



Sport and Democracy in the Ancient and Modern Worlds

Paul Christesen

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This book explores the relationship between sport and democratization. Drawing on sociological and historical methodologies, it provides a framework for understanding how sport affects the level of egalitarianism in the society in which it is played. The author distinguishes between horizontal sport, which embodies and fosters egalitarian relations, and vertical sport, which embodies and fosters hierarchical relations. He also differentiates between societies in which sport is played and watched on a mass scale and those in which it is an ancillary activity. Using ancient Greece and nineteenth-century Britain as case studies, he analyzes how these variables interact and finds that horizontal mass sport has the capacity to both promote and inhibit democratization at a societal level. He concludes that horizontal mass sport tends to reinforce and extend democratization.

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