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SOCIO-CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF SPORT

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According to the authors of *Sport, Culture and Society*, “it is impossible to fully understand contemporary society and culture without acknowledging the place of sport.” Sport plays a key part in many people’s lives, and one can observe its increasing importance in the world. It is connected to major social institutions; it shapes identity and visibly influences culture. This remarkable publication by Grant Jarvie and James Thornton clearly describes numerous relationships between sport, culture and society, which makes it a comprehensive guide to the sociological, political, historical (and not only) sport research.

The material contained in this volume provides a stimulating account of the dynamic character of the sport. As the authors convincingly demonstrate, there are many perspectives through which sport can be viewed. The book consists of four chapters, which introduce readers to every core topic and emerging area in the study of sport and society; for example, the history of sport, sport and globalization, sport and the media, sport and education, sport and the environment, sport and religion, or sport and social change. The chapters are well organized and thoughtfully researched; there

are subsections’ summaries, highlighted definitions of key terms, boxed case studies and biographies, as well as guides for further reading. It should be noted that the book is engagingly written, and the wealth of material does not make the reader tired or confused.

A very good idea is the sectioning off the brief parts entitled *Sport in Focus*, where one can find interesting historical facts or descriptions of selected phenomena from the world of sport. These are, for example, *Baseball and US foreign policy*, *The Old Firm shame game*, or *Violence in North American ice hockey*. The sections, written in a concise way, prove to be most informative for the sport fans.

Yet, there is one point of critique related to the contents of the book. Although it is international in scope, the choice of countries demonstrates a bias towards East-Central Europe. Countries like Haiti or Tanzania appear in the presented analysis, while Poland, Russia, or Hungary (as well as many others) seem not to exist. For example, in the part concerning sport and religion, there is nothing about a very interesting phenomenon of religious pilgrimages or religious stadium choreographies of Pol-

ish football fans. The authors' ignorance of a half of Europe leaves a feeling of dissatisfaction.

To sum up, *Sport, Culture and Society* offers valuable insights into the societal impact of sport. In other words, it makes an important contribution to the understanding of sport influence on the societies. It is es-

sential reading for the sports researchers and students, but also anyone with an interest in sport. Thus, the book will serve a broad audience: not only academics, but also all those who regard sport as a fascinating social phenomenon. It will undoubtedly become an important reference source in the sociology of sport.