



SOCIAL
DIMENSIONS OF
CANADIAN
SPORT AND
PHYSICAL
ACTIVITY

Edited by
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SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF CANADIAN SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Crossman, Jane, author

Social dimensions of Canadian sport and physical activity / Jane Crossman,

Lakehead University, Jay Scherer, University of Alberta.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-13-344446-9 (pbk.)

1. Sports—Social aspects—Canada. I. Scherer, Jay, author II. Title.

GV706.5.C76 2014

306.4'830971

C2014-905540-4

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 [WC]

PEARSON

ISBN 978-0-13-344446-9

This book is dedicated to Paulene, Heather and Emma.

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Preface

Many of our students who study the social dimensions of sport and physical activity inevitably bring their own perceptions of what these popular practices are all about. Yet, in many instances, after completing one or two sociocultural and historical courses, their perceptions change quite remarkably. For example, students learn that the opportunities to participate in sport aren't equitable; that the control of sport is in the hands of a minority, many of whom are white males of affluence; that racism in sport still exists today even though it may not be readily apparent when watching a contest on television or reading about it online; that powerful economic and political forces shape what sport is today and what it might look like in the future; and that the mass media act as a filter of what we see and how we see it.

Although *Social Dimensions of Canadian Sport and Physical Activity* has a deliberately distinctly Canadian focus, we live in a world that has never been more interconnected. Indeed, what happens in the world of sport *outside* our borders influences sport *inside* our borders. Canadians have, historically, embraced a wide range of local sport and athletic heroes, in addition to consuming copious amounts of sports content from our American neighbours via the mass media. Today, more and more Canadians follow not only the major leagues of North American sport, but teams and leagues from around the world, including the most popular European soccer leagues. For generations, meanwhile, immigrants have been bringing their sports and their ways of doing physical activity to Canada. As such, we are not simply a carbon copy of another country or an amalgamation of countries. We are uniquely Canadian and, over time, we have shaped our own cultural ideologies and our own ways of interpreting and playing sport, sometimes in competing and contradictory ways.

THE CONTENT OF THE TEXT

Social Dimensions of Canadian Sport and Physical Activity contains 15 chapters. Because the chapter sequence has been purposely coordinated, we recommend that the chapters be read consecutively. However, since their content is so distinctive, it is possible to read the chapters in an altered order. Each chapter concludes with relevant Critical Thinking Questions, Suggested Readings, and References.

In the first chapter, Drs. Jane Crossman and Jay Scherer provide an introductory foundation for understanding the social dimensions of sport and physical activity from a Canadian perspective. They describe how pervasive sport is in Canadian society and outline terms that will be used throughout the text, such as *sociological imagination*, *agency*, *social structures*, *power*, *ideology*, and *hegemony*.

In the second chapter, Dr. Ian Ritchie presents a rich overview of sociological theories that set the foundation for understanding the social world, and more specifically for our purposes the world of sport. Since it is impossible to present a complete inventory of the myriad sociological theories, he focuses on four major ones: Durkheim's *functionalism*, Marx's *conflict theory*, Mead's *symbolic interactionism*, and *critical social theories* (cultural, feminist, and critical race studies).

In Chapter 3, Dr. Don Morrow condenses Canadian sport history from the 15th century to the present day. He highlights the people who have influenced our sport history (First Nations, French, British), as well as the existing social conditions, power relations, and developments that have had such a profound effect on shaping the development of sport in Canada. Highlighted are industrial and technological changes, the evolution of sporting equipment, transitions to commercial mass sport, and the impact of the entrepreneurial spirit.

Dr. Rob Beamish, author of Chapter 4, addresses the inequalities of condition and opportunity that exist in sport today. Theories of social inequality are outlined as well as current patterns of class and sport. He points out that in Canada we endorse an unequal, performance-based rewards system. Success is linked, for example, to proximity to facilities, gender, social class, and physical ability.

In Chapter 5, Drs. Victoria Paraschak and Susan Tirone explore issues of racial and ethnic discrimination in Canadian sport. They point out that sport provides opportunities to feel pride in one's own cultural heritage. Unfortunately, the system is structured so that some individuals—that is, those of white European heritage—feel more pride than others. Poverty and access are key components that prevent ethnic minority people from fully participating in sport in Canada. The need to create equal opportunities in sport for all Canadian people (e.g., through race-structured sport systems) is a fundamental message in this chapter.

In Chapter 6, Dr. Mary Louise Adams helps us understand the current issues relevant to gender, sexuality, and sport and poses the question: Is sport really a male thing? Adams does not shy away from controversial topics such as separate events for men and women, sex testing in sport, and sport typing (certain sports are “male only”). Issues for athletes who are transgender, transsexual, gay, or lesbian are also discussed.

In Chapter 7, Drs. Ralph Wheeler, Jay Scherer, and Jane Crossman outline the current sport system in Canada for children and youth, including school, community, and private agencies. Critical issues and concerns related to organized sport for children and youth are described and include reasons for the high rate of dropout, ethical issues, sport specialization, risk of injury, parental interference, and coaches' influence. Solutions to remedy the problems posed are offered.

Chapter 8 by Dr. Jason Laurendeau focuses on sport deviance. He describes how deviance is conceptualized and differentiates deviance on and off the field of play. He covers timely topics such as drug use in sport and risk sports and points out that deviance arises out of an overly enthusiastic adoption of a set of expectations that characterizes particular activities.

Dr. Stacy Lorenz, author of Chapter 9, addresses the fact that sport is replete with violence. Theories of violence are explained along with a historical overview of how violence in sport has grown in our society. Who encourages sport violence is a question he broaches to help the reader better understand contemporary trends in sport violence committed by both players and fans. He also discusses gender and gender relations as they relate to violence.

In Chapter 10, Drs. Tim Fletcher and Duane Bratt consider the relationship between sport and educational institutions in Canada. They describe the nature and purposes of physical education in the public school system and how the curriculum has evolved. The challenges and issues inherent in Canadian interuniversity sport are outlined and include

gender equity, athletic scholarships, doping, hazing, challenging the NCAA, alumni funding, and academic achievement.

In Chapter 11, Dr. Jay Scherer explains the influence, extent, and power the media have in shaping what we know and how we think. He outlines the historical development of the televised sports-media complex in Canada and points out that sports media are replete with symbols of nationalism and militarism and other gender and racial ideologies. Sport journalism and new media technologies that will change how we view and interpret sport are also included.

Dr. Jean Harvey, in Chapter 12, focuses on the marriage between politics and sport. He provides a historical overview and reasons for the Canadian government's intervention in sport. The author outlines current federal sport policies that include programs such as the Athlete Assistance Program, Hosting Program, and the Children's Fitness Tax Credit. Also included is the controversial topic of funding for high-performance sport versus mass participation sport.

Chapter 13, written by Dr. Brad Humphreys and Professor Moshe Lander, delves into the ever-changing and multifaceted business of sport. They cover the structure and functioning of professional leagues such as the NHL, CFL, MLB, NBA, NFL, and MLS. Under the auspice of these cartels, they address a host of issues such as the costs and revenues to the owners, reserve clauses, free agency, collective bargaining agreements, work stoppages, payroll caps, ticket pricing, revenue sharing, and facility subsidies. A discussion about the costs to bid on and subsequently host the Olympic Games concludes this chapter. Students with an interest in the economic side of professional sport will find this chapter a fascinating read.

In the penultimate chapter, Dr. David Whitson lends a keen eye to how globalization affects sport along cultural, political, and economic lines. He discusses both the upside and downside to globalization, homing in on the power of transnational corporations and the global sports labour market. He points out that, thanks to electronic media, professional sport is now marketed and consumed around the globe in fascinating and contradictory ways.

Dr. Brian Wilson frames the final chapter on the future of sport on four overarching categories that have been associated with major social changes: governance, globalization, technology, and the environment. He makes 11 predictions based on the social trends from the above four categories and describes ways to use research and theory to inform intervention.

On behalf of all the contributors, we hope you enjoy reading this book—and furthermore that it provides you with a sound basis for understanding the social dimensions of sport and physical activity from a uniquely Canadian perspective.

Jane Crossman and Jay Scherer

SUPPLEMENTS

Test Item File (978-0-13-344160-4) The Test Item File includes chapter-relevant questions to help instructors create quizzes, exams, homework, and practice handouts. There are approximately 400 questions in multiple-choice format that address factual, applied, and conceptual material from the textbook. It is available from the Pearson online catalogue to instructors who adopt the textbook at <http://catalogue.pearsoned.ca>.

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Acknowledgments

The completion of this text would not have been possible had it not been for the willingness of the contributors to share their expertise. To each of them we extend our sincere gratitude and we trust that readers will appreciate their knowledge, insights, and wisdom.

The authors and contributors greatly appreciate the advice and guidance of our colleagues in their review of the text and the manuscript:

Marc Belanger, *Vanier College*
Graham Fletcher, *University of the Fraser Valley*
Susan L. Forbes, *Lakehead University*
Peggy Gallant, *St. Francis Xavier University*
Fred Mason, *University of New Brunswick*
Barbara Ruttenberg, *Concordia University*
Susan M. M. Todd, *Langara College*

Also, we thank Pearson for their willingness to publish this first edition. Specific thanks go to Matthew Christian, Pearson's acquisitions editor who kick-started this project; Christine Langone, our ever-cooperative and motivating developmental editor; and Leanne Rancourt, our thorough, attention-to-detail copy editor.

We are grateful for the ever-present support of our families in Canada and New Zealand, without whom this book simply would not have been possible.

Jane would like to thank Dr. Brent Rushall for his mentorship and cheerleading through her career and Dr. John Vincent, her research partner, who, through his deft research and writing skills elevated the quality of their published papers. She extends special gratitude to Paulene McGowan for her feedback and constant encouragement.

Jay would like to thank those individuals who have generously shared valuable pedagogical insights and teaching philosophies with him over the years, including: Dave Whitson, Lisa McDermott, Judy Davidson, Steve Jackson, Brian Wilson, and, especially, Vicky Paraschak.

Jane Crossman and Jay Scherer

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EDITORS

Dr. Jane Crossman is a Professor Emerita at Lakehead University where she held several administrative positions throughout her career including Chair and Graduate Coordinator of the School of Kinesiology. She taught graduate and undergraduate courses in sport sociology, research methods, and mental training. Jane's research, which pertains to the newspaper coverage of sporting events and the psychosocial dimensions of sports injuries, has been published in a number of scholarly journals. She has edited three books: *Coping with Sports Injuries: Psychological Strategies for Rehabilitation* (2001) and *Canadian Sport Sociology*, Editions 1 (2003) and 2 (2007). Jane contributed a chapter to the book *The Sport Scientist's Research Adventures* in which she gave insights into the challenges and gratification of being a researcher. Jane is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Sport Behavior* and regularly reviews for a number of journals and texts in the fields of sport sociology, sport psychology, and research methods. During sabbaticals, Jane has been a Visiting Professor at the Universities of Exeter and Brighton (UK), the University of Otago (New Zealand), Victoria University (Australia), and the University of Ulster (Northern Ireland). Jane enjoys exercising a border collie, golfing, and fiction and nonfiction writing.

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Dr. Rob Beamish holds a joint appointment in the Department of Sociology and the School of Kinesiology and Health at Queen's University. During that time, in addition to his teaching and research responsibilities, he has served as the Associate Dean (Studies)

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Dr. Duane Bratt is a Professor of Political Science and Chair of the Department of Policy Studies at Mount Royal University. He teaches public policy and international politics. While his primary research interests are in nuclear energy and Canadian foreign policy, he also writes on sport policy. This includes a recent research project that led to the inclusion of physical literacy standards in Alberta's daycare accreditation standards. As a sport practitioner, he is the National Resource Person and Chair of the LTAD committee for the Canadian Lacrosse Association.

Dr. Tim Fletcher is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Kinesiology at Brock University. His teaching and research interests are in physical education pedagogy and teacher education. In particular, his research focuses on ways in which teachers understand the connections between their teaching identities, practices, and student learning. Much of his recent work has used self-study methodology, including the co-edited text *Self-Study of Physical Education: The Interplay of Scholarship and Practice* (forthcoming 2014) with Alan Ovens from the University of Auckland in New Zealand. In 2014 he was awarded a Young Scholar Award from the International Association for Physical Education in Higher Education (AIESEP).

Dr. Jean Harvey is a Professor at the School of Human Kinetics at the University of Ottawa. He is also the founding director of the Research Centre for Sport in Canadian Society. His main areas of research are sport policy in Canada and abroad as well as sport in the context of globalization. Jean has published extensively both in French and in English in multiple refereed journals. He is also the co-editor with Lucie Thibault of *Sport Policy in Canada* (2013) and co-author of *Sport and Social Movements* (2013).

Dr. Brad Humphreys is a Professor in the College of Business and Economics, Department of Economics at West Virginia University. He holds a PhD in economics from Johns Hopkins University. He previously held positions at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the University of Alberta. His research on the economics of gambling, the economics and financing of professional sports, and the economics of higher education has been published in academic journals in economics and policy analysis. He has published more than 80 papers in peer-reviewed journals in economics and public policy. He twice testified before the United States Congress on the economic impact of professional sports teams and facilities. His current research projects include an assessment of the informational efficiency of sports betting markets, an examination of the effect of new sports facilities on urban residential construction projects, an assessment of the causal relationship between recreational gambling and health outcomes, and an evaluation of the value Canadians place on Olympic gold medals.

Professor Moshe Lander is a Lecturer at Concordia University. He holds a Masters in Applied European Languages and is a PhD candidate in Economics. He is an award-winning teacher, having spent most of the last two decades teaching economics, statistics, mathematics, and finance at postsecondary institutions in Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec. Moshe is known on campus as much for his unique presentation skills and his appearance as he is for his extremely dry wit and linguistic dexterity. Though he spends much of his time in the classroom teaching, Moshe loves to spend his down time either at his picturesque summer retreat in Hapolonia or in Flin Flon, Manitoba, watching the annual migration of fake tootie birds.

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Dr. Don Morrow is a Professor of Kinesiology at Western University. His academic teaching and research interest areas are Canadian sport history, sport literature, body culture and concepts of exercise history, integrative health/medicine, and health promotion. He is the author of eight textbooks, including the most recent third edition of *Sport in Canada: A History* (2013) and numerous academic journal articles, an award-winning teacher, a past-president of the North American Society for Sport History, and an elected Fellow of the American Academy Kinesiology and Physical Education.

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Chapter 1

Perspectives on the Social Dimensions of Sport and Physical Activity in Canada

Jane Crossman and Jay Scherer



Take a few moments to think about the importance of sport and physical activity in your life.

Sport provides opportunities for socialization for Canadians.
Mark Spowart/Alamy



Blend Images – Pete Saloutos/Brand X Pictures/Getty Images

For thousands of students enrolled in kinesiology, human kinetics, and physical education programs across the country, the practices of sport and physical activity are so pervasive that they are widely taken for granted as a part of the rhythm of their own lives and also indelible elements of the fabric of Canadian society. For many of us, our earliest childhood memories include our first athletic experiences in organized sport settings or informal experiences at the playground or in school. Moreover, sport is a popular and pleasurable everyday topic of conversation among ordinary Canadians of all ages and is widely regarded as a common sense social lubricant. We habitually discuss the chances of our favourite National Hockey League (NHL) team making the playoffs, the performance of our fantasy football team, the latest scandal rocking the sports world, how the high school soccer team is performing, or the latest tweet by a sports personality.

Sport is intimately connected to the most significant social institutions of Canadian society (e.g., the media, the education system, and various levels of government). Canadians are inundated with images and stories of sports and athletes that now air on an unprecedented number of specialty sport channels (such as TSN and Sportsnet) that are part of the BCE and Rogers telecommunications empires. Students will be well aware that the Internet has a never-ending reservoir of sports-specific sites offering live feeds, recent and past game results and statistics, and continual insider information about teams and players. Online fantasy leagues, meanwhile, allow millions of sports fans to control the destiny of “their” teams and chosen players at their convenience. Most city newspapers still devote an entire section to sports (in print and online), knowing that a significant percentage of readers purchase or subscribe to newspapers for the sports coverage alone—a fact not lost on advertisers in search of sizable and predictable audiences. Following Sidney Crosby’s overtime gold-medal-winning goal for the Canadian men’s hockey team at the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver—a game watched by 26.5 million Canadians—Bell Canada wireless and wireline networks carried the most calls and text messages in its history. In sum, sport is an extremely popular social phenomenon that has exploded in visibility and popularity in the last 30 years.

Of course, we aren’t merely a nation that follows sports. Many parents devote huge amounts of time, energy, and money so that their children can participate in organized sport. Provinces, mindful of the declining fitness levels and soaring obesity rates of children and youth, are taking a hard look at extending the number of hours per week devoted to physical education. Canadian colleges and universities offer a wide range of intramural and interschool sports for both women and men. Some baby boomers now reaching retirement age are spending significant amounts of their leisure time actively involved in their favourite sport or physical activity. The number of sporting activities and leisure pursuits available to Canadians has expanded radically over the past 50 years. We have approximately 2,500 arenas, 1,300 curling rinks, and more than 2,300 golf courses. The 2013 Goodlife Fitness Toronto Marathon saw roughly 12,000 people cross the finish line. Many of these activities are more than sports played for the fun of friendly competition—they’re also popular social and cultural events.

In addition, many groups that have historically been left out of the sport equation are now finding more opportunities to participate. For example, the 2014 Winter Paralympic Games in Sochi, Russia, had 585 competitors from 45 countries. The 2014 North American Indigenous

Games held in Regina, Saskatchewan, had 6,000 competitors. Cleveland, Ohio, home of the 2014 Gay Games, welcomed more than 10,000 athletes from more than 65 countries. Unprecedented numbers of girls and women now participate in a host of sporting activities they were once excluded from—especially sports that traditionally emphasized aspects of physicality for boys and men, like wrestling. Still, while there is no doubt that the opportunities to “do sport” have expanded across Canada, there remain significant and enduring issues of inequality between men and women, rich and poor, and along racial and ethnic lines that continue to structure sporting experiences for Canadians in different ways. For example, according to the latest research paper on sport participation rates released by Canadian Heritage (2013):

1. Sport participation rates across the country continue to decline.
2. The gender gap in sport participation has increased, and men are more likely to participate in sport than women.
3. Sport participation rates decrease as Canadians get older, yet the participation rates of young Canadians are declining faster than that of older Canadians.
4. Higher income earners are more likely to participate in sport than less affluent Canadians, and household income decisively influences children’s participation in sport.
5. Sport participation of non-Anglophones is declining, and established immigrants participate in sport less than recent immigrants.

There are other obvious disparities as well. For example, female athletes are still regularly marginalized and under-represented by the media and society at large. Furthermore, in 2013 women comprised only 21 of 101 active members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), and in 2011 women held only 15% of head coaching positions in Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS). Yet, while all of these observations are important and point to the fact that interest and participation in sport and physical activity are related to a number of standard sociological variables (gender, race, social class, age, geographic location, education levels, etc.), they do little to address the wider sociological significance of these seemingly obvious facts. Instead, it is more fruitful to ask, as Hall, Slack, Smith, and Whitson (1991) did over two decades ago, are patterns of male and female participation in sport products of social structures that favour and empower men in innumerable ways? What is it about the class structure of Canadian society that perpetuates unequal class relations and unequal access to sport participation? Why do older Canadians continue to struggle to gain access to various sports facilities? These questions and many others

connect the study of sport to the study of change and resistance in relations between dominant and subordinate groups in society. When these questions are asked, and when research uncovers interesting lines of analysis and further investigation, we show that to study sport sociology is not just of interest to a few fans but something that is important to the understanding of Canadian society. (Hall et al., 1991, p. 20)

In this respect, while sport continues to offer a host of opportunities and pleasurable experiences, including fun and relaxation for millions of Canadians, we would be naive to believe that the world of sport is devoid of the problems, social issues, and unequal power relations present in our society. Moreover, sport regularly makes the headlines for all the wrong reasons: Discriminatory practices, exploitation of athletes, labour disputes, drug



Christine Sinclair, captain of the 2012 bronze-medal-winning Olympic soccer team and the 2012 Canadian Athlete of the Year.

Carlos Osorio/ZUMA Press/Newscom

use, sexual abuse and assault, gambling, and the habitual glorification of violence which are byproducts of an industry focused on promoting a hypermasculine spectacle for profit. Indeed, it seems as the rationalization of sport continues to increase, moral conduct decreases while other ways of imagining sport are obscured.

The sociological analysis of sport and physical activity provides students with the opportunity to ask thought-provoking questions using “concepts and theories that emphasize social as opposed to individual causes and that point toward structural solutions to problems identified in sport” (Hall et al., 1991, pp. 11–12). For example:

- Why has participation in sport historically been stratified by age, gender, race, and socioeconomic status?
- Why is a power and performance model of sport privileged over alternative ways of playing and doing sport?
- Will leagues with high rates of concussions and other injuries (e.g., the Canadian and National Football Leagues) still exist in two decades?
- Why do so many cities invest significant amounts of public funds in “world-class” sports arenas and stadiums?
- Why do countries spend billions of dollars to host the Olympic Games?
- Should the Canadian government invest in high-performance sport (e.g., the Own the Podium program) at the expense of programs that could increase mass participation?
- Why do gay men hesitate to come out in professional sports environments?

Crucially, in raising these types of difficult questions and political issues, “the sociology of sport is going beyond a concern with phenomena within sport. It is seeking to demonstrate the significance of sport to some of the central problems of sociology: the explanation of structures of class, gender, and racial inequality, as well as the processes through which social change is achieved and circumscribed” (Hall et al., 1991, p. 12).

Thus, the chapters in this text will emphasize that sport is not simply a reflection or mirror of society but, as Jean Harvey (2000) (author of Chapter 12) notes, “a world in its own right, with its own life and its own contradictions” (p. 19). It is also important to recognize, though, that as sport is *shaped by the social world around us, so it actively shapes the social world*. As we shall see throughout this textbook, while sport is a social practice that is shaped by broader power relations that benefit some individuals and groups more than others, it also enables individuals and groups with varying resources to reproduce current practices or resist them.

On this latter note, students often walk into their first sociology of sport and physical activity course with preconceived ideas about the world of sport and how it works. For example, because of the predominance of black athletes in certain sports, we may believe that racism no longer exists in sport, or that black athletes are “naturally gifted.” Or, thanks to our regular exposure to hockey, we may have come to accept that fighting is simply “part of the game.” Still, even our most accepted beliefs and normalized values need to be held up for critical reflection and analysis, while all of the sports that we play and enjoy—and the institutions that they are connected to—need to be recognized as social and historical products that have been made and remade by Canadians over the course of many decades against the backdrop of a range of cultural struggles. Students of sport sociology need to look critically at sport to better describe, explain, and improve it, but also to engage in broader processes of social change and transformation. At its very root, then, the sociological study of sport is a fundamentally creative and exhilarating practice that can reveal new insights and lines of analysis that contribute to the understanding of contemporary Canadian society.

SOCIOLOGY AS A SOCIAL SCIENCE

Sociology is one of the social sciences, along with economics, anthropology, political science, and psychology. It is “the disciplined study of human social behaviour, especially the investigation of the origins, classifications, institutions, and development of human society on a global level” (Henslin, Glenday, Pupo, & Duffy, 2014, p. 5). Sociologists are interested in social interactions that take place between humans, groups, and societies. They examine the ways in which social structures, power relations, and institutions (e.g., family, social class) enable and constrain individuals and groups; they are concerned with the social rules and ideologies that not only bind people together, but also separate them.

Yet as the English sociologist Anthony Giddens (1987) noted, it must also be emphasized that “sociology cannot be a neutral intellectual endeavor” (p. viii). Rather, it is a critical examination of the contemporary social situation with the underlying goal not only to *understand* social phenomena but to *improve* society. Because sociology is concerned with our behaviour as social beings, subdisciplines have emerged that are broad in scope and diverse in nature. One of those subdisciplines is called *sport sociology*.

Sport sociology examines the relationship between sport and society and studies sport as an ever-present part of social and cultural life. Sport sociologists study humans/agents

involved in sport (e.g., athletes, coaches, fans, team owners), the institutions and social structures that affect their sport experiences (e.g., education, media, economics, politics), and the processes that occur in conjunction with sport (e.g., social stratification and mobility, deviance, violence, inequality). Some of the aims of the sociology of sport include:

- to examine critically the role, function, and meaning of sport in the lives of people and the societies they form;
- to describe and explain the emergence and diffusion of sport over time and across different societies;
- to identify the processes of socialization into, through, and out of modern sport;
- to investigate the values and norms of dominant, emergent, and residual cultures and subcultures in sport;
- to explore how the exercise of power and the stratified nature of societies place limits and possibilities on people's involvement and success in sport as performers, officials, spectators, workers, or consumers;
- to examine the way in which sport responds to social changes in the larger society; and
- to contribute both to the knowledge base of sociology more generally and also to the formation of policy that seeks to ensure that global sport processes are less wasteful of lives and resources. (ISSA, 2005)

Sport sociologists are also concerned with the links between the structure of organized sport and dominant cultural ideologies such as class, race, sexuality, and nationalism. Indeed, one of the main roles of sociologists is to “disentangle the complex relationships between individuals and their social world” (Naiman, 2012, p. 2). We challenge long-held myths and common sense assumptions about the world of sport and, by doing so, seek to make it better for all those involved.

An overview of what sport sociologists actually *do* is listed below:

1. **Serve as experts** to government agencies, public enquiries, and commissions in areas such as drugs, violence, and health education, thus contributing to their reports.
2. **Act as advocates** for athlete's rights and responsibilities by providing research for groups who seek to challenge inequalities of gender, class, ethnicity, age, and disability, particularly with respect to access, resources, and status.
3. **Promote human development** as opposed to performance efficiency models within physical education and sport science.
4. **Encourage better use of human and environmental resources**, thus ensuring that there is a sporting future for generations to come. (ISSA, 2005)

It's important to emphasize, then, that sport sociologists look for extrinsic or structural and historical explanations to explain social behaviour and social issues. On the other hand, psychologists examine intrinsic explanations to explain individual behaviour. However, is it enough to consider intrinsic factors and personal choices by athletes to explain the systemic use of, for example, performance-enhancing drugs in many professional sports? Or do we need to consider a host of structural issues and, indeed, the increasing rationalization of high-performance and professional sport in relation to values of competition and the significant financial rewards (sponsorship and salaries) on offer to

contemporary athletes as decisive factors that contribute to these patterns? Alternatively, why should we consider banning performance-enhancing drugs at these levels if their use is endemic (i.e., is it cheating if everyone is doing it)? Finally, why are the debates associated with drug use in sport so heavily moralized when the use of other performance-enhancing drugs is normalized in other occupations and industries and actively encouraged and promoted in relation to other aspects of our personal lives? Students will be well aware, for example, that other performance enhancers (i.e., Viagra and Cialis) are habitually promoted during popular sports broadcasts to reach male audiences.

Because we seek to both understand and denaturalize longstanding assumptions and beliefs, in addition to engaging in political dialogue and debate on how to improve contemporary sporting practices and cultures in Canadian society, the sociology of sport is a complex, controversial, and often challenging pursuit. Moreover, sport sociologists pose difficult questions about social problems and issues that are not always answered. It is, however, a fascinating endeavour—so much so that it can foster stimulating discussion on a wide range of topics and ideas.

In so doing, the chapters in this text will regularly ask you to reflect on your own sporting experiences and, indeed, hold up your own *practical consciousness* for critical reflection. By practical consciousness we mean your accepted beliefs—all of the things about sport and Canadian society that you may be tacitly aware of without, at times, being able to give them direct expression or explanation. Your practical consciousness is shaped by your experiences of “doing,” “consuming,” and “interacting” with various social structures, institutions, and ideologies; these are the experiences that frame the possibilities you can imagine in sport and beyond. However, your practical consciousness is far from simply reflective of dominant interests and beliefs—it is also subject to ongoing refinement (hence, practical), especially as you encounter new experiences, ideas, and information. As such, practical consciousness is never static. Actions and experiences supporting practical consciousness strengthen it, while new actions and experiences can challenge our assumptions and make us question various “truths” about what we once took for granted.

For example, a “power and performance” model based on competition, domination of opponents, rationalized rules, and scorekeeping by adults is widely understood as a common sense and normal way for children and youth to play sport in the eyes of many administrators, coaches, and parents, who themselves often grew up playing similarly structured sports. Indeed, your own practical consciousness may have been reinforced over years of engaging in these types of sporting experiences that have now simply come to seem natural (and, of course, regularly pleasurable, thrilling, and fun). Still, is this the only way that youth sport can be structured? Or, are there alternative ways of structuring sport according to different values and principles? Before revisiting these ideas, though, let’s first briefly consider the origin of the sociology of sport and some of the issues associated with defining sport.

ORIGINS OF SPORT SOCIOLOGY

The academic study of sport sociology is relatively new, and scientific research in the field only emerged in the 1960s. From 1965 to 1969, Kenyon and McPherson (1973) of the University of Wisconsin published a series of articles devoted to the sociology of sport, positioning it “firmly within the positivistic perspective of science” (Sage, 1997, p. 326). In the late 1960s

the annual meetings of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation included a session devoted to the sociology of sport (Dance was added to this organization's title in 1979). In 1976, this same association founded the Sociology of Sport Academy with the purpose of coordinating and promoting the study of sport sociology (Sage, 1997).

The 1960s and 1970s constituted an important time for the development of the study of sport sociology. During that time there was much unrest in North America, particularly with regard to the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War as well as the civil rights movement. For example, in 1968, during the medal presentation at the Summer Olympic Games in Mexico City, two black athletes, John Carlos and Tommie Smith, made a gloved black power salute, thereby using the global visibility provided by the Olympic Games as a vehicle to broadcast their anger with the plight of black Americans and unequal race relations in the United States. This resistant gesture was symbolic of the imbalance of societal power that prevailed not only for black Americans, but also for other minority groups. Sport was no exception. Sport sociologists understood that it was no longer enough to simply describe and celebrate sport and various athletic accomplishments; instead, they needed to examine and explain how various social institutions transform sport and, likewise, how sport can be used to transform broader social structures against the backdrop of a range of cultural struggles, pressing political debates, and social movements.

Within this context, an organized society for the study of sport sociology (which later became the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport [NASSS]) emerged after a Big Ten Symposium in 1978. The mission statement of the NASSS was "to promote, stimulate, and encourage the sociological study of play, games, sport and contemporary physical culture." In 1980, the first NASSS conference took place in Denver, and subsequently several Canadian cities have hosted this annual gathering. NASSS publishes a peer-reviewed journal entitled the *Sociology of Sport Journal*. An international umbrella group called the International Sociology of Sport Association (ISSA) was founded in 1965. The ISSA holds annual conferences and publishes a peer-reviewed journal entitled the *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. Other international journals in which sport sociologists commonly publish include the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, *International Journal of Sport Communication*, *Sport and Society*, *Leisure Studies*, and *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*. Some sociology and sport management journals also publish articles with a sport sociology theme.

Therefore, while there are a host of various national and international organizations associated with the sociology of sport, it is vital for students to understand sport within the context of Canadian society while also making connections to continental and, indeed, global patterns and forms of social organization. The organization of Canadian society has many similarities with the United States; however, there are also significant differences between the countries. Canadian history is, of course, substantially different from that of the United States, and there are unique social relations (between Anglophones and Francophones, Aboriginal and Euro-Canadians, etc.) that point to these enduring distinctions. Canadians also have competing visions of the roles and structures of government, vastly different commitments to the provision of social services including universal healthcare, a longstanding history of public broadcasting by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Radio-Canada, and, at times, radically different visions of foreign policy.

It should be no surprise, then, that significant aspects of the organization and structure of Canadian sport are different compared to sport in the United States and, indeed,

other parts of the world. Of course, as Jay Scherer and David Whitson note in Chapters 11 and 14, Canadians have always followed the North American major leagues in significant numbers (in addition to NCAA football and basketball). As well, we are more interconnected with the rest of the world than ever before. In 2014, for example, we watched Germany win the FIFA World Cup in Rio de Janeiro with 32 nations qualifying; Martin Kaymer (Germany) and Michelle Wie (United States) win the US Open Golf Championships; and Novak Djokovic (Serbia) and Petra Kvitová (Czech Republic) win the singles events at Wimbledon. So to claim that Canadian sport is a unique entity thriving on its own without any external influences would be naive and inaccurate.

There are, however, undeniably unique elements in Canadian life and culture, and sport continues to play a significant role in providing a range of symbolic meanings and values that are important to Canadians and are part of the ongoing story that we tell ourselves about who we are and what it means to be Canadian. For example, winter sports are often thought of as distinctly Canadian cultural forms, especially sports like hockey, curling and, perhaps to a lesser extent, cross-country and alpine skiing and snowboarding. In many neighbourhoods across the country the boards go up for outdoor ice rinks, and when the weather gets cold enough surfaces and backyards are flooded to make rinks for thousands of Canadians to play shinny on. Sport has, moreover, the capacity to represent our communities and indeed our nation on the world stage. In the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver, Canada won the most gold medals ($N = 14$) of the 82 nations competing and was third overall in medal count. Both the women's and men's hockey teams won gold over their US rivals, and Sidney Crosby's sudden-death overtime winning goal, referred to by the *Globe and Mail* newspaper as "The Shot Heard Around the World"



Alexandre Bilodeau, Canadian freestyle skier, was the first Canadian to win an Olympic gold medal on home soil in 2010. He won a second gold medal at the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games. Cameron Spencer/Getty Images

(March 1, 2010, p. A3) became an indelible Canadian memory and provided a new generation of Canadians with their own “Paul Henderson moment” (*Globe and Mail*, March 2, 2010, p. 4), a reference to the iconic 1972 Summit Series between Canada and the Soviet Union. These victories (and others, like Alexandre Bilodeau’s gold medal in the men’s moguls—the first gold medal for Canada at an Olympic Games held in our country) have been “mythologized” in Canadian culture as part of the story of who we are and what we value as a country. Similar feats and stories were experienced in the 2014 Sochi Olympic Games when Canada won gold medals in men’s and women’s hockey and curling, women’s moguls, freestyle skiing, bobsleigh, and men’s speed skating, to name a few.

The sheer popularity and visibility of these sporting events and physical activities that bring together more groups of Canadians than other aspects of culture suggests that they are important features of everyday life in Canada and contribute to a distinctive Canadian cultural identity. Still, even our most cherished identities and normalized sporting practices such as the national sport of hockey are far from simply natural extensions of the Canadian environment, while even the definition of *sport* has been widely debated and contested.

DEFINING SPORT: POWER AT PLAY

The meaning of the word *sport* has evolved over time, and until recently sport has simply been understood as an activity that requires *physical exertion*. For the purposes of this textbook, sport shall be defined as any formally organized, competitive activity that involves vigorous physical exertion or the execution of complex physical skills with rules enforced by a regulatory body.

An examination of the components of this definition is worthwhile. First, in order for the activity to be *competitive* the organizational and technical aspects must become important, including equipment and systematic training protocols. Second, the *rules* of the activity must become standardized and formalized by a regulatory body that oversees rule enforcement. “What we are talking about, in short, is the institutionalization of sport and the rationalization of both sports training and the sports organizations that sponsor training, and under whose auspices competition occurs” (Hall et al., 1991, p. 14).

Nonetheless, even these broad, general ideas do not necessarily provide a neat solution to what “counts” as sport. For example, are chess boxing (an 11-round match consisting of alternate rounds of boxing and “blitz” chess sessions) or competitive rock-paper-scissors contests sporting events? The World Chess Boxing Organization and the World Rock Paper Scissors Society may think so; others may not. Also consider the made-for-TV coverage of the World Series of Poker. In his article “Sport or Not a Sport? Pot Is Split on Poker,” Mike Dodd (2006) considers this question. ESPN (the E standing for Entertainment) never called poker a sport. Certainly, a mental component is required to play poker, but is there a physical component? Some poker players, such as Doyle Brunson, age 72, argue that there is because of the length of tournaments: “The last tournament I won, I played 18 hours one day, 16 hours the next day and 16 hours the last day. That’s pretty tough” (Dodd, 2006, p. 13C). On the other hand, some athletes might object to the use of the words *poker* and *sport* in the same sentence. Bryan Clay, the 2004 Olympic silver medalist in the decathlon, feels that “the word athlete and the word sport are getting so watered down” (Dodd, 2006, p. 13C) Even though the IOC hasn’t recognized poker, it does recognize another card game: contract bridge.

Instead of focusing on the endless (but often enjoyable!) debates and discussions over the definition of sport, it is more productive to consider some of the ideas associated with the concept of social construction and how both organized sport and informal ways of playing have emerged over the course of many years. In so doing, we will focus not only on formal practices associated with sport, but also on the less formalized aspects of physical activity that are important for millions of Canadians. By informal sport, we mean physical activities that are self-initiated with no fixed start or stop times. Informal sport has no tangible outcomes such as prizes or ribbons, and victory and reward are not dominant features in this form of activity (e.g., children getting together after dinner to play a game of pickup baseball, playing a game of tennis with a roommate, going for a round of golf with three friends, rock climbing, or windsurfing). Here we are interested in the social significance not only of prominent forms of sport in Canadian culture (e.g., NHL hockey and the CFL), but also of games of pickup basketball, shinny, the beer leagues of old-timer hockey, softball, and all of the other informal activities that are important and popular parts of Canadian culture and everyday life.

Sport (formal and informal) is *socially constructed*, as are all of the meanings about social life that shape the world in which we live. That is, sport has been invented and reinvented by generations of men and women for a wide range of purposes. Sport also shapes and is shaped by the social world around us, and because sport is a social construct it can be changed and given different forms and meanings over time and from place to place (i.e., it can be *socially reconstructed*). Indeed, it scarcely needs saying that a certain activity that is considered to be a sport in one culture or subculture may simply not be considered a sport in another culture or another era. In other words, the debates about defining sport “are less important than studying the social relations and distributions of political and economic resources that have meant that some games and physical pursuits have become institutionalized features of Canadian life while others have not” (Hall et al., 1991, p. 15).

Together, all of these ideas point toward the importance of embracing a critical sociological outlook that emphasizes the role of social construction in all of our lives; human beings live in webs of meaning that they themselves have spun. Indeed, even our most naturalized social relations (money, democracy, the legal system, etc.) and taken-for-granted identities need to be understood as historical and cultural constructs that are constantly changing as we interact with each other and with social structures. In this respect, we will focus on making historical and comparative connections to illuminate how various sports and their related meanings change, but also illustrating the significance of sport and human agency in processes of broader sociohistorical reproduction and transformation.

WAYS OF LOOKING AT SOCIAL PHENOMENA

In the study of sociology, there are different ways of looking at social phenomena: micro, macro, and global. The three levels of social structure are not necessarily in opposition to each other. Rather, they are ways of looking at social phenomena from different perspectives.

1. *Microstructures* are intimate, face-to-face social interactions with, for example, friends, family, work colleagues, teachers, and coaches and how they influence society. These are small groups such as a curling foursome, bowling team, or the board of a children’s soccer league. People participate in microstructures for personal