

New Deal Spending and Stadia: Constructions Utilized by National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Institutions

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The present study examines the history of Depression era financing in the United States with respect to various New Deal programs and the impact they had on the development of stadia used by current institutions of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's Division I level (i.e., Football Bowl Subdivision and Football Championship Subdivision). Specifically, the current research provides findings and explanations regarding regional differences and presents data on the various New Deal programs. We further highlight the construction and renovation of stadia importantly created an atmosphere of "institutional legitimacy" for the universities, helped provide a substantial amount of work to the unemployed, and produced a significant amount of financial investments by the U.S. government. Practically, the present study offers the subsequent information as rhetorical work or as a resource for museums on and off campuses for the purpose of commercial gain, marketing, and cultivating the next generation of college football fans.

Keywords: New Deal programs, financing, stadiums, rhetorical work

Previous research by a variety of scholars (e.g., Hill et al., 2012; Howard, 2018; Johnson et al., 2016; Kohe, 2018; Phillips, 2012; Ramshaw, 2017, 2019) provided significant and substantial information about sport halls of fame and museums including those offered at college institutions or focused on specific sports. Of note, these works collectively discussed their typologies (e.g., academic, community, corporate, and vernacular) and highlighted their locations as stand-alone structures or as incorporated into sport facilities and factories (Howard, 2018; Johnson, 2016; Phillips, 2012). Next, these scholars recognized them as important vehicles to educate visitors about public life and cultural history at local, regional, or national levels (Howard, 2018). Moreover, they showed public memory is often influenced by sport and its venues to help people understand the emergence of society and how people shape their collective and potential individual identity (Hill et al., 2012; Ramshaw, 2017).



Corporate sport museums, like the College Football Hall of Fame, employ full-time personnel to manage the facility and promote the products and services it provides visitors through rhetorical work (Phillips, 2012). Rhetorical work is the “skillful use of language to elicit the help they [e.g., organizations] need . . . to build greater or lesser support” toward consensus through the presentation of “a particular version or rendition of a topic or series of events” (Foster et al., 2015, p. 154). Importantly, rhetorical work includes the development of displays, collecting of or payment for research, and offering of educational services that may talk about their sport’s contributions to the national or regional public good (Kohe, 2018; Phillips, 2012; Ramshaw, 2017). Further, the overall emphasis of corporate sport museums and halls of fame and their rhetorical work is to create a favorable image of the organization or sport and to cultivate or attract sponsors or partners to provide financial support through celebrations of past players, teams, and when possible public history (Howard, 2018; Johnson, 2016; Phillips, 2012).

Notably, Johnson (2016, p. 320) situated college sport halls of fame as valuable “cultural sites for education, community engagement, and a source of inspiration for the next generation” of fans and campus or community visitors. Furthermore, of particular interest to the present study, Phillips (2012) mentioned that many colleges and college sports in the United States strategically developed their own sport halls of fame through rhetorical work specifically focused on college football to promote their institution and provide heritage education, revenue, and tourism opportunities (Hill et al., 2012; Kohe, 2018; Ramshaw, 2017, 2019).

With respect to these points, Phillips (2012) emphasized corporate museums and halls of fame and their rhetorical work as often organized through assistance from academic sources. Moreover, it is not uncommon for many corporate sport halls of fame and museums to actively serve as repositories or archives for sport researchers (Kohe, 2018; Ramshaw, 2019; Seifried & Novicevic, 2015). This is accepted practice because the products that emanate from scholarly research often help to create the aforementioned commercial displays, tours, and formal education programming sport halls of fame and museums offer (Ramshaw, 2017; Kohe, 2018).

Kent Stephens and Jeremy Swick, historians and curators of the College Football Hall of Fame, verified such a conclusion by arguing academic sources are important to them in their rhetorical work to organize displays and explain how the past impacts or shapes our everyday reality, behavior, and engagement with one another (personal communication, January 24, 2022). Stephens and Swick also advocated for the need of their rhetorical work to engage in public history studies on college football (personal communication, January 24, 2022). Next, Stephens and Swick suggested that the College Football Hall of Fame and other sport halls of fame would be specially interested in research on the interaction between stadium histories and public history because stadia are great sources of socialization, engagement, and representatives of collective identities (personal communication, January 24, 2022). One topic they mentioned as an underexplored public history topic they feel could produce commercially attractive rhetorical work concerns the impact of New Deal

era programs on college football and specifically stadium construction (Stephens & Swick, personal communication, January 24, 2022).

New Deal programs emerged during the Great Depression of the 1930s to help the United States recover economically and emotionally as unemployment soared and both manufacturing and wages declined (Darby, 1976; Mathy, 2016). New Deal programs provided two forms of financial assistance to individuals and communities (i.e., work relief and direct relief). Work relief often involved the construction of public works projects through the provision of labor while direct relief required no actual reciprocation in the form of labor (Myers, 1936; Neumann et al., 2010). The goal of both relief approaches was to help people survive, promote gifts or donations, and to stimulate spending in the economy (Myers, 1936).

Interestingly, New Deal programs helped preserve college sport throughout the United States through various work relief projects focused on stadium development (Seifried, 2016; Seifried et al., 2016, 2020). However, this phenomenon has not been adequately communicated to the public or researched. Such a fact is compelling for several reasons as rhetorical work. First, many New Deal stadia still provide architectural significance to schools and represent the commercialization of universities with respect to brand image and awareness, cultivation of alumni relationships, and the development of an attractive institutional environment (Ingrassia, 2012; Leighninger, 1996; Tutka & Seifried, 2020; Watterson, 2002). Second, complimenting the latter point, New Deal stadia serve as important social anchors for their communities and university fan nations. For instance, New Deal stadia support their fan nations through activities such as tailgating and social engagement (e.g., dialoging, cheering, and singing). Collectively, such activity promotes a unique campus spirit for each institution and develops or maintains “social capital, identity (group or individual), and/or social networks” (Seifried & Clopton, 2013, p. 50). This point is further substantiated by the frequent use of stadia related images and videos to help promote institutions and the active use of stadia on campus tours (Stephens & Swick, personal communication, January 24, 2022).

Third, as a college football history issue, it would be interesting to understand just how much money the federal government provided stadia and which schools or communities took advantage of these opportunities (Stephens & Swick, personal communication, January 24, 2022). Unveiling information about the history of New Deal programs and their connections to college sport stadia could be important items for the rhetorical work of retelling of institutional and community histories (Stephens & Swick, personal communication, January 24, 2022).

Since there has never been an organized scholarly account of New Deal spending programs on college football stadia, the present study seeks to understand more about their contribution to college football by exploring and providing answers to the following research questions: 1) What New Deal programs (i.e., 1933-1942) are connected to college football stadia construction; 2) What regions took advantage of these programs to support the development of their football product; and 3) How can any differences found between regions and New Deal programs be explained?

To complete this study, we focused on learning more about the history and funding of college stadium construction at institutions within the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Division I, which includes both the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and Football Championship Subdivision (FCS). From a practical perspective, the present study offers the subsequent information as rhetorical work or as a resource for a corporate sport museum like the College Football Hall of Fame and those organized on individual university campuses for the purpose of commercial gain, marketing, and cultivating the next generation of fans.

Rhetorical Work Part 1: Historical Background on New Deal Programs

The first official response of the U.S. government to address the burgeoning devastation brought on by the Depression occurred in late 1930 when President Herbert Hoover created an Emergency Committee for Employment- ECE (U.S. Federal Works, 1947). Initially, this committee aimed to help state and local relief efforts through a call for individuals and businesses to improve their properties and to give people short-term/temporary jobs in the process (i.e., work relief). Unfortunately, unemployment continued to grow over the course of 1930 from 4 million to 7 million so the ECE was replaced by the President's Organization on Unemployment and Relief in 1931, which similarly encouraged state and local governments to help create work relief activities (U.S. Federal Works, 1947).

Neither initiative decreased unemployment in an effective way; thus, in 1932, the federal government developed the Emergency Relief and Construction Act (ERCA). Title I of the ERCA made \$300 million available to states and municipalities that declared they could not provide relief from their own resources. This was the U.S. government's first formal effort to offer federal monies for construction projects and work relief. The monies were provided based on promised repayments and facilitated through the development of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), which offered low-interest loans to those engaged in work relief efforts (Barber, 1988). The RFC repayment promises were often backed by bonds developed by institutions and/or states and communities (U.S. Federal Works, 1947). Although the \$300 million was distributed fairly quickly and primarily to the "hard hit areas of the nation", it was apparent more governmental stimulus was needed (U.S. Federal Works, 1947, p. 2). For instance, despite the fact that nearly 1 million received temporary work by mid-1932, unemployment continued to soar to 11 million by the start of winter 1933 and many state governments and local municipalities became bankrupt (U.S. Federal Works, 1947).

The U.S. Congress responded to bankruptcy claims by creating the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) in May of 1933 and installing Harry Hopkins as its leader. With similar goals to provide federal funds to state and subsequently municipal entities for work relief, various public works projects completed through 1935 received monies under the administrative supervision of FERA. While the RFC delivered in total about \$500 million in funding when

ending in 1933, half of the initial FERA appropriation was originally contingent on matching monies provided by states and/or municipalities (U.S. Congress, 1933). In this case, one federal dollar required three dollars of public money from states and/or municipalities (Davidson, 1983). The other half of the initial FERA appropriation was made available to states financially unable to meet the match requirement. Distribution of the funds was contingent upon eligibility and since there was no federal infrastructure or supervisory organization in the early years after the passing of the FERA, state and local authorities managed projects and distributed work payments after receiving federal funds (Davidson, 1983; U.S. Federal Works, 1947).

It appears FERA was initially reactive, often supporting small-scale renovation projects that could provide immediate help to unemployed in various communities (Van West, 1994). Yet, FERA also created the Civil Works Administration (CWA) in 1933 to employ individuals on labor-heavy public work projects (Leighninger, 1996). The CWA often used the same personnel but unlike FERA, the CWA was the first true federal program, in that CWA funds required more government supervision on projects than its predecessors to make certain federal monies were being used appropriately. This was particularly important for the federal government because they accounted for over 90% of funding for the \$951 million in expenditures of approved CWA projects (U.S. Federal Works, 1947; Wong, 1998).

Like the Federal Emergency Relief Act, the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) also emerged in 1933 and under Title II established the Public Works Administration (PWA). Led initially by Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, the PWA required that states applying for federal monies also accept control from federal officials (Ickes, 1948). Furthermore, the PWA expected that proposed constructions “make lasting contributions to the public” through socially useful buildings and programs (Van West, 1994, p. 130). Section 202 outlined that the PWA would support programs intended to help with the “construction, repair, and improvement of public highways and parkways, public buildings, and any publicly owned instrumentalities and facilities” (Additional public works appropriations, 1934, p. 2).

Regarding the concept of accepting government supervision, the PWA and other federal funding programs, as lender or financier, sent engineers and/or representatives to building sites to make certain projects were built according to the submitted plans (Hays, 2018). Next, PWA inspectors examined budget expenditures to ascertain if contractors were paying fair wages and if materials were adequately purchased, without suspicion of unsavory profiteering (Hays, 2018). Interestingly, the assessment of construction results, fair wages, and material purchasing was not dependent on a national standard but one that likely changed based on evolving local or regional expectations and market conditions (Fishback, 2018).

The positive outcomes intended from the PWA did not quite make the impact many believed would happen. For instance, the PWA initially required applicants to support 55% of necessary funds against the federal government’s 45% match for construction (Montgomery, 1971). The poor economic and/or financial condition of many schools and communities, particularly in the South, made the pursuit of PWA funds generally challenging for most universities and communities. Next, the

frequent complexity of large-scale PWA projects was problematic. In particular, PWA projects often required substantial technical planning, relied less on man power, and used heavy expensive equipment to complete projects (Clarke, 1996; Davidson, 1983; Leighninger, 1996; Wong, 1998). Many large public works within the PWA also required reliance on many skilled workers all of which limited the number of employable workers in comparison to smaller-scale projects (Davidson, 1983; Leighninger, 1996).

FERA's director, Harry Hopkins, pushed to expand the relief capacity of the federal government and to simultaneously reduce the control of local sponsors through calls for bigger public works projects like that offered by the PWA. Hopkins also importantly called for more approval of smaller-scale temporary work projects (Van West, 1994). Agreement from other contemporaries eventually compelled approval of smaller-scale building projects by the PWA but also the development of the Works Progress/Projects Administration (WPA) in May of 1935 after Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 7034. Assigning Hopkins as lead administrator, the WPA aimed to provide emergency work relief through projects that could employ as many people as possible (McJimsey, 1987). Like its predecessors, WPA projects also had to be useful to the public but they required sponsorship from local groups or municipalities and involved Roosevelt's final approval before funds were allocated (Howard, 1943; McJimsey, 1987). In this, Davidson (1983) highlighted the WPA required the federal government to work cooperatively with state, county, and municipal governments during planning, approval, and funding.

Expectedly, because WPA projects were not quite as complicated or as large-scale as PWA projects, WPA applicants frequently found success in procuring federal monies to finance their constructions (new or renovations). Furthermore, WPA allocations assumed, on average, about 80% of total project costs (USWPA, 1936). As smaller public works less dependent on mechanical equipment and more likely to employ unskilled laborers or semi-skilled workers, the WPA provided work relief for roughly 8.5 million persons in the United States (Howard, 1943).

Public sentiment or opinion often facilitated proposals and the development of various building projects like sport stadia (Ingrassia, 2012). Although reducing unemployment was the basic priority, there was interest in projects that could evoke "individual pride derived from useful work" and capable of improving or addressing the culture of American society (Leighninger, 1996, p. 226). Work relief on stadia and other sport-related projects provided individuals with self-respect while also reinforcing or developing skill sets and work habits (Davidson, 1983). Moreover, it was promoted that such work relief helped the country reinforce inherent or cultivate innate work ethics present in each American citizen (Leighninger, 1996).

Rhetorical Work Part 2: The Case for Football Stadia Investments during the Depression

American football started on Eastern college and university campuses before the 1860s through spontaneous class competitions (Ingrassia, 2012). The earliest

campus fields were simple open grounds and frequently incapable of producing gate receipts; therefore, many schools sought out professional sport facilities (e.g., cricket, baseball, horse racing) in larger population centers in their region (Lewis, 1965, 1973; Watterson, 2002).

Continuing and burgeoning media attention and financial successes over the 1870s and 1880s eventually prompted many institutions to develop and expand or enclose on-campus athletic grounds during the end of the century. This occurred so that schools could avoid “paying rental fees and could secure a greater portion of the gate receipts, the only source of revenue being produced at this time” (Tutka & Seifried, 2020, p. 321). All new construction and renovations used wood and emerged primarily throughout Eastern and Midwestern areas of the United States with less activity in the South and West (Ingrassia, 2012; Tutka & Seifried, 2020). Expansion of these campus athletic grounds served to accommodate larger enrollments and alumni attracted to the spectacle of football but recruited to provide gifts to their alma mater, both athletic and academic (Ingrassia, 2012; Watterson 2002).

Interestingly, the size of these temporary wooden structures failed to capitalize on the popularity of intercollegiate football so gate receipts were limited before the turn of the century (Watterson, 2002). To capitalize on the possibility of increased gate receipts, Harvard built the first large-scale (i.e., 30,000 seats) reinforced concrete and steel venue (i.e., Harvard Stadium) in 1903. Costing \$300,000 (i.e., \$9,177,102 in 2021), the new facility was financed through alumni gifts totaling \$100,000 and loans based on promised future gate receipts (Ingrassia, 2012; Lewis, 1965, 1973). Schools in the East (e.g., Syracuse, Yale, Princeton, etc.) were generally first to follow Harvard with construction and financing of their own permanent stadia. However, only those schools with more resources (e.g., alumni, community entrepreneurs, and students) were capable of producing large gate receipts and/or the gifts necessary to build new venues.

After World War I, permanent stadium construction boomed in the United States when schools developed stadia as war memorials and sought to use those buildings to legitimize their place as an institution of higher education (Schmidt, 2007). Specifically, Tutka and Seifried (2020) found 58 new stadiums built and 67 renovations took place between 1920 and 1929. Like the East, many Midwest and some Western schools, in larger population centers, developed their own massive concrete and reinforced steel venues financed through alumni gifts and/or bonds based on future gate receipts (Tutka & Seifried, 2020). New stadia in the South and most Western states were substantially smaller on average (i.e., under 15,000-seat capacity) as their institutional enrollments, local populations and economies, and alumni bases were smaller. Yet, all were strategically built well beyond the size of institutional enrollments to capitalize on the ascending popularity of football, growing economy, and to promote schools as legitimate through not only the size and scale of those venues but through the spectacles and spirit (e.g., play, bands, cheering) they offered or engendered (Ingrassia, 2012; Smith, 2008).

Football was seen as a legitimizing agent on college campuses and stadiums became icons before the end of the 1920s capable of representing the importance

of a university and serving as social anchors for their fan nation comprised of students, alumni, and local townsfolk (Smith, 2008). In support of this position, Big Ten Conference Commissioner John L. Griffith proclaimed, when conference members Michigan, Ohio State, Illinois, and Minnesota were all constructing massive sport stadia during the 1920s, that building such structures were justifiable since they helped to reinforce a preferred standard of living in the United States (Austin, 2000).

It seems as though the amount of stadium construction during the first 30 years of the 20th century combined with the building boom of the 1920s and decreased tax revenues produced by the Depression, which meant that subsequent stadium construction would be unlikely in the 1930s; however, this was not the case for several reasons. First, President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945) enjoyed spectating mass sports like football as an adult suggesting “sport made life more enjoyable” and was a valuable investment for the government and American culture (Davidson, 1983, p. 114). As proof of Roosevelt’s liking of football, it was widely known that he joined the school newspaper (i.e., *Crimson*) as an editor shortly after beginning his studies at Harvard University (Freidel, 1952). Often writing columns on the exploits of the football team, Roosevelt wrote to incoming freshman that they should stay active supporting the school through various activities such as “athletics . . . and athletic managements,” among other types of work (Roosevelt, 1950, p. 503). Roosevelt also did not just talk about supporting athletics; he served as a cheer or yell-leader and often reflected on his time at Harvard football games as evidence that people could come together to do great things through sport (Rosenman, 1938).

Second, although it had its detractors before the 1930s, most advocates and even opponents of competitive sport would recognize it as important for developing a unique spirit of an institution that schools could use to help retain students and promote their brand (Ingrassia, 2012). Within this point, historian Ronald Smith (1990) convincingly suggested that the United States, because of its melting pot origins, almost immediately saw intercollegiate sport as commercial or professionalized. Alumni were also quite active following and supporting their institutions via the offering of intercollegiate sport competitions. As an example, David E. Ross, a member of Purdue University’s Board of Regents, delivered a speech in October 1931 to the Association of Governing Boards of State Universities and Allied Institutions citing that alumni often “point with pride to stadia . . . as the acme of perfection in the Alma Mater” (Austin, 2000, p. 258).

Third, it should be noted that the interest in supporting athletic competition in the United States and thus sport facilities was bi-partisan. Both Republicans and Democrats viewed athletic competition as capable of developing or engendering important personal characteristics that were important to capitalism along with regional and national pride (Austin, 2000; Wong, 1998). Betts (1974) also concluded the federal government was attracted to support the construction and renovation of stadia to establish legacies of democracy. Moreover, some suggest that New Deal programs helped to protect the “bourgeois class under an industrial capitalist economy” (Wong, 1998, p. 174).

Fourth and finally, New Deal programs served to strengthen the economic system and consumerism generally in the United States through the various expenditures or

investments to employ individuals without work on public works projects (Austin, 2000; Wong, 1998). Sport facilities like stadia were identified as smart investments for community officials, university administrators, and New Deal program assessors because of their long-term value and connections to the aims and goals of the various programs. More specifically, sport facilities would host and entertain thousands to potentially millions of visitors over their lifetime, which was expected to be 50 to 60 years (Leighninger, 1996; Raji & Chester, 2017). Next, stadia offered opportunity, through their events, for the building and maintaining of community cohesion, identity, and interaction amongst groups or engagement with local businesses to encourage consumer spending (Leighninger, 1996). Lastly, stadiums were desirable projects because the size and scope of those venues produced many construction jobs and opinions that they enhanced permanent job creation (e.g., event management, concessions, facility maintenance, etc.) to support the subsequent activities they would hold after their development (Raji & Chester, 2017; USWPA, 1936). This may be why Roosevelt was so publicly recognized as providing final approval for so many stadia projects (Craig et al., 1977).

Method

To address the aforementioned research questions, the present study began by identifying projects completed as part of the New Deal spending through various primary and secondary sources available. As a baseline, an initial list of college football stadium construction projects was assembled from livingnewdeal.org and stadium-connection.org. From these lists, projects were limited to college stadium construction involving the NCAA's Division I FBS and FCS subdivisions.

Following other scholarship that previously outlined various steps to be taken on sport-focused historical research (e.g., Seifried, 2010, 2017), multiple primary sources were gathered. Primary sources used for the current research included items like student and local newspapers, organizational reports/memorandums, and letters of correspondence. Many of these items were collected from archival research conducted at institutions (n=15), reviews of digital collections offered by Division I institutions, and databases such as Google and HathiTrust Digital, among others. Multiple secondary sources were also referenced to gain additional information about various investments made into those properties. As an example, Google Scholar, SportDiscus, and Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals among others were used to identify funding information. Finally, multiple reports published by the U.S. government and various New Deal programs were accessed regarding stadia projects. Overall, using multiple and different primary and secondary sources provided the present study with factual accounts of facilities that was corroborated to reduce the emergence of dissonant data (Seifried et al., 2019).

To facilitate an accurate review, an internal and external source criticism was completed to ascertain the reliability and authenticity of the collected sources. An internal source criticism asked pertinent questions about the authority, perspective, and trustworthiness of the document author (Seifried, 2010, 2017). Specifically, we asked if the authors had any specific skill, experience, and reputation to research and

generate conclusions about the topic at hand or if there is any bias present. An external source criticism is concerned with identifying available evidence of the origin of the document as well as the time and place the document was produced (Seifried, 2010, 2017). It is also important to determine the intended audience, purpose of the document, and the environmental conditions from which the document was created (Seifried, 2010, 2017). These were all considered and analyzed during this process.

Next, we attempted to procure sources created within the timeframe of the study. Kohe (2018) similarly emphasized the need to situate information about the construction and renovation of sport facilities into their cultural period. To assist this process, we worked with university archivists and/or special collections faculty and used finding aids or document catalogs they provided because they serves as a critical “paradigmatic [. . .] disciplinary marker” for historical-based works (King, 2012, p. 13).

The final step in the present historical research process entailed data analysis and interpretation. To organize information, we developed a spreadsheet to record data on the New Deal stadia projects. Specifically, we recorded information for: facility name, location (i.e., city, state, region), cost (i.e., real and nominal), school connection, construction type (i.e., new or renovation), federal program type (i.e., FERA, RFC, WPA, CWA, or PWA), federal contribution (i.e., real and nominal), and whether the facility is currently active or defunct. Regarding renovation, we were only interested in identifying major projects. Therefore, we followed the Energy Efficiency’s (2010) description of major renovations as those projects that change a venue’s layout and/or substantially upgrade its services and conditions for attendees, participants, and employees or organizational partners (e.g., media). Notably, this process allowed us to identify and establish relationships between collected data, triangulate information, and recognize overarching themes, connections, inferences, and patterns. Lastly, from this spreadsheet and other information collected, emerging themes and conclusions were drawn about the importance of New Deal funding in the development of NCAA Division I stadia.

Results and Discussion

During the period from 1933 thru 1942, the present research found evidence of 79 stadium construction projects completed with support from FERA (n=2), RFC (n=1), WPA (n=53), CWA (n=2), and/or PWA (n=23). Three projects received funding from two federal programs. Of these projects, 43 were new constructions and 36 were renovations. The current study also discovered government expenditures for 77 projects and in total and on average Division I stadia construction cost \$16,042,403 (i.e., \$307,528,944 in 2021) and \$208,343 (i.e., \$3,993,882 in 2021) respectively. Federal funding accounted for 71% of these expenditures and notably 39 are now defunct.

Regarding Division I status, the present research discovered 18 projects were for current FCS schools exclusively while 51 projects served current FBS institutions. Next, the current study discovered projects were approved throughout the U.S. with

Division I universities or colleges in 31 states receiving federal assistance. Within this point, the states of Alabama, California, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, and Texas each received four or more rewards. From a regional perspective, we found that most construction projects occurred in the South (n=43). This region was followed by the West (n=19), Midwest (n=13), and East (n=4). Next, it should be noted that most projects were generally on campus but several were also off-campus or at locales considered to be neutral sites (n=10), used by multiple Division I (i.e., FBS and/or FCS) programs annually (Table 1).

Finally, of the projects, new constructions cost in total roughly \$12 million (i.e., \$223 million in 2021) and averaged about \$264,467 (i.e., \$11.15 million). In comparison, renovations accounted for almost \$4 million in spending (i.e., \$85 million in 2021) and on average each project cost about \$133,511 (i.e., \$2.571 million in 2021). Federal investments represented approximately 73% for new construction and 69% of the cost for renovations.

Table 1

New Deal Project Location, Type of Construction, and Current Status

School	City	State	Stadium	Year
NC State	Raleigh	NC	Riddick Stadium	1933
San Jose State	San Jose	CA	Spartan Stadium	1933
South Carolina	Columbia	SC	Columbia Municipal Stadium	1934
NC State	Raleigh	NC	Riddick Stadium	1935
Multiple	Jackson	MS	Jackson State Fairgrounds	1935
William and Mary	Williamsburg	VA	Cary Field	1935
Colorado	Boulder	CO	Colorado Stadium	1936
Multiple	Pasadena	CA	Rose Bowl	1936
Multiple	Orlando	FL	Citrus Bowl Stadium	1936
Toledo	Toledo	OH	Glass Bowl Stadium	1936
Baylor	Waco	TX	Municipal Stadium	1936
ODU	Norfolk	VA	Foreman Field	1936
Cincinnati	Cincinnati	OH	Nippert Stadium	1936
NC State	Raleigh	NC	Riddick Stadium	1936
Texas Tech	Lubbock	TX	Tech Field	1936
Washington State	Pullman	WA	Rogers Field	1936
Michigan State	East Lansing	MI	Macklin Field	1936
SDSU	San Diego	CA	Aztec Bowl	1936
Arizona State	Tempe	AZ	Goodwin Stadium	1936
Multiple	Charlotte	NC	American Legion Memorial Stadium	1936

Multiple	Birmingham	AL	Legion Field	1936
Arkansas	Little Rock	AR	Little Rock High School Stadium	1936
Purdue	West Lafayette	IN	Ross-Ade Stadium	1936
New Hampshire	Durham	NH	Lewis Fields	1936
Furman	Greenville	SC	Sirrine Stadium	1936
Eastern Kentucky	Richmond	KY	Hangar Stadium	1936
Idaho State	Pocatello	ID	Spud Bowl	1936
LSU	Baton Rouge	LA	Tiger Stadium	1936
South Carolina	Columbia	SC	Carolina Stadium	1937
Tulane	New Orleans	LA	Tulane Stadium	1937
Kentucky	Lexington	KY	McLean Stadium	1937
Washington	Seattle	WA	Husky Stadium	1937
Alabama	Tuscaloosa	AL	Denny Stadium	1937
Memphis	Memphis	TN	Crump Stadium	1937
Miami	Miami	FL	Burdine Stadium	1937
Buffalo	Buffalo	NY	Roesch Memorial Stadium	1937
Bowling Green	Bowling Green	OH	University Stadium	1937
Tennessee State	Nashville	TN	University Athletic Field	1937
Southeastern	Hammond	LA	Strawberry Stadium	1937
Morgan State	Baltimore	MD	Hughes Stadium	1937
Idaho	Moscow	ID	Neale Stadium	1937
Arkansas	Fayetteville	AR	University Stadium	1938
Georgia Tech	Atlanta	GA	Grant Field	1938
Mississippi State	Starkville	MS	Davis Wade Stadium	1938
Southern Miss.	Hattiesburg	MS	Faulkner Field	1938
Washington	Seattle	WA	Husky Stadium	1938
Florida	Gainesville	FL	Florida Field	1938
Tennessee	Knoxville	TN	Shields-Watkins Field	1938
Rutgers	New Brunswick	NJ	Rutgers Stadium	1938
UTEP	El Paso	TX	Sun Bowl	1938
Multiple	Oklahoma City	OK	Taft Stadium	1938
Arizona	Tucson	AZ	Arizona Stadium	1938
Southern Illinois	Carbondale	IL	McAndrew Stadium	1938
North Dakota State	Fargo	ND	Dacotah Field II	1938
Sam Houston State	Huntsville	TX	Pritchett Field	1938

Auburn	Auburn	AL	Auburn Stadium	1939
Western Michigan	Kalamazoo	MI	Waldo Stadium	1939
Southern	Baton Rouge	LA	University Stadium	1939
Montana	Missoula	MT	Dornblaser Field	1939
Northwestern State	Natchitoches	LA	Demon Stadium	1939
Tennessee	Knoxville	TN	Shields-Watkins Field	1940
Wake Forest	Winston Salem	NC	Groves Stadium	1940
Multiple	Lodi	CA	Lodi Grape Bowl	1940
Akron	Akron	OH	Rubber Bowl	1940
Fresno State	Fresno	CA	Ratcliffe Stadium	1940
Multiple	San Antonio	TX	Alamo Stadium	1940
Arizona State	Tempe	AZ	Goodwin Stadium	1940
Auburn	Auburn	AL	Auburn Stadium	1940
Boise State	Boise	ID	College Field	1940
Kent State	Kent	OH	Memorial Stadium	1940
Louisiana-Lafayette	Lafayette	LA	McNapsy Stadium	1940
Wisconsin	Madison	WI	Camp Randall Stadium	1940
New Mexico	Albuquerque	NM	Zimmerman Field	1940
Alabama State	Normal	AL	Hornet Stadium	1940
Ole Miss	Oxford	MS	Vaught-Hemingway Stadium	1941
Multiple	Oklahoma City	OK	Taft Stadium	1941
Stetson	DeLand	FL	DeLand Municipal Stadium	1941
Southwest Missouri State	Springfield	MO	Southwest Missouri State Stadium	1941
Houston	Houston	TX	Public School Stadium	1942

Below, three main themes that emanate from the New Deal program awards are discussed to answer the previously established research questions. First, regional differences are explained. Second, the main types of innovations or constructions completed are recognized and rationalized with respect to New Deal approval. Third, differences amongst New Deal program are identified and reasoned.

Regional Differences

With respect to region, the present study found several items to discuss. First, the results show a lack of New Deal monies provided to stadia in the East. Based on the aforementioned information, we rationalize schools and towns in this part of the country were already significantly more advanced in construction (Ingrassia, 2012). Again, the first reinforced steel and concrete stadiums initially emerged in the East,

followed shortly by permanent stadia in the Midwest, the second smallest region accounting for New Deal monies. Generally, college stadia in both the East and Midwest were already substantially larger than those produced by peer institutions in the South and West before the 1930s (Tutka & Seifried, 2020). Their larger student enrollments, corresponding alumni bases, and local populations typically compelled their new permanent facilities to surface so that they could take advantage of the interest in college football and potentially accommodate or cultivate new growth in the sport and their institution.

The collection of larger gate receipts undoubtedly motivated the development of permanent facilities because with capacities bigger than their predecessors more revenues could be produced for the institution and athletic department. Alumni also viewed football stadia as a critical legitimacy marker for the “coming-of-age of their alma mater” (Miller, 1997, p. 293). Thus, stadia at higher education institutions needed to be large and permanent to communicate the largeness of its donors, alumni, and student enrollments. Western and Southern institutions and communities similarly sought to develop or expand their existing facilities built during the 1920s to help communicate their school or region was modern and legitimate (Downs et al., 2019; Gumprecht, 2003; Ingrassia, 2012). However, both were substantially smaller in capacity and accommodations before the 1930s. Thus, they were prompted to strategically search out for additional funding sources during the Depression to renovate or build new larger stadia as football continued to ascend in popularity.

Western Schools. Some Western schools on the Pacific Coast (e.g., University of California, University of Southern California, Stanford University, etc.) were quicker to improve their quality of play than others in the region. Therefore, they were viewed as legitimate institutions in part due their large permanent facilities (e.g., California Memorial Stadium, Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, and Stanford Stadium) and outstanding football performances in games like the annual Rose Bowl played in Pasadena, California from 1915-1941 (Tutka & Seifried, 2021). Other institutions in the region (e.g., San Jose State, University of Colorado, Texas Tech University, Washington State, Arizona State, etc.) eventually sought to emulate regional football powers and consequently New Deal investments to renovate or build new facilities. In the case of the West Coast, Yale University’s famous football coach, Walter Camp, helped justify such pursuits by suggesting that a “high grade of football is played at many institutions hundred and thousands of miles away from the northeast corner of the country” (Schmidt, 2007, p. 12). Moreover, as Albert Britt (1922, p. 154), writer for *Outing* proclaimed “The story of football is no longer a story of a few teams in the East, nor even of the East . . . Football pre-eminence may be on the Pacific coast.”

Southern Schools. Schmidt (2007) also presented a noticeable shift in the balance of power toward the West and later the South in the 1930s with the advancements in football performances by schools in that region. As evidence, from 1920 thru 1932, schools that would charter the Southeastern Conference produced 26 wins and four ties against peers in the East, Midwest, and West. Doyle (1994) further

validated the potential need to help Southern schools search for federal monies by suggesting that with the addition of thousands of seats to existing stadia or building new venues during the 1930s, Southern schools and communities, in particular, could challenge Eastern and Midwestern perspectives about their region. More specifically, Doyle (1994, p. 243-244) claimed “staging mass market sporting events in modern stadiums was a highly visible way to showcase the progressive urban society of the 20th century South” as it recovered from the American Civil War and Depression. Their smaller wooden facilities of a previous era relegated them as exhibitions for Eastern and Midwestern schools, limited their ability to schedule opponents, and diminished their reputations as schools and communities in the process (Perry, 1914). The technical skill of coaches and enthusiasm for football after World War I prompted new interests in sport investments to produce revenues, better publicize institutions, and to develop unique campus spirits Southern schools could promote to potential enrollees and/or retain existing ones (Lantz, 1939; Schmidt, 2007).

Neutral Sites. Many universities also made use of off-campus sport facilities and within larger population centers to produce revenues from their larger capacities. Generally located in urban areas, these facilities were attractive for several reasons. Beyond their larger capacity, institutions sought to play in these venues because they provided their schools with more publicity and exposure due to a greater media presence and population located in cities. Attempting to capitalize on the early success demonstrated by professional sport entrepreneurs leasing their venues in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the present study found several municipalities built (i.e., Lodi, CA; San Antonio, TX and Charlotte, NC) or renovated existing venues (e.g., Jackson, MS; Orlando, FL; and Birmingham, AL, etc.) to host sporting events. Further, they sought to host intercollegiate football games with many regional institutions in mind.

Waco Municipal Stadium (Waco, TX) and Alamo Stadium (San Antonio, TX) exist as two sample Texas stadia that were constructed and hosted several football events. In the case of Waco Municipal Stadium, that facility housed not only Baylor University for several years (1936-1949) but also local high school games weekly and state high school playoffs annually (Seifried et al., 2021). Alamo Stadium similarly supported local high school games but also annual intercollegiate rivalries such as Texas A&M versus Texas Tech from 1943 through 1950 and regular season contests that featured Baylor, the University of Tulsa, and other schools in the region (Domel, 2010).

Innovations

To further explain the changes taking place and use of New Deal programs, the present research argues innovation diffusion should be attributed, in part, to regional growth of sport stadia (Tutka & Seifried, 2020). Similar organizations, in this case Division I football programs and conference peers (e.g., Big Ten, Southeastern Conference, Southern Conference, Southwest Conference, Pacific Coast Conference, etc.), can be influenced by the neighborhood effect, where the likelihood of adopting

an innovation is higher for these organizations when they are geographically close or institutionally tied together (Tutka & Seifried, 2020). Within the innovation diffusion literature, researchers also discussed the neighborhood effect and its influence on the adoption of new technologies as well as knowledge transfer (Seifried et al., 2017). In the present study, New Deal programs helped new and renovated stadia embrace technological innovations such as reinforced steel and concrete, stadium lighting to host night contests, and radio within expanded press boxes.

Rationalization for New Deal lighting investments was important for a couple of reasons. First, night football games were rare before the 1930s with only a few Division I institutions (e.g., University of Cincinnati and Syracuse University) possessing lights before the decade. Subsequent drops in game attendance (i.e., 30% across the United States by 1933) prompted institutions to seek out novelties or reposition games to start times more attractive to potential attendees (Tunis, 1936; Watterson, 2002). Lights were a logical addition because they provided a novel spectacle (i.e., night football) and/or allowed people to attend games when they were not potentially searching for work. Second, the financial and attendance success enjoyed by Louisiana State University and other schools who previously installed lights encouraged several regional peers (e.g., University of Florida and University of Southern Mississippi) to follow suit and to beat the heat of the late summer. Likewise, many institutions out West (e.g., Arizona State University, Texas Tech University, and University of Washington) also incorporated light fixtures into their stadia during the decade using New Deal monies.

Radio similarly emerged as a substantial addition to sport stadia in the United States at this time because of the value it provided schools both publicly and financially (Oriard, 2001; O'Toole, 2013; Smith, 2001). Before the 1930s, few schools used radio to broadcast games for fear it would reduce attendance. However, as revenues from gate attendance decreased, schools and their affiliated conferences realized and sought out opportunities to sell the broadcast rights of their games by the mid-1930s (Oriard, 2001; Smith, 2001). Radio broadcasts accounted for thousands of dollars annually helping college sport survive and eventually flourish, evoking an attendance rebound toward the latter part of the decade (Smith, 2001). Radio also allowed alumni to stay connected, often encouraging them to provide gifts or to continue public support of their alma mater, which could also boost or maintain enrollments (Griffin, 1932; O'Toole, 2001).

The number of expanded press boxes to accommodate radio and newspaper personnel is also substantial within New Deal stadium construction. As some examples, the University of South Carolina not only benefitted from the construction of a new football stadium utilizing PWA money in 1934 but subsequently received WPA funds for a 1937 press box expansion project, which also included a new state-of-the-art sound system and a scoreboard (Seifried & Bolton, 2017). Elsewhere, the University of Washington's Husky Stadium also received a new press box courtesy of the WPA (Works Progress Administration, 1937), in addition to Cincinnati's Nippert Stadium obtaining PWA monies (Ohio Federal, 1936), among others.

Finally, concourses were either developed or expanded through New Deal programs to provide attendees with more amenities such as concessions and restrooms. With respect to such renovations, the Rose Bowl (Pasadena, CA) serves as an exemplar for the interest in concessions and restrooms. The Rose Bowl's renovation consisted of adding or rehabilitating seven concession stands and bathroom facilities to improve revenue production and fan comfort ("List of WPA," 1935). Next, New Deal monies also often went toward improving accommodations for participants through the construction or redevelopment of locker rooms and athletic training/medical space. As one example of this work, Riddick Stadium (Raleigh, NC) obtained WPA funding in 1936 to construct a new fieldhouse on the south end zone for players and game officials (North Carolina Emergency, 1936). Similarly, Louisiana State's Tiger Stadium (Baton Rouge, LA), University of Arkansas' Razorback Stadium (Fayetteville, AR), and the University of Tennessee's Neyland Stadium (Knoxville, TN) received funding for new seats, locker rooms, and interestingly dormitories that were incorporated into the seating and locker room additions, adding extra value to those construction projects (Seifried, 2016; Seifried et al., 2016, 2020).

New Deal Program Differences

Lastly, the current study reveals and explains differences between New Deal programs. As expected, there was little use of RFC, FERA, and CWA funds for sport stadia by Division I institutions or communities (Table 2). In the case of the RFC, those funds had to be repaid since they were interest-bearing loans. FERA required a rather large percentage commitment from schools or municipalities to acquire federal monies and CWA projects were often larger-scale suggesting that approval would be harder for smaller-scale stadia constructions and renovations. Expectedly, because unemployment continued to rise and the economy deteriorated, the RFC, FERA, and CWA programs were replaced by the PWA and WPA (Table 3).

Table 2
New Deal Funding Types, Investment, and % Contribution

New Deal Funding Type	Number of Projects	Nominal Cost	Real Cost (2021)	Nominal- Federal Contribution	Real- Federal Contribution-2021	% Contribution
RFC Total	1	\$53,554	\$1,117,672	\$53,554	\$1,117,672	100%
RFC Average		\$53,554	\$1,117,672	\$53,554	\$1,117,672	
FERA Total	1	\$30,000	\$585,300	\$30,000	\$585,207	100%
FERA Average		\$30,000	\$585,300	\$30,000	\$585,207	
Combined Programs Total	3	\$307,098	\$5,941,088	\$180,539	\$3,471,916	59%
Combined Programs Avg.		\$921,295	\$17,823,265	\$541,617	\$10,415,748	
WPA Total	50	\$234,812	\$4,484,103	\$184,767	\$3,527,580	71%
WPA Average		\$11,740,576	\$224,205,136	\$9,238,346	\$176,379,003	
PWA Total	22	\$3,296,978	\$63,797,570	\$1,959,054	\$37,980,084	72%
PWA Average		\$149,863	\$2,899,890	\$89,048	\$1,726,367	

Table 3
Yearly Funding Types

Year	# of Projects	Nominal Cost	Nominal-Federal Contribution
1933-1935	6	\$397,873	\$336,869
1936	23	\$4,208,391	\$3,091,467
1937	13	\$4,794,476	\$4,200,428
1938*	14	\$2,420,601	\$1,654,067
1939	5	\$586,879	\$316,036
1940*	14	\$2,613,873	\$1,487,286
1941-1942	5	\$1,020,310	\$736,418

*Contains one unavailable project cost

The push to develop these programs by notable individuals like Hopkins, Ickes, and Roosevelt among others helped position them as viable and attractive alternatives. PWA and WPA stadia projects were more frequently approved under those programs for several reasons. First, the size and scope of the stadium projects could put many people back to work and in a variety of positions. As one example, Louisiana State's 1936-1938 north end zone project to expand Tiger Stadium involved over 800 WPA workers that contributed about 265,983 man hours to compliment the 119,335 hours contributed by university workmen (Seifried, 2016). Elsewhere, we discovered some WPA or PWA projects were art-related. For instance, 60 WPA workers developed four ceramic tile murals at Alamo Stadium. As part of the WPA's Arts and Crafts Division, the "colorful glazed tile murals depict a century of local sports activities, ranging from rooster races to the district's football teams of 1940" (Alamo Stadium, 2011, p. 4).

Second, under the mission of the PWA and later the WPA, stadia were attractive projects to approve because they were socially useful buildings that could make lasting contributions to the interests of the general public through the events they provide and subsequent long-term job opportunities. More specifically, stadia construction projects were large and complicated enough to require not just a desirable number of temporary construction workers but also subsequent full-time employees to manage those facilities, events, and services they provided on a daily basis.

Third, the events stadia hosted were publicly attractive across the country and generally recognized as capable of bringing not just large groups of people together but also diverse groups of people to participate in the spirit-building exercises produced by football. To complement this, WPA projects also had to be sponsored by local groups or municipalities; thus, demonstrating genuine enthusiasm and/or pride and connection to not just accommodate attendees but also participants whether they were live or remote via radio.

Finally, the current study shows there is a rather large gap between the number of WPA projects approved versus the number of PWA projects. Initially, PWA projects

were approved based on their complexity and use of machinery. Thus, they relied less on general man power and more on skilled workmen (Clarke, 1996; Davidson, 1983; Leighninger, 1996; Wong, 1998). The WPA in contrast immediately supported smaller-scale projects that the PWA later began to approve as unemployment remained a problem. This might explain why of the 34 renovations discovered in the present study, 25 of them involved WPA funds.

Conclusion

The College Football Hall of Fame and other individual college or university corporate museums are regularly interested in designing educational and entertaining displays and exhibits through rhetorical work that features the interaction between sport and public history. To respond to this opportunity, the present study shows that one of the most important contributions made to the current landscape of college football occurred during the Great Depression through New Deal funding made available for stadia construction and renovation. Within this point, many athletic departments and municipalities across the United States understood the importance of football programs and sport facilities as a revenue generator, source for employment, beacon of legitimacy, and home for community or campus spirit. Evidence of this view is not only substantiated in the number of work relief projects approved during the Depression but also by looking at the amount of expenditures, number of workers, hours spent building sport stadia, and the length those buildings lasted for Division I institutions and their local communities.

The present study specifically examined New Deal era program investments used by Division I institutions of the NCAA. Within, we found notable and substantial regional differences and distinctions between New Deal programs. For instance, many Eastern and Midwestern schools were far ahead in construction and expansion of permanent venues in addition to possessing developed alumni bases and donor relationships, enabling them to better navigate the economic downturn of the Depression. Southern and most Western schools, on the contrary, were still building up their football programs during the 1930s; therefore, they found great relief from New Deal programs to help fund stadia projects when they otherwise would not have been able to afford such construction. With respect to program distinctions, WPA and PWA monies were more frequently used based on their mission and percent contributions toward new constructions or renovations. In this, RFC, FERA, and CWA required more contributions or repayment from awardees. The divergence between the WPA/PWA and RFC/FERA/CWA explains the amount of products pursued and awarded to the South and West who were generally poorer economically than communities and schools in the East and Midwest.

Next, we discovered awardees were able to justify their pursuit of New Deal monies for several reasons and that the federal government was interested in supporting a large percentage of new constructions and renovations. As an example, while football as a sport ascended in popularity and the quality of play improved, many schools or communities viewed larger venues as capable and necessary to

increase revenues for both athletics and the institution or community. Football and stadia were also promoted as legitimacy markers by applicants and institutions as they fought for potential enrollees and sought to satiate alumni concerns or beliefs. For communities and schools, stadiums also served as a tool to promote their modernity. In this, and beyond seating expansions, stadia were modified to improve conditions for various stakeholders such as fans and participants. Improving comfort, access, and communication capabilities appear as some of the most prominent motivators to add press boxes, radio technology, lights, concession stands, and restrooms. Finally, stadia were characterized as adding value to institutions through the exposure and campus or community spirit they provided. Moreover, they were large and complicated enough to put many people to work in skilled and unskilled work positions and were capable of instilling pride through the products/events they produced.

Future Areas of Research and Practical Implications

Lastly, the present study presents some future areas of research and practical implications that the College Football Hall of Fame and other individual college and university corporate sport museums should consider exploring. Furthermore, through the methods presented in the current work, we demonstrate how such work might be done. First, practically speaking, the current research demonstrates there are other outlets to support stadia funding beyond athletic associations, donors, and host institutions, common features of today funding sources (Tutka & Seifried, 2020). For instance, the federal and many state governments offer grants (e.g., <https://www.preservationdirectory.com/>) to renovate historic properties. Second, from a research perspective, this study shows New Deal projects facilitated the national sport culture of the United States and the development of municipal stadia. Municipal stadia emerged based on interests to support sport but also draw events and people to cities. It would be interesting to learn if New Deal era stadia and the outcomes (i.e., events and attendance) they produced impacted decisions by municipalities to financially support the construction of municipal facilities across the United States after World War II. Also known as the “cookie cutter era”, these facilities were also multi-purpose venues that aimed to offer many events (Seifried & Pastore, 2010).

With respect to effective rhetorical work, college sport museum and hall of fame managers should seek to establish connections between the past and present through well-developed and sequenced, psychologically engrossing, and physically engaging environments (Foster et al., 2015). In essence, these facility managers and organizers should craft messaging and engagement opportunities to help educate, facilitate interactions, and craft messages or realities they want visitors to accept. Such messaging should include strong narratives assisted through academic research in order to provide storylines featuring protagonists and compelling questions to call back individuals for future visits.

One particular question emanating from the present work suggests it would be interesting to study if New Deal programs helped support the construction and/or renovation of stadia for historically black colleges and universities (HBCU). This

could serve to compliment the exhibit on HBCUs the College Football Hall of Fame previously supports and the present study's focus on Division I schools. The Federal Works Agency (1940) articulated that the PWA and WPA were not racially discriminating programs with respect to the reviewing of proposals and the awarding of funds. However, that claim does not generally match reality as state and local authorities often influenced decisions on access and application decision-making processes (Davidson, 1983; Fishback, 2018). In particular, local politics in the Southern part of the United States prevented or discouraged applications, and a general lack of education about government programs and their own eligibility likely limited the number of proposals from HBCUs. The present research only found four HBCU stadia projects supported through New Deal programs that are current Division I members. HBCUs also compete at the Division II and III levels within the NCAA. Moreover, 112 HBCUs operated during the Depression.

Finally, recognizing the presence of Division II and III schools who also successfully procured New Deal era funds, it would be interesting to better understand any differences or similarities with respect to stadia produced by schools operating at those levels and the impact of New Deal funding. In particular, it would be compelling to see if there was a funding difference established between private and public schools in addition to the purposes of this work which focused on region and program type.

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