

THE BENEFITS OF SPORT TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS IN THE SOCIETY

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Introduction

Sport is a vast global concept that has been around the world for centuries. This concept has grown with the human race according to sports history. Sport possesses many benefits to individuals, such as determination, discipline, communities coming together, women having a chance to excel in their gender, and other races having allowed to play in high-class leagues. Even the great Nelson Mandela, in his 2000 speech, said that “sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire; it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in the language they understand. Sport creates hope where once there was despair. It is more powerful than the government in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.” (Coakley, 2015).

Mandela said this for a reason. Coming from a place centered on racial injustice, apartheid, and gender divide, he saw the impact sport had in breathing these societal prejudices. Not only that for the athletes, but sport is also often seen in society as a form of socialization and unity among (common ground) fans in which people presume this as the game giving purpose and hope.

The world of sports has developed immensely throughout the years. Individuals from low-income communities, such as super boxer Manny Pacquiao, have drastically changed social class status thanks to sports. This results in society broadcasting sports through; TV, advertisement, social media, and an abundance of support and endorsements by higher authorities. With this amount of exposure, it is easy to say that most people have been one way or the other influenced or affected by sport. These broadcasting sure bring a considerable amount of money to the economy and help low-income communities participate in hostings of games.

These examples and much more are why sport has so many critical positive benefits socially and economically, and it is fitting to be the topic of discussion in this paper. There is no denying that sport is a force, and its socioeconomic benefits can be compared, critically explained, and analyzed in more detail.

Key Points

Analyzing the positive impacts that sport has in today's society, one may look at the following justifications:

- Sports teach socialization.
 1. Children associated with sports are more likely to develop leadership qualities and social skills and work together cooperatively.
 2. Middle school students who scored the highest in leadership skills conducted in a study were the most physically active or were partaking in a sport (Nauert, 2019).
 3. Relating personal experiences, such as leading the football team for five years, has taught me independence for my responsibilities, skills, and discipline necessary to cooperate with the team.
 4. It taught me to consider everyone's ideas and utilize each other's strengths and weaknesses in the team's best interest.
- In addition to the first point, being introduced to sports in childhood helps prepare them for civic engagement skills necessary for adulthood.
 1. Students are more likely to engage in civic activities such as voting and volunteering, encouraging them to be "active citizens."

2. A study shows how high school students, who participated in sports, were more comfortable in public speaking, were more likely to watch the news, and participated in more volunteer work as they matured (Levine, 2016).
- Sport has a significant impact on economies throughout the world.
1. In 2010, the New York Marathon boosted its economy by around \$340 million (Depta, 2017).
 2. Another aspect of sports that impacts the economy is jobs; sports do not rely only on athletes. Coaches, referees, and agents are needed to make a sporting event successful. Also, the many employees needed in stadium vendors, such as front-office personnel, concession stand workers, and security.
 3. According to Economic Modeling Specialists Intl., as of 2013, the sports industry in America produced 456,000 jobs with an average salary of \$39,000. (Depta, 2017).

How the idea of the benefits of sport has negatively impacted society are as follows;

- Over-conforming to the sport ethic, especially by athletes in low-income communities, can be detrimental. Massive sporting bodies exploit low-income communities with the promise of recognition and more job opportunities.
1. This is shown in the case where low-income communities are made to pay for massive games and tournaments, and when they are done, huge sporting organizations leave these cities with enormous debt. An example is Brazil after the 2014 FIFA world cup. The city was left in shambles.
 2. In the case of athletes, when they overconform to the sport ethic, “being an athlete involves making sacrifices, striving for distinction, accepting risks and playing through pain and refusing to accept limits in pursuit of possibilities.” (Hughes & Coakley,1991).

Frequently athletes do not assess how bad their not taking care of themselves can have a bad influence on their communities.

3. Imagine a star athlete from a low-income background that opened community centers in their communities to help their members get injured and not allowed to heal before returning to the game. What becomes of that community since the breadwinner (athlete) can no longer afford to take care of their community? The economic status of that community will decrease.
4. These points explain why sports are not only healthy for society in the long run but also very detrimental to the athletes' mental, physical, and psychological state, especially those that do not go pro or are not making a good living from these endless sacrifices.
 - Many athletes and consumers of sports are being over-exploited by sports companies and governing bodies which does not help their social class.
1. Over-exploitation comes when one group, the producers, works hard to ensure revenue for the owners and does not get the benefit or reward they deserve.
2. In the case of sports, the fans and the players are the producers. They work for the benefit and revenues of the sports companies and are barely compensated for their work.
3. In college sports, the NCAA has ensured that athletes are still getting exploited and not paid for playing, using amateurism to justify these actions (Sack & Allen, 2008).
4. The fans, on the other hand, buy tickets to watch these games, buy jerseys and pay for cable, but in the end, it is the sporting bodies that yield all the benefits of the college games, which is very sad and disturbing and does nothing to help their communities at all.

- College athletes do not learn academically in college because they are there for the sole purpose of playing sports and sometimes leave college without any knowledge in any academic field, which in the long run will hurt the societal economy rather than help it.
1. Coaches of college teams and their sponsors lower the entrance grade SAT scores for college athletes' admission.
 2. This is evident in Sack and Allen's "Laying the Groundwork for Profession Sport," which stated that the NCAA only required athletes to have a GPA of 1.6 out of 5 to play as a freshman. This GPA point is well below the required GPA by the college for a non-student athlete.
 3. Also, this lower academic expectation from college athletes creates some form of hierarchical status in which athletes are seen as more privileged than the rest of the students (Coakley, 2003).
 4. If the game is strictly about college students playing and having fun, then why are college games broadcasted to make money and tickets to stadium seats not accessible? With this being said, very few athletes go pro, and for the ones that do not, how do they contribute to the economy with little or no college education?

Summary/Conclusion

Sport is important because it is global and transcends through generations. The above arguments show that the benefits of sport in the socio-economic status of society have their negatives and positives. When referring to the actual play and game, the sport has little benefit to the socio-economy of the society. It is mainly the athletes socializing, especially when the game

is not a profession (competition) or a job. The argument that sport promotes socialization is only valid to an extent. That is away from the pressure when it is not a job and children playing for fun. However, it fails to highlight that according to the sport ethic (Hughes & Coakley, 1991), being the best means treating teammates as competitors rather than friends, promoting alienation and anti-social behaviors.

In as much as a student-athlete needs a certain GPA to keep their student scholarship and still keep playing the sport on the one hand, on the other hand, the required GPA for a college athlete is far less than what an academic student requires. Most college athletes feel that doing good in academics is just a hurdle to their sporting career rather than an essential part of learning (Coakley, 2003). If they do not make it in that career, they have little to offer the economy in terms of academics.

This hurts the economy instead. The argument that playing sports assumingly promotes a healthy lifestyle due to increased physical activity and physical capacity is only accurate to a certain degree. This is because when children are growing up playing sports, all they want to do is have fun and play. Nevertheless, it becomes about the competition the older they get and a job if they go professional with risks of high injuries (Coakley, 2003). This is why most children drop out of sports the older they get because it becomes more of a health risk and less fun to play (Waddington et al., 2000) than physical exercise. This should be a social benefit in the long run, but it is not. All in all, the benefits of sport in society are relative, and any benefit is minimal. Sport can be beneficial in its socio-economic aspect as it pertains to society, but its specific societal benefits are very overrated and should be more critically analyzed.

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