

# Figueroa's framework essay sample

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Many social factors directly or indirectly shape opinions and influence an individual's decision to participate in physical activity. These factors change throughout an individual's life. For example, some children start playing sport because it is fun; others may join a sporting group because their older brother or sister plays that sport. A new sporting complex may open nearby and provide a chance to try a new sport. Coaching clinics might inspire some people to give a sport a go. Teachers can provide both positive and negative sporting experiences. At school, peers can change adolescents' attitudes about a sport that was previously enjoyed.

Even students who are talented at a particular sport may quit it because a sporting career is not realistic or because of the social expectations of their gender. Work commitments, financial costs and equipment costs—such factors can have a negative effect on sports participation. Peter Figueroa, a sociologist, developed a framework to analyse racism within society, particularly to look at how equity and access to society's resources are affected by a person's race. This framework can also be applied to other aspects of sociology, including equity and access in sport. Figueroa's framework explored equity and access through five levels in society:

1. cultural level
2. structural level
3. institutional level
4. interpersonal level
5. individual level.

The levels look at all aspects of society, beginning with the 'big picture' of society and working down to the individual.

### The Cultural Level

The cultural level of Figueroa's framework includes a society's values, beliefs and attitudes, which are the product of factors that include the social group's history, culture and ethnic background. Society's values, beliefs and attitudes shape and influence equity in and access to sport, for example, consider the cultural attitudes to masculinity, femininity and sport.

Traditionally, sport has been seen as a male domain; women have been seen as supporters or as people without interest in sport. Sports that are appropriate for men and those that are appropriate for women have been clearly differentiated.

As these cultural barriers are slowly removed, women are gaining greater access and opportunities in sport. A society's history and culture also affect sporting culture in other ways. Cultural factors can influence the type of sports that individuals within that society participate in. For example, consider the sports that are regularly watched or played in Queensland. Are they different from the sports preferred in Western Australia or somewhere further away, such as Canada? Such differences are the results of different sporting cultures. Describe your culture? How have society's values, beliefs and attitudes shape and influence equity in and access to sport

### The Structural Level

The structural level of Figueroa's framework includes the influence of government, business and the media. Applying this level of Figueroa's

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framework to sport means investigating the relationship between the media and sports promotion, the allocation of government funding for sports programs, and how the corporate sector affects sport and sports participation through sponsorship and other funding. For example, the Australian government funds and operates several organisations—such as the Australian Sports Commission—that aim to improve sports participation, promote equity and access to sport for all Australians, and improve Australians' sporting performance. It is the structural level that provides many insights into how funding is allocated to sport.

How can the government, business or media affect sports participation, access to sport and equality in sport?

### The Institutional Level

The institutional level of Figueroa's framework level examines the institutions within society that affect sport and physical activity. Institutions such as schools, community groups, sporting clubs, and religious groups are able to help shape positive attitudes to sport and physical activity. Schools feature prominently when discussing how people's early attitudes towards sport are shaped.

Some schools with strong sporting traditions reinforce participation in sport. The sports that students are encouraged to participate in can depend on the school's history and traditions, the facilities and equipment available, and the expertise of the teachers.

The institutional level is not just about the influence of schools; it also looks at the availability of facilities and the structure of organised sport within a community. The rules of different sports are also considered as part of an analysis of the institutional level. Sporting rules, which are determined and standardised by sports' governing organisations, can restrict access to certain groups and individuals.

Which institutions have affected your access and equity to sport? How have they influenced your participation, access to facilities, the quality of facilities and your attitudes towards sports?

#### The Interpersonal Level

The interpersonal level of Figueroa's framework is used to investigate the relationships that affect whether an individual will develop a lifelong association with sport. Most of us are influenced, directly or indirectly, by the people around us. Whose role is the most crucial? Parents? Peers? Siblings? Teachers? Coaches? Sporting role models?

Explain which three people have had the greatest influence on your sports participation and why?

#### The Individual Level

The individual level of Figueroa's framework examines why individuals choose to participate in physical activity. The reasons vary from person to person. For many people, the word 'exercise' is associated with images of unpleasant, vigorous activity that just makes them dirty, sweaty and uncomfortable. Others see exercise as something they must do to

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improve fitness or as a normal part of their daily life. For others, exercise is something that they do for enjoyment.

While each of the other levels has some bearing, decisions about sport and physical activity are ultimately made by the individual. Genes, values, attitudes and personalities are specific to each individual. This is reflected in differences between family members.

Why do you participate in sport? What is it about you that influences your choices behind the sports you play?