

Lecture 3: Sport and societal values

- What are the dominant values in American society?
 - ▶ What is a value?
 - "A culturally prescribed criterion by which individuals evaluate persons, behaviors, objects, and ideas as to their relative morality, desirability, merit, or correctness."
 - "conceptions of what is desirable; . . . the underlying assumptions by which individual and social goals are chosen."
 - Rokeach – terminal and instrumental values
 - ▶ What are typically mentioned American values?

Discussion.

 - Terminal values: success, materialism, progress, individualism
 - Instrumental values: hard work, continued striving, deferred gratification, competition, external conformity
 - ▶ Sports values

Lecture 3: Sport and societal values

- VIDEO: George Carlin. "Baseball vs. football"
 - ▶ Discussion. What does this say about the values underlying the two sports
 - Rural, old-fashioned values – baseball.
 - Urban, modern values – football.
- Dominant values in other cultures
 - ▶ VIDEO: American game, Japanese rules (1988)
 - Discussion. What are the differences between these two cultures as they are presented here?
 - Robert Whiting, "You Gotta Have *WA*" (1989)
 - *Wa* – team spirit and unity
 - Discipline and obedience; corporate ownership and mindset
 - Strategy more important than power
 - Role and treatment of *gaijin* – foreigners, mainly Americans
 - ▶ Evidence for differences in cultures around individualism - communalism, cooperation-competition, materialism

Lecture 3: Youth Sports

- Socialization into sport and socialization via sport
 - ▶ *INTO*: Various agents of socialization influence attitudes towards sports . Who? How? Discuss.
 - ▶ *VIA*: Participation (or non-participation) then has consequences for personality, skill, fitness, social relationships, etc.
- Socialization and development: theories
 - ▶ Two kinds of theories
 - those that postulate "stages" (development theories)
 - those that do not (socialization theories)
 - ▶ George Herbert Mead – not a formal stage theory
 - Play stage
 - Game stage
 - About rules

Lecture 3: Youth Sports

- ▶ Other approaches
 - the social learning perspective (Bandura) assumes nothing about the "readiness" of children to engage in various types of play.
 - The ethological perspective – assumes continuity between other animals and humans in forms of play.
- **Studies of socialization *via* sport – focus on sportsmanship**
 - ▶ Webb (1969)
 - his assumption was that "The transition from 'child's play' to games, and then to sport, involves increasing complexity and rationalization of the activities and increasing professionalization of attitudes."
 - By professionalization he meant "...the substitution of 'skill' for 'fairness' as the paramount factor in play activity, and the increasing importance of victory."
 - Findings: increasing importance of "success" and decreasing importance of "fairness" with age

Lecture 3: Youth Sports

- Gender differences in types of play and games
 - ▶ Sutton-Smith and Rosenberg (1969) – "Sixty years of historical change in the game preferences of American children" (From 1896-1959)
 - ▶ Janet Lever (1978) – based on children's activity diaries. Differences:
 - Boys outside more
 - Boys' play groups larger, more age-mixed
 - Boys play more competitive games
 - Boys' games had more explicit goals; more often teams
 - Boys' games more complex: more rules, more roles, more interdependence
 - Girls play in boys groups more than the reverse
 - ▶ *Discussion:*
 - Why do these differences exist?

Lecture 3: Youth Sports

- Characteristics of organized sports for children in the U.S.
 - ▶ How does organized sports participation differ from informal sports participation?
 - Player-controlled games- groups of 2-12 kids
 - Characteristics of participants
 - kids are interested in four things
 - (a) action, especially if it leads to scoring.
 - (b) personal involvement in the action
 - (c) a close score
 - (d) opportunities to reaffirm friendships
 - "The informal games of children should not be romanticized"
 - Formal, adult-controlled games
 - Kids still interested in action
 - More emphasis on positions, rules
 - Differentiations begin between good a poor players
 - Comparison

Lecture 3: Youth Sports

- History of formal children's sport programs
 - ▶ For boys
 - 1903 New York City. The Public Schools Athletic League.
 - 1939 Little League Baseball
 - Football, basketball, soccer followed
 - ▶ For girls
 - Challenge to Little League in 1973 led to girls being admitted in 1974
 - Development of soccer leagues, etc. provide much more access – by 1980 over 1 million girls playing soccer
 - In 1971, 7% of high school varsity athletes were girls; in 1999, 41%
 - College change was 15% --> 42%
 - ▶ Problems in organized youth sports
 - Lack of adult comprehension of kids' abilities
 - Dropping out
 - Injury issues

Lecture 3: High School Sports

- High school sports
 - ▶ Discussion – you tell me about pros and cons of sports in high school
 - ▶ Problems
 - Injuries
 - Problems for athletes
 - Overemphasis and early recruitment, leading to "majoring in sports"
 - Solutions?
 - Problem for others:
 - Elitism – most students are closed out of sports
 - Fitness issues; dropping out of PE
 - Gender discrimination
 - Corporate sponsorship
 - Solutions?
 - ▶ VIDEOS:
 - Recruiting in grade school gyms (1993)
 - Friday Night Lights (1990)