anger, even during the times when there is ample justification for it. Patriotism and courage demand that even in our righteous anger, we must always insist on doing what is right…

@username17 (Twitter post, 4 July 2018)
Im all for Gilas protecting one another but lets be realistic, Its illogical for PH to host the tournament in the future… *Lalaki kng nakipag-suntukan lalaki kading tumanggap ng parusa.* (You punched like a man; you should take punishment like a man, too.)

@username18 (Twitter post, 4 July 2018)
A real man knows how to apologize after the unexpected fight. You guys did a great job although not in a proper action but there's still reason behind it. That was brotherhood defines.

As reflected in the linguistic materializations of norms and values in these tweets (i.e., *professionalism, sportsmanship, patriotism,* and *manliness*), part of being a man is showing restraint even in instances of subjugation and taking responsibility for their actions. The preponderance of words such as *Filipino, flag, PH,* and *patriotism* in the tweets shows that maintaining the national image of a people should be treated with utmost importance, especially by men who represent the country in international events.

These normative expectations are part of the distinctive accountability of being a uniformed man. Wearing the national uniform adds another layer to the social pressure that manliness brings because they are not simply basketball players in the court, but they carry the image of a whole civilization. Thus, men in this kind of situation address a dilemma: which masculine norms should they adhere to when following one would mean the infringement of the other? It is evident in these kinds of discourse that men do not only face one set of societal mandates of masculine gender roles but are more likely to be confronted with multiple conflicting ones, especially when under the scrutiny of the public eye. This may then further complicate what psychologists call masculinity discrepancy stress (Pleck, 1995). This

kind of stress occurs when one fails to live up to the ideal manhood derived from societal expectations of masculinity. The ideological structures in social-media tweets, however, reflect that there is not only one ideal set of perceived forms of masculinity in one situation.

3.3   Chauvinistic Humor

One of the most controversial behaviors of the Philippine team is when they all posed for a selfie after the scuffle. This drew a variety of responses from the viewing public. The reactions were expressed along the lines of disrespect and Filipino humor, as evident in these tweets.

> @username19 (Twitter post, 3 July 2018)
> I agree that the selfie was **tasteless** but what outsiders don't understand is that the guy who initiated the selfie is a former national team player who is known as a **funny** guy. Filipinos always try to **inject humor** into stressful situations to defuse tension #justmytwocents

> @username20 (Twitter post, 2 July 2018)
> The selfie is to **pissed people** like you. It's effective tho!

> @username21 (Twitter post, 2 July 2018)
> Oh I think it's their way **to lighten up** d situation…

> @username22 (Twitter post, 2 July 2018)
> Must be so **proud of themselves, getting flogged on the scoreboard** and then needing all their bench players help in the brawl **lol**

The polarization strategies of most Filipinos in social media represent the team as humorous and view the act as the team's attempt to take a cheerful perspective from the seriousness of the situation as revealed in the above sample tweets. As evinced by the lexical choices of the Twitter users such as "funny guy," "injecting humor," and "lighten up the situation," which may sound like a biased defense of the inappropriate act in the guise of characterizing it as a Filipino trait. However, some did not buy such explanation and thought that the selfie is "tasteless" and disrespectful.

The selfie was controversial because the national team seemed to take pride of what other people see as a disgrace and a disappointment to the professional team playing for a national sport. This partly stems from men's natural instinct to exert male dominance. Considering the context of the nonlinguistically performed act of taking a selfie after instigating a ruckus that caused their opponents' black eye and busted lip, the Filipino team seemed to have taken glory from successfully inflicting physical injury to a team that has overwhelmingly beat them in the game. This may not be surprising in a male-dominated field given the competitive nature of the sport. Men may naturally seek for recognition and a sense of ascendancy in whichever way possible.

3.4   *Sorry not Sorry*

A few days after the event, several members of the Philippine team posted a public apology through their Twitter accounts. Basketball players Allein Maliksi[1], Terrence Romeo[2], Jayson Castro[3], and the head coach Chot Reyes[4] expressed their regret and remorse for having acted the way they did during the incident.

> [1]@username23 (Twitter post, 4 July 2018)
> As a teammate, a brother, a friend, and a family, **I couldn't resist myself to help and protect them** when they're in trouble that's what a team is.

> [2]@username24 (Twitter post, 4 July 2018)
> *Taos puso po akong humihingi ng kapatawaran sa lahat ng Pilipino, mga kabataan at sa mga ibang lahi na sumusuporta sa Gilas. Sa lahat po ng sumusuporta samin simula umpisa hanggang sa huli maraming maraming salamat po sa inyo. Dun po sa mga taong nawala or nabawasan ang paghanga or nadisappoint namin, patawad po. Pipilitin po naming maibalik ang paghanga ninyo at suporta sa Gilas…taos puso rin akong humihingi ng pasensya sa lahat ng Australians at sa mga players nila…*
> ***Hindi kami proud na nakipag-away kami pero proud kami dahil nagtulungan kami at hindi naming iniwan ang isa't isa. Kaya mas pipiliin ko na mabash ng kahit na sino tao matulungan ko lang at wag iwan ang kasamahan ko. Pag nangyari ulit yun masasabi ko na ganun pa rin ang gagawin ko para sa mga kaibigan ko.***
> (I sincerely ask for the forgiveness of all the Filipinos, the youth, and all the other nations who support Gilas. Likewise, I ask for the forgiveness of everyone who've continued to support us since we started, and to those who lost faith in us. We will do our best to bring back your admiration and support. I also sincerely apologize to the Australians and their players…
> **We are not proud that we quarreled with them, but we are proud because of our teamwork and our loyalty to each other. This is why I'd rather be bashed by strangers as long as I know I offered my help to my teammates. If this happens again, I will still do the same thing for my friends.**)

> [3]@username25 (Twitter post, 4 July 2018)
> Hindi kami pumunta dun para maghanap ng away, **siguro hindi lang talaga naming napigilan ang sarili naming para ipagtanggol yung kapatid** namin dahil nasaktan siya pero wala ako/kaming intension na makasakit lalo na may mga bata at mga anak kami na nanunuod.
> (We didn't go there to look for trouble, we just couldn't help ourselves to look after our brother who was hurt. We didn't have any intention to hurt anyone, especially when there are kids, our kids, watching.)

[4]@username26 (Twitter post, 4 July 2018)
The past few days have been extremely difficult for us at GILAS. Each player and coach who got involved in the incident has apologized, and as Head Coach, so have I. Again, to those we have offended, we are sorry. To those who have stood by us, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Our prayer is that we come out better and stronger from this as we affirm that **it is our honor to fight for our country til we can't fight anymore**, with all our hearts. Laban. Pilipinas. Puso. (Fight. Philippines. Passion)

McLachlan (2013) explains that for an apology to work, there should be an expression of taking responsibility, offering compensation or reparation, promising not to engage in a similar action in the future, and taking further steps to mend and build the relationship between the apologizer and the addressee. Although these apologies contain some sort of admission to the wrongdoing, there seems to be a lack of expression of regret. Instead, the Twitter posts emphasized the idea of *brotherhood* and *protecting their own* as a rationalization of the offense. These Twitter posts seem to downplay the harm done to the outgroup, offering justifications as regards their own actions. Thus, while they recognized the need for an apology as a mark of true sportsmanship, they also felt the need to satisfy their male ego through justifying their actions.

This may be explained through Brown and Levinson's (1987) concept of face. The apologizer's positive face (i.e., the desire to be approved and appreciated in certain respects) may be threatened by the act of apologizing. Thus, the public apology may have only been issued to satisfy society's expectation and perhaps to end the public discourse about the incident. Nonetheless, it is apparent in their expressions of apology that they have difficulty admitting that they are wrong by emphasizing the reason why they have done it in the first place. This is another manifestation of machismo in discourse. As Engel (2001) avers, men equate admission of wrongdoing with losing a power struggle and hurting their male egos.

4.   Conclusion

This paper sought to critically analyze the discursive materialization of machismo in Filipino basketball by using van Dijk's (2016) sociocognitive framework. Specifically, it aimed to answer the question: how polarization strategies are used in the (re)production and negotiation of machismo in social-media discourse? It is revealed in the analysis that the social understanding of the male ego is consciously internalized, disseminated, and embodied in social-media discourse. The analysis of the polarization strategies (i.e., the positive representation of the ingroup and the negative representation of the outgroup) revealed that the tweets from the Filipino users contextually frame the Filipino players as the abused instead of the abuser, even if they were the ones who threw the first punch. These tweets place the Filipino players on the defensive side, thus justifying the brawl as an act of retaliation and shielding one's own kin from the maltreatment brought by the physically advantaged Australian players.

In addition, this paper also attempted to identify the explicitly or implicitly expressed

norms and values that perpetuate machismo in social media. Data analysis showed that the salient societal norms and values such as toughness, dominance, sportsmanship, kinship, and nationalism also draw attention to the ways in which machismo may be socially constructed.

It is also evident in the analysis that the more social responsibility a man takes, the more layers of normative expectations he has to satisfy. Thus, when a man is also a sportsman, a national representative, and a public figure, he has to conform to more complicated social demands of masculinity, which are often conflicting and confusing. The positive characterization of masculinity such as honor, nationalism, respect, and responsibility may be more multifaceted than it seems.

Consequently, this paper adds to the previous psychological and sociological studies on machismo by providing an analysis of the discourse component of the concept. This study reveals that machismo is constructed, recreated, and negotiated not only over females but also between or among men in different levels of dominance in terms of physicality, strength, and superiority.

A further extension of this analysis may be done by considering the dispositives of media sports, which involve nonlinguistically performed practices, and identifying the ways on how ideological groups defend, protect, attack, marginalize, or control other groups to satisfy gender roles and the normative standards that go with them.

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