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Sport and Development: The Significance of Mathare Youth Sports Association

by
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

August 1999

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0-612-49468-3

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ABSTRACT

Sport has been a neglected focus of academic analysis, often considered unworthy of serious study. Seldom directly associated with international development, sport receives scant attention in the development literature. While numerous programmes are directed at the development of sport, few view sport as a significant contributor to the practice of development itself. The case study that is central to this thesis offers an intriguing view of the interrelationship between sport and grassroots development. Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) is an innovative development organization in Nairobi, Kenya that links youth with sport and developmental initiatives. From humble beginnings, MYSA has become one of the largest grassroots organizations in Kenya. It is felt that MYSA affords some promising avenues for research, particularly regarding the role of youth in development, the ability of sport to challenge gender stereotypes and the overarching question of the relationship between sport and development. While arguing that sport may allow a point of entry for grassroots involvement in the development process, caution is expressed in expecting too much from essentially functionalist perspectives on the role of sport in society.

ABBREVIATIONS

AGIL	adaption, goal attainment, integration, latency ("functional prerequisites" of Parsonian functionalism)
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CSDP	Commonwealth Sport Development Program
FIFA	Federation Internationale de Football Association
GNP	Gross National Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IAAF	International Amateur Athletic Federation
IOC	International Olympic Committee
KANCO	Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium
KFF	Kenya Football Federation
MYSA	Mathare Youth Sports Association
NASCOP	National AIDS and STDs Control Programme
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PCEA	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
SCSA	Supreme Council for Sport in Africa
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

UNDHR United Nations Declaration of Human Rights

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

VSO Voluntary Service Overseas

WB World Bank

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. David Black for his encouragement and always incisive, yet kindly put, comments. Also for his superb editing ability. I am grateful to my second reader, Dr. Jane Parpart, for an "other" view. Thanks to both of them for their stimulating teaching over the years. Many thanks to Dr. Sandra Maclean, my third committee member, for stepping in at late notice but most of all for her example and encouragement.

I have many people to thank for their assistance while I was in Kenya. Without the help of Wainaina Ndung'u, the man with the mission, my efforts would have been a lot more complicated. And, as ever, Daniel Wanjĩ's driving and cheerful approach to ferrying me around the city and taking me to some wonderful African meals, was much appreciated by a student on a limited budget!

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to all within MYSA for welcoming this mzungu so warmly and providing me with a home away from home. As in Ottawa, Maurice Njoroge was more than pleasant and helpful. I am particularly thankful to both him and Jay Magnus of the CSDP for allowing me to accompany a Zimbabwean delegation during the first week of my stay, which gave me an overview of MYSA that might have taken weeks otherwise to achieve. I am indebted to Bob Munro for welcoming me into his delightful family for a day and taking me to watch Mathare United at Naivasha -- even if they did lose! I agree wholeheartedly with a former Canadian High Commissioner to Kenya, David Miller, that Bob has attempted in MYSA "a courageous and big-hearted thing".

Also a big "asante sana" goes to all those workers and volunteers at MYSA who helped in all manner of ways. It would be difficult to single them all out, but a special thanks to Salim Mohammed and Pius Obala, who went out of their way to make me welcome. Thank you too to George Kamau for introducing me to some of the players and teams of the future, like "Cool and Deadly".

I can think of few better places to conduct research than on football fields.

I cannot fail to thank the girls and boys of MYSA, who proved an inspiration to a sometimes cynical and jaded observer of the sporting scene.

Also many thanks to my own children for their patience throughout. My apologies , especially to Tasha, for "hogging the computer"!

**Last, but certainly not least, I thank my wife, Tina, for bearing with me throughout this project and helping to form perhaps the best team in the world,
Mathare United notwithstanding!**

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Sport is a universal. As a new millennium dawns, sport increasingly knows no boundaries. Ronaldo and Mike Tyson, Manchester United and the Chicago Bulls are household names in much of the world. On the personal level, sport often allows complete strangers to strike up a conversation, an ice-breaker every bit as effective, even more so in some African climes, than the weather. Sport can be both exuberant play and serious business. Sport can unite and divide in the ecstasy of victory and the agony of defeat. Sport may be incomprehensible to millions, especially women, but can also, particularly among men, inspire fanaticism. Sport is inescapable. In Jean-Marie Brohm's words, "Sport is everywhere" (1978: vii).

The Olympics capture the attention of billions. All the world, except for North America, seems to stop for soccer's World Cup: "France 98, good or bad, will demonstrate yet again that sport has a power, rivalled only by war itself, to arouse not just the individual, but the nation" (*The Economist*, 1998: 6). Nationalism finds a prime showcase at such events. George Orwell once described sport as "war minus the shooting" (1950: 195). The World Cup has been described as "civilised world war" (Ashworth, 1971: 43). History even records a real "Soccer War" between El Salvador and Honduras. Economically, sport has become big business -- part of the third largest "industry" on the planet (MacClancy, 1996: 1). The International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF), the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) all have more national members than the United Nations itself. The dramatic expansion of global media coverage and the continuing

growth of opportunities for sporting participation in developing countries has led to sport increasingly becoming a truly global influence. Yet, many developing societies see little role in their developmental priorities for sport, viewing it as a mere distraction amidst the realities of underdevelopment.

Soccer, more than any other game, lays claim to the title of the world game. Soccer has been described as the only “global idiom” apart from science (in Dunning, 1971: xvii). As a team sport, part of the global appeal of soccer lies in its egalitarianism: it appears to privilege neither short nor tall, black nor white, rich nor poor. More and more women are now playing soccer. The recent Women's World Cup in the United States proved an unqualified success. Easy to understand and inexpensive to play, the global game is equally at home in North or South. As Eric Dunning comments:

In short, there appears to be something in the structure of soccer -- perhaps its fundamental simplicity, its capacity for recurrently generating high levels of excitement and the fact that it serves as a medium and focus for collective identification -- that gives it a near universal appeal in the modern world, an appeal that appears to be relatively independent of the level of development of countries and their socio-political patterns and allegiances (1997: 15).

Arthur Hopcraft, while advancing the commonly made linkage between sport and art, strikes a common chord for many when he suggests that: “What happens on the football field matters, not in the way that food matters but as poetry does to some people and alcohol does to others; it engages the personality” (in Dunning, 1997: 15).

Sport has been a neglected focus of academic analysis, often considered unworthy of serious study. Yet sport remains of immense significance to multiple millions of people around the world. The “founder” of the modern Olympic Games, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, believed in the benefits of sporting involvement in terms of physical health

and universalist principles; Nazi Germany and the Communist Bloc have exploited sport's propaganda value; the United States has employed it in diplomacy; Cuba has mobilized sport as a tool of the revolution. Sport has played a role in the ending of apartheid in South Africa, and may yet play a significant role in the liberalization of gender relations in the Middle East. Recent revelations about corruption within the International Olympic Committee (IOC) stand in stark contrast to the idealism and purity traditionally associated with the Olympic rings.

Even in a Third World context, sport is no longer as peripheral as it once was. As a result of the communications revolution more people in the Third World have access to the major sporting events. The Abebe Bikilas and Kipchoge Keinos helped advance the realization in developing nations that sport was one of the few areas in which they could compete as equals with the developed nations. The impression that the playing field is level may apply in the area of sports alone. One of Africa's greatest contemporary ambassadors and a former sportsman himself, Nelson Mandela, has declared that every child has three fundamental rights to: "health, education, and sport" (www.commonwealthgames.ca). In a young continent, increasingly becoming urbanized, sport may assume even greater importance. Like many inner-city blacks in the United States who have seen sport as an exit route from the ghetto, some in the Third World have grasped at sport as one of the few avenues to escape endemic poverty.

This thesis will consider the relationship between sport and development, by means of a case study of Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), an innovative grassroots -- or perhaps more appositely termed "barefoot" -- developmental project,

which links youth with sport, the environment, HIV/AIDS prevention and other developmental priorities in Nairobi, Kenya.

SPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Sport is not often directly associated with international development, receiving scant attention in the development literature.¹ While numerous programmes are directed at the development of sport, few view sport as a significant contributor to the practice of development itself, although there may be signs that this is changing. In the 1998 Human Development Report, which focuses on consumption and development, the authors begin their overview by noting that “World consumption has expanded at an unprecedented pace over the 20th century” and point out that rising living standards have enabled hundreds of millions of people “time for leisure and sports, vacations and other activities beyond anything imagined at the start of this century” (1998: 1). Thus a connection is made between development and sport, even if it is not directly advanced within the report. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) declares simply that: “Everyone has the right to rest and leisure... ” (Article 24).

Sport features in the Development Plans of many a Third World country, but beyond the obligatory and perfunctory mention, specific developmental impacts are often unarticulated. For instance, one of the two sentences regarding sport in the Kenyan Development Plan for 1979-1983 succinctly states: “Sports is an important aspect in National Development” (Republic of Kenya, 1979: 122).

The desire of some emerging nations to host major international sporting events -- for example, the 1988 Olympics in South Korea and the 1998 Commonwealth Games in

Malaysia -- illustrates their concern to use such events as opportunities for promoting as well as showcasing development. After hosting the Rugby World Cup successfully in 1995, South Africa has been vocal in attempting to attract even more prestigious sporting events. As David Black and John Nauright explain: "it is clear that the government firmly supports the use of international sporting events and connections as a major developmental strategy" (1998: 154). Concerns as to how much actual development occurs beyond the capital city and other sporting venues may be countered by considerations of the national prestige gained and tourism generated from hosting such a high profile event.

One organization that has emphasized the connection between sport and development is the Commonwealth. It may appear natural that this linkage should continue in this enduring legacy of Empire, where sport has long been recognized for its cohesive function.² Considered one of the Commonwealth's prime unifiers, sport has maintained its position of comparative significance in this loose association of nations, while other areas of its influence have declined. The quadrennial Commonwealth Games, long dubbed "The Friendly Games", may well represent the organization's most obvious public display of solidarity, appealing to the average Commonwealth citizen on a more visceral level than the other major visible event on the organization's calendar: the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings (CHOGM), which attract less media coverage than the Games. It might be argued, especially since colonial background is no longer insisted upon for "club" membership, that sport is the major link that brings these disparate nations together. Sport, "a Commonwealth passion", has been described as "one

of the most visible and relevant manifestations of the Commonwealth association” (Hillmer, 1997: 1).

The 1991 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Harare recognized the relationship between sport and development by setting up a Committee on Co-operation through Sport. The purpose of this initiative was to assimilate sport into Commonwealth developmental priorities, as is clear in the mandate of the CHOGM Committee, particularly so in such purposes as:

- to encourage recognition of and build support for the inclusion of sport in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) programmes
- to broaden opportunities for youth development through sport, particularly for disadvantaged youth, young women, youth at risk and those with special needs (Hillmer, 1996: 84-85).

According to Anne Hillmer, Executive Co-ordinator of the CHOGM Committee, sport was thus “recognized as a potent instrument to help achieve Commonwealth objectives: a vehicle which is readily accessible, flexible and appeals to all age groups and social strata; an inexpensive and practical means of helping to turn the principles and strategies embodied in the Harare Declaration into practice” (1996: 85). The connection between sport, youth and development is clearly evident in Commonwealth sporting programmes, with the CHOGM Committee identifying sport as “the only activity with the natural appeal to provide an attractive alternative to the street” (Hillmer, 1996: 86).

In October 1997, as part of the CHOGM in Edinburgh, the first Commonwealth Conference on Sport and Development focused on the linkage and potential of sport in development. Delivering the closing speech entitled, “Building a Nation through Sport”, Lord Carrington described participation in sport as “necessary to health and well-being in

every stage of life, but particularly vital in the development of children and youth” (www.oneworld.org). Yet the final report acknowledged that for the vast majority, “the joys of sport were impossibly out of reach” and concluded that “sport was an under-utilised developmental tool” (www.oneworld.org).

Another organization that has recognized the potential of sport to effect development is Britain’s Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO): “The result has been cheap, practical and effective ways of reaching some of the most disadvantaged people in the world” (www.oneworld.org). Former British Foreign Secretary and VSO President, Lord Carrington, remarked after a visit to sports volunteers in South Africa in 1996, “I was fortunate to witness at first hand the enormous impact that sport can play in development. In ways that other development projects could never be, sport has proven to be an inspirational catalyst for change” (in Niven, 1997: 1). VSO volunteers in the Third World suggest that sport provides a unique point of entry for developmental impact: “These community-based projects are consistently met with great enthusiasm by local people and have enjoyed unparalleled success in areas where other development projects could not find a foothold” (in Niven, 1997: 2). As a result of such comments, VSO claims that the role of sport in development, “once considered an unfashionable development ‘luxury’”, becomes “harder and harder to ignore ” (Niven, 1997: 1-2).³

In Canada, the Commonwealth Sport Development Program (CSDP), an initiative of the Commonwealth Games Association of Canada, claims to be “the first program of its kind to twin sport with development” (www.commonwealthgames.ca). Director Mel Barlow points to various projects in the Eastern Caribbean, East and Central Africa, and Sri Lanka as providing “compelling” evidence for a positive connection between sport

and development. She sees Canada, through the efforts of the CSDP, as “a leader in the use of sport as a development tool” (CSDP, 1998: 11). Sport is seen as contributing in various ways to developmental objectives: providing an alternative for youth at risk, contributing to health benefits, breaking down gender prejudices, encouraging education, promoting positive values and even assisting the democratic process. Permanent Secretary to the Minister of Sport in Grenada, Joe Charter, who has worked with CSDP throughout the Caribbean, recognizes the functionalist and universalist claims of sport:

We feel that sport contributes enormously towards the development of democratic life. Playing sports according to the rules is similar to playing the game of life according to the laws of the land and the accepted norms and values of international society. And these are the kinds of values that we are trying to impart into young people, values which we hope will enable them to make significant contributions to their own personal development and make them better citizens of the world (www.commonwealthgames.ca).

The CSDP sees a particular responsibility to harness the potential of youth, a huge demographic constituency within the Commonwealth:

There is an incredible untapped resource in the youth of the Commonwealth. The latest estimates top one billion young people in the Commonwealth. With that untapped resource, comes an enormous energy along with the hope for our future. Sport provides youth with an attractive way to convert that energy into important life skills and positive results (CSDP, 1998: 10).

CSDP, through its connections to Heritage Canada/Sport Canada and CIDA, provides funds for the HIV/AIDS and leadership training programmes of MYSA, the case study under examination in this thesis, seeing the Mathare organization as a model for replication in other Commonwealth countries.⁴

MYSA itself is beginning to attract considerable attention both locally and internationally, with many press reports suggesting that sport can make a significant

difference in slum environments like Mathare. Many delegations are beating a path to MYSA's door in order to learn how to replicate MYSA within their locales.

THE NEGLECT OF SPORT IN ACADEMIA

While sport has historically been sidelined in development circles, it has also largely been ignored in the academic world. "With some notable exceptions there has been an extraordinary neglect of sport as a social and cultural phenomenon among the social science and cultural studies communities, who have largely ignored what is arguably one of the central components of popular culture" (Hargreaves, 1982: 30). John Hargreaves' comments still accurately reflect the underemphasis of sport in academic disciplines. While the literature surrounding the sociology of sport continues to grow, there remains a substantial lacuna in the analysis of sport and society in the developing world. Even more pronounced is the lack of attention to the potential of sport to contribute to grassroots development. As Klaus Heinemann acknowledges, research into sport in the Third World has been seriously neglected: "Consequently, it is necessary to rely more on suppositions than on substantive knowledge" (1993: 139). Much research is called for in this context, as Joseph Arbena suggests:

So, as I have been suggesting, we know many of the questions to ask and perhaps even possess the basis for offering some tentative answers, but we need an exceptional amount of field work if we hope to understand how these processes have worked themselves out at various social and geographical levels in different cultural and historical contexts... (1993: 156).

Thus Arbena's comments form part of a common chorus on a theme: that inadequate research has so far been conducted regarding the development of sport in much of the

world. Acknowledging that as far as African sport is concerned, the only topic adequately researched has been the sport and apartheid issue, William Baker suggests that the story of sport in Africa is yet to be told: "...social historians have an equally important story to tell; of the way in which Africans have lived and died, fought and loved, worked and played. Sport is a central but neglected part of that story" (1987: vii). Writing of Kenya, Peter Mahlmann bemoans the fact that despite Kenyan sporting success and the increasing significance of sport as a social phenomenon to Kenyans, "empirical research in the field of sports has hardly been carried out" (1989: 120).⁵

INTRODUCTION TO THE CASE STUDY

"There is always something new out of Africa". Pliny's famous statement might well apply to the case study that is central to this thesis. Described as "one of the biggest youth development schemes in the world" (Denyer, 1998: 35), MYSA affords an intriguing view of the interrelationship between sport and grassroots development in Africa. Situated a few miles from the city centre of the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, lies its most well-known slum, Mathare. Here MYSA was founded in 1987 by Bob Munro, a Canadian expatriate. This significant initiative embraces the goal, in the words of its motto, of "giving youth a sporting chance". Environmentalist Munro not only saw an opportunity for the youth of Mathare to play organized football but also to help clean up their neighbourhoods. From humble beginnings MYSA has grown into one of the largest grassroots organizations in Kenya, and continues to expand. Over 10,000 teenagers are involved in playing in what is claimed to be Africa's largest soccer league, as well as making significant developmental impacts in various areas.

Innovation is at the heart of the MYSA initiative. An organization for young people, MYSA has from the outset believed in empowering the youth themselves, with most of the several hundred volunteer coaches, referees and staff members being 16 years old or younger. MYSA claims to be a development project that not only targets, but is run by, the largest demographic constituency in Mathare and indeed in Kenya -- the youth.

Perhaps the most significant of one of the many “firsts” that MYSA claims is the introduction of soccer leagues for girls. Kenya in general remains a patriarchal society, and Mathare in particular is home to an aggressively masculine culture. The concept of soccer for girls was bound to arouse suspicion on many fronts, but with care and promotion, the MYSA leagues contain a far larger proportion of girls to boys than in Canadian minor hockey, for example. MYSA’s logo now significantly includes a girl as well as a boy under the rubric of “sport and community services”.

MYSA has taken a leading role in the training of hundreds of HIV/AIDS “peer educators”, seeing a unique opportunity not only for youth to reach other youth with information about AIDS prevention, but also to change fundamental attitudes and prejudices regarding the dreaded disease. MYSA estimates that some 30,000 young people have so far been reached with a message of prevention in this way.

The organization continues to branch out in its impact, seeking innovative ways of making an impact on the lives of Mathare’s children. The “Shootback Project” is one such example. Less than two years old, this photography venture seeks to link creativity, technical expertise and environmental awareness. It has already generated an exhibition on the Internet and a book is scheduled to be published later in the year. Pictures taken by youths themselves allow an opportunity to reflect on many of the issues that are central to

life for the disadvantaged, in the process providing an opportunity for developmental impact.

MYSA has won not only football awards, with provincial youth titles aplenty at home and victories overseas, particularly in the Norway Cup, but also recognition for their other activities, most notably a UNEP Global 500 Award at the Rio Earth Summit. Emerging out of the MYSA leagues, a professional side, Mathare United, was formed in 1994, winning the Moi Golden Cup last season and proving a force to be reckoned with in this its first year in the Kenyan Premier League.

This case study, therefore, explores some promising avenues for research, particularly regarding the role of youth in development, the ability of sport to challenge gender stereotypes and the overarching question of the relationship between sport and development.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The central research question that will inform this thesis can be summarized as:

Can sport be used as an effective vehicle for grassroots development in the South?

Subsidiary questions that might prove valuable for investigation include: *Should sports organizations be more cognizant of the opportunities for developmental impact?* and indeed: *Should developmental organizations be more attuned to the possibilities of sport providing a point of entry for grassroots involvement in the developmental process?*

On a theoretical level, central to this thesis will be an investigation into a fundamental debate in the sociology of sport: *Whether sport serves a consensual purpose, maintaining order and facilitating integration, as functionalism suggests, or whether*

sport is essentially alienating, perpetuating structures of inequality, as conflict theories posit. The functional proposition that sport may aid in the developmental process, so central to MYSA's aims and objectives, stands open to question from both structural and Gramscian Marxist positions, as well as feminist and figurational interpretations, which would suggest that relations of power are inadequately addressed in functionalist theory. I consider this case study to be particularly interesting in highlighting the ongoing debate between functional and conflict theories of sport.

The thesis will pay particular attention to the gender dimension in sport and development, asking the question: *Can sports provide a unique opportunity to break down patriarchal structures and male dominated societies, leading to more general developmental impacts?* The latter question may assume particular interest, given that sport is more typically thought to reinforce patriarchy. It will also reflect upon youth "ownership" in developmental programmes designed for young people, and, in passing, will touch on the contested relationship between sport and the development of moral character, noting possible parallels between colonial philosophies of sport and those of MYSA today.

Terence Monnington's concern regarding the morality of investment in African sport may be widespread: "Given the social, economic and environmental problems that appear set to overwhelm much of Africa, the morality of African investment in sporting success, let alone her capacity, must be seriously questioned" (1997: 107).⁶ In light of such reservations, hopefully this thesis can shed some light on the question: *Is international investment in sport in the Third World, particularly Africa, justified?* And,

if so, bearing in mind the difference between élite and mass sport: *What sort of investment would be most productive for development?*

METHODOLOGY

The methodological challenges to this research project are obvious, both conceptually and practically. While a growing literature exists on the sociology of sport and related disciplines, comparatively little is focused on the developing world. Also, the developmental literature tends to ignore sport as a potentially significant contributor to development. I have not yet become aware of any academic or critical analysis of MYSA in the public domain. The challenges of distance and communication are apparent, especially when it is recognized that the centre of MYSA is located within a slum area where infrastructural links are weak, to say the least.

A major method in this study, particularly regarding the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of the research questions, involves content analysis of information derived from library research. As far as literature pertaining to the case study itself, I was fortunate in being given access to MYSA's archival records, containing press clippings, media reports and promotional literature. I have also been able to keep current with developments in MYSA via the Internet, personal correspondence and contacts.

This thesis has relied heavily on qualitative research methods. I visited MYSA for just over three weeks in April/May this year, during which time semi-structured in-depth interviews, employing primarily open-ended questions, were conducted to inform the case study and complement observational techniques. During my visit I had virtually unlimited access to all the prominent figures within MYSA. The founder, Bob Munro, graciously

invited me to accompany him to a Mathare United fixture in Naivasha, which allowed me to spend a whole afternoon and evening with him. I have been able to talk at length to the Chief Manager, Maurice Njoroge, both in Canada and Kenya. He generously allowed me access to all the department heads in MYSA as well as players and officials of Mathare United, including the Coach, Jonathan Niva, a former national player.

While in Kenya, I was able to make contact with officials from a cross-section of the NGO community, such as the Ford Foundation, the Population Council, the Commonwealth Sports Development and the United Nations Environmental Programmes. Unfortunately, my efforts to talk to those responsible for liaising with MYSA either in the Norwegian or Dutch embassies, whose countries represent two of the prime donors to MYSA, were unsuccessful. I interviewed journalists, teachers, probation officers, AIDS counsellors, including Allan Ragi, Chairman of the Kenya AIDS Consortium, and David Miller, a former Canadian High Commissioner to Kenya. In addition to the more formal interviews, I was able to talk informally to scores of people about MYSA from all sections of the community -- from taxi-drivers to university professors. Last but not least, I had many informal conversations with boys and girls playing in the MYSA leagues. In this way I sought to gather as much information as I could, as well as gauge both internal and external perceptions of MYSA's success. Throughout I relied on interview notes, rather than audiotaping, which I consider to be too intrusive in the Mathare context.

In addition to the interviews, observation played a significant role in my research. Welcomed into MYSA as an honoured guest, I was never short of companionship or escorts through the slums. I was able to spend many hours around the MYSA offices as

well as at MYSA games. The timing of my visit was coincidentally excellent, allowing me to observe MYSA both during the school holidays (when MYSA is much busier) and after them. By the end of my stay, I felt I had become as much a “part of the furniture” as could be expected in the limited time I had available. Of course, as a “mzungu” (European) I was hardly inconspicuous and as an older male I would be naturally accorded respect, scarcely allowing me to be a full participant. Also, I am sure that my presence sometimes affected the activities of those I was observing. In spite of stressing my “neutral” status as a researcher, on occasion I am sure that some were not completely forthcoming in their responses to my questions. Another drawback was my rusty Swahili, the *lingua franca* of MYSA, which meant that I missed a number of nuances in overheard conversations.

In employing content analysis, observation and interviewing as my main research methods, I was attempting through a process of triangulation to enhance the validity of my study.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Following the present introduction, in which the overarching relationship between sport and development is posited, Chapter Two provides a literature review within the framework of an introduction to the various sociological theories of sport. The two main theories, functionalism and Marxism, may be broadly described as order and conflict perspectives. While functionalists regard sport as fulfilling a harmonious role in society, structural Marxists view it as essentially alienating. Alternative theories are briefly explained -- symbolic interactionist, figural and feminist approaches to sport. The

chapter concludes by constructing from the various approaches some hypotheses germane to the case of MYSA.

Chapter Three will provide a general overview of sport in the South, with particular reference to Africa and specific attention to Kenya. After a brief consideration of traditional African sport, more attention will be paid to modern sport's colonial genesis and diffusion, culminating in a post-independence era which saw sport being used for purposes of national integration and international recognition. Health and socio-economic benefits are considered prior to an examination of sport's potential to challenge some of the gender stereotypes that have long afflicted African women. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the challenges and dependencies engendered in a rapidly globalizing world.

Chapter Four details the growth of MYSA from its shoestring beginnings to its present position as one of the largest grassroots organizations in Kenya. It focuses on the facts and figures of MYSA -- the sporting, environmental, gender, AIDS, photographic and administrative dimensions of the organization.

In the fifth and concluding chapter, the research questions are revisited in light of the case study, and implications for development are examined. I suggest that MYSA has helped to enlarge choices, create community, build indigenous capacity as well as empower youth generally and girls specifically within Mathare and environs. While arguing that sport may allow a significant point of entry for grassroots involvement in the development process, caution is expressed in expecting too much from essentially functionalist perspectives on the role of sport in society. Recommendations are advanced and conclusions stated.

WHAT IS SPORT?

Confident they know what “sport” means, most sports participants, as well as spectators, would regard any attempt at a definition to be superfluous. However, the definition of sport has itself been as uncertain as many sports contests themselves.

More technical definitions often involve some differentiation along a continuum between the informal and formal poles of “play” and “sport”. Johan Huizinga drew attention to the play element in sport in Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture originally published in 1944.⁷ Jay Coakley’s definition is concise and not atypical: “Sport is an institutionalized competitive activity that involves vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors” (1990: 15). But for the purposes of this thesis, I am drawn to Richard Holt’s embracing generality: “Sport is pleasurable physical activity, which is normally organized and competitive but need not be so” (1992: 10).

When considering the global role of sport, it should be recognized that the concept of sport is socially constructed and defined, abstract in nature and subject to change over time and culture.⁸ Any definition of sport will by nature be inherently subjective, and, as Holt points out, “Sport, therefore, is *not* reducible to a single essence” (1992: 362).

The definition of “sport” used in this thesis will be a broad one, incorporating many of the above points. In terms of the case study under investigation, sport is to be recognized as containing elements of informal play and more formal competition. In practice much overlap occurs, especially at a youth level. MYSA’s sporting endeavours

are built around soccer on an organized level within the MYSA leagues, though this formal organization has grown out of the informal and often spontaneous play amongst children kicking improvised “made in Mathare” balls in whatever patches of unoccupied land they can find. A more specific distinction between mass participation sport and elite sport will at times need to be drawn, though with particular reference to the MYSA soccer leagues mass participation sport will generally be assumed. The professional team, Mathare United, an outgrowth from the MYSA leagues, obviously crosses the line to high performance sport, while maintaining a connection with other levels of performance within the MYSA leagues. In the context of this thesis, the term “sport” primarily refers to modern sport forms, predominantly of Western origin, rather than the traditional or indigenous forms of sport that predated the colonial era. The terms “soccer” and “football”, more prevalent in North America and Britain respectively, are used interchangeably. The terms “Third World”, “South” and “developing world” are also used interchangeably, recognizing the limitations of any of these terms to do full justice to the nuances and complexities of the contemporary international political economy. My definition of youth will generally follow that of MYSA, whose upper age youth category is at the Under 18 level.⁹

While any definition of sports is more complex and contested than typically assumed, a definition of development is even more problematic. The next section will discuss the contested definition of development, and in the process attempt to shed a little light on the whole process of development.

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

Development itself is a contested concept, and development studies have wrestled interminably with definitions. The opening line of M.P. Cowen and R.W. Shenton's Doctrines of Development, "Development seems to defy definition, although not for a want of definitions on offer" (1996: 3), is echoed by Jan Knippers Black, who conceives development as a "user-friendly term, having virtually as many potential meanings as potential users" (1991: 15). Ronald Chilcote simply suggests that: "The study of development is 'overdeveloped'" (1991: 286).

While greater theoretical precision is striven for in the quest for definition, no holy grail is yet apparent, for as Gustavo Esteva suggests in The Development Dictionary: "This overload of meanings ended up dissolving its precise significance" (1992: 9). He argues: "Development occupies the centre of an incredibly powerful semantic constellation...At the same time, very few words are as feeble, as fragile and incapable of giving substance and meaning to thought and behaviour as this one" (1992: 8).

Part of the problem is that "development" is an English word, rooted firmly in European origins and Western thought. "Development has thus become one of those words -- like security or democracy -- which apparently requires no definition, for everyone knows, instinctively, what it is. It is what 'we' have" (Manzo, 1991: 20). And just as easily, "underdevelopment" is what "they" have. The word "development" has thus been devalued, often rendered impotent by its imprecision.

The origins of "development" are often traced back to President Harry Truman's inauguration speech in 1949, when he envisaged "a bold new program...for the

improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas". He decried previous imperialism as "exploitation for foreign profit", though growth and Western superiority were still implicit in his "program of development" (Esteva, 1992: 8). Cowen and Shenton would take development's origins back a few centuries earlier to its original advancement as a hypothesis "amidst the throes of early industrial capitalism in Europe" (1996: 8). But development, too often viewed as a post-war phenomenon, has been around not just for centuries, but for millennia, as the ruins in the sands of time testify.

MODERNIZATION AND DEPENDENCY

In the post-war context, development became increasingly identified with the modernization paradigm as such authorities as Walter Rostow, in The Stages of Economic Growth (1960), confidently sang the praises of economic growth. This was the age of the mega-project, of hydro-electric dams and agro-industrial schemes, the sheer scale of which caused indigenous efforts to pale into insignificance. It was also a time to break the limiting bonds of myth and superstition, which were perceived as holding back traditional societies from modernity and advancement. As modernization dissolved traditional bonds, space was created for the institution of new ones, allowing imported modern sports to further secure a niche in society.

Modernization theory's heyday may have already been waning when Lester Pearson wrote The Crisis of Development in 1969. The crisis that he saw emanated from the explosive potential unleashed by two-thirds of humanity languishing in destitution, while a minority thrived in affluence. His response was clear: the flow of aid should not slacken until development, or growth, was at last achieved:

In the purely economic sense, development is the process by which a state reaches the position where it can provide for its own growth without relying on special arrangements for the transfer of resources from other and richer countries – where its growth becomes self-sustaining on a reasonable level and may enable it, through its own efforts, to secure the benefits of industrial and technological progress for its people (1969: 7).

Even in such a simple and appealing definition, the assumptions (and limitations) of linearity and determinism are pervasive.

As the seventies approached, the modernization imperative increasingly frustrated those who were left behind, giving rise to a new paradigm, *dependencia* or dependency, with a distinctly Southern, and particularly Latin American, flavour. Kate Manzo comments: “...dependency equated development with national autonomy and growth -- just as the developmentalists had done -- and left intact the classical image of the West as *the* image or model of what it means to be ‘developed’” (1991: 12). The modernization paradigm saw growth as saviour, even as dependency theorists looked with envy at the end result, if not the means. The dependent nations embarked on import substitution and other programmes in an attempt to detach and catch up. Like dependency itself, development found it hard to delink from concepts of growth, or from the West.

SUSTAINABLE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

While the “Lost Decade” of the eighties led to disillusionment with developmental dogma, it also provoked a certain introspection. Recognizing that development on its own would always tend to be subject to identification with growth and exploitation by greed, a chance was seized to distance development from a solely economic interpretation. It was thought that the addition to development of a qualifying

adjective: “sustainable”, to be followed later by another: “human”, could ameliorate the consequences of irresponsible growth. But actual progress was confused by semantics.

The Brundtland Report defined “sustainable development” as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987: 43). Such a definition seemed to at last limit the power of unaccountable growth, particularly its ravaging effect on the environment. While theoretically helpful, in practice it allowed broad subjectivity regarding supposed “needs”, often encouraging a blurred demarcation between needs and wants, and raising a plethora of questions regarding Northern and Southern needs as well as wants. Few perhaps can define what exactly is being sustained in sustainable development, whether a rate of growth or a level of economic activity (Daly, 1991: 32). At heart is the question of growth, which essentially survived as a *sine qua non* in the Brundtland Report.

It is now over a decade since that report, and sustainable development remains almost as enigmatic a term as development itself. From the outset the term “sustainable” has been criticized for its “fuzziness” (Lélé, 1991: 607). As early as 1984, the Director of the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP), Mostafa Tolba, had suggested that sustainable development was “an article of faith, a shibboleth; often used, but little explained” (in Lélé, 1991: 607). The years following have overburdened its abuse, no more so than in the all-too-frequent elision of “sustainable development” into “sustainable growth”, or as Herman Daly puts it, “the cornucopian myth of unlimited growth, rechristened as ‘sustainable growth’ ...It is easier to invent bad oxymorons than to resolve real contradictions” (1991: 41). The Human Development Report sums up

tellingly: “Development and consumption patterns that perpetuate today’s inequalities are neither sustainable nor worth sustaining” (UNDP, 1998: 39).

Human development is also evidence of a paradigmatic shift in the field of development, though, like sustainable development, it stands in danger of becoming little more than a rhetorical cliché. Drawing on a rich line of philosophical thought, human development proclaims that “People are the means and the end of development” (World Bank, 1996: 110).

This greater emphasis on human development and its universalism of life claims has arisen in no small measure as a result of the Human Development Reports, published throughout the decade of the nineties, as well as the particular impetus provided by the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995. While readily accepting that economic growth is part of the process of attaining human development’s goal of “enlarging people’s choices” (Jolly, 1997: 224), it moderates the doctrine that economic growth is the “be all and end all” of development, although the threat of semantic cooptation is ever present.

This thesis will broadly follow the approach adopted in the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Reports, where human development, viewed more qualitatively than quantitatively, is defined as the process of “enlarging people’s choices”.

Jan Nederveen Pieterse looks to this latter definition in describing development theory’s current crisis: “Development thinking is at a crossroads, torn between conventional development-as-growth and human and social development” (1997: 377). There may be a trend already, perhaps even an emerging paradigm, towards the latter

dimension of human development, emphasizing prescriptions associated with greater social justice rather than economic growth.

Distinguished economists, Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, acknowledge the human dimension of development and foresee an increasing focus on human capabilities, while noting the historical primacy of economic growth as the guiding doctrine of development:

The basic objective of development as the expansion of human capabilities was never completely overlooked in the modern development literature, but the focus has been mainly on the generation of economic growth, in the sense of expanding gross national product and related variables (1995: 11-12).

Social programmes, such as those in education, health and social security, are crucial contributors to the development of human capabilities, and provide hope that such directions will form the basis of a countervailing force to the historical primacy of economic growth in development theory and practice.

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

A neo-liberal orthodoxy has influenced policies in the last decades. The magic wand of modernization, ineptly waved by an incompetent state, was to be replaced by, in Reagan's phrase, "the magic of the market", which would make all things possible. Not much had changed in this neo-modernist paradigm. The market may have replaced the state, but the assumption of a trickle-down effect persisted, though this time it would be more than a trickle, perhaps a flood when full orthodoxy was attained. The market would globalize development, perhaps even supersede it altogether. But, as the Group of Lisbon pointed out, "The market cannot properly discount the future: it is naturally short-sighted" (1995: xvii). Globalization has brought the crisis into stark relief. On one hand, the

indispensability of growth, a tautology of one economic text after another, is preached in various theories of growth, while on the other, and in actual practice, the poor have been marginalized, essentially excluded from the fruits of globalization.

Reacting against such a neo-liberal agenda, many observers have looked for alternative models of development, calling even for a fundamental reconceptualization of development. According to Manzo: "Thus, the current impasse, or crisis, plaguing development theory, I would argue, relates not to the fragmentation of the field but to its unity: to this failure to conceive of development in any other manner" (1991: 6).

Often missed in the development debate has been the perception that development can be viewed from other, predominantly non-Western, perspectives. Development theory, framed in the West and rooted in Western ideals, has too often failed to escape its entrapment in the growth-oriented model of the American dream, the developed heaven on an underdeveloped earth. But increasing Souths in the North, as well as Norths in the South challenge developmental assumptions. As Wolfgang Sachs puts it: "Indeed, it is not the failure of development which has to be feared, but its success" (1992: 3).

Calls for alternative models of development escalate, coalescing around indigenous and grassroots initiatives, often seen as involving more participatory and democratic attempts at development. But to resist the tide of global homogenization, or Westernization of culture, achieved by the market requires the courage to accept a people-centred development united in the celebration of difference. Alternative approaches may allow postmodernism's "silenced voices" to be heard, although there still may exist an unwillingness, beyond development platitudes, to give them full freedom of

expression. Traditional development thinking may need to be breached in order for the objects of development to become instead its subjects.

The case study that is central to this thesis addresses many of the central debates in development. While contention exists between those proponents of development who point to advances against underdevelopment, and those who claim that development has merely produced more underdevelopment, most would agree that development, of whatever perspective, has largely passed the Mathares of the world by. The prescriptions of the modernization and dependency paradigms may seem irrelevant as sources of solutions to squalor and deprivation on such a scale as found in Mathare. But MYSA appears to provide hope: that grassroots development can make a difference; that youth can “own” their own development; that gender stereotypes can be successfully challenged; that the objects of development can finally become its subjects.

MYSA challenges much established developmental wisdom and suggests new developmental enquiries, particularly in its approach to youth in development. But it also highlights a more basic divide: does MYSA reinforce or challenge fundamental structures of inequality? MYSA not only raises profound developmental questions, but also significant sporting ones.

SPORTING MODERNIZATION AND DEPENDENCY

Even on the purely sporting level, the impact of modernization and dependency approaches are evident. Where do sports fit into the modernization project? In order for the underdeveloped sporting nations to catch up with the West, conveniently the originators of “modern” sporting forms, massive investment in both structural and human

infrastructure would be required. The role of traditional pastimes and leisure activities would be further marginalized as new imported “modern” sports became established, encouraging social restructuring in the process. Eric Wagner identifies the vacuum left by the disintegration of traditional bonds:

The larger international processes of development and modernization, of which Americanization is but one part, are fundamentally responsible for changes in the world of sport. One could certainly argue that as modern society develops and traditional lifestyles change, many young people look around for things to do to replace traditional ways of living...as urban/industrial/town/service jobs replace traditional rural ones, young men and increasingly young women search for pastimes, and cultural forms coming via the media, such as soccer and basketball, may catch their attention” (1990: 401-402).

Arbena notes that development is “measured by standards generally set by the Western or Westernised international community” and details sport’s contribution to the modernization imperative in South America: “To the extent that sport, as many Victorian proponents hoped, also conveyed values and models, they likewise offered a potential means to modify traditional Latin American society...” (1993: 153). He recognizes that such nations had few alternatives to progress other than “through a major acceptance of European behaviour” (1993: 153), a not insignificant part of which involved European sport forms. While modernization was to provide the answer to material progress, sporting modernization was to provide the key to sporting success.

Sporting dependency is increasingly evident as the links between metropole and periphery become every bit as obvious in the sporting world as it is in the world delineated by the political economy. The largely unchallenged assumption that the developing world should progress toward the sporting standards of the developed world reflects the modernization imperative, but also reveals a situation of dependency where,

as Stoddart reflects, “the international sports system is, by and large, loaded against the developing world” (1989: 129). Turning to André Gunder Frank and Fernando Henriqué Cardoso, Guttman clearly recognizes that the connection between sport and dependency theory is evident in “the global expansion of modern sports as a hitherto neglected aspect of the ‘development of dependence’ on the periphery of the ‘world system’” (1994: 5). Grant Jarvie and Joe Maguire see dependency, in its simplest form, as “a form of domination of one culture over another” (1994: 237).

Argentine journalist Osvaldo Bayer laments the fact that: “The central countries, in the same manner as they carry away the riches of the Third World, likewise carry off their best soccer players” (in Arbena, 1993: 158). A vicious circle results: with the best players gone, the standard of soccer drops, leading to smaller attendances and less income for the clubs, who find it even more difficult to hang on to promising talent locally. Attendance at league games in Brazil have been dwindling to all-time lows, with mere smatterings of supporters in some of the largest stadia in the world.

Sport in the periphery thus suffers in comparison to sport in the metropole.

Arbena poses some incisive questions concerning whether:

certain international sporting relationships actually produce underdevelopment or if these patterns of ‘muscle drain’ are merely reflections of deeper, more pervasive structural problems that affect sports but are not caused by them. Or, by bringing income into the exporting country via player sales or the return flow of salary earnings, are they really benefiting (sic) the country economically, even though they may be damaging the quality of play and the psyche of frustrated fans (1993: 158)?

He refers to Alan Klein’s classic study of baseball in the Dominican Republic which reveals how sport can be “at one and the same time a source of exploitation and

development, of cultural colonialism and nationalism, of domination and creativity, of humiliation and pride, of hegemony and resistance” (in Arbena, 1993: 158-9). Noting “an overall trajectory that parallels the typical neo-colonial enterprise”, Klein argues that the whole structure of Dominican baseball reinforces “dependency and underdevelopment” (1989: 111). In the Kenyan athletic context, Bale and Sang come to similar conclusions: “it is possible to see ‘development’ and ‘underdevelopment’ occurring at the same time” (1996:163). They suggest that peripheral countries such as Kenya have been marginalized by a global core leading to a dependency which “in sports, like in economics, can be seen as a symbiotic relationship with development” (1996: 175).¹⁰

But still more troubling questions exist. Can sport, inherently about competition, achieve development goals essentially concerned with cooperation? Does sport perpetuate, or does it challenge systems of inequality? Does sport unify or divide? Or, paradoxically, do both at the same time? While functionalists argue that sport is intrinsically unifying, Marxists would suggest that sport is fundamentally alienating, thus setting up the debate between order and conflict theories of sport that will be explored further in the next chapter.

ENDNOTES

1. I will discuss definitions of development later in this chapter.
2. Harold Perkin contends that sport played a highly significant role in the successful divestiture of imperial power, maintaining that sport eased the independence process and the transition from Empire to Commonwealth (1989). While his position may be contested, sport and the Commonwealth remain inextricable.
3. The American Peace Corps -- sometimes also known as the “sports corps” -- has also had a close association with sports.

4. Barlow considers that the partnership with MYSA offers CSDP “not only excellent value for money but also enables us to learn and adapt some of the powerful programming tools developed by these innovative youth” (CSDP, 1998: 27). It has also provided support for programmes in Zimbabwe for youth with disabilities, and in all its efforts has sought to promote gender equity. Attempts are currently being made by the CSDP to replicate aspects of the MYSA programme in Zimbabwe.

5. While Mahlmann's comments may still be accurate regarding many developing countries, Dunning cautions that Western lack of knowledge regarding other sporting forms and practices “may reflect our ignorance of material in the native languages of such countries more than an absence of such material per se” (1993: 122). A similar dynamic exists with regard to European perceptions of the lack of sporting history among indigenous Africans. Since Mahlmann's writing, John Bale and Joe Sang have contributed substantially to the limited literature on Kenyan sport, claiming that their book, Kenyan Running: Movement Culture, Geography and Global Change, is “the first to explore in detail the emergence and significance of a single sport in one particular African country” (1996: xiii).

6. Writing shortly after the Ethiopian Famine of the early eighties, Jim Riordan asks the question: “How can a country spend money on sport when so many of its people are dying of hunger?” (1986: 287).

7. Strongly influenced by Huizinga's work and narrowing the focus from general play to specific games, Roger Caillois attempted a classification of games in Man, Play and Games, emphasizing a typology based on *agon* (competition), *alea* (chance), *mimicry* and *ilinx* (shock) (1971: 17-39). Harry Edwards describes the transition from play to sport in an eightfold schema (1973: 69), while Allen Guttmann lays out a set of seven “systematically interrelated formal-structural characteristics” of modern sports (1994: 2-3). Henning Eichberg also sees seven basic characteristics associated with sport (1984). John Hargreaves identifies six autonomous elements of sport: “play, contest, uncertainty, theatre, ritual, and the body” (1986: 10-15).

8. For instance, the preferred usage in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc of the term “physical culture” as opposed to “sport” has often reflected a broader approach, allowing a more political interpretation than in the West. In the African setting “movement culture” or “body culture” places sport in the context of a culture that predated the imposition of Western sport forms.

9. UNICEF's Convention on the Rights of the Child defines childhood as extending through age 18.

10. The authors suggest that “it is possible to detect underdevelopment and regression in Kenyan athletics within the statistics which are so often used to denote its growth” (1996: 164).

CHAPTER TWO

THEORIES OF SPORT

How can sport be explained? Sport is a central phenomenon in popular culture. Variouslly regarded as noble or sordid, as well as everything in between, sport is in many ways a microcosm of society itself. Sport has accumulated its fictions through the centuries, at times assuming an almost mythical stature itself. Lofty statements extolling not the winning but the taking part hark back to an apparently nobler time. The idealism of the Olympic movement has often seemed to contrast all too sharply with the rude reality of life, providing a sense of reassurance to a public jaded by politics, economics and even religion. Until recently that is, when tarnished with bribery, drug-taking and commercialization, the realization increasingly dawns that sport, even the Olympics, merely reflects a less than perfect society. Sport may even help create such an imperfect society.

While humans have sought to understand their societies from the dawn of history, the term “sociology” dates back only as far as 1838 when Auguste Comte coined the term. Sociological enquiry into sports is even more recent, but reflects the main perspectives in the discipline. The most prominent of these are the order and conflict perspectives, primarily represented by functionalism and Marxism respectively. Symbolic interactionism and, more recently, alternative approaches such as figurationalism and feminism, also provide insights into the role of sports in society. The theories have many variations within their generally identifiable constellation of central core assumptions.¹

Historically, much of the literature on sport has been permeated implicitly or explicitly by a functionalist approach. Sport has traditionally been seen as fulfilling a valuable function in society, an approach that perhaps reflects the origins of modern sport in Britain at a time of colonial expansion, where sport was seen as a major means of character development. Tom Brown's Schooldays, originally published in 1857, may be the archetypal example of a rich literature extolling the function of sport.

This chapter will seek to explain and identify the main assumptions within the various theories of sport, and conclude with some hypotheses that the various theories might generate with reference to the case study in question.

SPORT AND FUNCTIONALISM

To the functionalist, sport ranks with education, religion, government and other institutional actors in contributing to the stability of society. Functionalists emphasize what holds society together, and sport is often seen as fulfilling a prime function in this regard. During the turmoil of the Vietnam War, then Vice-President of the United States, Spiro Agnew may have reflected much popular sentiment when he declared: "I believe that sport, all sport, is one of the few bits of glue that holds society together" (in Edwards, 1979: 15).

In her Commonwealth Day Message in 1998, Queen Elizabeth II declared that: "Sport is a great leveller. The same rules apply to all; there are no age, racial or cultural barriers to participation. Indeed, enthusiasm for a sport brings people together from every background". It might be said that Her Majesty's declaration that sports is "a great leveller" owes much to a functionalist perspective. Sport is seen as fulfilling an

essentially cooperative and integrative function in bringing “people together from every background”. Her Majesty is not alone in subscribing to such sentiments. The members of the UK Sports Council regard sport as fulfilling a functional role in society when they state: “We know that sport can make a positive contribution to national morale, health and the economy. We believe it can enhance community spirit, equality of opportunity, personal development and social integration” (in Hargreaves, 1994: 8). A former Director-General of UNESCO attributes all-encompassing powers to sport:

Whether we consider the asceticism of training, the ideal of balanced personality, the sense of justice implicit in obedience to rules, or the brotherhood of classes, races and peoples evinced on the field and in spectator sport, these major ethical virtues are satisfied in our modern civilization by sport more than by anything else. I know of no social, ideological or intellectual movement able to bring home the gamut of these basic values so directly to the young, to every class and, overcoming political barriers and differences of race and language, to all peoples of the world (in Hargreaves, 1982: 55-6).

Such comments merely reflect widely held views in society that have become virtual truisms. An uncritical acceptance of popular views about sport and society feeds into the functionalist mainstream. Although functionalism’s heyday may be past in academic circles, its legacy remains resilient in the popular imagination, fuelled by regular affirmation in the media.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FUNCTIONALISM

The roots of functionalism are often regarded as originating with the elder statesmen of sociology, Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim. All three saw society as a system. This approach, the “structural” side of sociology, considered structures in society to be more powerful than individual actions, thus allowing an

objective examination of society and placing sociological enquiry on a level with that of the natural sciences. A functionalist approach reckons society to be an integrated whole composed of structures that function to produce consensus and integration rather than conflict and disintegration.

Viewing society as a whole, the early functionalists identified a connection between the essential needs of biological organisms and the essential needs of social organisms. The organic analogy may long have passed from favour, but many functionalists would still argue that societies demand various necessities, which may be termed “system needs” or “functional prerequisites”, in order to function.² The American sociologist, Talcott Parsons, saw four primary areas, under the acronym AGIL, representing adaption, goal attainment, integration and latency (pattern maintenance), as “functional prerequisites” for the orderly continuity of social life.

In struggling with the question of social change, Parsons postulated that the social system maintains a kind of equilibrium or “functional unity”, whereby changes in one area of society lead to compensatory adjustments in other areas. One of the key assumptions of functionalism is that cooperation rather than conflict is the normal characteristic of the social process. Following from this essentially harmonious view of society, Parsons maintained that the analysis of social structure should precede that of social change. Whereas Marxists would tend to see class as central to conflict, functionalists would tend to see conflict arising from the level of values, a result of imperfect socialization. Particularly in America, this approach remained unchallenged during the 1940s and 1950s, a time which also coincided with the emergence of the modernization developmental paradigm.

This harder form of functionalism was softened by Robert Merton, who saw the need to pay greater attention to the empirical data, which clearly identified some societies to be more in conflict than in harmony. One of Merton's major contributions to functionalist theory was to differentiate between "manifest" and "latent" functions. His use of these terms recognized the contradiction between the "manifest" or intended, often considered positive, and the "latent" or unintended, and often negative, consequences of human actions. This recognition of disintegrative as opposed to integrative tendencies in society, allowed Merton to articulate the concept of dysfunction. While attempting to resolve some of the fallacies of functionalism, Merton opened the door to a more general critique of functional sociology.

FUNCTIONALIST VIEWS OF SPORT

The functionalist perspective, particularly the structural-functional approach, has historically been the most utilized in the search for meanings in the field of sport. Functional sociologists deserve credit for bringing to academic attention the fact that sport merits serious study within the context of society. Functionalist literature, with its diversified strands and emphases, coalesces around the central concept of sport's function in society. In short, functionalists argue that sport helps society to function, providing many benefits, from health to happiness, in the process. The established pattern of society remains unquestioned in functionalist analysis, being accepted as normal.

All the elements of orthodox Parsonian structural-functionalism -- adaptation, goal attainment, integration and latency, or pattern maintenance (AGIL) -- can be readily identified in sporting activity. Sport can teach participants how to cope with change in the

external environment, and thus adapt; it can assist in attaining the goals of a social system; it can serve to integrate people into communities and to socialize people into mainstream society, thus maintaining patterns essential to the functioning of society. In this way, sport can take its functionalist place alongside the other prime socializing institutions, such as family, church and school and thus satisfy the functional needs of the social system.

Christopher Stevenson and John Nixon, in a crisp conceptual schema, identify five basic functions of sport in their article, "A Conceptual Scheme of the Social Functions of Sport" (1979). While acknowledging that overlapping will necessarily occur, they isolate the following functions: the "socio-emotional function"; the "socialization function"; the "integrative function"; the "political function" and the "social mobility function" (1979: 16).

The socio-emotional function is further subdivided by Stevenson and Nixon into three aspects, broadly corresponding to catharsis, community and ritualism. Sport can be cathartic in nature, allowing players and spectators to "let off steam" in a relatively harmless way. Larger frustrations can therefore be confined to and released on the field of play, thus providing a societal safety-valve. Sporting events also encourage camaraderie in the crowd, if only for an afternoon, and are associated with a rich array of symbols and rituals. It has long been recognized, most obviously perhaps in the British public school system, that sport can be a very effective means of socialization. Sport has been a powerful medium for the transmission of societal values, from concepts of fair play to principles of submission to authority. Few endeavours in a competitive society reinforce the value of winning as much as sports do, reflecting Vince Lombardi's misquoted

maxim: “Winning is not everything, it is the only thing”.³ The political function of sport in fostering national unity is evident, at least superficially, especially in emerging countries. The social mobility function may also be noted, for sport provides one of the few opportunities for upward mobility for minority and disadvantaged populations in society. While emphasizing a select coterie of sporting successes, the Michael Jordans or Wayne Gretzkys, functionalists tend to downplay the vast majority of nameless “wannabes” who “never approach the level where they can make a living, let alone a fortune, out of sports” (Cashmore, 1996: 97).

But perhaps it is the integrative function that is most pronounced in functional analyses of sport. The example of cricket in the Caribbean has often been advanced as an example of sport’s integrative power, where it may be argued that cricket has provided a potent vehicle for regional integration in uniting disparate islands in a common cause. In fact, cricket may be the single most important signifier of West Indian identity, encapsulated in the local expression, “Cricket is We!”. Such was the game’s integrative appeal that, according to Brian Stoddart, cricket represented “the one social institution in which all classes and colours could meet to promote a common cause and identity” (1988: 636). Clive Lloyd, the most successful captain in Caribbean cricket history, suggests that “when you are captain of the West Indies, you are the most important man in the West Indies” (Gibson, 1999: 50).

One of the more comprehensive case studies of sport from a functionalist perspective is Janet Lever’s examination of Brazilian soccer. The central thesis in Soccer Madness — “*Sport helps complex modern societies cohere*” (1983: 3) — is tempered by her acknowledgement of a basic paradox:

Spectator sport is one mechanism that builds people's consciousness of togetherness. Paradoxically, sport helps bring the whole together by emphasizing the conflict between the parts. Sport is the perfect cultural reflection of our Janus-headed existence; it becomes the arena for conflicting interests while cultivating a shared outlook as the basis for order. Its unique qualities enable sport to accomplish this antilogical feat (1983: 3).

Lever sees the "unifying power of its conflict" (1983: 4) from an essentially functionalist perspective. The integrative function of sport, Lever avers, has transformed Brazilian society: "Soccer has promoted real change in Brazil in several ways. Sport's ability to reinforce societal cleavages while transcending them has provided a stage for the 'integrative revolution', bringing about a more perfect union between diverse groups of people in a single vast land" (1983: 157). Few would deny the soccer madness that affects, especially male, Brazilians, though functionalists would see method, or function, in that madness.

FUNCTION AND DYSFUNCTION

Functionalism, viewed as essentially conservative in approach, has been criticized for being too defensive of the status quo in society and for failing to sufficiently explain the dynamics of change, something that conflict theory might better interpret. Alvin Gouldner suggests:

Clearly the trouble with functionalism is that it is committed to the present society, with all its dilemmas, contradictions, tensions, and indeed, with all its immorality. The trouble with functionalism is, in a way, that it is not really committed to social order in general, but only to preserving its own social order. It is committed to making things work despite wars, inequities, scarcity, and degrading work, rather than finding a way out (in Coakley 1990: 26).

Functionalism may thus be seen as merely an integrative veneer over an often deeply divided and unjust society.

In exaggerating its positive functions, functionalists have often avoided focusing on the negative consequences of sport. While it may appear obvious that sport fulfills a functional role on a number of levels, Stevenson and Nixon, following Merton's reservations, point out that sport can produce not just function, but also dysfunction. Sport may distract attention from pressing socio-economic needs, thus obstructing processes of adaption and goal attainment and maintaining unjust patterns of power. Rather than serving as a vehicle for integration, sport may encourage disintegrative tendencies, perhaps the most obvious example being the culmination of tension between El Salvador and Honduras in their so-called "Soccer War". The obsession with winning at all costs can lead to severe health consequences, exaggerate commercialism and encourage such growing problems as bribery and the use of performance enhancing drugs.

Functional theory may also fail to address the needs of the individual or groups within society as a whole. It may well ignore the possibility that sport privileges some individuals or groups at the expense of ostracizing others, and may also paper over divisions resulting from unpopular and unrepresentative team selection. Finally, functionalists tend to downplay the effects of power relations and underlying tensions within society. The question that John Hargreaves poses: "functional for whom?" (1982: 38) resonates forcefully in critiques of functionalist positions.

While acknowledging that: "Sport's paradoxical ability to divide and integrate serves the ends of both pluralism and unity, but not necessarily equally" (1983: 149), Lever settles firmly on the integrative as opposed to disintegrative side of sport. Countering the Marxist argument that sport is an opiate, she suggests that spectators

would merely manufacture alternative escape routes if soccer were not so readily available (1983: 156), and while she recognizes that soccer feeds into the basic *machismo* of Latin American society, she fails to incisively question soccer's masculinist bias. The integrative function of sport is seen as overwhelming all possible negative side-effects, as she emphasizes sport's unique power, in such events as the World Cup, to bring people together in powerful ways of bonding and belonging (1983: 20).

While sport's integrative function can often be seen, and perhaps overstated, the paradox that Lever describes is all too apparent, and leads into a discussion of conflict theory.

MARXIST THEORIES OF SPORT

Marxist theory shares with functionalism the basic belief that sport maintains the status quo, but rather than sport fulfilling a positive function towards this end, conflict theory sees sport as playing a negative role in the process. Rather than emphasizing the cooperative and integrative functions of sport, Marxist theory stresses conflict and struggle.

With its emphasis on the primacy of material needs, Karl Marx saw in his "materialist conception of history" that the economic structure was the determining factor in understanding society. According to Marx, the split in the ownership of the mode of production between bourgeoisie and proletariat gave rise to capitalism, and would inevitably lead to social change.

Sport, like religion in Marx's original hypothesis, becomes an "opiate of the peoples" in a Marxist sociology of sport. Conflict theory concentrates on the process of

change and focuses on the inequalities sport reinforces in society. The interrelationship between sport and society is regarded as being shaped by the structure of capitalist society. The rise of industrialization promoted commodification and specialization in the work place, leading to repetitive and alienating jobs. Sport provided an outlet from the drudgery of work, deflecting or distracting workers from pressing socio-economic issues. In this way sport serves the interest of those in power, maintaining the status quo by keeping workers' minds off more pressing problems in the workplace, and focusing attention on the trivial pursuits of the sports field. A victory over an arch-rival in the latest soccer match may become far more important to the worker than the continuing injustices of an economic system. Capitalism therefore is not under threat as long as the worker remains relatively satisfied with life, a process that sport can aid and abet. Thus the leaders of capitalist society, the owners of the means of production, are perceived as agents of coercion and control in using sport to manipulate the masses.

Marx suggested that work within the capitalist system produced alienation, with the worker feeling "at home only during his leisure time, whereas at work he feels homeless" (Fromm, 1961: 98). Such a position is largely contradicted within Marxist sport sociology, where leisure or sport is often seen as essentially alienating. From the perspective of many contemporary Marxist sociologists, sport produces alienation and particularly, in an age of growing commercialization and globalization, commodification.

Jean-Marie Brohm, a French Marxist, in a set of critical essays entitled Sport -- A Prison of Measured Time (1976), virulently attacks sport as alienating, emphasizing the constraints rather than freedoms it generates. Brohm argues that sport is a stabilizing factor for capitalism, claiming that capitalism has so moulded it that: "All the values of

the capitalist jungle are played out in sport" (1978: 15). Brohm sees the human body as little more than a machine in the service of capitalism. His critiques of drug-taking and commercialism may strike a responsive chord today, as drug abuse becomes endemic and sport increasingly become part of mega-business ventures, owned and controlled by people with questionable loyalties to sport itself.

The German sociologist Bero Rigauer, in Sport and Work (1981), also sees sport as essentially limiting. Classifying athletes as producers and spectators as consumers, he suggests that: "The athlete's achievement is transformed into a commodity and is exchanged on the market for its equivalent value, expressed in money" (1981: 68). This commodification is alienating, reducing the sportsman or sportswoman to "a kind of machine" (1981: 62), and will only be reversed, in Rigauer's opinion, when the entire capitalist system is replaced by a more humane society.

Paul Hoch, in his scathing polemic, Rip Off the Big Game (1972), supports the contention that sport is an opiate, which he likens to "whiskey" or "desublimated sex" and defines as:

anything that tends to frustrate the solution of social problems by providing individuals with either (1) a temporary high...which takes their minds off the problem for a while but does nothing to deal with it; or (2) a distorted frame of reference or identification which encourages them to look for salvation through patently false channels (1972: 20).

The latter approach may be reflected in the situation of blacks in the United States, where the lure of sporting success, perceived as an exit route from the ghetto, may have deflected black youth from pursuing alternative paths to success in life or targeting the structures which maintain their subordination.

Marxian conflict theory is not without its detractors, many of whom coalesce around a paradox: if sport is indeed so alienating, then why does it remain so popular? John Hargreaves disputes the view that sport is totally negative or essentially alienating and instead, together with other Marxist sympathizers such as Richard Gruneau and John Hoberman, argues for a more nuanced approach towards an area of life which may be more complex than most orthodox Marxists would concede. Hargreaves notes that sport may even provide a basis for unity and enhance workers' solidarity, declaring that "it is precisely this type of solidarity that historically has formed the basis for trenchant opposition to employers" (1986: 110). Sport therefore may be seen from a less rigid Marxist viewpoint than that of Brohm, Rigauer and Hoch. In providing an opportunity for resistance as well as accommodation, it becomes in David Robins' words: "Part mass therapy, part resistance, part mirror image of the dominant political economy" (in Cashmore, 1996: 87).

Such positions reflect the influence of Antonio Gramsci, a key thinker in the evolution of Marxist theory. In being forced to explain why the working classes did not foment rebellion under capitalism as might have been expected, Marx postulated that the ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas (Bottomore and Rubel, 1963: 91-5), further suggesting that those who control the means of material production also control the means of ideological production (Hague et al, 1992: 139). Antonio Gramsci expanded upon Marxist principles to stress cultural hegemony, seeking to explain hegemony through indirect rather than direct political or economic means.⁴ Noting that domination and subordination are seldom total, he explained how one class might control another without recourse to force, and how shared cultural values might transcend

economic inequalities. Hegemony can therefore be maintained at the level of ideas, but ideas can also have a life of their own.

Cricket in the West Indies provides a salient example of such dialectical processes at work in sport. If cricket, at least in the eyes of the British colonial authorities, had initially made the blacks better colonial subjects, it had also suggested a path of resistance to them. Joseph Arbena writes: "The resulting paradox is that, if sport was a mechanism for reinforcing formal or informal colonial relationships, it would eventually become one of various means by which the subjects turned the tables on their masters" (1993: 152). As black prowess on the field of play became impossible to ignore, cricket became a counter-hegemonic vehicle of "resistance and assertion, which mirrored an entire people coming into their own" (Searle, 1990: 36). Cricket had become part of a larger struggle -- in C.L.R. James' opinion, more than a game (1963). Cricket and struggle have proved inseparable in the Caribbean.

Marxist theories of sport, especially those of the structural variety, have repeatedly been criticized for being too economistically deterministic. Many would argue that the tendency of Marxists to cast human beings, as Ellis Cashmore puts it, in the role of "passive dopes, pushed around by factors beyond their control" (1996: 86) is too simplistic.⁵ Humans are not so easily manipulated. In seeing sport as merely a reflection of capitalism, Marxist theory fails to adequately acknowledge the other factors in society impinging on such a narrowly determinist framework, such as race, religion, age and gender.

In stressing alienation, Marxist theory tends to ignore the side of sport that can be exciting and meaningful. In short, sport can be personally fulfilling. This omission may

partly be caused by a concentration on élite sport to the exclusion of mass participation sport, the latter often driven more by reasons of pleasure and recreation than by the capitalist imperatives so obvious in élite level sport.

Finally, Jay Coakley argues that research does not support the “opiate” hypothesis (1990: 29). He suggests that it is often economically successful people who are the most involved in sport, while those from the lowest strata in society are less involved, even though they may be the most alienated and desperately in need of excitement in their monotonous lives.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

In addition to functionalist and conflict interpretations, other sociological theories have some explanatory power with regard to sport and its place in society. I will examine three: symbolic interactionism, figurational and feminist theory.

Symbolic interactionism stands in marked contrast and as a critical response to Marxism and particularly functionalism, which both focus on society as a system. It focuses instead on individuals, and the meanings that individuals give to their surroundings. Rather than taking a macro view of the system, the symbolic interactionist reduces the focus of analysis to the individual, and concentrates from the micro perspective on how individuals make sense of their world.

In the sporting context, symbolic interactionism “examines and defines sports through the senses and emotions of the participants” (Vogler and Schwartz, 1993: 9), placing great importance on the personal ecstasy or agony of victory or defeat, which will profoundly shape the individual’s view of and relation to sports.

Critics would point out that symbolic interactionism, with its focus on the individual, fails to account for how societal influence and pressure molds individuals. Interactionists would contend that it is only in interaction with others that the self is developed, and that each individual represents a microcosm of society.

FIGURATIONAL SOCIOLOGY

Figurational sociology, pioneered by Norbert Elias and championed by Eric Dunning, who has developed Elias' sociological principles with particular reference to the sociology of sport, revolves around the concept of figuration. Rather than concentrating on the individual divorced from his social milieu, and reacting against the separation of individual and society in both micro and macro sociological perspectives, figurational sociology stresses the fact that human beings live in a social context, and are integral parts of networks of interdependent social relationships, or figurations. These networks are "both global in scope and historically rooted" (Murphy, 1997: 97). Figurationalists argue that the conventional dichotomies that exist between micro and macro sociological perspectives, as well as between theories of harmony and conflict, are largely resolved within this comparatively recent sociological paradigm.

While this interdependent relationship may be seen as essentially cooperative or functional, in reality it may also be conflictual, leading figurational sociology to define these processes of interdependency in terms of power relationships. These "power ratios" tend not to be equal, for even the most powerful of individuals or groups are dependent on other less powerful individuals or groups and are constrained within specific figurations of interdependency.⁶

Figuralists use the term “process” to reflect the fact that human relationships or figurations are never static, but always dynamic and in process. Therefore figural sociology is also termed process sociology, enabling this paradigm to have particular explanatory power regarding the development of various sporting forms.

Intimately involved with, but not dependent upon, the figural perspective was Elias’ concept of the civilizing process, which he identified as taking place in Europe between the Middle Ages and the twentieth century. In his vast work, The Civilizing Process (1978, 1982), Elias saw civilizing trends as resulting in an ongoing, if unplanned, transformation in the direction of greater civilization, marking the end result of a transition from a situation where sport was intrinsically linked with preparation for war to one where sport could function as a pleasurable and cathartic end in itself.⁷ Sport, therefore, in a process Elias called “sportization”, became central in the “quest for excitement” (Elias and Dunning, 1986) that is increasingly necessary in the arid landscape of modern life. According to Elias, this civilizing trend, with occasional reverses, is in continual process. But Elias’ “civilizing process” seems suspiciously like yet another “variant or mutation” of the modernization paradigm. More disturbing are the implications of a civilizing process being associated with the western perception of an uncivilized and underdeveloped world. For, in spite of protestations to the contrary from figuralists, it is difficult to use terms such as “the civilizing process” without an almost automatic value judgement, if not in the speaker, then in the hearer.

Elias’ “grand project” of seeking to link the development of modern sport with the civilizing transformation of the past several centuries represents, in Ellis Cashmore’s opinion, “a hugely ambitious attempt to illuminate the nature and purpose of modern

sport” (1996: 83). While that linkage may be debated and subject to accusations of oversimplification, perhaps Elias and Dunning’s greatest contributions have been to suggest that individuals can never be understood adequately outside their social and historical context. Individuals are inextricably linked in webs of complex figurations within society. Sport is no longer an independent “other”, but an interdependent part of society. The fact that all sports to a greater or lesser degree are associated with figurations, whether between contestants, between teams, or amongst players and spectators, has given a certain resonance to the figurational theory of sport.

FEMINIST THEORIES

Allen Guttman, surveying the bibliography surrounding women and sport in his book, Women’s Sports: A History, suggests that: “The history of women’s sports is a badly underdeveloped field” (1991: 317). Few would disagree with him, though a growing literature exists in the field of feminist sports studies, reflecting a progression in the feminist discourse from a concentration on “women in sport” to “gender relations and sport”. A common complaint of feminists is that much of an uncertain literature has traditionally reflected the white, male and middle-class dominance of sport. Feminist intervention has led to the development of feminist theories of sport, which Jennifer Hargreaves clearly outlines in her book Sporting Females (1994).

Liberal feminism emphasizes equal opportunity for women in sport, seeking to integrate women more fully into what has historically been a male sporting milieu. Culture, rather than nature, is seen as the barrier to women’s participation in sport. Regarding liberal feminism, the most popular of the feminist approaches, Hargreaves

warns that: "Far from challenging male sports, liberalism endorses them" (1994: 29). A separatist position argues that since sports are male controlled and dominated, it is necessary for women to delink themselves from male sporting forms with a view to playing and controlling "women only" sports and even establishing sporting forms defined by and for women. The separatist position has many similarities with radical feminism, which emphasizes patriarchy as the basic form of oppression. Along with analyzing these positions further it may be helpful to consider how the two main sociological theories explain the position of women in sport.

A functionalist might suggest that it is hard to argue with the facts -- women are playing sport as never before, not only in the developed world, where technology and changing lifestyles have eased barriers to participation, but also in the Third World, where sport is often considered to have aided in the liberalization of traditional patriarchal structures.

But functionalists may well be exaggerating the progress made in women's involvement in sport. While integration may appear well advanced on the surface, a closer inspection, particularly in the areas of administration, coaching and management, reveals a much greater proportional discrepancy. In these areas women, like blacks, have made little impression, and remain markedly underrepresented. Women are thus integrated into a male sporting milieu, rather than men and women being accepted as equals in a gender-neutral sporting environment. In emphasizing the integrative function of sport, it may be argued that increasing female involvement in sport has diverted attention away from fundamental imbalances of power that enshrine male control.

Therefore, John Hargreaves' question: "Functional for whom?" (1982: 38) is also particularly vital in the case of women. Sport retains a strong masculine identity, and functionalism can be critiqued for defending an essentially male status quo, in the process marginalizing women. This approach reflects, in Jennifer Hargreaves' opinion, "social engineering of a piecemeal kind" (1994: 10), a position closer to liberal feminism, rather than an assault on the male-dominated system itself, advocated by radical feminism. Functionalists would emphasize the biological differences between men and women rather than concentrate on less obvious relationships of power.

Functionalists may also be criticized for failing to distinguish between the varied categories of women encompassed within the broad category delineated by the word "women". Functionalism may gloss over the differences between women, and for that matter different groups of men as well, failing to adequately address the situations of minorities. Women tend to be grouped into one amorphous category in spite of their multicultural backgrounds. Black and Muslim women can easily be subsumed into a general category of women, thus obscuring the particular challenges that minority groups face. Similarly, inadequate attention may be given to class divisions. A functional analysis, in failing to acknowledge the differences among women themselves, may be too limiting to adequately interpret the marginalization of women in sport.

It is important to understand that Marxist approaches to women do not constitute a unified theory, though a broad consensus would exist in seeing capitalism itself as the reason for women's oppression. A number of Marxist sociologists of sport would suggest that sport, a contemporary "opiate of the peoples", produces alienation and commodification. Marxists would identify the exploitation of women and female

sexuality as part of that commodification. While more women than men would no doubt regard sport as personally alienating, such an approach fails to acknowledge the liberating influences that women have experienced through participation in sport. Even in a capitalist society, many women would attest to the fact that sport can be exciting and personally fulfilling, allowing them to experience their bodies in a dynamic way.

Marxists would also see sport as reflecting and reinforcing the chauvinism and sexism representative of “the quintessential ideology in capitalist society” (Hargreaves, 1982: 41-2). Marxists would further suggest that gender equality cannot exist within the confines of a capitalist system. In the West, most women involved in sport, whether as players or spectators, are of middle-class background, an imbalance which is even more noticeable in the administrative, political and academic areas. This class imbalance is further exacerbated in the Third World, where lower class women are to a large degree excluded from the world of sport.

While functional theorists stress the cooperative and integrative aspects of sport, approximating more closely the position held by liberal feminists, conflict theorists share with radical feminists an appreciation that oppression is at the heart of gender relations. However, they would disagree as to the basic cause; Marxists seeing class oppression rather than sexual oppression as the determining factor. While Marxists would suggest that class exploitation cannot be eradicated without dismantling the capitalist system, radical feminists might question whether the overthrow of capitalism would change the basic structures of patriarchal power, arguing that patriarchy, rather than capitalism, is the primary reason for women’s oppression.⁸

Marxist theory fails to adequately incorporate gender into its analysis. As far as many feminists are concerned, Marxist theory simply has too narrow a focus. It also does not take into account the opportunities for women's resistance provided by sport, for it may be argued that sport has fulfilled a significant role in changing societal attitudes regarding the abilities and capacities of women.

Sport is an area of much greater complexity and contradiction than many Marxist theorists admit. In this context, Gramscian hegemony theorists acknowledge that sports can be a contested cultural site of both accommodation and resistance. While shedding light on these dialectical processes, many Gramscian theorists may not go far enough in moving beyond economic and cultural causal explanations to include other areas of analysis, including gender.

Finally, in common with most theoretical approaches outside of feminism itself, most Marxist scholarship has been produced by males and has been directed toward male sports. Such a perspective informs Jennifer Hargreaves' main critique of Marxism: "The crux of feminist criticisms of all varieties of Marxism is that sexual categories are not intrinsic to Marxist concepts, but have only been appended to them" (1994: 39).

SPORT AND MASCULINITIES

Gender is an inclusive term, encompassing both men and women. Feminist scholarship has helped to highlight the socio-cultural, rather than biological, construction of what are considered appropriate "feminine" or "masculine" behaviours. Such behaviours are not fixed, but vary according to time and place (Foucault, 1976; Weeks, 1986).

A growing literature exists on the question of masculinity in sport. Sport, long identified with heterosexual masculinity in patriarchal societies, has not been untouched by changing gender roles, orientations and identities in society, and may even be one of the more visible sites where struggles toward gender realignments are taking place. Defining sports as “an arena of masculinity” (1990), Brian Pronger argues that “homosexuality is an issue in our society because it undermines, in a paradoxical way, the most important myth of our culture, the myth of gender. This is a myth upon which all our human relations are based” (1998: 161). Noting how sports reinforce the sexual division of labour, leading to the exploitation and repression of both sexes, Bruce Kidd suggests that sports should be redesigned and transformed (1987). Michael Messner and Donald Sabo suggest that the task is nothing short of “rethinking masculinity” (1994), for historically any departure from accepted norms of masculinity or femininity within the world of sports have been labelled as deviant.

HYPOTHESES CONCERNING MYSA

In the concluding section of this chapter, I intend to briefly propose several hypotheses that would result from an application of the theories of sport described above to the case study that informs this thesis. For MYSA to be viewed as functionalist in orientation would require an acceptance of the essentially cooperative rather than conflictual nature of sport. Following Stevenson and Nixon’s schema, MYSA would be seen as providing cathartic relief from the dulling effects of poverty and underprivilege, as well as encouraging community responsibility, through its environmental and health

programmes. It would be viewed as emphasizing the development of character, in order to benefit its members in wider society and in the broader “game of life”. It would certainly seek to promote integration in a culturally diverse community, in the process transcending ethnic, economic, generational and gender gaps. Political aims of local and national unity could also be encouraged through mobilization. MYSA’s promotion of elite sports, as in the establishment of a professional soccer team, and efforts at vocational training, as in the photography project, would be regarded as providing opportunities for social mobility. The evidence so far presented might provide a compelling argument to suggest that MYSA is unabashedly functionalist in outlook, fundamentally antithetical to the Marxist approach.

Far from being alienating or commodifying, as some Marxists suggest, sport is presented within the MYSA project as being exciting, fulfilling and liberating. However, the Marxist critique may raise incisive questions. Is attention to soccer deflecting attention from the socio-economic disaster that is Mathare? To what extent – if at all -- does MYSA contain the seeds of a sustained challenge to unjust social structures? Or is it merely a sophisticated means of social control, a part of the capitalist imperative? In presenting soccer as an opportunity for social mobility, has MYSA fallen into the trap, so prevalent amongst the black population of inner-city America, of promoting sport as the most promising exit route from the slum? A Marxist position would suggest that sport is fundamentally alienating and trivializing -- a diversion from socio-economic realities.

Gramscian hegemony theorists might suggest that sport may not only be a vehicle for accommodation or control, but might also prove to be a site of resistance. When viewed through a Gramscian lens, the function of control may be readily identified in the

MYSA initiative, though it is conceivable that sport may also encourage ideas of counter-hegemonic resistance in the future. Gramscians might also point out that it is in the interest of the powerful to infer that the status quo is natural, thus maintaining their hegemony through culture rather than coercion. Similar dynamics may be identifiable within MYSA.

Rather than concentrating on a macro perspective emphasizing society as a whole, as both functionalism and Marxism attempt, symbolic interactionists would limit their analyses to the micro level and seek to understand society from the inside out. A symbolic interactionist would submit that the interaction of the individual member of MYSA with others would develop his or her identity. That identity would be molded and shaped over time not just by family members, friends and peers but also, in the sporting context, by team members, coaches and officials.

From a figurational perspective, it would be suggested that it is impossible to fully understand MYSA outside of an appreciation of the historical and social context of Mathare, and indeed of Kenya. Like Marxism, figurational sociology would seek to draw attention to fundamental imbalances of power, but unlike Marxist theories, would attempt to widen the analysis beyond mere class or economic imbalances, to include such issues as race and gender. Figuralists would concentrate on the interdependent figurations encompassing MYSA.

Jennifer Hargreaves sees the choices open to sports feminists as being threefold:

1. co-option into a male sphere of activity
2. a separatist all-female strategy
3. a co-operative venture with men for qualitatively new models in which differences between the sexes would be unimportant (1994: 40).

In reference to the case study being examined, I would hypothesize that the involvement of women in MYSA's sporting activities fits into Hargreaves' first category. But in its attempts to promote a greater awareness and appreciation of gender roles, perhaps the MYSA initiative can fulfil the mandate of bell hooks that "men have a tremendous contribution to make to feminist struggle in the area of exposing, confronting, opposing, and transforming the sexism of their male peers" (in Hargreaves, 1994: 39), and thus advance Hargreaves' third option. The liberal feminist would see MYSA clearly reflecting a functionalist orientation, where women fit into existing structures and equalize gender imbalances, while the radical feminist would prefer MYSA, in resisting cooptation into a man's world, to directly challenge the patriarchal system itself. While the MYSA initiative hardly reflects a feminist approach per se, it is nevertheless remarkable in its transformative approach to gender relations within the aggressively male sub-culture of a slum like Mathare. Various studies have shown that the roots of soccer hooliganism in Britain are contained within the basic social structure that reinforces and rewards a flawed concept of "aggressive masculinity" within a lower class/inner city culture (Elias and Dunning, 1986). For MYSA to even attempt any gender realignment within Mathare is courageous indeed. My research regarding MYSA is primarily focused on gender in the sense of issues involving women's participation in sport and society, rather than changing concepts of masculinities and femininities.

In investigating whether sport can aid in the process of human development, this thesis questions whether human development can be advanced within a functional perspective of sport or whether an alternative approach might be better able to "enlarge people's choices". Because of the undoubted functionalist orientation apparent in the case

study, this thesis will seek to test functionalism's explanatory adequacy with regard to MYSA. In recognizing the flawed nature of functional analysis, and while sympathizing with aspects of the Marxist position, particularly its Gramscian variant, this thesis also acknowledges the influence of a figurational sociological perspective.

ENDNOTES

1. However, there may be more consensus between the approaches than is sometimes admitted by their adherents themselves. As Jarvie and Maguire acknowledge: "It is our belief that the critique and counter-critique which has plagued the sociology of sport and leisure over the last decade has failed to recognize the cultural diversity and common ground which does in fact exist between different traditions of social thought" (1994: 3).
2. Much debate exists regarding the parameters and definitions of these "functional prerequisites" which involve such needs as adaption, socialization, conformity, reproduction, belief systems, leadership and the family.
3. Apparently, Lombardi said that winning "is not everything, but *trying* to win is" (in Cashmore, 1996: 19).
4. Using human sexuality as an example, John Hargreaves suggests that "instead of repression we have control by stimulation" (1986: 14).
5. As Hargreaves puts it, regarding people as "passive dupes...ignores their capacity to resist control and stamp sports with their own culture" (1986: 3).
6. Elias emphasized a relational conception of power, using the graphic image of a global chain gang, where interdependence is a given and each individual's view is limited as a result of their narrow location within the system (1967).
7. Elias identified a process where manners, behaviour and etiquette became more evident as social pressure encouraged more self-control. This growing internalization of self-constraint led to a decrease not only in violence on the field of play, but also growing spectator revulsion towards an excessive dimension of violence in sport.
8. They might point to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as examples, submitting that Marxism insufficiently addresses the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy.

CHAPTER THREE

SPORT IN THE SOUTH: AN OVERVIEW

In this chapter, I intend to provide an overview of the development, purposes and functions of sport in the South. I will focus primarily on African sport, with particular attention to the Kenyan example. I will examine sport's colonial genesis and diffusion, consider its current justification politically, economically and socially, and explore the gender dimensions involved, in order to provide historical background and contemporary context to the case study which will be introduced in Chapter Four.

Africa is still deeply affected by its colonial legacy, complicated in some cases by the Cold War rivalry of the post-war years, while the more recent phenomenon of globalization has thrown up new challenges and threatens new dependencies. The resilient belief that sport remains underdeveloped in the South may well be countered by the dominance at various times of Brazil in soccer, the West Indies at cricket, Pakistan in squash and Indonesia at badminton. African leaders have long assumed that sport embodies the potential to advance national integration and international recognition. Sport has also been seen to hold health and socio-economic benefits, as well as the potential to challenge some of the gender stereotypes that have long afflicted African women. Finally, a distinction needs to be made between élite and mass sport in the South, as the spectre of globalization supposedly shrinks the world into a global village. But first a detour into history is necessary in order to understand the context and the manner in which modern, predominantly British, sport forms became established in the countries of the South.

TRADITIONAL AND MODERN SPORT

While sport was well established in Greek and Roman times, the rise of modern sports occurred in tandem with the Industrial Revolution in Britain. The reinvention of the workplace together with the rapid growth in transportation led to major changes in the way British society was organized that facilitated the development and diffusion of modern sport forms. Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby School, is often credited, more romantically than realistically, with the transformation of sport from a crude exertion to a cultured exercise. During the second half of the nineteenth century, coincidentally the golden age of imperial expansion, sport became a means, more than ever before, for the transmission of values, the shaping of character and the formation of identity. Sport and imperialism became inextricably linked.

An appreciation of the legacy of colonialism is essential for an understanding of the development of modern African sport forms, especially in the former British colonies. Most African nations have shared in the colonial experience, and sport remains one of the enduring legacies of the colonial era. The diffusion of British sport forms to the world was an intrinsic part of the colonial imperative, and while “the history of all cultures is the history of cultural borrowings” (Guttmann, 1994: 184), the colonial export of sport to British Africa was all in one direction. The golden age of sporting diffusion coincided with the scramble for Africa in the late nineteenth century. As C.L.R. James noted in his cricketer classic, Beyond a Boundary, British sporting forms, most notably soccer, “spread as nothing international had ever spread for centuries before” (1963: 151). This remarkable congruence between imperial expansion and sporting extension may have

appeared to the sporting evangelist as evidence of destiny: “From the British Isles, modern sports went forth to conquer the world” (Guttmann, 1994: 2).

But what sporting forms did the colonialists find in Africa? Did any activity correspond to what is now understood by the Western concept and practice of sport? What is “sport” in the African context? Many questions remain to be answered about the history of sport in Africa. It is reasonable to assume that African society differed little historically from other societies in viewing physical activities which encouraged health, strength, endurance, dexterity and bravery as invaluable preparation for militaristic purposes.¹

John Blacking describes African involvement in various activities prevalent in pre-colonial societies: “Physical activities that have been variously described by ethnographers as ‘play’, ‘games’, ‘sports’, ‘pastimes’, ‘physical education’, ‘recreations’, and ‘dances’ were generally classed together as extensions of human aesthetic and ludic capabilities...” (1987: 3). Gambling in traditional Africa has been described as “the biggest game of all” (Reefe, 1987). Hunting, which if defined as sport might challenge gambling’s preeminence, is assumed from earliest antiquity. At what point the line is drawn between work and sport may be more problematic in practice, as the hunter experienced the thrill of the chase, and undoubtedly on occasion killed for sport rather than for sheer necessity. Certainly such “sport” was considered a male preserve.

In the Kenyan context, Ken Hardman and Joseph Nteere suggest that: “Each ethnic group pursued its own rituals of a physical or sporting nature” (1994: 418). Bale and Sang comprehensively chronicle the antecedents of Kenyan sport,² noting that the movement cultures of pre-modern Kenya were not bureaucratised, standardised or subject

to record orientation (1996: 47-68). Recreational challenge undoubtedly played a large part in the lives of youth, as physical ability in a challenging environment proved essential for survival and success. Down by the lake, the Luo organized boat races on Lake Victoria; on the plains the killing of a lion was integral in the initiation rituals of the Maasai while in the thin air of the highlands herdboys laid the basis for the future formidable Kenyan distance running machine (Hardman and Nteere, 1994: 418). Jomo Kenyatta, in Facing Mount Kenya, paints a universally familiar picture of childhood:

The children do most things in imitation of their elders and illustrate in striking way the theory that play is anticipatory of adult life. Their games are, in fact, nothing more or less than a rehearsal prior to the performance of the activities which are the serious business of all the members of the Gikuyu tribe. The little boys indulge in fighting like big boys. Running and wrestling are very common, and the best performer in these activities is marked out for leadership (1961: 101).

Unfortunately, far too little is known of what may constitute a rich history of traditional sport forms. André Odendaal recognizes that, at least in the South African context, “the myth has arisen that blacks have no real sports history” (1988: 193). Such a myth is not restricted to the South African context, but remains only too applicable to the whole continent, and limits any perspective other than the dominant colonial account. Traditional African sporting forms became sidelined, negated and, at times, ruthlessly displaced by the “civilizing” tide of colonialism.

SPORTING EDUCATION AND MUSCULAR CHRISTIANITY

The Duke of Wellington’s contention, so imbued in British historical mythology that the Battle of Waterloo was won “on the playing fields of Eton” is expressed in the well-known line of Sir Henry Newbolt’s poem, “Play up! Play up! And play the game!”

(in Kirk-Greene, 1987: 82). In seeking to transfer Tom Brown from England to Empire, the colonial vision embraced a unique opportunity for the diffusion not so much of soccer and cricket as of civilization and character. Eton's playing fields were recreated on a thousand dustier or muddier pitches from Enugu to Embu, from Zanzibar to Zomba. John Milton's belief that "God is English" led him to identify what would become the guiding imperial imperative: "Let not England forget her precedence of teaching nations how to live" (Perkin, 1989: 145). Francis Duckworth articulated English pride in more than just sporting heritage: "It's in football and cricket and rowing that Englishmen get that splendid moral training which no other nation gets...None of them get that magnificent sporting instinct which is the real foundation of our great empire" (in Mangan, 1987: 138). The British educational system, as exported to the colonies, placed a much greater emphasis on sports than the systems of the other European colonizing powers. Baron de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic Games, had remarked that: "the role played by sport is what appears most worthy of notice in English education" (Holt, 1992: 1).

Character formation was the *raison d'être* of public school education, whose teachers saw sport as one of the principal mediums for teaching the lessons of life. It was only natural therefore that sports should become an indivisible part of the imperial educational curriculum, and the public school system, the production line for colonial administrators, its model. But in the early colonial days, the only black children who would have found themselves influenced by this public school ethos would have been the children of an emerging, yet still inconsequential, élite.

Christianity was also intrinsically enmeshed in the educational system, with many a master seeing conversion as "the outright objective" (Mangan, 1987: 145). "Muscular

Christianity” was seen as the ideal means of producing the ideal man strong in body and spirit, modelled on the Ideal Man of the Gospels (Tyndale-Biscoe, 1920: 13). But as Mangan points out, the African was not as ready to accept the “Muscular Christian” as the concept of “the educated man” (1987: 162). With its moral emphasis, athletic education was not seen as nearly so efficacious as the purely academic inheritance being offered by the schools. Academic learning was seen as a gift to be grasped with both hands, as a guarantee of future, in particular economic, success. Ngugi wa Thiong’o is perceptive in his remark that: “Few wanted to live the white man’s way, but all wanted this thing, this magic” (1965: 68). Mangan focuses on the reasons behind the rejection of the “games ethic”:

The Africans’ redefinition of educational priorities was clearly a manifestation of anti-imperialist self-assertion. The rejection of the central significance of the games ethic in the educational process was an act at one and the same time of pragmatism and principle; it represented materialism and nationalism...There was no currency, occupational or political, in kicking footballs and swinging cricket bats (1987: 164-5).

Academics attracted while athletics distracted. “In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the English public schoolboy escaped from the classroom; the Africa (sic) ‘public’ schoolboy escaped into it. His *toga virilis* (gown of manhood) was not the football strip but the graduate gown” (Mangan, 1987: 165). Africans never generally identified with Tom Brown, as they generally did not identify with Empire, leaving “the muscular Christian schoolmaster with his facile metaphors and similes of the playing fields...increasingly out of step” (Mangan, 1987: 165). Looking back, it is perhaps surprising how little influence the colonial administrators had on the general development of sports in Africa. This was not so everywhere – particularly in India, where cricket was

to assume an almost religious fanaticism and in the West Indies, where the game became part of the struggle against the burden of empire. Soccer took root in Africa, but not to the same extent as in Latin America.

Ali Mazrui draws attention to processes other than British imperialism at work. Noting that sport is “always linked to broader cultural and sociological forces”, he suggests that, “underlying all these factors is Africa’s triple heritage of cultures. Indigenous traditions, Islamic ways, and Western practices have worked in tandem to shape the history of sport in Africa” (1987: 217). He points out that Islamic influence on sport has often been “negative, ambiguous at best” (1987: 219), and notes that school sports are not encouraged as they are in the Christian system. He does suggest however that “soccer, on the other hand, is largely *culture-neutral*” (1987: 219).

“Muscular Christianity” was driven by the concept of character building. Missionary activity was also influenced by the need to replace traditional activities, such as dancing, with supposedly more character-building imperial sports. In many cases, sport and Church were seen as mutually supportive, for sport was not perceived so much as enjoyable relaxation as moral reinforcement.

Sporting evangelists proclaimed their gospel to every corner of Empire. The efforts of Cecil Earle Tyndale-Biscoe, perhaps the most eccentric exponent of “muscular Christianity”, became the stuff of legend. Obsessed with the idea of “putting backbone into jellyfish”, his exploits in the service of “Muscular Christianity” are recorded in his appositely titled book, Character Building in Kashmir (1920). He spared no effort in using sport to inculcate character in his often resistant pupils. Perhaps the most notorious example involves his determination to make high-caste Hindu boys learn soccer. Armed

with sticks, he and his teachers forced their unwilling wards to kick a leather football against their religious principles, in spite of ingenious stratagems by the boys to frustrate them, from deflating the ball with pins to the practice of witchcraft. Sporting prowess was also combined with active service to the community, as his boys brought street cleaning, fire-fighting and life-saving skills to the local Srinagar community. Some parallels with MYSA appear inescapable. Tyndale-Biscoe even encouraged schoolboys to model fair play in the role of referees and play a service role in slum communities.

But others recognized the role of a more secular influence in the promotion of sporting activity. Social Darwinism, which came to hold considerable weight in later Victorian England, was exported to the colonies as part and parcel of a secular sporting gospel. Herbert Spencer's sociological espousal of evolution was attracting attention both at home and abroad. David Brown, using a Canadian case study, suggests that: "Darwinism and Christianity formed a contradictory, yet effective, alliance, in both ideal and practice, within the confines of the upper-class schools of Victorian and Edwardian Canada" (Brown, 1988: 218). Brown sees this syncretic mix of muscular Christianity and Social Darwinism as producing in the private schoolboy "a paragon of 'virtue and manhood' ...(that was) more than the embodiment of Christian manliness. He was a 'Spartan of the West'" (Brown, 1988: 227). Toughness was also indispensable in the Tropics.

THE BLUES AND THE BLACKS

Sporting record and prowess played a disproportionate role in the selection of colonial officials,³ at least prior to the 1950s, when the balance between brain and brawn

finally began to turn in favour of the former in the selection of suitable candidates (Kirk-Greene, 1987: 110). Sporting captaincy, in particular, was considered as an excellent qualification for colonial service.

Few colonial officials would have subscribed to the somewhat stereotypical belief that athleticism was the sole requirement of a successful colonial servant. The crucial requirement was “character”. Anthony Kirk-Greene’s recipe for colonial service consists of “some brain, some brawn, and lots of breeding. The balance between (sic) the first two was flexible, often tilted in favor of the second. As for the third, for good or bad, ‘class’ was virtually a qualification in itself” (1987: 109). “Class” and “character” were considered mutually inclusive, but those without the advantage of prime pedigree could certainly develop character through sporting involvement. Character and leadership, developed so effectively on the playing field, empowered the imperial administrator. Most importantly, the governing principle of Empire -- submission to authority -- was instilled into the player of sports, as well as a long list of characteristics -- from decency to decisiveness, from reliability to resilience -- for the challenging and demanding burdens of Empire. Such qualities were ideally, if not exclusively, developed on the playing field. The Sudan Political Service went even further than the Colonial Office in taking to the extreme the concept of sporting qualification for service, so much so that Sudan gained the colourful reputation of being “The Land of Blacks Ruled by Blues” (Holt, 1992: 206), giving rise to the quip that the administrators in the Sudan had “more blues than brains”.⁴

On a more practical level, the contribution of sports to general health was also not without importance in regions of the world that were to prove the “white man’s grave”.

Health may have been a welcome by-product, if not the central defining motive in Kipling's injunction in his poem "The White Man's Burden" to "send forth the best ye breed" (in Kirk-Greene, 1987: 86). The colonial servant was healthy in mind and body (*mens sana in corpore sano*), manly and, at times, not without guile. The latter requirement may have been refined on sticky wickets at Eton or Harrow. For the colonial servant, there were more pragmatic reasons for the popularity of sports in the imperial endeavour. To relieve the boredom of colonial outposts and to recreate a Little England in the midst of the African plain, many a colonial administrator turned to one of the formative influences in his life -- sport. For soldiers, who had facilitated sporting diffusion in many a country, sport provided a chance to "let off steam", and release the "tensions that arose in crowded barrackrooms" (Clayton, 1987: 115).

Kirk-Greene is careful not to overemphasize the athletic component in the athletic/colonial linkage: "Athletic excellence in the colonial administrator was at most a means to an end, never an end in itself. It was held to make the Briton a better administrator; it did not seek to make the African a better athlete" (1987: 108). It was undoubtedly more important in his relations with his colonial colleagues than with his imperial subjects. This helps to explain what otherwise should be seen as a general failure in the transmission of the sports ethos to Africans. For it was not the game as such that was at the centre of the imperial imperative, but rather the more important by-product of character in the game of life. Character, developed on football pitch and village green, would prepare the colonial administrator for successful service on foreign fields.

SPORTING IMPERIALISM

The diffusion of modern sport forms to Africa has at times attracted simplistic explanations. One German account records that Africans took up soccer because of their fascination with “everything that is round and can bounce” (in Guttman, 1994: 172). But more sinister explanations are more popular than their simplistic cousins. Political and economic influences by themselves are inadequate to explain the exponential growth of sports in the colonial world. Control, in the form of cultural imperialism, has been a more resilient explanation. John Hargreaves argues that “culture cannot be so neatly cut adrift from work or politics”, identifying a parallel with an earlier ideology of “rational recreation” -- a middle-class movement concerned with planning other people’s cultural pursuits in order to ensure they got up to no radical mischief (1982: 38-39). Certainly, sport was one way of keeping the native in his place. A study of British sport in the Victorian age clearly underlines the lofty values and purposes associated with sport, and while some have seen control as the primary *raison d’être* for the diffusion of colonial sport, kinder observers, such as Guttman (1994), have seen worthier motives. “Muscular Christianity” too played its role, for as Guttman argues, “the urge to bring the heathen to Christ can motivate as powerfully as the desire to sell them Coca-Cola” (1994: 177).

But the colonized have often not only adopted the sports of their colonizers, but also excelled at them, weakening the hegemonic aspect of the cultural imperialism thesis. As Jay and Joan Mandle recognize, “What is important is not where a cultural form originated but what happens to it upon arrival” (1988: 20). Sport, once established, often spoke of resistance as much as accommodation, as in the cases of baseball in the

Dominican Republic (Klein, 1989) and cricket in the West Indies (James, 1963). In the South African case, the African National Congress and its allies recognized the power of sport as a vehicle of resistance in the struggle against apartheid.

In the last few decades, American sports forms have vied for supremacy, so far unsuccessfully in Commonwealth areas, against their older established predecessors. “Can the diffusion of modern sports from Europe and the US to the rest of the world be considered a form of cultural imperialism?” (Guttmann, 1994: 6). In answering one of the central questions in his book, Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism, Guttmann reaches a compromise conclusion, “neither crediting the ‘colonialists’ with diabolical powers nor denying all agency to the ‘colonized’” (1994: 179).

Sport, originally the province of the privileged imperialist, gradually came to be seen as a useful tool for the subject peoples: “What began as manly exercise for a master race slowly came to be a kind of common language superficially obscuring divisions of ethnicity, religion, and economic interest” (Holt, 1992: 203). More and more élite Africans came to be absorbed in sport, underlining, in Richard Holt’s opinion, “the insidious influence of British culture on the educated few” (1992: 220). The idea of promoting sport for the betterment of subject peoples had become popular around the turn of the century, though, as Holt points out, “it was never systematically carried out” (1992: 218). But school sport and physical education programmes had been established, and, with their promise of a healthier, happier and more reliable future workforce, would assume ever greater importance as the century progressed and independence beckoned.

What was missing in terms of technical facilities and teaching expertise was often made up for in talent and exuberance.

In Kenya, as in much of Africa, opportunities for indigenous sportsmen remained undeveloped, while those for sportswomen were virtually nonexistent. Outside of the educational system, it was only in the security forces that some organized opportunity was available for the African, and soldiers came to be among the first colonially recognized indigenous sportsmen. While sports clubs were divided on colour lines between immigrants of European and Asian extraction, the African was often excluded from the very sports to which he had been introduced at school. Exceptions included athletics, boxing and football, with their minimal equipment requirements, but general opportunity lagged far behind that available to the privileged in the colonial establishment.⁵

SPORT AND POST-INDEPENDENCE POLITICS

The diffusion of sports in the colonial era, enmeshed as it was in the evolution of Empire, had obvious political overtones. It is hard to deny a connection between sport and politics. From the manipulation of the modern Olympic Games to the propaganda value of sports in former communist countries, examples abound of sport being used for political ends. African leaders, in the post-independence era, have seen the potential of sport, primarily athletics and football, to encourage national unity and facilitate personal as well as national political advantage. They also saw its broader potential in the anti-apartheid struggle. Sport played no insignificant political role in the liberation of South Africa; it might even be argued that sport was the straw that broke the boer's back.

Nelson Mandela has clearly identified himself with South African sports teams, even proclaiming sport to be one of three fundamental rights for all children.

Monnington has challenged the extent of political capital that African leaders may gain from a close identification with sport, questioning whether the idea of securing political advantage through sporting success is “myth or reality” (1997: 92). Even if the latter is true, Monnington posits that “the social, economic and political reality of Black Africa is such that the value of sport in alleviating its many chronic problems is questionable” (1997: 92). Such structural handicaps can be traced to the colonial experience, which drew artificial boundaries, favoured a policy of “divide and rule” and skewed terms of exchange in favour of the “Mother Country”. Inferiority was entrenched in the system, but World War II saw the beginnings of the questioning of European invincibility, leading to eventual independence, which from the late 1950s to the 1970s dawned upon Africa. The independence struggle produced a short-lived focus for unity, but once the euphoria had passed, the all-too-real exigencies of economic hardship and political powerlessness became apparent. The optimism of a “new dawn” was soon replaced by a pessimism generated by myriad problems all too apparent in the harsh light of day. Also, in a number of African countries, ethnic tensions, temporarily obscured at independence, were soon exposed revealing ethnically charged and divided nations. Nationalism, which had proved strong enough to break the bonds of colonialism, failed to overcome its legacy: “Nationalism was strong enough to attain independence, but not to maintain unity” (Monnington, 1997: 95). This left an opportunity, indeed a temptation, for sport to fulfill a cohesive role in the new Africa, and provide political opportunity to its increasingly beleaguered leaders.⁶ It was in this context that some African leaders saw

the potential of sport as a vehicle for encouraging national unity and identity, and perhaps more hopefully on the broader stage, international respect: "A mythology of nationhood had to be created out of nothing" (Baker, 1987: 272).

Perhaps the prime instrument in achieving such a unifying goal was the "national hero" (Baker, 1987: 272), a role eagerly played by the leader of the nationalist party, now honoured in many cases as the "Father of the Nation". The person of the national hero was to prove more capable of idolization than the still abstract concept of the nation state. As William Baker points out: "If political heroes came first, athletic heroes shortly followed" (1987: 273). In the 1960 Olympic marathon at Rome, Abebe Bikila blazed a trail for Africa, to be followed by many other African sporting stars in subsequent years, most notably the Kenyan distance runners, who put Kenya on the sporting map in an unprecedented fashion. In the process they presented an alternative view of their country, confounding the images of poverty and squalor all too readily available in the popular press or Western imagination. The successful staging in 1965 of the first All-Africa Games in Brazzaville, an idea that de Coubertin himself had planned for Algiers in 1925, helped to promote the idea of unity through sports. The formation of the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa (SCSA) further advanced such an ideal. Monnington suggests that, for many citizens of Africa, sport provides "the only common bond" (1993: 128). By the 1970s African athletes had become powerful symbols of national identity. Like athletics and boxing, which rapidly grew in popularity, soccer did not require capital outlays, and therefore was to prove popular in the African context, becoming far and away the most popular team sport in Africa, with Ghana, Zaire, Cameroun and latterly Nigeria shining in various international tournaments.

It was Kwame Nkrumah, with his pan-Africanist vision, who had seen the political potential of African sport: "Although I was desperately keen on learning...I never became a swot or a bookworm...I discovered that sportsmanship was a vital part of a man's character, and this led me to realise the importance of encouraging sport in the development of a nation" (in Mangan, 1987: 165). African leaders took advantage of the reflected glory of their sporting giants -- Kenyatta and Kip Keino, Houphouet-Boigny and the "Elephants", Biya and Roger Milla -- opportunistically recognizing that political advantage could accrue from identification with sporting victories. Like many African leaders seeking to bask in the reflected glory of their superstars, Daniel arap Moi has continued to follow Kenyatta's precedent in welcoming home national Olympic teams. Often a sporting foundation leads to a career in politics. Kenneth Matiba in Kenya provides a salient example of a prominent person using the chairmanships of the Kenya National Football League and Kenya Breweries, a formidable combination, to launch a bid for political power.⁷ But, as Monnington points out, African leaders soon realized that "too close an identification with sport, which can capture the hearts and minds of a nation and even the wider world community, can have dire political consequences when victory turns sour" (1997: 104). He has noted a discernible trend among African leaders of distancing themselves from sporting identification as harsh financial realities, Olympic boycotts and problems of violence undermined the positive image of African sports involvement. Often the sporting hero possessed more stability of tenure in popular affections than did the political leader.

Political involvement in sport has not just been limited to the head of state. Many African governments have retained strong central control over sporting development

through ministries of sport, administrative organizations and delivery systems, thus allowing political power to influence sporting policy at all levels. As Hardman and Nteere conclude in their comparative study of sport in England and Kenya: "Clearly, politicization of physical education and sport is a reality with interwoven relationships within and between these entities at all institutional levels. Power is at the very core and such power has substantially influenced decision-making and taking in the two countries" (1994: 421). With a post-independence history that has included apartheid struggle and Olympic boycotts, it is unlikely that Africans have ever subscribed to the Brundagean "enshrined myth" (Baker, 1987: 288) of the separation of sports and politics. Baker and Monnington agree that in African society, sports and politics are "inseparably joined" (Baker, 1987: 290) and "inextricably linked" (Monnington, 1997: 106).

NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Many developing countries have tried to use sport as a means for integrating their ethnically diverse states, perceived as a vital requisite for national development: "Throughout the world...modern sports are one of the frail institutions that leaders of religiously and ethnically divided societies call upon to resist the factionalism that threatens always to devolve into fratricidal conflict" (Guttman, 1994: 188). From Nicaragua to Nigeria, sport has been seen as one of the primary vehicles in creating a sense of national identity. In Cuba, sport has been used unabashedly as a tool of the revolution. In Northern Ireland sport has been used in an attempt to bridge the religious divide. In Bosnia today sport is being invested with a conciliatory power that other institutions are perceived to lack. In fact, the integrationalist role of sport in Africa should

not be seen as purely a post-independence phenomenon. Baker relays the comments of an Englishman in Kenya in 1927: "Our administration officers are welding tribes into a nation" (1987: 279). A colonial administration, steeped in its sporting ways, believed in sport's potential to unify, encouraging the inclusion of sports in the school regimen. Sport is often credited with an almost mythical power to heal societal divisions. As James Frey notes: "Sport is seen as a major social institution that helps societies overcome cultural, regional, ethnic, religious, and political diversity or conflict" (1988: 66). Thus sport is empowered as a symbol of common meaning, common identity and common purpose. But such views tend to reflect an essentially masculinist outlook towards sport as well as take an unnecessarily benign view of the obvious ethnic entrenchments that can be reinforced and exacerbated through sport.

Janet Lever, in her seminal study of soccer in Brazil, states the case plainly for sport in the South. She sees the integrative powers of sport as essential to national unity in the developing world: "Sport does help connect people in complex modern societies. The case of soccer in Brazil shows that sport does link people, groups, towns, cities, and regions into a single national system, as it links nations into a single world system. Through ever-enlarging circles of competition, there is a renewed sense of collectivity" (1983: 145). She notes that sport promotes communication, develops a sense of community and is one of the few subjects that can transcend the generation gap. By providing "a common frame of reference, meanings, and rules that transcend cultural, political, and language barriers" (1983: 9), she stresses sport's integrative function. She suggests that national unity is a precursor to economic development, thus making a linkage between sport and development (1983: 155). Few would deny that soccer, so

close to the hearts of Brazilians, has become “a symbol of national unity and progress” (1983: 153), but whether it has significantly affected economic development may be more open to debate.

This functionalist position, which stresses the integrative role of sport, can be challenged: “Sport can divide as much as it can unite” (MacClancy, 1996: 11). Arbena too remains unconvinced of sport’s utility in the nation-building process, questioning, in the Latin American case, whether: “sport has contributed significantly or uniquely to the construction of cohesive national identity -- to the building of ‘nations’ in the old-fashioned sense of the word...” (1993: 153). While Frey agrees, suggesting that sport’s “impact can be short-term, superficial and, may be, superfluous” (1988: 79), Guttman disagrees: “It is nonetheless probable that the integrative consequences of modern sports are stronger than the divisive effects” (1994: 183). Arbena concludes: “Obviously, whether sport serves to unify or divide at any given level of community identity depends on a multiplicity of contextual factors” (1993: 153). Clearly, sport may well serve to unify sub-national groups at the cost of national unity.

While sport’s role in national integration may be debatable, its ability to propel less well-known nations to wider international prominence is clear. East Germany built its campaign for political acceptance on sporting foundations, with its eventual diplomatic recognition being undoubtedly hastened by the legitimacy conferred upon it by sporting dominance. Sport became a major focus of foreign policy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc, in an attempt to demonstrate the superiority of one ideological system over another. Cuba has used sport as one of the prime methods in its effort to assume leadership in the Third World. Even the most inconspicuous of nations, such as Surinam, may gain

unexpected recognition through an Olympic victory. Athletics is one of the few areas where Kenya can stand tall in the company of nations. Speaking in 1978, the Nigerian Minister of Sport, Sylvanus Williams, was unequivocal: "Sporting achievements today are used as a measure of our country's greatness" (in Baker, 1987: 290). International success is also deemed to promote greater internal cohesion and national identification. Sporting contact may also allow a level of interaction between nations that might be inappropriate at a more formal diplomatic level, or may serve as a precursor to stronger diplomatic relations, such as in the case of Sino-American "ping-pong" diplomacy.

The quest for prestige is perhaps best seen in the sporting context in terms of the desire to host major international events. The Seoul Olympics may have garnered for South Korea an even greater reputation abroad than at home and may also have underlined the temporary, almost ephemeral, power of sport to unite a nation (Larson and Park, 1993). From the initial World Cup in Uruguay in 1930, Latin American nations have gained prestige by hosting the world's premier soccer competition. The Argentinian generals sought to legitimize their questionable regime by hosting the 1978 World Cup, an action that, in Arben's opinion, represents "one of the most extreme, even disgusting, examples" of the misuse of sports (1993: 155). The troubled history of the All-Africa Games reflects the preponderance of Africa's economic woes, though a successful Games sends a clear signal regarding an African nation's economic and administrative capabilities. South Africa's bids to host the Olympic Games as well as soccer's World Cup have sought to stake a claim for Africa's place and potential in the sporting world.

Frey classifies sports among "secondary national interests" (1988: 73). But while sport may well be peripheral, it has the advantage of producing high profile benefits at

relatively low cost or risk. Frey counsels against overemphasizing the influence gained by sporting success and warns against equating prestige with power, claiming that prior economic, political, and military arrangements largely determine the allocation of influence: "Thus, one needs to be careful how much credence is assigned to the internal and external importance of sport" (1988: 79). However, as Baker summarizes, sport cannot be discounted in the context of the emergent African nation: "Like threads in a rich tapestry, the meaning of sport for national identity and unity, for international visibility and prestige, and for pan-African cohesion and leverage weaves in and out of the history of independent Africa" (1987: 274).

Another widely held, though questionable, position is the belief that sport contributes to international solidarity and universal brotherhood. It has been pointed out that lulls in fighting during the World Wars led to football matches between the trenches. Guerilla campaigns have been suspended during premier sporting occasions, such as during the 1978 World Cup in Argentina. But whether such examples really substantiate the fact that sport has demonstrably stopped conflict is highly debatable. The assumption that sport enhances international understanding may be little more than one of the more resilient myths of sport. In the 1998 soccer World Cup, political overtones in the game between the United States and Iran may have been perceived as more significant in both countries than the actual sporting contest itself, and hardly aided the cause of rapprochement. Frey argues that: "In reality, conflict, not agreement, is articulated when two disagreeing countries meet in athletic competition" (1988: 78). Frey's contention was most obviously affirmed in the "Soccer War" between El Salvador and Honduras in 1969. The soccer match may have provided the spark that ignited the conflict, though tensions

between the two countries had been extant for a long time. One thing is clear: sporting events can exaggerate differences and reinforce divisions. That global peace and understanding may be enhanced through sport may merely be one of the more enduring myths of sport.

ECONOMIC, HEALTH AND SOCIAL BENEFITS

Beyond the ever present political dimension of the sporting story, the economic, health and social benefits of sporting involvement are often touted in the South, as indeed they are in the developed world. As Bale and Sang point out: “national success in sport is not unlike success in the national economy. In both a key word is ‘development’; another is ‘growth’” (1996: 21). While few direct economic benefits are perceived to accrue, at least to the participants, from mass sport, élite sport is perceived by many as a route to fame and fortune. As black athletes in the United States saw sport as an avenue out of the ghetto, so a sporting exit route from poverty and underprivilege became increasingly seductive in Africa: “Even more than political heroes, athletes represented a kind of success that was ostensibly within the reach of vast numbers of young Africans” (Baker, 1987: 273). The “brawn drain” of African athletes to American universities has been ongoing for decades, and sporting migration in an era of globalization is becoming an ever bigger factor in the lives of the top African sportsmen, if not so much sportswomen. For the few who make the international athletics circuit, however, there are many more waiting, frustrated, in the wings.

Throughout history many peoples have encouraged sporting activities as a means of keeping their male populace fit and prepared for war. Ethnic groups in Africa have been no exception. In the context of rural Africa, hard work in the field may have kept much of the population fit. Sporting activities of the more physical kind may often have seemed unnecessary for the adult peasant in the harsh world of subsistence agriculture. With the growth in industrialization, health may have become more of an end in itself in recent years, and sport has been advanced for its preventative role in countering an increasingly urban and sedentary lifestyle. The rise in non-communicable illnesses, such as heart disease, will doubtless lead to calls for involving larger numbers of people in mass sport programmes. The health benefits of sport are well-established in the popular imagination (even though the prevalence of sporting injuries may contradict some of these beliefs). Beyond the purely physical aspects of health, sport has long been known for its therapeutic mental effects, not only for providing excitement, challenge and fulfillment, but also for easing the release of societal tensions in a controlled environment. Games of whatever description are well suited for the encouragement of not just sporting, but social interaction. They may also be an instrument in social control. Sport also can provide opportunities for the development of leadership and organizational capabilities in a less pressured way than that demanded in the workplace. Arbena provides a list of the assumed benefits of sport:

Sport encourages health and hygiene; sport teaches cooperation and discipline; sport molds better workers; sport reduces vice and crime; sport makes people happier; and, it is hoped, a successful sports programme or a positive sports image can attract foreign investment and tourism (1993: 154).

Many of these characteristics appear in the MYSA literature, reflecting a positive and essentially functionalist view of sport. In short, sport has been invested with many positive qualities, some of which may be open to contestation upon closer inspection.

THE GENDER DIMENSION

Women have been relegated to mere footnotes in the pages of African sporting history. Few areas have so clearly captured some of the tensions, biases and contradictions within the sporting world as has gender. Historically, women have been less involved in sport than men; their exclusion often being explained and justified on the basis of nature. In outlining the barriers to women's participation in sports, it is sociologically necessary to first differentiate between "sex" and "gender", terms often confused in popular usage. "Sex" refers to the genetically inherited biological differences that exist between the male and female, while "gender" denotes the learned, culturally constructed differences between the sexes. Thus "sex" is a relatively fixed biological idea as opposed to "gender", which is a more variable concept altogether, subject to changing societal mores.

The popular inability to differentiate between the terms "sex", determined by nature, and "gender", defined by culture, reinforces the resilient myth that women's bodies are inferior to men's. But all the time the gap lessens between male and female performance in elite sport. Training can dramatically narrow the difference between male and female performance. For instance, the gap between the men's and women's world records for the marathon has narrowed remarkably in recent years (Cashmore, 1996: 128-30). Differences between the physical abilities of males and females have been

greatly exaggerated, often by men who have sought to use nature to justify the exclusion of women from sport. For many women, participation in sport involves breaking through a formidable barrier into a “man’s world”.

Today, it would appear that sport has come to be one of the major sites where struggles over gender relations are taking place, “an excellent monitor of how far women have travelled along the road to equality and the distance yet to go” (McCrone, 1988: 2). Those struggles may have already initiated significant gender realignments. Barriers that may have once appeared inviolate are falling. Women around the world are participating in sports in larger numbers than ever before and are increasingly involved in traditionally male contact sports.⁸

Women have been traditionally underrepresented in sport, and though this pattern is changing, questions remain as to the scale, scope and speed of change. Barriers have existed, and still exist, discouraging the full participation of women in sports. While many women see cause for optimism, judgement, like Susan Cahn’s, may need to be more equivocal: “You’ve come a long way, maybe” (1994: 246-279). While her questions as to whether there has indeed been a revolution in women’s sport refer specifically to America, Cahn’s comments further underline the scale of the challenge in the Third World. While Kathleen McCrone acknowledges that sport has often been a symbol of women’s repression, she also recognizes that sport has provided an opportunity to challenge the status quo (1988: 1-2). The breaking down of barriers in women’s sport also affords the opportunity to break down barriers in the wider world. The process is necessarily interconnected. While concluding that “sport remains a key cultural location for male dominance”, Cahn identifies the ultimate sporting solution for women to be in

“transforming the broader social relations of gender within which sporting life takes place” (1994: 279).

Major barriers to women’s involvement in sport, either as players or spectators, still exist in the Third World generally, and Africa more specifically. The lack of economic resources can be profoundly limiting, and sport must remain an abstraction for the majority of women actively involved in a daily struggle to survive. Even where basic economic considerations are not in themselves constricting, religion and tradition may sharply limit the potential for women’s entry into the sporting arena. In some societies, the display of the female body may cause ostracism or worse. Maternal responsibilities and domestic duties are often all consuming. Parents may be profoundly suspicious of any involvement of their daughters in sport; husbands of their wives. Women face strict segregation in many societies.

Religious barriers to feminine sports participation have been significant at different times and in different societies. Today, Islam may be seen as an impediment to women’s sporting opportunity in some Middle Eastern societies, though it may be argued that such barriers have developed more around traditional interpretations of the Koran than Koranic doctrine itself (Sfeir, 1985). Christianity’s historical position regarding the submission of women – “a women’s place being in the home” – has also impacted upon women’s participation in sport, more so in the past than today.

While the barriers preventing women’s participation in sports, particularly in the developing world, are obvious, some perspective is needed. It is tempting to assume that historically women’s sporting involvement in the underdeveloped areas of the world has been profoundly limited. That assumption depends in part upon whether a broader or

narrower definition of sports is employed. For instance, traditional dancing, with its predilection for exercise, enjoys a long history. Guttman, in his Women's Sports: a History, decries the lack of women's presence in the accounts of historians, noting "not only the scarcity of archaeological and literary evidence for women's sports but also their colleagues' neglect of what scanty evidence exists" (1991: 8). He is able to point out, for example, that wrestling among women has been common in a number of African tribes (1991: 8).

Mazrui attempts a more incisive explanation for the exclusion of African women from sporting tradition by suggesting that cultural contradictions between athleticism and aestheticism "have tended largely to exclude women from competitive sports" (1987: 223). However, culture is nowhere static, and perceptions of body image are in continual process of change. In situating women's exclusion from sport in the wider context of their marginalization in society, Mazrui makes a telling point: "Women became marginalized not because they lost control of the means of production but because they were excluded from the means of destruction. Nothing in human history has been more responsible for the political subordination of women than their demilitarization" (1987: 225).

While it may be argued that the barriers to participation are often greater in the Third World than in the West, sport has played a significant role in helping women to gain a measure of liberation. Certainly sport has the potential to break down some of the gender stereotypes that have long afflicted African women. In the Arab world, Hassiba Boulmerka, the Algerian runner, saw her victories, like those of many sportswomen before her, in terms of the women's struggle. Overcoming great opposition from Muslim fundamentalists as well as the ordinary man in the street, she exulted at her 1991 World

Championship triumph: "I screamed for joy and for shock, and for much more. I was screaming for Algeria's pride and Algeria's history, and still more. I screamed finally for every Algerian woman, every Arabic woman" (Riordan, 1994). Boulmerka went on to win an Olympic gold medal in the 1500m at the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, where another female athlete from Africa -- the Ethiopian Derartu Tulu -- won the 10,000m, the first Olympic gold for a black African woman. Coming from a humble background in a family of ten children, Tulu became a national hero as well as a symbol of the progress and potential of African women. The Boulmerkas and Tulus have encouraged their female compatriots to break down gender barriers. As early as 1980 it had been claimed, with respect to Nigeria, that: "Despite the social or cultural sanctions against women's participation in sports...Nigerian women have made a remarkable breakthrough in sport participation which hitherto had been the exclusive domain of men" (Anyanwu, 1980: 90). While Kenyan male athletes have been a power for three decades, it has been interesting to see Kenyan women runners making significant strides in this direction in the last few years. Although Jim Riordan suggests that the modern Olympics, with their élitism, commodification, politicization and corruption, are an irrelevance for most women in the world, he acknowledges at the same time the potential of sport to effect substantive changes in the developing world:

Change can be painfully slow. But inasmuch as women's sporting attainments are reflecting, reinforcing and even *precipitating* processes of social change in the role and status of women, this clearly offers exciting prospects for the future of women in developing and developed societies (1986: 294).

What does that future hold for African sportswomen? A masculinist bias in the world of sports is obvious everywhere. Sport has been seen as a "male preserve", one of

the last bastions of male chauvinism. That bias is further reinforced in African societies. As women become more involved, men feel increasingly threatened. A study of sporting history will reveal that women have long been pressured to fit themselves into male -- and indeed Western -- ideas of sport, which stress strength and masculinity, and emphasize times and records. Women may prefer to redefine sporting forms towards a greater emphasis on play, sociability and informality, in the process perhaps even creating alternative sport forms, more suited to women's talents. This may be especially necessary across different cultures. For instance, Mazrui suggests a variety of female and indigenous "sports" that might be more culturally appropriate to many women in Africa (1987: 220-21).

Even in the Western world, women are especially underrepresented in the administrative versus the active playing side of sport. Sports administration is predominantly male. Women's participation rates on the field of play are not often translated into officiating, coaching, managerial and administrative responsibilities. This gender imbalance is even more dramatic in the Third World. Any attempts to redress this fundamental inequity may encounter opposition from entrenched male power blocs, but will be a necessity for future gender equity.

Encouraging women to participate in sport is a project that goes well beyond sport itself. While sport has historically been an area of male domination, many feminists see it as a site of resistance and recognize that ultimate sporting liberation for women must take place together with broader changes in the society within which sport takes place. Gender is one area of challenge, often interconnected with issues of race, class, history, politics and Westernization/globalization.

THE FUTURE OF AFRICAN SPORT

In conclusion, it is necessary to take a brief look at the changing patterns of sport in a globalizing world, for "...clearly cultures communicate, compete, contrast and conflict with each other in a more interdependent (sic) manner than was previously the case" (Jarvie and Maguire, 1994: 233). The future of sport in Africa is not in doubt, although its progress at the highest levels is bound to undergo change. In a world that increasingly privileges capital, the gulf that exists between mass and élite sport is bound to grow greater everywhere, but perhaps most dramatically in Africa. As Jarvie and Maguire recognize: "Every aspect of social reality...is intertwined with unfolding globalisation processes" (1994: 230). Economic factors will continue to impact upon participation levels. Women will continue to be excluded from the centre of sporting power. Increasing urbanization will affect sporting patterns, as environmental limits are already strained in many an African city. Technological advances will allow more and more Africans to watch international sports, encouraging transnational role models for the youth and further inducing societal change. Homogenization may occur on the global level while diversification may occur on the local level, in the globalizing effects of what Roland Robertson describes as "the particularization of universalism" and "the universalization of particularism" (1992: 97-105).

One thing is certain: sporting standards will continue to be set in the developed world, while the developing world will continue to languish in sporting underdevelopment. A southern periphery will surround a Northern metropole. Will globalizing tendencies encourage new systems of dependency? The shape of things to

come may have become clearer recently, with the announcement of Ajax Amsterdam's takeover of two local South African teams to form the new Cape Town Ajax. Known for its intensive training methods, especially in developing children as young as nine for its youth teams, the Dutch team's marketing manager suggests that: "We have to select the players and then give them almost a different life" (Fletcher, 1999: 9). Reflecting the global nature of football, the Dutch team hopes to enter into similar arrangements with teams in Ghana and Mexico. With such strategies, Ajax hopes to uncover stars of the future, more loyal to club than country. In an article entitled, "Cape of Fresh Hope", journalist Iain Fletcher proclaims that "Europe's new missionaries are nourishing the dream of escape from despair" (1999: 9). Similar hopes exist in another place of despair, Mathare.

This chapter has sought to provide context for the case study that will be examined in the remainder of this thesis. Many of the themes addressed in this chapter have relevance to MYSA. Strong parallels exist between the colonial emphasis on character building through sport and MYSA's moral objectives. Integration and recognition, so prevalent in the post-independence rationale for sport in Africa, are evident in the MYSA initiative. A few have benefitted economically from their involvement with MYSA, finding an entry into professional sport and an exit from the slum. MYSA's environmental clean-up efforts are well-known in attempting to cut down on the disease that plagues Mathare and other slum areas, while its AIDS prevention endeavours target youth at risk. Including girls into its organization has surely been one of MYSA's most remarkable achievements. As far as the future of African sport goes, does MYSA point the way towards an escape from or a greater entrapment in dependency?

And does sport, in an underprivileged environment, open a possible path for development itself?

ENDNOTES

1. G. W. B. Huntingford suggests that "to many African peoples war was a form of sport, the only kind on a large scale that they understood, which gave them something real and exciting to live for..." (1953: 77). Cattle raiding became known as the "sport" of the aggressive Nandi, an ethnic group that has provided some of Kenya's best runners.
2. See also Mahlmann's thorough treatment of the subject (1988).
3. With the possible exception of the Indian Civil Service which maintained more rigorous academic standards (Holt, 1992: 206).
4. Kenya too was regarded as "a public schoolboys' colony par excellence. Indeed, Lord Cranworth urged public schoolboys to go to Kenya, their leadership qualities and love of sport making them ideally suited to life in East Africa" (Bale and Sang, 1996: 75-76).
5. For an overview of the "development of modern sports" in Kenya, see George Godia (1989).
6. Referring to the dominance of Western sport forms over traditional folk-games, Bale and Sang assert that political independence in Kenya (as indeed elsewhere in Africa) did not involve "a decolonisation of the body" (1996: 63). While a cohesive role was sought for sport in the post-independence era, it also fulfilled a conservative role, as Black and Nauright suggest: "sport in Africa after independence has proved to be a conservative institution closely linked to new post-colonial power structures..." (1998:43).
7. Daniel arap Moi was himself an indigenous sports official in Kenya, serving as vice-president of the Arab and African Sports Association in the 1950s (Bale and Sang, 1996: 110).
8. China, for instance, reports "over three million female weight-lifters" (Hargreaves, 1994: 274).

CHAPTER FOUR

MATHARE YOUTH SPORTS ASSOCIATION

From humble beginnings in 1987, MYSA has become one of the largest grassroots organizations in Kenya. In providing facts and figures regarding MYSA in this chapter, the organization's remarkable growth will become apparent. But first it is necessary to provide some background regarding Kenya and its capital city, Nairobi.

Kenya is an overachiever among developing nations in the world of sports, having realized Olympic success out of all proportion to its economic and physical resources. Sport assumes a particularly high profile in Kenya, unlike in some other Third World countries. While the nation's sporting renown has been built on athletics, other sports have found an enthusiastic audience, most notably motorsport's annual Safari Rally, although there is no question as to the most popular team sport and the one that absorbs the biggest budget: soccer.

Kenya achieved independence from Britain in 1963, and has since adopted a pro-Western stance politically and advanced a Western model of development under Presidents Kenyatta and Moi. For many years, Kenya was seen as a developmental success story, an overachiever by African standards in a continent known more for its developmental failures than successes. But after solid growth rates in the initial decades following Independence, the last decade in particular has seen increasing political, economic and ethnic problems in a country which had gained a reputation for stability in an unstable region. With a 1997 GNP per capita of \$330 (World Bank, 1999), a vast gulf still exists between the mass of a mainly rural population and a privileged élite with its

urban connections. Renowned in the late 1970s and early 1980s as having the highest population growth rates in the world -- a reported 4.1% over the period 1980-87 (World Bank, 1989) -- growth has recently been curtailed to a more modest 2.4% (UNDP, 1998). The most recent census -- back in 1989 -- placed Kenya's population at 21.4 million and Nairobi's at 1.3 million. However, few people ascribe any accuracy to the census. Journalist Barrack Otieno describes it as "a complete fiasco, the final results were announced after five years, and still they were not accurate" (1999: 10). Even President Moi described the exercise as "useless, a waste of time and resources" (in Otieno, 1999: 11). In recent years Nairobi has been strained to its infrastructural limits, as a town planned in colonial times for thousands has grown into a megacity housing millions.¹

MATHARE

Situated a few miles north-east of the city centre lies Nairobi's most notorious slum, Mathare. Feared as a centre of crime, famous for the illicit brew "changaa" and plagued by all the worst of societal ills, this sprawling shanty town hugs the valley through which a stream dignified by the title of the Mathare River meanders. This putrid and, outside of the rainy season, turgid stream wends its way through an ill-defined series of "villages" comprising Nairobi's "mother of all slums", where dilapidated shacks and hovels, composed of various combinations of cardboard, wood, stone and predominantly corrugated sheet metal, make up one of Kenya's infamous "tin towns". No one knows how many people are crammed into the shanty town -- guesstimates varying from 300,000 to 700,000. Rarely achieving a balance between dust in the dry season and mud

in the wet, Mathare scarcely provides a promising site for one of Africa's sporting and developmental success stories.

The prestigious suburb of Muthaiga, in dramatic contrast to Mathare, is a virtual stone's throw away, though it might be a world away. Once the centre of settler life, Muthaiga, with its manicured lawns and tropical gardens, is home to well-established families and diplomats as well as a golf club, the successor of the quintessential colonial club. Muthaiga and its less fortunate neighbour, Mathare, illustrate in the most dramatic fashion possible the dichotomy that is modern Kenya.

Kenya is a young country. Thanks to the baby boom resulting from one of the world's highest growth rates, it is estimated that around half of all Kenyans are children. Statistics estimate that 45% of the population was under 15 in 1997 (Government of Kenya/UNICEF, 1998: 23). Multitudes of children make an indelible first impression on the Western visitor. These children represent all sections of society, from those neatly attired in the colourful school uniforms of the established schools to those "clothed" in rags and tatters, the worst of the street children being variously described as "parking boys", or "urchins". A large proportion of the population of Mathare are children who, together with their parents, have somehow found themselves excluded from the "African dream", represented by the phalanx of modern glass and steel skyscrapers on the distant horizon.

THE ORIGINS OF MYSA

It was in this unpromising environment that Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) was founded in 1987 with the intention of, in the words of its motto, "Giving

youth a sporting chance". Its logo, evident everywhere on its ubiquitous T-shirts, significantly includes a girl as well as a boy above the slogan of "sports and community services". The brainchild of Bob Munro, a Canadian expatriate working in the development field, MYSA has grown exponentially from humble beginnings. Munro, who still serves as adviser and Chairman of Friends of Mathare Youth, a supporting NGO, acknowledges: "When I started this I had no idea of the potential". He has come to subsequently recognize the reality of success however: "I found a goldmine in Mathare" (Personal interview, 26/4/99). One day while waiting to pick up his daughter, who was volunteering at the time in the slum, Munro came across the common sight of some barefoot boys kicking a "made in Mathare" football, a combination of plastic and paper held together by string. Peter Serry takes up the story: "We were playing football when we saw a white person gazing at us. We took him for a parent interested in the game, but when he asked if we'd like a better ball, the response was unanimous excitement" (Diang'a, 1997). Munro's initial aim was to organize a small self-help organization to provide a sporting outlet for the youth of Mathare and at the same time make a little headway against the garbage, filth and squalor endemic to the shanty town. "We had been given a chance. Idle and with nothing to do, we wanted to engage ourselves meaningfully" (Diang'a, 1997), says Serry. Twenty seven teams signed up for weekend matches and, at Munro's prompting, before their games, started to attack the piles of filth synonymous with Mathare. Community and personal development were always prominent in Munro's developmentalist vision.

The next year Munro's motley crew of footballers and garbage collectors received official recognition by being registered under the Societies Act as a non-governmental,

non-profit and non-political organisation. Mathare Youth Sports Association was born. But, in the words of its promotional literature, “MYSA didn’t stay small for long” (MYSA a). The next year, 1988, saw immediate expansion with 120 teams joining the league, a season that also saw sporting success, with the under 18 boys team winning the national championship, the “first” of a cluster of honours that MYSA has so far accumulated. 1988 also saw the influx of younger boys wishing to be involved, necessitating the creation and organization of a league for under 12 year olds – again a “first” in a long list of “firsts” of which MYSA is undeniably proud (MYSA b).

Soon MYSA began to expand into other “zones” beyond its epicentre in Mathare, and now comprises sixteen zones covering an area of around eighty square kilometres throughout the more impoverished areas of the city. Perhaps every fourth or fifth resident of Nairobi falls within MYSA’s present boundaries. The MYSA zones are divided into east and west regions for administrative purposes, with a main office in Eastleigh and a smaller one-room office for the western zones. With an annual operating budget of around 30 million Kenya shillings (US\$ 500,000), and a total staff of 73 full-time, half-time and part-time staff, MYSA has long left its shoestring beginnings behind.

At this point it may be necessary to emphasize that although MYSA retains Mathare, Nairobi’s quintessential slum, in its name, the organization now represents youth throughout the more impoverished eastern areas of the city. In fact, the first official MYSA games took place in Eastleigh, a stone’s throw from its present offices, although most of the youth involved came from Mathare just across the road, which divides the two areas of the city. The retention of Mathare in the names of both Mathare Youth

Sports Association and Mathare United thus reflects a continuing identification with the slums.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS

Growth also allowed a more pronounced linkage between soccer and the environment. As part of its community service mandate, MYSA embarked on the task of refuse collection, a service long abdicated by the City Council if indeed they did ever venture into Mathare. Even by Third World standards, garbage has reached epidemic proportions in Mathare and environs, as open sewage and piles of garbage contribute to an ever-present threat of disease. MYSA claims to have been the first organization in the world to link self-help youth sports and environmental cleanup (MYSA b). As with the footballing dimension of MYSA, garbage collection efforts started small. In lieu of paying fees to play soccer in MYSA, hardly practical in one of Nairobi's poorest slums, cleanup projects were substituted. The successful completion of an approved cleanup project leads to a team being awarded six points (the equivalent of two wins) in league standings. Originally, cleanup tasks included preparing the field and environs for safe play. With the dramatic expansion in the numbers of teams, each team is currently assigned two cleanups per year. What must initially have seemed strange to the residents of Mathare has now become commonplace, as each weekend and in school holidays, teams of youths are seen with hoes, shovels and wheelbarrows clearing garbage and digging ditches. This remarkable initiative was recognized and rewarded at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio-de-Janeiro with a UNEP Global 500 Award. The citation read: "Kenya can be proud that some of their poorest youth have demonstrated that anyone and

everyone can help improve their environment” (Maser, 1995: D12). Emphasizing the dual sporting and environmental strengths of MYSA’s mandate, a MYSA football team duly won the under 16 division of the Eco ’92 Youth Football Games promoted by Pél during the Earth Summit in Rio. P, who had himself made good from the slums, personally paid all the local expenses of the MYSA team. After one of the Brazilian youth teams was heavily defeated by the Mathare team, P is reputed to have said: “This is how we used to play football in Brazil!” (Jackson, personal interview, 7/5/99).

Although MYSA’s cleanup efforts realistically made hardly more than a dent in Mathare’s mountains of filth, they did illustrate the possibilities of community initiative. As MYSA expanded as a soccer league into other underprivileged areas of Nairobi, a corresponding environmental outreach beyond Mathare’s boundaries became possible. Self-help principles expressed in its unofficial motto: “You do something, MYSA does something. You do nothing, MYSA does nothing” began to catch on, helping to create a sense of community. MYSA’s efforts were a step in the right direction, though hardly the basis for long-term solutions, as Kim Adam-Peters suggests: “Community clean-up campaigns like Clean Up Nairobi and the Mathare Youth Sports Association do not offer effective, long-term solutions, but may be the beginning of a widely supported social movement demanding more effective management of urban environmental resources, and possibly more effective and representative government at all levels” (www.cbie.ca).

Since Adam-Peters wrote, garbage problems have only got worse, and even with the recent addition of two garbage collection trucks and two fork-lift tractors, a gift from Norway’s Ministry of the Environment, MYSA’s operation scarcely scratches the surface. However, it does represent virtually the only garbage removal service within the zones

where MYSA operates. As John Muraya, a former City Council employee who manages the cleanup side of MYSA's efforts, exclaims: "With more trucks we could do wonders!" He notes that parents are also learning about environmental responsibility from their children, the "future bosses of the country" (Personal interview, 18/4/99). Sometimes local residents lend a hand, inspiring such comments as "neighbouring friends helped the youth" (1999, MYSA Community Service Reports). As in other areas, MYSA is determined not only to act, but even more importantly, to change attitudes towards the problems of Mathare.

EMPOWERING YOUTH

From the outset MYSA has believed in empowering the youth themselves. MYSA claims to be an organization *of* youth, run *by* youth and designed *for* youth (MYSA a). Of the hundreds of volunteer coaches and referees, most are teenagers. The principle of youth ownership is particularly pronounced, and reflects favourably on the vision, not to mention, courage of Bob Munro, who was willing to see beyond the stereotype. As John Githongo writes:

Munro was convinced that the popular stereotype of Mathare's youth was false, that they were not all glue-sniffing, drug-taking criminals destined for life on the streets or prison, or death from AIDS. They were ordinary people struggling to survive in horrible circumstances and, given something they could be proud of, something that would give them back their self respect and give them hope for the future, they were capable of anything (1997: 31).

Munro believed in them, and sought to give them a purpose, even a dream, in life.

Chief Manager Maurice Njoroge sees MYSA as going beyond the parameters of the normal grassroots organization to include the youth themselves, usually excluded

from even the grassroots developmental process (Personal interview, 28/1/99). Africa is a “young” continent and it is to the youth, the largest demographic constituency in Mathare, that MYSA looks to for deliverance in a secular salvation.² MYSA sees its mission as “more than a soccer club” and seeks through football to promote community, responsibility and leadership “on and off the field” (Munro, personal interview, 23/4/99). This functional ethos pervades the organization. However, it would be a mistake to imagine, as press articles about MYSA sometimes suggest, that all decisions are made by the youth themselves. While teenagers have access to the Sports, Community Service and Executive Councils, the more experienced twenty-somethings and beyond tend to dominate. The likes of John Muraya, Isabel Mbuthia, Bob Ouma, Samuel Karanja, and, of course, Bob Munro, are now well beyond their twenties. In a culture that respects age, such older voices count for much. But the youth are listened to, and do have a voice within the organization, especially at the lower levels. Such accommodation goes well beyond the practice, if not always the rhetoric, of the average NGO operating in Kenya.

With so many young referees and coaches, a common question involves the maintenance of discipline. Football matches organized by teenagers, played by teenagers and refereed by teenagers might seem like a recipe for disaster to many observers. From MYSA’s inception it was realized that sanctions would need to be in place to ensure order. One of these rules punished the abuse of referees with an automatic suspension until the offending player had refereed ten games. Although the rule is still on the books, MYSA claims that it has not had to use it since 1990 (MYSA a), and points to the fact that the discipline worked in providing correction and direction for some of the future leaders in the Association, like Gabriel Njoroge, who holds the dubious distinction of

receiving the first yellow card in a MYSA game. “King Zolo” has gone on to become not only a referee, but Head Referee and finally Chief Referee. He now serves as Head Coach of the MYSA leagues and Assistant Coach to the professional team, Mathare United.

MYSA has made much of its disciplinary rules, though in actual fact, dissent may be more common than their literature suggests. Although the most common comment on the match reports remains “The match was fairly played”, other perspectives do exist:

The match was organized fairly, the weather and field conditions were fine, the conduct of the Ogopa players and coach was poor because they went ahead and beat up the referee. So the match could not be continued.

The referee was not fair.

Conduct of both teams was poor due to bad behaviour like ignorance and rowdiness but there were no serious injuries.

Zamelka’s _____ was misbehaved, threw his uniform on the ground and started abusing the other players.

During the second half, Decosto Club members had an intention of injuring Black Beaver’s players after they were incited by their fans (1999, MYSA Match Reports).

To be fair, such comments are the exception, not the rule.

Youth involvement is stated to be fundamental in MYSA’s management organization. A Sports Council, made up of the chairpersons of the individual football league committees, is responsible for the soccer leagues, while a Community Service Council monitors the non-sporting dimensions of the programme. Both Councils are represented on the Executive Council, which meets on a weekly basis. All meetings are conducted in a business-like fashion with careful attention to the agenda. Within the last year a Management Committee has added an administrative level and is responsible for reviewing issues of management and finance. Its stated purpose involves the

implementation of decisions reached within the Executive Council, though real power clearly resides within this particular committee, considerably more advanced in average age than the Councils.

Accountability, transparency and good governance are sought after in a Kenyan environment, notorious for corruption of big and small alike. "Transparency in all things became of utmost importance. MYSA's weekly executive meeting began with a review of income and expenditure, with all meetings, records and accounts open to members and the public who were allowed to raise questions" (Diang'a, 1997). As Samuel Karanja, the current Executive Council Chairman says, "There are no secrets in MYSA!" (Personal interview, 21/4/99). Such openness may be more ideal than actual, though clearly more transparency exists in MYSA than in many a comparable organization in Kenya. Rumours exist of financial impropriety by former managers. Munro admits that historically the system of financial accountability has been "our weakest point; in fact, our only major weak point" and vows to correct any deficiencies in this area, seeing transparency as paramount for the maintenance of MYSA's reputation (Personal interview, 23/4/99). Further accountability is sought by means of an audit, provided as a contribution in kind, by Coopers and Lybrand.

SOCCER FOR GIRLS

Perhaps MYSA's most significant "first" was the introduction of organized soccer leagues for girls. Kenya remains to a large extent a patriarchal society, where some of the most controversial debates in recent years have involved the question of women's rights.³ That Kenyan women's soccer saw its genesis and found its fulfillment in Mathare is

nothing short of miraculous. The MYSA literature scarcely conveys the magnitude of the achievement. In listing developmental priorities, MYSA recognizes its responsibility to: “Change gender attitudes: The dominant attitude of men toward women and constrained views of women about themselves are major obstacles to development. Providing opportunities for girls to play football and participate in MYSA decision-making changes both” (MYSA c). Njoroge sees the need not just to “empower” girls, but also to “enlighten” boys (Personal interview, 28/1/99).

Seeing girls playing soccer at the Norway Cup transplanted the idea to Mathare. Under the direction of Samuel Karanja, a prominent activist in MYSA activities and currently Chairman of the Executive Council, leagues were formed for the Under 12 and Under 14 age groups in 1992. Rather than progress downwards to the lower age levels, a pattern that had succeeded in the boys’ leagues, it was decided to establish younger age group teams first, so the girls could provide a future nucleus for the upper age categories. Soccer for girls, as might be expected, proved a much greater challenge than for boys, and it took a few years before girls’ soccer became established. Formidable challenges resulted from the prevalence of traditional stereotypical attitudes towards gender.

Proverbs such as “A woman’s work is never done” and “A woman’s place is in the home” can be applied within the shacks of Mathare. Girls are expected to fulfill their gender-specific household roles babysitting younger siblings, assisting their mothers in the kitchen and helping out in such daily chores as laundry, fetching water and petty trading. The prevalence of families with single mothers further multiplies the work load. While boys may well have time to fill, a girl’s work is never done. As Barbara Mensch, Judith Bruce and Margaret Greene put it, in the context of the developing world, “During

adolescence, the world expands for boys and contracts for girls. Boys enjoy new privileges reserved for men; girls endure new restrictions reserved for women” (1998: 2).

The concept of soccer for girls aroused suspicion on all fronts. Girls themselves did not regard soccer as their game, a view reinforced by the boys, who felt it unbecoming. Netball was regarded as the sport for girls, and while boys doubted the ability of girls to play soccer, the girls themselves were limited by a lack of self-confidence in what was traditionally accepted as a boys’ sport. Parents also were concerned that their daughters would find themselves in close proximity with boys, with the attendant sexual complications that might result and thus further divert their daughters’ attention from household responsibilities and future potential. In a milieu which views education as one of the few escape routes from poverty, the whole concept of play offers little serious prospect for the future.

To ease such concerns, MYSA’s management realized that it would have to address such reservations on various fronts. Much of the initial effort was directed towards the parents, who had to be persuaded that their daughters would be safe in MYSA, that soccer was merely one part of the MYSA initiative, and that girls could play an important part in the community service aspect of the organization’s activities, thus developing the leadership and organizational skills necessary to succeed in the larger world in and beyond Mathare. Isabel Mbuthia, a respected former teacher, was assigned the task of helping to alleviate maternal suspicion. Concentrated attention would need to be focused on the girls’ side of the soccer project. Sporting participation and skill development would have to be encouraged in the girls, who, aside from occasionally watching their brothers or friends play the game, had little background in this traditionally

male sporting preserve. It was recognized that the development of soccer for girls, rather than being merely a subservient afterthought to the boys' game, would need time and attention in the form of training and coaching, in order to develop the girls' skill levels. One objective would be for the girls themselves to be trained as coaches, referees and organizers, giving them a sense of ownership in the venture. Practical solutions to babysitting needs and the supervision of younger siblings during games and activities would also need to be found in order to ease the introduction of girls into the sport. More appropriate clothing would be required. Shirts, rather than vests, and shorts would be necessary for the girls.

Most importantly, sponsors of the girls' game would need to be found in order to underwrite some of these extra costs.⁴ Norwegian help meant that programmes for girls could grow, with equipment and clothing needs being taken care of. The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) was also able to sponsor the visit to Kenya of two of the top players from the Norwegian women's world championship side, Gunn Nyborg and Trude Stendal, who led workshops for hundreds of girls throughout Nairobi. Progress was rewarded with a quarter-final place on their first appearance at the Norway Cup for the Under 14 Mathare girls team. The appearance of the girls at the tournament, like their male predecessors before them, represented a "first" for African soccer. The team not only won a special fair play award, but also the hearts of their hosts. Mathare girls began to dominate domestic women's football in Kenya, becoming the national champions for the first time in 1997. To date, 236 girls teams exist throughout the MYSA zones. In addition, at MYSA's prompting, a number of girls' soccer teams have been established in local schools.

Not only have girls been able to cross the gender divide to play football, but they are also involved in MYSA's general programming efforts. A deliberate attempt has been made to employ part-time staff from among the girls at the weekends, so that they can earn enough for their own school fees, thus relieving burdens on cash-strapped families. Some sixty percent of MYSA educational scholarships go to girls, reflecting the high percentage of female volunteers (Mohammed, personal interview, 18/4/99). Njoroge sees such funding as an answer to the concerns of parents regarding the value of their daughters' involvement in sporting and community activity. As long as parents perceive their daughters participation in MYSA to be "useful", rather than "useless", the involvement of girls can be maintained (Njoroge, personal interview, 28/1/99).

Interestingly, in MYSA leagues the ratio of girls to boys, at roughly 1 to 3, is far higher than in minor ice hockey in Canada, where 29,000 girl players compare with 484,000 boys (Jenish, 1998: 54). Further, girls are now coaching some of the boys teams, something that would have been unheard of, and ridiculed, only a decade before. MYSA officials are well aware that yet more work lies ahead before gender equity is achieved:

This is not to say that traditional attitudes and gender roles have been completely swept away simply by girls playing football. Old habits and mind-sets die hard...Even within MYSA, boys outnumber girls by three to one, and the girls' leagues still need to develop better organisational structures so that they can participate more effectively in the organisation as a whole.

Yet it does seem that MYSA is succeeding in helping girls develop greater self-esteem, and that boys are starting to question whether sex is the only way in which they can relate to girls (Williams et al, 1997: 11).

Girls are very positive about the changes that MYSA has precipitated. Sarah, a coach not just of a girls' team but also of an older boys' team, comments: "I'm proud of my teams. The boys look on me as a sister and I treat them like my brothers. The girls' mothers

listen to me and trust me with their daughters...The boys also respect me. In fact playing football has helped me to get to know boys as friends. It's given me the confidence to say 'no' to boys who are interested in sex" (Williams et al, 1997: 14). Progress in the all-star teams towards Norway Cup selection provides a substantial incentive for the girls to avoid pregnancy, common in Mathare at such ages. As a result of their involvement in football, many girls acknowledge a change in their relationship with boys and describe a new-found equality. As one of the girls said to me in a casual conversation, "I feel equal with the boys now". Such statements, while stating the case for gender equality, remain a credit to the vision and enthusiasm of the MYSA pioneers, who persisted with the idea of introducing soccer to the girls of Mathare. It would probably have been far easier for the organizers to institute a programme around an established girls' sport such as netball, thus avoiding many of the gender complications implicit in the introduction of soccer for girls. But the girls themselves wanted to play soccer, and, so the MYSA officials, true to their word, saw the possibility not as a problem, but as a challenge.

HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

While AIDS is "no longer a death sentence" in the West, the dreaded disease still spreads "like nerve gas in a gentle breeze" in much of the rest of the world (*The Economist*, 1999: 42). AIDS now "surpasses malaria and war as the biggest killer in Africa. Nearly half of all HIV cases in the world are in eastern and southern Africa" (McGreal, 1999:2). Kenya has been hit hard. Estimates suggest that "for every 15 adults, one is infected. In urban areas, one out of every eight adults is infected" (Okeyo et al, 1998: vii).

African slums represent some of the highest risk areas in countries which already have the highest HIV/AIDS infection rates in the world. In such an environment, the youth are often most at risk. It was therefore natural that a youth organization like MYSA should turn its attention to the AIDS crisis, especially as its members increasingly have come to see the impact of the AIDS pandemic at first hand. The death of an 18 year old orphan, former street kid and later MYSA player, Adrian, in 1994, galvanized his team mates as well as officials to confront the obvious threat posed by AIDS. Recognizing the need for HIV/AIDS prevention programmes to be an integral part of MYSA's overall strategy and objectives, officials sought to include an HIV/AIDS prevention programme in MYSA's activities.

Having decided to focus on the senior team, all 25 squad members were initially given training as AIDS peer educators. With their hero status to both the girls and boys of the slums, they were afforded a unique platform to promulgate the message of AIDS prevention. Aware of sensitivity to such issues in Kenyan society, "In its first year the programme took a cautious approach, alert to the controversies that had raged over previous efforts to introduce 'family life education' into Kenya. Above all, MYSA had to avoid the accusation of 'promoting promiscuity' among young people, which would have undermined the programme from the start" (Williams et al, 1997: 13). For a while, the acronym MYSA came to stand amongst detractors for "Mathare Youth Sex Association".

While the AIDS initiative represented a start, the scale of the pandemic required a more organized, planned and concerted effort. Further peer educators were trained the next year, raising the total to over 50, and two AIDS Programme Officers were employed to manage the project. The most effective way of reaching the target audience was found

to consist of short presentations by these peer educators before and after MYSA matches. With the continuing assistance of Norwegian Church Aid, further training was undertaken, now including girls as well, enabling youth with status to influence their peers most at risk. Currently 125 boys and girls are trained in AIDS prevention and counselling programmes (Mohammed, personal interview, 23/4/99). Most are top players on the boys and girls all-star teams with Norway Cup experience. Not only are they a potentially vulnerable group, but possessing status among fellow MYSA youth, they are also the most effective group to reach the other youth. Although MYSA claims that some 30,000 youths have been reached by the AIDS programme (MYSA d), the primary objective is to target their own population within the MYSA leagues. As Salim Mohammed, a Project Officer for the programme, engagingly says, "You must send a thief to catch a thief!" (Personal interview, 18/4/99).

MYSA sees its contribution to the fight against AIDS on two levels. On a surface level, young people are reaching other young people as "peer educators", itself an innovative approach, with information about AIDS. As Mohammed admits: "The majority of kids don't think about today or tomorrow" (Personal interview, 23/4/99). Not so obviously but even more profoundly, MYSA seeks to change fundamental attitudes towards the disease. To achieve the latter is a major task, for Mohammed acknowledges that much prejudice is still directed against people with AIDS, "though not as much as there once was" (Personal interview, 4/5/99). Mohammed's comments reflect MYSA's commitment to get beyond the purely preventative dimension of HIV/AIDS programmes in order to change societal attitudes to those who actually have the disease.

The initial course for peer educators is residential, with additional refresher courses being organized to provide support for the peer counsellors and to keep their knowledge current. It may be hard to quantify MYSA's achievement in the campaign against AIDS, and research will be needed to ascertain the effectiveness of MYSA's AIDS programme. Glen Williams, Lucy Ng'ang'a and John Ngugi suggest:

No studies have been undertaken to measure the impact of MYSA's work on young people's sexual attitudes and behaviour. However, there is ample anecdotal evidence to suggest that important changes are taking place. For boys and young men, it is no longer so fashionable to boast about having lots of girlfriends. For girls and young women, having a boyfriend is no longer a 'must' for one's self-esteem. Far more important is doing one's best for one's team and the local community -- by playing, coaching, refereeing or organizing football matches, and helping to keep the environment as clean as possible (1997: 15).

But, just bringing the issue of AIDS into the open in one of the most difficult areas to reach with effective programming, such as Mathare and neighbouring areas, should be recognized as an achievement in itself. Allan Ragi, who has seen his Kenya AIDS NGOs Consortium (KANCO) grow from 7 to over 450 agencies, considers MYSA's AIDS efforts to be a significant initiative. He admits that only "token attention" has historically been paid to issues involving children and youth, identifying 13 to 15 year old girls as the category "most at risk". He acknowledges that, outside of MYSA, peer programmes are not "a well developed idea" (Personal interview, 3/5/99).

POSITIVE PEER PRESSURE

Positive peer pressure is seen not only as paramount in the struggle against AIDS, but also against the glue-sniffing and drug abuse that abounds in Mathare. MYSA

literature declares that: “Our teams have adopted eleven basic rules for winning on and off the field”, with the last of the eleven rules receiving the most prominence:

I will not smoke, drink alcohol or use illegal substances. I will promote environmental awareness and improvement as healthy athletes need a healthy environment (MYSA a).

Soccer is seen as providing meaning in vacuous lives and the provision of a football as potentially liberating: “A top priority in MYSA is to provide every team a football so they can train regularly. That helps many to stop, largely because of peer pressure from their teammates to keep fit”, or put more bluntly, “giving them a football helps them stop, in part because their teammates insist they stop” (MYSA d). Actual match reports may not be quite so unequivocal.

MYSA has operated not just through the stick, but also the carrot. Youth can earn points for their involvement in MYSA activities, which count toward school scholarships, thus enabling and encouraging young people to stay at school. Currently around 100 awards of 10,000 shillings each are made annually. These awards are paid direct to the educational institution to ensure that the money is used for its intended purposes and not diverted, by either MYSA or family member, for other purposes. About sixty percent of awards are made to girls.

Family breakdown is apparent in slum communities, and Mathare is no exception. Often in such communities, where single parents are the norm and orphans commonplace, hard working mothers bear much of the burden of family responsibility. Coaches and leaders in MYSA are regarded as filling a vacuum of male role models within slum life, with Mathare United’s top soccer players perceived by many young people as the new heroes and role models within the slums. Don Bosco Onyatch credits MYSA with

transforming his drug addiction: “Through the seminars, I learned the dangers of my lifestyle. Now MYSA has made me a role model for other youths, who think it impossible to stop taking drugs” (Diang’a, 1997).

Similar testimonials abound from former MYSA members who are making good in the wider world beyond Mathare. Maurice Wambua, a Mathare United player and Kenyan international, acknowledges MYSA’s transformative role in his life: “I joined MYSA when I was ten years old. You could say that I grew up in MYSA. It was through MYSA that I got the chance to play serious football, and I also learned discipline early in life”. Wambua is also fulsome in his praise for MYSA’s transformative influence beyond the soccer pitch: “Anything worthwhile that I’ve achieved, either as a player or a person, is all due to MYSA” (Williams et al, 1997: 12).

Gabriel Njoroge, known on the pitch as “King Zolo”, recalls the time back in 1987 when: “I was just doing nothing and being involved with bad company. Now I’m with good company and I have travelled and I have a job. In these slums these kids have nothing to do so they go to drugs, to alcohol and to thievery. Many boys join (the association) and they have something to do and they become good, even in school, because they’re busy” (Maser, 1995: D 12).

Maurice Njoroge, 27, is one of MYSA’s proudest role models. Attracted by the idea of playing soccer, he joined MYSA at the age of 14 and went on to become the first MYSA graduate of University of Nairobi. Njoroge sees lessons other than soccer in MYSA’s contribution to his life: “Working in MYSA opens up a whole new era of possibilities in life”. Now Chief Manager, Njoroge represents MYSA with an easy

articulation and a quiet passion. Bob Munro identifies him as “one of the African leaders of tomorrow” (Blanchfield, 1999: A3).

Other MYSA graduates are presently undertaking university studies. Will they, like Njoroge, remain loyal to MYSA and return to Mathare to serve their fellows, providing much needed expertise to the organization? Ultimately, however, the effects of MYSA will be judged, not by its high profile “successes”, outstanding as they may be, but by the future progress of the thousands of young people who go through “the system”. To that end, Njoroge recognizes the need to create a database to track the results of MYSA’s influence more accurately. Clearly many MYSA graduates do “fall by the wayside” once their playing days are over (Personal interview, 9/5/99).

FOOTBALL PROWESS AND PROGRESS

Although officials stress that MYSA is “more than a football team”, there is no doubt that soccer is the heart of MYSA. The game has captured the imagination of the slum youth in a way that no other activity has. Like many elsewhere, these children eat, breathe and sleep football. Young girls and boys anxiously check the fixture list displayed in the MYSA offices for their teams – the Ghetto Spirits and the Undugu Saints, the Spice Kids and the Dream Teams, the Black Pélés and the Young Ronaldoes. Some of the pitch names catch the eye as well – for instance, “Soweto” and “Sewage”.

Under 10 leagues contain mixed teams and, together with the Under 12s, consist of 7-a-side teams. The Under 10 “toto” league has no competitive standings, virtually no rules and emphasizes just having fun. The heaviest concentration of teams, both in the boys and girls divisions, occurs in the Under 12 and Under 14 categories. In the older age

groups, participation drops off dramatically, with only 26 boys and 2 girls teams in the Under 18 age category. As the age groups increase, more attention is paid to rules and strategy, allowing the youth to gain valuable experience as coaches and referees, activities that MYSA identifies as falling within its leadership training programmes. Admiring children sit in rapt attention for hours at the feet of “King Zolo”, as he explains the attitude, ethos and strategy needed to succeed in MYSA soccer. In an area which generally lacks male role models “Kingi” is king. The youngsters are sent out to play with mottos such as TEAM – “Together Each Achieves More” – ringing in their ears.

By any standard of evaluation, MYSA ranks as the largest youth football league in Africa -- perhaps more accurately a “barefoot” rather than a “grassroots” league. This season (1999) MYSA fields 750 boys teams, 236 girls teams and 56 mixed teams for a total of 1,042 teams, representing well over 10,000 players. As the season, which stretches from March to December, progresses, zonal “all-star” teams are formed, with the best players proceeding to Mathare United youth teams and selection for the Norway Cup. This selection process has provided a large reservoir of skilled junior players.

MYSA’s sporting honour list continues to grow, making impressive reading (MYSA b). MYSA teams have consistently dominated youth tournaments in Kenya, and beyond. In 1988 they surprised everybody by winning the Kenya Youth Championships at the first attempt. Provincial and national championships have come their way, as have international awards as far afield as Brazil and Norway. MYSA’s most notable international exposure has been in the Norway Cup, the largest youth soccer tournament in the world, which annually attracts more than 1,200 teams from over 30 countries. Mathare teams first participated in this annual competition in 1990, and since then

MYSA teams have been a regular feature of the competition. The Under 12 boys team won the Cup in 1995, a feat they were to repeat in 1998. In 1996 a girls team became the first African representatives at the Cup. The girls Under 14 team took a bronze medal in 1997, in the process being dubbed as the “Cinderella Girls” in the local press, advancing to a silver in 1998. The lure of the Norway Cup is unmistakable, and competition for a place on the plane is intense. In order to prevent unbalanced sides within the MYSA leagues, a ruling was introduced early on that only two players from each team could be considered for selection for the Norway Cup.

A professional team of MYSA “graduates” was formed in 1994 as Mathare United. While the name may bear a coincidental verbal resemblance to Manchester United, the team’s colours correspond with Brazilian colours. Green was selected to reflect Mathare’s environmental concerns, while gold has traditionally symbolized success. Although not the first professional team, it certainly was the youngest team to play professional football in Kenya -- most of the squad members being under twenty. By winning the Super League championship, they gained entrance into the National Premier League this season. Altogether over 200 MYSA players have graduated to play in the National Premier and Super Leagues for various teams, not just Mathare United, and some have won national honours. Two Mathare United players have been selected for the Kenyan national team, the Harambee Stars, and others have played for their country at the Under 23 level. All players for Mathare United continue to come from MYSA teams, maintaining their links with the grassroots organization.

With a celebrated and surprise victory in the Moi Golden Cup in October 1998, Mathare United rocketed to national attention. The *East African Standard* trumpeted:

“The slum kids have finally arrived” (Denyer, 1998: 35). This higher profile has brought Mathare United, and also to a lesser extent MYSA, before a wider audience domestically. By winning the cup, Mathare United qualified to represent Kenya in the African Cup Winners Cup (the Mandela Cup) in 1999. During their first round victory against Malawi’s Bata Bullets in Blantyre, the boys from Mathare caused quite a stir when, armed with shovels, they proceeded to do a Mathare-style cleanup in the Malawian city.

Mathare United has undoubtedly captured the popular imagination with its meteoric rise from obscurity, reputation for fair play and ethnic diversity, in a league renowned for indiscipline and ethnic attachments. Other teams are much more limited in their appeal, being primarily identified with companies, parastatals or the security forces. Some teams, like the heavyweights AFC Leopards and Gor Mahia, are identified exclusively with their ethnic bases, as a result engendering constant crowd tension. A former Kenyan international told me that he had returned to watching Kenyan football as a result of the attractive style of the boys from Mathare: “These kids have brought me back to football” (Personal interview, 8/5/99).

Currently the team of the moment in the National Premier League, Mathare United remain a young team with a future. Munro acknowledges that the professional team is “still a sink” financially,⁵ but the ever optimistic Club Chairman hopes that the team will eventually be able to support the whole MYSA enterprise in a plan that will enable “the best to generate revenue for the rest”. He sees the possibility of lucrative European transfer fees in the future as Mathare’s players become marketable internationally, explaining his rationale in the following terms: “we bake the cake, they put the icing on” (Personal interview, 23/4/99).

Mathare United's best years are clearly ahead, as they reap the rewards of all the junior potential developed in the largest and most organized football league in the country. Munro remains devoted to his team and dream: "My professional work is what I'm doing between Saturdays. Nothing compares with the instant gratification I receive from MYSA" (Personal interview, 23/4/99).

THE SHOOTBACK PROJECT

MYSA's willingness to follow new directions is amply exemplified in the "Shootback Project", an innovative photography venture started in August, 1997. 16 boys and 16 girls, aged 12 to 17, were originally selected for the project, the brainchild of Lana Wong, an artist and photographer, who explains the rationale behind Shootback: "We try to give a creative outlet because the Kenyan school system can be so rigid. It is a way of introducing something that is artistic and something that gives them a chance to express their voice to tell the story from their own perspective" (Lee, 1998). Using simple point-and-shoot cameras, the youths are instructed in the basics of photography and allowed to capture significant aspects of their community, environment and their own lives on film. At first sight such an esoteric programme may seem incongruous in its surroundings, considering how few residents of Mathare own or even could afford to operate a camera. But Wong explains that competence with a camera brings self-esteem, like soccer on the sports level, and also helps the youths to better understand the context of their lives, thus functioning as a developmental resource for many, as well as providing a vocational possibility for those trained in the programme (Personal interview, 15/4/99). In a briefing where Shootback members reflected on their future goals in life, almost all

expressed a desire to become photographers or photojournalists. Funding for the programme has come from the Ford Foundation and UNEP.

The project also provides a unique view for many into the day-to-day life of an impoverished community. A display of photographs on the Internet -- "Through a Child's Eye: Photographs of and by African Children on the Internet" -- represents an attempt to bring images of Mathare to a worldwide audience. A picture, especially of Mathare, is worth a thousand words. One unforgettable image by Julius Mwelu depicts three latrines together, fronted by sacking, with the caption, "pesa mbele, kuhara nyuma" -- "money first, feces behind". The text explains that the use of such a "privilege" costs three shillings per day, thirty shillings per month. The children select their favourite pictures for a journal, accompanied by an explanatory text. Frederick Otieno's account and pictures of a potential "necklacing" make sobering reading. Ali Barisa's picture of a dead thief's crushed head is more macabre and illustrates the thin line between life and death in Mathare. Such graphic images surely provide a rude awakening for first world observers.

Postcards and handsomely mounted images are offered for sale and some photos have already appeared in the press. Earnings are returned to the photographer in the form of school scholarships, enabling some of the children to return to school, while ten percent is held in a personal account for each child. Wong is quick to stress the necessity of education in the children's lives (Personal interview, 12/5/99).

An international internet exchange between four cities, London, Nairobi, Cape Town and Dhaka, forms the photographic text of "A Tale of Four Cities", which provides a forum for interaction between children of very different social and geographical

backgrounds, giving the Mathare children an opportunity, in Wong's words, to "reach into other worlds" (Personal interview, 12/5/99). The internet exchange encourages dialogue: "These conversations are accumulating to form the core of an ongoing, interactive website through which the children tell their stories and invites (sic) others to contribute theirs" (www.photonet.org). A desire to fully exploit the opportunities provided by the worldwide web is evident not just in photographic exchange, but also in footballers advertising their skills on the web.

Exhibitions of the Mathare pictures have been held at the National Museum of Kenya and the Photographers' Gallery in London, while a book showcasing the images, entitled Shootback: Pictures by Kids from the Nairobi Slums, is due to be published in September, 1999. Originally expecting to be heavily involved in shooting for the book, Wong came to see, as time progressed, that it was the children "from the inside" who must tell their own stories (Personal interview, 12/5/99). It is hoped that the book can not only encourage cross-cultural understanding and stimulate increased consciousness, but also generate funds for MYSA. Wong also hopes that future plans will allow for a dark room, allowing more intensive photographic training. She sees the Shootback project as a significant alternative point of entry into MYSA for those uninterested in sport, advancing the argument that art itself can assist development (Personal interview, 12/5/99).

NEW DIRECTIONS

Bob Munro considers that it will take some ten to fifteen years for MYSA to reach its full potential (Personal interview, 23/4/99). For now, MYSA continues to

expand in new directions, as well as increasing its capacity in more familiar areas. The recent acquisition of trucks and tractors to aid in a daily process of refuse collection has enabled the scale of weekend clean-up activity to expand, as teams of youth armed with hoes, shovels and wheelbarrows are being augmented by the new equipment which allows a much more effective and regular refuse collection service. Improved health is an obvious by-product. With similar intentions, MYSA hopes to soon begin monitoring the water quality within Mathare, in coordination with area schools. While acknowledging that such a venture may have political overtones, Njoroge discounts the possibility of conflict with the authorities (Personal interview, 9/5/99).

A number of MYSA children have themselves at various times been familiar with the inside of a police cell. In 1997 MYSA instigated a project at the Juvenile Court in Nairobi with a view to assisting remanded children who are often held in dire conditions. Three times a week MYSA staff and volunteers bring milk and bread to feed “parking boys”, lost children or youth picked up in various police swoops. They have also facilitated contact with parents, guardians or other authorities in order to secure their release. MYSA claims that over 2,000 children have been traced in this way .

With its increasing expansion into so many areas beyond its original soccer pitch, there is no denying the impression that MYSA is an organization on the move. What of the future? Replication seems to be a favourite word in Njoroge’s vocabulary of the future MYSA, or rather MYSAs. He maintains that the basic principles upon which MYSA’s success is founded can be replicated anywhere (Personal interview, 28/1/99). A number of other countries have shown interest in adapting the programme to their needs. Njoroge is particularly excited by the possibilities in Kakuma refugee camp in northern

Kenya, where over 60,000 refugees, most of whom are children, have been brought together as part of the flotsam and jetsam of war in the Horn of Africa. MYSA's Peter Serry has acted as consultant in cooperation with Dutch aid officials in setting up soccer leagues, involving some 500 teams, within the refugee camp. As far as duplicating the clean-up operations as in Mathare, Njoroge smiles wistfully as he recounts that the conditions within Kakuma may well be preferable to those in Mathare itself (Personal interview, 28/1/99). In the arid conditions of northern Kenya, the greatest environmental needs are for trees, and so the community service component of the programme has devolved primarily to tree planting.

While Mathare's success story may seem to highlight the silver lining in any of Mathare's clouds, darker clouds may well be on MYSA's horizon. With success increasingly coming to MYSA, it is bound to attract its share of enemies. Njoroge admits that some are jealous of MYSA's exposure and connections, but cautions envious critics to realize that life in a slum is "no bed of roses" (Personal interview, 21/4/99).

Greater visibility may also be bringing increased threats to MYSA's future. The phenomenon of land-grabbing reported daily in the local press is a major concern to MYSA officials. Increasing demands for spare land are obvious in the slum areas. Construction has recently encroached on MYSA's first pitch behind Eastleigh Community Centre, provided by the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). At the same time MYSA volunteers have been levelling an area in Komarock earmarked for a home pitch and new headquarters office location. A move to a new location may substantially alter the internal dynamics of the organization. Journalist Alex Diang'a provides a warning regarding MYSA's future:

While the project has succeeded beyond anyone's wildest dreams, it is not without its frustrations, the most pressing being lack of space thanks to "slum sprawl". Recently, politicians have exacerbated the problem by colluding with the City Council authorities, illegally allotting themselves title deeds on the playing fields, leaving the young without a place to practice. If this continues, MYSA's now skilled footballers will be back to the muddy lanes between Mathare's corrugated iron shacks, with no goal-posts, no lighting and little hope to continue (1997).

With declining access to soccer pitches, MYSA's remarkable growth would be hard to maintain, for, without soccer, MYSA's long term future would be uncertain.

Munro lists various priorities for the organization: "some more garbage trucks, buying or leasing fields to protect them for future Mathare youth, a reasonable main office plus bringing MYSA back to the communities with small offices in the other 15 zones, some computers and reasonable office equipment" (Personal correspondence, 5/7/99). But such priorities cost money, and although MYSA's current budget of half a million US dollars may appear huge relative to the "less than \$1,000 annually we started with", Munro considers that "relative to the needs and possibilities there is still a huge gap" (Personal correspondence, 5/7/99).

ENDNOTES

1. Many observers would place Nairobi's population around the three to four million mark. Another census is scheduled for August, 1999.
2. In fact, "the world is now populated by the largest generation of youth in human history... roughly 900 million 10-19 year olds in developing countries" (Mensch et al., 1998: 2).
3. Incidents and debates regarding wife-beating frequently come to the attention of press and courts, while the S.M. Otieno case in 1987 led to a national debate as to gender roles in society.
4. Voluntary contributions from the Nordic community in Kenya had proved helpful, but more consistent and regular inflows of funds were necessary. Consequently, a three year

Development Plan was submitted to potential sponsors, resulting in the involvement of a Norwegian NGO, The Stromme Memorial Foundation. Following the World Conference on Sport and the Environment in Lillehammer in 1996, at which MYSA was represented, more secure funding from NORAD was established.

5. It should be pointed out that Bob and Ingrid Munro have poured much of their personal savings into Mathare United (Personal correspondence, 5/7/99).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

One comment in MYSA's guest book is representative of many: "One has to see MYSA to believe it. Congratulations". By most standards, MYSA has been remarkably successful, a virtual Cinderella story in an African slum, a veritable miracle in Mathare (Hutchison, 1994). Considering all the circumstances arraigned against the underprivileged who come from areas such as Mathare, MYSA has apparently succeeded against all odds. How has MYSA accomplished so much and what lessons can be learnt for development? In an address to the Commonwealth Conference on Sport and Development in Edinburgh in October 1997, Peter Serry, then Chief Manager of MYSA, stated that MYSA is "not just another small charitable project in a distant corner of Africa. It has already yielded some compelling policy insights and practical lessons for sustainable development in Africa" (MYSA c).¹ MYSA raises some penetrating questions while suggesting some tentative conclusions regarding the linkage between sport and development.

In this final chapter I shall return to the research questions that consider aspects of the relationship between sport and development, make some observations and recommendations regarding MYSA as an organization and appraise the significance of the case study with regard to the overarching relationship between sport and development. An unresolved tension becomes apparent between the obvious accomplishments and promise of MYSA on the one hand and the weaknesses of its functionalist assumptions and neo-colonial implications on the other.

Echoing the Mandles' conclusions regarding basketball in Trinidad and Tobago, I would suggest that it is "difficult to be other than celebratory" (1988: 73) concerning MYSA's contributions to Mathare. As Sammy Gitau, who works with street kids in the slums, says: "MYSA is giving the kids in Mathare a face-lift" (Personal interview, 22/4/99). Whatever weaknesses the organization has, and no organization is without some, MYSA remains nothing less than a bold and imaginative venture. Even critics are forced to acknowledge that MYSA has "made a difference in Mathare" (Personal correspondence).

ENLARGING PEOPLE'S CHOICES

In this chapter, the central research questions are revisited in light of the case study, beginning with the central question: *Can sport be used as an effective vehicle for grassroots development in the South?* Such a broad question revolves around a definition of development. In adopting the definition of human development popularized by the UNDP, that development is the process of "enlarging people's choices" (1998: 14), it may confidently be argued that MYSA has enlarged people's, especially young people's, choices within Mathare.

Addressing the Governing Council of UNEP at their twenty-fifth anniversary celebrations in 1997, Maurice Njoroge summarized the problems of Mathare's residents in terms of choices, or rather a lack of them, concluding: "It is a matter of choice" (1997: 33). Most of Mathare's endemic problems can be reduced to a singular lack of choice. Few residents have the luxury of choice. Take, for example, garbage disposal. Africans, renowned though they may be for their natural recycling inclinations, have little choice, in

the absence of any garbage collection service, but to dump their unrecyclable garbage in the few open spaces within the slums. Before long, a sizeable mound of rubbish accumulates, threatening significant health hazards. Similarly, the AIDS pandemic removes a population's choices. HIV/AIDS education is certainly providing some young people under threat from AIDS a greater freedom of choice -- a choice of life, for one of the most certain "exit routes" from slums like Mathare is death. Environmentally, as Bob Munro emphasizes, the poor person cuts down the last tree because he has exhausted other options (Personal interview, 23/4/99). Similarly, once her other economic choices are exhausted, a woman may resort to selling her only remaining possession -- her body. The same lack of choice determines whether one is forced to sell bodies or charcoal. Munro is convinced that the slum dweller will make the right choice in life, if he or she is presented with sufficient choice. Such confidence, while laudable in theory, may need to be verified empirically. Even Munro acknowledges, "If I lived in Mathare, I couldn't afford my ethics!" (Personal interview, 23/4/99).

Education expands choices. Realignment of gender roles allows women a greater array of choices. Involvement in a project like MYSA allows greater freedom of choice for the youth, which may significantly impact their future lives as adults. Beldine Achieng talks of the reaction of Mathare residents to the expanding possibilities provided by the Shootback programme: "It was amazing to them, one of them told me, since they live in a big slum and they have never seen youth taking pictures in such a way. Only tourists are the ones who come to the slum and take photos" (www.mediazw.com). As a result of her involvement, Maureen Atieno's horizons may have expanded: "My ambition in life is to

become a politician and who knows, perhaps I will become the first woman president in Kenya!” (www.mediazw.com).

While there is little doubt that MYSA has enlarged choices for young people within Mathare, a more significant question that may need to be asked is how widespread and sustainable such expansion of choice has become. How extensive is MYSA’s influence beyond its active inner core of players, volunteers and regulars? While numbers of MYSA participants may appear impressive on paper, how involved are many of them beyond an occasional soccer match? MYSA may have a more limited impact than its promotional literature propounds, raising questions as to the emphasis between élite -- in this case at a Mathare all-star level -- and more general sports participation.

MYSA claims to be a grassroots developmental initiative. The ideas of development in earlier decades that encompassed multimillion dollar dams or state-of-the-art airports have largely been replaced by more practical and more human-centred projects. MYSA illustrates the human side of development, where development programmes allow for an expansion of people’s choices and illustrate above all the power of mobilization for a cause. While sport clearly plays a role in MYSA’s overall emphasis on “human development”, can sport of and by itself make a direct contribution to the development process?

A POINT OF ENTRY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Francis Kimanzi, or “Kim”, readily recalls his reaction when given the chance to play football with a real “green and white” football, in contrast to the “made in Mathare” combinations of string and plastic that he and his friends had been familiar with. At the

time he recalls, “I didn’t realize that a football could change my life”. MYSA attracted him because it spoke his language -- “football being the name of the game round here” (Personal interview, 18/4/99). Kimanzi has since gone on to captain Mathare United, travel widely, study photography for a year in Norway, manage the Shootback Project and become MYSA’s Project Manager responsible for youth leadership and training. For Kim football provided a point of entry to a wider world of personal development, an opportunity to use not just his feet but also his mind.

Sport is an essential part of MYSA, without which the continuance of any of its other endeavours would be fraught with difficulty, raising questions as to their ultimate sustainability. Soccer is the magnet that attracts the youth to MYSA, and provides them exposure to the varied developmental messages for which MYSA serves as conduit. Development practitioners may observe that where MYSA has succeeded, and succeeded remarkably, has been in its recognition and promulgation of soccer as a point of entrance for developmental initiatives. Sport is one of the most effective drawing cards there is -- probably now more effective in the developing world than the developed, where increasing alternatives to sport exist.

MYSA’s promotional literature suggests that:

Sport is often ignored or treated as a marginal elite activity in national development plans and projects. The same plans often appeal for greater “public participation” and the “mobilization of youth” but with little success. MYSA is based on the simple fact that every football team is a “mobilized youth group” (MYSA d).

The concept of every sport’s team being a “mobilized youth group” may have been underutilized by the development community. A subsidiary research question: *Should sports organizations be more cognizant of the opportunities for developmental impact?*

can be unequivocally answered in the affirmative. After all, a sports team is a ready made “mobilized” youth group and, as MYSA demonstrates, has the potential for additional impacts beyond its narrow organizing principles. Trends are noticeable even at the highest sporting level. The Olympics, following the example set at the Lillehammer Winter Games in particular, have increasingly sought to be considered “green”, with the 2000 Sydney Olympics vying for the title of the “greenest” games ever. A further question: *Should developmental organizations be more attuned to the possibilities of sport providing a point of entry for grassroots involvement in the developmental process?* can also be affirmatively answered. This is especially true in areas where youth are to be targeted, but may not be so efficacious in the case of adults, where greater pressures of life may impact on sporting opportunities. Sport may be especially viable in a place like Mathare, where significant educational options are not perceived to be obvious. Any sports team can be transformed into a “mobilized youth group” for development, even if such developmental initiatives play second fiddle to sporting priorities. Njoroge readily admits that the “community service” division of MYSA’s mandate is the harder sell, and indeed questions its survival were the football side of MYSA to collapse (Personal interview, 28/1/99).

Linkages, such as those in MYSA between sport, the environment and AIDS, may not be immediately apparent, but may well be a key to development initiatives in the next century. The problems that afflict the developing world are seldom one-sided or monocausal. Multiperspectival approaches may encourage more holistic approaches to development.

MYSA may well need to evaluate whether it relies too much on sport, at times even evaluating whether it sees sport as an end in itself. With the high profile accorded Mathare United, particularly in the last year, the elite sporting dimension of the organization has gained added emphasis. It is important not to exaggerate the developmental implications of MYSA. Sport, not development, is at the heart of MYSA, which is not to say that MYSA does not have significant developmental implications and potential. However, an exclusively sporting focus may be unnecessarily limiting. Not every child within a slum is a “football freak” and, admittedly, a number of street children fall outside MYSA’s net. Perhaps similar projects to Shootback can provide alternative points of entry for those not so interested in sport. The Shootback Project, with its capacity for international exposure, can provide significant developmental impact, and may highlight the potential of art to influence development. Art’s linkage with development, like sport’s, may be historically underdeveloped.

In the opinion of this researcher, MYSA demonstrates beyond question the utility of considering sport as a point of entry into grassroots development. But it must be stressed that sport, while an effective vehicle for grassroots development, can be no more than a vehicle. It is questionable whether sport by itself can effect significant development priorities. It also underscores the necessity of a broader approach to human development -- something that MYSA has wisely seen.

THE CREATION OF COMMUNITY

Celebrations continued long into the night in Mathare at the news of Mathare United’s shock victory in the Moi Golden Cup Final at Eldoret in October last year. It is

not often that Mathare residents have had something to cheer about. Eric Hobsbawm's comment may have found fulfillment that night: "The imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people" (1983: 143). Mathare United has certainly given Mathare a profile in the sporting world it did not have before, with the "fairy-tale" story of "the boys from the slums" capturing the imagination of many Kenyans.

A number of times I heard variations on the comment: "Before I was ashamed to say that I came from Mathare. Now I'm proud to be from Mathare". The Mandles found that the Trinidad and Tobago basketball leagues were one of the few areas where the lower strata in society could "demonstrate their individual self-worth and achievement" (1988: 14). The MYSA leagues have assisted in this development of worth and creation of community. Speaking in the British House of Lords following a visit to MYSA, Lord Newby commented that: "sport is not simply a frivolous adjunct to real life but can be a very powerful force for personal and community development" (www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co). Community survival, according to Richard Gruneau and David Whitson, depends on forces other than just the economic, marginal at best in Mathare: "Community survival also requires a collective sense of identification and public spirit, which in turn requires the survival of other kinds of organizations and associations that can regularly renew social relationships" (1993: 207). MYSA has a unique opportunity to fulfill such a role in Mathare and neighbouring areas. As Heinemann points out, sport is often seen as a solution to some of the problems created by rapid social change and the dissolution of traditional forms of identity accompanying processes of modernization: "Voluntary organizations remain durable social groups that

transmit a feeling of solidarity, facilitate conviviality, engender a conformity of social aims, and solve identity problems” (1993: 147).

In discussing the construction of community in a Canadian context, Gruneau and Whitson show how “Minor hockey got parents involved in community life. It was part of what made the suburbs feel like communities” (1993: 155). They suggest that for young people, “...a sports team is likely to be the first group outside their family that they have really *belonged* to. Almost certainly it will be the first time they have any experience of being part of, and contributing to, something larger than themselves or their families” (1993: 155).

Children from Mathare often do not have the family backing that junior hockey players may take for granted in Canada. MYSA can fill such a vacuum in young people’s lives, creating a much-needed sense of community. For many young people within Mathare and environs, MYSA represents the social epicentre of their lives. As the Mandles found in their West Indian experience, “basketball is the central organizing focus of their lives...Basketball constitutes an important -- even central -- structural focus to their lives” (1988:17-18). MYSA fulfills a similar role in many children’s lives in Mathare. As an orphan, Salim Mohammed regards Mama Fatuma Children’s Home as his first family, but quickly adds, “MYSA is my second family” (Personal interview, 4/5/99). Reporter Eric Odanga ascribes MYSA’s success to the fact that they are “one big family” (Personal interview, 20/4/99), fulfilling their acronym TEAM: “Together Each Achieves More”. Few organizations in Nairobi can involve such a spirit of voluntarism. Critics may suggest that such volunteers are not entirely altruistic, especially considering the scale of

potential rewards at MYSA's disposal — jobs, travel, scholarships -- which are usually not readily accessible to residents of the slums.

Ethnic strains, so prevalent within general Kenyan society, are not immediately obvious in MYSA. Linguistically Swahili, rather than tribal vernaculars, is used as a *lingua franca*. In fact, I have come across few Kenyan organizations where Swahili was used so exclusively and where so little ethnic tension was apparent. With players from so many ethnic groups, as well as its reputation for exciting play, Mathare United is attracting support from around a country where ethnic clashes have in recent years threatened the fabric of society.

The experience of MYSA cannot be read without some reference to Janet Lever's seminal study of Brazilian football. She would point to community building as evidence that "sport helps complex modern societies cohere" (1983: 3). Sport has long been recognized in the creation of community. However, it is important in emphasizing sport's community building function not to lose sight of sport's double-edged power to also cause division between communities for, as Gruneau and Whitson point out, "while sport can bring people together it can also divide them" (1993: 217).

CAPACITY BUILDING

In the Epilogue of their fascinating study, the Mandles recognize the latent developmental potential locked in grassroots basketball in Trinidad and Tobago. Noting that the basketball leagues are organized at the grassroots level, they identify the growth of a competency potentially valuable in larger processes of development. As the Mandles came to realize, grassroots communities are not lacking in raw talent: "for these are

people whose skills and attributes are frequently undercounted when an inventory of the country's human capital is undertaken" (1988: 73). They identify the organizational and administrative skills of those involved, who in working together "creatively and cooperatively" (1988: 73) demonstrate to themselves as importantly as to others, their abilities and potential. The Mandles claim that "outside of basketball, this resource has not been effectively utilized" (1988: 73).

Parallels between the football leagues of MYSA and the basketball leagues in Trinidad and Tobago are obvious. In both examples, a series of committees attend to the organizational, technical and financial needs of both leagues. However, in size there is little similarity, with the Mandles' advancing as evidence of "complexity" the needs of 33 teams (1988: 52-53), in comparison to Mathare's one professional and 1,042 amateur teams. Clearly administrative skills are needed in running -- quite so efficiently -- the largest soccer league in Africa. More remarkable still is the fact that such organization has been achieved without the benefits of computerization. Sport therefore can provide a learning environment for much-needed capacity building. MYSA employs delegation strategies, and many officials are used to covering for each other, in the process expanding both perspective and capacity. It is also to MYSA's credit that it has gone beyond the West Indian example in seeking to branch out beyond just the sporting arena in order to benefit the wider community. In these areas also the release of unbounded grassroots potential is encouraged, allowing the objects of developmental practice to become its subjects.

James Frey could well be speaking of MYSA when he emphasizes the capacity benefits gained in connection with sport: "These organizations are training grounds, in the

lessons of administration and organization. Leaders are trained, literacy is enhanced, work values are learned, communication skills are improved, and collective task accomplishments are made easier” (1988: 70). He concludes that: “sport settings are an easily established training ground for a population that lacks the organizational and administrative skills deemed necessary for the transition of a country to the next level of development” (1988: 70). In certain circumstances, as in Mathare, sport may well provide one of the few avenues available for such capacity building.²

THE RESILIENCE OF SLUM DWELLERS

Grassroots development is often equated with rural development, a consequence of the historical position of poor African countries having predominantly rural economies. But developmental problems in Kenya, once thought of as rural, are increasingly urban problems. Although an estimated 69 percent of Kenyans still live on the land (Bellamy, 1999: 111), the demographic balance is continually shifting towards the urban centres. Cities, such as Nairobi, were planned in colonial times for populations in the hundreds of thousands. With the explosive birth rates of the last few decades, the multiplication of vehicles and an exodus from rural to urban areas, such cities are increasingly incapable of sustaining populations in the millions. Basic services, such as refuse collection, are non-existent in places like Mathare, necessitating the intervention of concerned community organizations such as MYSA.

High density population ratios, in contrast to the scattered nature of rural demographics, open up particular windows of opportunity for sports organizations to mobilize their members in activities that can benefit the broader community. The future

of cities will be critical in the coming century, and the ability of sport to motivate and mobilize should not be overlooked in future development strategies. If an organization can succeed in an area, locked into degradation and deprivation, like Mathare, then one feels it should succeed anywhere, given the will. However, as a Swedish developmental official, considering MYSA's unique genesis and context within Mathare, told me: "You can't copy MYSA" (Personal interview, 17/4/99). Slum populations may realize that nothing will get done unless they do it themselves, having learnt by painful experience not to rely on anyone to do it for them. There may well be a community of the streets in slum areas that does not exist in the more impersonal and affluent suburbs elsewhere. All over the world, and often unrecognized, there is a resilience possessed by the poorest of the poor. For as Maurice Njoroge says: "You've got to be smart to survive in Mathare, otherwise you die" (Personal interview, 23/4/99).

Speaking in a House of Lords debate on international development in 1997, Lord Newby paid tribute to MYSA: "The imagination, maturity and success of those who run the Mathare project challenge the perception of many people about the ability of the poor and the young in the most unpromising circumstances to help themselves" (www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co). MYSA's success flies in the face of the patronizing attitudes of some development workers and aid donors, who fail to appreciate not only the resilience, but the basic commonsense, of many slum-dwellers. Few Western developmental executives could last a week in Mathare. How to harness the undoubted resilience and creativity of the poor remains a key developmental priority.

YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Bob Munro explains that one of the secrets of MYSA's success is that the organization has grown out of the real needs of its participants, rather than their perceived needs as identified by development "experts" (Personal interview, 23/4/99). Apocryphal or not, Munro is reported to have asked the youth themselves what they wanted. The answer came back: "football", providing the basis of the whole MYSA initiative. MYSA's promotional literature makes the claim that MYSA is "organized and run *by* youth with an average age of 16 years", suggesting that the "views, talents and energy" of youth, especially poor youth, are "largely ignored in development planning and projects" (MYSA c). Such claims raise questions as to the encouragement of youth "ownership" in developmental programmes designed for young people. Many a developmental project targets youth, though few make the claims that MYSA does concerning youth actually "doing" development. Adolescence itself is often ignored as a distinct life phase:

Adolescence is a powerfully formative time of transition to adulthood, roughly concurrent with the second decade of life. What happens between the ages of 10 and 19, whether for good or ill, shapes how girls and boys live out their lives as women and men -- not only in the reproductive arena, but in the social and economic realm as well. Yet, despite its impact on human development, adolescence has been sidelined as a research and policy subject in developing countries (Mensch et al., 1998: 1).

Sport is intrinsically linked with youth, as is evident in MYSA. In making the extra connection between youth and development, again so evident in MYSA, sport is brought together with youth and development. The Commonwealth is one of the few international organizations that has sought to incorporate sport into "the mainstream" of its development efforts, emphasizing the natural appeal of sport "to provide an attractive

alternative to the street” for youth-at-risk (Hillmer, 1996: 86). Sport can assume a major influence in the youth culture of a country like Kenya, where, as a result of the burgeoning growth rates of the 70s and 80s, almost half the population can be categorized as youth. A CSDP promotional video suggests that “long overlooked and underutilized, sport is a highly effective, low-cost development tool” (1999).

MYSA not only encourages youth, but also indigenous, ownership. Aside from Bob Munro, the management and staff of the organization all come from Mathare and environs. Outside of funding relationships, primarily with the Dutch and Norwegians, MYSA is not reliant on the usual coterie of expatriates in development.

Critics of MYSA have pointed out that the youth themselves are allowed little more than a token voice in the running of the organization. Adults dominate most of the decision-making, as is evidenced by their preponderance in the make-up of and participation on the councils and management committee. While opportunity for the youth themselves to sit on councils does exist, whether they have the capacity to be influential in such fora is more open to question. But in comparison to most developmental organizations, which incorporate the rhetoric of youth ownership within their jargon, there is surely a much greater feeling of ownership by youth within MYSA. As Salim Mohammed says: “Youth are now talking out, before youth were forgotten” (Personal interview, 18/4/99). Youth grow older and with advancing years and experience gain the confidence to speak out. Though a process of “graying” is evident within MYSA as the first generation of youth reaches adulthood, Maurice Njoroge at 27 is hardly old. Addressing UNEP’s Governing Council on the occasion of its 25th Anniversary, coinciding with his own 25th year, Njoroge captured the dynamism and urgency of youth:

“We are young and we are optimists” in a speech entitled “Our future is NOW” (1997: 33).

GENDER IMPLICATIONS

Of all MYSA's initiatives, perhaps the inclusion of girls within the soccer leagues is its most interesting and courageous. Girls are equally represented with boys in the Shootback Project, as well as in the AIDS workshops. Of the scholarships that go to MYSA youths, the majority of recipients are girls. Certainly girls are in evidence around the MYSA offices, where they hold a number of part-time jobs. Given that sport has typically been thought to reinforce patriarchy, the research question: *Can sports provide a unique opportunity to break down patriarchal structures and male dominated societies, leading to more general developmental impacts?* assumes significant importance. Development too, in spite of its recent emphasis on gender equity, has not always been women friendly, as the Mandles point out: “the experience of Trinidad would tend to support the hypothesis advanced in the literature that the process of economic development may, in some respects, work to the detriment of women” (1988: 46).

Critics may suggest that MYSA's claims of gender equality are overblown, arguing that women still possess no real power within the organization, remaining little more than a token presence in the circles of power. Though represented on the various councils, girls and women may still be reticent to make their voices heard, allowing councils to be dominated by males. While there may well be truth in such allegations, it is always necessary to consider how far the girls have come. In an aggressively masculine

culture, such as in Mathare, the fact that girls are playing a role in a soccer-promoting organization is an achievement in itself.³ Njoroge counsels patience, recalling that girls have only been a focus within MYSA for half its history and identifying teenage girls coming up through the system, who will help to provide the organization with the leadership requirements necessary in the future (Personal interview, 9/5/99).

MYSA claims to see results in terms of greater self-respect and dignity among the girls, though questions again may need to be asked as to how much impact MYSA makes on the lives of those girls beyond the insider group involved on all-star teams and in particular programmes. As a result of their domestic duties, teenage girls often lack the time that boys possess. Clearly it is harder for girls to devote time to the MYSA leagues.

Other voices may be heard in praise of MYSA's provision of activities for the boys. In an NGO climate that increasingly emphasizes programmes for girls, especially in the reproductive health area, boys are arguably neglected in developmental budgets.

FUNCTIONALISM AND SPORT

I therefore suggest that sport can play a significant part in the development process, particularly by providing a point of entry for development initiatives. I argue that MYSA has, at least to some extent, helped to expand people's choices, foster community, develop overlooked and undervalued capacities, encourage indigenous ownership as well as empower both youth and women. But the functional approach to sport, so central to MYSA's aims and objectives, stands open to question from alternative positions. On a conceptual level, therefore, one of the lines of enquiry in this thesis involves an investigation into a central debate in the sociology of sport: *Whether sport serves a*

consensual purpose, maintaining order and facilitating integration, as functionalist or order theories suggest, or whether sport is essentially alienating, perpetuating structures of inequality, as conflict theories posit. I wish now to focus specifically on sport's role within MYSA.

Sport is sometimes invested with virtually mythical properties. Its positive function within society is often assumed. Many a Development Plan sings the praises of sport's potential contribution to the nation, though remains silent about any potential negative consequences. Sport is assumed to make a positive contribution to development, as in Kenya's 1994-1996 Development Plan:

Sports provide the physical and recreational relief to society, replenishing the spent energies of 'wananchi' [citizens] for sustained and continuous effort at nation building. ...Participation in sports also plays a critical role in political and national integration as various ethnic groups bring to bear their particular talents in various sports, all for the glory of Kenya.

The most important aspect of sports in national development is that it enhances social discipline. In learning to play as a team, we learn to work and live as a community (Republic of Kenya, 1994: 248).

Opening the 4th All-Africa Games in 1987, Daniel arap Moi proclaimed that: "Sport is one factor that unifies all people regardless of their race, tribe, ethnicity or denomination" (in Gordia, 1989: 270). In a similar vein, Munro suggests that "MYSA is about the future of Kenya, national unity and nation building" (Personal correspondence, 5/7/99).

Arbena lists some of the familiar functionalist arguments associated with the importation of "modern" western sport forms into Latin America:

Sport encourages hygiene and health; sport teaches cooperation and discipline; sport molds better workers; sport reduces vice and crime; sport makes people happier; and, it is hoped, a successful sports programme or a positive sports image can attract foreign investment and tourism" (1993: 154).

MYSA would identify with such functions in its organizational experience, from reduction of disease as a result of its environmental cleanups and HIV/AIDS programmes to the influx of Norwegian tourists who visit MYSA every year to view the organization's activities at first hand. MYSA would credit football itself with getting youth off the streets into more worthwhile endeavours and more productive lifestyles.

Frey provides an even more expansive list of contributions that sport can make towards development:

It is a mechanism of conflict avoidance and societal integration. It serves as an avenue of excitement and tension-release without risking the fabric of society. Sport networks serve as a resource in the development of local human capital thereby serving as a source of resistance to internal and external domination. It is a training ground for skill development as well as a conduit for value training and the dispersion of crucial information (1988: 71).

All these characteristics are visible and promulgated in the MYSA experience.

MYSA's basic outlook is unabashedly functionalist, clearly conforming to the AGIL acronym of Parsonian sociological "functional prerequisites" or Stevenson and Nixon's "social functions of sport". MYSA football is considered to promote an exciting outlet in a depressing environment. Many of the administrative functions that revolve around the leagues implicitly or explicitly encourage the formation of leadership and character. Integration is an obvious benefit of the venture. Cathartic benefits are identified in sport's reduction of aggression and tension, channelling youths into productive rather than destructive outlets. Success at sports -- as well as in more vocationally based programmes such as the Shootback Project -- is seen as providing opportunity for employment, and may even be viewed as an exit route from the slums.⁴ Other benefits of

sporting success, for instance as a result of Mathare United's high profile entry into the Kenyan football world, are regarded as fostering a sense of community.

MYSA's functionalist philosophy endows sport with almost mythical capacities. Sport is often seen as saviour, as evidenced in a number of the press headlines: "Miracle in the Mathare Slums" (Hutchison, 1994) or "Soccer as Savior" (Maser, 1995). The rise to success of "the boys from the slums" embraces a salvation theme. Such quasi-religious terminology, not uncommon in sporting journalism, may make MYSA a future victim of overblown and unrealistic hopes. MYSA may perhaps be seen as straddling "the gap between lived experiences and human hopes, in a world with too many broken promises and too many unrealized dreams" (in Gruneau and Whitson, 1993: 217).

In a normative realm, where sport is perceived to provide what is missing in mundane life, sport may join with belief in a blinkered if not blind faith. MYSA gives the impression of being able to deliver a fairness unattainable in normal life. Frey explains such a feeling: "It is, perhaps, an expression that represents how we feel the world ought to operate, a climate of peace and cooperation. Yet the reality of internal and external relations suggests the opposite is usually the case" (1988: 79). Sporting events can exaggerate differences and reinforce divisions. Comments such as Steve Tshwete's that: "Sport should be playing a role of reconciliation" (*The Economist*, 1998: 22) have been heard in the new South Africa, are widespread in Bosnia today and will no doubt be heard in Kosovo tomorrow. However, reality may be less rosy. Even a school sports tournament may show that few significant friendships are built between participants; rather divisions may be emphasized. On a national basis, "sport can both reinforce and accentuate the division of countries into rival and even hostile regions" (Leys, 1982: 305). The Olympic

movement, while preaching a universalistic gospel, “represents not so much the transcendence of nation-states as their rearticulation and reaffirmation” (Wilson, 1998: 23). In the words of *The Economist* “...sport reflects life: neither wholly noble nor entirely nasty, but a spectrum of behaviour that stretches from one to the other” (1998: 6). The resilience of the idea that sport has the potential to enhance global understanding may be a product of hopeful, even wishful, thinking: at heart, we want it to be true. Sports, as Clifford Geertz has pointed out, have a mythical dimension, being “a story we tell ourselves about ourselves” (1972: 26).

MYSA also finds itself balanced, somewhat uneasily perhaps, between its historic commitment to mass participation sport in the MYSA leagues and its increasing involvement in achievement sport, whether in Norway Cup selections or more recently in Mathare United’s entrance into the world of professional soccer. MYSA may find it increasingly difficult to counterbalance the forces of mass and elite sport.

For the best footballers, the glittering prize of being selected for the Norway Cup is a powerful motivating force. Most MYSA players will not reach this pinnacle of achievement, but all can be winners off the field in the game of life, which requires even more stamina, determination and courage (Williams et al, 1997: 15-16).

Such sentiments are at the heart and core of functionalism and represent a denial of any of sport’s dysfunctions. But as Jarvie points out, sporting traditions can be “both integrative and divisive, conservative and oppositional” (1993: 74).

ALTERNATIVE VIEWS OF SPORT

Such an optimistic and opportunistic view of sport is hard to maintain in a globalizing world where ongoing challenges of commercialization and corruption are all

too evident. While he does not deny sport's pleasurable appeal, Arbena's plea to "consider always the international context" should not fall on deaf ears for: "...we need to understand sport as a carrier and modifier of culture, as an expression of national differences and international homogenization, as a promoter of social stability and social change, as a mechanism for development and underdevelopment, and as a tool of governments and other political agents in pursuing their special agendas" (1993: 159). Stressing sport's powers of commodification and alienation, Marxist critiques of functionalism may fail to fully explain the ongoing popularity of sport in the public imagination and may falter in assumptions of economic determinism, but they also provide an alternative perspective to an uncritical acceptance of sport's positive functions.

Beyond providing a point of entry for development initiatives, sport's intrinsic role in development needs to be further evaluated and realistically considered. For instance, Frey's contention that sport "diverts attention from more serious social and political problems" (1988: 72) deserves serious attention. Is gender participation largely limited to the sports field? Does integration lead to further control? Does MYSA's sporting initiative merely mask a thinly disguised attempt to "tame the savage and undisciplined character of young, lower-class males" (Coakley, 1990: 43)? Is the colonial "character-building" concept alive and well in the neo-colonial context of MYSA? Certainly relationships of power need to be more carefully analyzed,⁵ for as Frey contends: "Development can only take place when domination is reduced; development is not a matter of moving through stages as the modernists would suggest" (1988: 79).⁶

Marxists might suggest that MYSA merely provides an interesting, but insignificant, diversion without addressing fundamental inequalities of power. Sport seldom affects the status quo. Rather as Heinemann argues, “sport is organized in such a manner that the dominant values of a modern society take effect and are rewarded” (1993: 143). Would the interests of the quarter million or so residents of Mathare be better served by an attempt to radically restructure the power imbalances and inequalities of society? Is MYSA merely an attempt to adapt to an unequal status quo, a sporting veneer on an unjust system of capitalism and corruption -- a model that some may feel has long failed not only Mathare’s but Kenya’s requirements? The message of the role models -- play fair, do things right, don’t drop out of school, responsibility will bring its own reward -- may echo Marxist overtones which identify the capitalist imperative as requiring unsuspecting pawns to work ever harder to succeed in an alienating system.

Bale and Sang’s incisive study of movement culture, geography and global change in Kenyan Running sees the whole Kenyan athletic “machine” as evidence of the imposition of western sports forms in obliterating indigenous movement culture, ultimately identifying Kenya’s undoubted athletic “success” as serving the interests of the powerful. In the process, dependency is created and structures of élite dominance and control are perpetuated. Gruneau and Whitson also identify issues of control: “modern sport has itself been a constitutive element in the broader control of aggressive drives within civilizing institutions (such as schools and youth clubs)” (1993: 179). Control is certainly not foreign to MYSA’s sporting philosophy. Sport is not independent of broader relations of power. Jay Coakley might conclude that: “sports remain integrally linked to

commercial interests, power relations in general, and gender, class, and race/ethnic relations in particular” (1990: 46).

It is hard to gainsay the fact that MYSA has achieved a great deal in a short time. Anecdotal evidence would suggest that hope is being ignited within Mathare. But are such hopes, like those that fuel the impetus behind black professional sports in the United States, more ethereal than real? Can 11 professional soccer players, 30 young photographers, 125 AIDS counsellors, or even 10,000 soccer players hope to redress the fundamental imbalances in and obstacles to opportunity available to the inhabitants of Mathare?

THE COLONIAL CONNECTION

Both a Gramscian theory of sport, which emphasizes cultural control, and figurational sociological theory, which pays particular attention to power differentials, may be insightfully explored via the colonial philosophy of sport. I earlier suggested that this thesis would, in passing, touch upon the contested relationship between sport and the development of moral character, noting possible parallels between colonial philosophies of sport and those of MYSA today. Clearly, character concerns are central in MYSA’s stated objectives, and colonial comparisons are hard to resist.

Some of MYSA’s rationale in its propagation of sports bears at times an uncanny resemblance to the colonial rationale for sport in Africa. Especially in its informational and promotional literature, MYSA presents an almost atavistic throwback to the ideals of “muscular Christianity”, now displayed in the more agnostic or secular terms of

“fairness” as opposed to “faith”. Some might see in Bob Munro’s original impetus a colonial tendency to identify sport with character building – something that the MYSA initiative is not shy to acknowledge – witness their eleven rules for fair play, rather than the comparable “Ten Commandments of a Public School Boy” (Kirk-Greene, 1987: 111). In Arnoldian echoes MYSA’s declaration that “Our teams have adopted eleven basic rules for winning on and off the field” (MYSA e) could have been lifted directly from any number of sermons or elegies to the Ideal Man.

The colonial mindset clearly equated success in sport with ultimate success in life, most notably in a Christian, but sometimes in a Social Darwinist context. To be “winners on and off the field” implies the survival of the fittest in the “jungle” of Mathare. Succeeding in the world beyond Mathare -- note, for example, MYSA’s pride in first University graduate -- raises the question whether the sporting imperative in Mathare is fulfilling the role, albeit unintentionally, of accommodation.

This emphasis on character formation is central in the context of Mathare where “imperial administration and athletic imperative” is no longer at issue but rather “developmental initiative and athletic imperative” at the end of the century. Some might see in MYSA’s espousal of the efficacy of sports a neo-colonialist preaching of a neo-functionalist athletic gospel. While structural Marxists may view sport as a frivolous diversion from the issues that really matter, Gramscians may identify in the character issue a pretext for control by persuasion as opposed to coercion. Blacking notes in the African context that sport: “was psychologically and sociologically related to the exercise and maintenance of power and to the enculturation and social control of young people” (1987: 10).

As the Mandles point out, it is overly limiting to view sport exclusively as an externally imposed form of control: "This is because actively helping to shape an important community activity, as well as playing and mastering the skills associated with a sport, are empowering activities" (1988: 19). To see football exclusively as an external imposition in MYSA's case would clearly be less than accurate. To cite another West Indian example, cricket became not so much an area of accommodation as a site of resistance to the established order. As a West Indian hegemony was imposed on the cricketing world in the 1980s, Hilary Beckles suggested that: "black West Indians took the plough share of Empire and turned it into a sword which they later placed at the throats of the imperial order" (1995: 149). A dialectic between accommodation and resistance within MYSA may become more evident as the organization continues to expand in scope and influence.

A number of other parallels between the philosophies of colonial sport and those of MYSA are apparent. Bob Munro, the sole European in evidence, may still be cast in the role of the noble amateur. In colonial times, sport's connection with health in regions of the world that were to prove the "white man's grave" was evident. Today MYSA conceives the community service side of its mandate in terms of reducing "disease, disability and death" (MYSA c). Similarities and comparisons become immediately apparent in the work of that eccentric exponent of "muscular Christianity", Cecil Earle Tyndale-Biscoe. Muscular Christianity corresponds with the colonial imperative, in stressing the moral efficacy of sport in the building of character. Tyndale-Biscoe saw sporting involvement as a precursor to community service, introducing street cleaning, fire-fighting and life-saving within the slums of Srinagar. With obvious parallels to

MYSA, Tyndale-Biscoe even trained schoolboys as referees. The famed educationalist, “Carey Francis of Kenya ” (Greaves, 1969), while less eccentric, was similarly driven by the athletic ethic and bears some similarity to Munro today.⁷

Academic learning was seen by its African recipients as a gift to be grasped with both hands, as a guarantee of future, in particular economic, success. Within the Mathare context it may be argued that sporting excellence may generally be seen as a more reliable exit route from underprivilege, somewhat analogous to feelings of political disillusion following the independence dawn when, “Even more than political heroes, athletes represented a kind of success that was ostensibly within the reach of vast numbers of young Africans” (Baker, 1987: 273). Is MYSA encouraging this kind of ambition, and like black American and British athletes, raising the aspirations of the black athlete rather than encouraging alternative exit routes from the slums? While MYSA might justifiably counter such accusations by pointing to its school scholarship programme, there is little doubt that MYSA, and Mathare United, have fuelled sporting rather than academic aspirations among many youth in Mathare. Are new dependencies being created? Is Bob Munro’s desire to feed the European soccer machine similar to the colonial mentality of transforming “raw material” into “made article” (Bale and Sang, 1996: 97)?

MORALE AND MORALITY

In light of reservations, such as Terence Monnington’s, concerning the morality of African investment in sporting success, this thesis also seeks to shed some light on the question: *Is international investment in sport in the Third World, particularly Africa, justified?*

Monnington raises the question of whether sport can help in the socio-economic process. MYSA is one of the prime examples of a vibrant developmental project in Africa having a genesis in sport. The questions, posed by Monnington, cry out for answers, for they question the morality of investment in not just African sport but all sport, and especially Western sport, in a world of inequality. It may sound trite to suggest that sport is a part of life, and that life would be the poorer without sport. World War II may have taught the African the “vincibility” of the previously invincible European, but sport has more recently confirmed in the stadia of the world that Africans can compete on the world’s athletic tracks and win. Such morale boosters for an often demoralized populace cannot be quantified in economic terms, as indeed sport itself cannot be explained solely in socio-political or socio-economic terms.⁸

Observation would also suggest that MYSA is helping girls and boys to develop a self-confidence and self-esteem, otherwise in short supply within an environment like Mathare. Nicholas Mathenge’s ambitions may be typical: “I believe the project can do miracles for me because I can manage to get a job when the time comes and also it can take me to countries which I hadn’t dreamed of going to and I will be able to help my family” (www.mediazw.com). Such comments illuminate the privileged programme that MYSA can offer. They also highlight the power of hope, for hope is an especially vital factor in slum life that Westerners may all too easily overlook. Munro considers that Mathare United provides “a huge psychological boost for the players, the MYSA kids and the dignity and hopes of all the people in Mathare and poor communities throughout Kenya” (Personal correspondence, 5/7/99).

But while many children are sustained by the hopes, ambitions and dreams of foreign travel, superstar status and school scholarships, some undoubtedly are demoralized if such advantages do not come their way. MYSA has created an “all is possible” mentality. But what happens when reality or injustice hits? While observing final trials for the Norway Cup, I asked my MYSA companion: “What happens to those who are not selected?” I was given the answer “they cry for a week” and even “they drop out of MYSA altogether” (Personal interview, 21/4/99). While such reactions are unfortunate, and MYSA seeks to avoid such by sympathetic counselling, it may bring children face to face with some of the harsher realities of competitive sport.

In addressing the question: *What sort of investment would be most productive for development?* the MYSA example suggests to this researcher the value of programmes encouraging mass participation sport, especially when such programmes, like MYSA’s, are tied in with developmental objectives. I suggest that MYSA represents a very promising funding route and I would appeal to donor agencies to recognize and support the potential developmental linkages that organizations like MYSA encourage. In a cautionary postscript, there may already be signs of resentment against the level of external resources to which MYSA, a victim in a sense of its own success, has access.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

The following recommendations and observations are offered, always considering MYSA’s recent origins and geographical roots, and acknowledging the enormous strides the organization has already made in only 12 years, from its humble origins in Mathare.

1. More reliable systems of accountability, particularly in the financial area, need to be introduced. MYSA is beginning to deal with unusually large sums of money for its environment -- an annual budget somewhere in the region of 30 million Kenya shillings (US\$500,000). Temptation to embezzlement needs to be reduced. It has already suffered in this area in the past and without more rigorous accounting systems will undoubtedly do so again. Maurice Njoroge argues that MYSA's actions speak louder than its words (Personal interview, 9/5/99), but donors may be less convinced by such a line of reasoning, and insist upon accurate and punctual reporting.

2. To be more effective in its administration, and to provide a more accurate estimate of MYSA's long-term impact on young lives, a database needs to be created. Apparently, with Dutch assistance, such a system is finally close. Munro admits that he "can't even make an estimate" of the dropouts (Personal interview, 23/4/99). Hopefully, improved management information systems will provide a more accurate estimate of the dropout rate and allow for a more telling indication of MYSA's impact on individual lives. Some scepticism that exists regarding MYSA's statistics may be justified. Clearly a number of "paper" soccer teams do exist, with many walk-overs occurring in the girls' leagues particularly, and estimates in the multiple thousands of those reached by AIDS education efforts are hardly precise. However, to have achieved the present level of organization without computerization is perhaps a miracle in itself.

3. Concern exists as to what happens to MYSA members after they pass the age of 18. The chances are that if such people have not made the professional football grade or achieved employment within the organization, contact will be lost at this stage. It is recommended that the possibility of some form of follow-up be investigated.

4. MYSA needs to avoid becoming a hostage to its own propaganda. Some of its disciplinary claims are naive in the extreme. A perusal of the match reports reveals human kids, rather than angels, who, on occasion, dispute with the referee, argue with others, and even fight. I would be surprised if more than a handful of MYSA members could recite more than one, or at most two, of the eleven rules.

5. MYSA needs to be aware of its theoretical ideology towards sport. Never short on vision, the organization needs to evaluate its reliance on the functionalist approach to sport, being aware that sport can produce dysfunction as well as function. The present quintessentially functionalist interpretation precludes a necessarily critical evaluation of sport. Input from a sports sociologist would prove valuable in this regard, to avoid unrealistic assumptions in its sporting ideology affecting policy decisions with regards to MYSA's future.

6. Concern exists that MYSA is not reaching the poorest of "the poorest of the poor", and is scarcely affecting the lives of the most hardened of street kids, sniffing glue and foraging in dark, dank alleyways. But, to be fair, this is one of the most difficult areas of involvement, as many charitable organizations working within Mathare can testify.

7. Women, though very visible around the MYSA offices, have little real influence in the organization at present, remaining little more than a token presence in the circles of power. All the leaders of MYSA programmes are currently men. Again, it is necessary to recognize the aggressive masculine culture that exists within Mathare and acknowledge the progress that has been made already. But the perception seems to exist among the girls that management lacks confidence in their ability. As a priority, more emphasis needs to be given to developing female coaches for the girls' all-star teams.

Another area where females might play a greater role is in the AIDS project, where instructors are predominantly male.

8. Similarly, MYSA needs to continually be aware of the need to involve its youth in substantial decision-making affecting the organization. Some criticism exists as to the style of executive management, regarded by some as too “hierarchical” or “bossy”.

9. MYSA needs to be careful lest it become too heavily focused on sports, and sell short its development potential. One of MYSA’s strengths is its integrated organization, though it may well be questionable whether the sporting side of MYSA’s programmes are as integrated with the other programmes as is often assumed. It is recommended that education -- overall, a more reliable exit route from slum life -- be continually emphasized.

10. While MYSA claims to be a grassroots organization, evidence points to an increasingly élite concentration within MYSA, especially since the birth of Mathare United. The current focus on the professional team, now in its first season of Premier League football, exposes on a small canvas the historical contradiction between élite and mass sport. Overemphasis on Mathare United may lead to a corresponding lack of attention to MYSA. Can Maurice Njoroge continue to wear “two hats” effectively? While MYSA may well be “anchored” in Njoroge’s words (Personal interview, 9/5/99), it is hardly established enough to sustain without constant care and undivided attention. I wonder, for instance, if top officials are aware of the potential of the Shootback Project.

11. Concern exists whether the organization currently over relies on the likes of Munro and Njoroge. Middle management capacities, not attitudes, are lacking, revealing an urgent need for management training. Sustainability may well be threatened without a

better trained workforce. Capacities need to be further developed, and where possible MYSA graduates need to be directed into academic pursuits that will fill gaps within the organization.

FURTHER RESEARCH

MYSA affords some very promising areas for future research. The present study was clearly limited by time constraints. Time is essential, particularly in order to investigate the long-term effects of MYSA on its members. My research was also somewhat limited by language. With my rusty and rudimentary Swahili, the *lingua franca* of MYSA, I missed certain nuances that a competent Swahili speaker would have picked up. The present research should therefore be viewed, at most, as an introductory study. In an African environment where NGOs often have short lives, MYSA is an established and, without question, promising development project that deserves further study. Much popular analysis of MYSA is currently based on anecdotal and circumstantial evidence; clearly empirical data based on sound methodology is required.

With the limited time available to me, I was unable to satisfactorily explore the deeper relations of power that often lie beneath the surface and determine life in slum communities like Mathare. Future studies, paying particular attention to undercurrents of power, would need to analyze how such power relationships have already affected and may yet impact MYSA.

Within MYSA itself, an examination of the élite-mass participation dynamic should be one of the major areas for any future research. A significant question concerns the long-term impact that MYSA makes in individual members' lives, not just for the

fortunate few who go to the Norway Cup or proceed on to the professional team, but for the wider mass participants in MYSA leagues. These average footballers, who may view MYSA as providing little more than an opportunity for a game of football with friends, form the numerical majority within MYSA. However, their histories are shadowy at best, and MYSA's effect on their lives is uncertain. MYSA must be studied beyond its inner core of "groupies".

The sporting dimension of the MYSA project would benefit from analysis from the disciplinary perspective of the sociology of sport. MYSA's attachment to functionalist interpretations of sport may be unduly limiting. A more critical assessment of sport, derived from a consideration of alternative approaches, may be of significant benefit to policy prescriptions for the organization in the future. While such issues have been cursorily touched upon in this thesis, further research, taking greater account of the alienating and dysfunctional aspects of sport as well as the power relationships embedded in sporting figurations, is essential to develop a more balanced assessment of sports's potential to MYSA as a development organization.

On a larger scale again, some comparative study between youth at risk in both developed and developing worlds might repay investigation. Contrasts and similarities exist, raising profound questions about sport's role in community development in both the developed and developing worlds.

CONCLUSIONS

MYSA faces many challenges. Can it survive land-grabbing and the inexorable shrinking of open spaces within the slums? Does it have the management expertise to

maintain its momentum in so many different fields? Will exponential growth threaten its overall effectiveness and dilute its moralistic principles? Will peer pressure remain positive? Can the forces of cooptation and corruption endemic within the Kenyan system be withstood? The sheer force of corruption within Kenyan life is an almost irresistible force. I heard on a number of occasions the plea from people all too familiar with the Kenya Football Federation's (KFF) political as opposed to sporting know-how, "Please don't allow politics into MYSA". However, hidden within MYSA may be the unexpressed hope that some MYSA graduates may be able to extend fairness and integrity beyond the football pitch into the body politic, thus underlining MYSA's fundamental, long term challenge: does it continue to make a difference "around the edges" or can it lead to a restructuring of fundamental inequalities?⁹

If hopes are raised only to be dashed, as an idealistic youth becomes increasingly disillusioned with the realities of the adult world that confront them, will MYSA suffer a backlash or will any anger be directed against the endemic corruption evidenced in Kenyan society? Might the structure, goals and intentions of MYSA be significantly changed in the future? Only time will tell. Or is MYSA's future on a larger canvas altogether, where it can make, not so much a token assault on the socio-economic problems of the Mathares, but rather a direct and unequivocal realignment on the structures of power? Africa's greatest legacy is its youth. Can the Maurice Njoroges make an impact beyond Mathare? Will that necessitate an entry into the political realm?¹⁰

Alternatively, are such conceptual frameworks merely evidence of development's long-standing concerns with meta-solutions and meta-narratives? Does MYSA point the way to more modest development solutions rooted in grassroots initiatives?

MYSA's garbage collection effort may well be a salient metaphor for its whole initiative within Mathare. The scale of the challenge is daunting. MYSA's collection efforts, efficient as they may be, can make little impression on the mountains of garbage within the slums. Their efforts can only be effective "around the edges". Similarly, in spite of its outreach, MYSA's varied programmes can only have a limited effect on the overwhelming challenges of Nairobi's slums, which would require drastic societal restructuring rather than mere peripheral tinkering.

The basic problems that produce and sustain a Mathare are scarcely being addressed, nor would it be fair to expect MYSA to deal with them. Writing in the *New York Times*, Jane Perlez suggests: "...although a soccer program cannot affect the fundamental problems of life in Mathare Valley, it has clearly become a bright spot in the lives of the inhabitants" (1991). I suggest that one cannot quantify hope, and that MYSA has ignited hope, at least for some, in the slums. Optimism reverberates in all MYSA officials' insistence that they face "no problems, only challenges". MYSA is nothing but an optimistic organization.

Finally, I wish to restate three overall conclusions. First, on a personal level, this study emphasized to me in a powerful way the undoubted resilience and unrecognized potential of "slum" communities. This thesis contains a plea not to underestimate the capabilities of the excluded. Secondly, I argue that sport can provide a valuable point of entry for the development process. Sport's direct impact on development is more problematical. Certainly sport should not be invested with unrealistic and universalistic properties. Functionalist ideals must be tempered by practical realities and critical understandings of power relations. Thirdly, it may be easy to be cynical, and ignore the

fact that somebody is actually “out there” doing something. MYSA is a brave and innovative initiative. It is not the solution to the manifold problems of the Mathares of this world, but as the proverb says: “It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness”. Or as the opening line of David Mbuthia’s Shootback notebook reads: “A long mile journey start with one step”. MYSA’s motto, freely translated from a Swahili proverb, resonates with such sentiments:

Haba na haba hujaza kibaba
Step by step we reach the goal.

ENDNOTES

1. Serry laid out ten policy implications for sustainable development in Africa:
 1. Involve youth in development
 2. Link sports and environmental improvement
 3. Reduce disease, disability and death
 4. Tackle the escalating AIDS threat
 5. Reduce drug abuse
 6. Create new role models
 7. Help future leaders stay in school
 8. Change gender attitudes
 9. Ensure good governance and accountability
 10. Help youth help other youth to help themselves (MYSA c).
2. As Black and Nauright point out in the case of apartheid South Africa: “Sporting organizations provided one of the few legitimate opportunities for blacks to be administrators and leaders...” (1998: 56).
3. In the South African case, Black and Nauright point out how “urban black sport became closely linked with notions of urban black masculinity” (1998: 41).
4. Munro points out that: “MYSA/Mathare United also creates jobs directly (over 100 already) while also giving these kids social and technical skills which will help more to get jobs outside MYSA in the future (e.g. in other NGOs and aid agencies, as sports officials in companies, etc.). Many young leaders already have impressive CVs which make them more competitive in a tough job market. Also, it is now less of an impediment

to say you are from Mathare and certainly a plus to be able to say you are/were a leader in MYSA" (Personal correspondence, 5/7/99).

5. A Foucauldian perspective might be profitably employed to illuminate such processes. Michel Foucault's emphasis on the dynamic relationship between power, knowledge and the body lends itself to sporting analyses. See David Andrews (1993).

6. MYSA may well be profitably, and loosely, evaluated according to David Korten's typology of three generations of NGOs (1987), which advances a progression from a first generation contact involving relief and welfare usually directed at individuals or families to second generation linkages leading to self-reliance and community development and on to a third generation emphasis on sustainable systems development at the regional or national level. MYSA's progression from first to second generation can be readily identified, though MYSA has yet to confidently move into the third area of advocacy, where its greatest contribution may yet exist. Further questions would be raised by such an ideological shift. But would more radical postures actually change anything?

7. Francis explains his motivations: "I suppose I felt that Africans had few guides into the new life which was forced upon them willy-nilly. I believed I knew some things that would help them...I wanted to share all that I had that was good" (Greaves, 1969: 17). Bale and Sang conclude that: "His values were well-intentioned, to be sure, but his efforts were essentially undertaken in order to make the African more like the European and less with the interests of the mass of the African population in mind" (1996: 82).

8. Riordan comes to similar conclusions, though like Bale and Sang, questions what kind of sport is beneficial: "One thing is certain: far from being a luxury, *sport or, better still, physical culture, in modernising societies is an absolute necessity*" (1986: 299).

9. Politics has often been mixed with football. See Black and Nauright's discussion regarding African soccer: "John Iliffe in his history of Tanganyika argues that the earliest African urban political organizations there developed from within the soccer clubs in Dar-es-Salaam in the 1930s. This pattern recurred throughout sub-Saharan Africa..." (1998: 43). Many other examples could be cited of sports clubs serving as a cover for political purposes: one of the most infamous examples being Winnie Mandela's "Mandela United" within Soweto.

10. When presenting the findings of my research at this year's Canadian Association of Development Studies (CASID) Conference, most of the questions revolved around the possibility of MYSA's potential for politicization. Njoroge's involvement with MYSA and Mathare United would provide a formidable springboard for political involvement within Mathare. Munro hints at such when he describes Njoroge as "one of the African leaders of tomorrow" (Blanchfield, 1999: A3). Looking to the future, he suggests that "15 or so years from now, I fully expect many of them will be helping build the new Kenya in different capacities in the public and private sectors" (Personal correspondence, 5/7/99).

APPENDIX A – ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

The following chart is adapted from
“MYSA Management Structure” (MYSA, J).

APPENDIX B

WHO'S WHO IN MYSA

The following are some of the main figures in MYSA mentioned in the text:

Bob Munro. Founder and Senior Adviser. Chairman of Mathare United.

Maurice Njoroge. Chief Manager. Manager of Mathare United.

Francis Kimanzi. Project Manager: Youth Leadership and Training. Mathare United player.

Pius Obala. Project Manager: Sports.

John Muraya. Project Manager: Garbage Cleanup.

Salim Mohammed. Senior Project Officer: Youth Leadership and Training.

Isabel Mbuthia. Senior Project Officer: Garbage Cleanup.

Samuel Karanja. Chairman of the Executive Council.

Bob Ouma. Chairman of Community Service Council.

Gabriel Njoroge. Head Coach. Assistant Coach, Mathare United.

Lana Wong. Shootback Co-ordinator and Adviser.

Jonathan Niva. Coach of Mathare United.

WIFILM

Cola

PEPSI

FACES OF

▲ 1. Maurice Njoroge.

▼ 3. Pius Obala.

▲ 15. Sammy Gitau explains a point during an AIDS Refresher Course. Salim Mohammed (on left) looks on.

▼ 16. "King Zolo"
at a coaches' meeting.

▼ 17. George Kamau,
Chairman of Eastleigh Zone.

▲ 18. A Sports Council meeting in progress.

▼ 19. A Mathare United Under 16 girls' representative team poses at Kasarani (in Dutch uniforms).

SOCCE
▼ 20-2.

▲ 29. Mathare United play Utalii at Kasarani.

▼ 30. Mathare United on the offensive. (Photos by Alex Kamweru).

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