

High School and College Sports Participation, Socioeconomic Background, and College Selectivity

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Introduction

Research suggests that participation in high school organized extracurricular activities is strongly associated with social class, and that participation in organized extracurricular activities will also influence postsecondary plans such as whether and where a student-athlete attends college (Kaufman & Gabler, 2004; Stevens, 2007). Drawing mainly on cultural capital theory, the debate has either focused on the associations between social class and activity participation (Chin & Philips, 2014), or the role that cultural orientations play in extracurricular participation. The theory of concerted cultivation, typically observed in middle-class parents but rare among working class or poor parents, portrays extracurricular activities as a means of cultivating children's potential skills and talents (Lareau, 2011).

This poster represents the preliminary results of ongoing work which uses data from a nationally representative sample of high school students to explore the relationship between socioeconomic background and college matriculation for student-athletes. This research will ultimately contribute to the debate on the role that athletic participation plays in college admission, and also how high school athletic participation is a mechanism to sustain inequality and contributes to stratification in higher education.

Objectives

1. How does college sports participation vary by socioeconomic status? Is there a difference by institutional selectivity?
2. For college athletes, does participation in sports lessons outside of high school organized sports teams vary by SES? What is the difference between athletes at highly selective institutions and athletes at any four-year institution?

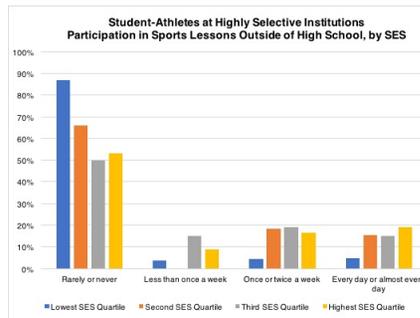
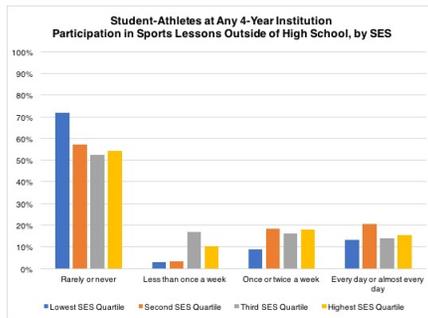
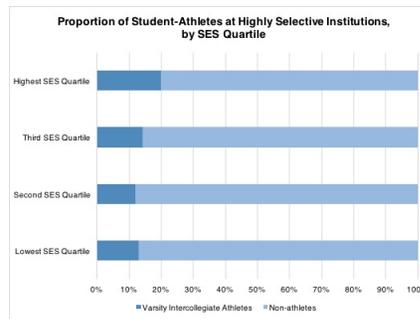
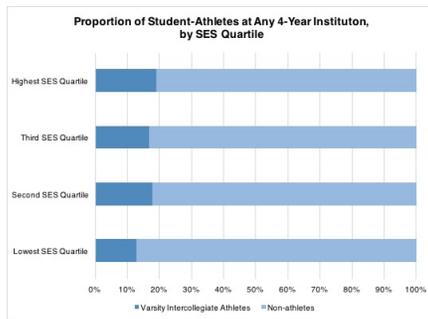
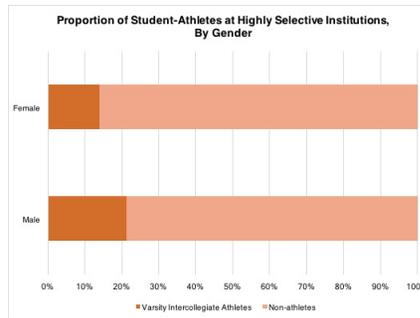
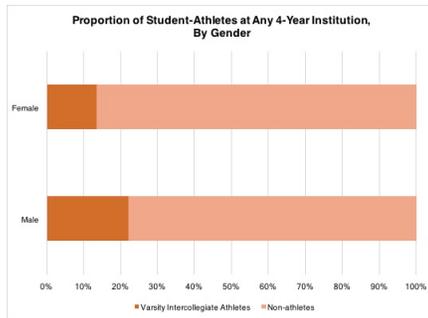
Data

- Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS:2002)
- Nationally representative of high school sophomores in the U.S. in 2002
- Full sample includes 16,197 observations

Methods

- Second follow-up panel weight was used
- Taylor series linearization to compute standard errors
- Descriptive statistical analysis of subpopulation of athletes who report participating in collegiate athletics "sometimes" or "often"

Findings



Discussion

- Proportions of male and female student athletes at highly selective institutions are similar when compared to proportions of male and female student athletes at any four-year institution.
- Student-athletes from the highest quartile of socioeconomic status represent the greatest proportion of student athletes, both at highly selective institutions and at any four-year institution.
- The proportion of student-athletes from the lowest quartile of socioeconomic status is the lowest at any four-year institution. However, the proportion of student-athletes from the second quartile of socioeconomic status is the lowest when analyzing highly selective institutions.
- Of student-athletes at four-year institutions, the lowest proportion of participation in outside sports lessons in high school is by the lowest quartile of socioeconomic status. However, the proportion of students who report participation "every day or almost every day" is within the same tenth of a percentile.
- The proportions change when analyzing student-athletes at highly selective institutions. Student-athletes from the lowest quartile of socioeconomic status have a low proportion of participation in outside sports lessons, especially when compared with student-athletes from the highest and third quartile of socioeconomic status.

Future Research

- Merge NCAA information onto respondent records to further break down sports participation by NCAA type institution.
- Compare SES and outside sports lesson participation by sport, by institutional selectivity.
- Ultimately I would like to answer the question - Is athletic participation is another form of gatekeeping in the admissions process, or does it actually have an effect on which institution the student-athlete attends?

References

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6. Weinger, E. B., Lareau, A., & Conley, D. (2015). What money doesn't buy: Class resources and children's participation in organized extracurricular activities. *Social Forces* 94(2), 479-503.