

# Sport as a Social Technology

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The conception of sport as technology represents a major "discontinuity" in the history of athleticism. Technologies are not just machines and inanimate objects, but also organizations of human energy designed for problem-solving. In this sense, modern cultures have used technologies to enhance athletic performance and increase the visibility of sporting events, and also to exploit sport, itself, as a social technology. Advocates of "the promise of American sport" have maintained that sport will teach people the value of team play and cooperation; assimilate immigrants and colonized peoples; prevent crime and behavioral deviance; promote nationalistic and patriotic sentiments; ameliorate race, class, and gender divisions; and rescue the inhabitants of technological civilization from the artificial sterility of the machine process. This conception of sport as a social technology illuminates how, despite the important continuities endemic in the history of sport, that sharp discontinuities also deserve renewed attention in the construction of a new paradigm.