

# Sport, Culture and Socialization

MARIA ALLISON (U.S.A.)

## *Abstract*

In the article the author makes explicit the relationship between culture and socialization. Much past work in sport socialization has ignored the impact and influence of culture on the socialization process. This paper critiques past approaches to socialization from a cultural perspective, and demonstrates, through the use of ethnographic data, an interactionist approach to the process.

## 1. SOCIALIZATION: A CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

Culture has been defined by the anthropologist Clyde Kluckholm (1967) as the implicit and explicit designs for living.<sup>1</sup> Socialization is the process by which such designs are passed on from one individual to another, and hence from one generation to the next (Wentworth, 1980). However, despite the obvious interrelationships between the concepts of culture and socialization, historically each has been defined, studied, and analyzed by social scientists as though conceptually and empirically distinct. One possible reason for this forced separation is that anthropologists, sociologists, and social psychologists have traditionally focused on different units of analysis. Anthropologists, for example, focus on culture and use the term enculturation to describe "the process of learning the traditions of ones' society" (Bock, 1969: 24). Sociologists and social psychologists are also interested in the process of social learning i.e., socialization, but have focused on the group-individual dimension, and have frequently held the cultural dimension in abeyance. Thus, past separations have been forced rather than real, and have masked the interdependence between the individual, the group, and the culture at large.

The interrelationships of culture and socialization has also been ignored by social scientists interested in understanding the phenomena of play, games and sport. On the one hand there is a great deal of work

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<sup>1</sup> The term culture here refers to all activities, actions, and meanings of man and is not limited to the concept of "higher" culture frequently utilized in central Europe.

which highlights the interdependence between play, games, sport and culture. From the work of Huizinga (1938), who suggested that all culture evolves from play, through the works of Anderson and Moore (1960), Lüschen (1967), and Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962) who suggest that sport, play, and games reflect the essence of culture, it has been argued that sport and culture are inextricably intertwined. Similarly, a multitude of social scientists, including the works of Mead (1934) and Piaget (1965), have presented data which describe ways in which play, games, and sport teach, or the very least allow children in society to learn about the ideas, norms, rules, and expectations which guide their behavior and the behavior of others. Thus, play, games, and sport have been historically linked to the process of socialization as well. Again, however, the interrelationship between culture and socialization within the play, games, and sport contexts has not been carefully elucidated.

The purpose of this chapter is to present a cultural interpretation of the process of socialization and describe the role of play, games, and sport within it. In order to clarify and illustrate the nature of the interrelationship between culture and socialization, comparative data collected within the United States contrasting contemporary sport in the Navajo Indian culture and mainstream American culture is presented.

## 2. THE IDEA OF CULTURE

The concept of culture is a term which has been used particularly by anthropologists to describe the actions and meanings of man in society. The term itself has been defined on the one hand to refer to the objective things of which society is made including art, music, language, dress, games, morals, language, knowledges, values, and beliefs; in essence, everything that man is and does. On the other hand, the term culture has been said to be a design or deep structure which guides behavior in society (Geertz, 1973; Wentworth, 1980).

In essence, culture is both; it is patterns of behavior and patterns for behavior (Goodenough, 1961). The patterns of behavior or products of culture are those objectified "things" which anthropologists describe as their raw data. Culture includes, for example, those artifacts such as language, music, arts, games, knowledges, values, and beliefs which make up a peoples' way of life.

Beyond the cultural products, however, Goodenough (1961) indicates that culture presents a pattern for behavior. That is, culture is an implicit design or blueprint for living. Not only is culture a series of artifacts or products which reflect a way of life, but is simultaneously a "design for that way of life" (Woods, 1975). Embedded in the products of culture are implicit principles or "rules" which guide behavior; these

principles or patterns present to the individual members of society a series of choices for future behavior.

The view of culture as a system of principles, or rules which guide behavior does not imply that the individual is molded and turned into a carbon copy of what to think and how to behave. As an individual learns the patterns for behavior of his culture, he/she will change, adapt, and adopt his/her own "rules". So the perspective of culture as a blueprint or design simply indicates that future patterns for behavior are established among a people, and individuals and groups will build on, modify, and re-design that blueprint in various ways. Such a perspective recognizes the freedom of the individual to move within the culture, but also recognizes the dynamic and changing nature of culture as well.

### 3. PLAY, GAMES, AND SPORT: PATTERNS OF AND PATTERNS FOR BEHAVIOR

The perspective of culture as both patterns of and for behavior becomes important in our analyses of play, games, and sport types. On the one hand, cultures possess many distinct types of games and sport activities which are indigenous to, or derive from within, that particular group. Thus, the United States has basketball and baseball, England has rugby, the Spanish have bullfighting, and the Japanese have sumo-wrestling, which represent relatively unique expressions or patterns of behavior in each culture. These particular cultural products can be described in some detail. In fact, discrete lists and descriptions of games indigenous to many cultures, from the most primitive to the most industrialized, could be created in order to understand the nature of each game.

In addition to the fact that cultures may have unique game and sport forms, it is also apparent that many games are shared. Thus, basketball, soccer, and hockey are games shared by many cultural groups. However, when a cultural group adopts a game from another, it has been found that the game undergoes some change. Riesman and Denny (1954), for example, trace the transformation of the English game of rugby into the current form of football which has become so popular in the United States. In addition, works by Allison and Lüschen (1979), Blanchard (1974), and Farrer (1976) describe ways in which native American Indian groups within the United States adopt the game of basketball and tag, respectively, and change the content in very patterned, culturally-specific ways. These studies suggest that such changes in games occur in such a way that content of games come to reflect the cultural schemata of the group in which they are found. Thus, games come to represent the patterns of behavior of the cultures in which they are found.

The cultural analysis of play, games, and sport as patterns for behavior is somewhat more complex. Here one must attempt to understand the implicit design or blueprints of culture which are embedded within the game setting. Beyond the immediately recognizable content of the game such as of rules, styles, strategies, and materials which make up the raw data which the social scientist must understand, analyses must try to discern, beyond such content, the implicit pattern, design or deep structure which form the cultural foundation of such behavior. Thus, for example, Piaget (1965) has suggested that games represent a system of jurisprudence and morality. A culture's underlying system or morality may then come to be elaborated in the game played. Similarly, Lüschen (1970) has suggested that cooperation, association and contest are implicit structural manifestations of the game. The ways in which particular cultural groups elaborate on these dimensions within games may represent the culture's patterns for behavior. The social scientist, then, must not look only to observe the patterns of behavior which are expressed as games in culture, but must attempt to uncover within the games themselves, the implicit blueprint or design for living of a culture as well.

#### SOCIALIZATION AND SPORT

To this point, the discussion has focused on the definition and nature of culture and its relationship to play, games, and sport. If culture is viewed simultaneously as those morals, customs, laws, knowledges, arts, music, and games of a people, and, too, as the implicit blueprint or design of a people, then the question becomes, "How are these explicit and implicit designs passed along from one generation to the next, from one individual to another?" The process of socialization is the mechanism by which such transfer occurs. It is the process by which individual members of society are taught and/or learn about the nature and essence of their culture (Danziger, 1971; Wentworth, 1980).

Much of the past works on sport socialization have implicitly recognized that socialization helps insure cultural continuity, but few have explicitly focused on socialization per se from a cultural level of analysis. Before presenting a cultural interpretation of the process of socialization, past approaches to socialization and sport are explained and critiqued.

#### 4. SOCIALIZATION: APPROACHES, PROBLEMS, AND PROSPECTS

Approaches utilized to study the process of socialization have changed throughout history. Early work, for example, utilized a social problems approach which attempted to identify what child training variables in

culture led to certain personality traits (e.g., aggressiveness, overdependency, weakness). Because this approach found such situation-specific rather than consistent personality dispositions, it lost much of its explanatory power (Danziger, 1971). A second popular approach to socialization has been social reinforcement theory (Bijou, 1970). This approach assumes reinforcement, in the strictest stimulus-response sense, is the major means by which an individual develops into a socialized human being. A basic problem with reinforcement theory is that it is not predictive in the sense that it cannot explain why one stimulus might elicit a response in one person and not in another (Danziger, 1971). In addition, such a psychological approach perceives of the child, for example, as a passive organism who simply receives reward and punishment from adults and responds in the appropriate fashion (Zigler and Child, 1969). One need be around children but a short while to realize this approach does not work.

Perhaps the most pervasive approach to the study of socialization today utilizes the social learning perspective (Bandura, 1963; Bandura and Walters, 1969). Bandura and associates have argued that most social behavior is learned through observation, imitation, and modeling of significant others (e.g., family, peers, teachers) within the life space of the individual. The social learning paradigm suggests that society is organized into a series of roles; these roles or social positions require certain patterns of behavior which the socializee (i.e., the role learner, whether child or adult) must learn.

For our particular interests, the role which one would learn would be that of athlete and/or sport participant. We would want to know in what ways a person comes to be socialized into the sport role (e.g., athlete, coach) and what types of behaviors and attitudes are developed in that person once that role is adopted. Snyder and Spreitzer (1981) characterize the sport socialization process along the following continuum:

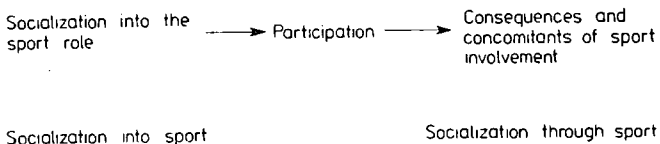


Fig. 1. The continuum of sport socialization (Snyder and Spreitzer, 1981, p. 119).

The former process is termed socialization into sport and the latter is termed socialization through sport. Each is discussed in regard to their basic premises and their contribution to the cultural understanding of socialization.

## SOCIALIZATION INTO SPORT

By far the most popular topic of research in the United States is an analysis of the process of socialization into sport. Utilizing the social learning perspective, much of this work has attempted to identify what factors influence one to adopt a sport role (e.g., athlete, fan, sportswriter, coach). Sewell's (1963) Social Role—Social Systems approach has been used extensively and divides the elements of socialization into three components (Figure 2): significant others, that is, socializing agents who serve as role models (e.g., family, peers, teachers, mass media, sport heroes); social situations (e.g., the home, school, sport club, community); and personal attributes of the role learner (e.g., personality, traits, race, gender, values, ethnicity, ability, attitudes, motivations).

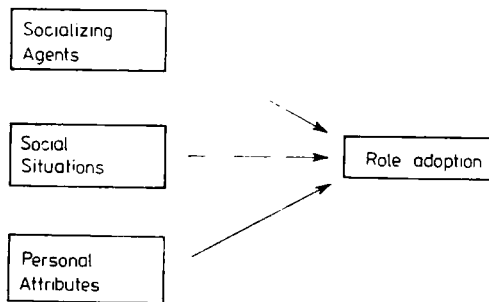


Fig. 2. Socialization into sport.

Those utilizing this socialization-into-sport model attempt, usually through the use of questionnaire methods and correlational analyses, to identify the degrees to which different significant others, socializing situations, and personal attributes contribute to the adoption of the role of participant (e.g., athlete). Without going into detail about the specific findings of such research, it can generally be stated that boys and girls experience different degrees of influence from significant others (Green-dorfer, 1977, 1978a, 1978b; Snyder and Spreitzer, 1976). The opportunities to become socialized into sport also differ by social class (Eggleston, 1965; Lüschen, 1969; Loy, 1972), and sport type (Kenyon and McPherson, 1973; Spreitzer and Snyder, 1976; McPherson, 1976b) to name but a few of the patterns identified. In addition to identified intra-national differences this same approach was utilized in a large scale cross-cultural study (Kenyon and Knopp, 1978) in order to identify whether or not the patterns of socialization into sport were the same in several countries (i.e., Australia, Belgium, Canada, Federal Republic of Germany, Hungary, and Japan). As one might expect, cross-cultural differences in patterns did emerge, although unfortunately no attempt was made to isolate the

sociocultural, political, economic, or other structural features of the countries involved which might explain such differences. In general, then, the studies cited above have moved our knowledge of the process of socialization into sport forward in that they have isolated the factors which influence one to adopt a sport role. Despite the value of this past work, however, there are several shortcomings which should be addressed as we attempt to understand the dynamics of socialization.

First and foremost, the social learning paradigm as it is currently expressed does not take into account the macrosystemic influence of culture in the process of socialization. The influence of culture, in this particular model, is subsumed under the category of personal attributes e.g., race, ethnicity, values. This psychologistic approach clearly overlooks the fact that the entire model could vary based on culture. Thus, for example, the particular patterns which socializing agents utilize, the social situations available, and particular values and attitudes held by the role learner would directly be influenced by the culture in which he/she is raised.

A second problem with the social learning model as it comes to be studied is that it oversimplifies the complexity of the relationship which exists between socializing agent, social situations, and personal attributes. Basically, the model studies each of the sets of variables as though they are separate and discrete (Wentworth, 1980). Work focuses on, for example, differences in degree of parental influence as compared to socializing situations without understanding the dynamics implicit to each. Parents obviously influence the values which children have toward sport and, too, have tremendous control over the socializing situation. Past research, due to the imposed structure of the model, ignores this complexity.

Third, the social learning model portrays the role learner as a passive individual acted on by socializing agents (Wentworth, 1980). A quick glance at Figure 2 indicates that the flow of influence is assumed to be unidirectional. Many social scientists now agree, however, that although one is influenced by others, one simultaneously influences others in an interactive fashion as well. Such mutual influence takes place through communication, argumentation, conflict, competition, cooperation, negotiation and other forms (Simmel, 1971) of human interaction. As those who adopt the social learning model would have it much of what is passed between individuals is accomplished through imitation, and reinforcement. However, it seems that many mechanisms of social learning are more conscious, interactive, and overt in nature. The social learning model does not take these dynamic mechanisms into account.

Fourth, the methods utilized most frequently in past socialization-in-to-sport research ask subjects to remember back to earlier experiences and evaluate the degree of influence of significant others, socializing

situations, and various personal attributes had on the subjects' participation patterns. Such recall techniques have frequently been criticized by social scientists for their potential lack of accuracy. In addition, although it is inferred in such research that cause-effect relationships have been identified, only correlational relationships are identified. Wentworth (1980) suggests that much socialization research assumes a deterministic, cause-effect pattern when at best what is suggested is "differential association" between variables (p. 73).

Finally, the social learning model tends to focus on the individual as a product. The following definition exemplifies this perspective (McPherson, 1981: 246):

Socialization is a complex social process designed to produce an end product, an individual who is prepared (i.e., socialized) for the requirements of participation in society in general, and for performance of a variety of social roles in specific sub-groups within that society.

The socialized individual is, therefore, viewed as a product, as an end result of external stimuli which act on him/her. Such a perspective creates an oversocialized (Wrong, 1961) view of man as one who is influenced by others, but does not necessarily influence and, too, ignores the spontaneity and creativity within the system as a whole — both for the individual and cultures as well.

How, then might one view socialization so that it does not reflect such shortcomings. One immediate necessity is to redefine and reorient our thrust. Specifically, Wentworth (1980: 67) suggests that, "socialization is the interactional display of the sociocultural environment," and formally defines socialization as, "... the activity that interacts and lends structure to the entry of members into an already existing world as a sector of that world" (Wentworth, 1980: 85). In other words, we need to move beyond simply identifying the degree of influence which significant others, socializing agents, and personal attributes have on the process, and attempt to understand the intricate nature of that influence. It means, too, viewing such interaction as the display of cultural messages, essentially the content of cultural which is to be transferred.

#### SOCIALIZATION THROUGH SPORT

Whereas the process of socialization into sport has been studied quite extensively, the process of socialization through sport has not received the same attention. The socialization through sport model is based on the premise that one learns about society (e.g., values, norms, customs, behavior) through participation in play, games and sport activity. As McPherson (1981: 263) states, learning is thought to develop in these areas:

1. the development of individual traits and skills,



2. the behavioral and attitudinal learning about the environment, and
3. learning to interact with the environment.

Whereas the socialization into sport model was concerned with how one learns to adopt the sport role, socialization through sport is concerned with what happens to the person once in the role.

The notion that one is socialized through play, games, and sport has been accepted for some time. Callois (1961), Denzin (1975), Huizinga (1939), Herron and Sutton-Smith (1971), Lüschen (1967), Mead (1934), I. and E. Opie (1969) and Piaget (1963), Stone and Stone, 1977 and Watson (1977) are but a few scholars that have suggested that one learns about self and society through the play game, and sport behavior. A good deal of work by psychologists, social psychologists, and child development specialists has been conducted in order to understand the function of play within the life of the child. Mead, for example, suggested that children develop a sense of selfhood and "generalized other" through play. Piaget (1965) suggested that through games children develop a cognitive sense of morality and jurisprudence. Most such works have focused on play and not sport as the context of social learning (Denzin, 1977).

There are several recent works which suggest that participation in sport leads to the development of values which exist in the society at large (Helanko, 1960; Lüschen, 1967; Watson, 1977; Webb, 1969). Lüschen (1967), for example, suggests that the participation of subcultural groups in a high achievement oriented sport system, may function to teach that high achievement orientation to the members of that subgroup. Webb (1969) has offered data which suggest the participation in games and sport prepares one to deal with the value orientation demanded by the society at large.

Recent work by Lever (1976, 1978) and Duquin (1977) suggest that sex role learning occurs through participation in play, games, and sport activity. Lever (1976, 1978) found, for example, that boys and girls participate in games which vary to quite a degree in complexity; boys' games are much, much more complex than girl's games and take place in very different environments. She suggested, therefore, that boys' games, which are typically competitive and rule bound, prepare them for the demands of a bureaucratic world. Girl's games, which are typically more expressive, prepare them with different skills and a different type of social world.

One of the few cross-cultural works related to socialization through sport was conducted by Roberts and Sutton-Smith (1962). Roberts and Sutton-Smith attempted to link the complexity of games played with the child training variables dominant in particular cultures. In general, their work suggested the following logic. Cultures vary in the degree of demands and hence conflict they place on children in child training pat-

terns. Some cultures emphasize responsibility, some obedience, and some strong achievement strivings. The demands placed on children to adopt these orientations create psychological conflict in the child. Games act as situations of buffered learning where children learn to deal with such conflict. Thus, their work links child training variables, the demands of culture, and the game behaviors expressed in a culture.

As can be seen, the socialization through sport research does not present the same consistency of approach found in the socialization into sport research. Although this is not a necessary weakness, part of the difficulty lies in problems of method. Much of the socialization into sport research conducted has utilized the questionnaire method which is efficient and allows for ease of measurement. Thus, many groups can be sampled in a relatively short time. As indicated previously, however, this ease of measurements overlooks the complexity of the actual situation at hand.

Secondly, if one is actually interested in understanding what is learned through participation in play, games and sport, one need carefully observe those dynamics in order to establish the cause-effect relationship. Observational research is quite difficult to conduct and frequently involves much time.

Finally, the major problem with both areas of research to this point is that they have failed to link the process of socialization to culture in general. The rest of this chapter presents a perspective and data which suggest ways in which the link can be expressed.

## 5. CULTURE AND SOCIALIZATION: A SYNTHESIS

As should be clear to this point, past work on socialization and sport has ignored the cultural dimension. If we adopt the perspective of Wentworth (1980) that "socialization is the interactional display of the sociocultural environment", then the nature of research questions asked would indeed be distinct from the a-cultural approaches typically utilized in the past. The following discussion present a possible framework within which such work may be conducted.

### THE CARRIERS OF CULTURE: AGENTS, CONTEXTS, AND INSTITUTIONS

If we focus on interaction as the process by which socialization occurs, then it is incumbent on social scientists to understand the forces which influence the nature of that interaction. In other words, interaction does not occur within a social vacuum but rather is formed by different socializing agents in distinct roles, in different contexts, and within different societal institutions. These three dimensions set the

bounds and parameters within which interaction takes place and thus influence the content of culture which is transferred.

*Agents.* Daily interactions with family, peers, teachers, coaches and other socializing agents (e.g., community, family, sport heroes via mass media) are the immediate, most recognizable salient forces which influence what a novice learns about the social system in which he or she lives (Sewell, 1963). Parents, for example, have a tremendous influence on the types of play, games, and sport activity in which children participate. Parents attempt to shape the behaviors and attitudes of their children from the day of birth. Similarly, coaches attempt to influence the behaviors and attitudes of their athletes. Coaches frequently stress discipline, victory, and high achievement levels in their athletes. They attempt, as best is possible, to influence not only skill development, but also the psycho-social development of the individual as well. Thus, socializing agents within the bounds of their own particular roles, attempt to influence others (e.g., teach others) through the behaviors they enact, and through the values, norms, and expectations they espouse and communicate (both verbally and non-verbally) to others. Surely, some of the interaction which occurs between individuals is idiosyncratic and perhaps superficial to the situation at hand; however, some of the content of that interaction carries within it cultural values and expectations as well. The job of the social scientist is to uncover those cultural messages and understand them within the socialization framework as a whole.

*Contexts.* To focus exclusively on the role of socializing agents as the means by which socialization occurs, seriously overlooks the influence which changing contexts (Wentworth, 1980), or social situations (Znaniecki, 1925) exert on the process as a whole. The types of interaction which take place between individuals are influenced directly by the context within which such interaction occurs. Thus, for example, the game of soccer played by children in a park creates a different context for interaction than the game of soccer played by the same children involved in a highly competitive youth soccer league. What these children learn, for example, from and about each other, who they learn from, and what they learn about the nature of the game, the nature of social interaction, and the rules of social behavior, expectations, norms, and values, would probably be quite different in each setting. Our understanding of the process of socialization, then, must include not only an understanding of the nature of the interaction between socializing agents, but also must consider simultaneously the context within which interaction takes place.

*Institutions.* Finally, it must be remembered that the major social institutions of society such as the kinship structure, politics, religion,

education, and sport to name a few, frame the contexts within which human interaction takes place. These historically linked institutions reflect, in their very nature, function, and structure, the content of culture which is to be transferred from one generation to the next, from one individual to the next. Thus, the institution of religion in doctrine and practice presents an ideal typical model of moral behavior for an individual. Similarly, an analysis of the educational institution would reveal the nature of the implicit and explicit patterns of behavior which a particular society expect to be transferred. In like fashion, sport as a social institution reflects the exigencies of culture which are to be transferred. In addition to the function of sport as play and display in American society (Stone, 1969), the structure of sport comes to reflect nature of the larger society. Again, the work of Riesman and Denny (1954) traces the transformation of rugby into American football and describes the features of American culture which influenced such a change. Arens (1975), suggests that the highly specialized division of labor, degree of violence, and heavy sexual symbolism of American football express the valued tenets of the society at large. Damm (1960) describes the relationship between the evolution and development of sportive activities among primitive peoples, and links such to the psychological and environmental contingencies of these cultures. Glassford (1970) links the development and complexity of Eskimo games to the economic structure and behavior of their culture. Similarly, Zurcher and Meadow (1967) describe ways in which the national sports of bullfighting and baseball reflect the variation in kinship structures of Mexico and the United States, respectively. Thus, at the macro-level, institutions such as sport are car-

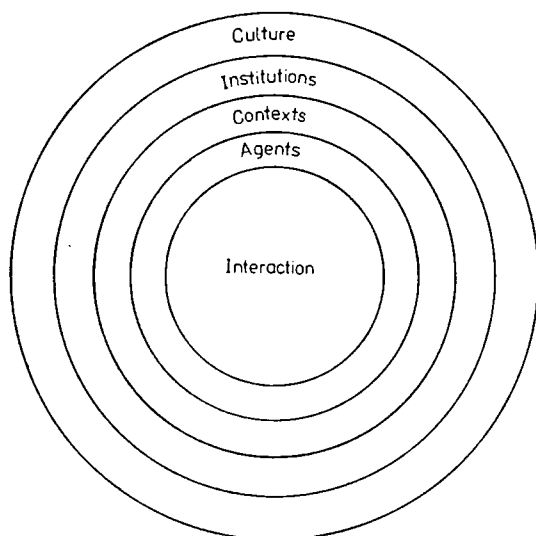


Fig. 3. Spheres of influence on the process of socialization.

riers of culture in that their very nature broadly define that which is to be transferred — the patterns of and patterns for behavior.

Agents, contexts, and institutions, then, can be conceived of as carriers of culture. Through human interaction, people interact and in so doing socialize one another into the culture as a whole. Interactions take place in quite different contexts and with different institutional models. Culture, then, is the manifestation of the patterns of and patterns for behavior valued by a people. These patterns are manifested in different institutions and come to be expressed, influenced, and communicated by individuals in interaction with one another in different contexts and situations. Ultimately through mutual interaction, individuals are not only socialized, but in turn influence those around them, the contexts in which they participate, and ultimately the institutions and culture as a whole. The process of socialization, then, is not only a process of being shaped, but also one of shaping, in a creative, evolving sense, the world around us. It is not new that individuals are, in fact, the creators of culture change (Woods, 1975); this model simply links culture change with the process of socialization as a whole.

#### CULTURE, SPORT, AND SOCIALIZATION

To this point in the chapter an attempt has been made to define culture, define socialization, and develop an understanding of the relationship between the two. I should be relatively clear that in research dealing with play, games and sport, the relationship between culture and socialization has been greatly ignored.

It is one thing, however, to suggest that culture and the process of socialization are interrelated, and another to show how such an interrelationship expresses itself in the real world. In order to ground this theorizing in concrete terms, data are presented which make explicit the concepts and principles thus far described. Specifically, the writer describes her cross-cultural sport research which was conducted among the Navajo Indians of the southwestern United States. Such a descriptive account not only makes explicit the relationship between culture and socialization which has been described, but too, sensitizes the reader to the methodological strengths and problems inherent in such research.

#### THE NAVAJO GAME SYSTEM

The Navajo Indian culture is the largest Indian tribe in the United States today, numbering approximately 140,000 people. The Navajo Indian Reservation is located in the southwestern quadrant of the United States covering 24,700 square miles including portions of New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah. Although the majority of Navajo people are terri-

torially isolated from urban areas populated by White or Anglo<sup>2</sup> people, the rate of travel of Navajos to such areas is quite high.

As a people, the Navajo have maintained a very strong sense of cultural identification. This is due, in part, to the territorial isolation. For some time anthropologists have studied and written about the value orientations of the Navajo people. Although some cultural differences between Navajo and Anglo are highlighted in the work which follows, the reader is referred to the works of Bryde (1971), Kluckholm and Leighton (1962), Kluckholm and Strodbeck (1961), Ladd (1957), Leighton and Kluckholm (1974), Shepardson and Hammond (1970), Vogt and Albert (1966), Witherspoon (1977) for a detailed description of the culture. In essence these writers suggest that the Navajo culture is a cooperation based society which places heavy emphasis on maintaining group solidarity and homogeneity. Any behaviors which threaten that solidarity receive negative sanction by the community.

The schools on the Reservation are a major source of contact between the Anglo and Navajo culture (König, 1980). The school district in which these data were collected is part of the public school system of the state of New Mexico. The school curriculum and sport programs are designed by Anglo educationalists; the administrators, teachers, and coaches in this district are predominantly Anglo while the student clientele is predominantly Navajo.<sup>3</sup>

The Navajo students in the school district live at home. Many are bused from thirty to forty miles a day. In living at home these Navajo students interact with family and friends in a predominantly Navajo community. Thus, these Navajo adolescents are embedded in their own culture, its values, norms, and expectations.

The immediate implications of such ethnic diversity among teachers/coaches and students should be clear. Navajo youth are socialized by family, peers and community into Navajo culture, yet have to interact in an educational system which reflects another. Specifically, the Navajo students attend a school whose implicit and explicit structure, function and content reflect the ideology and/or valued characteristics (e.g., individualism, competitiveness, high achievement orientation) of Anglo mainstream society. The teacher/coach as socializing agent communicates the pre-established subject matter as well as the value orientations in which he/she is raised. The content of Anglo culture then, comes face-to-face with the content of Navajo culture within the school setting.

Sport programs, as part of this school setting, reflect this same diversity. A description of the interactions of Navajo athletes and Anglo

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<sup>2</sup> The term Anglo is used by those in the region to describe Whites of the mainstream American society.

<sup>3</sup> No value judgement is made here regarding the acceptability of this ethnic distribution; this simply reflects the actual state of affairs.

coaches within the sport program provide some specific examples of what happens when two cultures come together. Essentially, the goal of the Anglo coach, as socializing agent, is to teach the Navajo student the appropriate behaviors (e.g., game skills, rules, knowledges) and dispositions (e.g., attitudes, values, orientations) that would turn that student into a successful athlete. The responsibility of the Navajo athlete, is to internalize these behaviors and dispositions and hopefully display them in game situations.

The initial question becomes, what are the behaviors and dispositions which the Anglo coaches "carry" in their heads? Is their definition of "good athlete" embedded with values and expectations which are quite distinct from those carried by the Navajo? A second question becomes, to what degree and in what ways does the Anglo coach attempt to socialize the Navajo athlete into his/her perspective or world view? And finally, what is the response or result of such attempts? Does the Navajo athlete adopt the perspective of the Anglo coach, does culture conflict result, or is there a sense of compromise between the groups involved? By focusing on the sport of basketball, and the interactions between Anglo coaches and Navajo athletes specifically, such questions can be answered.

*Basketball: Their "National" Sport.* The game of basketball was introduced to the Navajo people in the early 1940's by Mormon missionaries (Blanchard, 1974). Since that time the game has grown in popularity among the Navajo to the point where many Anglos refer to it as "their (Navajo) national sport." It is not uncommon to attend a high school game where there is standing room only; frequently Navajo people drive in from 60 to 70 miles out to watch any evening of the week. Navajo athletes play the game in quite a skilled fashion; they are excellent ballhandlers and shooters. The particular school where these data were collected had always won more than half of their games during a season, and gone to the State tourney on several occasions. The interscholastic games played by Navajo athletes and Anglo athletes are very similar, although not identical (see Allison and Lüschen, 1979). In general it can be said that the Navajo athletes do not play as physical a game as their Anglo counterpart; hard body contact is avoided. Other than that distinction, however, the games are quite similar. To some degree, this similarity in strategy, style, and rules should not be surprising since the game content is very much controlled by the organizational structure and tradition of sport in general, and the direct control and teachings of the Anglo coach.

Besides the interscholastic game, a form of free play, pick-up informal basketball, called Navajo 21, is also quite popular among the Navajo. This game is played by boys and girls every chance possible. It is played before school, after school, lunch time, and at home whenever

baskets are available. One principal indicated that one late night he found several Navajo youth playing at an outdoor court. They had parked their pick-up trucks around the court with headlights on so they could see. Although space does not allow for a detailed description of the game rules here (see Allison and Lüschen, 1979 for details), suffice it to say that the game is quite distinct from the pick-up, informal game typically played by Anglo youth. Whereas the Anglo informal game typically has many rules, a high division of labor, a strong team component, and is played as though an official were present on the court, the Navajo game is much more relaxed in fashion. Rules are few; no violations, fouls, or boundaries are used. Any number of players participate, the team concept is not present, and no attempt is made by participants to control the nature and style of play of others. The Anglo informal game had a very rigid structure; the Navajo game had a very loose structure.

*What Is A Good Athlete? Navajo and Anglo Perspectives.* As indicated previously, the school is a major source of contact between the Navajo and Anglo people. Anglo administrators, teachers and coaches represent an extension of the Anglo mainstream culture. The student athletes represent extensions of the Navajo culture. In our particular focus Anglo coaches, Navajo athletes, and Navajo parents and community (as spectators) come together in the interscholastic sport context (see Figure 4). On the one hand, Anglo coaches attempt to socialize the

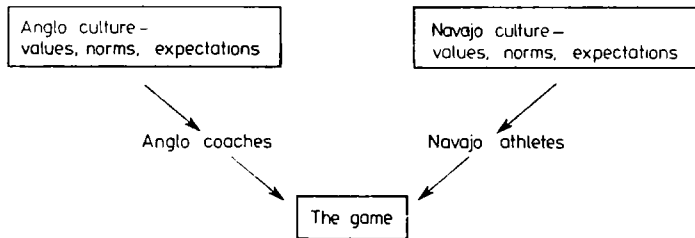


Fig. 4. Sociocultural complexity of the game setting.

Navajo athlete into the role of "good athlete" while the Navajo parents and community attempt to socialize their youth into a player of the Navajo culture. The question becomes, "What are the expectations of each; are they consistent or different, and how does the athlete respond to the demands of this potentially conflicting cultural system?"

The methods used to identify the values, norms, and expectations of each cultural group included observation and interview techniques. In addition to a careful description of Navajo game behaviors, a major source of information was collected by interviewing Anglo coaches. In general, Anglo coaches were asked what they tried to teach their Navajo



athletes, how well their athletes responded, and, too, how they felt coaching Navajo athletes differed from coaching Anglo athletes. This strategy had two advantages. First, these Anglo coaches were not only describing their perspective of the Navajo culture, but, too, were expressing their own values and expectations as Anglo coaches. The value of this approach should become clear as we move through the data.

Anglo coaches highlighted three ways in which the behaviors and dispositions of Navajo athletes varied from their own expectations. Specifically, Anglo coaches indicated that the Navajo athletes' orientations toward rules, competition, and recognition were different from their own.

## 6. RULES

One major difference in the conception of the Anglo coaches and Navajo athletes revolved around the structure and function of rules. While data collected indicated that the Anglo teacher/coach found rules useful, important, central, and necessary to the functioning of the game and team, the Navajo did not consider rules so important. This pattern is exemplified in the difference between the Navajo and Anglo informal pick-up basketball games. The Navajo game had a very loose structure while the informal pick-up game of the Anglo was quite rigid. One Anglo coach noted:

... the White kids play like they're playing in a high school game, the Navajo kids just wanna horse around; they don't like rules.

One Anglo administrator specifically asked the coaches not to allow students to play Navajo 21.

Anglo coach: The Navajo kids love this game, i.e., Navajo 21.

Q: Why don't you let them play it more often?

Anglo coach: 'Cause Mr. Starfish the Anglo principal doesn't like to let the kids play it. He thinks it's too unorganized. It looks unorganized but the kids know what they're doing. They've got their own rules and they follow them. We don't understand it; it's not our way, but it's theirs and they love it.

This statement clearly reflects the value which the Anglo principal placed on rules, rule following, and organization. In the mind of the Anglo principal, the "proper" basketball game should have organization, rules, and disciplined adherence to these rules. In addition, this statement at least implicitly implies that by playing the "appropriate" game the Navajo kids might learn about the necessity and role of rules in their own lives (i.e., discipline). This is not to say that the Navajo athletes were rule breakers. On the contrary, when playing the interscholastic game Navajo athletes accepted the patterns imposed by the game structure

to a high degree, and followed them as carefully as Anglo athletes. However, when given the choice in a free-play setting of utilizing the rule orientation of "regular" basketball, which the Navajo considered overloaded with rules, or playing Navajo 21, the latter was typically chosen.

The following statement made by an Anglo coach who had taught and coached both Anglo and Navajo youth, reflects some of the problems inherent in such value dissonance:

Investigator: How would you compare the two groups on rules?

Anglo coach: They (Navajos) don't like to use'em. My first year there, I went out and set up all sorts of practice rules; I had rules for everything. I ended up having to cut kids left and right; I had no team left. Those kids had things to do like helping the family, tending sheep, driving someone to town. It wasn't that they were being bad; they just had other things to do. I finally had to compromise, I'd let them miss one day of practice and if they'd miss two we'd let team decide what to do. I had to change my ways a bit and they had to change theirs. You can't make changes 'til you've been there a while. I was there 6 years and I finally got them to accept a few of my values, but not a lot.

This statement clearly reflects that there were two sets of rules operating: the rules of the coach which were superseded by the cultural rules of the Navajo (i.e., responsibility to family group). As the coach realized the source of the problem, he allowed a new rule structure to develop which met the needs and expectations of each group.

## 7. COMPETITION

A second major difference between Navajo athletes and Anglo coaches was in their orientations toward competition. Consider the following statements which were reflective of those made by Anglo coaches:

These kids (Navajo) don't have that killer instinct... they don't have what it takes to keep pourin' it on when you've got'em down. Like in football, you have to love to hit 'em...hit 'em hard even when they're down. These kids won't do that.

The lack of physical aggressiveness showed itself in actual game behaviors as well. Another Anglo coach offered:

Q: How competitive are the kids?

Coach: They're not... they're not competitive or eggessive at all.

Q: But they play hard don't they?

Coach: Oh, they'll play until they're ready to fall but they're not physically aggressive... they don't like the real physical stuff.

I've got this football player who is a ninth grader. He'll

be set in a position to "take out" a bunch of guys with a body block and he won't do it. He'll go and do something silly like tackle around the ankles... but no body contact. These Navajos just don't have what I call the killer instinct.

Importantly physically aggressive behavior which may do harm to others receives strong negative sanction in Navajo society (Kluckhohn and Strodbeck, 1962; Ladd, 1957). One can only surmise that the lack of physical aggression displayed by the Navajo on the court is grounded on that principle. Clearly, however, the Anglo coach defines competitiveness as physicality and the Navajo youth do not respond appropriately.

One other difference between the Anglo coaches and Navajo athletes' perception of competition had to do with the way in which the opponents were viewed:

They (Navajos) are competitive in sport. The type of competitiveness, though, is very different. The Navajo kid doesn't get so involved in beating his opponent — not beating him as we think of it. We work at really beating the other team. The Navajo kid competes more with himself; the others aren't so important.

This statement indicates that whereas the Anglo seems to focus on the external source of competition (i.e., opponent), the Navajo perceives of competition as an internal, self-imposed standard. Whereas for the Anglo opposition and domination of the opponent is central to the activity, for the Navajo athlete the opponent is perhaps symbolic and less central to the focus of the activity. Importantly, many might describe the Navajo as a noncompetitive people. This example suggests that Navajos may simply define competition in a very different way (Allison, 1981a). Clearly the dispositions toward competition held by the Anglo coach and the Navajo athlete are different; the definition of what it is to be a "good athlete" differ. The Navajo athlete competes more with himself than against an opponent; physical aggressiveness is not part of their game, yet they play hard within the game itself. The definition in the mind of the Anglo coach includes a sense of the body as a strategic tool, a symbolic sense of "killing" the opponent, a sense of utter domination over the opponent. The Navajo, then, appears to maintain a strong sense of association (Lüschen, 1970) with the opponent and protects the bond created by such opposition.

## 8. RECOGNITION

A final way in which Anglo coaches differ from Navajo athletes is in regard to the interpretation the status, recognition, and reward received for winning and performing well (Allison, 1980; Allison and Duda, 1981; Duda, 1980, 1981). One Anglo coach stated:

The kids at the Navajo school don't like pressure. I had a relay

team that had three runners with three of the best times in the State. They started getting publicity and two quit. They don't like recognition. I had one kid that won the state championship and he carried his head down for weeks. He didn't want all the publicity the school was giving him. The kids at G High (the predominantly Anglo school) want their names plastered all over the walls if they win something. These (Navajo) kids just want to do their thing quietly, for themselves.

One reason suggested which might explain such behavior on the part of the Navajo athlete, is that there are strong sanctions in Navajo society against singling oneself out as superior to the group (Bryde, 1971; Kluckholm and Leighton, 1962; Kluckholm and Stordtbeck, 1961; Ladd, 1957; Vogt and Albert, 1966). One Navajo informant offered:

... in our culture you are not supposed to raise your head above anyone else. You should never try to be ahead of anyone and think you're better. Things are changing a little now, but they stay the same with some.

To perform well is valued, but to behave in a way that implies superiority to the group is not. In fact, two Navajo athletes who were said to have been getting too cocky or "big-headed", had witchcraft threatened and actually used against them by members of the Navajo community. Such sanctions quickly bring the socializees back into line with the valued cultural principles of the Navajo culture as a whole (Allison, 1980, 1981b).

As the examples above illustrate, the dispositions held by Anglo coach and Navajo athlete are distinct in many ways. The Anglo coaches definition of "good athlete" encompasses a specific orientation to competition, rules, and individual recognition which are very different from those held by the Navajo athlete. The Anglo coaches' expectations reflect those of the Anglo culture in general and the American sport system more specifically. The Navajo athletes, on the other hand, enter the sport system with the value system of their own culture, and display behaviors which are quite consistent with those values.

What occurs in such a situation where the culture with quite distinct norms, values, and expectations, come together in interaction with one another? More specifically, what occurs when a socializing agent (e.g., coach) has such different values, norms, and expectations than those he is trying to socialize (i.e., athlete)? Four responses suggest themselves: conflict, selectivity, compromise, and creation.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> These components resemble and overlap to some degree with those suggested by Merton (1949) in this attempt to explain the modes of adaptation (i.e., conformity, innovation, retreatism, ritualism, rebellion) selected by individuals to cope with the demands of their own culture (e.g., monetary success). Since we are discussing the inter-cultural dynamics, the responses are somewhat different.

Conflict is one immediate response which might be expected to occur in such a diverse setting. Since each group holds such different perspectives, communication and understanding must be inhibited. Such a breakdown could lead to frustration, hostility, aggression, and other forms of interpersonal strain. Overt interethnic conflict did not appear to exist in this particular school community during the period of data collection. Coaches and players seemed to get along quite well; community support for the sport program was high. A second possible response to the high degree of value dissonance is termed selectivity. Selectivity means that the participants (i.e., Anglo coach and/or Navajo athletes) may choose to withdraw from the situation due to the high degree of value dissonance. In a sense, latent conflict may exist in such a setting as well; one response, however, is to withdraw rather than confront as in the former case. In fact, the data presented on the response of the Navajo to recognition and status indicates that this process does occur. In fact, there were several cases cited by Anglo coaches where outstanding Navajo athletes "simply quit" when they could not deal with the perceived pressures. In a sense the athletes were desocialized (McPherson, 1977) from the sport system. Importantly, however, this same process of withdrawal occurs with teachers and coaches as well. As a former teacher/coach in this school district the investigator watched many educators enter and leave within a short while: many could not deal with the high value dissonance. One teacher from Japan who had taught in the district two years talked about her frustration and why she planned to stop teaching in the district:

Investigator: How do you like it out here?

Teacher: Oh, I don't; the ways of life (of the Navajo) are just too different.

Investigator: Like what, what do you mean?

Teacher: Well in my country education is a privilege, the children work very hard, they are very disciplined. You tell them to do something and they do it. There is respect for the elder; out here there is no discipline.

Thus, withdrawal is one possible response to the conflict over such value differences.

Another form of selectivity which is open to the coach in his/her position of power, is simply to cut players from the team (whether consciously or unconsciously) who do not manifest the appropriate behaviors and dispositions. The example of the coach who had cut players on his team who broke his practice rules, is one example of the type of selectivity. Incidentally, this response negates the entire process of socialization per se in that the coach by removing the player from the team, loses all opportunities for influence.

A third potential response to such value dissonance is compromise.

In other words, each cultural group adjust in various ways to the exigencies of the other. Thus, Anglo coaches and Navajo athletes come to some understanding of demands of situation at hand. The aforementioned example which described the compromise between Anglo coach and Navajo athletes on attendance rules for practice sessions is but one example of the process. In a sense, both coach and athlete are socialized by each other. The coach is socialized into a more Navajo-like social structure, while the Navajo athletes respond to meet the minimal role expectations of "good athlete" for the coach.

Allison (1980, 1981a) has suggested that such intercultural compromise occurs at the system level as well. Specifically, Allison (1980) has suggested that in this particular setting each culture comes to "control" different aspects of the game content.<sup>5</sup> Data indicate that whereas Anglo coaches control, or guide the behavior dimension of the game (i.e., rules, strategies, styles, materials), the Navajo community control the disposition dimension of the game (e.g., attitudes, orientations, expectations). A general description of this process is as follows. The Navajo culture accepts at least the general form (Simmel, 1971) of the game of basketball from the Anglo culture. At first glance one might assume that this adoption implies the Navajo is becoming assimilated into the Anglo culture. However, as we have seen, not only are some game behaviors different (e.g., Navajo 21 and degree of physical aggressiveness in the interscholastic game), but the dispositions are distinct as well. The degree of interethnic conflict might be high if members of the Navajo community (i.e., parents, elders) thought Anglo coaches were attempting to "Anglo-ize" their youth (which some would agree is the case). However, "control" of the Navajo youth is maintained through fear and use of witchcraft. This same process occurs in sport where witchcraft is used against Navajo athletes who violate the expectations of the Navajo community. Thus, the Navajo community control the dispositions which the Navajo athletes hold toward the game, while Anglo coaches control the behavior dimension of the game. Such compromise protects the integrity of both cultural systems; the Anglo coach gets skilled game enactment which resembles his/her expectations and the Navajo community protects the "Navajoness" of their culture by "monitoring" the dispositions of the Navajo athletes.

The fourth potential response which grows out of the sense of dissonance and compromise, is the process of "culture creation". Here the writer refers to the process whereby two groups in interaction develop a new structure, a new entity which is distinct from what existed before. In a sense the Navajo culture, in defining and redefining the game

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<sup>5</sup> The term control is used here in a very loose sense to imply direction of influence, guidance.

basketball within their own culture value system, has been involved in the process of culture creation. However, beyond that it seems that these cultures, in interaction with one another, develop a new system of sport which is the result of the particular context. In a sense, this culture creation is the result of the interplay between interethnic dissonance, latent conflict, and compromise; the interplay between the three lead to a context-specific creation which itself evolves through time. Thus, Navajo athletes and community in interaction with Anglo coaches and school-community develop changes in the sociocultural environment itself.

The purpose of this last section was to illustrate the interrelatedness between culture and the process of socialization. The data presented simultaneously depicted: (1) the dynamics of socialization which occur between a socializing agent and a novice in this particular case between a coach and his/her athletes; (2) the dynamics of socialization in inter-ethnic settings; and (3) the ways in which the process of socialization itself is imbued with cultural messages, both patterns of behavior and patterns for behavior.

Play, game, and sport become important in and of themselves in that their content and nature represent the patterns of and for behavior of a people. Play, games, and sport forms are the products of culture. Simultaneously, however, play, games, and sport become one of the media within which cultural messages are communicated and transferred from one individual to another, and in this case from one culture to another. Thus, play, game, and sport forms are simultaneously the content of culture which is to be transferred, and too, are the media with which such transfer occurs. They are products of culture, yet part of the process of culture transmission as well.

The goal of this chapter was to make clear the dynamic and complex relationship between culture and the process of socialization. It was suggested that past work on socialization and sport has completely ignored the nature of this relationship. If, as Wentworth (1980) suggests, "socialization is the interactional display of the sociocultural environment", then the interrelatedness is quite explicit. Moving beyond the social learning paradigm, it is suggested that interaction is the means by which socialization occurs (Denzin, 1977; Goffman, 1967; Wentworth, 1980), and cultural messages are that which is to be transferred.

The institution of sport frames the particular context of interaction which we observe. The nature of interaction which occurs between individuals in particular roles (e.g., athlete, coach) is thus influenced by these elements: the culture, the institutions, and the context within which the interaction takes place. Importantly the effects of interaction do not stop with the individuals involved. Through interaction individuals ultimately effect the sociocultural environment around them. For

example, Navajo youth involved in Navajo 21 not only respond to the structure of the game but, in fact, continually adopt, adapt, create, and recreate it. The content itself evolves for the participant. Similarly, the nature of interaction between Navajo athletes and Anglo coaches is influenced to a great extent by structure of organized sport and the school system. However, through interaction with one another they create a new internal structure with a dynamic nature all its own. Thus, all are involved in what Wagner (1961) terms "the invention of culture".

In closing, a few words should be said about the value of cross-cultural research in increasing our understanding of human social behavior. It was Durkheim (1938) who suggested that methods of sociology must include comparative research. Such comparative research has several benefits. First, if the goal of social sciences is to understand the universals of human behavior, then our theoretical frameworks must not be limited by ethnocentric perspectives. In studying other cultures of the world we can come to understand other ways of thinking and behaving and encompass such insights into our scientific developments.

A second benefit to such cross-cultural research and understanding is that we learn more not only about other cultures, but about our own culture as well. As Wagner (1981: 9) states, "culture is made visible by culture shock..." As we move into cultures distinct from our own we come to realize that our ways of seeing the world, thinking about the world, and behaving are not necessarily the only appropriate ways. Thus, as we come to understand the richness and diversity of other cultures, we come to better understand our own. By looking carefully, then, at other cultures and attempting to understand the world from their perspective, we can move beyond ethnocentric tendencies in our personal lives and in our scholarship as well.

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## СПОРТ, КУЛЬТУРА И СОЦИАЛИЗАЦИЯ

### Резюме

Автор статьи освещает связи между культурой и социализацией. Работы в прошлом на тему спортивной социализации часто игнорировали воздействие и влияние культуры на процесс социализации. Настоящая работа проводит критику прошлого подхода к социализации с культурной точки зрения и демонстрирует при использовании этнографических данных подход к этому процессу в аспекте взаимодействия.

## SPORT, KULTUR UND SOZIALISIERUNG

### Zusammenfassung

Die Autorin stellt in dem Artikel den Zusammenhang zwischen der Kultur und der Sozialisierung dar. Bisher haben viele Arbeiten auf dem Gebiet der Sportsozialisierung die Wirkung und den Einfluß der Kultur auf den Sozialisierungsprozeß ignoriert. Dieser Artikel kritisiert die bisherigen Versuche über die von der Perspektive der Kultur aus geschene Sozialisierung und zeigt, wobei Angaben aus der Völkerkunde herbeigezogen wurden, daß dieser Prozess von der Kultur beeinflusst wird.

## LE SPORT, LA CULTURE ET LA SOCIALISATION

### Résumé

L'auteur de l'article expose clairement les relations entre la culture et la socialisation. Les nombreuses initiatives antérieures visant à socialiser les sports sousestimaient l'impact et l'influence de la culture sur le processus de socialisation. L'auteur critique du point de vue conjoncturel culturel la façon dont on traitait auparavant la socialisation et présente à l'appui de données ethnographiques, l'approche de ce processus, fondée sur l'interaction.