



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### SPORTS TOURISM: ISSUES AND IMPACTS: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

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#### ABSTRACT

The relationship between sports and tourism is most definitely grinning momentum in both industry and academic domain of tourism studies. Sports sociology and sports Anthropology, sports tourism refers to travel which involves either observing or participating in sporting events staying a part from their usual environment. It is a first-growing sector of the global tourism industry and equates to billions of money. To begin with, the article deals briefly with the concepts of sports tourism and describes the current discussion concerning this field. Subsequently theoretical concept with regard to the sports tourism issues and possible impacts is developed. To conclude, the policy issues regarding the participation in sports tourism as well as regarding perspectives of this field are briefly presented.

## INTRODUCTION

Sports tourism is an economic and social activity at the cross roads of sports and tourism. It is a segment of the tourism industry and its economic contribution has grown strongly during recent decades. Sports tourism appears in the first instance as a tourist activity of economic type before being seen as an experience as well as domain of sports culture. The growth and significance of sports related tourism have gradually become an area of interest in sports study curriculum of Sports Sociology and Sports Anthropology. While sport and tourism as two distinct elements of the leisure industry, clearly they have great relevance in their own right. So called 'Sport Tourism' has developed significantly over the last two decades and the interrelationship continues to evolve in both the demand and supply structures of contemporary leisure time recreation. The concept of sport related tourism has become more prominent in the last few years as both an academic field of multidisciplinary study and an increasingly popular tourism product (Gibson, 1998). The present paper qualitative in nature provides an overview of sports tourism in the perspective of Social-Cultural Anthropology and also explores the interrelationships, issues and impacts associated with sport tourism under the purview of Sports Anthropology. It also highlights the growing academic, as well applied research interest in the same field.

## Sport, Tourism and Sport Tourism: Definitions and Paradigms

Even among 'experts' there is considerable controversy over efforts to define sport. Some critics insist that all-embracing definition is impossible because sport in a socially conducted activity that has varied across historical eras, societies and cultures. Others hold that sport has specific and timeless characteristics such as goal-oriented competitive and a forum for the creation of winners and losers. The term 'sport' has been applied to numerous and different. Yet there is some common ground about the notion of sport among 'Western scholars. Jay Coakley's definition is a typical example of the attempt to classify sport. He cites four major factors:

### 1. Physical conditions:

- Use of physical prowess, physical skill or physical exertion.

### 2. Complex physical skills:

- Coordination, balance, quickness, or accuracy; speed, strength and endurance.
- Excludes non-physical activities (such as Chess and Cards).
- Includes human use of equipment and machines, (i.e. Car Racing).

### 3. Institutionalised and Competitive

- Rules are standardized
- Rule enforcement is overseen by official regulatory agencies.
- Organizational and technical aspects of the activity are important.
- Learning of playing skills becomes formalised.

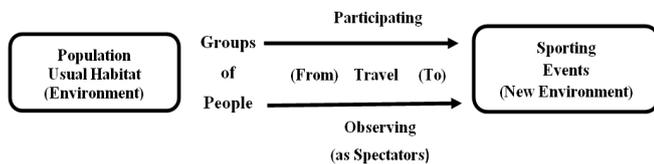


Fig.1. Basic Idea of Sports Tourism

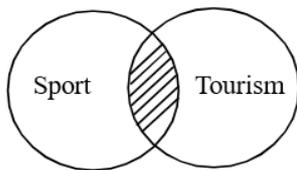


Fig.2. The Confluence of Sport & Tourism

### 4. Individual participation is motivated by a combination of Intrinsic and Extrinsic factors

- Intrinsic rewards through involvement (dynamics of activity – play, fun, etc.)
- Extrinsic rewards through (salary, prizes, money, medals, fame).
- If the orientation tips toward extrinsic, the activity is more game like.

Moreover, Coakly also provides a fairly typical working definition of organized sport: 'Sport is an institutionalised competitive activity, that involves rigorous physical exertion, or the use of relatively complex skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors' (Coakley, 2001). On the other hand, Historian Alan Guttman, seeking to acknowledge the changing nature of sport, has attempted to pinpoint characteristics of modern sports, as compared with pre-modern sporting activities (Guttman, 1974). He identifies seven features that, in his view are necessary preconditions for a sport to be accepted as part of modern societies:

- (1) Secularism (absence of the religious element from sport, i.e. not competing to 'please the gods')
- (2) Equality (participation open to all, with competitors facing the same set of competitive conditions).
- (3) Specialisation (attuning athletic skills to specific positions and roles.)
- (4) Renationalization (sports governed by specific rules, playing conditions, types of equipment, etc.)
- (5) Bureaucratization (Sports competitions regulated by organizations, which contain hierarchies of power and responsibility).
- (6) Quantification (predilection for precise measurements of athletic performance).
- (7) Records (provide archive of performance achievements of athletes over time, under certain conditions etc.)

Notwithstanding this definition, it needs to be pointed that sporting activities may be either formal or recreational. The key, it is argued, is that there should be at least three persons (two taking part and a third to act as referee, umpire or judge), and they must be engaged in competition to establish a winner (Coakley, 2001). Above all, modern sport is generally considered to be highly organized and structured, with contests taking place at common times and places, and records kept of performances. We might conclude, therefore, that both 'sport-as-competition' and 'sport-as-play' are legitimate ways of conceptualising the physical activities we take for granted as 'sport'. Crone (1999) reminds us that there are key aspects to competitive sport that mark it as different to playful sporting activity.

- (1) the degree of emphasis on winning;
- (2) the degree of emphasis on extrinsic rewards (e.g. money, power, and prestige.)
- (3) the amount of bureaucratization.

It is also worth mentioning that in terms of sport tourism, sport-as-play is normally associated with active tourist behaviour (taking part in sport), while sport-as-competition is usually associated with passive tourist behaviour (witnessing sport as spectator) – though in the latter case, sports tourists can also be competitors, such as with young tennis players following the satellite circuit in Europe, playing to win but sightseeing between matches. Therefore, more noticeable, of course, is how urban based elite level sport has been influenced by commercialization and professionalism, so much, so that, the amateur ideas, once taught in school sports, appear somewhat irrelevant. Sport is consumed widely by patrons at stadia, viewers in front of television, listeners within earshot of radio, readers of newspapers and magazines. It is also, now more than ever a tourism product— as the present paper goes on to attempt. On the other hand, the growth of tourism has been fuelled by general improvements in leisure time combined by increased discretionary income for many people. This has helped to fuel a desire to escape from work routine and engage in holidays, whether domestically, nationally or internationally. Definitions of tourism vary with respect to whether the term is applied from a supply side (industry) perspective or a demand side (consumer) perspective. As Smith (1988) has, noted, 'there are many different legitimate definitions of tourism that serve many different, legitimate needs'. Many of the tourism definitions vary due to organisations or individuals trying to define their own motives for tourism activities and opportunities. However, there is common ground covered by many of the definitions (Smith, 1988). An early definition of tourism stated that, a minimum of a 24 hour stay at a site was required for an individual to be considered a 'tourist'. Smith (1988) believes that it is difficult to determine the precise magnitude of the tourism industry due to an accepted operational definition of tourism. Nevertheless, the tourism industry has been defined in principle as a sector that 'encompasses all activities which supply, directly or indirectly, goods and services purchased by tourists' (Hollander et al, 1982; Hall, 1995) believes that three factors tend to emerge when examining various definitions about the tourism industry.

1. The tourism industry is regarded as essentially a service industry;
2. The inclusion of business, pleasure, and leisure activities emphasizes 'the nature of the goods a traveller

requires to make the trip more successful, easier, or enjoyable' (Smith, 1988).

3. The notion of a 'home environment' refers to the arbitrary delineation of a distance threshold or period of overnight stay.

However, McIntosh et al. (1995) take a more systems based approach when defining tourism as 'the sum of phenomena and relationships arising from the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host governments, and host communities in the process of attracting and hosting these tourists and other visitors. This definition includes the potential impacts that tourists may have upon the host community, which until recently was a neglected component of the definition process. Similarly, alongside the rising academic attention devoted toward sport and tourism has appeared a growing interest in the interrelationships between two or more conspicuous aspects of sport related tourist activity Sport tour includes travel to participate in a passive (e.g. sports events and sports museums) sport holiday or an active sport holiday (e.g. cycling, golf), and it may involve instances where either sport or tourism are the dominant activity or reason for travel (Standevan and De Knop, 1999). Therefore, we can define sport tourism as all forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated casually in an organized way for non-commercial or business/ commercial reasons that necessitate travel away from home and work locality. Gammon and Robinson (1997) have a similar approach to defining 'sport tourists', though they prefer to classify them as either 'hard' or 'soft' participants. Kurtzman (2000) increases the complexity of sport tourism by suggesting that, there are five main sport tourism categories (or supply side elements of sport tourism). Among them we find activities as diverse as:

Kurtzman (2000) opined that sport tourism can with its allied natural or human made settings and activities which are as follows (Table- 1)

Additionally, Pitts (1999) believes that from a sport marketing and management perspective, sport tourism consists of two broad product categories.

1. Sports participation travel (travel for the purpose of participating in a sports, recreation, leisure or fitness activity); and
2. Sports spectatorial travel (travel for the purpose of watching sports, recreation, leisure or fitness activities and events.).

However, Gibson (2002) suggests three categories of research in the field, including:

- Active Sport Tourism;
- Event Sport Tourism; and
- Nostalgia Sport Tourism

Weed and Bull (2004) have suggested a different approach, arguing that sports tourism is constructed as much around experiences as activities, and that people and places interact with activities to construct, such experiences. Consequently Weed and Bull (2004) suggest the following conceptualization of sports tourism: 'a social, economic and cultural phenomenon arising from the unique interaction of activity, people and place'. This definition depicts sports tourism as a phenomenon having cultural anthropological significance. Sports tourism is a diverse and heterogeneous phenomenon that encompasses a wide range of different activities and product niches. Five overlapping and non-mutually exclusive

**Table 1. Sport Tourism: The Breadth of Sport Tourism Categories and Activities**

Kurtzman's (2000) Sport Tourism categories	Natural Or Human-Made Settings and Activities
Attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Himalayas</li> <li>➤ Blue Mountains, Australia</li> <li>➤ Sport heritage sites (e.g. birthplace of Rugby Union, Rugby, UK.)</li> <li>➤ Halls of Fame (e.g. Baseball Hall of Fame, Cooperstown)</li> <li>➤ Sport museums (e.g. Olympic Museum in Lausanne)</li> <li>➤ Sport stadia (e.g. Disney Wide world of Sports)</li> <li>➤ Unique sports facilities (e.g. Indoor Summer Ski Arenas)</li> </ul>
Resorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Winter Ski resorts (e.g. Whistler, Canada)</li> <li>➤ Summer Ski resorts (e.g. Thredbo Resort, Australia)</li> <li>➤ Sports villas and integrated resorts and health and fitness clubs.</li> <li>➤ Sport training facilities (e.g. Thredbo High Altitude Training Facility)</li> </ul>
Cruises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Transportation for participation in sports tourism (e.g. travel to Great Barrier Reef for snorkelling)</li> <li>➤ On-board sports facilities</li> <li>➤ Hosting of sports personalities / conferences</li> </ul>
Tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Tour of sport stadia, halls of fame, sport theme parks, unique sports facilities, sport matches</li> </ul>
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mega, Hallmark, major or local sporting events</li> <li>➤ Olympic Games, Wimbledon, London Marathon, endurance races, Masters Games, weekly rugby union football and American Football fixtures.</li> </ul>
Adventure tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ White water rafting</li> <li>➤ Cycling tours</li> <li>➤ Mountain Climbing and hiking</li> <li>➤ Ski Tourism</li> <li>➤ Golf Tourism</li> </ul>

- Sport tourism attractions.
- Sport tourism resorts.
- Sport tourism cruises
- Sport tourism tours
- Sport events tourism.
- Sport adventure tourism.

'types' of sports tourism have been proposed by Weed and Bull (2004).

1. Tourism with sports content: In this context of definition sport is an 'incidental' activity and is not the purpose of the tourism trip. Given such a defining characteristic, this category may overlap with sports

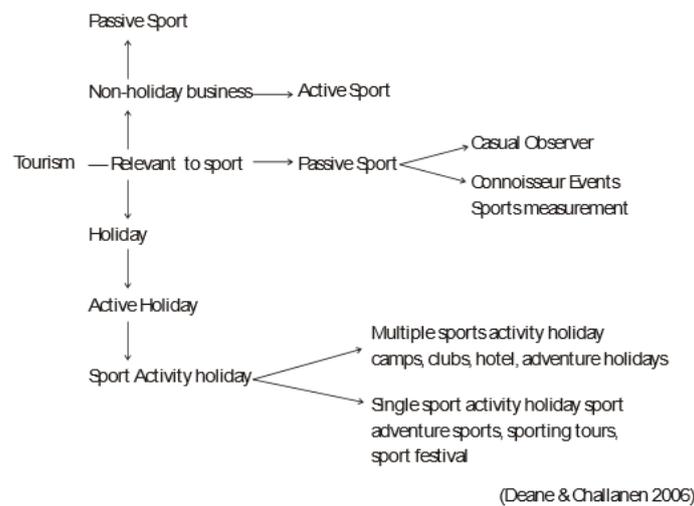
event tourism and luxury sports tourism, where it may also be possible that sport is not the prime purpose of the trip.

2. Sports participation tourism: It essentially refers to sports holidays (including sports day trips) and is probably the 'common sense' understanding of the term sports tourism.
3. Sports training tourism: It is much narrower than the previous two types, comprising, quite simply, sports tourism trips where the prime purpose is sports instruction or training.
4. Sports event tourism: It refers to tourism where the prime purpose of the trip is to take part in sports events, either as a participant or as a spectator. Sports events can range in size from mega-events such as the Olympics (IOC) and Football (World Cup to the smallest local events).
5. Luxury sports tourism: Unlike any of the previous categories, it is not defined by reference to the nature of the activity involved. Rather it is the quality of the facilities and the luxurious nature of the accommodation and attendant facilities and services that define this type of sports tourism.

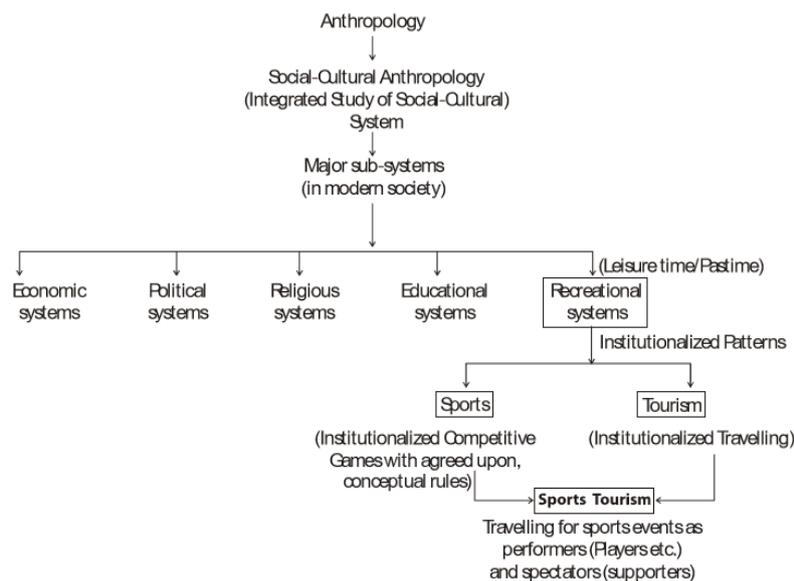
Smith (2001) contends that the staging of major sports events and the building of sporting infrastructure may lead to certain cities or countries developing an image as a 'Sporting destination'. Therefore, all the above mentioned definitions as well as conceptual paradigms clearly imply significant convergence of interests in tourism and sport (Figure 1). Sport is an important activity within tourism, and tourism and travel are fundamentally associated with many types of sport. The specific confluence of the two concepts varies according to the perspectives of stakeholders and their particular interests in sports tourism. For the purpose of the present paper, sports tourism is defined as sport based travel away from the home environment for a limited time, where sport is characterized by unique rule sets, competition related to physical prowess and play (Hinch nad Higham, 2001). Modern Sport is recognized as a significant travel activity whether it is a primary or secondary feature of the trip.

**Sports Tourism: Issues and Impacts - Significance in Anthropology:**

To date, there is precious little research and literature those analyse, specific links between issues on sports and tourism,



**Fig.3. Active & Passive Sports with Tourism Issues**



**Fig.4. Relevance and Area of Sport Tourism Study in Cultural Anthropology**

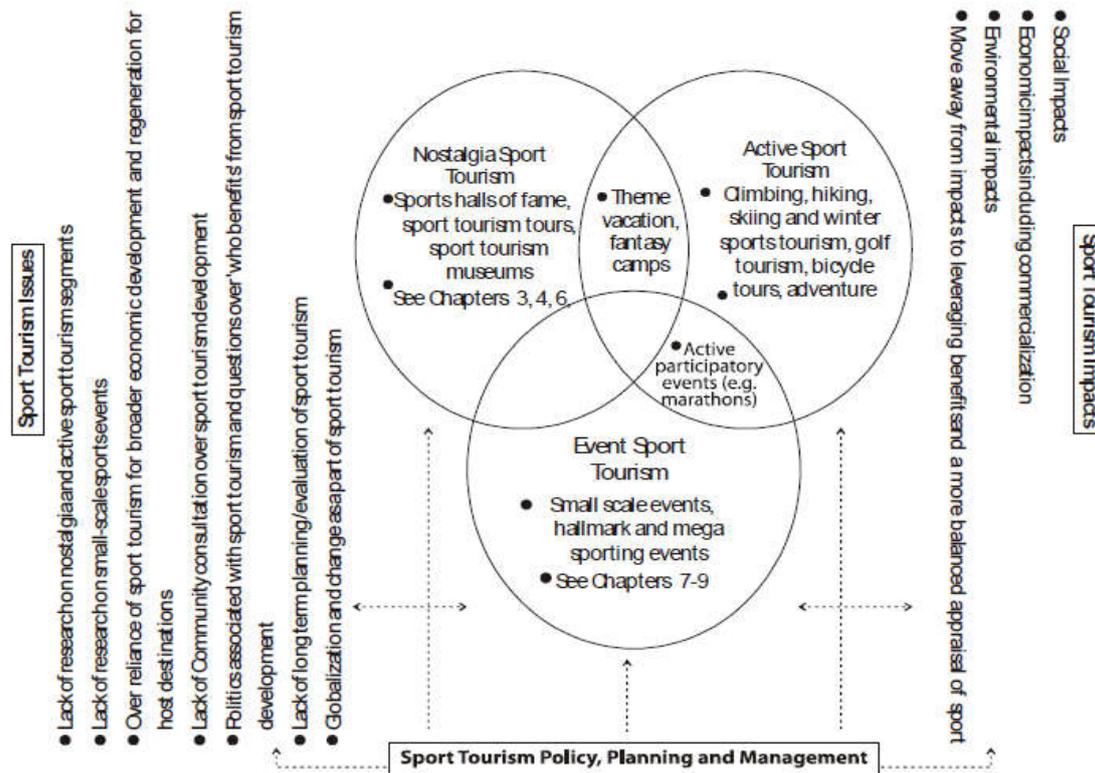


Fig.5. Sports Tourism, Segments, Issues & Impacts

especially in the field of anthropology as well as the socio-economic impacts related to sport tourism. However, an emerging issues and interest in sport tourism reflects, to some degree, a growing awareness within the leisure industry that sport tourism products have complementary features (Gibson, 1998). The Anthropology of Tourism rests upon sound anthropological foundations and has predecessors in previous research on rituals and ceremonials, human play, and cross-cultural aesthetics. Modern tourism exemplifies that part of the range of human behaviours, as Berlyne (1962) called 'human exploratory behaviours', which includes much expressive culture such as ceremonials, the arts, sports, and folklore; as diversions from the ordinary, they make life worth living. Tourism does not universally exist but is functionally and symbolically equivalent to other institutions that humans use to embellish and add meaning to their lives. Therefore, in its special aspects travelling for sports and sports for travelling it has more significant attachment with leisure time recreational aspects of culture and hence it has got the cultural anthropological relevance and significance, as well (Fig-4). The potential of the linkage between sport and tourism clearly has economic, social and environmental impacts, both positive and negative, obviously there is, unquestionably, a wide range of impacts resulting from sports tourism provision, of which economic impact is perhaps the obvious. Sports tourism is a dynamic and expanding economic sector. Sports related facilities, activities, places and events are capable of generating visitors from outside the local area, and this generates economic benefit locally from sales of accommodation, food, beverages (cold and hot drinks), gifts, admission fees, other spending at facilities, hire fees, use of transport, etc. sports, particularly sports events, may also generate sponsorship income, inward investment, media exposure, ongoing tourist appeal and secondary multiplier effects. (Fig. - 5) It has tended to be in the area of sports events that most economic and social

impacts research in Sociology and Social Cultural anthropology has been conducted. The obvious direct benefits of major sporting events (new facilities and visitor spending) are supplemented in most cases by pre-and post-match event, sports tourism boosts. Resulting publicity and the positive influence on local tourism are clear advantages of staging such events (staging of mega events like, Asian Games, Commonwealth games, Olympic, etc.)

### Concluding Overview

Sports tourism has also made a number of significant impacts in rural areas too, over recent years which may be considered under the purview of rural anthropologists and sociologists. Despite the evident sensitivity of rural environments and the fact that there will be some negative impacts of development, sports tourism has for the most part maintained a reputation as 'soft' tourism, capable of contributing to the rural economy in a range of context across the world. As traditional rural economic contributors such as farming are in decline in many areas, sports tourism has been seen as a way to boost rural economics. So, these have now increasingly been recognized, particularly by the commercial leisure industry, which very quickly saw the market potential and economic benefits of utilizing sport within the development of tourism, and subsequently in its diversification and niche marketing strategies. The nature of contemporary sports tourism is such that it is no longer possible to view it as a tourism market niche. It is a multifaceted phenomenon that comprises a range of heterogeneous areas. Obvious differences within sports tourism are between: (i) those who watch and those who actively take part; (ii) those who travel with sport as the prime purpose and those for whom sport is an incidental tourism activity; (iii) those for whom sports tourism involves competition and those for whom involvement is recreational'

and (iv) those for whom different aspects of the activity, people and place interaction are important (Malcolm, 2008). Sports tourism, as both a leading phenomenon, primarily related with sports events and an area of academic interest, has developed considerably in recent years, and the indications are that it will continue to grow still further and became a part of the study of anthropologists.

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