

Grant Jarvie and Joseph Maguire, *Sport and Leisure in Social Thought*. Routledge, London, 1994. Index, pp. 263. £14.

The study of sport and leisure has come of age judging by the quality of texts that explicate social theory in the discipline. Students who wish to contextualise sport and leisure in social thought can consult Chris Rojek, *Capitalism and Leisure Theory* (1985), Jim McKay, *No Pain, No Gain?* (1991), Eric Dunning and Chris Rojek, eds, *Sport and Leisure in the*

Civilizing Process (1992), Eric Dunning, Joseph Maguire and Robert Pearton, eds, *The Sports Process* (1993) and Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females* (1994). The most comprehensive text, however, is that under review. In *Sport and Leisure in Social Thought*, Grant Jarvie and Joseph Maguire discuss eleven 'traditions' of social thought that have influenced research in sport and leisure: functionalism, interpretative sociology, liberal pluralism and modernisation theories, classical Marxism, hegemony theory and cultural studies, figurational sociology, feminism, generative structuralism, postmodernism, dependency and development theories, and globalisation theories.

Apart from the final chapter, which juxtaposes development and globalisation, the authors assign one chapter to each tradition. The chapters adhere to a loose format. Nearly all begin with an overview of the tradition's influence on sport and leisure research. Functionalism, for example, 'played a key part in the early development of the sociology of sport in North America and . . . Europe' (p. 6), while Gramsci's concept of hegemony underpins cultural studies which has 'condensed and crystallised' ideas about 'resistance and domination' in sport and leisure (p. 108). The traditions derive from diverse sources. Feminism's heritage includes liberalism, Marxism, socialism, psychoanalysis, postmodernism and existentialism. By contrast, theories of globalisation emanate from contemporary 'mainstream' sociology.

Jarvie and Maguire discuss at length the essence and the principal features of each tradition. Although pluralism is a broad concept, pluralist approaches share several common assumptions including the notion that societies consist of 'competing interest groups' (as distinct from economic classes), and that the state is 'just one actor' among many (p. 68). Few of the founders of traditions actually refer to either sport or leisure and the authors devote most attention to the three notable exceptions. Georg Simmel (interpretative sociology) made numerous references to play and games and his examination of the connections between sociability, "social games" and play . . . provides, in embryonic form, a more general theory of sport' (p. 32). Norbert Elias (figurational sociology) employed sport to test and develop ideas regarding civilising processes:

a central aspect of the development of modern sport has been a 'civilising process' regarding the expression and control of physical violence. A crucial aspect of this process

. . . was a long term decline in people's propensity for obtaining pleasure from directly engaging in and witnessing violent acts (p. 139).

Pierre Bourdieu (generative structuralism) claims that sport and dance are 'terrains in which is posed with maximum acuteness the problems of the relations between theory and practice and also between language and the body' (p. 186).

Researchers working in sport and leisure have shown wide variation in their interpretations and applications of the concepts and theories which make up each tradition. 'Alan Klein's study of Dominican baseball is . . . an example of dependency theory at its best' (p. 248), while Slowikowski's 'insightful examination' of sports symbols in the ancient world, replicates 'several postmodern concerns' (p. 215). On the other hand, Allen Guttman 'provides an overly optimistic interpretation of Weber [a founder of interpretative sociology] and the sporting condition' (p. 56); 'academic Marxism has . . . been responsible for a certain violence of abstraction that has at times drifted from a central point of Classical Marxist focus namely, the labour movement and praxis' (p. 104); and 'Gramsci's theory was much broader than that which is often expressed in the cultural genre on sport and leisure' (p. 109). Jarvie and Maguire attribute these violations to researchers who leave terms such as status, lifestyle and feminism undefined, and to the failure to consult original texts.

All eleven traditions have their critics. Figurational sociology has faced charges of functionalism, ethnocentrism, caricaturing other traditions, and of neglecting gender, political economy and the state. Generative structuralism allegedly offers a limited account of agency, does not explain adequately the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious, avoids questions of political economy in the production of sport, and plays down gender.

Lastly, the authors examine recent developments in several traditions and discuss whether these have surfaced in sport and leisure and whether they offer fruitful areas for new research. Roland Robertson and Bryan Turner offer a sympathetic reappraisal of Parsonian functionalism but this has not 'yet surfaced in the study of sport and leisure' (p. 25). Interestingly, given its rapid ascendancy in academe, Jarvie and Maguire believe that 'as far as the sociology of sport and leisure is concerned the question of postmodernism must remain a question and not an answer' (p. 226).

Understandably, the breadth of *Sport and Leisure in Social Thought* means that Jarvie and Maguire could not cover every tradition in detail. They confine their appraisal of interpretative sociology, for example, to the cultural problems of modernity and exclude symbolic interactionism and phenomenology. Yet, as they admit, both approaches have been influential in North American sociology of sport. Breadth also means that critics will undoubtedly find points of disagreement, especially when reviewing their 'preferred' tradition. I would debate the authors' claim that 'one cannot accept Marx's scientific theory and reject his revolutionary politics' (p. 104). This appears to imply a consistency in Marx's own work which does not exist and which ignores the epistemological break between his early humanistic and political writings and later scientific writings. Indeed, Jarvie and Maguire note on page one that they prefer the term 'tradition' to 'framework' or 'perspective' because it conveys a 'sense of change' and because it avoids the notion of logically sealed paradigms and problematics'.

But critics must not allow these minor points to detract from the book's strength: *Sport and Leisure in Social Thought* sets a new standard in texts dedicated to social theory in sport and leisure. It will greatly benefit students' and others' comprehension of sociological theory and the sociology of sport and leisure.

Nonetheless, the book does suffer one major shortfall. It needs a concluding chapter that spells out the essential ingredients of good social research, especially theory. Is this beyond the authors' objectives? Clearly not, since they identify 'much common ground . . . between many so-called competing intellectual traditions'. For example, Bourdieu, Elias, Simmel, Weber and cultural studies approaches share a 'common respect for history', situate 'power relations at the core of their general framework', and emphasise 'the cultural diversity and richness of social reality' (p. 257). Jarvie and Maguire themselves argue that 'historically grounded questions must be the compelling driving force [of all research] and not an optional extra' (p. 257) and in several places they advocate 'a processual, relational and comparative type of thinking' (p. 136). Such an approach combines theory formation and empirical enquiry so that neither dominates. Rather, theory and empirical investigation should interact and reinforce each other. The influences of Bourdieu and Elias are strong here. Bourdieu, for example, 'eschew[s] the choice between grand theory and narrow empiricism. His research craft centres around

a spiral between theory, empirical work and back to reformulating theory again' (p. 185). These ideas and concepts need elaboration and development in a separate chapter. Steven Best and Douglas Kellner offer an excellent model in *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations* (1991).

A concluding chapter which synthesises the criteria of good research would further enhance a fine book; perhaps Jarvie and Maguire will add the cherry to the cake in a second edition.

Douglas Booth
School of Physical Education
University of Otago