

Sport Without Management

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This article seeks to unsettle the taken-for-granted epistemological and ontological foundations upon which many curricular and research-based activities in contemporary sport management are grounded. With an emphasis on that academic field's development in the United States in particular, the author problematizes the underlying assumptions that guide many of sport management's concomitant scientific and industrial projects. The article concludes with a brief discussion on how we might reenvision both the study and praxis of sport management in ways that are not just economically generative, but in ways that might also bring about cultural and social transformation.

Keywords: ontology, epistemology, neoliberalism, cultural body, *jouissance*

Proem

In this article I reflect on the contextual, epistemological, and ontological underpinnings of the major research and teaching trends within the contemporary sport management discipline. I consider each with respect to the expansion of sport management as an academic field—a field that in the United States (as elsewhere) has come to incorporate, replace, or sometimes subordinate many related (sub)disciplines within the higher education *dispositif*. Here I am namely referring to physical education, sport sociology, sport philosophy, sport history, or sport studies. In the same moment that we have witnessed the contraction of undergraduate (and to a large extent graduate) academic programs in sport history, sociology of sport, and sport studies, for example, we have seen a proliferation of sport management programs—with more than 350 separate programs in the United States alone. Moreover, per NASSM/NASPE and COSMA accreditation standards, many of the research and teaching content areas once reserved for these outmoded disciplines have been folded into the increasingly crystallized discipline of sport management.

While this new disciplinary arrangement has created and will continue to create a number of important and generative pathways for scholars focusing on both the business and sociocultural aspects of sport, here I want to explore the metaphysical disjunctures this more integrative sport management project might create as the field moves forward. In short, I look at the consolidation of an academic field.

Hence, my use of the term *sport management*—in reference to the academic field and the industrial application of its pedagogical tenets—here and elsewhere is meant to refer not to the management-focused elements of the broader sport studies field, but the opposite: the collapse of sport studies' multifarious epistemological and axiological fractures into the programmatic development of the field of sport management (as codified in NASSM/NASPE and COSMA formulaics). I look at this construction of sport management with the intent to explore the metaphysical chasm between more “conservative” visions of this consolidation (see Shaw, Wolfe, & Frisby, 2011) and recently developed critical sport management approaches (Amis & Silk, 2005; Frisby, 2005; Zakus, Malloy, & Edwards, 2007; Zeigler, 1994, 1995). As has been discussed at length elsewhere (see also Bowers, Green, & Seifried, 2014), this turn toward sport management as *the* overarching instructional and institutional frame for sport-related inquiry, pedagogy, and practice has been accompanied by, if not brought about, new axioms in both our teaching and our research. Here I want to discuss two such interrelated points of emphasis: (1) an intensified focus on the commercial and managerial aspects of sport and (2) a turn toward privileging deductive, nomothetic, and marketable forms of sporting inquiry.

My aim is to move beyond an explanation that assumes that the absorption of pluralistic forms of sport-based inquiry into the aegis of sport management is merely a result of changing market forces—in both the research and sport labor markets. It starts instead with the principal contention that the study of sport in the academy—as operationalized in a burgeoning sport management discipline (among disappearing alternatives)—is not merely a product of the sport market or

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the marketplace of ideas. Rather, as sport management scholars we are part of a dialectic relationship; we have made and continue to make the sport industry (and the study of that industry) just as it makes our pedagogical and intellectual work. As such, this paper challenges a number of assumptions: assumptions that the ascent of sport management is a natural or organic phenomenon; assumptions that sport, in its myriad formations, exists principally as a commercial activity—and that its pedagogues, students, and practitioners should concentrate their efforts on regulating athletic and sport-based organizational (consumer and participant) behaviors in ways that will maximize efficiency and profitability.

In some ways, then, this paper is a response to the work that has sought to answer the call set out in Weese's (1995) *Journal of Sport Management* article titled, "If we're not serving practitioners, then we're not serving sport management." Following Weese's rationale, many scholars have subsequently given their research and teaching over to assumptions and promulgations of sport *as industry*, the athlete *as commodity*, the team *as brand*, the fan *as consumer*, and the sport facilitator *as "manager."* Through a series of six interrelated theses, I hope to provoke a discussion around the ways in which, to gain institutional and industrial legitimacy, sport management scholars over the past three decades have tended to align their work with the prevailing systems of capital, science, and managerialism.

I do so acknowledging that the style of polemic writing employed in this article offers a break from more traditional forms of scientific representation featured in the *Journal of Sport Management*. The purpose of this narrative structure is twofold: to provide a more evocative text for the reader and to draw upon the traditions of late Twentieth Century *francophonetic* postmodern/critical writing, namely, in the use of a thesis structure seen in the work of situationist Guy Debord (see 1967/1994) and anthropologist and sport scholar Jean-Marie Brohm (1978). It should also be noted here that the first three theses serve as a review of literature of sorts, retracing both the context in which sport management evolved and the debates being forged during that evolution.

Such a tone, indeed, such a discussion, is critical, I argue, because as contexts shift, markets fail, economies falter, and governments are reformulated—and as individual sport consumers and sport participants become evermore aware of the extent to which their experiences are increasingly orchestrated for the purposes of accumulation—sport managers in both the academy and the industry will need to develop dynamic, contextually imaginative ways of utilizing sport for ends beyond profits and revenue streams. Put simply, I believe that we cannot sit back and wait for the market to direct our research or teaching programs. As such, I make the case in the final theses that sport needs to be studied and practiced as dynamic and complex, as both a commercial *and* cultural formation.

In total, and at times by way of contentious prosaicism, this paper is an attempt to look beyond the *sport as*

industry hegemony that looms over our scholastic praxis. Drawing upon the theoretical work of French poststructuralist Roland Barthes and the feminist critiques of Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray, the article concludes with a brief coda-thesis on how—by updating conceptions of *jouissance* for our contemporary sporting condition—we might (re)imagine new pathways forward for sport, for those who play and organize it, and for the potentialities beyond the commercial realm it can hold for society.

Thesis 1: The evolution of a “market society” has brought about the intensified commercialization of sport

Many scholars have argued that the accelerated progression of the global sports industry is concomitant to an “opening-up,” unshackling, or *free marketization* of a number of key social and cultural formations (Bowers, Green, & Seifried, 2014)—one of many features of public life (such as education, health care, recreation, and various public works) that in many Western states had long been operated by the State and various other governmental apparatuses and widely envisaged as components contributing to the public good (see Horne, 2006; Silk & Andrews, 2012). When acknowledged, this shift toward free market sport has been widely lauded by most neoclassical economists (see Leal & Anderson, 2001; Ratten, 2010, 2011; Scully, 1995; Vrooman, 1995). More commonly, and particularly in the sport management literature, this free marketization of sport has been treated as a “natural development” within an industry's evolution, whereby the sport industry's growth and incorporation into the global economy is understood to be merely the organic expansion of heightened and accelerated global commercial activity.

More critically, some scholars have suggested that the marketization and commercialization of sport is symptomatic of a broader transformation brought about by the rise of global “neoliberalism” (see Coakley, 2011; Hall, 2006; Horne, 2006; Newman & Beissel, 2009; Newman & Giardina, 2010; 2011; Silk & Andrews, 2012; Wilson & Hayhurst, 2009). In political economic theory, the term *neoliberalism* refers to a global economic movement founded upon the notion that *only* through the freeing of markets and market-based relations can the individual—indeed society itself—achieve *freedom*. Based largely around reappropriations of the economic theories of Adam Smith and David Ricardo—and particularly the revival of those concepts through the work of Ludwig von Mises (1922/2005, 1949/2007), Friedrich von Hayek (1944), and Milton Friedman (1962/2002, 1993)—many corporate, intellectual, and political elites around the world have now recontoured the body politic, seeking to “open up” all facets of the human condition to uninterrupted forms of market exchange (see Klein, 2007). These initiatives include abolishing state regulation of economic activity; opening national markets to international trade; loosening or eradicating tax codes (and particularly those that tax corporations and top-end

earners); promoting the interpenetration of capitalist relations into *every* nuanced social relation; refocusing social activity around individualism and reemphasizing individual freedom while forsaking notions of democracy and human rights; publicly rejecting the existence of social and economic stratification; and introducing new, rationalized systems of “accountability” within the public sector (a point I will return to later).

In the United States, this totalizing logic—one based on Friedman’s orthodoxy that “*markets always work, and that only markets work*” (quoted in Krugman, 2007, p. 3, emphasis added)—has become a foundational premise upon which many reforms and economic policies have been contoured since the early 1980s. During this period, we have seen this shift, to varying extents, in the U.K., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, Argentina, and numerous other nation-states around the world. Politicians (from both “the Left” and “the Right”) and industrialists now extol the virtues of the market and market-based relationships, naming the pursuits of accumulation as the fundamental ascription of any now-and-future perfect free market-based global economy. For a more detailed discussion of the effects of neoliberalism in various national contexts, I would point the reader to the critical work of Barnett (2005), Bourdieu (1998), Chomsky (1999), Giroux (2004), Harvey (2005; 2007), MacGregor (2005), Munck (2005), Palley (2005), Pieterse (2007), and Saad-Filho and Johnston (2005).

One common result of this “great transformation,” as Polanyi (1944/2001) predicted, has been wholesale reformulation of the structure, ethics, and impetuses guiding many nation’s sporting activities. In terms of sport, the case can certainly be made that before the market revolutions of the Twentieth Century, most Western nation-states (as well as those of the emerging East) principally thought of sport as a feature of the public good. Sport and physical activity was systematized around the premise that individual and collective bodies at play made for a healthier, more disciplined, and ultimately *better* society. One need look no further than Soviet-era *Proletkul’ist* programs or early- to mid-century hygienics programs of its Eastern European neighbors. Even in developing capitalist societies, public sport programming and spaces of play proliferated against a Keynesian backdrop. During the New Deal era in the United States, the Civilian Conservation Corps built parks and ball fields for community use, for the collective good. In the United Kingdom as well as in various Scandinavian regions, workers-sport movements were important features of the broader physical activity program (Beck, 2005; Cantelon, 1982, 1988; Morton, 1982; Roberts & Fagan, 1999).

Today, however, most local, regional, and national governments have scaled back or eliminated funding the activities of everything from parks and recreation departments to Olympic committees, insisting that sport administrators turn to the market and corporate subsidization for operational funding. Like most public institutions, sport in these contexts has been radically transformed into a site for facilitating heightened commercial activity and

extracting new forms of profit. Whereas sport was once largely viewed as a way to—through community-based participation and increased physical activity—develop a more healthy, more unified, and more engaged civic society, in a market society, it is now principally operationalized as a site of investment and accumulation.

While this has diminished the role of “public sport” in many places, it has also led to an explosion in private sector sport. According to the *Sports Business Journal*, the U.S. sports industry grew from just over \$30 billion in total annual revenue at the start of the Reagan administration to US\$90 billion in 1989, to US\$153 billion by 1999, to US\$238 billion by 2009, and to over US\$450 billion by 2014 (see McKinney, 2011; Plunkett Research Group, 2014). In other words, over a three-decade period, the sports industry grew by a remarkable 1000%. During a period when public funding for community centers, school-based physical education programs, and parks and recreation departments has diminished, the private sports industry has become one of the fastest growing sectors of the U.S. economy (Green & Oakley, 2001; Pitter & Andrews, 1997). More broadly, the global sports industry is estimated to now be valued at US\$1.5 trillion and is projected to grow by three to five percent over the next three years (Plunkett Research Group, 2014). In fact, the sports industry is growing much quicker than the national gross domestic product (GDP) rates in fast-growing economies such as Brazil, India, and China and in the more established European and North American markets. Indeed, the sports industry has expanded in most places at *double* and sometimes *triple* the growth rates of those respective national economies.

Thesis 2: The sport-market dialectic has been good for some, but not for all

The marketization of sport has brought with it a number of negative consequences for many communities within developed and developing nodes of the global free market. These include: (1) the increased burden of sport-purposed taxation earmarked for an expanded “sports welfare system” (Rosentraub, 1999), whereby taxpayers subsidize private spaces of play knowing that the return on their investment is to be allocated for the purposes of private accumulation (eg, football stadiums or basketball arenas, see Coates & Humphreys, 2000; Jones, 2002; Siegfried & Zimbalist, 2000); (2) the training of sporting youth as instruments of what Michel Foucault (2008) might refer to as a sporting *homo economicus* (in such a way that physical education teachers have been replaced by elite trainer-entrepreneurs, and kids with a good jump-shot or fastball often become sites of investment for their parents’ high-earning professional athletic aspirations); and (3) the rise of a “sport-industrial-complex” (Maguire, 2011), whereby most community-based sports clubs have been disbanded or commandeered by globetrotting venture capitalists. Within this confluence, public spaces of play (ie, city and national parks) have, in the name of cronyistic “municipal capitalism” (Chapin, 2002), been turned

into revenue-generating apparatuses, and opportunities to learn about and participate in the benefits of physical activity and exercise have in many places been cut from the public school curriculum (Lupton, 1999; Macdonald, Hay, & Williams, 2011; Olssen & Peters, 2005).

Consider the following findings from a report titled *Pay to Play*, produced by the not-for-profit Up2Us organization in 2012:

- In the U.S., an estimated \$1.5 billion was cut from school sports budgets during the 2010 to 2011 school year. This was on top of the estimated \$2 billion cut during the 2009 to 2010 year.
- As of 2012, 40% of school districts nationwide charged fees to participate, known as “pay-to-play.”
- School sports participation suffered as a result: more than 80,000 fewer girls participated between 2009 and 2010; boys’ sports participation grew slightly, but at a substantially smaller rate than in previous years.
- Low-income communities and families were doubly impacted by fees and budget cuts, as there was often less money available for districts to trim and few alternative opportunities for youth to play sports. (p. 2)

These findings are consistent with a February 2012 U.S. Government Accountability Office Report to Congress that concluded that these dramatic shifts to pay-per-use sport programs will have significant negative effects on childhood obesity, health disparities, and community welfare.

Thesis 3: These transformations have been both constituted by, and constitutive of, a shift in how sport is structured in, and by, the academy

In the context of neoliberalism, universities have widely seen a shift away from physical education, sport studies, and even sport administration in favor of “sport management.” In higher education, sport management has become big business, and *business has been good*. In the United States, the nascent academic field of sport management has over the past three decades seen an explosion of undergraduate and graduate programs and a subsequent surge in undergraduate and graduate student enrollment. But why “sport management”? Why now?

Let me offer a partial answer to these questions. In their introductory textbook for students entering the sports industry, Masteralexis, Barr, and Hums (2011) explain that the reason for this recent explosion in sport management programs is twofold: (1) the sport industry needed more managers and (2) universities needed more revenue and used the addition of sport management programs to attract students and increase enrollment. Following the first point—and market logic more generally—we might then surmise that sport management programs have expanded to meet market demands. But

this raises other, fundamental, questions. What is the sport management education market and who determines its needs? Would they be industry executives seeking qualified practitioners, tuition-seeking college administrators, degree-seeking students? The answers to these questions are, to me, critical—and I will return to each later.

For now, I want to turn the discussion to a specific problematic, the second point raised by Masteralexis et al, namely, the extent to which market interests, and market intermediaries (or Weese’s “practitioners”), have infiltrated the pedagogical domain—shaping both the ways sport management programs are structured to serve industry interests (often in direct contrast to student/learner interests). As Shaw, Wolfe, and Frisby (2011) argue, the evolution of the sport management educational mission has, on the whole, been “conservative.” They convincingly posit that sport management education has “developed in a manner consistent with conventional management education, focusing on traditional instrumental performance measures and largely ignoring wider social considerations” (p. 1). Through NASSM/NASPE and later COSMA accreditation schemas, the sport management curriculum has, at many institutions, crystalized around technocratic core proficiencies (or *Common Professional Component*, as it is referred to in COSMA materials) in accounting and finance, marketing, management (strategic and ethical management practices), venue operations, policy and legal aspects, and leadership—often leaving more critically oriented courses, such as those on sport ethics, women in sport, or sociocultural aspects of sport, at the periphery in favor of a focus on technologies of control and accountability (Shaw, Wolfe, & Frisby, 2011, p. 1; see also *COSMA Accreditation Principles*, 2010). Indeed, the lone sociocultural dimension, the “social, psychological, and international foundations” pillar, of the COSMA rubric requires accredited programs to focus on systematic management principles, leadership, operations, and governance. Such a business-first orientation might readily prepare students to enter the field as technocratic functionaries, ready to fill an existing (but by no means permanent) industry need, but such proficiencies do not necessarily engender the creativity, criticality, and dialectical thinking necessary to bring about change within the industry.

One need look no further than the capstone element of the COSMA Professional Component—internships, or “experiential learning experiences”—to see how this market-based curriculum holds the potential for complications. At present, approximately 75% of sport management programs have an internship or practicum requirement. Jacquelyn Cuneen (2004) has called them “the most common curricular component in all sport management programs” (p. 21). Sport management educators have tended to laud internship programs as important instruments for creating job-ready sport practitioners. Furthermore, labor economists will certainly be quick to point out that the expansion of sport management programs and exponential increase in graduates from those programs, coupled with a rise in the demand for internships, has

come as a great benefit to corporate sport intermediaries. Indeed, many teams now substantially augment their season ticket sales force, game day operations staff, or marketing operations with unpaid or low-paid interns. A proverbial win-win situation, it would seem.

On the supply side, however, we see that this expansion of low-wage labor “opportunities” has brought with it considerable consequences: creating a glut of skilled labor seekers in the sports industry, pulling down the average entry-level salaries, new forms of labor exploitation, and creating increased job instability for early-career practitioners (Wiest & King-White, 2013). Consider this cursory statistic: of the 266 jobs listed through the 132 professional sports franchises in the United States (NFL, MLB, NBA, WNBA, and NHL) in May of 2012, the vast majority, 188, were internships, part-time, and commission-based positions in sales and/or (social media) marketing (approx. 71%). To assume that an explosion of sport management internships—as an overrepresentation of the total labor force—can always or only be positive carries another set of assumptions about the labor market, one often unsettled in the existing labor economics literature. The low-wage positions that have come to dominate employment opportunities for many sport management graduates might stand as a direct obstacle to the earning potential and job opportunities of our students.

Consider further the financial implications that come with the trend to require extended or full-time internship experiences as part of the undergraduate (and in many cases master’s level) sport management program. The average amount of tuition and fees paid per year for in-state students at U.S. public universities is approximately US\$9,000 and at private universities is nearer to US\$30,000. Assuming sport management degree seekers fall near these averages, we can surmise that a full-time internship will cost each student, on average, over US\$4,000 at public universities and more than triple that amount for students at private schools (approx. US\$15,000)—meaning that even paid internships are almost certainly going to be a money-losing arrangement (exacerbated by the fact that the average student loan debt per graduate in the United States is now over \$27,000).

Moreover, unpaid sport management interns in the United States may not have the right to challenge workplace discrimination, harassment, and other abuses (see *O’Connor v. Davis*) (Perlin, 2012). Such legal and monetary arrangements might be best for markets and efficiencies, but it would be hard to argue that this is always what is best for the student worker.

Indeed, I believe one could convincingly argue that this practitioner curricular realignment is symptomatic of the broader processes of corporatization now acting upon the Sport Management department or academic unit. Admission decisions are now largely based on student enrollment and FTE goals, curricula are often restructured at the whim of industry advisory boards, and courses are being retooled to maximize efficiency and cost effectiveness (moving to online delivery formats)—all this

without any firm evidence that this will lead to higher student achievement or an enhanced educational experience for the student. We have also witnessed in recent years an explosion of for-profit career development and job networking conferences/internship fairs, an increase in privately run study abroad programs, an expansion of the enterprise of paid guest speaking, and an influx of part-time faculty whose appointments are substantiated more by industry experience than teaching acumen. Of course, this is not to suggest that these changes do not hold potential to enrich the learning environment, just that there is little discussion in the accreditation mandates or sport management governance documents as to the implications this new pedagogical order holds for the field and its students.

Thesis 4: A market-compliant science of sport management risks tautological inefficaciousness

Much like our curricula and ancillary internship programs, research in sport management has also trended toward satisfying market interests. As in other fields, external public and private agencies now play an active role in placing value and impetus on what types of research are likely to gain institutional and pecuniary support within sport management. However, whereas in the past, university-based research has often been framed as exploratory—set in motion to change society—today, research across the academy is being structured to validate, perpetuate, or attenuate dominant scientific norms. Such a “corporate science” necessarily demands “truth and generalizable answers that are not to be interpreted, deciphered, or translated. Rather, the finality of these answers oftentimes implies epistemological control and a fetishization of systems of knowledge” (Koro-Ljungberg & Barko, 2012, p. 79). The dictum is quite unidirectional: the market demands that sport management scholars reduce the complexities of the sporting experience to predictable and manageable data patterns, patterns that will help make market relations more efficient and thereby effective.

This has been the order of things for many recent contributions to the major sport management journals. For example, a review of the last 10 years’ worth of content in sport management’s four leading journals—the *Journal of Sport Management*, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *International Journal of Sport Marketing and Sponsorship*, and *Sport Management Review*—clearly illustrates this trend toward reductionist approaches to the study of the sport industry (for an extended discussion of bibliometric citations for sport management and sport marketing journals, see Shilbury [2011]). A vast majority (nearly 95% of all articles published in these journals over the past decade) adhere to a deductive, nomothetic epistemological approach or located within a positivistic paradigm. My use of the term *nomothetic* is evoked here to point to the type of highly structured research that is meant to be replicated and controlled, and that focuses

on generating statistical data with a view to explaining and generalizing causal relationships; such data are often for the purposes of categorizing, testing, modeling, or projecting behavioral outcomes.

The benefits of sport management's overarching nomotheticism have been clear: we can provide solid answers, oftentimes definitive, to very complex social, psychological, and cultural phenomena. Our students can track patterns, our granting agencies can "get the answers" they need to create new policies or protocols, and we can continue to add layers of interpretation onto the empirical world. In short, scientific deductivism/reductionism has served us well. It has given us legitimacy in the academy at a moment when the production of knowledge—and of particular types of knowledge—is increasingly subjected to market *doxa*. It has helped us to provide concrete answers to questions that arise about industry and for industry.

The problem is that we have failed to name our politics, to reveal our epistemological commitments, and in many cases to look beyond our taken-for-granted bases of our approach to knowledge. By reducing human (sporting) plurality to numbers, categories, models, and patterns, we have created relations of power—power of the researcher over the researched, a privileging of science over the art of human life, a prioritizing of testing our models over allowing for the emergence of multifariousness. In seeking out truths we have failed to explain how our pursuits and productions of these truths align with particular axioms and interests. We have often left some truths behind—the truths that lie in those realities and experiences and pluralities left behind by the market—in the pursuit of evidence that will further industrial ends. As Deleuze (1972) reminds us, "the truth is not revealed, it is betrayed; it is not communicated, it is interpreted; it is not willed, it is involuntary" (p. 160). In sport management as elsewhere, one might argue that the pressure points of neoliberalism have "steer[ed] researchers to focus on outcomes rather than paying more attention to the processes that generate particular types of answers" (Koro-Ljungberg & Barko, 2012, p. 80).

Perhaps the most pertinent question at this juncture of the discussion is this: to what effect are we mobilizing this science? Or, put differently, *what are we trying to do?* Are we researching toward a more empowered athlete experience, a more agentive consumer experience, an effective business practice?

Again returning to the cursory 10-year review of the leading journals in the field offers an (albeit perfunctory) answer. In recent years, the following striations of inquiry have come to dominate research published in the major sport management journals:

- consumer behavior and attachment
- sponsorship effectiveness
- brand management
- capitalization on team identification
- reform/policy changes in all levels of sport

- corporate social responsibility
- managing efficiency through changes in organization culture
- managing sport for development
- volunteer motivations in sport (more perceived social involvement to produce more efficiency and profit)

Moreover, before the recent expansion of sport finance and sport economics journals (eg, *International Journal of Sport Finance*, *Journal of Sports Economics*), throughout the 2000s every sport management journal named thus far was up-trending in the number of articles focusing on financial management and microeconomics. Despite the existence of well-establish outlets in sport marketing, the past decade has seen a significant uptick in sport marketing research published in the main sport management journals—from 19% of all articles published in 2003 to 37% in 2012. When paired with sponsorship research, this number has exceeded 40% in most years for the past decade. Management content in these journals has steadily averaged 25 to 30% per year, peaking most recently in 2009 with 34%.

Despite claims to the contrary, most of this research rarely makes it into the industry; it rarely informs industrial praxis or helps to refine business acumen. More than other fields (business-focused or otherwise), the work in sport management journals tends to be self-referential. A review of the various matrices indicates the self-referential tendencies of the field. For example, the *Journal of Sport Management*, *European Sport Management Quarterly*, and *International Journal of Sport Marketing and Sponsorship* make up 49% of the citations of research from the *Journal of Sport Management* (26% self-cite), 41% of the citations of research from the *European Sport Management Quarterly* (29% self-cite), and 64% of the citations of research from the *International Journal of Sport Marketing and Sponsorship* (27% self-cite). Further, the breadth of journals citing these three main journals of sport management is fairly insignificant—with the *Journal of Sport Management* having been cited in 37 other journals, *European Sport Management Quarterly* in 12 other journals, and *International Journal of Sport Marketing and Sponsorship* in 21 other journals.

This might seem to contradict findings by Love and Andrew (2012); however, I would simply agree that sociocultural analyses have been incorporated into research published in sport management journals at a higher rate than the inverse. This trend is not unique to sport management, as the sport sociology literature tends to make its way into journals beyond sport at a high rate as well. Contrasting this with the three highest impact factored journals in sport sociology exposes the self-referential propensities of sport management. The *Sociology of Sport Journal*, the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, and the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* make up 28% of the citations of research from the *Sociology of Sport Journal* (19% self-cite), 25% of the citations of research from *The Journal of Sport and*

Social Issues (7% self-cite), and 32% of the citations of research from *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* (15% self-cite). In addition, the breadth of research from the main sport sociology journals is considerably larger than in sport management with the *Sociology of Sport Journal* having been cited in 79 other journals, the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* in 67 other journals, and the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* in 62 other journals. Thus, we have, in many ways and more so than our contemporaries, become entrepreneurs of a self-referential science.

In sum, most strata of published research in the field have trended toward making the business of sport more marketable, efficient, and performance based and thereby more profitable. We still want marginalized groups to participate in sport, but increasingly when we say “participate” we really mean *consume*. Or, as Frisby (2005) more neatly put it, our work has been underpinned by industrial imperatives, “fostering a materialistic lifestyle that ties self-esteem to the possession and consumption of goods while contributing to social problems such as exploitation, pollution, and the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots” (p. 4). In a few cases, researchers have sought to examine and enhance the athlete’s experience or organizational diversity, but even these studies are largely undergirded by the central imperative to increase producer/consumer satisfaction and thereby generate new forms of revenue. And we have largely constructed these messages for *us and us alone*.

Thesis 5: Sport management scholars need to rethink our accountabilities of, and to, the body

Recent data suggests that the U.S. sport economy, much like the global market in general, is slowing down. Many high-profile sports have seen a slowing of growth since the start of the global recession of 2007 to 2008. High-profile U.S. professional franchises have been “bailed out” by their parent leagues or have relocated to smaller markets. The general trend among the North American “Big Four” (NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL) leagues has still been one of increased revenues and valuations, but not at the same rate as was the case in years before the Great Recession. For instance, even though the average valuation of all franchises across the Big Four *doubled* between 2000 and 2008 (NFL: \$423 million in 2000 to US\$1.04 billion in 2008; MLB: US\$233 million to US\$472 million; NBA: US\$207 million to US\$379 million; NHL: US\$148 million to US\$220 million)—roughly increasing 13% in value each year—from 2008 to 2011, the composite valuation growth of all teams across these leagues was less than 1.3% per year (see Hambrecht, Hambrecht, Morrissey, & Black, 2012). From 2006 to 2011, regular season attendance slowed down for three of the Big Four leagues, with the NFL, MLB, and the NBA all seeing around a 0.3 to 0.7% decline (see Hambrecht et al, 2012). Many of these metrics—signifiers of these “hard economic times” in the sports industry—have

offered substantiation for recent lockouts in professional basketball and hockey and renewed labor negotiations in professional football.

Looking beyond the “Big Four,” and as my colleagues and I (Newman & Beissel, 2009; Newman & Giardina, 2010; 2011) rightly predicted approximately five years ago, this has brought about a number of problems for what was once a stable sport-market synergy. Writing around the context of “America’s fastest growing sport,” NASCAR, we looked at the relationship between the expanding regimes of accumulation brought forth by neoliberal economic policy, its political imperatives and global operatives, and the cultural politics that actively shape consumer experiences within the sport. We found that NASCAR consumers increasingly struggled with neoliberalism’s top-down lived economies, and how sport fandom and rates of consumption in such a market-centric sport would become untenable, if not unsustainable, under the weight of widened income inequality. We looked at how lower salaries among NASCAR’s working-class fan base influenced consumer behavior (and rates of consumption), and how “market freedom” was working toward the benefit of NASCAR executives and to the detriment of its fans. We concluded that the sports industry offers a twisted contradiction, whereby fans laud the political framings of market freedoms while those same economic systems extend income inequality and political disenfranchisement—and that this lower standard of living would in the long run have a negative impact for NASCAR, and the sports industry more generally, moving forward. As wages lowered, benefits were cut, and recession set in, NASCAR’s revenues and TV ratings faltered—with its fans earning less disposable income that could be spent consuming the sport (Newman & Beissel, 2009; Newman & Giardina, 2010; 2011).

As in other sectors, the slowing of the sports economy has brought about increased emphasis on regulation, predictability, and efficiency—the tightening of an industry’s proverbial belt, if you will. It has also resulted in a systematic, if not global, manufacturing “bargain hunt” for sport retailers such as Nike or Under Armour. Factory workers in developing nations—producing everything from sneakers to soccer balls—now earn less per unit than ever before (relative to cost of living); corporate executives now canvas the globe, looking for economic catastrophe, currency suppression, or loosened child labor laws in developing nations so they might relocate a factory to better control variable labor costs (see Darnell, 2012; Donnelly, 1997; Enloe, 2004; Kaufman & Wolff, 2010; Miller, Lawrence, McKay, & Rowe, 2001; Spaaij & Westerbeek, 2010).

In both the classroom and in the boardroom, most U.S. sport managers have sought to refine techniques for accounting and managing these new forms of productivity. We often teach of “accountability” using terms like *delegation*, whereby the worker is made accountable to the goals and objectives set out by his or her employer (Masteralexis, Barr, & Hums, 2011) or debate to which stakeholders (or shareholders) administrators of corporate

sport are accountable as they seek to grow profitability while using sport for social good (see Bradish & Cronin, 2009). A critical question worth asking here is, in what ways is this market-centric sport management paradigm *accountable to the active sporting participant* (athlete, consumer, etc.); to the underprivileged, abjected, or vulnerable body; to those individuals or groups who, through their encounters with the business of sport, have seen their experiences, identities (racialized, gendered, etc.), and autarky subordinated to the logics of accumulation (Frisby, 2005)?

Like previous epochs, the body under neoliberalism is the primary site for accumulation, exploitation, and distribution of power. Power has always been “literally incorporated or invested in the body” (Hargreaves, 1986, p. 13). However, we have in recent decades seen the emergence of new technologies for managing the body (as a site of production, consumption, deviance, neglect [healthism], terror, combat, lifestyle, and “freedom”). Sporting bodies, in this regard, are no different. The living bodies of the global free market are connected in and through the economic and cultural formations of neoliberal sport. The struggles of child workers—stitching sneakers and footballs and bound to the logics of capital found in southeast Asian sweatshops—are bound to the desires of multimillionaire football team owners in Europe, Asia, or North America, and aspirant ball-dribbling youths in South America practice English media-speak over writing or arithmetic in hopes of joining the traffic on the superhighways of the sport labor trade.

To what extent are we as sport management scholars accountable for these transformations? In what ways are those within academies of the developed world accountable to the *vulnerable bodies* and the *disposable lives* created by free market sport? (Or are these matters simply better left for a critical sociologist or human rights advocate?) Are our research, teaching, and internships structured to reinforce market *doxa* or offer creative pathways that might at once *refine* and *creatively change* the unique features of the sports market? What are the consequences if we as sport management scholars tend to favor and promulgate public/academic pedagogies of *performance* and *profit* or if we proscribe ways to better *manage* the bodies and labor(s) of the under-served or of children in underdeveloped parts of the world, better *manage* the profitability of sport corporations, better *manage* the processes and conditions within which sport business is done, and better *manage* public perceptions of their corporate operations? Both in the academy and on the field, the reward has been a reformation of sport closely aligned with, if not replicating, those spectacular culture industries of the unbridled market. And while new pathways are being charted (see the critiques by Frisby, Zeigler, Kidd, Wolfe, Shaw, Sherry, Chalip, Coatler, Wilson, Hayhurst, Darnell, and others), one cannot help but wonder: In grafting a science that largely responds to the market, have we also helped (re)make that market?

Thesis 6: We need to reimagine sport as a site of joyful energy

Of course, the free market fundamentalists among us will likely celebrate the *marketization of sport* I have hitherto sought to problematize. They will point to the transformations I have noted here as countenances of the *working market* (or market at work), whereby individual consumers, increasingly emancipated from democratic bureaucracy and state interference in matters of the sporting body, are now “free” to choose what to buy and where to play, and sport’s “job creators” can now expand the industry without artificial political intervention. They will suggest that the market metaphysics of contemporary sport management are but natural outcomes of a now-and-forever thriving industry, unshackled. When reminded of the negative consequences of free market sport—tax-loaded cash grabs by private sport enterprise, increased exploitation in both fields of production and consumption, mass diversions of public funds to private sport mega-events, disproportionate sport participation rates based on socioeconomic status, and the rise of ultra-competitive youth sport—they will undoubtedly retreat to Austrian and Chicago School precepts. If the existing literature offers any indicator of how this hypothetical dialogue might play out, exponents of free market sport would argue that sport, like everything else, should *only* be a site of private accumulation: free market dictums *only* seek to emancipate the sporting individual from state oppression, and the corporation is but a facilitator, rather than inhibitor, of sporting freedom. They will tell us that each economic actor, each *homo economicus*, arrives at the sporting encounter with the same freedoms: to play, to consume, to spectate, to own, to capitalize. Those who are not *buying in* either (1) have not worked hard enough or (2) have simply chosen not to play. The disproportionate accumulation of wealth in sport—as owner of the means for production, as intern-laborer, or as celebrity athlete—then, is considered merely a consequence of rational choice or providence (choice to play, choice to buy, choice to watch) and the fruits of endowment or nepotistic good fortune.

Such a paradigm positions sport as a *market formation without contingency*, that is, *a sport without history*, if you will (see Andrews, 1999; Zakus, Malloy, & Edwards, 2007). Such a position bestirs the echoes of former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s conviction that “there is no alternative” (“TINA”) to a market society. However, I would argue that such market orthodoxy neglects to consider the social production and cultural history of each sporting encounter. Parents in the developed world take their kids to soccer practice so that they might kick balls stitched by similarly aged children of the developing East. Coaches bandy golden championship rings with studded diamonds from the mines of sub-Saharan slave-states. Fans laud the dribbling skills of *favela*-born Brazilian girls and yet fail to connect this football fancy to the conditions of poverty those skills helped to escape. We marvel as impoverished

families—in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, in Johannesburg and Cape Town, in *your town*—are uprooted by the bulldozer's blade, displaced by metallic dream worlds of the postmodern soccer-scape. We, the globetrotting tourist class, bark at our caddies for not pulling the right club to carry a man-made sand trap overlaying a space that was for generations that caddy's family farmland. We, the sport management scholars of the United States (and elsewhere), at worst celebrate and at best turn a blind eye to the market obsessions and brand priorities of our universities' now too-big-to-fail athletics programs (often to the considerable detriment of the young people these programs draw into our halls). (For example, see the thorough commentary on academics' role in the "Penn State crisis" put forward in the August 2012 special issue of *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, edited by Michael Giardina and Norman Denzin.)

My point here, then, is that the market and its ideological formations obscure the hierarchies of the past and the commodity chains of the present. As an alternative to our current disciplinary norms, I am proposing that sport management scholars reenvision sport—not outside of, or transcendent of, the market conditions that now hold sway over the contemporary body politic and its ancillary corporealities—but rather as a deviation from the order of things I have described above. I am suggesting that we need to move beyond the narrowing tendencies of what the sporting and active body *can do*. I am not alone here. Zeigler (1994, 1995), Alvesson and Deetz (2000), Amis and Silk (2005), Frisby (2005), Smith and Stewart (2010), and others have similarly suggested that we need to engender more critical and innovative approaches to the study of sport management. I concur, and follow Singer (2005), Nauright (2004), Shaw and Frisby (2006), Roth and Basow (2004), Anderson (2009), Skinner and Edwards (2005), and many others in encouraging sport management scholars to consider how their research and teaching values—indeed their very ontological bases—reproduce, or in many cases hold the potential to confront, the systematization of sport created by colonialism, patriarchy, heteronormativity, racism, and economic exploitation. I believe some of the critical work being done in the areas of Sport for Development and Capacity Building through Sport are two such starting points from which to move in new directions.

It is often said that sport management is "like any other discipline," that a critique such as this does not hold up because the study of sport is bound to market forces in the same way as any other industry, and that this same critique could be levied against scholars in marketing, management, or advertising (to name but a few). But *sport is not like any other aspect of our society*. Troubled as it is by histories of patriarchy, and exclusion, by violence and civilizing disciplinarity, sport is also a site of great affect. It is a social space where pleasure and pain collide in uniquely generative ways, where communities come together, and where positive health outcomes can be made. It is a site of intense competition

and of ludic gambol. And while its competitive elements tend to allow for a seemingly natural alignment with neoliberal *doxa*, such a neat alignment does not open up all of sport's generative possibilities. Sport, like society, is competitive—but competition alone is neither sport's nor society's *raison d'être*. Sport, in the first instance as in the last, emerges *not as a market entity* but as a *cultural formation*. Business and markets did not create running and jumping, they *valorized* them. A young child who swings a bat or dives into a swimming pool does so not necessarily to become, or be made into, a consumer (or a commodity, a celebrity, or a brand). Put simply, there is something more to sport than the market logics within which it now finds itself entangled.

Perhaps in closing it would behoove us to revisit the role of body in ancient philosophical thought. Aristotle's notion of *energeia* might help. *Energeia* is the root of the modern word *energy*, and while difficult to translate *energeia* into English, the American philosopher Joe Sachs (1999) often describes it as "being-at-work." For our purposes, we might also look to the word *kinesis*, which often stands as the etymological and scientific basis for the study of various forms of human movement (including sport), and the extent to which—as Aristotle makes clear—the moving body acts as a source of positive social energy. In the context of contemporary sport, we might consider how the physical movements native to sport can produce broader movements, or social movements, directed toward community development and civic engagement; these sorts of movements that create new (e)motions within the body politic. Now is the time to ask, how can we, through sport, cultivate an *energeia* of social progress over, or perhaps in concert with, economic growth?

Of course, the strident neoliberal economists among us will undoubtedly retort, "doesn't pleasure and happiness come to us through market relations?" or "is it not the case that market relations are the only truly free relations, and thus to be joyful and happy is to be free in the market?" The latter interrogative is fraught with an ill-fated logic that others have convincingly remonstrated against elsewhere, and that I will not revisit here (see Hull, 2006). With regard to the former question, I would say this might partially be the case—an admission my critical sociology friends would surely admonish. We *can* find pleasure and happiness through consumption of commodities and the fetishization of their spectacular machinations. Importantly, however, *this is not the only way we find joy in sport*.

At its core, sport is a site of joy and pleasure (see Andrews, 2006). The market did not make this so, but rather has found ways to capitalize upon that joy. So I contend that we should teach and research toward a more *joyful* sporting condition. In his seminal book *Mythologies*, the late Roland Barthes (1972) carefully laid this case out. He explained how bodily performances, in a discursive as well as a physical sense, are powerful; they are able, through their production and negotiation, to cultivate human *energeia*. The performing sporting

body is one such genesis point of *jouissance*: at once a site of bliss and the instrument through which we live joyful and blissful lives. Perhaps most importantly, as the feminist Julia Kristeva (1982) reminds us, the body—as a fulcrum of *jouissance*—can produce self-actualized forms of embodiment (think: scoring a goal or achieving orgasm) within the social and cultural procedures and at the same time can be transcendent of those structurings. This point is made even clearer in Luce Irigaray's (1985a, 1985b) interpretations of Jacques Lacan's (1949/2006) multiple readings of *jouissance*. Irigaray suggests that forms of *jouissance* have in many respects become masculinized, and concomitantly thrust into the patriarchal structures (polity, economy, etc.) that render it a source of subjugation (rather than liberation). She calls for a feminine *jouissance*, a transcendent state of the body overcoming the systems of subordination and control imposed onto it.

Perhaps sport management could benefit from a turn toward such transcendental bliss: a pure joy through sport that helps us understand, and move outside of, the social, politico-patriarchal, and market structures acting upon our active bodies. In that bliss we will find those core distinctions that separate sport from every other industry: the messy and unpredictable ludic, gambolic, competitive, social, civic, corporeal features of the cultural field we all are so deeply invested in making better. So what I am proposing here is that we entertain the possibilities of a *sport without management*; not in the sense that we should abandon all the managerial technologies that we have spent so much time and energy establishing, studying, and refining, but rather that we might benefit from a little disciplinary vertigo.

My objective in this article has been to contextualize the market and scientific dialectics of the “management” in and of sport management, and in so doing explore the ways in which management as a field and a sensibility—and as an increasingly taken-for-granted part of broader formations of sporting inquiry (replacing outmoded sub-disciplines such as physical education, sport sociology, etc.)—has come to hold sway over the study of sport in the academy. Moreover, I wanted to call into question how we have played a part in that outmoding process. My intent, then, is not to suggest that will ever see a sporting condition devoid of management. Rather, that by thinking about how the rationalities of markets, management, and science have contoured our treatments of sport, we might find ways to look beyond those contours; we might see, teach, and research sport in different ways. Rather than seek to *better manage* gender or racial diversity, indigeneity, development, performance, or potential for development (or capacity building) in sport, we should instead seek to give our teaching and research over to—to *be made by*—the very corporeal pluralities and potentialities we have too often sought to regulate or classify in the name of industry. Now might very well be the time to turn our ontologies on their collective heads, to move away from the assumption that the bodily experiences emerging from sport contexts are there to be categorized,

modeled, made efficient, structured, capitalized upon—to *be managed*—and instead to “open up” our curricula and empirical encounters to different frames of accountability and managerialism.

The academic enterprise known as *sport management* that I have generalized above *makes sense* in the context of neoliberalism, but as Immanuel Wallerstein (2008) and David Harvey (2007)—among many others—have made clear, the free marketization of society is but a temporal fix. Much like the welfare state before it, the neoliberalization of societal bedrocks such as education, police, health care, media, and sport only works as anti-thetical response to a stagnating State-intrusive political economic system. And as we pass into a new cycle of (post)austerity political structuration, market sport might continue to sputter. It has not always and will not forever outpace the domestic and global economies it has been produced by and productive of; it will not always be the fertile space for capital accumulation that it has been since the early days of Ronald Reagan and the “Hamburger Olympics” he brought to life.

So we need to begin “imagineering”—to borrow a Disney neologism—a market-second sporting condition. My closing argument here is not that dissimilar to the discussion offered by Brian Pronger (1998) in his imaginings of a “post-sport” condition; merely my effort is complementary in seeking to extrapolate the defining features of modern sport which he envisages we must work to transcend. As such, I propose that we look to bring about a condition where sport continues to act in economically productive ways, but does so in seizing its potential for social, political, and cultural *energeia*. We need to teach and research sport as if accountability, management, and accumulation are not its permanent features but rather have been defined in contextually specific, tenuous, unstable terms. We should consider in our teaching and our writing the patterns and shifts within the geopolitical context within which sport is located. We must also consider why we brought those assumptions to the table in the first place, and look to history to discover old and new sporting dialectics.

The roadmap has already been drawn by our colleagues in the Business School. Dalvir Samra-Fredericks (2003), Gordon Dehler, Ann Welsh, and Marianne Lewis (2001), and many others have for more than a decade been calling for, and putting into practice, a critical pedagogy for management scholars. They call for teachers to explore and educate in ways that not only prepare students and peers to thrive in the existing business environment—to execute commands and replicate techniques—but also to develop a complicated understanding of the historical, social, political, and philosophical traditions underlying contemporary conceptions and machinations of organizations and the management thereof. They explain how developing a critical awareness of both business techniques, and the conditions by which those techniques came to be normalized, will allow students to transcend existing paradigms—creating new methods, new strategies, new social relations, and new pathways. We can

galvanize a praxis of sporting action by locating the body as a site of *energeia*; by always looking for how we might move in creative and pluralistic directions; and by being ever mindful of the contextual formations that act upon it and that it makes, by the very ways of its movement. Times will change, sport will change, and we can play a role in not only adapting to those transformations but also in bringing new sporting possibilities to life.

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