
INTRODUCTION

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Sociology of Sport in “la Francophonie”

This special issue of the *Sociology of Sport Journal* was proposed by Peter Donnelly, then editor of the journal, at a meeting of the editorial board during the 1993 NASSS conference. The NASSS conference in Ottawa was a special one in many ways, but its major innovations were its bilingualism and its focus on French-language sociology of sport. This issue of the journal mostly includes revised and translated papers presented at the Ottawa conference. The main objectives of the issue are to provide an introduction to Francophone authors, an application to sport of some of the major French sociological works that have been translated in English, and a sample of the writings done by Francophone sport sociologists (i.e., those using French as their major language of scientific communication).

The task associated with this special issue is more complicated than it appears at first sight. It implies more than translating, since in addition to the language barrier a cultural barrier must be overcome. In fact, several factors have to be considered when publishing research papers written in another language, especially when they are inspired by works that have already been translated. Articles presented in this issue and dealing with the works of Bourdieu and Foucault are good examples of the relevance of such factors. First, when a piece of work is made available in another language, it already has a life of its own among the readers of the original edition. Second, since this specific piece has been released first in one language, it has already been the object of comments (informal and published) when it is released in the other language. Third, the same piece circulates in different scientific cultures or scholarly spaces, as well as within different readerships. Accordingly, the same *oeuvre* may have a very different impact in one linguistic community compared to the other. Some of the issues it raises can be of importance in one linguistic community and not in the other. Such issues may also be understood or integrated differently. Finally, the so-called “cumulative process of knowledge” follows different pathways according to the structure of the field of knowledge within each scientific culture or scholarly space.

Obviously, this special issue is intended not to solve the above-mentioned difficulties but rather to raise awareness about them and contribute to the discipline by allowing a confrontation of readings specific to different scholarly spaces within sociology of sport. Some of the ideas conveyed here might appear inadequate or simply wrong to some readers. If that is the case, this issue will have accomplished one of its secondary objectives. Indeed, we do hope that it will stimulate some essays in the comparative epistemology of sociology of sport.

In terms of the articles presented in this issue, we trust that they will shed some light on the sociology of sport in “la Francophonie.” Suzanne Laberge

and Georges Vigarello have graciously agreed to write about the historical developments, scholarly spaces, cultures, theoretical traditions, contributions, and issues specific to sociology of sport communities in Québec and in France. Their excellent essays are presented at the end of the issue. Feature articles constitute a very small yet highly interesting sample of the current theoretical perspectives and thematic issues within French-language sociology of sport. Jacques Defrance provides an introduction to the anthropological sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, while Suzanne Laberge builds on earlier suggestions to integrate gender into Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. Jean-Paul Clément's paper concludes on Bourdieu by offering a synthesis of the ways in which the Bourdieusian approach has contributed to sociology of sport. Two articles deal with the works of a second major French author: Georges Vigarello focuses on the "positivity" of the disciplines in his examination of Michel Foucault's writings on the birth of the prison, and we present a brief summary of Foucault's concepts and perspectives as well as the impact they have had on social theory and sociology of sport. Pierre Chifflet's article represents another French theoretical tradition, that of Crozier and Friedberg's strategic analysis.

From a thematic point of view, the feature articles are a good illustration of a number of issues central to French-language sociology of sport communities. Normand Bourgeois' paper deals with Québec sports media and their construction of narratives and journalistic events, while Nancy Midol and Gérard Broyer provide an anthropo-analysis of the culture associated with new "fun" and "whiz" sports in France. Other issues discussed in the feature articles include knowledge production (Laberge, Vigarello); culture and the "field" of sports (Defrance, Clément, Midol & Broyer); the body (Vigarello, Rail & Harvey); sport, class, and the state (Chifflet, Clément); and gender and sexual identity (Laberge, Rail & Harvey).

We feel that the papers presented in this special issue are characteristic of the quality and diversity of sociology of sport writings done in "la Francophonie," and we thank the readers in advance for taking this opportunity to cross the linguistic and cultural barriers that too often separate and isolate our scholarly spaces.

Jean Harvey and Geneviève Rail, Guest Editors

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