

## Sporting Communities

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Having discussed sporting subcultures, and physical culture within the contemporary city, we now turn to **issues of community and community identity**, and how they are manifest and experienced through engagement with **“representational”** sporting culture.

That is, we focus on how sport plays a role in **constituting our various collective/communal identities**.

There are two primary definitions of **COMMUNITY**:

1. A group of **people living within/** occupying the same area (**SPATIAL**)
2. A sense of belonging derived from **sharing common** interests and attitudes (**CULTURAL**)

Within this topic we bring these two understandings together:



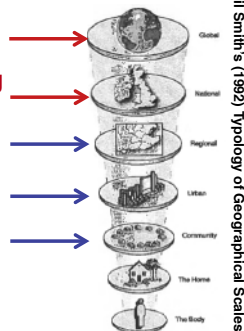
**COMMUNITY**: a population living within a **bounded space** and sharing specific **cultural practices** through which **communal identity** is expressed.



### Levels of Communal/Collective Identity

**Module 3 Topic D:**  
**The Imagined Sporting Nation**

**Module 3 Topic C:**  
**Sporting Communities**



## Theme 1:

### Communities and Communitas

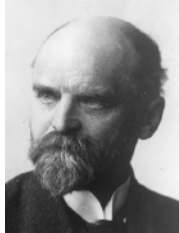
Tönnies identified two types of social groupings/  
human association:

### Gemeinschaft

**"Community"**  
Social groupings based on strong interpersonal relationships and commitments, and shared beliefs, customs, and places.

Individuals committed to collective over personal interests.

Strong collective associations and institutions.



Ferdinand Tönnies



### Gesellschaft

**"Society/Civil Society"**  
Social groupings only motivated by need to realise individual self interests. Lacks a sense of shared beliefs, customs, and places.

Individuals committed to personal over collective interests.

Weak collective associations and institutions.

### Pre-Industrial Gemeinschaft

**"Community"**

**BEING FOR ONE ANOTHER...**

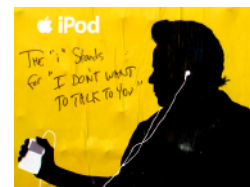


Traditional Maypole Dance Community

### Post-Industrial Gesellschaft

**"Society/Civil Society"**

**BEING FOR ONESELF...**



Consumer/Technological Individualism

There is a tendency for some critics to associate **pre-industrial societies with *gemeinschaft*** and **contemporary late modern/post-industrial societies with *gesellschaft***.

However, the social groupings/associations in all societies incorporate **varying degrees of both *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft***.

Gemeinschaft ← → Gesellschaft



### Gemeinschaft

**"Community"**

**BEING FOR ONE ANOTHER...**



### Gesellschaft

**"Society/Civil Society"**

**BEING FOR ONESELF...**



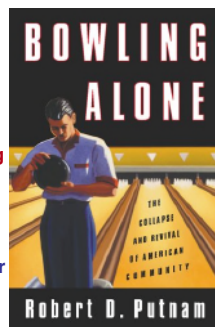
### Bowling Alone?

Putnam's (2001) thesis highlights the decline/transformation of American community within consumer society.

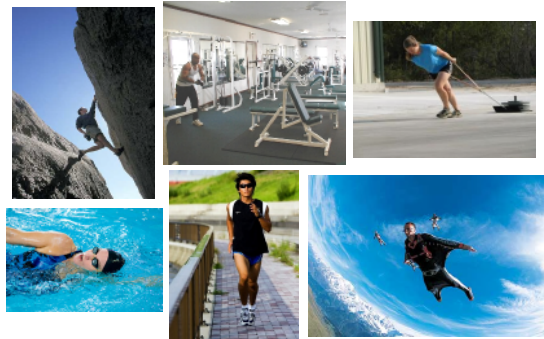
Decline in membership of **civic organizations** due to **individualizing (technological/cultural/political)** of society and social life.

Example: Number of people who bowl has increased, but the number bowling in leagues has decreased.

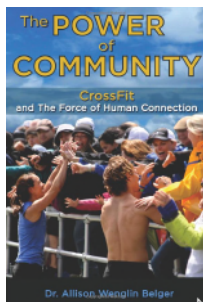
Breakdown of social capital, **social belonging**, and **participatory democracy**.



### Bowling Alone → Working Out Alone → Risking Alone



Sporting Gesellschaft (Individuality)



So much for contemporary  
**GESELLSCHAFT** (individuality)?

Or

CrossFit and the persistence of  
**GEMEINSCHAFT** (community)?

"The power of community is about making lives better and helping people achieve their goals. Psychologist Allison Wenglin Belger describes the importance of group affiliation—of having a network of mutual support and human connection in the midst of our hectic, technology-driven lives. With candor and grit, the author takes the reader on a journey from her childhood in suburban New York as she follows her passion for competitive sports and wilderness adventure, to her present-day connection to CrossFit, a dynamic, functional fitness and conditioning program with an emphasis on camaraderie and community." (Wenglin Belger, 2012)

## Sporting Gesellschaft (Individuality)

Adult competitive team sports are on the decline while involvement in individual sports is increasing.

1. Within wealthy societies, involvement in individual sports a marker of social/status differentiation and individual improvement
2. Individual sports demand less social investment and are easier to "drop"
3. Time-pressured existences lend themselves to individually realised activities
4. Within appearance-based consumer culture, many individual activities focus on body toning/reshaping
5. Adult recreational team sport on the decline, team sports the domain of the young.

Source: Yeoman, I. (2008, June 23). The sports tourist: The rise of individualism. <http://www.hospitalitynet.org/news/4036524.html>

While collective experience/  
social capital association may  
have declined for participatory  
sports, it is still evident in sport  
spectating contexts...

## Collective (Communal) Representation



Émile Durkheim

Durkheim used the term "**collective representation**" to describe the elements of life (religion, and yes, sport), that are the **commonly shared** institutions or experiences through which individuals express and derive their **sense of collective belonging**; their sense of "**we-ness**".

According to Durkheim, collective representations can contribute to the levels of "**social solidarity**" (communal/group cohesion) within a society.



### Examples of Collective [Community] Representation

"For example, a stamp, a flag, or the sport of football are by themselves just a piece of paper, a piece of cloth, or a group of padded men chasing a leather ball; they are all essentially worthless and derive their value from the **reality of collective forces they represent and embody**. The more important a society determines an object to be, the more valuable it will be in the eyes of an individual."



Source: [www.iep.utm.edu/durkheim/](http://www.iep.utm.edu/durkheim/)

## Sport as Collective/Community Representation

"an object with which we identify, an athlete or a sports team defines as a 'community' all those who relate to the object **cathectically** or in a **possessive manner**—our athlete, our team—and who introject the "representation" into their **self-definitions** (I am a \*\*\* fan; I wanna be like Mike [Jordan])."

Source: Ingham, A. G., & McDonald, M. G. (2003). Sport and community/Communitas. In R. C. Wilcox, D. L. Andrews, R. Pitter & R. L. Irwin (Eds.), *Sporting dystopias: The making and meanings of urban sport cultures* (pp. 17-34). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

## Sport as Collective/Community Representation



### Sporting METONYMS for COMMUNITY

Metonym: Something that stands in place for/ comes to represent something else.



“**communitas**—a special experience during which individuals are able to rise above those structures that materially and normatively regulate their daily lives and that unite people across the boundaries of structure, rank, and socioeconomic status.”

(Ingham & McDonald, 2003, p. 26)

Source: Ingham, A. G., & McDonald, M. G. (2003). Sport and community/Communitas. In R. C. Wilcox, D. L. Andrews, R. Pitter & R. L. Irwin (Eds.), *Sporting dystopias: The making and meanings of urban sport cultures* (pp. 17-34). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

REPRESENTATIVE SPORT is often the collective **glue** (the **communitas**) which, **seemingly** binds all the elements of the community together...

Oftentimes in different ways...



Terrible Towel Bar



Alumni Organization



Bumper Sticker



Raven's Work Day

### Variants of SPORTING Communities

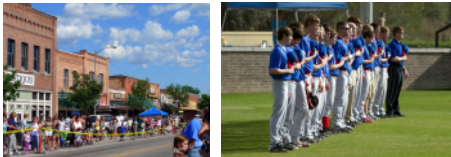
1. **Organic/Face-to-Face Communities**
2. **Extended Communities**



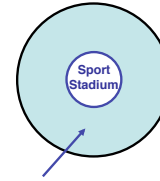
## Theme 2:

### Sport and Small Town Community

In **SMALL-SCALE** communities (where we know/are familiar with a large percentage of community members) learn the histories, rules, and bonds of community belonging through **FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTIONS AND EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.**



## Dimensions of Sport Community/Communitas I



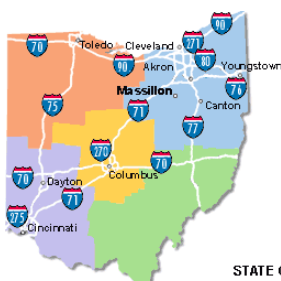
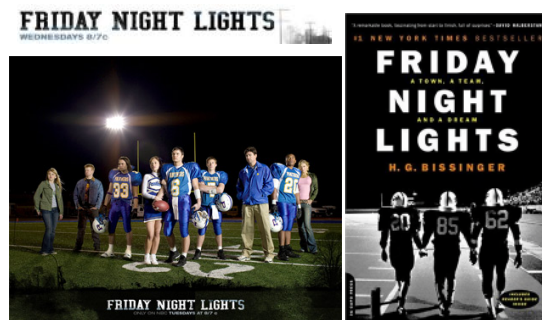
### Organic/Local Community

- Relatively close proximity to stadium
  - Team represents local identity
  - Small town socio-spatiality and populace
  - Face-to-Face familiarity and experience of belonging
- LOCALIZED ORGANIC COMMUNITAS**

## The Performance of [Sport] Community



See Video Clip 1



STATE OF OHIO

**Massillon, OH: "Touchdown Town"**



"We love football so much because it's part of our history. It's part of the fabric of this community, just like it's part of the fabric of this society. I think Massillon is like a little America. I mean, this society is sports crazy."



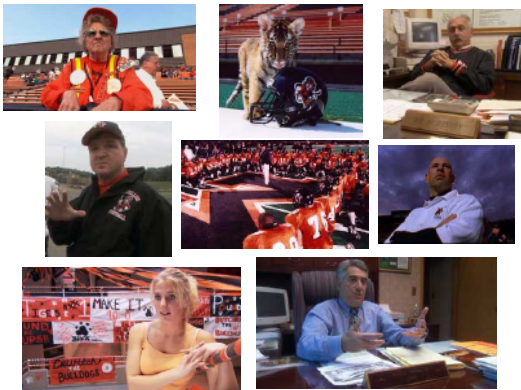




See Video Clip 2

## TIGER FOOTBALL:

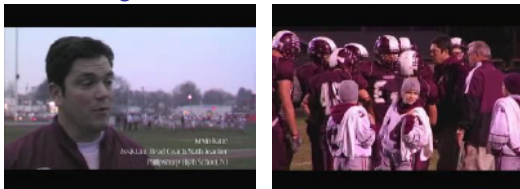
Dialectically related to the class, gender, racial/ethnic, and nation-based elements of the Massillon, OH, community.



### Phillipsburg, NJ



“the **community** makes what this football program is all about. I grew up in this town. I grew up in this town, and I remember and I remember as a little kid on Friday nights, in the Fall, **is football night**. That’s what you did. We walked over to the game, and **everybody** went to a football game, and you grew up with it. And, it just kind of just **breeds itself** throughout the town.”



See Video Clip 3



### **“North Town”, TX**

**Small town (8,000) in south Texas.**

**Predominantly farming/ranching community.**

**Considerable local poverty.**

**80% Mexican-American population.**

**North Town H.S.: 600 students/Triple-AAA level sports teams in 5-level state system**

Source: Foley, D. E. (1990). The great American football ritual: Reproducing race, class, and gender inequality. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 7(2), 111-135.



This is a **face-to-face community**, in that the size of the town was sufficiently small that individual's would either **directly know, be familiar with, or recognize**, the majority of their community fellows.

Thus, it can be considered an **“organic”** community, in that the experience and feeling of **communal belonging** was realised through **direct participation in, and engagement with, community practices and people.**



### **Football and the North Town Community/Comunitas**

**“The games enlivened the community’s social life...Community sports was the patriotic, neighborly thing to do”**

(Foley, 1990, p. 113)

Source: Foley, D. E. (1990). The great American football ritual: Reproducing race, class, and gender inequality. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 7(2), 111-135.

### **High School Football Rituals and Collective Involvement**

- Friday night games
- Weekly pep rallies
- Marching band
- Cheerleader/Pep Squads
- Homecoming bonfire and dance
- Powder puff football game
- Booster club

Source: Foley, D. E. (1990). The great American football ritual: Reproducing race, class, and gender inequality. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 7(2), 111-135.

**Involvement in each of these elements of the North Town high school football ritual, represented a context for the performance and display of individual commitment to the town’s/community’s traditions/rituals/values.**

**Thus, on the surface, football becomes a vehicle for affirming the collective solidarity/harmony of the community.**

As much a source of social divisiveness, as social cohesion, the high school football ritual “staged” community politics and social hierarchies:



- Gender hierarchies
- Sexual preference hierarchies
- Ethnicity/racial hierarchies
- Social class hierarchies

Source: Foley, D. E. (1990). The great American football ritual: Reproducing race, class, and gender inequality. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 7(2), 111-135.

So, the example of North Town demonstrates that is important not to **overly romanticize** the **organic community**.

As much as the high school football ritual contributes to the creation of collective belonging and familiarity, it also **reproduces dominant CLASS, ETHNICITY, and GENDER** based power structures, relations, and inequalities.

Thus, North Town, high school football:

“socialize(s) people into community structures of inequality”

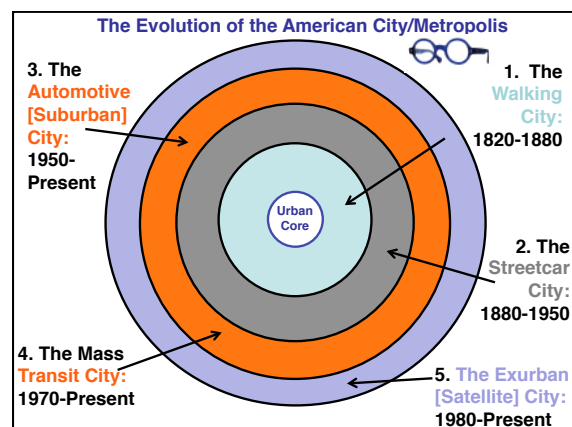
(Foley, 1990, p. 112)

Source: Foley, D. E. (1990). The great American football ritual: Reproducing race, class, and gender inequality. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 7(2), 111-135.

### Theme 3:

## Sport and Metropolitan Community

As centres of population grew from **towns**, to **cities**, to **sprawling exurban areas**, so the **scale and nature of metropolitan community** has changed.





### The IMAGINED sense of Metropolitan COMMUNITY

Extended METROPOLITAN communities are “imagined communities”, because their members can only realistically be expected to know, or be familiar with, a very small percentage of the entire populace.

Influence by the POPULAR MEDIA and POLITICAL RHETORIC, people IMAGINE the COMMON BONDS and AFFINITIES which produce the FEELING OF COMMUNITAS (shared experiences, values, and identifications).



We IMAGINE (assume) that members of the COMMUNITY will practice and express the learned COMMUNAL NORMS with which the COMMUNITY is IDENTIFIED.

Source: Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso.

**SPORT TEAMS** are one of the most resonant and powerful sources of **IDENTITY** for cities and their populations.

**TEAMS** as **REPRESENTATIVES** of their cities, and oftentimes came to **EMBODY** and **ENHANCE** aspects of **COMMUNAL IDENTITY**.

Hence, **SUPPORTING/FOLLOWING** a **TEAM**, whether actively or passively became an **EXPRESSION** of **CIVIC/COMMUNITY UNITY**, **IDENTIFICATION**, and **BELONGING** (**COMMUNITAS**).

From the earliest days of modern industrial cities in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, sport has been an important expression of **CIVIC IDENTITY**.



1888 Boston Beaneaters v Baltimore Orioles

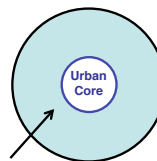


1896 Baltimore Orioles



1869 "To the Ladies of Cincinnati"

**Walking City:** Spatially dense and concentrated population: face-to-face interaction, and experiential construction of local communal belonging/communities.

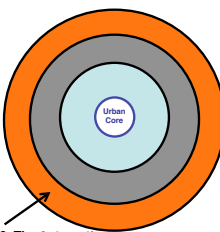


1. The Walking City: 1820-1880



Cleveland's League Park: Early 1900s

**Automotive City:** Spatially dispersed and deconcentrated metropolitan population: stadium a magnet for the newly suburban and mobile populace.

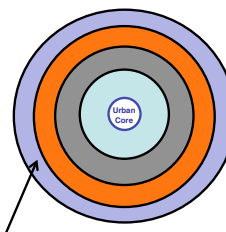


3. The Automotive [Suburban] City: 1950-Present



Los Angeles Dodgers Stadium: 1960s

**Contemporary Metropolis:** Spatially dispersed and culturally diverse population: increasingly mediated/symbolic construction of communal belonging/communities.



5. The Exurban [Satellite] City: 1980-Present



Representative sport entities remain a focal point for **civic pride and identity**, even with these **extended metropolitan communities**.

**SERIAL** display of city teams provides the opportunity for the frequent **PERFORMANCE** of the community (as represented by the team) as a whole.



162 Games  
(81 Home Games)



16 Games  
(8 Home Games)

Teams become an important way through which a **METROPOLITAN** community is **IMAGINED** and **EXPERIENCED**.



## COMMUNITY AND UNITY

“Professional sport events can contribute to our **imagination of the community** as a whole...their very **popularity suggests the absence of segmentalism and stratification**; in part because they assert, like the concept of community, a **sense of continuity and unity**”

(Ingham et al, 1987, p. 460-461)

Source: Ingham, A.G., Howell, J.W., & Schilperoort, T.S. (1987). Professional sports and community: A review and exegesis. *Exercise and Sport Science Review*, 15, 427-465.

## United in Sporting Hope/Misery...



See Clip Video 4

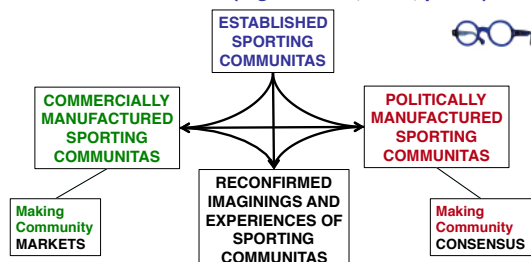
## Sport Stars as Metropolitan METONYMS



See Video Clip 5

Metonym: Something that stands in place for/ comes to represent something else.

“Sport, as a civic ritual, is embedded in **political-economic relations**” (Ingham et al, 1987, p. 460)



Source: Ingham, A.G., Howell, J.W., & Schilperoort, T.S. (1987). Professional sports and community: A review and exegesis. *Exercise and Sport Science Review*, 15, 427-465.

## Theme 4:

### Manufacturing Sporting Community

#### Baltimore Orioles and ESTABLISHING Sporting Communitas



The securing of the Orioles from St. Louis, in 1954, as least symbolically, helped address Baltimore's "inferiority complex", and established itself (even just in the imaginations of its citizens) as a "major league city."

#### [Re]Establishing Oriole COMMUNITAS



350,000 at the Orioles welcome to Baltimore Parade in April 1954.

[See Clip Video 6](#)

#### CONFIRMING the Baltimore Oriole's Sporting Communitas



Public Celebrations/Events 1950s-1980s

#### COMMERCIALLY MANUFACTURED SPORTING COMMUNITAS



"Together We Are All Orioles, and Together We Play at Orioles Park"

[See Clip Video 7](#)

#### Oriole METONYMY/COMMUNITAS

"It's great that we have homegrown talent, guys like [Matt] Wieters, Manny Machado...It has that Cal Ripken feel that they're going to be here a while. You can see them grow in their play and you connect with them. That's your town, your team."



Source: [http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2013-04-01/sports/bs-sp-orioles-rays-opener-0402-20130401\\_1\\_outfielder-nolan-reimold-manny-machado-orioles-manager-buck-showalter](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2013-04-01/sports/bs-sp-orioles-rays-opener-0402-20130401_1_outfielder-nolan-reimold-manny-machado-orioles-manager-buck-showalter)



### Building Ravens' COMMUNITAS



Baltimore Colts: 1953-1983



Baltimore Ravens: 1996-present

### POLITICALLY MANUFACTURED SPORTING COMMUNITAS



#### Mayor Martin O'Malley at the 2001 Super Bowl Victory Celebration:

"I try to shake people by the lapels all year to have civic pride. These guys do it by making the playoffs" (Jan. 13, 2001)

"You can't put a price tag on how this unites the city. This transcends football and sports – it's a source of pride" (Jan. 23, 2001)

"The whole town's alive and the whole town believes in itself again" (Jan. 28, 2001)

### Ravens METONYMY I

Joe Flacco:

"The win was representative and symbolic of our city... We're a blue-collar city"



Source: Preston, M. (2013, February 4) These Ravens just kept finding a way to win. *The Baltimore Sun*.

### Ravens METONYMY II

Jameel McClain:

"Hard work, hard work, hard work and being an underdog — that's what I think the team represents and that's what Baltimore represents... It's a blue-collar city that understands what a hard day's work is. And that's what the Baltimore Ravens are: a blue-collar team that knows what a hard day's work is. And is always the underdog."



Source: Zurawik, D. (2013, February 2) The Ravens, 'The Wire,' Ray Lewis and Baltimore's Super Bowl image. *The Baltimore Sun*.

### POLITICALLY MANUFACTURED SPORTING COMMUNITAS



Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake at the 2013 Super Bowl Victory Celebration.

[See Clip Video 8](#)

### POLITICALLY MANUFACTURED SPORTING COMMUNITAS

"This win is a testament to the can-do attitude of Baltimoreans. Ninety-five percent of the commentators counted the Ravens out. They said we couldn't win this game, that we'd lose and it just couldn't be done. But few things unite a city and a region like a team, and tonight we showed the country how Baltimore faces a challenge: we band together and do what must be done."



Congressman Elijah Cummings, February 3, 2013

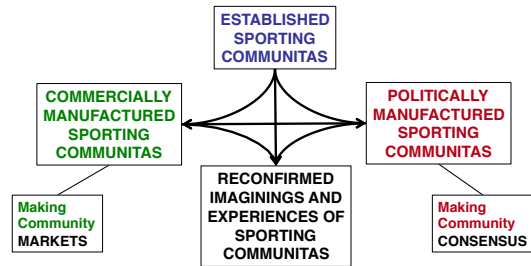
Source: Cummings, E. (2013, February 3). Cummings Congratulates Baltimore Ravens on Super Bowl Victory. Press Release

### POLITICALLY MANUFACTURED SPORTING COMMUNITAS



Manipulating SPORTING COMMUNITAS Building  
POLITICAL CONSENSUS?

“Sport, as a civic ritual, is embedded in political-economic relations” (Ingham et al, 1987, p. 460)



Source: Ingham, A.G., Howell, J.W., & Schilperoort, T.S. (1987). Professional sports and community: A review and exegesis. *Exercise and Sport Science Review*, 15, 427-465.

## Sporting Communitas:

Good or Bad,

A Positive or Negative  
for the Metropolitan  
Community?



“**communitas**—a special experience during which individuals are able to rise above those structures that materially and normatively regulate their daily lives and that unite people across the boundaries of structure, rank, and socioeconomic status.”

(Ingham & McDonald, 2003, p. 26)

Source: Ingham, A. G., & McDonald, M. G. (2003). Sport and community/Communitas. In R. C. Wilcox, D. L. Andrews, R. Pitter & R. L. Irwin (Eds.), *Sporting dystopias: The making and meanings of urban sport cultures* (pp. 17-34). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

### The SOCIAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS OF SPORT AS COMMUNITY/CIVIC RITUAL

- **COMMUNITY CONSCIENCE:** It provides the “social glue” generating shared values, beliefs, and experiences that “bind community members to one another.”
- **COMMUNITY SELF-ESTEEM:** It increases the “self-esteem” of citizens, through their perception of living in a “first-rate, major league city”



Source: Eckstein, R., & Delaney, K. (2002). New sports stadiums, community self-esteem, and community collective conscience. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 26(3), 235-247.

### Elevating Community Conscience and Self-Esteem?





### The ALTERNATIVE viewpoint:



**“Civic rituals have a political purpose: to construct the illusion of consensus”**

(Ingham et al, 1987, p. 458)

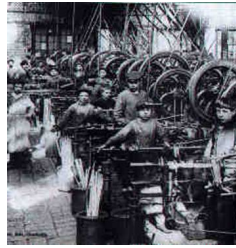
In **MANUFACTURING CONSENSUS/COMMUNITY** professional sport transcend difference, but in doing so **DIVERT ATTENTION** away from the **SOCIAL INEQUALITIES AND INJUSTICES** that persist within **METROPOLITAN LIFE**.

Source: Ingham, A.G., Howell, J.W., & Schilperoort, T.S. (1987). Professional sports and community: A review and exegesis. *Exercise and Sport Science Review*, 15, 427-465.

**“It (religion) is the opium of the people.”**



(Karl Marx (1843) *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*)



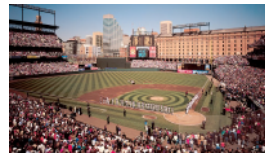
Diverting people's attentions and energies away from the problems/realities/inequities within their own lives and communities. Thereby acting as an agent of social control and political conformity?

Is **REPRESENTATIVE SPORT**, the new opiate of the masses?



Diverting people's attentions and energies away from the problems/realities/inequities within their own lives and communities. Thereby acting as an agent of social control and political conformity?

Ignoring the Metropolitan Rot Beneath the “Sporting” Glitter?



## Theme 5:

### Sport and Diasporic Community

Traditionally, **SPORT-BASED COMMUNITIES** were anchored within specific **SPACES**, and to varying degrees **CLOSELY LOCATED** to the **SPORT ORGANIZATION**.

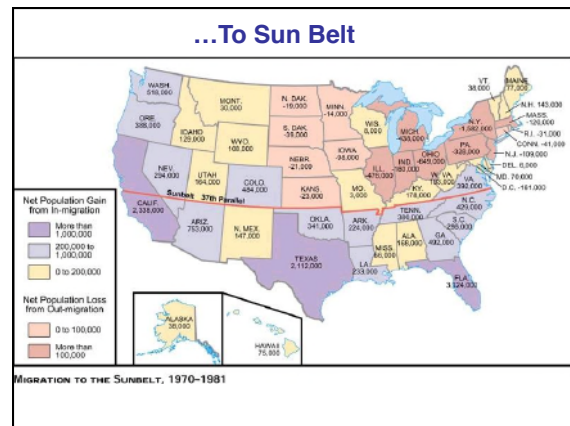
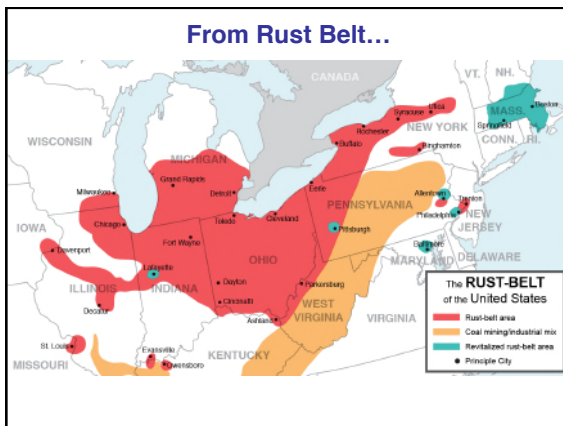
However, this has changed as a result of specific **SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, and TECHNOLOGICAL** developments over recent decades, that have created **DIASPORIC SPORT COMMUNITIES**.



## DIASPORA:

The movement or resettlement of people from an original base or home.

The **deindustrialization** of many of the established urban areas in the second half of the twentieth century caused a significant **resettlement of the American working class population** from the **RUST BELT**, to more economically flourishing cities in the **SOUTH, SOUTHWEST and WEST** of the United States.



The phenomenon of the **DIASPORIC** sport community can be illustrated through reference to the **Pittsburgh Steelers**.

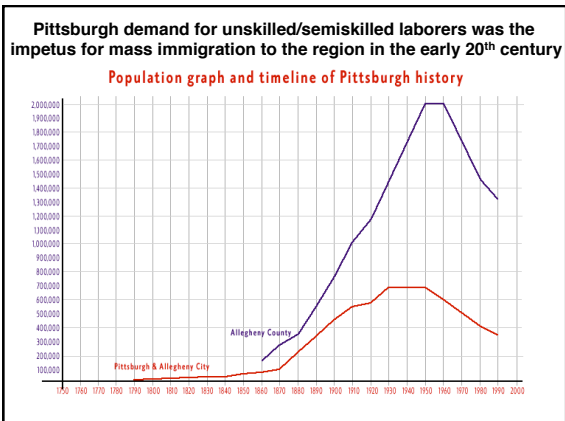
## Pittsburgh as the backbone of America's Industrial Revolution

The city's industrial boom was owed in large part to three principle reasons:

1. Access to natural resources
2. New machinery technologies
3. Mass immigration



Pittsburgh became known as the 'Steel City' as it produced half of the nation's steel by 1900 and it came to symbolize the working-class culture of America's industrial era



**The Pittsburgh Steelers soon became a METONYM for the entire city of Pittsburgh.**

Pittsburgh Steelers - 1947

1955 23rd YEAR

Blue collar individuals, playing a blue collar sport, as representatives of a blue collar city.

Metonym: Something that stands in place for/ comes to represent something else.

**Post-Industrial Pittsburgh**

The **deindustrialization** of Pittsburgh in the late 1970s and early 1980s brought with it the systematic dismantling of the city's steel industry and manufacturing.

Steel companies fled the progressively taxed and highly unionized Northeast for more 'business-friendly' cities and regions with cheaper labor in the U.S. Sunbelt, Mexico, South America, and Southeast Asia (often through the incentive of public subsidies).

Pittsburgh's steel industry was among the hardest hit by these shifts. For example, U.S. Steel Corporation in particular closed fourteen mills (principally in Pittsburgh).

Source: Bluestone, B. & Harrison, B. (1982). *The Deindustrialization of America*. New York: Basic Books Inc., Publishers

**Depopulation and Deindustrialization of Pittsburgh**

Pittsburgh been among national leaders in both **urban economic decline and depopulation**, and suburban growth.

The immediate Pittsburgh area lost more than 100,000 manufacturing jobs in the 1980s. It's population dropped from over 700,000 at the start of the Second World War to under 300,000 today.

Source: McColister, C. (2005) The Glory and the Gutting: Steeler Nation and the Humiliation of Pittsburgh. *Monthly Review* 57 (07).

**BIRTH OF A (STEELER) NATION...**

In the 1970s, the Steelers became a site for **SHARING and COUNTERING the COLLECTIVE ANXIETIES** of the city created by **DEINDUSTRIALIZATION**.

“STEELER NATION” emerged as an “IMAGINED COMMUNITY” through which Pittsburgh's economically and psychologically depressed labor class could preserve and celebrate their “**BLUE-COLLAR**” identity.

### The METONYMIC Steel Curtain of the late 1970s

"Pittsburghers were looking for a story that encapsulates who they are, and the Steelers have become that story. People all over the world have latched onto that sense of **blue-collar strength**, and proving yourself through actions rather than rhetoric."

(Maggie Patterson, author of the autobiography of the Steelers owner Art Rooney)



Source: quoted in Jubera D. (2011, January 21). Roethlisberger's Road to Redemption. CNN.com

### Steeler Nation Communitas and Post-Industrial Pittsburgh



[See Clip Video 9](#)

### The Pittsburgh Diaspora



"As the industrial collapse gained momentum in the 1980s, young manufacturing workers with **families fled** mostly south and southwest—the **Pittsburgh diaspora**—maintaining an affection and nostalgia for a town that had a 'lot of class.' Steeler games, wherever played, **drew large numbers of black and gold fans**; Steeler bars can be found in **all sections of the country**."

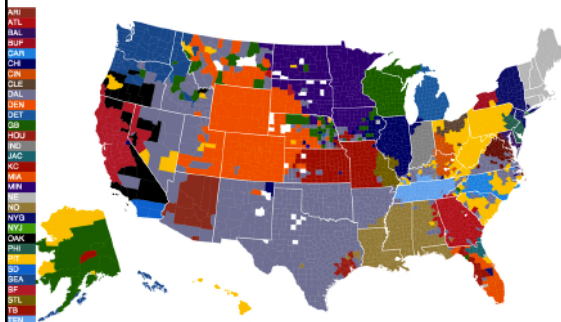
Source: McColleston, C. (2005) The Glory and the Gutting: Steeler Nation and the Humiliation of Pittsburgh. Monthly Review 57(07).

"When you're displaced you look for something familiar"



[See Clip Video 10](#)

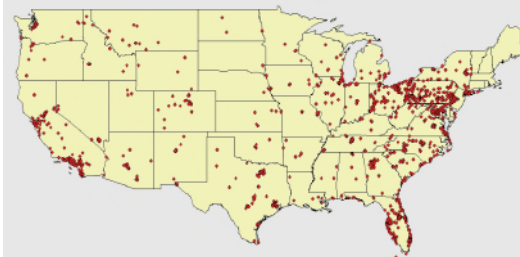
### Mapping the Steeler Diaspora?



Source: Facebook NFL Fandom Map (2013)

### STEELER NATION

Over 1640 Steeler Bars





### Steelers and the Active Remembrance of Community

According to Wright Thompson (2011):  
 "That old city is an idea now, a place remembered by the people who left and the generation of Pittsburgh-Americans they've since raised. ... So they construct a sort of Renaissance fair for manufacturing America. They treat Pittsburgh in the same way their Italian ancestors treated Italy—a complex thing becoming simple, fighting assimilation, trying to keep a culture from diluting into nothing. What makes this unique is that they do it almost entirely by following a football team."



OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE  
 DC STEELER NATION FAN CLUB

Source: Thompson, W. (2011, November 16). Displaced Steelers fans have found a new home in Houston). *ESPN.com*

### The Pittsburgh Steelers and Community Nostalgia



### Pittsburgh as America's "Most Livable City"



Source: Levy, F. (2010, April 29). America's most livable cities. *Forbes Magazine*

### Community Memory/Imaginations Meets Metropolitan Reality?

"With its breathtaking skyline, its scenic waterfront, its cozily vibrant downtown, its rich mixture of cultural amenities, its warm neighborhoods and its scrubbed-clean skies, it no longer is the smoky, smelly gritty mill town of yesteryear. . . . Pittsburgh's character has changed markedly in the last three decades. Despite its smokestack heritage, it has gone a long way toward conversion to post-industrial way of life. . . . a leaner economy, based largely on information and services, is emerging. Pittsburgh's biggest employer today is not a steel company but the University of Pittsburgh."

Source: Stevens, W. K. (1985, March 31). Pittsburgh bemused at No. 1 ranking. *The New York Times*. p. 21

## Sporting Communitas:

Good or Bad,

A Positive or Negative  
 for the Metropolitan  
 Community?

See course website for  
 related lectures slides,  
 podcast, thematic review  
 questions, video clips,  
 required readings, key  
 concepts, discussion  
 tasks, and essay question.