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THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SPORTS AND NEW MEDIA

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The political economy of media is a theoretical perspective that seeks to understand the inter-relationships of wealth, power, and the media and cultural systems in societies – including sports and sports media. While much of media and communication studies focuses on textual representation and reception, political economists situate those processes in relation to broader political, economic, and socio-cultural structures of power, particularly class struggle (McChesney, 2008; Mosco, 2009).

Political economy's preeminent theorist, Karl Marx predicted that capitalism's contradictions and crises would compel the working class to overthrow this exploitative system (Marx and Engels, 1848/1998). Capitalism has proven remarkably dynamic and resilient, though, remaking itself in the face of existential crises while maintaining its constitutive (if contradictory) structures (D. Harvey, 2006). To explain capitalism's perpetuation during the twentieth century, critical political economists point to the structuring role of modern cultural institutions, such as education, commercial sports, and – particularly – the mass media (Jhally, 1989b; Mosco, 2009; Murdock, 1982).

Ideologically, private ownership and corporate subsidy of media and culture afforded capitalists platforms for advancing their interests by controlling public “consciousness.” Materially, the commercialization of the cultural sphere facilitated capital accumulation processes. Commercial media generated demand for consumer goods and services (through advertising), and media firms provided reinvestment opportunities for keeping capital “productive.” As this chapter explains, sports and sports media's rich cultural meanings and massive consumer interest factor prominently in these ideological and material processes.

New media technologies destabilize media's role in wealth and power asymmetries (Benkler, 2006; Castells, 2009; Shirky, 2010). For instance, social media tools allow athletes, fans, and sports activists to directly communicate with one another and the public – a development that threatens commercial sports media's (relative) ideological closure and scatters valuable audience attention. Capitalism, again, is dynamic and resilient, though. From a political economy perspective, a full understanding of new media's relationship to wealth and power requires attention to both change and continuity. How are (sports) media's long-standing relationships to wealth and power disrupted by new media's affordances? And – just as important – how are powerful interests using new media to *extend* class and corporate control?

Using instrumental control and structural constraint as an organizing framework, this

chapter outlines a political economy of so-called “old” sports media. Then, change and continuity associated with new media’s digital and interactive affordances are explored. While new media are undoubtedly transforming the sports media landscape, they are also being used to extend established relationships of wealth and power.

Instrumental control

The mass media are the principal institutions through which citizens make sense of the world and their place in it; however, the rich and powerful exercise inordinate influence over these accounts. Wealthy families and major corporations have long owned the lion’s share of US media outlets – a tendency that has intensified in recent decades. Moreover, corporate media are embedded in relationships with major non-media corporations and political elites (Bagdikian, 2004; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; McChesney, 2008).

This dense web of relationships means that media workers are regularly tasked with presenting accounts of the world that may negatively affect their owners’ and associates’ interests. So the argument goes, corporate media’s owners and directors exert instrumental control over media content not by directly intervening with “the red pen,” but by allocating resources to some projects rather than others and by hiring and firing key media personnel. Further, employees self-censor to protect their jobs (Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Jhally, 1989b).

Historically, sports organizations, leagues, and personnel have all exerted instrumental control over sports coverage. During the 1940s, most Major League Baseball (MLB) franchises employed their own radio broadcast teams (McChesney, 1989), and announcers’ full or partial payments by teams remained commonplace for decades. Broadcasters could critique a player’s technique or manager’s line-up – that was part of the show; however, blaming losses on management or highlighting sensitive franchise issues could jeopardize one’s employment (Stewart and Newhan, 1988).

Commercial sports’ influence over content has also been institutionalized in the broadcast contract’s “no-criticism clause.” In 2000, Philadelphia sports radio station WIP suspended talk radio host Mike Missanelli for critical comments about Philadelphia Flyers executives. The station’s broadcast contract included a “no-criticism clause” that prohibited “personal attacks” on the team and personnel (Panaccio, 2000).

Newspaper sports beat reporters have faced their own *de facto* no-criticism clauses. To meet their deadlines, reporters must continually cultivate sources within sports organizations – and the sources know it. To discourage critical coverage, sports organizations or personnel can temporarily cut off access to the beat reporter (Lowes, 1999). As *The Dallas Morning News*’ Gary Jacobson explained, “If you piss people off, they shut you out” (Strupp, 2006: para. 35).

Such examples attend to sports organizations and personnel advancing their specific interests by exerting influence over media production and resulting content; however, political economists also theorize instrumental control at more general levels, particularly class struggle. Whereas pluralist accounts stress capitalists’ pursuit of narrow self-interests, political economists argue that members of the capitalist class coordinate on matters of policy and ideology, advancing their collective interests, in part, through ownership and subsidy of media (Murdock, 1982).

The political economists’ argument is two-part. First, the capitalist class articulates shared values and policy positions through elite institutional mechanisms. These include a strategic policy-planning network, corporate and non-profit board memberships, and exclusive social clubs (Domhoff, 2005). Sports-stadium luxury boxes also function as business and social spaces for team owners, politicians, and the corporate elite (Schlueb and Damron, 2011). In the media and technology industries, power brokers meet annually in Sun Valley, Idaho, for Allen &

Company's exclusive industry conference. Executives strike mergers and deals in Sun Valley; however, the media elite also use this meeting to "[build] a consensus regarding the primary mutual concerns of Big Media and big business as a whole" (Bettig and Hall, 2012: 81).

Second, political economists document the ways media content reflects capitalist class values and policy preferences. Specific media "biases" are of less concern here; rather, attention focuses on broad content patterns that normalize and naturalize system-maintaining worldviews. As Croteau, Hoynes and Milan (2012: 48) explain:

Ownership by major corporations of vast portfolios of mass media gives us reason to believe that a whole range of ideas and images – those that question fundamental social arrangements, under which media owners are doing quite well – will rarely be visible.

Conversely, media firms widely distribute system-maintaining content, such as sports news and game accounts. Sports and sports media provide a two-part ideological service to the capitalist power structure – as distracting spectacles and as socializing agents. As an "opiate of the masses," sports spectacles have long served as sanctioned escapes from the alienation of industrial and postindustrial capitalism (Jhally, 1984; Kellner, 2003). And "sports chatter" – ongoing conversations about sports – keeps spectators distracted from more pressing social and political issues well after the game has finished (Chomsky, 2011; Eco, 1983). More than an "opiate," sports also socialize spectators into capitalist production and consumption processes. Media accounts accentuate and celebrate sports' idealized capitalist structures, particularly labor's bureaucratic subordination, rationalization, specialization, measurement, and sale. Players and teams that attend to these processes are rewarded and celebrated. Codes of sportsmanship and fair play reinforce sports' meritocratic precepts, legitimating capitalism as fair, just, and democratic (Jhally, 1984; Kellner, 2003; Real, 1975).

The trouble with instrumentalist frameworks – in both specific and general variants – is that empirical evidence for ideological control is challenging to come by. Power relationships can be mapped, interests inferred, and logically correlating media content documented. But those data points do not necessarily indicate causality. Detailed case studies and insider accounts provide telling, if anecdotal, detail; however, the best of political economy interrogates instrumental control while acknowledging structural constraints that both enable and place broad limits on power (Jhally, 1989b; Murdock, 1982).

Structural constraint

Political economy's structural accounts follow from two basic observations: first, that capital accumulation is fundamental to the system's perpetuation; and, second, that capitalism's inherent contradictions make it prone to accumulation-threatening crises. The wealthy and powerful actively pursue their individual and class interests; however, their actions are ultimately bounded by the structural imperative to perpetually generate ever-larger returns on investment in a crisis-prone environment (D. Harvey, 2006).

"Underconsumption" and "overaccumulation" crises fundamentally shaped the twentieth century's transition from competitive to monopoly (or oligopolistic) capitalism. Rapid expansions in productive capacity often outpaced consumer demand for goods, resulting in underconsumption. Meanwhile, huge corporate profits in mature, oligopolistic industries outstripped the development of new reinvestment opportunities, resulting in overaccumulation (Baran and Sweezy, 1966; Mandel, 1972).

Capitalism is remarkably adaptive, though, and the media industries played important roles in mitigating these crises. Since the 1920s, corporate advertisers have addressed underconsumption by harnessing media's broad public attention and rich social meanings (e.g. youth, love, power, beauty, community) to generate demand for goods and services. Sports' popularity and cultural resonance made it ideal for these purposes. Meanwhile, an influx of advertising dollars made media companies, themselves, viable investment opportunities for overaccumulated capital (Andrews, 2009; Goldman, 1992; Leiss, Kline and Jhally, 1997).

In the newspaper and broadcast industries – those most relevant to a political economy of sports media – advertising sales historically constituted 75 percent and 100 percent of revenue, respectively (McAllister, 1996). Because of this, media companies gave audiences entertaining content, such as sports, primarily as a means to an end; profitability hinged, instead, on giving advertisers *who* they wanted (Bagdikian, 2004; Smythe, 1981). Sports media have a track record for attracting hard-to-reach, “demogenic” consumers (McAllister, 1996) – young, brand-conscious males with disposable income and the willingness to spend it. Sports fans also expose themselves to advertising in an upbeat editorial context that is conducive to consumption (Bellamy, 2006; Lowes, 1999; McChesney, 1989).

Media outlets have traditionally paid sports entities handsome sums for exclusive sports broadcast rights. Since audiences went to specific broadcasters to watch live events, broadcasters maximized audience size, and advertisers paid accordingly (Hutchins and Rowe, 2009). In 1961, the US major professional leagues successfully lobbied Congress for an anti-trust exemption in order to centrally (and lucratively) sell television rights (McChesney, 1989; Rader, 1984). Competition from cable and satellite networks created upward pressure on this market (Eastman and Meyer, 1989; Ourand, 2011). With these huge rights fees, television revenue accounted for large shares of total revenue in commercial sports (Cave and Crandall, 2001).

Sports news, information, and commentary outlets also heaped valuable attention on commercial sports entities. For newspapers, daily coverage of men's commercial sports fed and fomented Americans' “insatiable” appetite for sports coverage (Rader, 1984). This was as much a “push” as a “pull” dynamic, though. For sports franchises, daily newspaper coverage and programs such as ESPN's *SportsCenter* provided valuable “news-as-publicity” (Lowes, 1999). Resource-rich men's commercial sports teams employed media relations personnel to arrange press conferences, compile media guides, and otherwise “facilitate” sports journalists' work. In this, Lowes (1999) argued that sports news was, effectively, a promotional vehicle for commercial (male) sports entities.

With sports delivering large audiences to media, and media providing attention and revenue to sports, McChesney (1989) described the sports-media relationship as “symbiotic.” Indeed, commercial sports and media are so intertwined that Jhally (1989a) described the industry as the “sports/media complex”; Wenner (1998) referred to them as “MediaSport.”

New media

To what extent have new media disrupted or extended these relationships of wealth, power, sports, and media? To answer this question, it is helpful to identify what exactly is “new” about “new media.” The matter is contested; however, *digital* and *interactive* affordances are two characteristics that distinguish new media from traditional media's analog formats and one-way structural relationships (Rideout and Reddick, 2001). Using these affordances as an organizing framework, the following discusses some ways in which new media's uptake by producers and consumers is (re)shaping processes of instrumental control and structural constraint in sports media.

Digitization

Traditional analog media formats were characterized by relatively distinct technological affordances and constraints. For instance, television's live visuals facilitated its "dream marriage" with sports (Real, 2011). And newspapers delivered text-based background, analysis, and statistical minutiae (McChesney, 1989). However, real time newspaper accounts were as impossible as reading long text on television was impractical. Such affordances and constraints made it practically and conceptually useful to talk about media industries, rather than *a* media industry (Croteau *et al.*, 2012; Hesmondhalgh, 2007).

Digital media are different, though. Compared to analog formats, digital media's basis in binary code means content is more easily reproduced, transferred, and manipulated. Moreover, the Internet's networked infrastructure means that text, photographs, moving images, audio, and live content can all be produced, distributed, and consumed on the same multimedia (or converged) platform and devices (Croteau *et al.*, 2012). For instance, multimedia journalism makes use of the best available medium (or combination of media) for telling stories on the Web. With its emphasis on speed, visuals, and analysis, sports journalism has been on the leading edge of multimedia innovations (albeit sometimes reluctantly). One sports editor explained the demand for journalists who "Talk like ESPN, write like SI, move it like AP" (Brown-Smith and Groves, 2010; Murray, McGuire, Ketterer and Sowell, 2011: 84).

The ongoing shift from media industries to a more fluid digital content industry has created troubling power asymmetries, though. With the help of deregulation, such as the 1996 Telecommunications Act, media conglomerates have aggressively pursued horizontal integration strategies once restricted, technologically, to specific sectors (e.g. newspaper chains, television networks). Through cross-media acquisitions, large and powerful transnational media corporations (TNMCs), such as Disney, News Corporation and Time Warner, aim to reduce costs, erect barriers to entry, and facilitate cross-promotional synergies (Croteau and Hoynes, 2006).

Given sports' popularity and cultural relevance, conglomerates see sports media and even sports franchises as valuable cross-promotional content for their other media properties and corporate advertisers. Famously, Disney founded the Mighty Ducks hockey franchise in 1993 to exploit synergies between the team and its namesake films, cartoons, and related merchandise (Whitson, 1998). More recent sports synergies revolve around Disney's ESPN brands (e.g. ESPN, ESPN.com, *ESPN The Magazine*, ESPN Mobile, and many others). These properties aggressively cross-promote one another's content, especially live sports programming.

As broadcast rights fees escalated in the mid-to-late 1990s, more media firms acquired professional sports franchises to gain access to those teams' valuable broadcast rights. By 2001, the media and entertainment sector constituted North American professional sports' largest ownership bloc – a full 31 percent of major league teams. Media interests included the "usual suspects" (Disney, News Corp., and Time Warner), regional media firms, and new media moguls, such as Microsoft's Paul Allen. These developments threaten to marginalize remaining non-commodified sports, as well as critical, independent accounts of commercial sports (J. Harvey, Law and Cantelon, 2001; Law, Harvey and Kemp, 2002).

By the mid-2000s, though, some TNMCs divested of their sports franchise holdings. Sports' and media's vertical integration did not disappear, though – it inverted (Bellamy and Walker, 2005). The NFL, MLB, Big Ten Conference, New York Yankees, and Texas Longhorns (among others) all created television networks for distributing live games (Ourand, 2010b). Individual athletes also communicate with fans through web sites, blogs, and social media (Sanderson and Kassing, 2011). And some teams even employ their own beat reporters

("Making the team," 2009). These arrangements provide sports entities and athletes greater control over their media coverage. In its Longhorn Network partnership, for instance, the University of Texas can fire ESPN announcers that do not "reflect the quality and reputation of UT" (Hiestand, 2011, para. 6).

Direct communication with fans shifts the sports/media complex's organization (Sanderson and Kassing, 2011); however, assertions of radical change deserve critical interrogation. As noted, commercial sports interests have long influenced their coverage through broadcasters' employment, "no-criticism clauses," and access to sources. And industry symbiosis meant that sports coverage was largely promotional, anyway. Indeed, sports entities create these new outlets to secure control over new and existing revenue streams; control over "the message" is a welcome byproduct of the profit imperative (Ourand, 2010a).

Unlike free-to-air broadcasts, digital television and online services can operate as "electronic turnstiles" (Whitson, 1998), generating new revenues for media firms and sports entities from pay-per-view and subscription purchases. High consumer demand for live sports makes telecasts a "killer application" (Hutchins and Rowe, 2009) for entering and exerting control in emerging markets (Andrews, 2003). For instance, cable operators use sports content to market "TV Everywhere" packages. After "authenticating" (i.e. passing the turnstile), cable customers watch premium TV content on computers and mobile devices. In 2011, ESPN stated it would not consider rights deals without broadband and mobile rights for TV Everywhere (Ourand, 2011).

Stiff competition for digital rights contributed, in part, to an aggressive 2011 rights marketplace, with annual payouts more than doubling previous deals (Ourand, 2011). Quite simply, in a fragmented media landscape of "digital plentitude" (Hutchins and Rowe, 2009) and proliferating ad-avoidance technologies (e.g. DVRs, AdBlock software), few programming genres can still reliably aggregate mass audiences for advertisers like live sports can (Bellamy, 2006; Rowe, 2011). In 2010, live programming with uncertain outcomes – sports, awards shows, reality specials – accounted for 99 of the top-100 rated telecasts. And in 2012, TV advertisers invested 23 percent of their budgets in reaching audiences for sports events (Nielsen, 2013).

Rights holders seek more than advertiser dollars, though. Since live sports may be the last programming to keep cable subscribers from "cutting the cord" and migrating to online services, cable providers pay handsomely for sports channels ("The incredible value of live sports," 2012). According to SNL Kagan research, ESPN commanded a \$5.13 per subscriber monthly carriage fee from US cable companies in 2012, far outstripping the basic cable channel average of 26 cents per month (Badenhausen, 2013). Regional sports networks averaged \$2.49 per subscriber – an increase (like ESPN's) of roughly 8 percent, annually (Sherman, 2012). In this, live sports' proliferation is as much – if not more – a function of consumer demand for content as it is advertiser demand for demogenic audiences.

Fans' new technology uses destabilize these processes, though. Most importantly, fans can now share high quality, unauthorized live sports broadcasts using peer-to-peer (P2P) networks, undermining the traditional broadcast model's lucrative exclusivity. This portends, perhaps, media's next big intellectual property (IP) battle. Sports with international fan bases, such as soccer, are particularly susceptible to P2P's global reach (Hutchins and Rowe, 2012). In 2009, the English Premier League (EPL) urged officials to make Internet service providers responsible for users' activities and to appoint an "IP tsar" (Gibson, 2009). Sports organizations only recoil over P2P streaming because live sports rights are so valuable, though. Sports organizations tolerate, if not encourage, other non-commercial IP infringements for their promotional benefits, such as in-stadium photo sharing and the creation of YouTube highlights (Belson and Arango, 2009). This underscores needed attention to new media's second key affordance: interactivity.

Interactivity

Most traditional mass media were characterized by high production costs and low reproduction (or copy) costs. This meant, first, that media production was restricted to a small number of wealthy individuals and well-capitalized corporations. And, second, that profitability hinged on maximizing audiences for successively cheaper copies. These economics incentivized a largely one-way, one-to-many communication model focused on the creation and distribution of escapist fare, such as sports (Benkler, 2006; Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Shirky, 2010).

New media radically reduce production and distribution costs, making everyone with a networked phone or computer an instant creator and global distributor. In this, traditional mass media now operate alongside and in conjunction with new media's two-way, many-to-many communication model (Benkler, 2006; Castells, 2009). New media are interactive and participatory in that users can now talk back to traditional media gatekeepers and collaborate with one another. Claims of new media's democratic or revolutionary potentials hinge on these interactive, participatory affordances (Jenkins, 2008; Shirky, 2010).

Some women's sports advocates saw blogs as opportune tools for challenging mainstream media's marginalization and trivialization of female athletes (Maxwell, 2009; Messner, 2002). In 2009, women's sports advocates launched the Women Talk Sports blog collective to promote visibility and issue advocacy around women's sports (Women Talk Sports, 2012). Progressive sportswriter Dave Zirin, and fan advocacy groups, such as the League of Fans and the Sports Fan Coalition, also took to the Web in the late 2000s to challenge entrenched interests, publicize their agendas, and organize for policy changes ("Dave Zirin: Sports columnist," 2009; League of Fans, n.d.; Sports Fans Coalition, 2010).

More common and visible are sports blogs and "Fan Based Internet Sports Communities" (FBISCs) where fans satisfy their sports information and identity needs (Porter, Wood and Benigni, 2011). In the late 2000s and early 2010s, independent commercial sports blog networks, such as SB Nation, Bleacher Report, and Big Lead Sports, amassed hundreds of blogs and FBISCs and sold advertising against these sites' collective traffic figures. Beyond their roughly ten million unique visitors each per month, advertisers also liked these networks' "young, tech-savvy, affluent male" audience (Corrigan, 2012: 131). This "sports-tech" demographic includes "high-information" media consumers (Carinody, 2011) and new technology "early adopters" (Ourand, 2011). Many are also fantasy sports participants – a group characterized as "hyper-consumers" (Fisher, 2008). Moreover, blog networks and FBISCs operate with substantially lower cost structures than the majors. As of 2012, even SB Nation's most prolific bloggers were minimally compensated – if at all. Instead, they write for the pleasure of interacting with appreciative fellow fans (Corrigan, 2012).

Lines between outsiders and the mainstream media increasingly blur, though. Industry leaders, such as ESPN.com, offer discussion areas where fans show off their analytical expertise (Meán, 2011). And establishment sports journalists maintain blogs to engage users, if reluctantly (Schultz and Sheffer, 2008). In 2012, Turner Sports paid \$175 million for Bleacher Report, providing Turner a deep well of needed (if largely amateur) Web content. Turner also announced plans to have Bleacher Report talent appear on its CNN and Headline News television properties (Fisher, 2012). Thus, fan production – an ostensible threat to the sports/media complex – is increasingly incorporated into MediaSport's familiar commercial structure.

Interactive media experiences can also intensify fan passions for teams and athletes, as well as media and advertisers' brands (Oates, 2009). Fans that follow the NFL and MLB on social media report increased avidity for these leagues and more time watching and following events (Broughton, 2011). Similarly, by interacting with athletes' blogs and Twitter feeds, fans can

experience parasocial interaction – heightened levels of perceived closeness and involvement with an athlete (Sanderson and Kassing, 2011). Many sports fans also augment their televised sports experience by using a “second screen” to search for sports information and chat with other fans. Indeed, fans’ historical proclivity to “chatter” positions live sports well for social TV practices (Pardee, 2012).

For advertisers, interactivity creates opportunities for inserting brands into users’ meaningful sports media experiences (Corrigan, 2012; Meân, 2011). For its Captain Morgan’s “Captain of the Tailgate” sponsored blog posts, SB Nation asked readers to recount tailgating¹ tips and experiences; the process (ideally) created greater resonance with the Captain Morgan brand (Corrigan, 2012). Other campaigns involve even more intensive “consumer co-production” – putting the consumer to work (Ritzer and Jurgenson, 2010). The year 2013 marked the 6th iteration of Doritos’ “Crash the Super Bowl” campaign, in which public advertisement submissions compete for possible inclusion during the Super Bowl. The ads – also voted on by the public – circulate widely on social media. As Frito-Lay’s Ann Mukherjee explains, “your consumers actually become your billboards . . . They’re the ones who become the ambassadors, who talk about the integrity and authenticity of the brand” (Blair, 2013: 9).

Monitoring and measurement of sports media use for behavioral targeting deserves greater attention and critique. Media outlets and metrics companies build user profiles based on visit, clicks, and purchases. With these profiles, media and marketers tailor content, offers, and advertising to us during future sessions, on other websites, and even in offline consumption contexts (Turow, 2011). With a few exceptions (e.g. Corrigan, 2012; Hutchins and Rowe, 2012) sports media research has not explored these processes.

Finally, interactive media have largely extended sports media’s broad ideological processes. The expanding live sports menu, and the even larger user-generated content universe means that there are simply more sports events, updates, and conversations competing to distract us from social and political issues than ever before. There is more critical coverage of the sports business and social issues in and around our games; however, the expanding plentitude of commercial sports content dwarfs these critical accounts. True to their insatiable appetite for sports, fans have continued to commit inordinate amounts of time to sports consumption, particularly sports “apps” and fantasy sports games (Chaffin, 2007; Nielsen, 2013).

Interactive media place users in new subject positions, reorganizing socialization processes. Traditional media audiences passively watched sports work play out. Sports video gamers, fantasy sports contestants, and “mock draft” contributors, on the other hand, all actively participate in the “vicarious management” of the capitalist labor processes (Oates, 2009). Fantasy sports participants enact pro sport’s managerial processes, and they learn to identify with its ownership class. As managers, fantasy sports participants exercise control and authority amid a crisis in (white) masculinity (Davis and Duncan, 2006).

Conclusion: Property and promotion

Media companies and sports entities face a challenging dilemma. Digital media present opportunities for monetizing live sports through pay services, and for driving fans to content and brands through multi-media distribution and cross-promotion. Generating new revenues (e.g. TV Everywhere) and maximizing existing ones (e.g. advertising sales) requires a degree of corporate control and coordination in production, distribution, and consumption. As TNMCs expand their sports media holdings and sports entities move into the media business, so, too, are opportunities for instrumental control extended and expanded.

On the other hand, fans now interact with sports media, sharing their experiences with

others in more participatory ways. Sports entities, media firms, and corporate advertisers all stand to benefit from gains in fan avidity and actionable marketing data, not to mention fans' ideological identification with powerful institutions. To make the most of these opportunities, though, sports and media organizations have to cede to fans a degree of control over the mediated sports experience. Some interactive fan practices, like P2P streaming, undermine key revenue streams, and entrenched interests may not always like the way sports are discussed on the Web. How these tensions are negotiated remains to be seen. What is clear, though, is that incongruities between digital property and interactive promotion permeate and will continue to shape contemporary sports media for years to come.

Note

1. "Tailgating" is the practice of hosting picnics and parties from the tailgate of a vehicle, often on the parking lot of a sports stadium, which originated in America.

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