

Sociology and its application to sport essay sample

[Sport & Tourism](#)



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Social Groupings

As social beings, we need to learn social behaviour to fit in and doing sport teaches us with confidence and co operation. By doing different activities you make new friends and learn to do new things. You get the feeling that you have a value to society. A common reason an individual does a sport or exercise of any kind is because he/she friends are participating in it as well.

Education

A person's education can have an effect on what sports they participate in because in different schools, they participate in different sports. If it was a private school the sports that you are most likely to participate in are polo, rugby and badminton. If you went to a public school then you are most likely to play football, tennis and netball.

Reasons for participation in sport and physical activity

Individuals generally recognised there are health benefits of physical activity and sport.

Weight management, social interaction and enjoyment of exercise are also common reasons for participation.

Concerns about body shape were the main reasons for the participation for women.

A number of studies reported pressure to conform to popular ideals of beauty as important reasons for teenage girls being physically active. Girls

were also more likely to participate if the activity emphasised fun and enjoyment and provided the opportunity for social interaction with friends.

Along with general health benefits, older people identified the importance of physical activity in staving off the effects of ageing.

Social dancing was successful in maintaining participation in older people. Participants described dance as challenging traditional expectations of older people being physically infirm. As people aged and became less physically able, graduated levels of dancing meant continued participation was possible.

Participation was also maintained across other major life events such as bereavement because other participants at dances provided a support network.

Discuss the application of sociological theories of sport

The sociology of sport is a sub-discipline of sociology that looks at the relationship between sport and society. Sport is a part of life; it has been created, shaped and sustained by members of societies. Sport is not separate from 'real life' it is part of it. Look at the attention, time and money we devote to sport and the myriad of activities it covers. Sport does not simply mean competing but we can participate in sport as players, spectators, officials, and business. In one way you can think of sport as a reflection of society but it is more than that in the fact sport and society interact. Why is sport so important? Why has sport changed and how is this

change related to changes in society? Why do people enjoy sports? What are people's experiences of sport?

Sociology is divided into a number of different theories, many of which work together, that try to explain the development of society and peoples behaviour.

Marxism: (Conflict Theory) Well a Marxist viewpoint may concentrate on the economic and class structures of sport and set out to show how sports keep people in their places and the exploitative aspects of sport. Marxists may put forward proposals that they see make sport more equal to all.

Conflict Theory: Are Sports All About Money and Economic Power?

Is based on the idea of social control and manipulation by powerful group(s), the ultimate control of everything is based on money, wealth and economic power. Oriented toward change, not the status quo, it has the same goal as functionalism: general theory about everything in society:

need efficient work processes

need large industrial bureaucracies

causes specialized and alienating jobs

people need escape and excitement

consumerism/spectacles created to be exciting

sport is a good spectacle because: tied to consumerism

Same as capitalism, dominance

Obedience

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Discipline

Competitive success

Conflict Theory and Research on Sports

Conflict theorists look for: alienation athletes become alienated from their bodies (Jean-Marie Brohm, 1978) instrumental view of body, machine drug abuse coercion & control sport distorts people's thoughts about their goals in life. Sport diverts people's attention away from important issues:

Commercialism e. g. consumption e. g. materialistic dependence

Nationalism & militarism too much encouragement of national pride

Racism & sexism sport perpetuates racial and sexual stereotypes

Conflict theory is very concerned with unequal distribution of power and economic resources ultimate conclusion: radical change (revolution?)

Conflict theory is not comfortable for people; Using Conflict Theory in Everyday Life

There is a bit too much orientation on economic matters; class inequality and radical change, there should be a call for more play and less business emphasis, union mentality (power to the people), more concern for "have-nots" and a call for fewer and/or less emphasis on spectator sports.

Weaknesses of Conflict Theory

Excludes factors other than capitalism in explaining sport, assumes that sport is determined by the system of production. Overemphasizes extent to which sport is controlled by people in power (i. e. class relations and money) ignores the fact that people might define themselves on the basis of something other than class (e. g. gender, race, ethnicity, age)

Too much emphasis on spectator sports, Ignores the fact that sport participation can be a liberating, expressive, creative experience

Interactionist theory

Interactionist Theories: How Do People Experience Sports?

Interactionist Theory focuses on meaning, identity, social relationships, and subcultures in sports. Interactionist Theory assumes: that behaviour involves choices, choices based on meaning of the situation. We behave -> behaviour impacts the world -> self understanding the self: formed through behaviour constantly changes.

Human behaviour is not governed by a cause-effect relationship ... it is contingent, changeable and somewhat unpredictable, notions of identity: who we are what we do identities always changing. People assign meanings to things ... then the things become associated with them notion of " social creation". People as choice makers - not responders, avoidance of use of a cause-effect model.

Interactionist Theories and Research on Sports focus on:

social processes of becoming an athlete ,

How people develop meanings/identities from participating in sport (e. g. “ I’m a soccer player.”)

issue of meaning of sports

process of retirement and its effects

issue of sport subcultures

General research is focus on how people see their world, social participant observation.

Using Interactionist Theory in Everyday Life includes:

meanings of sport participation

sport situations have to be defined in terms of relationships with others

Focus on athletes – not coaches, administrators, spectators, etc.

have to consider the needs of children in youth sports – not adults who are also involved

Weaknesses of Interactionist Theory

too personal ... no link to larger society

cannot handle non-rational behaviour (everything is rational problem-solving and choice behaviour)

ignores physical experiences ... all in the head

Functionalism

Functionalist Theory: What Do Sports Contribute to Society?

Functionalist assumes that society is an organized system, that people hold same basic values and all major parts of society support the system. the key

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point is idea of balance, society functions on consensus, common values and coordinated organization events which are sudden and which upset the balance are dysfunctional ... and are to be discarded. Society is like an organism - gradually changing; society needs four things:

People must be taught basic values and rules (pattern maintenance). People are taught to want to do what they must do

There must be social mechanisms to bring people together (social integration).

There must be a system to teach people important life goals (goal attainment).

There must be methods which can handle change smoothly (adaptation).

Functionalist Theory and Research on Sport

Studies of the relationship between sport participation and good character - sport teaches people about basic values and norms. Studies of social integration in groups, communities, and societies: - e. g. integrating different social classes.

Studies of participation and achievement motivation - e. g. working hard to be successful; Studies of how sports develop abilities necessary to defend society against threats - e. g. war, technology and survival skills.

Functionalist approach is usually followed by those who like the status quo;

Using Functionalist Theory in Everyday Life:

to compare sport to other institutions

sport has valuable lessons for children

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sport is an inspiration

used to make many decisions: interscholastic sports

military sport

sport for girls and women

promotion of Olympic Games

orientation toward traditional societal values: individualism

Competition

Success

policy decisions related to “ more of the same, only better” developmental

sport programs

coaching certification

athlete supervision

drug testing

Functionalist Theory looks for interrelationships in all things.

Weaknesses of Functionalist Theory

Functionalist Theory leads to exaggerated statements about positive effects of sport anything that lasts is good (i. e. it is functional). It does not consider that sport could distort values. Functionalist Theory is based on the assumption that the needs of individuals are the same as the needs of the system some groups benefit more than others (e. g. Toronto Olympics)

Functionalist Theory ignores the extent to which sport is the creation of interacting people (i. e. sport as a “ social construction”); functionalism benefits those with power and wealth.

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Explain the social and personal influences on sport participation

Education (Schools) Health & Well Being

Culture (Changing Attitudes) Education

Social Groupings Entertainment

Motivation

Social and Personal Development

Sport is fun. Sport is an essential tool for building strong individuals and vibrant communities and for enhancing our collective pride and identity and sense of belonging. Through sport in their respective communities, individuals learn to volunteer and to accept a sense of responsibility for a civil society.

Sport contributes to individual physical, social, and character development. With the power to be a major influence on marginalized and under-represented groups and individuals at risk, sport develops self-esteem and helps to overcome personal and social challenges. Studies have shown that an increased level of sport participation offers many benefits over and above personal satisfaction and a sense of physical and emotional well-being. For example, an increase in sport activity can result in better marks at school, a decrease in cigarette smoking, reduced crime rates, and reduced use of illicit drugs.

Health and Well-being

As a way to be physically active, participation in sport contributes to the adoption of a healthy lifestyle and prevention of disease and illness. Physical activity is fundamental to positive human development and contributes to healthier, longer, and more productive lives.

Participation in sport and physical activity at all ages increases resistance to such diseases as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, arthritis, and obesity and to mental health disorders. An increased investment in sport means an increase in health quality and a decrease in health care costs. Conservative estimates suggest that illness due to physical inactivity costs £2.1 billion pounds annually in direct health care costs.

Culture

Sport is an important component of culture. We express ourselves and celebrate our communities through sport. We share stories, myths, and lessons derived from sport. Our languages are rich in the terminology of sport. Through sport we learn values and behaviours that we apply to all aspects of our society - hard work, discipline, the value of fun, teamwork, respect for others, and fair play.

Sport is especially important to the development of youth and often provides their first experience with organized activities. Sport brings young people into contact with each other and other communities, teaches leadership skills, provides a constructive outlet, and generally enhances quality of life.

Sport is an essential component in the daily lives of more than eight million athletes/ participants. Sport represents the second largest segment of the

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voluntary sector, after workplace based organizations. Establishing sport clubs and organizing events are great training grounds for social action. Social capital is built by learning to organize meetings, negotiate for the use of shared facilities, and deal with expectations, triumphs, and failures.

Sport is a popular spectator activity. People in every community across the world follow teams and individuals from the local level to the world stage. Individuals can relax together over sport and it is often a shared topic of common interest.

Education

Access to quality physical education, physical activity and school sport provides many benefits for children, including better health and quality of life, psychological well-being, improved behaviour and ability to learn, higher scholastic performance, good health habits, an appreciation of physical activity and sport. Quality physical education programs can reduce the social, structural, and economic barriers typically faced by children and youth, particularly those in low-income families.

Economic Development and Prosperity

Many people are unaware of the significant contribution sport makes to the economy. In 1996, the average household spent more than £700 a year on sporting goods and services. Significant construction of infrastructure is associated with sport, and millions of pounds are spent on sport sponsorship and advertising.

Sport generates substantial revenues, whether from professional sport or from hosting national or international events. Hosting sport events can also have a vital long-term impact on local and regional economies.

In 1999, sport activity was associated with more than 38 percent of all overnight trips taken by Canadians. More than 80 percent of Americans who reported staying in Canada during their travels participated in sport and recreation activities. 3 Tourism is associated with certain professional sports, especially baseball, basketball, and hockey. At home, the hosting of the Olympic Games and major national events has profound and lasting economic impacts.

Entertainment and Leisure

Individuals spend a sizeable portion of their disposable income and leisure time on sport. Whether participants, spectators at live events, or viewers of broadcast events, individuals regard sport as a valuable source of entertainment and a worthwhile way to spend their leisure time.