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Sociology of Sport in the United States

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Abstract

This paper updates and extends previous analyses of the sociology of sport in the United States. It provides a chronology of major events in the history of the field as well as a description of the social context in which the field emerged and grew. Then a review of data from both sociology and physical education leads to the conclusion that the sociology of sport in the United States continues to lack full legitimacy and a critical mass of members in both disciplines. In fact, there are reasons to conclude that the continued numerical growth of those calling themselves sport sociologists has peaked and will not change significantly in the immediate future. Finally, a content summary of papers published in the first 14 issues of the *Sociology of Sport Journal* reveals the priorities given to research topics and research methodologies among those Americans doing some of the more significant work in the field.

I. Introduction

Preparing an overview of the sociology of sport in U.S. presents two major problems:

First, it is difficult to separate developments in the United States from those in Canada and Europe. The sociology of sport was born in an international context, and an important group of the early sport sociologists in the United States were formally and informally involved in Canadian and European developments. Furthermore, Canadian sport sociologists have had a dramatic impact on both the content and organization of the field in the United States; in fact, it is impossible to discuss developments in the United States without making frequent references to developments in North America as a whole. However, this does not mean the sociology of sport in the United States does not have unique characteristics making it somewhat different from the sociology of sport in other countries. These will be discussed in the sections to follow.

Second, it is difficult to discuss the development and current status of the sociology of sport in the United States without repeating what has been written many times by many people. The number of "state of the field" papers focusing on the sociology of sport is truly impressive, and most of these papers have been written by North Americans using the United States as a major source of their observations (cf. Coakley and Hughes, 1984; Greendorfer, 1981; Gruneau, 1978; Loy, McPherson, and Kenyon, 1978a; Loy, 1980; McPherson, 1975; 1978; 1983; Sage, 1979a; 1979b; Snyder and Spreitzer, 1974; 1979; 1980).

The number and regularity of these self-descriptions and self-analyses in the sociology of sport calls for an explanation. The following list includes at least some of the reasons deserving consideration:

- a) Since the sociology of sport combines scholars from two different and distinct disciplines, there may be a perceived need to regularly clarify and defend the field's scholarly "roots" and to "appropriately" guide those doing the research on which the field depends. The fact that many of those in the United States who identified with the field were physical educators trained in programs which offered little in the way of sociology or the use of social science concepts and research methods has probably been a major factor underlying this "perceived need."
- b) Since the sociology of sport has lacked legitimacy in both physical education and sociology in American universities, regular statements about the development and direction of the field may have been seen as necessary "public relations" efforts. The fact that the sociology of sport has traditionally been one of the least prestigious subfields in sociology has probably increased the frequency of these statements (cf. Loy, McPherson, and Kenyon, 1978a). Among sport sociologists in physical education, there have been similar efforts to clarify and justify work having nothing to do with the concerns and orientations of their colleagues in exercise physiology, motor learning, and biomechanics all of which utilize the methodologies of the physical sciences.
- c) Since the sociology of sport in the United States emerged during a period of intense social activism fueled by journalistic exposés of the world of sport, some of those in the field may have been motivated to make regular attempts to distinguish what they were doing from the actions and writings of those whose scientific objectivity was in question.
- d) Since few people outside of the field have had any idea of the content or purpose of the sociology of sport, most of those involved in it have experienced a steady stream of requests to explain what it is they do as sport sociologists. This has probably intensified efforts to regularly engage in self-descriptions and self-analyses.
- e) Finally, since at least some American sport sociologists, including those who find meaning and enjoyment through playing and watching sports, have generally not taken the subject matter of sports as seriously as they should (cf. Hughes, 1987; MacAloon, 1987), it is possible that they use regular self-descriptions to assure themselves of the importance of what they do.

Regardless of the reasons for these frequent self-descriptions, sport sociologists in the United States have had no difficulty finding reliable accounts of the emergence of their field. This paper updates and extends these past analyses; the materials in the next section focus on a chronology of major developments, the social context for the emergence of the field, and the issues of legitimacy and growth.

II. Development of the Field

A. A Chronology of Major Events and Activities

The post war years in the United States were characterized by a combination of economic expansion, suburbanization, the growth of the middle class, and an almost unshakable expectation that things could only get better. Although these

"great expectations" held by Americans may not have been matched in other countries, the growth of the "leisure industry" and the increased visibility of primary and secondary sport participation in most industrial nations did not escape the attention of scholars around the world (cf. Loy, McPherson, and Kenyon, 1978a). In 1964 an international group of social scientists sensitive to the importance of sport on the social landscape during the late 20th century formed the International Committee for the Sociology of Sport. Although Gregory Stone, a sociologist from the University of Minnesota, was the only person from the United States on the first executive board, the formation of the committee provided an impetus for efforts to explain and promote the sociology of sport through selected American publications, as well as through interpersonal networks in sociology and physical education departments in some universities.

The publication of the *International Review of Sport Sociology* (IRSS) in 1966 crystalized awareness of the new field. During that year, the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (AAHPER) included a session on the sociology of sport in its program; Gerald Kenyon, John Loy, and C. M. White were invited speakers. During the following year, an international workshop on the sociology of sport hosted by the University of Illinois provided the papers for a volume on *The Cross-Cultural Analysis of Sport and Games* edited by Günther Lüschen (1970). In 1968 the American Sociological Association included a discussion on the sociology of sport led by Charles Page (University of Massachusetts), and the American Association for the Advancement of Science sponsored a session on the psychology and sociology of sport at its annual conference. Later that year, under the sponsorship of the Committee of Institutional Cooperation (CIC) which linked 11 major midwestern universities, over 50 scholars gathered at the University of Wisconsin for the first major sociology of sport conference in the United States. The conference proceedings were edited by Gerald Kenyon (1969) and published under the title of *Sociology of Sport*.

The incorporation of the sociology of sport into the curricula of American physical education and sociology departments was encouraged between 1969 and 1972 by the publication of 4 major anthologies by U.S. authors (Loy and Kenyon, 1969; Sage, 1970; Hart, 1972; Stone, 1972). During these same years, interest-generating critiques of American sport were written by Harry Edwards (*The Revolt of the Black Athlete*), Jack Scott (*The Athletic Revolution*), and Paul Hoch (*Rip off the Big Game*). Then the new field's first American textbook, *Sociology of Sport*, was published by Harry Edwards in 1973. Between 1973 and 1978 the publication of eleven additional books designed especially for classroom use did much to foster the integration of the field into American university courses (Talamini and Page, 1973; Sage, 1974; Ibrahim, 1975; Ball and Loy, 1975; Landers, 1976; Nixon, 1976; Yiannakis et al., 1976; Coakley, 1978; Eitzen and Sage, 1978; Loy, McPherson and Kenyon, 1978; Snyder and Spreitzer, 1978).

Research and writing was encouraged by the publication of the *Sport sociology Bulletin* early in 1972. In the first issue, the editor, Benjamin Lowe, announced that the publication schedule of his *Bulletin* would reflect the growth in sport sociology. The schedule immediately became regular (bi-annual issues), and by 1975 the two issues of the *Bulletin* contained nearly 160 pages. This prompted Lowe to publish a full scale bi-annual journal under the title of the *Review of Sport and Leisure*. The last issue of the *Bulletin* then appeared in 1977. A number

of other regular publications appeared during the 70's. In 1976, Richard Lapchick, a political scientist and founder of The Institute for Sport and Social Analysis, published the *Arena Newsletter* and the bi-annual *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*. The format and content of the newsletter changed in 1978 when it was replaced by an expanded publication, *Arena Review*. The officially stated purpose of Lapchick's organization was "to conduct serious inquiries into problem areas of sports" (1976). According to his description of *Arena*, these problem areas included "the political economy of sport, women and sport, race and sport, medical abuse of athletes, athletes' rights, and sport as a builder/divider of the concept of community." Another publication, the quarterly interdisciplinary *Journal of Sport Behavior*, also appeared during 1978 under the sponsorship of the United States Sports Academy in Mobile, Alabama.

Other journals related to the concerns of sport sociologists also appeared during the 1970's. There was the *Journal of Sport History* (1974), the *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* (1974), and the *Journal of Sport Psychology* (1979). These joined the already existing *Journal of Popular Culture* (1966), the *Journal of Leisure Research* (1969), and the longstanding *Journal of Physical Education and Recreation*, the *Research Quarterly*, and *Quest*. Furthermore, there were a number of established social science and sociology journals that published special issues devoted to the sociology of sport during the 1970's and early 80's.

Throughout the 1970's, both the American Sociological Association and the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education and Recreation included sessions on the sociology of sport in their annual conferences, and the regional affiliates of these two parent organizations frequently did the same at their annual meetings. In 1978 the University of Minnesota hosted a second CIC sponsored symposium on the sociology of sport, and the conference proceedings were again published (Krotee, 1979). But importantly a group of symposium participants decided that the future of the sociology of sport in North America depended on the formation of a new organization through which those in the field could receive relevant information and regularly communicate with one another. This marked the beginning of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS). The response to the new organization and its newsletter was so encouraging that Susan Greendorfer, Andrew Yiannakis, and a number of others planned and organized the first NASSS Conference held in Denver in 1980. Annual conferences have been held each year since then, and a bi-annual newsletter has been published every year since 1978. In 1983, two years after the *Review of Sport and Leisure* ceased to appear (for reasons unrelated to the demand for a journal in the field), members of NASSS made the decision to publish a quarterly journal. Jay Coakley was named editor and the first issue of the *Sociology of Sport Journal* (SSJ) was published by Rainer Marten's Human Kinetics Publishers in March, 1984.

B. American Society and the Emergence of the Field

There are some interesting parallels between the social conditions associated with the emergence of American sociology during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the emergence of the sociology of sport in the 1960's and 1970's. A review of the conditions and events at the turn of the century indicates that the emergence and early growth of American sociology went hand-in-hand with journalistic muckraking and progressive reformism. The muckrakers of the

1890's highlighted the existence of social problems and exploitation. They called attention to extreme poverty, overcrowding, social disorganization, and the powerlessness of those most vulnerable to the overwhelming influence of ungoverned industrial expansion. Complementing the muckrakers were the progressive reformers who proposed corrective changes through programs that would restructure social conditions and create orderly social progress. And complementing the reformers were social and behavioral scientists who provided the theories needed to give credibility and legitimacy to the reform-oriented programs being proposed and developed. In summary, sociology emerged out of a set of social conditions characterized by high rates of change coupled with progressive orientations which, in turn, generated ideas about controlling the nature and dynamics of future changes through planned intervention.

The emergence of the sociology of sport in the United States during the mid-1960's and early 1970's followed a similar pattern. The muckrakers created widespread awareness of problems in sport, especially problems of exploitation and abuse suffered by athletes at all levels of sport involvement. Between 1969 and 1978, there appeared over two dozen book length exposés on all levels of sport, from youth leagues to the professional leagues. The authors of these books, including a number of well-known former athletes, disclosed things never before discussed in print. They questioned popular American beliefs about sport, they challenged widely accepted attitudes, and they raised serious questions about the existing structure, organization, and consequences of American sports.

Even sportswriters, never known for their critical comments about sport, did their own brand of muckraking. Following the lead of Tom Wolfe and his "new journalism," they focused on numerous controversial issues. And after witnessing the role played by journalists in exposing the Watergate scandal, the sportswriters, especially the younger, college-educated ones, began to engage in serious investigative reporting. In commenting on this change, Rick Telander (1984), a former sociology student at Northwestern University and a writer for *Sports Illustrated*, explained that during this time "conspiracies and coverups lurked everywhere, and sports were no exception." Young writers "had no problem thinking of themselves as Woodwards or Bernsteins (the journalists who exposed Watergate) in search of locker room 'Deep Throats' (the code name of their contact in the White House) who would reveal the dirty tricks of sport."

The "progressive reformers" of the 60's and 70's, some of whom also played roles as muckrakers, emphasized possibilities for change by calling for a restructuring of sport and the sport experience. It was during these years that Jack Scott founded his Institute for the Study of Sport and Society – an organization which sponsored and encouraged the writing of influential exposés including Dave Meggyesy's *Out of their League* (1971), Gary Shaw's *Meat on the Hoof* (1972), and Paul Hoch's *Rip off the Big Game* (1972). Cary Goodman from the New School for Social Research in New York City founded *Sports for the People*, a radical organization designed to use sport as a vehicle for promoting and demonstrating needed social changes. Out of that short-lived organization located in the Bronx came the Center for Athletes' Rights, designed to provide legal assistance for athletes who had been exploited within organized sport structures. George Leonard and others founded the Esalen Sports Symposium in southern California; Leonard and his colleagues advocated changes in the structure of sport competition and in the orientations of athletes themselves. Harry Edwards

created the Center for Social Change in Berkeley. An even author James Michener joined in with his own popular "muckraking-reformist" book, *Sports in America* (1976).

Finally, sport sociologists often provided the logical and empirical support for the reformers' calls for changes, thereby lending credibility and legitimacy to their platforms and organizations. Like sociology itself, the sociology of sport emerged at least partially as a response to the awareness of problems generated by muckrakers, and to the call for changes by reformers.

In the 1960's the level of awareness about problems and social issues was similar to what existed during the Progressive Era. There were striking similarities between the interests of the social scientists of both periods; order and change were the focus of collective attention, and interests in reform were pervasive. But during the 60's and 70's, the significance of sport on the social landscape was difficult to ignore. Organized sport had grown tremendously on all levels. The baby boom (1946-1964) and suburbanization had fueled the development of thousands of youth leagues. Interscholastic sports at both high school and college levels had hit new heights of popularity as they modelled themselves after increasingly popular professional sports which, in turn, were publicized through growing television coverage. But more important than its growth, sport during the 60's and 70's could be connected with central social and political issues attracting the attention of both muckrakers and reformers. It was this fact that had an important impact on the emergence of the sociology of sport.

The 60's began with President John F. Kennedy making a plea for Americans to initiate a new commitment to progress and change by getting themselves in shape physically through exercise and sport involvement. He established a White House Committee on Health and Fitness and an annual National Youth Fitness Congress, and he asked leaders at all levels of government to promote "sports participation and physical fitness." In fact, he told American parents and teachers that "We do not want our children to become a generation of spectators. Rather, we want each of them to be a participant in the vigorous life." Kennedy's statements served to legitimize a growing emphasis on sport in the American way of life. Importantly, they reaffirmed an already widespread commitment to organizing children's play. But all was not well in youth sports. Autocratic coaches, naive parents, and programs organized to promote elitist definitions of excellence were criticized by muckrakers and reformers. Exposés were written, and there were calls for changes grounded in concerns for the psychological and social development of children. The legitimacy of the critiques and the calls for change were enhanced by sport sociologists gathering data on sport participation and individual development.

Sport-related issues also overlapped with race-related civil rights issues. With a few exceptions, many minority group members with widespread name recognition during this period were black athletes. This, coupled with the increased visibility of sport itself, led the sport setting to take on a significant symbolic attachment to the civil rights movement. Organized in part by Harry Edwards and Jack Scott, the boycott of the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City by black American athletes had much more to do with the status of blacks in American society as a whole than it had to do with sport. But sport could be counted on to generate the attention reformers desired. Then the research of

sport sociologists such as Edwards, Eitzen, Loy, and others established the fact that not even sport was free of racism. Reformers argued that sport, *like other institutional spheres* of American society, warranted change. This pattern was partially repeated in Richard Labchick's organization of the American anti-apartheid boycotts of South African sport teams and athletes; the content of the *Arena Review* and the *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* focused heavily on this and related issues.

The Vietnam war along with domestic civil disorders raised serious questions about the issues of violence and aggression. Sports, especially those involving heavy contact, were natural targets for analysis and reform in conjunction with these issues. Sports such as American football, ice hockey, and boxing attracted the most attention because they could be used to illustrate the dangers of unquestioned normative acceptance of aggressive behavior. Sport was also a setting in which the dynamics and consequences of such behavior could be exposed and used to support the arguments of reformers. Research on violence and aggression in sport was certainly associated with these concerns.

Questions about the relative merits of competition and cooperation during the 60's and 70's also drew attention to sport. Sport took on powerful symbolic value relative to this issue because it was an activity in which competitive excess had created a host of visible problems. When Vince Lombardi made his famous statement "winning is not the most important thing, it is the only thing", research on sport assumed even more meaning. Reformers quickly linked the narrowly defined success ethic in sport to general concerns about capitalism, the ethics of achievement, and the definition of success in American society as a whole. Research on competition expanded dramatically in response to these issues, and sport received scholarly attention because of its association with these issues.

Questions about authority and power, and about the autocratic orientations of business, political, and educational leaders led people to focus attention on American coaches and their dictatorial methods of controlling teams and players. During the late 60's and early 70's students throughout the country were demanding more responsiveness from administrators and teachers and more opportunities for making decisions having an impact on their lives. Because coaches were highly visible and had reputations for being authoritarian leaders, they occasionally became the focus of considerable attention among muckrakers, protesters, reformers and sport sociologists. Statements made by a small but visible group of coaches simply intensified the notion that the typical coach was a tough, straight, traditional representative of the establishment. In the minds of reform-oriented people this made the coach a symbol of an obsolete social order, inhibiting individual development and the preservation of democracy. Sport sociologists focused on this and related issues in a number of studies.

The role of higher education was also being debated during this time. Reformers and student leaders raised questions about expenditures of educational resources and the linkages between the university and the rest of the community. Similar questions were raised about secondary education. Open classrooms, student discretion in choosing desired classes, the elimination of requirements, and experiential learning were seen as the basis for future curricula. Elitism, conservatism, and escapist activities were antithetical to these new ideas. Sport, especially in the form of American interscholastic sport teams,

represented the epitome of what reformers wanted to change. The outcomes of these concerns were numerous investigations of the academic, social, and political attitudes and behaviors of athletes compared with "nonathletes."

Finally, sport came to be linked with the women's movement. In the 1970's, Title IX legislation in the United States was strongly associated with what was occurring in interscholastic sport programs at all levels of education. Through the 70's discussions about Title IX often focused on women's sport programs even though the legislation was actually drafted to cover *all* school programs, academic (especially) and extracurricular. This connection precipitated numerous studies, articles, and books on women in sport, many of which became important additions to the sociology of sport literature.

As with the social sciences around the turn of the century, the bulk of exploration and discussion in the emerging field of sport sociology during the 70's was carried on in a frame of mind characterized by optimism and a search for ways to reform basic institutions. During the same time, similar explorations and discussions in other subdisciplines of sociology were focusing on schools, corrections and the law, welfare, the family, gender roles, race relations, social stratification, poverty, and the actions and resources of the power elite. With all the links between sport and central issues attracting the attention of reformers, it is not difficult to understand why the sociology of sport emerged during this period and why its content took on a relatively unique character in the United States.

Unfortunately, much of the research in the sociology of sport has been neither cumulative nor theory-based, nor has it been dedicated to theory development (Kenyon, 1986). More often, research has been designed to describe sport in ways that question popular beliefs, or to document the existence of an issue or problem. This is true in the field as a whole, but it is especially true of work done in the United States. This is not to say that theory has not informed some of the work done by American sport sociologists, but little of their research has grown directly out of concerns for theory testing or theory development in sociology. The material summarized in the following section suggests that this situation is not likely to change in the near future.

C. Issues of Legitimacy and Growth

In 1980 John Loy noted that "the sociology of sport has yet to be perceived as a legitimate subfield within either physical education or sociology owing to factors associated with critical mass, academic status, and ideological orientations" (p. 106; see also Loy, McPherson, and Kenyon, 1978a). Despite progress in each of the three areas discussed by Loy, there is no cause to alter his conclusion at this point to fit the sociology of sport in the United States; critical mass is still lacking, academic status remains relatively low in both sociology and physical education, and issues related to ideological orientations have not been completely resolved.

Identifying the number of sport sociologists in the United States is a difficult task. Belonging to this field depends on subjective identification as well as a personal commitment to teaching, doing research, and publishing in the area, and interacting on a regular basis with like-minded colleagues. Since it is beyond the scope of this paper to pinpoint the full extent of such identification and commitment, the numbers used in this section come primarily from the records of

formal organizations in physical education and sociology, from NASSS, and from the *Sociology of Sport Journal*.

Physical Education.

When people join or renew their memberships in the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE, a division of AAHPERD), they select an affiliation with one of several disciplinary academies, including the Sport Sociology Academy (SSA). SSA membership in February for each year since 1981 looks like this: in 1982 it was 728, in 1983 it was 915, in 1984 it was 884, in 1985 it was 1010, in 1986 it was 819, and in 1987 it was 770. Unfortunately, data are not available for years before 1982, and it cannot be concluded whether the membership decline since 1985 signals a trend. NASPE members sometimes alter their disciplinary affiliations to receive new information in an area they know little about, or simply to rotate their affiliations between several areas in which they have interests. Therefore, the two year decline in SSA affiliations could simply reflect a drop among those temporarily curious about the field, or a cyclical pattern among those who regularly rotate their affiliations. At any rate, it can be concluded that there is *no* evidence of a unilinear increase in the Sport Sociology Academy membership. There is no official list of how many physical education departments offer special Ph. D. programs in the sociology of sport, but the number is low, and it has not increased significantly over the past 6-10 years. Other than the program at the University of Illinois (with John Loy and Susan Greendorfer), the graduate programs at most major schools offer only a minor emphasis on the sociology of sport, if it is emphasized at all at the graduate level. Similarly, the Sports Studies, Leisure Studies, and Kinesiology programs offering a sociology of sport emphasis are few. When such an emphasis does exist it depends more on the presence of an interested faculty member than on a continuing departmental commitment to sport sociology.

The emphasis in most physical education and related departments has shifted to sport/leisure management instead of the sociology of sport. However, it is important to note that many established departments in the United States have in fact sought faculty to teach undergraduate and some graduate courses in sport sociology. This "position" is often combined with a psychology of sport emphasis, although there are some physical educators who are devoting their primary attention to the sociology of sport. In sum, legitimacy and growth have increased slightly since 1980, but full legitimacy and critical mass are far from being achieved.

Sociology.

In the American Sociological Association (ASA) there were 249 (2%) out of about 13,000 members who declared "Leisure/Sport/Recreation" as one of their areas of interest in 1986; in 1979 there were 255, in 1982 there were 287, and in 1984 there were 246. This compares to 151 members who made a similar declaration in 1976 (Loy, 1980). In an analysis of the 151 members in 1976, Loy identified only 28 people who could actually be designated sport sociologists, including 4 physical educators and 8 graduate students. Among those expressing an interest in "Leisure/Sport/Recreation" as a subfield it is difficult to objectively identify a sport sociologist without a mailing list and a personal knowledge of

who's who. But from the official data available, it would seem the number of "sport sociologists" in the American Sociological Association has increased slightly over the past 10 years. However, an analysis of information in the ASA's 1986 Guide to Graduate Departments in Sociology suggests this increase has not generally occurred among the most productive scholars in sociology, nor among those associated with the graduate departments in which most future sociologists are being trained. Furthermore, it seems that the number of sociologists focusing on this interest area peaked in the early 1980's and stayed at about 250 since then.

In the ASA's 1986 Guide, there are comprehensive data on 201 departments offering an MA and/or PhD degree in sociology (the Guide includes *all* major departments). For each department there is a list of its special degree programs, a list of special content areas students may emphasize in their degree programs, lists of faculty with full-time, part-time, and joint/adjunct appointments, along with major areas of expertise listed for each faculty member, and finally, a list of those completing their degrees during the year, along with the titles of their dissertations. For the purpose of this analysis the following information was taken from the Guide:

- The 201 graduate departments collectively offer 501 special degree programs for students. Only 3 departments offered special programs related to sport, and none of the three were at the PhD level. In fact, one of the programs was an MA focusing on leisure and recreation, and the other two programs (the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs and the University of Nevada at Las Vegas) had only one faculty member who listed sport as an area of expertise (Jay Coakley and James Frey, respectively) and, during 1986, neither had any students in their programs. This means there were no well-established special programs in the sociology of sport in any of the graduate departments listed in the 1986 Guide.
- Out of 3320 content areas of emphasis listed collectively for the 201 departments, "Leisure/Sport/Recreation" only appeared 28 times (8%), and in 16 of those cases the departments did not have a single faculty member who listed sport as an area of expertise. In fact, only 8 of these departments had a faculty member who listed sport as an area of expertise and also offered a PhD. However, it should be pointed out that the sociology department at Bowling Green State University in Ohio provides students with an option of pursuing a strong emphasis in sport sociology at both the MA and PhD levels.
- Out of 4059 faculty members in the 201 departments, only 31 (.7%) listed the sociology of sport as an area of expertise. And "sport" was listed as the highest priority area of expertise by only 4 individuals with full time faculty appointments and 3 with part-time or joint appointments; 5 individuals listed "sport" as their 2nd priority area of expertise, and 19 listed it as their 3rd, 4th, or 5th priority among their areas of expertise. In summary, only a handful of sociologists currently focus primary attention on sport as an area of interest.
- Out of 499 PhD's awarded in 1986 only one (.2%) recipient completed a dissertation on a sociology of sport topic (Michael Messner at the University of California at Berkeley).
- There was only one joint appointment between a sociology department and a physical education department (George Sage at the University of Northern Colorado).

- A comparison of 31 departments listing "Leisure/Sport/Recreation" as a specialty in 1980 with the 28 listing it in the 1986 Guide shows that during those 6 years 15 departments actually withdrew the area as a specialty (3 because they dropped their degrees completely), and 12 departments added the area as a specialty – a net loss of three departments offering an emphasis at least partially related to sport. Important to note here is that not a single PhD program in sociology offered a special program in the sociology of sport, and only 2 PhD programs in the United States contained more than one person listing sport as an area of expertise (Bowling Green State University with Eldon Snyder, Elmer Spreitzer, and Dean Purdy; and Kansas State University with Richard Brede and Henry Camp-both of whom list sport as their third priority area).

These data strongly suggest that the sociology of sport continues to lack full legitimacy in sociology, and that its growth in terms of special programs and the production of related degrees has been minimal over the past 6-10 years. The absence of special programs on the PhD level indicates that sociology students have not been able to focus on sport during their training, and they have not been likely to choose sport-related topics for their dissertation research. Furthermore, it also seems that sociologists who claim "sport" as an area of expertise generally relegate concerns with sport and sport research to a low priority among their areas of expertise. Of the 31 sociologists who mentioned the area, less than half have regularly published or done research on sport-related topics. Some of those actively engaged in research and publication in the past have now shifted their priorities to other areas of interest. This latter pattern is normal in professional careers, but it may have a negative impact on the sociology of sport, because there are few established sociologists now coming *into* the field and making sport their central area of expertise – the flow seems to be in the opposite direction. Usually, those now entering the field have only secondary interests in sport, not only in the way they subjectively identify themselves as professionals, but in the resources they commit to sport-related teaching, research, publication, and attendance at professional meetings. This suggests their work on sport will probably not make major contributions to the cumulation of knowledge in the field or to the development of sociological theory, – tasks Kenyon (1986) has recently emphasized as central to the future of the sociology of sport.

One encouraging and important note on legitimacy is that about half the major introductory sociology textbooks published over the past 2-3 years have included sections or chapters on "sport as a social institution" or on "sport and leisure." In these texts there are a number of references to books and articles in the field. Furthermore, the ASA's Teaching Resource Center has sponsored and distributed a monograph, *Syllabi and Instructional Materials for Courses on Sociology of Sport* edited by William Whit in 1985. This publication was designed to assist sociologists developing courses on sport.

As in the case of physical education, legitimacy for the field is still lacking in sociology. Some progress has been made, but it has not generally been in the areas requiring a commitment of departmental resources. Declining enrollments in American higher education (because the last of the baby boom generation is now 23 years old) and a student shift to departments of business and engineering (because of student perceptions of the job market) are other factors to take into consideration when discussing this issue. Growth in the sociology of sport has

been difficult to promote when sociology departments have been forced to cut back faculty and course offerings.

NASSS and the SSJ

According to 1987 NASSS data, there were 160 members with addresses in the United States. Seventy-seven listed addresses in physical education departments, 48 in sociology departments, 10 in Kinesiology, Sport Studies, or Leisure Studies departments, and 25 in other departments or outside of universities. Although there were just under 100 American NASSS members in 1980, the first year of the organization's existence, the number of members with U.S. addresses has not increased significantly since 1982 when it was approximately 165.

SSJ data show that subscription rates have steadily increased since the first issue published in March, 1984. However, the bulk of that increase is accounted for by a healthy growth in institutional subscriptions. For example, for the first issue in 1984 there were 146 individual and 27 institutional subscribers in the United States, and for the last issue in 1986 there were 210 individual and 197 institutional subscribers. This indicates that there is a growing tendency to define the literature in the field as important enough to include in library collections.

Conclusion

Trends in the membership data for formal organizations in physical education, sociology, and the sociology of sport indicate that the field continues to lack full legitimacy and critical mass. Furthermore, it looks as if the achievement of full legitimacy and critical mass in the future will be problematic.

III. Research Topics and Methodologies

Although papers on the sociology of sport have been published in a variety of social science and physical education journals since the inception of the field, the *Sociology of Sport Journal* is currently the main publication outlet for sport sociologists in the United States. The SSJ encourages submissions from people around the world, but the majority (75-80%) of papers reviewed by the journal come from American authors. The papers published in the journal provide a

Table 1: Percentage distribution (and numbers) of SSJ Papers in general content categories by US and non-US authors.

<i>AUTHORS</i>	<i>RESEARCH PAPERS</i>				<i>COMMENTARIES, ETC.*</i>	<i>DEVELOPMENT/ CRITIQUE OF THEORIES</i>
	Qualitative Theory based	Qualitative Issue based	Quantitative Theory based	Quantitative Issue based		
<i>US</i>	6% (4)	4% (3)	16% (11)	43% (30)	21% (15)	10% (7)
<i>NON-US</i>	15% (4)	8% (2)	11% (3)	27% (7)	11% (3)	27% (7)
<i>TOTAL</i>	8% (8)	5% (5)	15% (14)	38% (37)	19% (18)	15% (14)

* Includes commentaries on sport and past papers, critiques of sport, literature reviews, and policy papers.

rough indicator of the research topics and methodologies used by Americans doing some of the most noteworthy work in the field (see Table 1).

An analysis of the papers appearing in the first 14 issues of the SSJ (i.e., 4 issues in each of the 1984, 1985, 1986 volumes, and the first two issues of the 1987 volume) indicates the following:

- 70 of the 95 (i.e., 74%) papers (including full-length articles as well as research notes and comments) published in the first 14 issues of the SSJ have senior authors with mailing addresses in the United States (16% are from Canada, and 10% have addresses outside North America).
- 30 (43%) of the American authors are associated with sociology departments, 31 (44%) with physical education or related departments, and 9 (13%) are associated with other disciplines.
- When compared to authors from outside the United States (see Table 1), American authors have done more quantitative research (38% vs 59%), they have done slightly fewer theory-based papers and fewer papers concerned with the development or critique of theory, and they do more papers involving "commentaries, literature reviews, critiques of sport, and policy statements."
- Nearly half (N=30 or 43%) of all papers with American authors involve descriptive or "issues-related" quantitative research; 18 (32%) involve theory-based research; and only 7 (10%) involve qualitative research.

American authors wrote papers on 36 different topics in the first 14 issues of the SSJ. The highest priority topics are listed below in descending order of importance:

<i>Topic</i>	<i>number of papers</i>
- affects of sport participation on academic performance	9
- race and sport (patterns of discrimination)	7
- patterns of sport involvement	7
- critiques of sociology of sport	5
- socialization through sport	5
- deviance	3
- aggression in sport	3
- media and gender	3
- media	2
- women and gender roles	2
- radical theory	2
- retirement from sport	2
- role conflict among student-athletes	2

It might be said that the content of papers in any journal would reflect the policies and biases of the editor and editorial board. However, this is probably not the case with the SSJ. As a new journal, article selection has reflected the quality rather than the topic content of the papers submitted. As the journal grows in the future, and as an increasing number of high quality papers are submitted, it may be that editorial biases related to content would enter into the selection process.

Summary

Despite the fact that it is difficult to separate the sociology of sport in the United States from developments in other countries, it is possible to identify major events and the unique features of the American branch of the field. The sociology of sport emerged in the United States during the late 1960's and early 1970's when there was widespread awareness of social and political issues and calls for reform in all major institutional spheres of American society. In fact, American sociology of sport was heavily influenced by the extent to which sport was related to the social issues attracting the attention of liberal reformers. This influence can still be detected in the orientations and research topics characteristic of recent work in the field. Articles published in the SSJ by American authors show that sociology of sport research in the United States emphasizes descriptive and "issues-related" quantitative studies rather than qualitative or theory-based studies.

The sociology of sport in the United States still lacks full legitimacy in both physical education and sociology, and growth since the late 1970's has not been significant. Furthermore, data from organizations in both fields, along with membership data from NASSS and subscription data from the SSJ, suggest that the achievement of full legitimacy and significant growth will continue to be slow in the future.

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La sociologie du sport aux Etats-Unis

Résumé

Cet article déploie et actualise les analyses précédentes de la sociologie du sport aux Etats-Unis. Il expose une chronologie des événements substantiels de l'histoire de ce secteur et une description du contexte sociale d'où cette science provenait et se développait. Puis, un résumé de données de la sociologie et de l'éducation physique mène à la conclusion que la sociologie du sport aux Etats-Unis continue à manquer de son entière légitimité et d'un nombre suffisant de représentants dans ces deux disciplines. En effet, il y a des motifs pour conclure que le nombre croissant de ceux s'appelant sociologues du sport a atteint un comble et qu'il n'y aura pas de changements significatifs dans le proche avenir. Enfin, un sommaire des articles parus dans les premières 14 éditions du "Sociology of Sport Journal" révèle les priorités attribuées aux thèmes de recherche et aux méthodes de recherche des Américains qui ont contribué à influencer ce domaine.

Sportsoziologie in den Vereinigten Staaten

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Beitrag gibt einen aktualisierten Überblick über frühere Arbeiten zur Soziologie des Sports in den Vereinigten Staaten. Er führt chronologisch die wesentlichen Ereignisse in der Geschichte dieses Wissenschaftszweiges an und beschreibt den sozialen Kontext, in dem er entstand und wuchs. Dann führt eine Übersicht über Daten aus der Soziologie und der Leibeserziehung zu dem Schluß, daß es der Sportsoziologie in den Vereinigten Staaten weiterhin an ausreichender Legitimierung und einer genügenden Zahl von Vertretern in beiden Disziplinen fehlt. Tatsächlich gibt es Anhaltspunkte dafür, daß die ständig steigende Zahl derer, die sich Sportsoziologen nennen, den Gipfel erreicht hat und sich in nächster Zukunft nicht mehr deutlich ändern wird. Schließlich zeigt eine Inhaltsübersicht von Beiträgen aus den ersten 14 Heften des Sociology of Sport Journal die bevorzugten Forschungsthemen und -methoden der auf diesem Gebiet einflußreicheren amerikanischen Wissenschaftler.

Sociología del Deporte en Estados Unidos

Resumen

Este aportada un resumen actualizado sobre trabajos anteriores sobre la sociología del deporte en los Estados Unidos. Indica cronológicamente los eventos esenciales en la historia de esta rama científica y describe el contexto social en el que nació y creció. Más adelante un resumen sobre datos de la sociología y la educación física llega a la conclusión que en los Estados Unidos a la sociología del deporte sigue faltándole una legitimación y un número de representantes suficiente en ambas disciplinas. De hecho hay razones para que el número creciente de personas que se denominan sociólogos del deporte haya alcanzado el tope y que en un futuro cercano no cambiará notablemente. Finalmente un resumen de contenido de aportes de los primeros 14 cuadernos del Sociology of Sport Journal muestra los temas y métodos de investigación preferentes de científicos americanos importantes en este campo.

Социология спорта в США.

Резюме:

Эта статья даёт актуализированный обзор прежних работ по социологии спорта в США. Она показывает хронологически основные события в историческом развитии этой отрасли науки и описывает социальный контекст, в котором она развилась. Потом даётся обзор данных по социологии спорта и физкультуре, который ведёт к выводу, что в США по-прежнему не хватает удовлетворительной легитимации и достаточных предствителей обеих дисциплин. Действительно можно сказать, что нарастающее число тех, которые считаются социологами спорта, по всем вероятностям достигло вершины и в близком будущем уже не будет изменяться. Предпочтённые темы и методы исследований более влиятельных в этой области американских учёных исходят из обзора содержания статей первых 14 номеров "Журнала социологии спорта", данного в конце статьи.

アメリカにおけるスポーツ社会学

<抄録>

本稿は、アメリカにおけるスポーツ社会学の先行研究を吟味し、さらに発展させようとするものである。ここでは、スポーツ社会学が誕生し、発展してきた社会的文脈を記述するだけでなく、この分野の歴史を主要行事の推移を追うことによって概説する。社会学と体育学の先行研究を検討した結果、アメリカにおけるスポーツ社会学は、両分野において十分に認知されておらず、批判的な研究者集団にも欠ける状態が続いている。実際のところ、これは自称スポーツ社会学者の人数もピークに達し、今後、顕著に変わらないだろうという理由からである。最後に、スポーツ社会学ジャーナル(SSJ)の第1号から現在までの14冊に発表された文献の内容は、研究テーマと方法論において、自称スポーツ社会学者の中で、より意義のある研究を行なっていることを示している。