

Global cultural sporting environment

Introduction

During this essay I will be talking about the relationship between sport and national identity been eroded and replaced by a homogenous global sporting culture. I will be including examples of how sport contributes to national identity, using historical and present-day perspectives. Before I do start this discussion in accordance with the oxford handbook of sports history written by Dilwyn Porter he explains a bit about national identity.

Here's a short summary of what national identity is the role of sport in the construction of national identity. It focuses initially on sport as a cultural practice possessing the demonstrable capacity to generate events and experiences through which imagined communities are made real. The governments of nation-states or other political agencies might intervene directly in this process, using sport as a form of propaganda to achieve this effect. More often, however, the relationship between sport and national identity is reproduced in everyday life, flagged daily by the mass media as an expression of banal nationalism. Particular attention is given to the role of sports that are indigenous to popular nations and to sports engaged in competitively between nations. These have contributed in different ways to the making of national identities. (www.oxfordhandbooks.com)

I will also investigate how globalisation is used within sport I will also include many articles to back up my points/views. Not only that but at the end of the discussion which I will be writing about both national identity and globalisation I will then make a conclusion explaining my points and how I feel about this topic in general.

Main body

What is the relationship between sport and national identity?

Despite the lingering protestations of sports themselves, there is a little despitte among those who study sport in the modern world that is political to the extent that its not only reflects social divisions but also frequently exacerbates these, as a result all of theses include sex, gender, sexuality, age and social class. It is virtually self-evident that identities are formed in a number of different locations and social practices. As Preston (1997) observes, "Identity is not a single homogeneous stock of traits, images and habits". One important arena for the construction of certain identities (masculinity, for example, or social class) is sport (Jones 1988; Messner 1992; Messner and Sabo 1990). Specifically, sport is clearly linked to the construction and reproduction of the national identities of many people. But how precisely does that process develop? Furthermore, to what extent is the linkage between sport and national identity likely to be weakened as a result of major transformations in global society?

Well, what this text is talking about is how sport could give national identity to a country I've looked at many sources to help me answer this as I've looked into rugby and how the all blacks are the best rugby national team in the world because they teach and show children from a young age on how to play rugby as this sport is their main one played within the country. I have also investigated what wales' national sport and the debate between both rugby and football fans it turns out that the national sport within wales is handball. Which is a surprise for me as I would've thought it would be either football or rugby as these are the most promoted sports in the country but through history the welsh have been playing handball for centuries. I wouldn't've thought this as the welsh have an exceptionally good rugby team and are known for being one of the best countries to play and that the welsh football is improving and gaining bigger names within the sport. I would say that due to the lack of coverage of handball is much less than rugby and football is why I did not know this.

But first it is important to say a little more at the general level about the relationship between sport, nationalism, and national identities. At a range of major sporting events, fans arrive waving their national flags and with their faces painted in national colours. Seldom do they favour more transnational emblems and insignia. While some fans of the European players in golf's Ryder Cup unfurl the flag of the European Union, many persist in waving their national flags despite the multinational composition of the European team. Rarely do fans wave the colours of sport's major sponsors, except when their names appear on the shirts of a club or a national team. Indeed, although competitors promote their sponsors by wearing certain clothing and using specific equipment, they continue to wave national flags to celebrate victories even, for example, in Grand Prix athletics events where, in practical terms, they are representing only themselves, although technically they remain affiliated during the event to a national federation. Formula One motor racing provides an exception to this general rule, with supporters of Ferrari celebrating the achievements of their team's drivers by waving flags emblazoned with the manufacturer's emblem. Even in this instance, however, the purpose of the exercise is at least quasi-national in that it salutes an Italian car maker.

So, what this text I found is talking about is that you will see in an international tournament you will see many fans come to the event/game holding and waving their national teams' flag and wearing their team's colours such as their jerseys. You will see this in football or rugby as big tournament such as the world cup or the rugby world cup as they are representing and supporting their team. This is different to the Olympics or a one player-based event/match such as tennis as people are still supporting but instead of their country, they are supporting the player mostly because they are from their home country for example Andy Murray for Great Britain or Rafael Nadal for Spain. There could also be an argument for premier league teams such as Manchester united as they are not supporting their team because its in the country but because they either are the fans home team, so they live in Manchester. Or they are such a huge European team around the world as even countries in Asia even support them due to them being so big and popular. This is mainly due to the premier league being one of the worlds best leagues.

Various literatures within the field of sport sociology have focused on the role that "sport" (broadly understood to include the many forms of participation in a wide range of types of physical activity, considerations of the physical body in movement, and the many forms of secondary consumption of sporting activities) may play in the processes of identity formation generally, and of particular identities specifically, and in the processes through which individuals strive to sustain such identities. This work has examined the role of sport (Anderson, E. (2002) in the formation of an identity as an "athlete"; Bairner, A. (2003) in the formation of identities specific to particular sports; and Bosma, H. A., Graafsma, T. L. G., Grotevant, H., & de Levita, D. J. (1994) in the formation of more generic identities, such as gender identity, racial/ethnic identity, or national identity. It has also examined the consequences of successfully claiming an athletic identity on the individual's future options for seeking alternative identities and career paths.

For welsh rugby down in the lower ages many pro teams such as the ospreys have been looking into bigger and taller players at the young age to beat other teams who have investigated only the same age group but teams such as the ospreys will choose a player in the younger age group as they fill the specification the coaches have such as they are bigger than a player and stronger in the older class.

There are also many, more specific, sporting identities that are available in a wide range of different sporting activities, and in these cases the sport sociology literature has focused on the processes of identity formation and maintenance of such identities. An excellent example of this focus is provided by the work of Donnelly and Young (1988), who show how identity claims are made in the context of existing sport groups, and that successfully claiming an identity as an athlete in a particular sport is an interactive process that occurs in social and cultural contexts in which social definitions and meanings serve as influencing factors.

The generic identity of “athlete” has considerable saliency in many social settings and in many of the countries of the world although the specific characteristics associated with this identity vary from sport context to sport context and from country to country. Nevertheless, such an identity is clearly valued and may provide many social benefits to the individuals who are able to successfully claim it whether this occurs at an elementary school age, at high school or college, as a member of a professional or national team, or even as a master’s athlete in his nineties. The success of such identity claims rests on, first, the individual’s ability to satisfactorily or authentically present the main characteristics of this identity, and second, the validation of the identity claim provided by primarily non athlete, significant others one’s peers, family, community, and so on.

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Finally, some literature in **sociology of sport** and identity has examined the consequences of successful claiming and maintaining sporting identities on an individual’s future options for seeking alternative identities and career paths. This literature has looked at the ways in which such successfully claimed sporting identities, while on the one hand encouraging the deepening of the individual’s commitment and “embeddedness” in sporting involvements, may, on the other hand, also act to constrain the individual’s immediate and future life choices. For example, Steven son’s (1990) examination of the careers of elite athletes illustrates how many of these individuals were often recognized early (but not always) in their lives as potentially excellent “rugby players” or “field hockey players” by a number of significant others (including their peers and their community, their parents and siblings, and such significant adults as teachers and coaches).

The initial consequences of being attributed such desirable identities were generally very positive, in that these individuals received considerable attention and praise, and were held in high esteem by their immediate social group. Such consequences served to heighten the commitment of these individuals to these identities and to their sporting activities, increasing the time, energy, and resources which they committed to them, while also simultaneously reducing the perceived value of pursuing alternative identities and other types of careers. So, as they enjoyed these benefits over their careers as athletes, they also found that their options to be “other than a rugby player” or “other than a field hockey player” became constrained.

Globalisation in sport

The definition of globalisation of sport is understanding of globalisation is central to an understanding of the changing nature of contemporary sport, culture and society", Jarvie and Thornton (2012, p.115). A historical process involving a fundamental shift or transformation in the spatial scale of human social organisation that links distant communities and expands the reach of power relations across regions and continents. Often used to describe a single world economy, although sometimes employed to define the growing integration of the internationalist capitalist system" Jarvie and Thornton (2012, p.120).

So, looking at the definition from Jarvie and Thornton of the changing of contemporary sport, culture and society I looked at the article of Houlihan and how he says that for some sports places are important and he used the example of football being one of the sports for being an important sport to be played in a good safe environment but used the example of the F1 a sport being as important.

He also goes on to say that the nationality of players does not prevent strong identification for some sports (e.g. football), whilst for others (e.g. tennis), it does. So, what he's saying from this point is that football is such a massive sport in many countries that in bigger and well-known popular countries such as Germany, England, Spain, Portugal and France from these countries many people who are not from these countries will still be able to identify them however he uses the point of tennis as this sport isn't as popular so international identification of a player within the sport will be so much more difficult to identify them.

Houlihan also goes on to say about the 'state is of central significance in determining the pattern of engagement between national and global sport and is far from the residual institution that is sometimes suggested' (Houlihan, 2016, p.566). What this is suggesting is that the difference between national sport and global sport are different because many people will not be able to identify a country's national sport as it's not in the global well-known sports. For example, of this is Wales and China many people will not be able to identify the Welsh national sport as it's not as promoted like other sports such as football and rugby as the Welsh national sport is handball. But with China their national sport is ping pong this is table tennis and many countries especially in Asia play it as well as many countries in Europe and China help promote that as much as they can so they can get as many elite players as possible to compete in the Olympics.

Another example of globalisation is that companies such as BSkyB, Canal and NTL have all sought to buy football clubs or at least shareholding (Brown, 2000) this is to enable them to exercise greater control over the key product while many of the most successful clubs have become entities by establishing their own television companies to attract subscribers.

As Evans and Kefever (2011,38) note 'by producing their own content sports clubs have become media clubs as a resistance to media's domination in order to have their own voice in the global sports market'.

Modern sport is bound up in a global network of interdependency chains that are marked by global flows and uneven power relations. Consider the consumption of sports events. People across the globe regularly view satellite broadcasts of English Premier League and European Champions League matches. In these games the best players drawn from Europe, South America and Africa perform. The players use equipment – boots, balls, uniforms etc - that are designed in the West, financed by multinational corporations such as Adidas and Nike and hand-stitched, in the case of soccer balls, in Asia using child labour. This equipment is then sold at significant profit, to a mass market in the towns and cities of North America and Europe. Several transnational corporations are involved in the production and consumption phases of global soccer – some of whom both own the media companies and have, as in the case of Sky TV, shareholdings in the soccer clubs they screen as part of what sociologists term the 'global media sport complex'. sportanddev.org |

So, what the two texts that I have found are talking about is how professional sports clubs around the world are making their own social media pages to help engage their fans and people around the world. They do this to help popularise themselves and get their name out there so they can bring back more revenue.

Conclusion

In conclusion after looking at all the articles and references that I am including within this piece of text there is a lot about how different countries play sport and how their sport gives them a national identity. When I look back at the first argument within the text I started talking about how china and the welsh national sports compare to each other as I started saying that everyone knows that the national sport of china is ping pong, and this sport is played throughout the world. However, I then started talking about how the welsh national sport is handball and that because its not the main priority sport within the country I even did not know that it was the welsh national sport as the FAW are always pushing forward football instead and the welsh government are pushing other such as rugby and badminton instead. The argument for this is that china is making it their priority to push their national sport to all the younger ages so they can then gain more elite performers to then compete within the Olympics and give their country an even bigger national identity within that sport.

Looking back at another piece of text that I have written about is that Barrie Houlihan has said that for some strong identification within some sports it is easier to be identified in a sport like football than in tennis due to football being more global and a bigger sport in the world than tennis unless you are from the same country of the tennis player you will probably will not be able to identify them.

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unfurl the flag of the European Union, many persist in waving their national flags despite the multinational composition of the European team.

So, another example of nationalism and national identity is that in big sporting events especially within the international stage a good way to identify a country or a national team is the way the supporters bring their flags or national colours within the tournament. This is not an example of homogenous global sporting culture due to fans around the world can travel and support their national team as everyone are the same when it comes to supporting their home country.

Looking back at my texts from the globalisation within sport the world cup draw helps determine which country gets to host the next world cup up to 8 years apart this is to help globalise and push to promote the country to get more tourists and this means more revenue for the whole country.

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I am using this piece of text again from the essay to explain my point as many countries have a national sport and many of them forget to promote them from a young age which then means that the sport then is not taught, and this demolishes globalising it due to the home country not promoting it within sports classes e.g., PE. To what extent has the relationship between sport and national identity been eroded and replaced by a homogenous global sporting culture. Due to many countries not promoting or teaching their national sports they are promoting other sports such as football and rugby within wales instead of handball, even though china is still promoting and teaching their own sport such as ping pong they are still promoting football, swimming, badminton and tennis. This causes a huge problem within globalisation and national identity due to other countries exceling in other sports than their national sport which gives people the wrong indication that they play that sport and is their national sport even though its just a sport they've promoted instead of their own.

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