

SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT

VOLUME 1

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SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT

VOLUME I

Core Theories and Perspectives



Edited by

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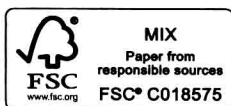
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The ***SAGE Library of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure*** traces the evolution and development of these fast growing areas of interdisciplinary research within the greater framework of business and management. Each major reference collection in the series will comprise seminal and cutting-edge research that examines the field of study on its own and in relation to each other. In each case, the evolution of the relevant field during the twentieth century will be mapped out and illustrated through the seminal papers in social science journals that are not widely available to most libraries and research institutes.

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Editor's Introduction: The Sociology of Sport

Richard Giulianotti

In most nations, the social significance of sport has grown markedly since the 1960s. In developed nations, in particular, public interest and participation in sport has been facilitated and extended by the greater proliferation of sport-related activities within the private sector, national and local government, media organizations, and voluntary and community associations. Moreover, sport is increasingly central to globalization processes, as reflected in the worldwide media coverage that is allocated to many tournaments and events, and in the transnational composition of leading sports teams.

Accordingly, sport has gained increasing prominence in the academic sector. The expanding field of 'sport studies' encompasses many disciplines within the arts and humanities, including sociology, anthropology, history, geography, economics, education, law, philosophy, political science, and cultural studies. The sociology of sport is arguably the largest and best established of all these sub-disciplines. Historically, sociologists of sport have been particularly well served by their international associations, notably through the International Sociology of Sport Association (ISSA), which was founded in 1965, the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS), founded in 1978, and the European Association of Sport Sociology (EASS), founded in 2001; each of these associations convenes large annual or biennial conferences. At the regional level, promising developments are evidenced by the recent emergence of sport studies networks in Scandinavia (through the Scandinavian Sport Studies Forum) and Latin America (through ALESDE, or Asociación Latinoamericana Estudios Socioculturales del Deporte). A multitude of professional associations also serves sociologists of sport at national level, notably in the UK, France, Germany, Japan, and South Korea.

The sociology of sport has been further supported by three renowned, well-established international journals. The highest-rated journal according to Thomson-Reuters is *Journal of Sport and Social Issues (JSSI)*, founded in 1977, with an 'impact factor' rating of above 1.00; the *Sociology of Sport Journal*,

founded in 1984, is the association journal of NASSS; and, the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, founded in 1966, is the ISSA's house journal. More recently, established journals with a strong sociological dimension have included the *European Journal for Sport and Society (EJSS)*, house journal of the EASS; and, the transdisciplinary outlet, *Sport in Society*.

It should also be emphasized that the sociology of sport has been well served in recent years by the appearance of sport-focussed articles in some of the world's leading mainstream social science journals. My own contribution to that process has included acting as a guest co-editor on special issues of leading journals that are devoted to sport – see, for example, *British Journal of Sociology* (2012), *Global Networks* (2007), and *Urban Studies* (2011).

The four-volume collection of articles which I present here, seeks to encapsulate the most important themes and substantive issues within the sociology of sport, particularly as this sub-discipline moves forward at a global level in the early 21st century. In putting together this collection, I have enjoyed the opportunity to select contributions from thousands of journal articles and book chapters on sport-related matters.

My aim in choosing those contributions has been to draw out the theoretical, substantive and international diversity that is evident in the sociology of sport. While remaining firmly anchored within sociology per se, the major work also reflects the influence of other disciplines, notably with respect to anthropology, cultural studies, education, history, human geography, media studies, political science, and social policy. All papers are in English, but the volume does engage fully with the global diversity of work within the sub-discipline by including contributors and contributions from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, India, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, the UK, the United States, and the West Indies. The work of scholars from East Asia is particularly well represented, while the collection also features a strong proportion of contributions by women. A wide diversity of sports are examined, including football, cricket, baseball, American football, rugby, ice-hockey, athletics, golf, Olympic sports, college sports, basketball, boxing, sumo, surfing, the triathlon, and extreme sports.

The contributions reflect the diversity of locations in which crucial interventions and scholarly debates on sport have been published. Thus, the collection looks well beyond specialist sociology of sport outlets, to draw upon key articles that have engaged with wider audiences through publication in mainstream journals, other specialist journals, and various books. I have been particularly keen to include articles that have appeared in the world's leading sociology journals, such as *American Journal of Sociology*, *American Sociological Review*, *British Journal of Sociology*, and *Social Forces*; and, also to feature contributions on sport by some of the world's best-known and most influential social scientists, such as Appadurai, Baudrillard, Bourdieu, Connell, Elias, Geertz, Patterson, Ritzer, Robertson and Wacquant. While work by most key

scholars within the sociology of sport is included, ultimately the selection of articles has been made according to their quality and thematic focus. I have also been particularly concerned to feature work that engages with contemporary themes and issues; thus, the vast majority of articles here have been published since the year 2000.

The collection is comprised of four separate volumes of articles that concentrate on specific themes. Volume 1, entitled *Core Theories and Perspectives*, explores key theoretical and interdisciplinary standpoints within the sociology of sport. Comprising both classic and contemporary articles, this volume features theoretical and disciplinary approaches that include cultural anthropology, functionalism and structural-functionalism, neo-Weberianism, symbolic interactionism, microsociology, figurationalism, Marxism and neo-Marxism, systems theory, feminism, theories of race and ethnicity, and postmodernism and post-structuralism.

Volume 2, entitled *Social Divisions and Conflicts in Sport*, examines the most significant social divisions and conflicts that have been addressed by sociologists of sport. Featuring, in particular, articles on sport and social class, gender and sexuality, and race and ethnicity, the volume also addresses substantive issues relating to violence, injury and exploitation with respect to sport participants.

Volume 3, entitled *Social Identities and Sites of Sport*, features articles that address the diverse social identities and sites within sport. The contributions consider the social identities of sport participants and spectators; the sporting body as a site of social practice and cultural identity; the role of risk-taking behaviour within contemporary and extreme sports; the construction of sporting identities through the mass media (both for 'celebrity' athletes and fans); and, the relationship of sport identities to social geographies.

Volume 4, entitled *Sport and Globalization*, explores the multifarious impacts of global processes upon sport. Contributing articles explore the international diffusion and adaptation of sports by national societies; the construction of national sports within a global context; the policies and politics of international sports governing bodies; the transnational migration of athletes within specific sports; the growth of the international 'sport for development and peace' sector; and, the making of global sport mega-events. A global focus provides a fitting way to complete the collection, given the growing transnational significance of sport in the early 21st century.

Introduction: Core Theories and Perspectives

Richard Giulianotti

This volume aims to capture the main theoretical interventions and influences that have been apparent within the sociology of sport since at least the 1950s. These contributions have tended to mirror wider moves and shifts within the interrelated fields of sociology and modern social theory. In line with my previous work, this volume, and indeed the collection as a whole, eschews some of the more rigid, mono-theoretical tendencies within the sociology of sport; instead, the volume and collection serve to celebrate the pluralism – both theoretical and substantive – that is identifiable across the sub-discipline (cf. Giulianotti 2004, 2005a).

The opening question to consider on sports and games is how we may identify and differentiate their underlying structures and properties. The first article, by Roger Caillois, advances a classic response to these question through the marshalling of a highly inventive integration of anthropological, sociological and psychological perspectives. Drawing on the pioneering work of Huizinga (1949), Caillois classifies games into four basic categories: *agon* (competition), *alea* (chance), *mimicry* (pretence), and *ilinx* (vertigo). His analysis, which crystallizes wider arguments on games and play (Caillois 1961), has had extensive influence on a wide range of approaches to sport, from structural-functionalist to postmodern perspectives (cf. Loy 1969; Baudrillard 1983); it also has clear applicability to contemporary trends in sport, for example, through the rise of intensive transnational competitions (*agon*) and vertiginous extreme sports (*ilinx*).

We then turn to explore how the three ‘founding’ theorists within sociology – Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx – may be utilized to explain the social aspects of sport. We begin by exploring Durkheimian approaches, notably their focus on the themes of social structure, function, ritual, and order (cf. Durkheim 1938). While these functionalist and, later, structural-functionalist approaches were particularly influential across social

science in the early and mid-20th century (cf. Parsons 1951; Merton 1957), their impacts within the sociology of sport were rather delayed, at least until the sub-discipline became more institutionalized in the 1960s and 1970s (cf. Loy 1969; Stevenson 1974). The main concern of the structural-functionalist perspective has been to reveal how sport and other social 'subsystems' influence the equilibrium of the wider social order, largely by assisting the effective functioning of the social system, while also allowing for the possibility of dysfunctional interrelationships. The early article by Gunter Lüschen, which is contained in this volume, grapples with these problems.

Since the 1970s, the work of the German theorist Niklas Luhmann (1982, 1995) has been strongly influential within northern European social science, notably his form of social systems theory which combines elements of structural-functionalism with cybernetic and biological theories. In the sociology of sport, the social systems approach has had strongest impact in Germany, Denmark and Norway, and has been applied to explain such problems as the position of sport between market and state, the use of sporting facilities, and fandom and profit-making in football (Schulze 2002; Storm 2009; Storm et al. 2011; Tangen 2004). The article included here, by Uwe Schimank, engages with the social system and differentiation theories of Luhmann and others to explore some of the dysfunctional trends in modern sport at the levels of elite and mass participation.

The Durkheimian tradition in sociology has also explored the crucial 'function' of social rituals such as religious ceremonies in sustaining moral order and social solidarity (Durkheim 1954). Sport events might be interpreted as modern ceremonies that perform these binding social functions within secular settings (cf. Alomes 1994, Light 2000). The work of Erving Goffman (1959, 1967, 1971) adapted this Durkheimian theme to examine micro-social rituals, particularly the fragile conventions of social interaction that are intended to preserve the sacred 'face' of individuals. Goffman's approach, and its Durkheimian underpinnings, is explored in the article by Susan Birrell, notably to examine how the moral order is reproduced within sport through the celebration of particular heroic qualities that are displayed by individual athletes.

Consideration of Goffman enables us to turn to issues of social action, and thus to address the legacy of Max Weber. Weber's sociological imaginary – focussed especially on questions of social action, interpretive understanding (*verstehen*), and rationalization – was creatively developed and extended by the symbolic interactionists, ethnomethodologists, phenomenologists, and other interpretivist schools of thought (cf. Blumer 1969; Gerth & Mills 1946; Mead 1934; Weber 1947). The interpretive approach explores the complex and changing meanings of social actions, symbols, identities, and roles, while placing great store on the intentions, subjectivities and reflexivities of social actors within specific social contexts. Interpretive standpoints have also examined cultural practices, in anthropological and hermeneutic terms, as types of

‘text’ that are constantly being enacted and read, re-enacted and re-read, by both social actors and social observers.

Clifford Geertz’s study of a Balinese cockfight provides the classic interpretive statement on how social scientists should read cultural events (including sport ones) ‘over the shoulders’ of the participants. In doing so, social scientists may explain how, through engagement in such occasions, each individual ‘forms and discovers his temperament and his society’s temper at the same time’. The article by Otmar Weiss, which is also included here, draws more fully on the legacy of symbolic interactionism, to explore how sport helps to build the identity of social actors within modern, industrial societies.

The shadow side of Weber’s legacy is his more pessimistic analysis of the ineluctable rise of rationalization and bureaucratization within modern societies. While providing the most technically and rationally advanced ways of organizing society, bureaucracies also serve to disenchant and to dehumanize social life, imprisoning humanity within an ‘iron cage’ (cf. Weber 1930: 181; Gerth & Mills 1946). The article by Allen Guttman provides the most concerted and persuasive application of Weberian rationalization theory to sport.

We move next to consider the impact of Karl Marx and his theoretical tradition upon the sociology of sport. Marxist, neo-Marxist, and cultural studies analysts encompass a hugely diverse array of theoretical and methodological approaches, and arguably have had the most extensive and long-lasting influence upon the study of sport. During the 1960s and 1970s, several sociological analyses applied conventional Marxist theories – notably historical materialist accounts of class conflict, false consciousness, and the alienation of labour power – to explain particular social problems within sport. Thus, elite athletes are understood as alienated automatons who ‘perform’ rather than ‘play’, while sport events are brain-washing opiates for the masses that secure servile class collaboration among spectators (cf. Adorno 1982: 80–1; Brohm 1978; Hoch 1972; Rigauer 1981; Vinnai 1973). The article by Jean-Marie Brohm, which is included here, is strongly illustrative of this critical, often polemical *oeuvre*. The sophisticated article by John Alt, also included here, while engaging with other sociological traditions, sustains the cultural pessimism of neo-Marxist accounts, to lament how commodification and rationalization have transformed sport events from meaningful, community-driven public rituals into morally impoverished, corporate-driven, mass spectacles.

The rise of interdisciplinary cultural studies enabled critical sociologists of sport to move away from the more economically reductionist aspects of neo-Marxist thinking, to examine the complex interplay between economic, cultural, political and social forces. Drawing particularly on Antonio Gramsci (1971), Richard Hoggart (1957), and Raymond Williams (1965), the cultural studies approach has paid particular attention to the significant structural changes within modern and late-modern capitalist societies, for example, in terms of new kinds of production, consumption, class formation, and political and cultural identities. Sport and other cultural forms are understood as

having contradictory relationships with dominant classes or 'hegemonic' social formations; thus, sport might enable dominated groups to 'contest' or 'resist', in direct or symbolic ways, this domination (cf. Carrington & MacDonald 2008; Clarke & Critcher 1985; Field & Kidd 2010; Gruneau 1983; Hargreaves 1986; Ingham & Loy 1993; Lenskyj 2008). In turn, the cultural studies tradition has enabled sociologists of sport to explore how less powerful and more marginal social groups – the working-classes, women, ethnic minorities, and gay and lesbian people – have resisted their subjugation within and through sport. The article by David Andrews and Michael Giardina crystallizes many of these issues by tracing the development and relevance of the cultural studies approach with respect to the sociology of sport.

The German sociologist, Jürgen Habermas, was initially part of the neo-Marxist Frankfurt School, but drew its critical social theory into fresh directions, notably through his concept of communicative rationality, and his various defences of the Enlightenment project, modernity, democracy and the 'public sphere' (Habermas 1971, 1990). In regard to sport, Habermas's work has been particularly influential in normative and philosophical terms, for example, in William Morgan's (1993) ground-breaking analysis, which called for a fully democratic 'practice-community' to be founded within the sporting polis. The article here, by Morgan, draws upon the strong normative components within Habermas's thinking in order to identify ways in which we may advance constructive moral criticisms of contemporary sport.

We turn next to explore the specific contribution of two leading 20th century sociologists to the sociology of sport. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu provided a powerful theoretical framework for exploring and critiquing frameworks of social domination. Through his concepts of habitus, field, capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic), and symbolic violence, Bourdieu advanced a comprehensive theoretical system that enables sociologists to examine how sport and other cultural 'fields' are defined by the struggle for 'distinction' between dominant and dominated social groups (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). Notably, Bourdieu (1978, 1984, 1993, 1998a, 1998b) wrote several significant articles and passages on sport, the most substantial of which is included here, and his work has been strongly influential in much sociology of sport, most obviously in France (Defrance 1995; Laberge 1995; Stempel 2005; White and Wilson 1999; Wilson, volume 2).

The work of Norbert Elias, and his process-sociological or figurational perspective, has been more influential within the sociology of sport than in any other sub-discipline across social science. Elias built up a sizeable and strongly committed body of followers in England and the Netherlands, in particular, many of whom have written substantially on sport-related social issues (Dunning 1999; Elias & Dunning 1986; Maguire 1999; Murphy, Dunning & Williams 1990; Waddington 2000). Elias used game models such as football matches to set out some of his core theories, such as his understanding of society as comprised by 'figurations' or webs of interdependent individuals who

are in constantly changing inter-relationships and power-balances. The article included here by Elias provides a classic process-sociological statement on the historical interconnections of sport and violence. Later figurationalist work applied Elias's distinctive theory of the 'civilizing process' to explain football hooliganism, although the main claims have been strongly disputed through subsequent research and analysis (cf. Armstrong 1998; Dunning et al. 1988; Giulianotti 1999).

We then move to consider two transdisciplinary fields of social theory and sociological enquiry, relating to gender and 'race', which have been strongly advanced by the growth of cultural studies perspectives within social science. Gender studies has been underpinned by an exceptional diversity of theoretical standpoints, including liberal, radical, socialist or Marxist, cultural studies, postmodern and post-structuralist feminist theories, as well as pro-feminist theory in masculinity studies, and queer theory which is centred on sexuality (Birrell & Cole 1994; Connell 2000; Hall 1996; Hargreaves 1994; King 2008; Markula 2005; Messner 2007; Pronger 1990; Wearing 1998). The impact of these theories upon the sociology of sport is very broad, and is therefore, evident in all volumes within this collection. The article provided here, by Jennifer Hargreaves, constitutes a pioneering contribution that critiques the dilatory response of sport sociologists to gender issues, while setting out key theoretical and substantive problems that require to be addressed.

'Race' and ethnicity have been long-running themes in the sociology of sport, but gained greater significance through the rise of cultural studies in the 1980s. Sociological research has been focussed particularly on diverse forms of racism and 'race' conflicts within sport, such as the contested exploitation and marginalization of ethnic minorities, the racist stereo-typing of athletes, the role of sport in building resistant minority identities, the racialized 'stacking' of athletes into specific team playing positions, and the imperialistic appropriation of minority cultural symbols (for example, the use of Native American images and emblems by major league sports teams) (cf. Andrews 2001; Booth 1998; Carrington 2010; Edwards 1969; Hoberman 1997; James 1963; Jarvie 1991; King & Springwood 2001; Robidoux, Volume 2; St. Louis 2003; Tatz 1995; Woodward 2004). The article, which is included here, by Gary Sailes, advances a powerful critique of one myth that is fundamental to racist assumptions and practices in sport, regarding the 'natural' physical 'prowess' of black sport participants.

The final three articles explore the contributions of postmodern and post-structuralist social theories to our understanding of sport. Particularly influential during the late 1980s and 1990s, these theoretical approaches were used by social scientists to account for new, post-industrial regimes of accumulation and consumption, major changes in social stratification, the growth of media and other kinds of virtual communication, and the weakening of boundaries between different academic disciplines (cf. Baudrillard 1993; Bauman 1992; Featherstone 1991; Harvey 1990; Jameson 1991; Lash 1990).

Postmodern and post-structuralist theories have had substantial impact within the sociology of sport since the late 1980s, notably among those influenced by cultural studies approaches. This has led to the analysis of subjects such as the historical periodization of sport, forms of body power and identity, the contemporary semiotics of sports events and cultures, and the influence of post-industrialism on sport-related practices (cf. Andrews 1998, 2001; Giulianotti 1999; Markula & Pringle 2006; Rail 1998; Whannel 2002). The article by George Ritzer and Todd Stillman, which is included here, provides a powerful, historically-informed case-study into the links between modern and postmodern developments in sport. Drawing on their neo-Weberian analysis of rationalization processes (or, to use Ritzer's phrase, 'McDonaldization' processes), Ritzer and Stillman examine how the design of baseball stadiums has moved from modern to postmodern styles, while still being orientated towards the maximizing of efficient, commercial activities (Ritzer 1993). The article by Pirkko Markula examines how the post-structuralist theories of Michel Foucault may be harnessed to provide a critical feminist understanding of women's physical activity. Departing from more 'structuralist' readings of Foucault that emphasize corporeal domination, Markula examines how his theory of 'technologies of the self' helps to reveal the critical agency and resistance of women through physical activities. The final article, by the leading postmodernist theorist, Jean Baudrillard, reflects on the cultural, political and social meanings of the 1985 Heysel Stadium disaster, in which rioting by English fans at the European Cup Final between Liverpool and Juventus led to the death of 39 Italian supporters. In Baudrillard's provocative and fatalistic imaginary, this tragic episode and the more general attempts of the authorities to control football fans, have served to reveal deeper impulses and trends within contemporary mass society, such as the profusion of indifferent audiences, the strategies of State terrorism, the rise of screened events, and the ultimate demise of the social.

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