

REFLECTIONS ON SOCIOLOGY OF
SPORT: TEN QUESTIONS, TEN
SCHOLARS, TEN PERSPECTIVES

RESEARCH IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT

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RESEARCH IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT VOLUME 10

**REFLECTIONS ON
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PERSPECTIVES**

EDITED BY

KEVIN YOUNG

University of Calgary, Canada



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LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

<i>Toni Bruce</i>	Faculty of Education and Social Work, University of Auckland, New Zealand
<i>Cora Burnett</i>	Department of Sport and Movement Studies, University of Johannesburg, South Africa
<i>Jay Coakley</i>	Department of Sociology, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, USA
<i>Agnes Elling</i>	Mulier Institute, Utrecht, The Netherlands
<i>Steven J. Jackson</i>	School of Physical Education, Sport & Exercise Sciences, University of Otago, New Zealand
<i>Mary Jo Kane</i>	Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, College of Education and Human Development, University of Minnesota, USA
<i>Joseph Maguire</i>	School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University, UK
<i>Roy McCree</i>	Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies, University of the West Indies, Trinidad and Tobago
<i>Fabien Ohl</i>	Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, ISSUL University of Lausanne, Switzerland
<i>Gertrud Pfister</i>	Department of Nutrition, Exercise and Sports, University of Copenhagen, Denmark
<i>Kevin Young</i>	Department of Sociology, University of Calgary, Canada

INTRODUCTION

Kevin Young

Following quickly on the heels of, and conceptually tied to, Volume 9 of *Research in the Sociology of Sport* (*Sociology of Sport: A Global Subdiscipline in Review*), this volume now completes the ‘double celebration’ of this book series as the sociology of sport subfield turns 50.

Ten recognized and influential scholars from around the world (five women and five men) have been invited to reflect on their respective academic journeys. Specifically, they have been asked to couch their experiences and to frame their papers around the following ten questions, grouped into four main themes: *About the Author* (Who are your Mentors and Influential Figures? What is your Research Trajectory?); *About Sport* (Why does Sport Matter? How Should Sport be Studied? Is Sport a Panacea for Social Problems?); *About Practising Sociology of Sport* (Is Teaching Sociology of Sport Easy? Do Sociologists of Sport Like Sport? Is the Sociologist of Sport a ‘Public Intellectual’?); and *About Sociology of Sport in the Academy* (Does Sociology of Sport Face Institutional/ Industry Barriers? What is the Future of the Sociology of Sport?).

To my knowledge, this sort of approach has never been taken before. While the ten questions are salient for everyone in the academy irrespective of field of study, they seem particularly trenchant for sociologists of sport as the subfield reaches a chronological milestone and continues to undergo its own ‘growing pains’ and maturation (as discussed at more length in the Introduction to Volume 9). The underpinning objective is thus plainly serious but, in style, the volume (often written in a conversational first-person tone) is definitely ‘lighter’ than a conventionally scholarly empirical or theoretical research approach. It is nevertheless suitably celebratory of, and introspective towards, the subfield. Once again, it represents a fitting complement to RSS9 where 23 chapters written by recognized scholars summarized the subdisciplinary ‘state of play’ across the globe in the most substantial and inclusive set of subfield summaries ever collated in one source. To avoid any perception of priority or proportional ordering, the ten chapters in the current volume simply follow an author surname alphabetical protocol.

When I acknowledged (with then co-editor Joe Maguire) in 2002 that *Theory, Sport & Society* is the opening volume in a new series entitled *Research in the Sociology of Sport*, I could never have imagined that 15 years

later I'd be writing similar prefatory comments for the 10th volume of the series. Clearly, the series has progressed at a respectable pace and, cumulatively, has offered up a valuable catalogue of information about the sports process. Over the past 15 years, the previous nine volumes have dealt with a wide diversity of sociological matters: theory; sports injury; the Olympic Games; sport subcultures; cultural diversity; qualitative methods; indigeneity; sport, social development and peace; as well as the status of the subfield across the globe. Including this volume, well over 200 authors have contributed their ideas culminating in, at this point, an impressive corpus of research papers and knowledge. The future looks equally rosy, with Volumes 11 (on sport and forms of mental illness) and 12 (on sport and risk, pain and injury) already 'in the works'.

It is an absolute pleasure to introduce Volume 10 of *Research in the Sociology of Sport*, and it is my hope that you enjoy these careful, contemplative and sometimes cautious 'reflections' as much as I have in earlier preparatory stages. My guess is that wherever and however you approach 'sport', these ten chapters will resonate with you and, in them, you will find many of your own experiences mirrored.

Once again, Happy Anniversary!