

PHYSICAL CULTURE AND SPORTS IN THE LIFE OF YOUTH OF THE 21ST CENTURY: VALUE CHANGES

^aANDRIY VINDYK, ^bALINA KUBATKO, ^cOLGA SOKOLOVA, ^dZHANNA MALAKHOVA, ^eVITALII LAPYTSKYI, ^fLIA GALCHENKO

^{a,b,f}National University Zaporizhzhia Polytechnic, 64, Zhukovsky Str., 69063, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine

^cZaporizhzhia National University, 66, Zhukovsky Str., 69600, Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine

^eSumy State Pedagogical University named after A. S. Makarenko, 87, Romenska Str., 40002, Sumy, Ukraine

^dDonetsk National Medical University, 27, Privokzalna Str., 84404, Liman, Ukraine

email: ^avindykttgg@gmail.com, ^balyakubtko5@gmail.com,

^csokolovaznu@gmail.com, ^dzhanna.koval.11@gmail.com,

^elapickiydocent@gmail.com, ^fliagal@ukr.net

Abstract: The article represents an attempt to comprehend value landscape of physical culture and sports in the life of today youth. The study is based on sociological paradigm, in particular with the use of stratification and institutional approaches with elements of comparative analysis and sociocultural integratism. The findings outline a scale of decline of physical and sports activities in youth in the USA, EU, and Australia, with the analysis of core reasons of this phenomenon. At the same time, special attention is paid to the phenomenon of hip-hop as a new kind of sports, having 'grassroots' and democratic nature, with strong identity and culture background, as a vivid manifestation of youth sports practices transformations in the 21st century.

Keywords: sports; physical culture; sociology of sports; values; youth; hip-hop; identity.

1 Introduction

In the 21st century, in the process of urbanization, technical and technological progress, the physical activity of adults, youth, and children has decreased significantly. In the era of digitalization of society and the development of automated industry, a person does not need as much physical effort to perform ordinary everyday tasks as was required even in the middle of the last century: groceries and food can be ordered without leaving home; a well-developed public transport infrastructure and taxis will take a person to any place he needs without much effort; even a walk to the nearest cinema can be easily replaced by watching a movie on the Internet. The lack of simple physical activity often causes a deterioration in vitality and a narrowing of physiological abilities, as well as the appearance of various diseases. Negative trends in decreased physical activity usually begin at a young age. However, today the value landscape of physical culture and sports among young people is very heterogeneous.

As studies show, the basis for developing interest in sports among young people is the availability of sports infrastructure facilities and the social environment in which a person grows up [2]. At the same time, the environment negative for physical activity is not necessarily dysfunctional families, disadvantaged communities or areas: in African-American "ghettos", basketball is very popular, as well as hip-hop dance practices, exercising of which requires very intense training and good physical shape, while among the so-called "golden youth" the use of "soft" drugs - marijuana and amphetamines - is often widespread, that, accordingly, excludes the possibility of active physical activities and sports.

Currently, most countries in the world are concerned about the problem of a sedentary lifestyle. According to European statistics, almost 40% of adolescents and young people aged 15 to 29 years do not pay attention to physical education and sports [7]. Some of the reasons for this problem, according to experts, are the widespread prevalence of information and computer technologies among children and youth, significant time spent at the computer, as well as the replacement of outdoor and sports games with computer ones, in particular, rapid development of cybersport [2]. At the same time, a sedentary lifestyle is associated with a number of negative consequences both for the

health of the individual (obesity, problems with the cardiovascular system, disorders of the musculoskeletal system, in some cases aggression, stress, etc.) and for society as a whole (decrease in labor productivity, increased financial burden on the healthcare system, etc.).

Meanwhile, in our fast-paced, digital age, when screens dominate our attention and virtual connections frequently replace face-to-face contacts, the importance of athletics in today's kids cannot be stressed. Beyond the excitement of competition and the delight of physical activity, sports provide other advantages that impact the character, health, and general development of young people. Sports serve an important part in preparing young people for the problems of today, from establishing camaraderie to encouraging discipline and boosting mental well-being.

In considering the critical points about the potential importance of sports in today's youth, experts outline the following [25]:

1. Physical fitness and health. The foundation's emphasis on athletics not only encourages young people to be physically active, but it also improves their entire well-being. It combats the sedentary nature of modern living and encourages a healthy future.
2. Time management and discipline. Sports demand commitment and discipline, which the foundation instills in its participants. These abilities will surely spill over into other facets of their lives, assisting with their personal and professional development.
3. Teamwork and leadership: The foundation's emphasis on teamwork educates young people for successful cooperation, which is essential in today's linked world. Leadership skills are developed, resulting in individuals who can lead by example and positively contribute to their communities.
4. Stress reduction and mental well-being. Participating in sports, as encouraged by the foundation, is a wonderful approach to reduce stress and boost mental health. It provides kids with coping techniques and resilience, which are critical in addressing the difficulties of the current world.
5. Social interactions and cultural exchanges. Through sports, the charity encourages social contact and cultural exchange among young people. This exposure helps to break down boundaries, foster understanding, and broaden their ideas.
6. Life skills and character development. The experiences given by the foundation help students establish character and acquire vital life skills. These abilities will benefit young people in their personal and professional lives, assisting them in becoming responsible and successful persons.

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda, adopted in 2015, recalls that sport is an important enabler of sustainable development and values sport's growing contribution to the realization of development and peace through the promotion of tolerance and respect, as well as the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and young people, individuals and communities, as well as health, education, and social inclusion objectives [26].

Sport not only promotes healthy mental health and cognitive development, but it also fosters tolerance, respect, tenacity, resilience, equity, and solidarity. Sport engagement promotes personal growth, which is essential for reaching young potential. The UN also acknowledges sport as a tool for conflict resolution and supporting long-term peace and development goals. Sport, which disregards geographical borders, ethnic divides, and socioeconomic classes, has the potential to connect communities despite cultural or political disagreements. It also contributes significantly to social integration and economic empowerment.

But, evidently, this potential cannot be implemented without integral inclusion of sports into youth' system of values. Thus, the study of value changes dynamics in physical culture and sports within the life of youth in the 21st century represents highly important scientific and practical task.

2 Materials and Methods

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study included works of sociologists who focus on an interdisciplinary approach to this problem. The study used stratification and institutional approaches with elements of comparative analysis and sociocultural integratism. In addition, system and axiological analyses, theoretical modeling and scientific generalizations were used as additional research procedures.

3 Results and Discussion

Increasing the level of health of young people depends on many factors, but the decisive one among them is the position of the person himself and his attitude towards his own health. The main factors that improve a person as an individual include the expansion of his worldview, while self-realization in society is possible only in the process of spiritual and physical self-improvement. The problem of the health of the country's population is determined both by the diversity of the demographic composition of modern society, and by the nature, orientation, approaches, ways and means of maintaining health, the difficulties of forming an active position among the population towards its preservation.

Human health is a problem that has gone far beyond the boundaries of medical science, it is a harmonious unity of biological and social qualities determined by congenital and acquired influences, and its preservation and maintenance is one of the fundamental values of human life. According to scientists, maintaining health largely depends on the attitude of the person himself to this precious gift of nature, his behavior and lifestyle [12]. Therefore, it is extremely important to adequately understand the place of physical culture in the value system of modern youth and wisely use its potential in various spheres of public life as the most effective means of social self-organization, the formation of a healthy lifestyle, as a way of aesthetic, moral, cultural, harmonious self-expression of the individual. The approach to physical education and sports activities from the point of view of its axiological, value foundations is of no small importance for understanding the role of this phenomenon in the life of a modern person as a carrier of social, class, group, individual and personal information.

Student sports, with its rich value potential, has a direct impact on the general culture of society – particularly, through the socialization of the student's personality. It is about physical and spiritual improvement of a young man's personality, his full and active life, health, a healthy lifestyle, the spirit of sports competition, respect and empathy, those human values that are the basis of physical education and student sports. Student sports plays a very important role in preparing a viable and socially active young generation [17].

This is especially true in the USA. According to 2018 data, the percentage of children aged 6 to 12 that participate in a team sport on a regular basis fell from 41.5% in 2011 to 37% in 2017. Since 2008, participation has decreased in a variety of sports, including baseball, basketball, flag football, and soccer, with baseball down by roughly 20%.

The reduction in juvenile sports engagement seems perfectly designed to heighten concerns about the status of American childhood. One would speculate that the decline is due to youngsters turning to computer games, television, and other electronic diversions that do not require an open field or a court. Perhaps athletics is simply another legacy institution that can no longer compete for attention, like churches, community centers, and bowling organizations. But delve further into the statistics, and a more nuanced, two-track picture emerges. Youth sports involvement is increasing among affluent households. Among

the poorest households, it is declining. In 2017, just 34% of children from households earning less than \$25,000 participated in at least one team sport, compared to 69 percent from houses earning more than \$100,000. In 2011, these figures were around 42% and 66%, respectively [22]. In summary, the American youth sports system, which favors the gifted and frequently wealthy individual over the group, has smashed the principles of participation and universal growth. Youth sports has evolved into a pay-to-play machine [1]. Thus, the existence of sports in the value systems of American children is directly related to socioeconomic standing. Figure 1 shows the current and predicted patterns of fall in team youth sports participation rates in the United States.

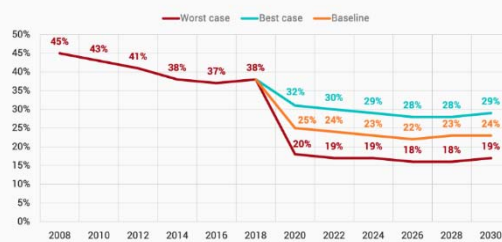


Figure 1. Team youth sports participation rates (with projection) [10]

But there is also another interesting phenomenon of physical activity and sports as a value – it is about the phenomenon of hip-hop.

According to Nielsen Media, hip-hop was the most popular genre in the music business in 2017, accounting for 24.5% of total music consumption [3]. This was the first time hip-hop completed the year at number one, surpassing the regular category leader, rock music. On January 8, 2018, 12-time Grammy-winning rapper and composer Kendrick Lamar performed the halftime show of the College Football Playoff National Championship game, as if to symbolize this achievement. And, while this performance firmly established hip-hop artists and their music as vital to current sport culture, the connections between hip-hop and sport are far from new. Numerous examples abound, from the groundbreaking Run-DMC/Adidas partnership of the mid-1980s, to the prominence of Nike and Michael Jordan within hip-hop communities in the 1990s, to more recently with the Jordan Brand signing endorsement deals with hip-hop artists Drake, Travis Scott, and DJ Khaled; Serena Williams appearing in Beyonce's visual album, *Lemonade*; Jay-Z founding Roc Nation Sports athlete management company in partnership with high-profile Hollywood talent.

Aside from cultural objects, hip-hop has entered the lexicon of sports. Today, both hip hop and sports are strong creative forces. And, while the sports-hip hop complex has grown to be a cultural giant capable of evicting conventional players from primetime advertising slots and disturbing their games, none of the two powers can be properly comprehended in isolation. Academic communities' failure to acknowledge these long-standing connections has cost them the opportunity to ask compelling questions about race, gender, sex, social class, age, identity, and social/economic values, as well as the ways in which influential cultural forms have complex externalities and associations, many of which are conditioned by and feed into the technological infrastructure. The September 2020 edition of *Sociology of Sport* was the first time a peer-reviewed publication merged two parts of societal culture for intellectual engagement in the same academic space: hip hop and sports. While this is an important time, more study, theory, and practical knowledge must be developed on this subject.

Sociological research in the field of sports is observed mainly within the framework of structural functionalism. The structural-functional paradigm was developed in the second half of the 20th century. Talcott Parsons considered it for sociology in

general, but it turned out to be applicable to the sociology of sport too. The focus was on the social functions of sport. Among the representatives of the structural-functional paradigm in the sociology of sport, one can single out Charles Leslie Stevenson, who is mainly known as a metaethical philosopher, but also worked in the sociology of sport. In particular, he emphasized the integrative function of sport, which he understood as involvement in a team included in the general social structure. He characterized this process as second-level integration. Stevenson considered sport to be an “institutionalized mechanism” for satisfying an integrative human need [15].

Within this paradigm, sport can be viewed as a social system which produces special relationships that are reproduced by specific social actions. When applying the methodology of this paradigm, “new functions and dysfunctions of modern sports, the relationship between the social system and the personality system, the status-role complex of actors in sports activity” are studied [20]. Functions and dysfunctions again refer to the dialectical nature of sport. Another issue is the interaction between the individual and society. And since all types of these interactions are practiced in sports, this subject of study is natural.

Sport has always been a realm where firms rely on the same marketing tactics: a brand on a player's chest, advertising boards inside a stadium, or television commercials during halftime. However, when Generation Z becomes a target for advertisers, it is time to improve these tried-and-true strategies. The fight for Generation Z's attention is tremendous. Gaming and hip-hop, in particular, play an equal (if not greater) importance in their leisure time, with Spotify, TikTok, Twitch, and Netflix becoming far more natural parts of the everyday lives of this generation aged 14 to 29 than sports. According to analysts, the most sought-after target group of young people may be found at the crossroads of athletics, gaming, and hip-hop [13].

In the last 10 years, hip hop dancing has emerged as a cultural vehicle for young people and adolescents in Guayaquil to express the social environment in which they live. Its role includes identity creation, identification, articulation, and organizational processes in children and adolescents. To understand them, it is necessary to examine the formal relationships of Hip Hop dance practice and how they affect racial concerns, migration, and classicism. Hip-hop has evolved throughout time to reflect and embody environmental and social concerns in a globalized society. Upon personal contemplation, the significance of the music on my identity became clear, prompting the research to focus on Hip-Hop as a vehicle of social change [8]. The notion that Hip-Hop has and continues to aid social transformation for minority groups is based on its investigation as a social critique. Hip-Hop's globalization in many surroundings and civilizations has resulted in sub-genres that have embraced the genre's social activism, enabling for changes in cultural attitudes and values. Hip-hop as a sport has therefore become a genuine value for the 21st century youth, permitting democracy in sports, which, as previously said, is rapidly being lost by traditional sports.

The connection between hip-hop and sports has continued to grow. This is an unparalleled phenomena in which sports value and place change in the life of the younger generation. For a large portion of the populace, hip hop signifies nothing more than free speech. As a result, Hip Hop extends well beyond its roots in urban society. It reflects the innate right to free speech, which is essential for a society's healthy growth. The freestyle movements are a kind of opposition to traditional society, representing young people's ambitions. Improvisation is a significant feature of hip hop dancing; while discussing dance, all of the crew members provide different ideas for choreography, and they select the finest dance steps based on originality and style. The beat is vital in choreography since it defines the rhythm during performance.

It should be noted that the relationship between hip-hop and the NBA has evolved throughout five decades, influencing not only

the league's image but also the larger cultural environment. Allen Iverson's breakthrough influence created a ripple effect that can still be observed in modern partnerships; this journey demonstrates a profound connection that resonates with players, fans, and teams. Hip-hop's enduring impact on the NBA has created a unique community that continues to grow, forever altering the sports and music landscape in an incomprehensible yet remarkable way, and this can even be viewed as a possibility to re-democratize elite sports by abandoning the rooted principle “pay-and-play”.

In Europe, both genders engage in more physical activity during childhood and less as they enter adolescence. Physical activity patterns are erratic, and many European children and adolescents seldom engage in persistent periods of moderate or strenuous physical exercise [11]. In Germany, just 43% of young people from households receiving social aid are physically active, but 63% of young people from secure socioeconomic circumstances exercise frequently. 14% of individuals polled said they didn't have enough money in their home to participate in sports. Poverty and social living conditions influence daily activity and involvement in sports groups [11]. Despite convincing data, there is a disturbing trend of decreased physical activity among European kids. The WHO recommends at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical exercise every day, although a considerable minority of people do not fulfill these standards. Gender differences remain, with females being less active than boys and activity levels decreasing as adolescents' progress from childhood to adolescence. Recent studies, such as the Fitback project (whose mandate is to advocate for and provide tools for examining population health trends, the effects of national fitness policies and interventions on child health at the local, regional, national, and European levels; FitBack enables the prediction of future trends in population health by relating health risk to physical fitness status), provide valuable insights into the fitness landscape of European youth. However, the results show troubling tendencies, with only a small proportion of young individuals fulfilling recommended exercise levels. Finland stands out, whilst Portugal, Italy, France, and Romania fail to meet minimum standards. The decrease in physical education offerings in schools exacerbates the problem, which is compounded by less possibilities for active living outside of educational settings. Inadequate infrastructure, insufficient adult supervision, and inactive options all add to the dilemma. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this drop, especially during school closures, which disproportionately impacted younger children and adolescents [6].

In 2018, Massiera et al. [16] did a study that looked at the representations made by sports practitioners as well as the ideologies that govern sports institutions in three European nations. Sports organizations appear to provide identity references for practitioners through the ideals they communicate and the types of sociability they foster. This worldwide research examines sports practices and representations using a questionnaire distributed to practitioners in Cardiff, Great Britain, Nice, France, and Pitesti, Romania. The findings show some differences. Sports practices in the United Kingdom continue to be imbued with educational principles, which are consistent with the ideas that inspired the sporting movement. In France, sporting practices appear to be more established in an orthodoxy fostered by communal monitoring. Sport in Romania is still associated with a therapeutic vocation and social mobility due to the country's communist heritage. When these paradigms are compared to the value landscape of generation Z, it is clear that they do not correlate, resulting in difficulties with young attraction to physical culture and sports.

At the same time, studies showed that while previously the main goal of physical education and sports was to maintain and improve health, for modern students, even among those who are obviously active in physical education and sports, maintaining physical fitness comes first [21]. Through physical activity, student youth demonstrate their belonging to the sports lifestyle and its values. The social environment places the subject's appearance within a certain framework. By changing the social

environment, the bodily embodiment of the subject also changes. By choosing a sports lifestyle, a person demonstrates a hierarchy of values that he shares, and in which the value of health is not paramount and does not act as the goal of sports and physical education among students.

Sport is an important part of Australian culture and identity. International athletic successes are the most important sign of national pride in Australia, as evidenced by the huge proportion of Australians aged 5-17 years (64-85%) who participate in some type of organized sport [23]. Organized youth sports are adult-controlled and led programs in which children and young people often attend training and competitive matches under the official leadership and supervision of an adult leader, usually the coach. While current figures show that Australia leads the way in youth sports participation when compared to other developed and developing countries, with reported participation rates ranging from 20 to 59%, it is concerning that roughly one-third of young Australians do not participate in any form of organized sport or physical activity. However, evaluations of Australian children's total physical activity levels clearly show that sport is insufficient as a solitary outlet for physical activity, with fewer than 20% of Australians aged 5-17 years achieving the prescribed Australian physical activity recommendations [23].

It should be noted that against the backdrop of the process of "erosion" of moral norms in people's minds, the culture of a healthy lifestyle among youth society has significantly decreased. And, as it is known, during adolescence the problem of choosing life values and ideals is especially important. One should remember that physical culture and sports are essential as the most effective means of developing reliable value orientations, models of moral behavior, and lifestyle. After all, the unformed system of moral guidelines of young people makes them susceptible to a variety of influences and, above all, negative ones. If to analyze the integral socio-economic trends that emerged in the 1990s and are expressed in a sharp increase in technological progress (Industry 4.0), an improvement in the quality of human capital and at the same time increased stratification in society, as well as a shift in value guidelines, one can trace their impact on youth sports participation. This is evident. In particular, in the graph in Fig. 2, showing sharp decline dynamics of students' participation in team sports in Ireland within 10 years period – from 1997 to 2007.

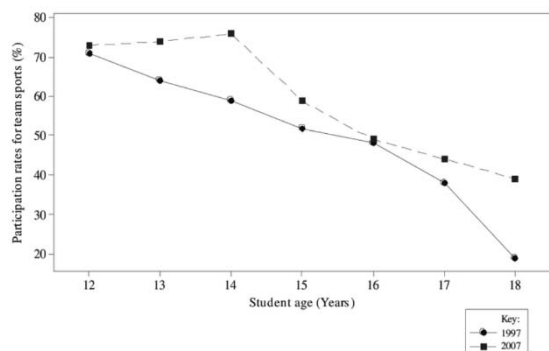


Figure 2. Participation trends in team sports by age in Ireland, 1997-2007 [4]

Sport is widely acknowledged as a vehicle for education, capacity building, and community participation, and in recent decades, sport-based development projects aimed at youth have grown in popularity. Sport has several advantages for both people and communities. Sport may serve as a platform for community members to come together, bridging ethnic, racial, religious, and other differences, and it can be an effective component of reconciliation and social integration initiatives. Sport has the potential to help vulnerable adolescents since it is built on norms, habits, and regulations that are acceptable in the wider society [19]. Participation in sports fosters a sense of responsibility that may be transferred to other aspects of life.

kids who are no longer in formal school, young people who are at risk of joining gangs, and kids who are disconnected from other kinds of youth engagement can frequently find a way to participate through sports. Sport provides young people with the chance to build social capital by developing relationships and networks.

Many young people's life revolve around sports. According to Cruickshank and Mainsbridge [5], it promotes involvement, breaks down cultural boundaries, builds community identification, makes friends, develops networks, and reduces social isolation.

Sport, in general, may contribute significantly to the common good by encouraging prosocial conduct. For example, a 2021 evaluation of 13 foreign research looked into the impact of sports programs on crime prevention and re-offending. Participants in these sessions had much lower levels of aggression and antisocial conduct. Their self-esteem and mental health improved dramatically. The consequence was a drop in criminal activity [14].

Basketball's founder, James Naismith, thought the sport taught players morals and moral qualities. He created basketball not just as an indoor game for football players to enjoy during the winter, but also as an environment in which young people could learn collaboration, cooperation, fair play, sportsmanship, and self-sacrifice. He thought that team sports instilled the abilities required for a successful community.

The conventional perspective of sport involvement is that it improves children's and young people's social and moral development while also promoting cultural values. Whitehead et al. [24] claim that the scientific evidence is more delicate and nuanced. The author investigates the notion of values as key organizing elements of human behavior that establish our priorities, direct our decisions, and transfer across contexts, as well as the value priorities and conflicts that are so valuable in understanding sporting conduct. Whitehead et al. argue that teachers and professionals who work with children in sports are centrally important agents for value transmission and change, and thus need to develop a deeper understanding of how sport can be used to encourage pro-social values. They also make recommendations for developing a curriculum for teaching values through sport in various social settings.

The socio-philosophical analysis of sport, as an established category in the system of value orientations, is also due to the need to respond to the practical problems of the modern lifestyle of young people. Modern youth are under the influence of social differentiation, changes in the structure of social relations, and negative contacts with new social intermediaries. The most important characteristic of 21st century youth is the increased stratification by socio-economic indicators. However, despite the fact that there are differentiating factors in the youth environment, many researchers still continue to consider youth as an integral group, including when studying the value of physical education and sports in the value system of youth, which is by no means the right approach. The attitude of young people to sport as a social value, their sports practices are decisively dependent on social status, conscious identity, communication and cultural attitudes. Thus, the dynamics of the value of physical culture and sports in the lives of young people of the 21st century should be considered in an interdisciplinary context, through the lens of theoretical sociology, sociology of sports, demography, and political science.

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