

Role that sport plays in the construction and development of australian society a...

[Sociology](#)



Learning and Communication Behaviour first essay Drawing on current and historical examples, discuss the role that sport plays in the construction and development of Australia's national identity. Does sport play a positive, negative or neutral role in Australians' view of themselves? The role that sport plays in the construction and development of Australia's national identity is the result of a number of social, cultural and economic processes. Sport was part of the cultural baggage that was brought out to Australia by the convicts, free settlers and the accompanying administrative personnel.

The migrant Englishman missing home could find in Australia matches between teams named after country sides and British sporting equipment was imported. Additionally the Scots held there Caledonian games and pioneered golf while the Irish played there version of football. In importing there traditional sports the British were no different from other immigrant groups such as the Germans who brought with them cross bows, target rifle shooting and later gymnastics.

In an environment where the seasons did not match the accustomed months and the landscape was far from familiar, sport provided a link with what had been left behind. Nostalgia led to the adoption of many sporting activities; but others were the result of deliberate attempts by the colonial wealthy and educated classes to replicate English social life including its social structure. Ultimately beating the mother country at there own sports became regarded as a sign of colonial maturity.

An example of this being in 1882 when the Australian XI beat the Marylebone cricket club by seven runs, leading the Australasian to comment that ' the

translation of stock to this country has improved rather than impaired the physique'. (Vamplew and Stoddart, 1994, p. 206) Socially sport in Australia is viewed as a way for 'battlers' and oppressed people to rise up the social ladder and a way for cultural minorities to express their identity. With the information available, it appears that aboriginal people prior to 1788 did not play any of the sports that were imported by the British.

However there is evidence from early contact times to show that aboriginal people did play many games that involved competitions between players. One such game being 'Murri Murri' where in young and old refined their throwing skills in target and distance competitions. (Cashman, 2011, P. 350). Because of the harshness of life in the colonies though after 1788 British sports predominated in the early years of colonial settlement. Sport in essence is a collaborative affair generally requiring a minimum of two players, one against the other.

More often than not sport involves teams of players, playing against teams of others and requires an orderly structure where opponents and teammates can come together. Sport involves a structure and social organisation, the corner stone of such organisation being the sporting club. Sporting clubs are seen to be a cultural median wherein groups of people across Australia come to express their interest in a particular sporting field. In the early years of the new colony racing and fox hunting clubs were formed followed later by cricket, tennis, croquet and so on.

The Sydney turf club was formed in 1825 and the Australian cricket club was formed in 1826 becoming the key promoters and organisers of their sports

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taking over from the earlier efforts of military regiments and entrepreneurial individuals. Culturally as discussed earlier in this assignment sport has been a central part of the Australian experience since the country was first colonised. Newspapers of the endeavours of sportspeople played an important role in the way the developing country understood and viewed itself, the influence of the sporting media continues to this day.

Australia's first sporting star Edward Trickett was reported back to Australia via telegraph in 1876. Trickett won the world sculling championship on London's Thames River. When Trickett arrived back to Australia twenty five thousand people were waiting to greet him. As Australia has developed economically so did technology and literacy rates. More Australians had the leisure time in which to watch and play sports and more time to read about it.

In modern society with the development of satellite and pay television, it is now possible for Australians to watch a wide range of sports from most locations. One of the most popular sporting events in Australia currently is the Bathurst car race; which is viewed by over two million people nationwide. Australia also has challenged the world in sporting competitions; the country has participated in every summer Olympics (one of only three nations to do so) since the establishment of the modern Games in Athens in 1896.

Disappointing results in the 1976 Montreal Olympics forced Australians to realise that basic talent alone was no longer sufficient and led to the formation of the Australian Institute of Sport with a charter to apply sports science to the training and coaching of top-ranking sports people. The

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Australian Institute of Sport reflects Australia's commitment to sport and its ongoing pursuit of excellence. Sports nationalism has played an important role in unifying Australia and in temporarily suppressing the inequities of race and gender and the rivalries of internal geography.

Within this assignment I have attempted to establish the importance of sport, not only for the players and millions of sports fans but also in Australian society as a whole. I have sought to demonstrate that sport has a prominent location within Australia's heritage and cultural processes. Have looked at the role sports organisation plays in Australian society. The role of the Media in Australian sport has been discussed. And have concluded with the role of the AIS and Australian nationalism.

Drawing on the current and historical examples prior mentioned we can establish how sport has played a pivotal role in the construction and development of Australia's national identity. Bibliography Cashman. R, 2011, Sport History and Australian Culture, Walla Walla press, Petersham NSW. Lynch. R and Veal. A, 2001, Australian Leisure, 2nd Edition, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest NSW. Mangan. J and Nauright. J, 2000, Sport in Australasian society, past and present, Frank Cass publications, London UK. Vamplew. W and Stoddart. B, 1994, Sport in Australia. A social history, Cambridge University press, NY USA.