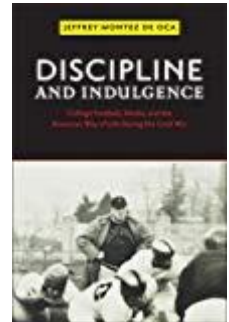


**Jeffrey Montez de Oca.** *Discipline and Indulgence: College Football, Media, and the American Way of Life during the Cold War.* New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2013. x + 174 pp. \$24.95, paper, ISBN 978-0-8135-6126-4.



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In *Discipline and Indulgence: College Football, Media, and the American Way of Life during the Cold War*, Jeffrey Montez de Oca offers an examination of how American college sports culture, national society, gender, and militarism intersect in the context of the Cold War. He begins with a compelling anecdote from his childhood, highlighting the paradox of buying into the common national experience of college football while simultaneously resisting projections of American internal imperialism. With this as a starting point, de Oca positions his work alongside a number of significant themes in twentieth-century American history, including Cold War conflict, domestic social policy, and imperial tension. De Oca's work comes at a time when the ascendancy of postcolonial theory in historical scholarship allows the reexamination of previously accepted narratives, and using college sports as his point of entry, he reveals the connections between sports, masculinity, and the construction of an imagined community poised to support national policies.

By focusing on college football during the Cold War and exploring the connections between American sport, militarism, and the media, de Oca engages a body of literature that defines the Cold War as just as much a domestic enterprise in the United States as a matter of military or foreign policy. In addition, de Oca observes the use of sports, college football in particular, in crafting a national Cold War identity, appropriately aware of ongoing Cold War conflict and America's responsibility in it. In keeping with his sociological background, de Oca builds on the work of Clifford Geertz, using college football as a point of access to examine these broader trends. De Oca also raises a thought-provoking analysis of imperialism, arguing that the traditions created by this militaristic sports culture promoted an avenue for achieving citizenship, but that individual elements also provided an opportunity for nonconforming groups to protest American imperial power.

By and large de Oca's purpose in this work is to illustrate how individuals can create unique identities or join the collective citizenry through

participation in American imperialist sports culture--thus transforming college football from a mere sport into a political discourse engaging the widely accepted or officially endorsed foreign policy, military superiority, and social ideals. He demonstrates this trend by examining such phenomena as the so-called muscle gap, American leaders' way of preventing young men from falling behind their Cold War counterparts; the concerted effort to develop American sports into a nationally accepted cultural activity; and the forging of these two phenomena into a single national and imperial commodity that encouraged Americans to consume sports and national policy simultaneously.

One minor criticism or caution is that de Oca's argument often seems to rely upon the implicit testimony of his sources, rather than an explicit demonstration of the connections he discerns. A specific example of this is the section on teaching and performing Cold War citizenship and football broadcasting and national pedagogy (pp. 63-72), where de Oca ascribes a certain level of intent and meaning to sources, while the construction of that meaning may not have been the express purpose of the source. De Oca may be interrogating these sources correctly, but care should be taken to demonstrate a clear example of intent. Otherwise the reader may be left wondering whether or not de Oca's sources were actually designed to provide the support that de Oca extracts for his argument.

These thoughts aside, de Oca presents a well-researched and persuasive narrative. Specific examples of compelling data-based observations include de Oca's discussion of "football as a remedy for depleted masculinity" (p. 85), where he uses an NCAA publicity plan to demonstrate connections between college football, masculinity, physical fitness, and national success--in terms of American industry, government, and military. De Oca also compellingly illustrates the rise of college football as a national--and therefore unifying--enterprise, through the use of *Sports Illustrated* coverage of

college football. De Oca argues that such coverage was instrumental in the construction of an imagined community of college football audiences at the national level, thus enhancing the potential for widespread buy-in to accepted narratives of Cold War social responsibility.

All told, *Discipline and Indulgence* is a concise, well-researched, and compelling work that highlights important themes of twentieth-century American history. Readers will observe elements of postcolonial theory, cultural history, and social history at work in de Oca's book. These various approaches, when combined with de Oca's colorful blend of source material and personal recollections, provide a vivid glimpse into the world of American Cold War sports culture and society. *Discipline and Indulgence* should be valuable reading for individuals studying American culture, sports history, masculinity, and imperialism during the twentieth century.

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