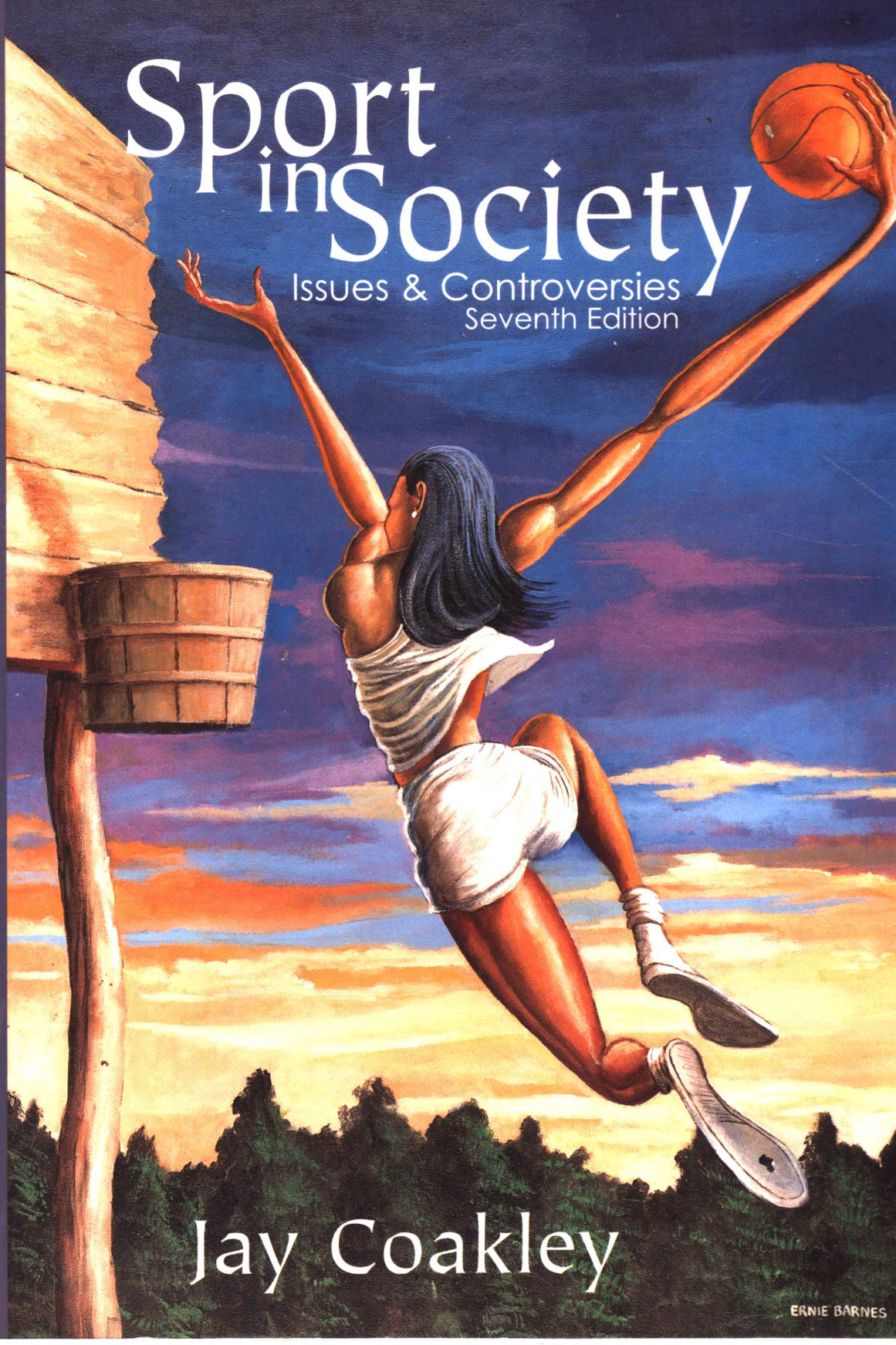
Sport in Society

Issues & Controversies

Seventh Edition



Jay Coakley

ERNIE BARNES

SPORT IN SOCIETY

Issues & Controversies

SEVENTH EDITION

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Preface

PURPOSE OF THE TEXT

The seventh edition of *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies* has a threefold purpose. First, it is designed to show students how sociology can be used to study sport in society. Second, it is written to encourage students to ask questions and think critically about sports as parts of social life. Third, it is organized to facilitate the use of published literature combined with the Internet and the World Wide Web to learn about sport in society.

I organize chapters around curiosity-arousing issues and questions and then discuss them in terms of recent research and theory in the sociology of sport. Although the concepts and source materials are not taken exclusively from sociology, discussions throughout the book are grounded in a sociological approach. Therefore, the emphasis is clearly on sports and sport-related behaviors as they occur in social and cultural contexts.

FOR WHOM IS IT WRITTEN?

Sport in Society is written for those taking their first look at sports as social phenomena. The content of each chapter is presented so it can be understood by beginning college students who have not taken other courses in sociology or sport science. Discussions of issues do not presume in-depth experiences in sports or a detailed knowledge of sport jargon and statistics. My goal is to push students to think more critically about sports and how sports are related to their social lives. I use concepts, theories, and research as tools that enable us to "dig into" sports as parts of culture and see them as *more* than activities that simply reflect the world in which we live.

Since the book is organized in terms of an issues approach, the content of many chapters is useful for those concerned with sport policies and program administration. My emphasis through the book is on making sports more democratic and making sport participation more accessible to all people.

CHANGES IN THE SEVENTH EDITION

This edition is a total revision of the previous edition; each chapter has been rewritten line-by-line. My goal is to clarify points and increase the ease of reading. I shortened chapters to make the book more usable during a standard semester. Integrating this edition with a new website for the book enabled me to cut material from the text and transfer it to the website.

All chapters are updated, and over half are reorganized in response to new research findings and new theoretical developments in the field. There are more than three hundred *new* references cited in this edition; most of them identify materials published since the sixth edition went to press in 1997.

A major challenge in doing this revision was determining what references and topics I would not include. The field has expanded to such an extent that this edition of *Sport in Society* is more of an introduction to the field than an overview of it. Because chapters are shorter and more concisely written, readers may want to use the website (www.mhhe.com/hper/physed/coakley_sport) to review chapter-by-chapter pages on the site.

Revision Themes and New Materials

This edition continues to emphasize socialization themes as well as the increasing organization, commercialization, and globalization of sports. The connection between sports and cultural ideology is more explicitly explained in this edition.

The chapter on theory (chapter 2) is more concise, so that readers can compare theories more easily and see how they are used to understand everyday social life. A section on figurational theory is included to reflect the impact of figurational research on the field. Summaries of studies using particular theoretical approaches are now found on the website.

The history and socialization chapters (chapters 3 and 4) are organized as they were in the previous edition, but they are updated and edited to read more smoothly. The chapter on youth sports (chapter 5), always a favorite of mine, is revised to reflect new questions and issues that I have heard from coaches and parents since 1997.

The chapters on deviance and violence (chapters 6 and 7) are rewritten to clarify the concept of positive deviance, now called "deviant overconformity," and to maintain conceptual consistency between the two chapters. The chapter on deviance contains new material on why the use of performance-enhancing substances is so prevalent among athletes today. Chapter 7 has been retitled "Violence in Sports" and is now organized around a more clearly sociological approach, with social psychological materials included on the website. Also, the topics of assault and male athletes' violence against women are given expanded attention and have been moved to this chapter.

The chapter on gender (chapter 8) is revised to recognize recent changes in the status of women's sports in many cultures. Included also is new material on gender ideology, homophobia, and the experiences of lesbian and gay athletes.

The chapter on race and ethnicity (chapter 9) includes new information on the concept of race and on the ways ethnicity is becoming increasingly significant in the social dynamics associated with sports around the world. The chapter provides an updated analysis of race-related, genetic factors and sport performance; a new "Reflect on Sport" section summarizes the search for "jumping genes" by "race scientists"; there is a discussion of Latinos in baseball; and there is new information on managing diversity in sports. Material on the history of racial desegregation in U.S. sports and on stacking has been included on the website to make room for material explaining why race and ethnicity are crucial issues in sports today.

The chapter on social class and class relations (chapter 10) has been completely rewritten, with a new emphasis on inequality. I've included new material on who has power in sports and how sports are used to transfer money from the public sector to the private sector of the economy. The chapter contains new analyses of the intersections of class, gender, and race/ethnicity in sports; a discussion of class segregation among sport fans in new luxury stadiums; updated information on social class and sport participation; and a new section on sport participation and social mobility.

The chapter on the economy (chapter 11) is rewritten to include new data and an expanded discussion of commercialization. A new "Reflect on Sport" section discusses professional wrestling as an extreme expression of commercialized sports.

The chapter on the media (chapter 12) includes new information about the Internet and about video games and virtual sports. There is new material on the connection between sports and the media and on the images and messages contained in media representations of sports.

The chapter on politics (chapter 13) includes new material on the political economy of global sports and political processes at local, national, and global levels. Material on politics in sports is updated with references to the Olympic scandals related to site selection processes.

The chapter on education (chapter 14) contains updated NCAA information and new material on the experiences of intercollegiate athletes. There are new data on gender equity and on economic issues in intercollegiate sports. A new "Reflect on Sport" section presents a discussion of the role played by sport participation in the

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status systems of U.S. high schools in what might be called the "post-Columbine" era.

The chapter on religion (chapter 15) includes updated information on sports and world religions. A new "Reflect on Sport" section presents a discussion of public prayers at public school sport events in the United States.

The chapter on the future (chapter 16) is updated and now includes a section on using theories to envision and promote changes in sports. This ties the final section of the book together with the theories introduced in chapter 2 and used throughout the revision.

Suggested Readings and New Website Resources

Each chapter is followed by updated references to relevant and interesting books, as well as to websites that may serve as useful sources of information about the topics raised in the chapters. The "Website Resources" section is a new feature of this edition, and I look forward to your feedback on how you used it and how it might be revised in the future to better meet your needs.

New Photographs and Cartoons

There are thirty-four new photos and thirty-three new cartoons in this edition. The use of photos, cartoons, figures, and tables has been carefully planned to visually break up the text and make reading more interesting. I've spent many weeks taking and selecting photos and reviewing cartoons directly related to the content of each chapter. I was especially lucky to meet Fred Eyers, a caricaturist who has a knack for capturing social issues in cartoon images. He did all the new cartoons for this edition. His drawings and captions reflect ideas from the text combined with his creative interpretations.

New Companion Online Learning Center

www.mhhe.com/hper/physed/coakley_sport is a new feature associated with the seventh edition of *Sport in Society*. The site contains general information about this edition, along with links to supplemental materials associated with each chapter. Those materials include:

- A downloadable PowerPoint® presentation
- Updated URLs for website resources
- Discussion issues and questions
- Group projects
- Materials from past editions that add depth and background to current chapter topics
- Brief editorial comments that call attention to current issues related to sport in society
- A message board enabling you to interact with other readers, respond to each other's questions, and provide information about sports as social phenomena in your locales and lives
- A link to PageOut to help create your own website.

ANCILLARIES

Instructor's Manual and Test Bank

An instructor's manual and test bank has been developed to assist those using *Sport in Society* in college courses. It includes the following:

- *Chapter outlines.* These provide a quick, overall view of the topics covered in each chapter. They are useful for organizing lectures, and they can be reproduced and given to students as study guides.
- *Test questions (multiple choice and true-false).* These questions have been designed to test the students' awareness of central points made in each chapter. They focus on ideas rather than single, isolated facts. For the instructor with large classes, these questions are useful for chapter quizzes, midterm tests, or final examinations.
- *Discussion/essay questions.* These questions can be used for tests or to generate classroom discussions. They are designed to encourage students to synthesize and apply materials in one or more of the sections in each chapter. None of the questions asks the students simply to list points or give definitions.

Computerized Test Bank

A computerized version of the test bank for the instructor's manual is available for both IBM and Macintosh to qualified adopters. This software provides a unique combination of user-friendly aids and enables the instructor to select, edit, delete, or add questions and to construct and print tests and answer keys.

Web Resources

MCGRAW-HILL'S HUMAN PERFORMANCE SUPERSITE The human performance supersite provides a wide variety of information for instructors and students, from text information to the latest technology. It includes professional organization, convention, and career information. Link to the online catalog to find the perfect text or ancillary for your course. Additionally, web links are also provided here for all our course offerings. Visit the website at www.mhhe.com/hper/physed/humanperformance

Additional features of the supersite include:

- *This Just In.* This link provides featured articles, related publications, web resources and more (updated monthly).
- *Faculty Support.* This links to PageOut, online supplements, Online Learning Centers, PowerWeb, and much more.
- *Student Success Center.* This helps students to locate new study skills, job hunting tips, and web links to assist in preparing for the job search and career development
- *Author Arena.* Contact our authors, visit their websites, and see our featured *Author of the Month* here.

***SPORT IN SOCIETY* HOMEPAGE** Developed specifically for the seventh edition of *Sport in Society*, a PowerPoint® presentation has been prepared and can be downloaded from the Instructor Center. Additionally, a link to PageOut, our web-based program, which can be used to help create your own website, is included here. Visit the *Sport in Society* homepage at www.mhhe.com/hper/physed/coakley_sport.

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This book has evolved out of ideas coming from many sources. Thanks go to the students in my sociology of sport courses; every semester they provide constructive critiques of my ideas and open my eyes to new ways of looking at sports as social phenomena. Special thanks also go to friends and colleagues who have influenced my thinking, have provided valuable source materials, and have given me personal support during difficult times. Nancy Coakley, Rebecca Bauder, Bob Pearton, Bob Hughes, Peter Donnelly, and Andrew Jennings deserve special thanks in this regard.

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Finally, I took special care with this revision, because it is dedicated to the memory of my son, Dennis Coakley. He and I shared many things during his thirty-two years. We played many sports together and learned from and about each other in the process. As a student, Dennis even

took my sociology of sport course. We had many friendly and spirited debates on issues related to sport in society, and he took photos that I have used in various editions of this book. He was an insightful critic and supporter of my work. While writing this edition, I moved to his home in Reno, so I could be with him as he faced the final challenges of living with an aggressive and untreatable form of melanoma. He died on 13 January 2000.

Jay Coakley
Manitou Springs, CO

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chapter 1

(Jay Coakley)

The Sociology of Sport
What is it and why study it?

[Sports] are why some people get out of bed. Sports define many of us. Some superstars command as much attention as heads of state and other leaders. Whether you weigh the good or bad of it—it's a fact.

Bob Davis, vice-president, American Program Bureau (1999)

The rituals of sport engage more people in a shared experience than any other institution or cultural activity today.

Varda Burstyn, author, *The Rites of Men* (1999)

Sport has become . . . a major social institution in American society, and, indeed, the modern world. Yet our understanding of this major social phenomenon remains limited.

Center for Research on Sport in Society, University of Miami (1999)

Houghton Mifflin's recently released American history textbook for fifth-graders, Build Our Nation, covers the Depression and the presidency of Franklin Roosevelt in 33 lines, while devoting two pages to Cal Ripkin, Jr. [the record-setting infielder for the Baltimore Orioles].

***Sports Illustrated* (1998)**

Sport is no longer just sport for individual expression. Rather, it has become spectacle, with a jaundiced eye on the profit margin.

Robert Rinehart, author, *Players All* (1998)

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Most of you reading this book have experienced sports personally, as athletes or spectators or both. You probably are familiar with the physical and emotional experiences of sport participation, and you may have extensive knowledge of the rules and regulations of certain sports. You probably know about the lives, on and off the field, of high-profile athletes in your school, community, or country. It is likely that you have followed certain sports by watching them in person and on television, reading about them in the print media or on web pages, or even listening to discussions of them on talk radio.

This book is written to take you beyond the scores, statistics, and personalities in sports. The goal is to focus on the "deeper game" associated with sports, the game through which sports become an integral part of the social and cultural worlds in which we live.

Fortunately, we can draw on our personal emotions and experiences as we consider this deeper game. Let's use our experiences with high school sports in North America as an example. When students play varsity basketball in high school, we know that team membership may affect their status in the school and the way teachers and fellow students treat them. We know it may have implications for their prestige in the surrounding community, for their self-images and their self-esteem. We know that it may affect even their future relationships, their opportunities in education and the workforce, and their overall enjoyment of life.

Building on this knowledge enables us to move further into this deeper game associated with sports. For example, we might ask why North Americans place such importance on varsity sports and top athletes. What does that say about our schools and communities and about our values? We might study how varsity programs are organized and how they are related to the way many people think about masculinity and femininity, about achievement and competition, about pleasure and pain, about winning and fair play, and about many other things important to those who endorse and promote the programs. We might ask how varsity sports influence the status structure that exists among students and how student-athletes fit into that structure. We also might ask if the organization of high school sports is influenced by new forms of corporate sponsorships and examine student ideas about the corporations whose names and logos are on their uniforms, on the surfaces of their sport facilities, in their classrooms, and on their school buses.

In other words, sports are more than just games and meets; they are also **social phenomena**[1] that have meanings that go far beyond scores and performance statistics. In fact, sports are related to the social and cultural contexts in which we live; they provide the stories and images that many of us use to explain and evaluate these contexts, the events in our lives, and our connections to the world around us.

People who study sports in society are concerned with the deeper meanings and stories associated with sports in particular cultures. They use their research to develop an understanding of (1) the societies in which sports exist, (2) the social worlds that are created around sports, and (3) the experiences of individuals and groups associated with sports.

Sociology[2] is very helpful when it comes to studying sports as social phenomena. It provides concepts, theoretical approaches, and research methods to describe and understand behavior and social interaction as they occur in particular social and cultural contexts. Sociology gives us the tools we need to examine social life *in context*, in its "social location." These tools enable us to

[1]Social phenomena are occasions or events involving social relationships and collective action and having relevance in the social lives of particular collections of people.

[2]Important concepts used in each chapter will be identified in **boldface.** Unless they are accompanied by a footnote that contains a definition, the definition will be given in the text itself. This puts the definition in context rather than separating it in a glossary.

"see" behavior as it is connected with history, politics, economics, and cultural life. In this book, we will use sociology to see sports as a part of social and cultural life and to describe and understand social issues related to sports.

As we do this, it is important that we know what the terms *culture* and *society* mean. **Culture** consists of the ways of life people create in a particular society. These ways of life are complex. They come into existence and are changed as people in a society come to terms with and sometimes struggle over how to do things, how to relate with one another, and how to make sense out of the things and events that make up their experiences. Culture is not something that is imposed by some people on others; rather, it is a creation of people interacting with one another. It consists of all the socially invented ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that emerge in particular groups as people try to survive, meet their needs, and achieve a sense of significance in the process. Of course, some people have more power and resources than others have to use in the "culture creation" process.

Sports are parts of cultures. Therefore, many sociologists refer to sports as **cultural practices.** Like other cultural practices, sports are human creations that come into being as people struggle over what is important and how things should be done in their groups and societies. This is why sports have different forms and meanings from one place to another and why they change over time: people never come to once-and-for-all-time definitions of the ways things should be in their lives. For example, traditional martial arts and Sumo wrestling in Asia have different meaning, organization, and purpose than individual sports such as boxing and wrestling in North America. Basketball's meaning, organization, and purpose have changed considerably since 1891, when it was developed at a YMCA in Massachusetts as an indoor exercise activity for men who did not want to play football outside during the winter. Canadian James Naismith, who invented basketball as part of an assignment in a physical education course, would not recognize his game if he were to see Shaquille O'Neal slam dunk during the Olympics while a billion people watch on television and thousands of others pay hundreds of dollars to see the game in person. It is important to know about these cultural and historical differences when we study sports as social phenomena.

As you read this book, keep in mind that sports have different forms and meanings from place to place and time to time. This is the case because sports are **social constructions.** In other words, sports are activities to which human beings give form and meaning as they live their lives with one another. Because sports are social constructions, sociologists study them in connection with social relationships and social, political, and economic processes. Thus, sociologists ask questions about why particular groups and societies have identified as sports some physical activities rather than others. They ask why sports are organized in particular ways, why different groups and societies associate different meanings with sports and sport participation, and who benefits from the organization and definition of sports in society.

In this book, the term **society** refers to a collection of people living in a defined geographical territory and united through a political system and a shared sense of self-identification that distinguishes them from other collections of people. For example, as separate societies, Canada and Japan have different cultures, or ways of life. Canada and the United States are also different societies with different cultures, although there are some important similarities between them. We can understand the forms and meanings of sports in Japan only in connection with Japanese history, society, and culture. The same is true for other sports in other societies, even in societies that have cultural similarities.

In summary, sports are cultural practices that differ from place to place and time to time. How they are defined, organized, and integrated into social life varies from group to group. The types

of sports played in a particular group or society, the organization of sports, the resources dedicated to sports and sport programs, who plays sports, the conditions under which sport participation occurs, who sponsors and controls sports, the definition of an "athlete" and the meanings associated with sport participation are all determined through social interaction within a cultural context. This means that to understand sports we must view them as social phenomena. Sociology provides us with the analytical tools that will help us do this as we discuss major issues related to sport in society in this book.

ABOUT THIS CHAPTER

This chapter describes the sociology of sport as a subfield of physical education and sociology and explains what is meant by the term **sports** as it is used in the following chapters. Throughout this book, I tend to use the term *sports* rather than *sport*. I do this to emphasize that the forms and meanings of sports vary from place to place and time to time. I want to avoid the inference that sport has an essential and timeless quality apart from the contexts in which people invent, develop, define, plan, package, promote, and play sports.

This chapter focuses on four questions:

1. What is the sociology of sport?
2. Why study sports as social phenomena?
3. What is the current status of the sociology of sport?
4. What are sports, and how are they related to similar activities, such as play and dramatic spectacle?

The answers to these questions will be guides for understanding the material in chapters 2 through 16.

WHAT IS THE SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT?

This question is best answered at the end of the book instead of the beginning. However, you should have a clear preview of what you will be reading for the next fifteen chapters.

Most people in the sociology of sport agree that the field is the subdiscipline of sociology that studies sports as parts of social and cultural life. The focus of much research and writing in this field is on what many of us refer to as "organized, competitive sports," although more of us in the field are studying other physical activities as well (Martin and Miller, 1999; Rinehart, 1998). The people who do this research and writing use sociological concepts, theories, and research to answer questions such as the following:

1. Why have certain activities (rather than others) been selected and designated as sports in particular groups?
2. Why have sports in particular groups and societies been created and organized in certain ways?
3. How are sports and sport participation included in our personal and social lives, and how do they affect who we are, how we are connected with other people, and how we define those connections?
4. How do sports and sport participation affect our ideas about our own bodies, what is "natural" and "unnatural," masculinity and femininity, social class, race and ethnicity, work, fun, ability and disability, achievement and competition, pleasure and pain, deviance and conformity, and aggression and violence?
5. How are the meaning, organization, and purpose of sports connected with social relations, material conditions, and the dynamics of power in groups and societies?
6. How are sports related to important spheres of social life, such as family, education, politics, the economy, the media, and religion?
7. How can people use their knowledge about sports and what sports could and should be as a basis for changing them to make social life more fair and democratic?
8. How can people use their knowledge about sports as social phenomena to understand the organization and dynamics of society and social life and then participate as effective agents of progressive change in today's world?

The notion that sports are social constructions implies that human beings create them and human beings can change them. This leads some people to identify things about sports that should be changed; others resist this notion because they benefit from sports as they are organized.

Differences Between the Sociology of Sport and the Psychology of Sport

One way to understand the sociology of sport is to contrast it with another discipline that studies sports and behavior. Let's use psychology as a comparison discipline.

Psychologists study behavior in terms of attributes and processes that exist *inside* individuals. Psychologists focus on motivation, perception, cognition, self-esteem, self-confidence, attitudes, and personality. Psychologists also deal with interpersonal dynamics, including communication, leadership, and social influence, but they usually discuss these things in terms of how they affect attributes and processes that exist inside individuals. Therefore, they might ask a research question such as this: "How is the motivation of athletes related to their personality characteristics and perceptions of their own competence as athletes in their sports?"

Sociologists study behavior in terms of the social conditions and cultural contexts in which people live their lives. Sociologists focus on the reality *outside and around* individuals. Therefore, sociologists deal with how people form relationships with one another and create social arrangements that enable them to survive and exert some control over their lives. Sociologists also ask questions about how behavior, relationships, and social life are related to characteristics that are defined as socially relevant by people in particular groups. This is why they often deal with the social meanings and dynamics associated with age, social class, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, and nationality. A sociologist might ask a question such as this: "How do prevailing cultural definitions of masculinity and

femininity affect the way sport programs are organized and who participates in sports?"

When it comes to the application of their knowledge, psychologists focus on the personal experiences and the personal troubles of particular individuals. Sociologists focus on group experiences and the social issues that have an impact on entire categories or groups of people. For example, when studying burnout among young athletes, psychologists would look at factors that exist *inside* the athletes themselves. Because stress has been identified as a key "inside factor" in human beings, psychologists would focus on the existence of stress in the lives of individual athletes and how stress might affect motivation, performance, and burnout (Smith, 1986). They might use strategies to help individual athletes manage stress through goal setting, personal skill development, and the use of relaxation and concentration techniques.

Sociologists, on the other hand, study burnout in connection with how sport programs are organized, the treatment of athletes in sport programs, and athletes' relationships with parents, peers, and coaches. Since burnout often occurs when athletes feel they have lost control over their lives and feel they have no power to make decisions about important things in their lives, sociological intervention would emphasize the need for changes in the organization of sport programs and athletes' relationships (Coakley, 1992). Such changes might emphasize giving athletes more power within sport organizations and more control over important parts of their lives.

Of course, both approaches have potential value (Gould, 1996). However, some people may see the sociological approach as too complex and too disruptive. They may conclude that it is easier to change individual athletes and the ways in which athletes deal with external conditions than to change the external conditions in which athletes live their lives. This is one of the reasons that those who have power and control in sport organizations often resist sociological approaches. They are uncomfortable with recommendations calling for changes in how they exercise power and control within their organizations. Parents and coaches also might resist approaches that call for changes in their relationships with athletes, especially since they have developed those relationships in ways they feel are best for everyone involved.

Using the Sociology of Sport

The insights developed through sociological analyses are not always used to make changes in favor of the people who lack power in society. Like any science, sociology can be used in various ways. For example, research findings can be used to assist powerful people as they try to control and enhance the efficiency of particular social arrangements and organizational structures. Research findings also can be used to assist people who lack power as they attempt to change social conditions and achieve greater opportunities to make choices about how they live their lives.

In other words, sociologists must consider the possible consequences of their work, as well as how they do sociology. Sociologists cannot escape the fact that social life is complex and that the interests of different groups of people in society are not always the same. Sociologists, like the rest of us, must recognize that social life is at least partly shaped by who has power and who does not. Therefore, using sociology is not a simple process that always leads to good and wonderful conclusions for all humankind. This is the reason we must think critically about what we want sociology to do for us when we study sports.

As a result of my own thinking about sports in society, I have written this book to help you use sociology to do the following:

1. Think critically about sports, so you can identify and understand social problems and social issues associated with sports in society.
2. Look beyond issues of physical performance and scores to see sports as social phenomena having relevance for the ways people feel, think, and live their lives.

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