



Sports in Society: Issues & Controversies

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Sports Are Social Phenomena


- 'Y' Sports are related to the social and cultural contexts in which we live
- 'Y' Sports provide stories & images used to explain & evaluate these contexts
- 'Y' Sports provide a window into culture and society



SOCIOLOGY is a tool for studying sports in society

 **Sociology** provides useful

- Concepts
- Theories
- Research methods

 These tools enable us to “see” behavior as it connected with history, politics, economics, and social life



CULTURE

Consists of the “ways of life” people create in a group or society

⚡ These ways of life are created and changed as people interact with each other, as they come to terms with, and even struggle over how to

- *Do things and organize their lives*
- *Relate to each other*
- *Make sense out of their experiences*



Figure 1.1 People create sports, and people can change them. But not everyone agrees that changes are needed.

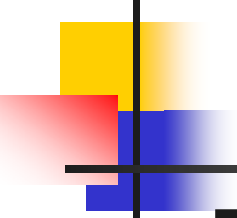


SOCIETY

A collection of people

- 👤 Living in a defined geographical territory
- 👤 United through
 - a political system
 - a shared sense of self-identification that distinguishes them from other people.

SOCIOLOGY Vs. **PSYCHOLOGY**



‡ **Psychologists** study behavior in terms of attributes & processes that exist inside individuals

‡ **Sociologists** study behavior in terms of the social conditions and cultural contexts in which people live their lives



Critical thinking about sports helps us

- ✎ Identify & understand social problems and social issues associated with sports
- ✎ Look beyond scores to see sports as social phenomena
- ✎ Make informed choices about sport participation and the place of sports in our lives
- ✎ Transform sports in progressive ways



SOCIOLOGY may lead to controversial recommendations

- ✧ **Sociological research** may produce findings that suggest changes in the organization of sports and the organization of social life
- ✧ Those who benefit from the status quo may be threatened by these research findings



Why study **sports** *as social phenomena?*

- ⤴ Sports activities and images are part of people's lives
- ⤴ Sports are connected with *ideologies* in society
 - i.e., the "viewpoints" that underlie people's feelings, thoughts, and actions
- ⤴ Sports are connected with major spheres of social life such as:
 - family, economy, media, politics, education, & religion



Ideologies

The sets of interrelated ideas that people use

- 'Y' To give meaning to the world
- 'Y' To make sense of the world
- 'Y' To identify what is important, right, and natural in that world



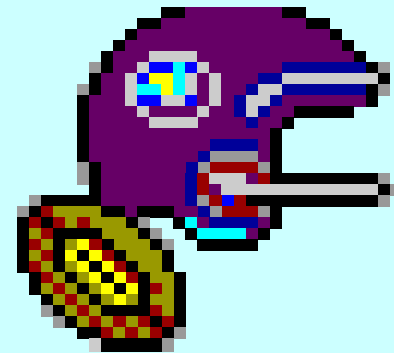
The characteristics of **Ideologies** are:

- ✧ **They** are never established “once and for all time”
- ✧ **They** emerge as people struggle over the meaning and organization of social life
- ✧ **They** are complex and sometimes inconsistent
- ✧ **They** change as power relationships change in society



“Dominant Ideology”

✧ Represents the perspectives and ideas favored by people who have power and influence in society



✧ **Dominant ideologies** serve the interests of people with power and influence



Gender Ideology

refers to

✧ A set of interrelated ideas about masculinity, femininity, and relationships between men and women

✧ ***Dominant Gender Ideology*** consists of prevailing notions of “common sense” about maleness and femaleness in a group or society



Racial Ideology

refers to

✧ A set of interrelated ideas that people use to give meaning to skin color and to evaluate people in terms of racial classifications

✧ ***Dominant Racial Ideology*** consists of prevailing ideas about the meanings of skin color and the characteristics of people classified in various racial categories



Why study **sports** *as social phenomena?*

⚽ Sports are connected with major spheres of social life

- Family
- Economy
- Media
- Politics
- Education
- Religion



Major Professional Organizations in the **Sociology of Sport** :

- ⚽ The International Sociology of Sport Association (*ISSA*)
- ⚽ The North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (*NASSS*)
- ⚽ The Sport Sociology Academy (*SSA*) in AAHPERD (*American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*)



Disagreements in the Sociology of Sport

⚽ Scholars in the field see themselves as

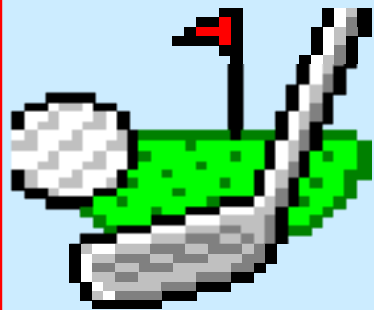
- Sport sociologists concerned with sport science issues
- Sociologists concerned with social and cultural issues

⚽ Scholars may see themselves as

- professional experts (interested in consulting and the application of knowledge to improve sports)
- critical sociologists (interested in social & cultural transformation), or
- knowledge builders (interested in using research to accumulate knowledge about social life)




SPORT Is Defined by Some Scholars As Activities That Are



 Physical

 Competitive

 Institutionalized

 Motivated by a combination of internal
& external rewards



Institutionalization Occurs When

- 👤 Rules become standardized
- 👤 Official agencies enforce rules
- 👤 Organizational & technical aspects of the activity become important
- 👤 Learning game skills becomes formalized



Play vs. Dramatic Spectacle

👤 **Play** involves expressive activity done for its own sake; it is often spontaneous and guided by informal, emergent norms

👤 **Dramatic Spectacle** involves performances to entertain an audience for the purpose of obtaining rewards

An **Alternative Approach** to Defining Sports:

Y Determine what activities are identified as **sports** in a society

Y Determine whose **sports** count most when it comes to obtaining support and resources





SPORTS are
contested activities

This means that there are struggles over:

- The meaning, purpose, & organization of sports
- Who will participate and the conditions under which sport participation occurs
- How sports will be sponsored, and what the reasons for sponsorship will be