

### **Major Concepts:**

*Sport, as a major American institution, is bound to market forces and market ideologies*

- Social Differentiation-Categorizing people by age, height, occupation, race, or other personal attribute
- Social Stratification-When these attributes are ranked hierarchically (often seen as superior to inferior)
- Implies that inequality is recognized and to a large extent accepted and expected

### **Major Concepts (cont):**

- Social Class-People that occupy the same economic rank belong to a social class but...
  - Not JUST economic
  - Occupation, education, income, pastimes
  - Music, food, cars, etc...
- Life Chances-Chances that one has to access the riches and rewards of a society (Sport, education & medical care for example) Rich have safety nets on this view

### **Capitalism:**

- Refers to one of several economic systems that involve the means of producing and distributing goods and services
- Based on the accumulation and investment of capital by private individuals
- *Class stratification is inherent* (and necessary) in this system

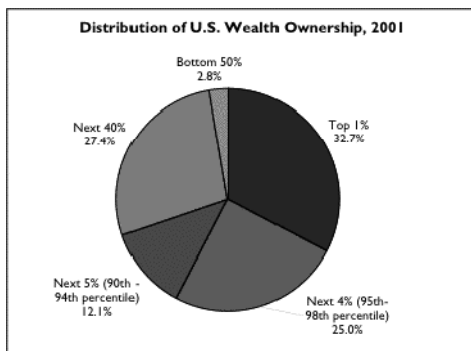
### Social & Economic Inequality:

- More Americans think the poor are poor because of a lack of effort than because of things beyond their control (including poor!)
- Because outcome is related to *individual talents & efforts*, results are fair
- So, people *deserve* their lot in life
- Social class inequity viewed as *natural*, not *ideological or structural*

### Social & Economic Inequality:

- *“Myth of meritocracy” – sport helps to reinforce this notion as well as the notion of egalitarianism*
- *Can be a challenge for the “better person” to rise to the top when social forces, including institutionalized sexism and racism are at work*

### Distribution of Wealth:



Source: Arthur B. Kennickel, "A Boiling Tide: Changes in the Distribution of Wealth in the U.S., 1989-2001," Table 10, (New Economic Institute, November 2003)

### Social Class & Sport:

- Preference for certain sports varies according to SES (see chart p. 269 in Eitzen & Sage)

Can you think of examples?

- Upper Class
- Working Class
- Lower Class

### Match the sport!



### Sport participation by SES:

- Wealthy more likely to play individual sports
  - Takes money (ski, sail, horses, etc)
  - Country club sports (golf, swimming & tennis)
  - Conspicuous consumption – must play the part!
  - Flexible (but busy) Schedules
- Working and lower class more likely to engage in team sports

### Spectator Preferences:

- Mass media have helped to make some sports popular across SES (football, Basketball, Baseball)
- Still there are different fan preferences
- Ability to attend live is SES based to some degree
- Average cost for a family of 4 for Denver Broncos in 2001 for example was \$426.00! (Eitzen & Sage, 2003)

### Social Mobility & Sport:

- We tend to believe we have an “open” class system and we are able to move up the SES ladder
- In some cases, this is true of sport, in fact participation in college sport can often translate into a comfortable occupation outside of sport when your playing days are over
- For some – huge economic windfall but...

### **Myths of the Sport-as-Mobility-Escalator**

- Sport Provides a free Education
- Participation in sport leads to a college degree
- A Professional Sports Career is Probable
- Sport is a way out of Poverty (especially for racial minorities)
- Women now have sport as a vehicle for upward mobility because of new opportunities
- A professional sport career provides lifelong security