

Week 12: Militarism & Sport



Emma Way

“Pentagon Paid Sports Teams Millions for ‘Paid Patriotism’ Events” & “Veterans Speak Out Against Militarization of Sports”

“Americans across the country should be deeply disappointed that many of the ceremonies honoring troops at professional sporting events are not actually being conducted out of sense of patriotism, but for profit in the form of millions in taxpayer dollars going from the Department of Defense to wealthy pro sports franchises... Fans should have confidence that their hometown heroes are being honored because of their honorable military service, not as a marketing ploy” - John McCain (Peralta, 2015).

“But to learn that these had been paid for -- that corporate teams, teams owned by billionaires, basically, were collecting money from the military. Paid for, obviously, by you and me, by the American taxpayer. Well, it was sad” - Bill Astore (Bryant, 2018).

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NHL, NBA, MLS, NFL, MLB, & Nascar

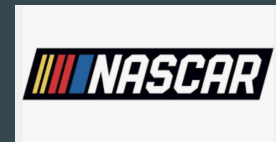
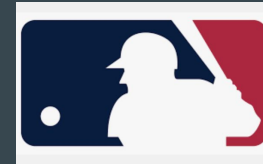
ALL of them: used 9/11 to make money

WHY?

- Recruitment
- “Patriotism for sale with troops as bait” (Bryant, 2018)

BUT..

- The military has no hard evidence that this is working



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How much money are we talking?

- 2012, the New York Army National Guard paid the Buffalo Bills \$250,000 to conduct on-field re-enlistment ceremonies
- In 2014, the Georgia National Guard paid the Atlanta Falcons \$114,000 to sing the national anthem
- In 2015, the Air Force paid NASCAR \$1.5 million for veterans to shake hands with Richard Petty
- \$49,000 to the Milwaukee Brewers to allow the Wisconsin Army National Guard to sponsor the Sunday singing of "God Bless America."
- New York Jets were paid \$20,000 to "recognize one to two New Jersey Army National Guard soldiers as hometown heroes."

Overall :

- If we are not listening to actual lawmakers and veterans than who else can get this point across and stop
- MONEY is the driving force, why stop now?

“My Whole Life Is about Winning”

“America needs to start winning again. Nobody likes a loser” –
Donald Trump



“My Whole Life Is about Winning”

Trumpism

- - “A *style* of politics, one that unabashedly asserts white, male, capitalist dominance (Oates & Kusz)
- Asserts the prerogatives of white, hyper-masculinity as a means to securing power
- “Trump’s performance of white masculinity –one that imagines itself as dominating and extraordinary, even as innately superior and above the law –has already impacted American culture by reinvigorating many contemporary white men’s resolve to push back on multicultural, feminist, and cosmopolitan logics, norms, and values”
- AND he has used **sports & relationships** to sports to support this goal

“My Whole Life Is about Winning”

Trumpism

Using sports & relationships to sports to support this goal

Claimed: “I was always the best player”

Claimed he could have: “gone pro in baseball”

Claimed: Won 18 amateur championships in golf

“My Whole Life Is about Winning”

- Trump connected himself with icons of masculinity :

- Bobby Knight:

- “winning sportsman” and “manly leader”

- Demeaning people of color and women registered his investment in upholding the “white male prerogative”

- Proved many whites’ willingness to overlook a white man’s racist and sexist wrongdoings so long as he promises to protect their privileges and wages of whiteness



“My Whole Life Is about Winning”

<https://www.facebook.com/cnn/videos/1354564561357222/?v=1354564561357222>



Some good did come out of this: sports are being used differently

“I was Pat Tillman’s Wife, but I can’t speak for him. Neither can you.”

“We should be able to respect his willingness to sacrifice for what he believed in without looking at it through the lens of today’s divisive political climate” - Marie Tillman



“Imagining the Citizen Fan: Sports Metaphor in American Politics and Implications for Democratic Culture”

- “Americans increasingly define their political affiliations in sporting terms”
(Mason, 2018)
 - Ex. Democrats and Republicans are not identifying with a political party INSTEAD they are becoming “loyal fans of them”

Partisan team-based mindset

- Us vs. Them Mentality : “group victory is a powerful prize... Americans are seeing that goal as more important than the practical matters of governing a nation”
(Mason, 2018)

“Imagining the Citizen Fan: Sports Metaphor in American Politics and Implications for Democratic Culture”

Brett Kavanaugh trial is used to investigate:

Political partisanship and how it functions similarly to sports fandom

1. Nomination and confirmation processes were both strongly and visibly partisan in ways that mimic sports fans (ex. Michigan vs OSU)
2. Hearings ultimately end in a vote: winner and loser
3. The language of sport

“Imagining the Citizen Fan: Sports Metaphor in American Politics and Implications for Democratic Culture”

Exploring political partisanship in the Kavanaugh case and how it functions similarly to sports fandom was researched by:

- Game frame and polarization
- Fan identity in sports and metaphors
- The ways partisanship mirrors sports fan loyalties

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Game frame and polarization

- “The framing of politics as a strategic game is characterized by a focus on questions related to who is winning/losing, the performances of politicians and parties, and on campaign strategies and tactics”

Examples: moving the “political football” in policy proposal, landing a “knock-out blow” in a debate, “horse race”

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Fan identity in sports and metaphors

Metaphors: “may clarify ideas and enhance interest” & “device for seeking something *in terms of something else*”

- They assist in characterizing political debates

Found risks:

- Promotes ‘winning’ or ‘losing’ rather than other reasons as to why someone is fit for a political position

“Imagining the Citizen Fan: Sports Metaphor in American Politics and Implications for Democratic Culture”

The ways partisanship mirrors sports fan loyalties

“Two bitter rivals fighting for an on-field victory”

- Connection to sport was mentioned “nearly fifty times”
- He talked about coaching his daughter’s basketball team
- Spending money on sporting events
- Talked about sports in high school

ALSO, the masculine privilege of sport invaded the political arena here

Conclusion

- We need to recognize that political rivals should be “decent, patriotic, law-abiding citizens”
- We will continue to struggle with partisanship and political hostility if things stay the way they are
 - We need to view one another as “adversaries” instead of “enemies”