SOCIAL INTERACTION, THE ARRANGEMENT OF INTERIOR SPACE, AND RACETRACK RENOVATION

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Recent and planned renovations of horse racing sites create simulcast monitor-viewing spaces to accommodate different forms of social interaction at racetracks, and, at new off-track betting facilities (OTBs), they are made to resemble upscale sports bars. Furthermore, interactive horse race wagering services are now accessible in private space. Competition with other sports and leisure options has made viewing racing, even in person, an increasingly mediated event, raising questions about how technologies organize space and about the nature of our experiences in the physical spaces—including those devoted to sporting events—created by interactive media.

Keywords: horse racing; sports venues; social interactive; interactive television; simulcasting; public space; sociopetal; sociofugal; authenticity; discipline

Through its use of interactive technologies, horse racing exemplifies some of the ways in which media technologies can reorganize the spaces of sporting and other leisure events. Recent racetrack redesigns have created interior television monitor viewing spaces that accommodate different forms of social interaction while sports patrons and fans watch and wager on races from around the country (and the world). Large-scale renovation projects are underway to position racetracks as leisure and retail destinations, often employing family-friendly themes; new suburban off-track betting facilities (OTBs) in which customers at nonracetrack venues view and wager on races have been constructed to resemble upscale sports bars. This reorganization of space and experience by horse racing during the past 25 years has turned to the expansion of information flows. Notions of writers like Manuel Castells, who, in *The Rise of the Network Society* (2000), envisions information technologies creating a society of information flows in which power is decentered, must be viewed skeptically. These flows, as Scott Lash (2002) argues, "comprise social relations even more gesellschaftlich, even more impersonal, even more distanced than those within the classic 'modernist' bureaucratic firm" (p. 27). This

phenomenon is certainly clear in the redesign of public sports spaces and, most notably, those of horse racing.

THE MEDIATION OF INTERIOR PUBLIC SPACE

During the 1980s, racetracks increasingly became involved in the practice of sending and receiving *simulcast* signals, television signals from other racetracks around the country that allowed patrons to watch and wager on distant races. As more tracks received more signals from other tracks and sent their own signals to more tracks, fewer bettors found it necessary to go to a racetrack where live horse racing was taking place to bet on races. Instead, they could often more conveniently wager on a plethora of signals at a nearby OTB or track where no live racing was taking place. By the close of the 1990s, more than 80% of all money bet on horse racing (known as *handle*) was being bet on simulcasts as opposed to on-site, live racing.

The rapid expansion of simulcasting had significant effects on racetracks. First, racetracks came to be categorized as *sending* tracks or *receiving* tracks. Sending tracks are premiere tracks that attract top horses and host important races, and they often concentrate their resources on the live experience of racing. For instance, Belmont Park maintains a large, lush, park-like picnic area near its paddock, and the very modern Arlington Park offers many amenities designed to bring young professionals and their families to the track. Receiving tracks are those tracks at which the quality of competition is below the top level, and the signals produced are less attractive for bettors elsewhere, so fewer simulcast outlets carry their signals; however, it should be added that even these tracks make significant revenue from simulcast wagering on their signals. Still, they are largely dependent on the small portion of the take-out (the part of the handle that is not paid back to bettors in the form of winnings) they get from bets placed at their facilities on simulcasts to stay in business. The emphasis then at these racetracks, then, is on the mediated experience of horse racing, and they usually house many banks of television monitors and carry numerous simulcast signals. For instance, on one day in early 2003, Fair Meadows' Simulcast Center carried signals from 15 tracks, and Louisiana Downs carried 19. In contrast, Santa Anita Park offered signals from 5 tracks, and Aqueduct in New York City offered 4.

Because of the need to install television monitors, all racetracks have had to make some physical changes to accommodate simulcasting, but the tracks considered to be sending tracks have likely made the fewest accommodations. Groups of monitors can be found throughout facilities, but often, (at both receiver and sender tracks) little thought has been given to their placement. Some tracks, however, have given significant consideration to the design of interior spaces where simulcasts are viewed and wagered on. Philadelphia Park, in the Philadelphia suburb of Bensalem, provides an interesting example of interior design at a track that is primarily thought of as a receiving track.

In 2000, Philadelphia Park underwent major renovations to better facilitate simulcast viewing and wagering and is essentially themed as a modern sports bar (albeit with an almost exclusive emphasis on horse racing.) The interior of the building behind the grandstand was divided into a variety of attractive, comfortable simulcast viewing and wagering spaces. One area features tables where groups or individuals can eat, drink, and watch simulcast races; another is comprised of rows of seats facing a wall of simulcast monitors; and yet another, which caters to less social bettors, has individual carrels, each of which contains its own set of small simulcast monitors. These different sorts of areas might be understood as being differentiated between those that bring people together (sociopetal areas) and those that tend to keep people apart (sociofugal areas). To better grasp these concepts, one might think of seating at a table in a café as an example of the sociopetal use of space. In his groundbreaking study of the use of space, Humphry Osmond observed that people sitting at right angles to each other engaged in conversations six times as frequently as those sitting face-to-face and twice as frequently as those sitting side-by-side (see Frohlich & Kraut, 2002, p. 5). Alternately, church pews, airport gate areas, and supermarket aisles are examples of sociofugal spaces, which are not designed to foster interaction.

Sociologist Robert Sommer describes sociofugal structures as "cold, stark, institutional" and sociopetal structures as those "intended to bring people together, which embody warm colors [and] absorbent surfaces" (1983, p. 16). Sommer uses the narrow aisles and enforced traffic patterns of the modern supermarket as examples of components of sociofugal space, noting that supermarkets are designed to discourage social contact and citing research that found that the only interaction most supermarket shoppers experience is a brief exchange with a checkout clerk. In a supermarket trip, a customer has less than a 1-in-10 chance of verbal interaction with another customer; and, should one encounter an acquaintance in an aisle, the setting is not conducive to significant conversation, thus ensuring that most exchanges will be perfunctory. Sommer contrasts the supermarket setting with the more open, sociopetal organization of farmers' markets, where there is a two-in-three chance that a customer will have social contact with another customer. Social interaction thus becomes an important element of a trip to a farmers' market, unlike a supermarket trip, of which Sommer argues that "the lack of opportunity for satisfying conversation is one reason why so many customers shop alone" (p. 17).

Sommer implies that sociopetal structures are preferable to sociofugal spaces, arguing in the case of the supermarket that changes must be made to "combat desocialization in the supermarket" (1983, p. 17). He does not entertain the notion that many or most shoppers might prefer a supermarket experience that is neither social nor viewed as, to use Sommer's word, "fun" (p. 16). More realistic is anthropologist Edward T. Hall, who observes that sociofugal structures are not necessarily bad, nor are sociopetal structures necessarily good. Instead, what is important is that structures offer people

"a variety of spaces" so that "people can be involved or not" with those around them (1966, p. 110).

Hall's advocacy of variety, and a growing consciousness among facility owners of the importance of spatial design, is reflected in contemporary approaches to the organization of gaming spaces. For instance, gaming consultant Bill Friedman states that in the case of casinos, "interior design is far more important in determining potential player counts than management, marketing, and operations combined" (quoted in Eadington, 2000, p. 2). When looking at horse race wagering facilities, one finds that they are increasingly sociopetal, organized to easily enable social contact—if patrons desire such contact. Some of racing's sociopetal areas resemble high-end sports bars, such as the Turf Clubs, the OTBs in southeastern Pennsylvania owned by Philadelphia Park's parent company, Greenwood Racing. On the Philadelphia Park Web page, the Turf Clubs are described as "the premiere simulcasting facilities and sports bars in the greater Philadelphia area," and potential patrons are told that "for a unique dining experience and a memorable night out," they should visit the nearest Turf Club. The comforts of individual turf clubs are also described. The Upper Darby Turf Club, for example, features "over 230 televisions, personal televisions, and wagering terminals, a spacious non-smoking lounge and magnificently painted dining room" (Philadelphia Park Turf Club, 2002).

The Turf Clubs are meant to be spaces of social interaction, and a Turf Club was constructed inside Philadelphia Park during its renovation. The various spaces of the renovated Philadelphia Park allow bettors to position themselves as, more or less, part of a social group and thus construct simulcast viewing and wagering as a social activity. As Anna McCarthy observes of television viewing in bars in the 1950s, viewing monitors in public venues allows people to feel part of a crowd experience rather than choosing to view in a solitary way (2001, p. 38). Indeed, architects who design racetrack spaces are well aware that there is a social component in horse race viewing and wagering. Architect John Di Ilio of Ewing Cole Krause, the sports facility architectural firm that oversaw Philadelphia Park's renovation, notes that horse race wagerers

> tend to be thinkers and researchers who methodically collect information on horses, jockeys, track and weather conditions, trainers and records. . . . Their actions are dictated by time limits between racing and handicapping activities that precede betting. These players tend to be extroverted and externally focused on all of the ongoing activities. . . . They interact among themselves, exchanging tips (and boosting their standings with their peers when their tips pan out).

He contrasts pari-mutuel players with users of gaming machines, slot machines, who

> tend to be introverted "doers" who bet impulsively. . . . Hence, gaming players tend to focus on the machines on which they are playing, interact with others on

a limited basis, and engage in an activity that is "timeless." They are not affected by external events or tied to post times. (1993, p. 42)

Similarly, architect Donald Dissinger of the same firm describes horse race bettors as "'comparison shoppers' who explore options with other fans," who "analyze, place bets via tellers or machines, and go to the rail, window, or television to view the race," and who "then rehash it and repeat the cycle." Gaming machine players, however, generally do not change physical location, and playing machines is "a continuous solo activity involving little or no interaction with other players." In designing pari-mutuel wagering space, Dissinger therefore recommends that racetrack operators consider "how different layouts promote or inhibit interaction between bettor groups" and create "the appropriate atmosphere" (1995, p. 58).

Erving Goffman's notion of frames might be another way to look at the unique characteristics of pari-mutuel players. A frame is an identifiable situation that is governed by its own principles of organization; different interaction frames are organized according to different principles (Goffman, 1974, pp. 10-11). One might usefully understand recent manipulations of pari-mutuel wagering space as attempts to construct different environments that enable different interaction frames. Indeed, in *Interaction Ritual*, Goffman suggests that casinos are organized to both physically and socially enable particular kinds of action. Players can enter from the street and almost immediately become involved in the continuous action of the casino. The layout and social organization of the casino allow the players to involve themselves in multiple plays at once, to play frequently because of the high rate of play in casinos, and to remain in this state for some time—as long as the casino is willing to cover the bets (Goffman, 1967, pp. 201-203). The layout of the casino functions, in the words architecture scholar Bill Hillier, in a conservative mode; that is, it functions to *re*produce rather than *pro*duce social knowledge (Hillier, 1996, p. 248). Casinos are configured to direct players toward particular sites of activity in a repetitive way. Players are not routed through areas on the casino floor that easily allow more than perfunctory social contact. Instead, they are meant to enact a preexisting pattern of activity and interaction with employees and gaming machines; in such a setting, according to Hillier, the "spatial configuration must insure that each of these interfaces happens in exactly the right way, and that all other possible encounters are excluded" (p. 251).

Similarly, immediately on entering a horse race wagering facility, bettors are presented with a configuration that directs them toward sites where they can buy a racing form and program, with monitors showing simulcast races from disparate locales (and odds information for each race), and with pari-mutuel windows and automatic wagering machines. However, spatial arrangements that allow bettors to enter into interaction with other patrons are also usually part of the design. Tables and stands grouped near simulcast monitors allow interplay and information sharing among patrons. In this way, racetrack wagering sites tend to behave more generatively than

casinos. A wider variety of possible random social encounters create a greater likelihood that, through collaboration, new knowledge will be generated (see Hillier, pp. 251-253.)

In both the case of the casino and the case of the pari-mutuel wagering facility, however, interior configurations are designed to promote the interests of the owners. Traffic patterns in casinos direct patrons toward gaming tables and machines. More varied paths may be found at a modern racetrack, leading outside to a racetrack, to food stands, and so on; but even in areas meant to encourage social interaction, simulcast television monitors and betting windows and machines are ubiquitous. In this way, spatial design serves, to borrow from Foucault, a disciplinary function. The bodies of patrons become elements that "can be placed [and] moved" (1979, p. 164). Moving from viewing locations to betting windows is a crucial function that bettors perform to support the economic interests of racing, and the organization of space is central in controlling this movement. Furthermore, racing's interests must ensure that bettors perform all the necessary functions within a limited time frame. There is less than a half hour between races during which individuals can study the racing form and program, confer with others, follow changing odds for different horses and different sorts of wagers, and place a bet. This fact distinguishes pari-mutuel wagering from the timelessness of casino gaming, which has no clock, and, to again quote Foucault, serves to "establish rhythms" and "regulate cycles of repetition" that allow the institutional enforcement of discipline on horse race wagerers (p. 149). Indeed, as posttime nears, movement toward betting windows and machines and then toward television monitors and/or the rail of the track increases.

Viewing horse races on monitors at pari-mutuel wagering venues is therefore not only distinct from other forms of gaming, it is also distinguished from other forms of public sports television viewing. The specific and demanding pattern of activity required of patrons makes horse racing betting sites distinct from, for instance, the sports bars described by Anna McCarthy in her book *Ambient Television* (2001). Off-track and on-track horse race wagering venues are not merely dependent on patrons' attendance and refreshment purchases for income; instead, they are primarily economically dependent on research and wagering activities performed by patrons. Furthermore, the signals received by OTBs and intertrack wagering sites are not commercial broadcasts but narrowcast signals transmitted only to sites that are part of complex legal and financial agreements that make venues part of a racetrack's simulcast network and that allow wagers from each site to be legitimate contributions to national and international pari-mutuel pools.

It should be noted, however, that, at racetracks themselves, patron movement toward the windows and the rail is now of less importance to ownership and management than it once was because today, more than 80% of horse race handle in the United States is generated through simulcasting. For instance, in following assumptions about the social nature of horse

racing fans, the Philadelphia Park renovation is striking in the way it reorganized the spaces of racetrack social activity and, in particular, in the way it redefined the social experience of racing as a highly mediated one that has very little to do with seeing horses and racing in person. From all of the newly constructed and highly differentiated simulcast viewing spaces, it is quite difficult to see how one would actually get to the grandstand, clubhouse, or paddock to see firsthand the horses racing at Philadelphia Park that day. The renovation of Philadelphia Park has created spatial niches that are designed to optimize the economic productivity of the facility through the technological mediation of experience; it was not designed to bring the public in contact with horses. Therefore, it adds a further degree of alienation to the relationship between two of the key means of production present at the racetrack, that is, the horses and horse people—without whom there would be no simulcast content—and the wagerers—without whom there would be no reason to provide simulcast content.

This phenomenon raises interesting questions, which I will return to later in this article, about the heightened dichotomy created by racing's technologically mediated spaces between the representatives of "nature" and the "authentic" at the racetrack—the actual horses in the flesh—and the conditions of "culture" and the "inauthentic"—the mediation of experience through television monitors, self-service wagering terminals, and other technologies—that are growing more ubiquitous at racetracks (and, of course, at OTBs). At the same time, implicit in the architects' comments is the assumption that there is something more "natural" and healthy in the practices of horse race bettors—who are analytic, sociable, and mobile—than in those of the asocial, stationary gaming machine players. Gaming machine users are depicted as entirely absorbed in technological interfaces, shunning human interaction. And unlike horse race wagerers, game machine players lack even a tangential relationship to nature in the form of horses and of the dirt, grass, water, and foliage that comprise and adjoin a racetrack. They are pejoratively defined as outside, and even against, nature (see Evernden, 1992).

Despite the cultivation of Olmstedian pastoral spaces around racing ovals and because tracks like Philadelphia Park must draw customers to their facilities by offering the opportunity to view and wager on signals from premiere tracks rather than merely by offering live racing, an economic imperative led Philadelphia Park to reconfigure its spaces of social and economic activity in a way that downplays the authentic experience of horse racing. By designing spaces that structure social experience around viewing remote races on television monitors and placing bets into a pari-mutuel pool that may be located several states and time zones away, Philadelphia Park has become a notable example of a modernized simulcast signal receiving track, and it is a key participant in the process of stretching out the relations of horse racing's economic production over space and time through the technological mediation of experience.

RACETRACKS AS DESTINATIONS
IN URBAN AND SUBURBAN SPACE

As the popularity of horse racing has declined in the United States over the past few decades, in addition to selling their signals to receiving sites, sender racetracks have sought other means to remain viable. In 2001 and 2002, Churchill Downs in Kentucky, Gulfstream Park in the Miami metropolitan area, and Golden Gate Fields in the San Francisco Bay area all announced development plans intended to make the facilities regional destinations, allowing the live experience of racing offered by the tracks to effectively compete with other area leisure options and with mediated sports experiences. In this regard, racetracks' efforts resemble those of many other sports and leisure venues and are part of salient national trends.

In their examination of the Chelsea Piers Sports Center in New York City, C. L. Cole and Jeremy Howell point to a "new postindustrial strategy of urban revitalization and economic redevelopment framed around entertainment, sport, and themed environments" (2000, p. 227). The construction of elaborate new leisure sites such as sports stadiums and arenas in or near major cities in the past several years—perhaps most notably Camden Yards, home of the Baltimore Orioles—is part of a trend to revitalize urban (and sometimes suburban) spaces and attract young professionals to venues. For example, the Staples Center, home of the Los Angeles Lakers, the Los Angeles Clippers, and the Los Angeles Kings, was completed in 1999 and features caviar tastings, a cigar humidor, a sushi menu, and a rooftop deck with a view of the Los Angeles skyline (Durston, 2001). Expensive luxury suites, aimed at attracting lucrative corporate clients, are far more numerous at new sports arenas and stadiums than they were at their predecessors. The SBC Center in San Antonio, new home of the NBA Spurs, has 56 sky boxes, whereas the Spurs' previous home, the Alamodome, has only 32. Consequently, there are over 11,000 fewer seats for average fans at the new arena (Durston, 2001).

In major team sports, one obvious reason for building new venues, especially those underwritten by home cities rather than paid for by team owners, is to keep team owners from moving their teams to cities making more attractive venue offers. Other reasons, and ones more relevant to horse racing, are to attract new, wealthier fans to live sporting events and to create vibrant commercial areas around venues. As research on sports stadiums indicates, however, a new facility is not enough to achieve the latter goal. Mark Rosentraub (1997) observes that a key to success in neighborhood revitalization is a "balanced urban redevelopment plan that include[s] many projects other than sports facilities" (p. 206). Such a plan would involve the construction of other "consumption spaces" (see Mullins & Natalier, 1999), such as restaurants, shopping malls, movie theaters, and cultural complexes. The idea, according to Mullins and Natalier, is that successful consumption spaces will draw visitors with the economic and/or cultural capital to purchase the goods and services available, and eventually

the convenience of proximity to quality goods and services will cause people to relocate to the area (in a process of gentrification, which Mullins and Natalier observe, for example, in their study of consumption space development in Brisbane, Australia.)

Some racetracks have completed development projects that include retail and other commercial elements, including integrated facilities in states that allow video lottery terminals (VLTs)—essentially slot machines—at horse racetracks. Dover Downs, a harness racetrack in Dover, Delaware, completed renovations that included building a hotel, luxury skyboxes, a performance and exhibition hall, and expanding its casino. Canterbury Park in the Minneapolis suburbs recently put forth a plan to build "The Racino at Canterbury Park," which would feature slot machines, an Olympic horse park, an events facility, a hotel, and a conference center. The project has been proposed and an economic impact study of its benefits to Canterbury Park and the region has been commissioned and presented; this has been done even before the Minnesota legislature has approved gaming machines at racetracks or a constitutional amendment has been passed to allow it (LaMarra, 2002).

Also attempting to get revitalization plans underway is Hallandale Beach, Florida, an aging suburb of Miami and home of Gulfstream Park racetrack. When Magna Entertainment Corporation, parent company of Gulfstream, announced plans in January of 2002 to build an events complex at the track, those plans seemed to support other efforts at revitalization in the city. Gulfstream was already the premiere East Coast venue for winter horse racing, and it now sought to be a premiere entertainment destination as well. Magna proposed building a three-tier "sports palace" to house live sporting events, such as boxing, as well as telecasts of sporting events from around the world. Also included in the plans were a state-of-the art Turf Club for race viewing, new and wider turf and dirt racecourses, an amphitheater for concerts, a hotel that overlooked the racetrack, and a retail complex ("Gulfstream Renovation," 2002; Hill, 2002). As Gulfstream Park president and general manager Scott Savin explained, "You'll be sitting at Starbucks or Borders and there will be horses walking around. . . . There will be all types of entertainment taking you from the day into the night" (quoted in Hill, 2002).

Construction at Gulfstream was scheduled to begin in 2002 after the conclusion of the racetrack's spring meet. In August, however, Magna announced that it was indefinitely delaying redevelopment when its second quarter net income was a paltry $.01 per share. In a press release, Magna stated that it was still "considering a major redevelopment of Gulfstream" but that it had "deferred a decision on that project for the time being" (from Hegarty, 2002). *Daily Racing Form* writer Matt Hegarty points out that Magna has yet to make promised renovations on any of its tracks, with the minor exception of Santa Anita Park where it built a restaurant.

Despite its failed promises, disappointing 2002 revenue, and shelving of plans for Gulfstream Park, in the summer of 2002, Magna filed

development plans with the cities of Albany and Berkeley, California, that are still under consideration for the racetrack it owns on the San Francisco Bay, Golden Gate Fields. Plans for the project, named Rancho San Antonio, are intentionally vague, but they include an event center, a conference center, retail shops, a simulcasting facility, a hotel, and a restaurant (Levy, 2002; Shinar, 2002). The current facility straddles the borders of Albany and Berkeley, and Magna vice president, Peter Tunney, states that the plans on file with both cities conform to each city's current zoning laws (Shinar, 2002). Measure P, a referendum that would have made Berkeley's zoning ordinances more restrictive by limiting newly constructed buildings in some areas to two or three stories and may have impeded development at Golden Gate Fields, was soundly defeated by voters in November of 2002 (Lin, 2002).

There is no disputing that Golden Gate Fields, with its location on the bay and adjacent to Eastshore State Park, is prime real estate for development. An *East Bay Express* writer's description of the view from Peter Tunney's office windows at Golden Gate Fields makes clear why hopes exist to turn the facility into a major leisure destination.

> From every vantage point the view is beautiful. The office is right above the track, just to the right of the finish line. A string of windows to the south brings the stable area into view, and to the west is a stunning panorama of the bay, Cesar Chavez Park, and the [San Francisco-Oakland Bay] bridge, all bathed in wisps of fog and clouds. (Barrios, 2001)

Not surprisingly, given the facility's location, Magna founder Frank Stronach possesses, according to Tunney, "a great vision for what he might do" with Golden Gate Fields, especially because he is known to be quite interested in developing "family-style entertainment centers" at his racetracks (Barrios, 2001).

Moreover, the city of Albany has a vested interest in helping to make the track a leisure destination because one third of 1% of live race handle bet at Golden Gate Fields—about $500,000 a year—goes to the city. The greater the number of people drawn to the track to watch and bet on live races there, the larger the contribution to Albany's budget. Largely for this reason, in 1994, a measure passed to allow a previous owner to build a restaurant, a retail area, and a card room at the racetrack. Development of the 40-year-old track, even though the plan included a non–pari-mutuel gambling facility, was seen as a lesser evil by the populace than demolishing the racetrack and developing the waterfront in some other way. However, the measure was overturned in the state Court of Appeals in 1997 (Barrios, 2001). Given that history and Magna's own history of proposing renovations and then shelving those plans, it is not clear that development of Golden Gate Fields will take place in the near future. As Magna vice president—former Golden Gate Fields president and general manager—Peter Tunney states, filing development plans was "the first step in the process. There's no time limit on this, no clock ticking" (Shinar, 2002).

Still, so far in 2003, the City of Albany has held two public workshops intended to solicit input about Golden Gate's development plans from community members. At the first workshop in January, several speakers argued that the track should not exist at all, that the city of Albany or an environmental group, such as the Nature Conservancy, should purchase the track and the land and restore it to its natural state, perhaps allowing it to become part of Eastshore State Park that it adjoins. This is the view supported by the San Francisco Bay chapter of the Sierra Club. At the second public workshop held in April, community members were placed in groups and instructed to, with the help of facilitators, come up with ideas for the development of the Golden Gate Fields' property, and they were told by representatives of the consulting group overseeing the meeting that ideas predicated on the track's demolition could not be included. Despite that instruction, in Group 8, the group in which I was placed, two of the seven members (a middle-aged White man who belonged to several local environmental groups and a middle-aged White woman) made clear that they would not be happy unless the racetrack was gone. Interestingly, only one Albany resident in the group, an older White woman representing the organization "Friends of Five Creeks" had ever been to Golden Gate Fields racetrack.

Participants in Group 8 were all residents of Albany or Berkeley and also included a 40-ish architect who worked for an environmentally friendly architecture firm, a kayaking couple made up of a young Asian American woman and a young White man, and an Asian American undergraduate student at UC Berkeley who was there to do research for an urban planning class. All agreed that development should include a link to the Bay Trail, no marina, more natural areas, fewer paved areas, a farmers' market, restoration of the creek if possible, and access to public transit. There was disagreement about whether small-scale retail development or a ferry landing would be desirable. Similar views were presented by other groups, which also argued for limiting parking areas, connecting to the Bay Trail, and providing access to public transportation. Some supported retail development in the form of small hotels and restaurants, some wanted the track's infield maintained as a bird habitat, some proposed the site be used for affordable housing, some disputed whether the city really needs revenue from the racetrack, and many were adamant that the track should be eliminated.

It might be useful to note that, of the approximately 100 people in attendance at the second public workshop, only three were visibly non-White and non-Asian, and there was a balanced mix of men and women, both young and old. This stood in stark contrast to the crowd that could be found at Golden Gate Fields to wager on simulcasts two days later, which was predominately non-White and male. In fact, on that day, I overheard an African American man who was observing the crowd say to his companion, "I haven't seen this many Black folks in one place since the riots in L.A." The disjuncture between Golden Gate Fields' patrons and members of the community attempting to influence future development of the site underscores a key dynamic in the horse racing industry today. Horse racing would very much

like to attract a younger, professional crowd, but it is also beholden to its current patrons who are keeping the industry in business and, thus, must be served. Bridging the divide is likely essential to the sport's survival, but the entrenched opinions of community members, such as those expressed at Albany's public meetings, indicate what a difficult task this has proven to be.

One project unlikely to face much community opposition is the very high-profile development already underway at Churchill Downs in Louisville, Kentucky. Like Gulfstream Park, Churchill Downs is a premiere live racing venue. In fact, as home of the Kentucky Derby, it is perhaps the premiere horse-racing site in the Western Hemisphere. Also, the 128-year-old track is located in a depressed area of the city along Central Avenue that is ripe for urban redevelopment. Because of Churchill Downs' value to the city as the site of a major national sporting event and because of the city's development plans for Central Avenue, the $127 million renovation project unveiled in the fall of 2001 is being undertaken with a 30-year tax break. The tax break will exempt Churchill Downs from paying property taxes to the city of Louisville, to Jefferson County, or to the state of Kentucky. Instead, the track will pay approximately $250,000 a year directly to the Jefferson County Board of Education ("Tax Break," 2002). Still, Churchill Downs plans to pay three fourths of the track's renovation costs itself (Shafer, 2001).

There is little doubt that Churchill Downs is in need of renovation. Sportswriter Jimmy Cannon once described Churchill as "an immense hovel of a racetrack, resembling a lodging for bats and spiders" (quoted in Mooney, 2003). The huge interior lacks continuity, making it extremely difficult to navigate. Churchill's renovations are intended to provide "for increasingly discerning patrons" the comforts of nearby casinos and other sports venues (Rees, 2001), such as Slugger Field, which has been an extremely popular entertainment site since it opened in downtown Louisville in 1999 as the new home of Louisville's AAA baseball team, the Riverbats. Commenting on Churchill Downs' plans, Kentucky Derby-winning trainer Carl Nafzger observes the following:

> It's been needed. We see how people enjoy Arlington Park [rebuilt for $200 million in the late 1980s in Chicago], because it's so much more for the family, more casual and enjoyable even if you're not a diehard race fan. (quoted in Rees, 2002)

In addition to bringing more young families to the racetrack, the development is intended to make Churchill Downs a year-round destination, attracting conventions, receptions, and meetings (Rees, 2001). Plans for Churchill Downs include the construction of 66 luxury suites in three levels east of the Twin Spires and overlooking the racetrack, the renovation of the grandstand and the Jockey Club, the addition of a glass-enclosed meeting space with a view of the Louisville skyline, the construction of a simulcast wagering facility near the paddock, the addition of lights to allow racing

after dark, the redesign and expansion of the Turf Club and adjacent terrace, and the inclusion of premium box seats with personal seat licenses (Rees, 2001).

Louisville Courier-Journal racing writer Jennie Rees (2001) notes that the renovation of Churchill Downs is especially difficult because of the importance of maintaining the track's historic qualities in the course of development. The lead architect at the firm likely to handle the renovations acknowledges this difficulty and the concern in the community regarding changes at the track, stating, "There's a lot of character and history here, and we're not looking to change the character of Churchill Downs" (quoted in Haukebo, 2001). As Cole and Howell (2000) point out in their analysis of Chelsea Piers Sports Center, development projects often employ tropes that celebrate and recapture the past while "theming" contemporary spaces. In the case of Churchill Downs, a commitment to preserve the Twin Spires atop the roof has been emphasized by track management when discussing the facility's reconfiguration.

Yet it is difficult to see how such substantial changes at Churchill Downs can avoid changing the perceived character of the facility. The addition of luxury suites that target corporate clients and the construction of an on-site simulcast center emphasize the increasingly mediated nature of the horse racing spectator experience. Churchill Downs' luxury suites will hold from 25 to 52 people and will cost $62,000 to $166,000 to rent for a racing season. They are projected to generate almost $4 million per year for the track, and, thus, they are an important source of revenue to pay for renovations (Mitchell, 2002). Patrons will be able to place bets from the suites and watch races at the track either on monitors or through the suite's windows. Luxury suites provide a highly mediated experience of a live event for people who are physically at the event. For instance, a Los Angeles Lakers fan who had the opportunity to watch a game with a friend from the Staples Center's corporate suite leased by his friend's employer commented that he "felt detached from the game—and the rest of the fans—while sitting in the suite" (Durston, 2001).

Churchill Downs, as the home of the Kentucky Derby, is one of the most visible purveyors of the live, authentic racing experience. Its location in the state well-known for its production of the most prized Thoroughbred racehorses in the world contributes to the nostalgic and utopian discursive construction of Churchill Downs as particularly "separate and worthy" (see Jensen, 1998, on authenticity). For the price of general admission, in the midst of the concrete expanses of an urban redevelopment zone, Churchill Downs offers a view through its horses, in its green paddock, on its dirt track and manicured turf course, and in its scenic infield of the pastoral, the natural tamed for social consumption, and a refuge from urban life. For some, the experience of racing under the historic Twin Spires is the only truly authentic experience of horse racing, and the renovation of the Downs will deploy the track's history as part of its theme. To appropriate words from Walter Benjamin's 1985 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical

Reproduction," the experience of attending horse racing at Churchill Downs possesses a presence in time and space that racing elsewhere—and perhaps even in a reconfigured, themed, and highly mediated Churchill Downs—lacks.

The work of Harold Innis reminds us that technologies that are especially good at extending communication across space, as in this case study, or time, are not neutral. The move towards interactive media with greater reach, both as part of and separate from the creation of themed sports and leisure destinations, is not always liberating or revolutionary for users. The historical tendency has been for those in power to use new and existing communication technologies to extend their power (Innis, 1951; Jhally, 1993). Those who use interactive media to bet on horse racing are engaged in a particular and explicit kind of work. Certainly, most are doing it, in part, for entertainment, but many are also, in essence, involved in a form of work with the hope of receiving financial compensation from wagering interests for their efforts. Moves to make racetracks family-friendly leisure destinations may, to some degree, obscure the ways in which interactive media, despite their participatory potential, have primarily been used in the case of horse racing (and in other sports and games, perhaps, to a less explicit extent) in the deployment of practices—a system of disciplinary practices reproducing social knowledge—that order and reconfigure public space.

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