

**The Development of Sport in Singapore: An Eliasian Analysis**

**Thesis submitted by  
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in December 2004**

**for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the  
School of Education, James Cook University**

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## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, the errors and shortcomings that remain are solely mine. The strength of this thesis however, comes from the tireless and generous support of many. Accordingly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank them.

Dr Malcolm Vick, who saw clarity in my inchoate ideas, found strength in my weak arguments, and weaknesses in my strong arguments, provided a most non-intrusive and yet meticulous supervision of my work. He was sharp and insightful with his comments, patient and encouraging with mine, and in the process created a stimulating and fun environment to think and rethink, write and rewrite.

The staff at School of Education, James Cook University was most obliging and patient. Associate Professor Annette Patterson, Head of School, was not only supportive in the general sense, but was enthused by this research project. Paul Travis who supervised my Masters coursework project, which represented an early version of parts of this thesis, was always encouraging. Joan Hill, Postgraduate Coordinator, was most efficient and helpful with all of the administration necessities involved in this project.

My family has been most resolute in their support of the indulgence that this thesis represents. They, particularly my nephew, provided pleasurable distraction and emotional comfort. Every long day at the archives or library was always rewarded with their good amusement in the evening.

My good friend, Nicole Ang, took time off from her hectic schedule to help me with the final check for accuracy in the references. With her fine PR skills, she also schmoozed up an excellent rapport with the photocopying staff at the library which facilitated the research process.

Finally and most importantly, I want to thank Dr Peter Horton who is singularly responsible for introducing me to the field of Sport Studies. He inspired and persuaded me to start this project, and provided unfailing support and wicked humour at every juncture. His critical insights added momentum when I was in my flow state and reignited my enthusiasm when I was in my ebb state. Without his unconditional and unstinting support and faith, this thesis would not have completed. I dedicate this work to him.

## Abstract

This thesis traces and analyzes the development of sport in Singapore since its founding in 1819 to present. Using an Eliasian approach, this thesis examines empirical evidence gathered from official documents, such as sport policies and media reports, to show how sport has developed in Singapore. An Eliasian approach focuses on examining the figuration of sport as a network of interdependencies and how its development creates more and more interconnections with other social figurations. The widening network of interdependencies shapes the culture of sport in Singapore but it also reveals similarities and differences with the development of wider Singapore society. The analysis also examines the figuration of sport in relation to Elias's substantive themes of state formation and the dynamics of established and outsider relationships.

Singapore has developed from a British colony to an independent country and over this period of time, it has also transformed from a virtually uninhabited island into a thriving first world nation. Although the seeming under-development of Singapore's sport appears to be at odds with the wider social development, parallels between the two can be drawn. Underlying both developments is the increasing regulation of practices and tightening of the chains of interdependencies. Medals may mark the level the sporting nationalism, but they do not indicate the increasing differentiation and integration of practices, identities and images of the disparate social groups. This thesis shows how sport emerged to its present form since the British colonized the practices, time and space of other social groups; how sport developed into a highly regulated practice and became intertwined with social identity formation and distinction. The development of the figuration of sport reveals the tension of the diminishing contrasts between the disparate of social groups and increasing varieties of the sport practices.

The paradoxically unifying and dividing tensions that sport embodied by the 1930s, were appropriated by the Japanese government when they colonized the island. Sport became centralized and the direction and form of its development became more and more situated in the state. Sporting practices were no longer regulated just by the players and their sporting clubs, but by the imposition, direct and indirect, of the state. This shift in the pattern of control on the sporting conduct paralleled the nexus of social control. The increase in bureaucracy and complexity in the organization of the

institution of sport widened the network of interdependencies between the state and the subjects but more significantly, the Japanese government also demonstrated the affective quality of sport in nationalizing disparate social groups.

In independent Singapore the functions of sport have become increasingly specialized as well as heightened in significance. The rise in commercialism binds more and more people together not only on the functional level but also on the level of identity and image formation. Although Singapore has developed into a first world nation, its sporting achievements are those of a third world country. This thesis discusses how the dissonance in the economic and sporting achievement has provided currency for greater centralization of sport. It also examines the role of sport in producing and reproducing the global-local tension in the establishment of a Singapore identity as the country become more and more interdependent with the rest of the world.

Whilst the trend of development of sport in Singapore suggests an increasing level of civilization, it was not a process unfettered with conflicts and tensions. The expansion of functions and rising self restraint in practices, identities and images were marked by continuities and discontinuities, civilizing and decivilizing spurts, integration and disintegration. Using an Eliasian theorisation of sport, the thesis reveals how sport has become more and more interconnected with the wider Singapore society at different historical junctures and how sport reveals the tensions of the cultural underpinnings of Singapore whilst at the same time functions both as a border and a bridge for different social groups.

## Table of Contents

Declaration on sources		ii
Statement of access to the thesis		iii
Statement of access to electronic copy		iv
Acknowledgements		v
Abstract		vi
Introduction		1
Chapter 1	Literature Review: Social Theory and Elias	9
Chapter 2	Sport in the British Colony: Formation, Diffusion and Bourgeoisification (1819-1940s)	81
Chapter 3	Sport in Syonan: Centralization and Nipponization (1942-1945)	132
Chapter 4	Sport in the Republic of Singapore: Centralization, Democratization, Hegemony Formation (1950s-1980s)	172
Chapter 5	Sport in First World Singapore (1980s-): Hegemony, Globalization and Identity Formation	220
Conclusion		267
Bibliography		273
Appendix 1	SPEX 2000 anthem – Winning for Singapore	298
Appendix 2	SPEX 2000 Funding Distribution	299
Appendix 3	Singapore's Performance at the SEAP and SEA Games 1959-2003	300
Appendix 4	Singapore's Performance at the Asian Games 1959-2003	301
Appendix 5	Core Sport Performances under SPEX 2000: 1994-1999 (Gold medals only); Core Sport Performances under SPEX 21: 2000-2004 (Gold medals only)	302
Appendix 6	Number of Participants in Mass Participation Sport Events: 1978-1998	303



## **Introduction**

The thesis examines the development of sport in Singapore since its colonization in 1819. Using both primary and secondary sources of evidence, it seeks to trace and explain the long-term developmental process of sport in Singapore.

The significance of sport as a social phenomenon is as well supported, argued and exemplified by reference to economics and statistics as it is by the work of academics in the field of sport studies. The institution of sport, more than the institution of English language and to some extent economics, is embraced, developed and defended by at least 80% of the countries in the world. Commercialisation of sport may have catapulted common images, practices and values of sport into the increasingly globalized world but underlying this commonality, is also no other necessity than one to recreate. Understanding the relationship of sport and other aspects of society, and the position it occupies in individual societies and in the global relations among societies afford useful insights into society. Also examining the relationship of an increasingly globalized sport and an increasingly globalized society in Singapore, in particular, offers understandings of how the forces of globalization enable and constrain the development of a largely Eastern society and the role of a Western institution within it.

Singapore's history is customarily divided into four epochs: the British and migrant settlement, the Japanese Occupation, merger with Malaya and finally its independence. Singapore has undergone massive transformation since its independence. Its landscape changed as it went from a third world to a first world economy. The government of Singapore, the People's Action Party has been largely credited with achieving the transformation but equally important are the underpinnings that preceded, initiated and to a large extent predicated the direction, intensity and form of development. Similarly, the development of sport spanned over 180 years and the lack of sporting success in Singapore is not solely the result of government intervention but rather of the cultural underpinnings that were set in motion pre-independence. Colonialism founded Singapore and established a largely Western economic template on Singapore which is sustained till today and instrumental in the rate and form of its socioeconomic development. Further, it was the economic model and the economic potential that attracted migrants from many shores to the island. Some of the cultural practices, the

values systems, the work ethos and the attitudes towards leisure and sport have endured whilst others were refined, elaborated or abandoned as the settlement developed into a nation.

Social research on sport in Singapore is limited. There have been only three doctoral theses on Singapore's sport and none of them provides a comprehensive synthesis of sport since its founding as a settlement in 1819. Of the three, only Oon's provides a long-term examination of sport. Although his thesis provides a comprehensive descriptive history of sport in Singapore between 1959 and 1984, his account is limited by its cause-effect explanation and over-privileging of the role of the government in determining sport in Singapore. This thesis re-examines Oon's analysis and demonstrates that as important as the government is to shaping sport in Singapore, it was neither alone nor held complete dominion over the development of sport. Rather, the outcomes of government action were as much unintended as intended.

This thesis also illuminates the development of sport during the Japanese Occupation and demonstrates how this juncture of Singapore's history enabled and constrained sport's ongoing development. The success and failure of Singapore's sporting performance, and the nature of its sport culture, are the culmination of the commingling of the different junctures in its history, the actions of the migrants, the colonialists, the Japanese, the People's Action Party. The sport culture of Singapore is a rich tapestry of struggle, conflicts, negotiation and cooperation which parallel and contradict the social development of Singapore. Although there have been numerous studies on the culture of Singapore, examinations of its culture through sport have been few and far between. By bringing these interconnections to light, a more intimate understanding of Singapore can be achieved whilst at the same time enhancing the understanding and appreciation of the significance of sport.

Elias's figurational sociology facilitates the exploration of the interweaving of global and local forces. It recognizes that sport, like society, is an evolving network of people, or as he describes it, figuration. This tenet places the emphasis on relationships between people rather than on reified entities. Relationship embodies characteristics of connectivity and interdependency, conflict and harmony, negotiation and struggle, tight and distant, past, present and future, continuity and discontinuity. Therefore it affords the view that the figuration of sport constitutes a network of people, with varying levels of interdependencies and correspondingly, varying levels of power. The

problems confronting sport are problems of this dynamic of relationships, enabled and constrained by both its history and its present reality. Figurational sociology emphasizes a 'theoretical-empirical' framework in social inquiry.<sup>1</sup> It is concerned with the development of long term structured processes. By tracing the connections between stages of development, it seeks to show how social formations emerge from their predecessors.<sup>2</sup>

As a theoretical paradigm, it resolves issues of what are often seen as binary opposites such as structure-agency, individual-society and cause-effect because it recognizes that they are in fact "two-sides of the same coin," as Dunning puts it.<sup>3</sup> It rejects the privileging of one social structure as the cause of the state of society. It also rejects the state of society as unchanging and static. It does so because it recognizes that social structures are not separate from people who use and abuse them. The constraints and enabling factors in the state of society are not the result of a social structure, such as the economy or the political system, but rather the result of a longer term development of the social figuration. By that, Elias refers to the way people become dependent on each other, and how these chains of interdependency bind and separate people, create and resolve conflicts and inequalities. Elias's figurational theory does not deny that particular aspects of society, such as government, or the economy, are major considerations in the development of the social figuration. However, his position (akin, in this respect, to that of post-structuralists), is to refuse to over-emphasize one social structure as the determinant of the society. The critical flaw of privileging of one sphere, as exemplified in the works of neo-Marxists and the American functionalists of the early 1970s, is that it leads to unbalanced polar polemical interpretations, either overwhelmingly negative, or uncritically positive, respectively.

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1 N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, ed. E. Dunning, J. Goudsblom, and S. Mennell, trans. E. Jephcott, Revised ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 2000).

2 E. Dunning, "Sport in the Civilising Process: Aspects of the Development of Modern Sport," in *The Sports Process: A Comparative and Developmental Approach*, ed. E. Dunning, J. Maguire, and R. Pearton (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1993).

3 *Ibid.*

Elias's theory accepts that there are multiple meanings to an interpretation and does not privilege the position of the individual in deriving its explanations. While this suggests a certain resemblance to poststructuralism, the differences are strongly marked. While poststructuralism rejects structuralism on one level, on another it adopts what can be seen as a form of applied structuralism. The examination of discourse is a form of structure and is grounded in what can readily be seen as a critical post-Marxist perspective, with clear negative judgemental overtones. This is especially clear in the treatment of discourse as limiting, restricting and controlling. And, since discourse is characteristically tied to existing (and themselves frequently unequal and oppressive) social structures, this essentially re-presents the argument of structuralism, albeit in a derivative sense. At the same time, it can be seen to over-stretch the concept of multiple meanings to the point of meaninglessness. To argue that anything could be the cause of a problem or situation, is little different from arguing that nothing caused the situation or problem.<sup>4</sup> Further, by treating power as totally diffused, and detaching it from particular positions and structures, it fails to recognise and appreciate the power differential in relationships and the complex and continuing process of negotiation to sustain and change the position and power in relationships.

Figurational theory, in contrast, disciplines or structures the use of multiple meanings. It does not privilege the individual (one of the key problems structuralism sought to address) but instead places the focus on the relationships, or chains of interdependence, between one individual to another. It recognizes that social structures are neither institutions nor reified abstractions and that an individual does not effect change, but rather the intended and unintended actions of the web of people that make up the social figuration effect outcomes that may be unintended rather than intended.

This approach has four notable strengths. Firstly, it recognizes that change is constant, rather than treating constancy as normal and change as that which must be explained (as in structural functionalism). Secondly, it recognizes that an individual is a constituent of a web of interdependence. Thirdly, the outcome of social intentions and actions is not fixed or predictable. And fourth, it provides for consideration of both

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4 W. J. Morgan, *Leftist Theories of Sport: A Critique and Reconstruction, Sport and Society*. (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

enabling and restraining factors, and the balance between them, in the interpretation and analysis of data.

Elias's theoretical framework locates it at the interface of history and sociology. Traditionally, historians have stressed the importance of sticking as close as possible to the data they derive from their sources, limiting interpretation as far as they are able to weighing and balancing the evidence available, and eschewing the elaboration of theory. Sociologists, as a hallmark of their discipline, seek to use data precisely in to abstract, generalise and theorise. Thus, historians have frequently criticised sociologists who have strayed into historical territory, for going too far beyond their evidence, while sociologists who have been concerned with historical contexts and developments have counter-accused historians of sacrificing the intelligibility and meaning of historical developments to an obsession with detail.

Elias's theory is contrary to both, and concedes to both. It enables the scrupulousness of good historical research because it demands the examination from a long-term perspective. It also offers a theoretical paradigm that synthesizes rather than isolates social structures but at the same time it possesses a structure to the interpretation which restrains the weaknesses of narrative history. This theoretical framework allows a greater degree of attention to historical detail than some sociological theories, but insists on a concern to trace the interconnections and chains of interdependency that would bring out the active nature in the development (in this case, of sport in Singapore) that goes beyond much historical narrative.

To some extent the development of sport in Singapore can be neatly compartmentalized into the following four political eras: colonialism, Japanese Occupation, the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew and the leadership of Goh Chok Tong. With each era, sport developed to a different extent and form. Its development was however, not confined or limited to the political development or leadership of one man, nor were the stages of sporting development neatly demarcated by the political eras. Rather, the stages of development of sport overlapped into each new political phase. The five stages in the development of sport as identified in this study are:

1. Incipient Phase (1819 – 1860s)
2. Colonization Phase (1860s – 1900s)
3. Establishment Phase (1900s – 1940s)

4. Centralization Phase (1940s – 1980s)

5. Repulsion Phase (1980s – present)

The incipient phase marked the beginning of the settlement years with the British colonizing Singapore as a trading post with the migrants dominated by their concerns to establish themselves economically. Sport in this phase was largely the preserve of the British. Some of them continued the sporting practices they acquired before settling in Singapore and some of them acquired new sports from their peers in their new settlement. Sports such as hunting, pedestrian sports and sailing dominated. In the colonization phase, sport became a visible mark of class and with the formation of recreation clubs, sport became institutionalized. Competition became more formalized and the concept of sporting leisure was introduced into the culture of non-Europeans.

The establishment phase was characterised by the extension of sport to the masses and the narrowing of class distinctions through sport. This was associated not only with sporting clubs but with schools. British and American missionaries undertook a major proselytization effort, promoting the mantra of muscular Christianity through the sport and physical education programmes in their schools. The British government had established an extensive control over the schools, but they neither had a monopoly of power nor exercised the formal authority that they held either comprehensively or intensively. Their laissez-faire system, in fact, distributed control quite widely.

The centralization of sport and physical education began during the period of the Japanese administration, and rapidly became virtually absolute. The Japanese, by sheer force, monopolized the control of sporting resources as they did of virtually all resources. The formation of the Syonan Sport Association centralised the control of sport clubs, physical education programme, sport competitions and venues, giving the government a greater influence over the direction of sport. The centralization momentum slowed when the British government regained Singapore. Freely formed independent sport clubs and associations regained fully their autonomous status and control over sport practices. This control again shifted to the state when the colony became a nation, with an elected government in power. The centralization process accelerated with the state assuming full control of all the sport associations and schools. Although clubs retained their autonomous status, they subjected more to intervention and policies of the government. With the centralization of sport, the state's

goals of health and ruggedness were increasingly dominant whilst elite level sport achievement were less dominant in the development of sport. Equally, the suppression of opportunities for racial distinction in sport diminished the sharpness of racial identities.

In the repulsion phase since the 1980s, the role of sport as a national identity marker emerged as a driving force of sport. This was not unproblematic, however, as the globalized nature of sport also threatened to undermine the capacity of sport to serve specifically national purposes. The pressing tension between these two forces – of globalization and the function of sport as a marker of national identity – is seen in the manifestation of sport policies that were aimed at achieving both sporting success as well as using sport to promote the health of Singaporeans. These changes are markedly different in intent from the policies of the preceding phase.

Each successive stage was characterised by an increasing orderliness and elaboration of behaviour as well as an increasing complexity and formality in organisation. It is important to emphasize that as a new form emerged in each stage, its predecessor did not cease to exist, but rather ceased to be the dominant form. Features that were previously dominant receded or developed in complexity in the new form. The duration of each stage was determined and defined by the way sport was played and the form and extent of its penetration into the spheres of life in Singapore. Each stage was marked by a greater degree of complexity, differentiation and integration in the sport figuration. These five relatively distinct stages reflected as well as paralleled the wider social developments in the country as well as in the world.

This thesis seeks to explain the dynamics of this emergent, changing figuration of sport in Singapore. It aims to show how sport developed during each stage and to elucidate the specific characteristics of the development of Singapore which help account for the particular direction and form of the development of sport in this country.

This study is organized in six chapters. Chapter One critically examines the literature on the history and sociology of sport, generally, and on sport in Singapore. It describes and justifies Elias's process sociology and argues that it offers an analysis of the sport culture of Singapore that is more suitable, compelling and meaningful than the dominant sociological theories. Chapters Two to Five chronologically trace and

analyze the development of sport in Singapore. For clarity of organisation, and in recognition of the relationship between sport and government, these four chapters are arranged according to the major political transition of Singapore's history. Chapter Two, which traces developments across the colonial period, discusses the incipient, colonization and establishment phases of the development of sport. Chapter Three, which focuses on the period of Japanese government, explores the beginning of the centralization of sport. Chapter Four, which covers the transition to, and early years of independence under the leadership of Lee Kuan Yew, examines the further development of centralization, and the ways the relations between an elected government and its citizenry gave impetus to and shaped the development of sport. Chapter Five, which deals with a socially and economically more mature Singapore under the leadership of Goh Chok Tong , notes a dramatic shift in the direction of sporting development in Singapore, and relating the development of sport not only to local or internal factors, but it examines the development of sport in an increasingly globalized world. These chapters are written as interdependent pieces. While they are arranged as an historical chronology, the analysis is conceptually organised to demonstrate long-term developmental processes. The concluding chapter synthesizes the various elements in this process, and seeks to account for the overall development and general character of sport in Singapore, the changes in sport policies and its apparent lacklustre sporting performances in international arenas.



# Chapter 1

## Understanding Sport in Singapore: Literature and Theory

Sport is more than a trivial pastime or a mere reflection of certain aspects of society. Its cultural, political, and economic functions are well used and abused in the world. It commands much attention in the public and private spheres. From the Olympic Games to backyard cricket, sport remains a powerful cultural institution. Dunning demonstrated his appreciation of the significance of sport by entitling one of his texts, *Sport Matters*.<sup>5</sup> It "matters" because "[n]o activities have ever served so regularly as foci of simultaneous common interest and concern to so many people all over the world."<sup>6</sup> The fact that the first functioning private, non-business association in Singapore, established within a decade of the settlement's founding, was a sports club indicates the importance of sport from the earliest days in the history of the country. As Elias argues "knowledge about sport (is) knowledge about society,"<sup>7</sup> and therefore research on sport will contribute not only to the understanding of the structure and dynamics of sport itself but demonstrate the intricate relationships that connect various social structures as constituents of society.

The study of sport in Singapore, thus, would elaborate and refine the knowledge of sport in that society, demonstrate how sport is intimately connected with other social structures and is an important constituent of society. It would show that it is both a manifestation of the overall social development of Singapore, and an enabling and constraining factor in that development. Despite its social significance, however, the study of sport and Singapore society is a relatively marginalized field of social investigation.

This chapter addresses five main tasks. Firstly, it considers the general state of play in the field of sport studies. Following this brief discussion, it outlines the literature dealing with the history and sociology of sport in Singapore. It then proceeds to outline

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5 E. Dunning, *Sport Matters: Sociological Studies of Sport, Violence and Civilization* (London: Routledge, 1999).

6 *Ibid.*, 1.

7 N. Elias, "Introduction," in *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, ed. N. Elias and E. Dunning (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 1.

the major features of Elias's approach to the historical sociology of both society in general, and sport in particular. That discussion provides the basis for a comparison of Elias with other major paradigms for the social (historical and sociological) analysis of sport. It also supports an argument that researching sport from an Eliasian perspective is particularly appropriate and useful as a means of developing an understanding of the development of sport in Singapore and, at the same time, in relation to the more general development of Singapore society.

The work of the social theorists of sport is engaged directly as empirical documentation, for it not only represents the thoughts of individual thinkers about sport, but collectively it has also formed and developed the stock of knowledge of sport. However, it must be emphasized at the outset that this discussion of the civilizing process of the critique of sport herein represents only a brief and tentative beginning, and most certainly does not seek to provide a comprehensive history of social thought about sport. The aim is, first and foremost, to show that the Eliasian approach enables an understanding of the development of sport in Singapore that departs from the dominant approach to sport in Singapore, an approach that privileges the government and the economy as the determining forces in the development of sport.<sup>8</sup> In the process it seeks to highlight the originality and appropriateness of Elias's work in social research, which argues that:

one can understand many aspects of the behaviour or actions of individual people if one sets out from the study of the pattern of their interdependence, the structure of their societies, in short, from the figurations they form with each other.<sup>9</sup>

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8 See, D. Oon, "Government Involvement in Sport in Singapore: 1959-1982" (Unpublished Ph.D., University of Queensland, 1984); P. A. Horton, "Olympism in the Asia-Pacific Region: A Question of Naivety or Pragmatism?," *Culture, Sport, Society* 1, no. 1 (1998); N. G. Aplin, "Values and the Pursuit of Sports Excellence: The Case of Singapore" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Nanyang Technological University, 1999); P. A. Horton, *Shackling the Lion: Sport and Modern Singapore*, ed. J. A. Mangan and F. Hong, *Sport in Asian Society: Past and Present* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

9 N. Elias, *What Is Sociology?* Trans. S. Menell and G. Morrissey (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1978), 72.

## Knowledge, Power and Sport

Sociological interest in studying sport became prominent in the mid-twentieth century. Rojek observes that sport and leisure has been positioned as "peripheral to the main business of life: work."<sup>10</sup> The positioning of the knowledge of sport as less important and relevant than knowledge of politics or economics was exemplified by perceptions of sport as an "unfashionable backwater"<sup>11</sup> or its trivialization as the "toy shop of the world."<sup>12</sup> Page contends that sport emerged as a field of serious study following the expansion of sport into a "major social institution of a worldwide scale."<sup>13</sup> Loy, McPherson and Kenyon on the other hand explained the ascendancy as a result of the emergence of a critical mass of sociologists interested in the field.<sup>14</sup>

The increased attention to this field of social inquiry reflects two intertwining developments: those of sport, and social thought. As Rojek argues, sociologists became more interested in the study of sport when they recognised that work could no longer be positioned as the central focus of all human activity.<sup>15</sup> From an Eliasian perspective, the development of the knowledge of sport could be characterized as having moved in the direction of greater rationalization and differentiation as sport overlapped into more and more aspects of life and the consideration of sport demanded a greater level of elaboration and refinement. The growth of interest in sport by academics thus reflects and is part of the development of both sport and social thought.

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10 C. Rojek, "The Field of Play in Sport and Leisure Studies," in *Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process: Critique and Counter Critique*, ed. E. Dunning and C. Rojek (London: MacMillan, 1992), 1.

11 S. Mennell, *Norbert Elias: Civilization and the Human Self-Image* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 140.

12 B. D. McPherson, "The Sociology of Sport," in *The Sport Sciences*, ed. J. Jackson and H. Wenger (University of Victoria, 1982), 75.

13 C. Page, "The Mounting Interest in Sport," in *Sport and Society: An Anthology*, ed. J. Talamini and C. Page (Boston-Toronto: Little, Brown and Co., 1973), 7.

14 J. W. Loy, B. D. McPherson, and G. S. Kenyon, *The Sociology of Sport as an Academic Specialty: An Episodic Essay on the Development and Emergence of an Hybrid Subfield in North America, Cahper Sociology of Sport Monograph Series* (Ottawa, Ontario: University of Calgary, 1978).

15 Rojek, "The Field of Play in Sport and Leisure Studies," 2.

The state of existing knowledge of sport, however, has been criticised as inadequate, as, at best, it fails to address issues of inequality and injustice in sport, and at worst, helps reproduce them.<sup>16</sup> Hargreaves observes the tendency of social theorists to view sport as having either a positive or a negative function failed to illuminate on the relationship of sport and politics, and sport and power.<sup>17</sup> Thus, for example, the tension between amateurism and professionalism, discussed by ancient Greek philosophers in ancient sports,<sup>18</sup> left-wing sociologists<sup>19</sup> and more recently by historian Lincoln Allison, is bedevilled by normative evaluations rather than illuminative understandings of how either, or both actually functioned in society.<sup>20</sup> Dunning contends that the lack of understanding of sport provided by such approaches results in the inability to control and overcome the problems of sport.<sup>21</sup> Balboa, from a postmodernist perspective, argues that the mainstream literature on sport is one of the contributing reasons to the acute global crisis in sport.<sup>22</sup> Post-structuralism, argues Andrew, departs from the Western traditional paradigm of rational and scientific thought which underpins a hierarchically ordered set of binaries that strategically privileges particular positions, knowledge whilst excluding, and subjugating others.<sup>23</sup>

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16 P. Donnelly, "Approaches to Social Inequality in the Sociology of Sport," *Quest* 48, no. 2 (1996).

17 John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986).

18 E. C. Davis and D. M. Miller, *The Philosophic Process in Physical Education*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1967).

19 See for example, C. Tatz, "The Corruption of Sport," in *Power Play: The Commercialisation of Australian Sport*, ed. G. Lawrence and D. Rowe (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1986).

20 L. Allison, *Amateurism in Sport: An Analysis and a Defence*, ed. J. A. Mangan, *Sport in the Global Society* (London: Frank Cass, 2001).

21 E. Dunning, "Introduction: Sports in Comparative and Developmental Perspective," in *The Sports Process: A Comparative and Developmental Approach*, ed. E. Dunning, J. Maguire, and R. Pearton (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1993), 2.

22 J. M. Fernandez-Balboa, "Introduction: The Human Movement Profession - from Modernism to Postmodernism," in *Critical Postmodernism in Human Movement, Physical Education and Sport*, ed. J. M. Fernandez-Balboa (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 4.

23 D. L. Andrews, "Posting Up: French Post-Structuralism and the Critical Analysis of Contemporary Sporting Culture," in *Handbook of Social Sciences*, ed. J. Coakley and E. Dunning (London: Sage Publications, 2000), 119.

The selection of Elias as a paradigm that might avoid the pitfalls of such normalising and binaristic approaches, therefore, is edentulous without a comparison with the dominant theoretical paradigms to which it offers an alternative.

### **Sport and Singapore: A Critique**

Historiographical and sociological analyses of Singapore from colonial times to the present are numerous<sup>24</sup> but only a small minority have referred to sport and an even smaller group have focused specifically on the theme of sport.<sup>25</sup> This marginalization reflects the general pattern of the development of the research of sport. Whilst the existing body of knowledge of sport in Singapore is slight, it is relatively diverse in its representation, written at different historical junctures and capturing different moments in history. The latter is particularly important given that a significant amount of primary data on Singapore sport, particularly documents on clubs, and schools were destroyed during World War II. Although the accuracy and reliability of these accounts can be questioned, these texts perform an important role as records of their particular periods. They also represent the thought of the particular moment in which they were written, and thus reveal the underlying development of the society and its culture.

General history texts reveal insights into what the authors regarded as of sufficient significance to include in their accounts of the historical development of Singapore. Charles Buckley, in 1902, provided one of the earliest general historical texts about Singapore. In his anecdotal history of Singapore's first five decades, one of the aspects of social life he considered worthy of attention was the sporting activities of the migrants. Makepeace, Braddell and Brookes devoted one chapter of their 1921 book on the history of the first century of British rule in Singapore to describe the variety of

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24 For an overview of historical research of Singapore see E. Lee, "The Historiography of Singapore," in *Singapore Studies: Critical Surveys of the Humanities and Social Science*, ed. B. J. Kapur (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1989).

25 See for instance C. B. Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 - 1867* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965; reprint, 1902); D. Moore and J. Moore, *The First 150 Years of Singapore* (Singapore: Donald Moore Press, 1969); C. M. Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, Second ed. (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1992; reprint, 1992); N. Tan, "Health and Welfare," in *A History of Singapore*, ed. E. Chew and E. Lee (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

sports played by the colonial expatriates.<sup>26</sup> Though a relatively small chapter, it covers the major sports in the settlement and was the first text to provide a specific focus on sport. It expands on Buckley's commentary on sports and provides an early twentieth century account of sport from a British participant perspective. Song's *100 Years of Straits Chinese History* offers glimpses of Chinese sporting activities and interests.

The attention to sport in these texts can be contrasted with that in contemporary texts on the general history of Singapore, which place considerably less emphasis on sport.<sup>27</sup> Equally sociological texts on Singapore's general culture or politics ignore the consideration of sport.<sup>28</sup> The contrast between the texts written in the British colony and those of independent Singapore indicates the relatively higher regard in which the British held sport. Similarly, their emphasis on bourgeois sport, particularly hunting, cricket, equestrianism and horseracing reflects the bourgeois sport culture of Singapore. Equally, the relatively small mention of the sporting or play activities of the non-European migrants may reflect the level of their involvement in sport; however, it also demonstrates a marginalization of their influence on the development of sport.

Since the 1980s, an academic interest in sport research in Singapore has slowly emerged. In 1984, Oon submitted the first doctoral dissertation on sport which was a descriptive historical examination of the government's involvement in sport in Singapore. His work not only signified academic interest in the field but the growing importance of sport in the nation. His study focused on the period between 1959 and 1982 and adopted Semotiuk's model for analysing the political functions of sport.<sup>29</sup> In taking on a functionalist model and placing his focus on the role of the government, Oon's study under-explores the role of the citizens and possible tensions in the

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26 W. Makepeace, G. E. Brooke, and R. J. Braddell, "A Century of Sport," in *One Hundred Years of Singapore*, ed. W. Makepeace, G. E. Brooke, and R. J. Braddell (London: John Murray, 1921).

27 See for example E. Chew and E. Lee, eds., *A History of Singapore* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991).; Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*.

28 See for example B. H. Chua, ed., *Consumption in Asia: Lifestyles and Identities* (New York: Routledge, 2000); C. J. W. - L. Wee, ed., *Local Cultures and the "New Asia": The State, Culture, and Capitalism in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002); W. S. W. Lim, ed., *Postmodern Singapore* (Singapore: Select Publication, 2002); R. Vasil, *Governing Singapore: A History of National Development and Democracy* (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2000).

29 Oon, "Government Involvement in Sport in Singapore: 1959-1982".

relationship between them and government. Such an analysis reflects Hargreaves's concerns regarding "one-sided" depictions of sport.<sup>30</sup> It has a tendency to position the masses as passive agents in the construction of sport in Singapore, and sport is presented as merely a functional vehicle that the government utilises to serve the functions it identified: indoctrination, labour productivity, prestige, socialization or nationalization, health and well-being, international goodwill, military defence, economic and legislation.<sup>31</sup> Oon's analysis recognises the nature of power as an expandable property of social systems but fails to acknowledge the significance of subjects in the dialectical relationship of sport and power. Nor does it recognise that development of sport was an outcome of a struggle of conflicting interests between the dominant and subordinate groups, rather than the result of one group's unfettered imposition of its interests.

With the establishment of a specialized school in sport and physical education in Singapore's second largest university, Nanyang Technological University, research interest on sport in Singapore has, in recent years, become relatively more active. Since 1990s, two more doctoral theses were written and further work on sport and Singapore society appeared in international publications, enabling a greater awareness of sport in Singapore as well as adding to stock of knowledge on sport. This rise in interest paralleled the increasing significance of sport in Singapore. In particular, the examination of sport in post-colonial countries reveals the enduring and not so enduring characteristics of the colonial sport culture. With the benefit of hindsight, Horton's comparative analysis of the emergence of the sports cultures in Singapore and Australia provides a critical focus on continuing cultural bonds of the British sojourners.<sup>32</sup> The diffusion of England's "cultural baggage," as shown by Horton, is neither homogenous nor complete.<sup>33</sup>

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30 Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain*.

31 Oon, "Government Involvement in Sport in Singapore: 1959-1982".

32 P. A. Horton, "'Padang or Paddock': A Comparative View of Colonial Sport in Two Imperial Territories," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 14, no. 1 (1997).

33 *Ibid.*,5

Unlike the work of Makepeace *et al.*, which paid minimal attention to the non-Europeans' contributions to the development of sport, Horton's *Complex Creolization* and Aplin's *Celestial in Touch* focused on the Chinese migrants' role in the early development of sport.<sup>34</sup> These two works demonstrate the unpacking of ignored and forgotten contents that form an important part of the knowledge of the development of sport in Singapore.

This incorporation of otherwise disregarded knowledge has implications for understandings of the overall process of development as well as for the completeness of the historical narrative. Critiquing earlier Anglo-centred accounts, Horton argues that "it would be a mistake to allocate sole responsibility for the nature of the nation's sport to one cultural force."<sup>35</sup> However, to argue, as Horton does, that the Chinese middle class "readily adopted" sport is to swing to the other end of the pendulum.<sup>36</sup> It suggests that the process of diffusion of sport from the British bourgeoisie to the similar class in another racially based social group was unproblematic. Although Aplin attempts to show the diffusion process to be problematic, this results in contradiction rather than complexity. Thus, on the one hand, he argues that "[t]he sports experiences... of the Chinese migrants were very limited and a cause of continual British concern"<sup>37</sup> while, on the other, claiming that "[t]he British continually failed to acknowledge... the Chinese should be provided with more extensive opportunities to participate in recreational activities."<sup>38</sup> Similarly, he claims that "[t]hose who did imitate British tastes in sport were also the ones who *adopted* the *whole spectrum* of empire-building values and beliefs associated with all social and economic activities"<sup>39</sup> (emphasis added) yet also insists that "[d]espite their open *emulation* of things British, there remained an underlying resistance to adopting, exclusively *all* (original italics)

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34 P. A. Horton, "Complex Creolization: The Evolution of Modern Sport in Singapore," in *The European Sports History Review*, ed. J. A. Mangan (London: Frank Cass, 2001); N. G. Aplin and J. J. Quek, "Celestials in Touch: Sport and the Chinese in Colonial Singapore," in *Sport in Asian Society: Past and Present*, ed. J. A. Mangan and H. Fan (London: Frank Cass, 2003).

35 Horton, "Complex Creolization: The Evolution of Modern Sport in Singapore," 79.

36 *Ibid.*, 91.

37 Aplin and Quek, "Celestials in Touch: Sport and the Chinese in Colonial Singapore," 69.

38 *Ibid.*, 92.

39 *Ibid.*, 71.



things British."<sup>40</sup> Contradictory statements such as these weaken the cogency of the pluralistic conceptualization. Aplin's failure to carry through his pluralistic intentions points to usefulness of a theoretical paradigm, such as Elias's, that is conceptualized precisely to capture the plurality of ambiguities, conflicts, paradoxes and harmony in social development.

The increasing emphasis on both achievement-oriented sport and research in the area were both accelerated by the government's sports excellence policy instituted in 1992. Horton examined the symbiotic relationship between unsuccessful sporting countries, such as Singapore and the Olympic movement and the Olympics.<sup>41</sup> Elsewhere, he explored the lacklustre performance of Singapore's sport and the monopolization of sport by the government.<sup>42</sup> Whilst the latter paper cogently argues the hegemonic struggles in sport, it situates the government in the pilot's seat in the development of sporting success. Similarly, in McNeill's examination of the validity and relevance of a sport excellence programme in a local secondary school, the government is positioned as holding the key to unlock, not just the resources but the cultural constraints.<sup>43</sup>

Certainly both Horton and McNeill's positioning of the government is convincing, particularly given that Singapore is governed so tightly that it is identified by citizens, government, local and abroad as a "nanny state."<sup>44</sup> However, examining the tensions of human interdependence, rather than treating government as the sole or dominant causal factor, may create space for a more complex sense of determination and agency. Indeed, in his doctoral dissertation Aplin argues against a determinist perspective, "particularly within the historical and political contexts," which searches for causal explanation of the "failings of sport."<sup>45</sup> However, his utilization of Schwartz's value system to examine the relationship between values and sporting excellence of

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40 *Ibid.*, 78.

41 Horton, "Olympism in the Asia-Pacific Region: A Question of Naivety or Pragmatism?."

42 Horton, *Shackling the Lion: Sport and Modern Singapore*.

43 M. C. McNeill, "Sport Specialisation in a Singapore Secondary School: A Case for Legitimation" (Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Loughborough University, 1999).

44 K. Y. Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000* (New York: Harper Collins, 2000), 183.

45 Aplin, "Values and the Pursuit of Sports Excellence: The Case of Singapore", 278.

Singapore swimmers to addresses the tensions inhibiting the pursuit of sport achievement fails to avoid the very problems he identified.<sup>46</sup> Further, the conceptualization of values as progressing from experimentation through apprenticeship to confirmation is vulnerable to Goudsblom's criticism of deductive formalism as "beautifully-ordered verbal schemes and diagrams, [whose authors] let themselves be persuaded that these schemes represent the hidden order of reality"<sup>47</sup>. It contributes to Aplin's untenable conclusion that "[c]ontemporary international sport does not fit easily into the model of nation building that has been designed for Singapore. The national culture has been constructed on the ideologies of peace, prosperity and harmony."<sup>48</sup>

Despite the criticisms that can be levelled at them, these examinations of the constraints and enabling factors in the development of sporting success in Singapore highlight the complexity of that development. The influences of the government, British Imperialism, the non-European migrants, education and the entrenched value system of the nation are all interwoven in the construction of sport. A process sociological analysis, such as that undertaken here, will demonstrate the binding of all these inter-related and interdependent forces in explaining the sport culture of Singapore. Its rejection of causal explanation or the privileging of particular factors to explain the figuration of sport in Singapore will add to the plurality of interpretations of sport.

In discussing the neglected historical juncture of the Japanese Occupation, it will also demonstrate more fully the development of sport in Singapore. Thus, it will show how sport culture in Singapore is the culmination of the interweaving of the different junctures in its history, the actions of the migrants, the colonialists, the Japanese, the People's Action Party. It will demonstrate that the sport culture of Singapore is a rich tapestry of struggle, conflicts, negotiation and cooperation, which parallel and contradict the social development of Singapore. Although there have been numerous studies about the culture of Singapore, the examination of culture through sport is

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46 *Ibid.*

47 J. Goudsblom, *Sociology in Balance: A Critical Essay* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), 103.

48 Aplin, "Values and the Pursuit of Sports Excellence: The Case of Singapore", 264.

limited. By bringing these interconnections to light, a more intimate understanding of Singapore can be achieved whilst at the same time enhancing the understanding and appreciation of the significance of sport.

### **The Eliasian Argument**

Elias's figurational sociology emanated from his analysis of the civilizing process in European society during the Middle Ages. Using empirical evidence, Elias traced the long-term development of social standards of manners and constituent psychological orientation. He argued that this analysis revealed a general pattern of development which involved a progression towards more elaborate and refined social behaviour with constraints on behaviour becoming more self-driven than externally imposed. He demonstrated that the social elite first imposed stricter demands on social behaviour upon those of lower social standing.<sup>49</sup> As the chains of interdependency between them tightened, the latter modelled more and more closely the behaviour of the former. In order to maintain a distinction in class, the upper echelons increased the degree of self-restraint and sophistication of their manners and behaviour. As the social distance between the two increased with economic expansion, external pressure on self-restraint was not only experienced by the lower strata but also by those in the upper echelons. Gradually the "armour of restraint [was] fastened"<sup>50</sup> and people came to exercise greater self-control over their behaviour and emotions.<sup>51</sup> With the internalisation of self-restraint and greater interdependency between the classes, the contrast in codes and standards of behaviour between the upper strata and the lower strata became less and less pronounced.

Corresponding to this 'psychogenetic' development in the civilizing process was what Elias called 'sociogenetic' changes. The web of interdependence expanded from emotional to functional bonds and from a local or insular level to a national level. Social figurations became increasingly characterized by functional dependency. Elias identified the monopolies of force and taxation as two critical developments unfolding in the civilizing process. With the monopolization of force and tax, the state gained

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49 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 116.

50 *Ibid.*, 117.

51 *Ibid.*

greater power in the distribution of resources. Concomitantly, the network of interdependencies was characterised by functional democratisation as production, distribution and supervision became more and more complex. Elias observed a diminishing in power of the "warrior aristocracy" and an ascendancy in power of the bourgeois who became more and more crucial in the facilitation of material production. As the dependencies between different social classes increased, the contrast between their social conduct diminished. Thus, for example, the upper strata intentionally and unintentionally colonized the lower strata with their practices, values and images, and as the lower strata mimicked the behaviour and practices of the upper strata the latter constructed 'walls of repulsion', which included an increased regulation of their social behaviour so as to distinguish their social identity. Miller showed, in her study of the development of patriarchy, that neostoicism underpinned the conduct of men of nobility in early Europe. Masculinity embodied Neo-Stoic discipline, moral and emotional restraint and an intellectual detachment, which distinguished the male aristocrats from the courtiers.<sup>52</sup> This tension of colonizing, mimicking and repelling is fundamental to the relationship between the established group and the outsider.<sup>53</sup> Thus, as the contrast between the conduct, practices and images of different classes and groups diminished, the variety of their conduct, practices and images increased. This concept of 'diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties' is useful in examining processes such as "Americanisation" or "globalization"<sup>54</sup> in the context of Singapore. A corollary of the 'equalizing' of power these processes entailed, was the shift from external control through physical force to increasing self-restraint and control as competition for resources increased and the pressure to comply and the conditioning of behaviour intensified. On both the psychogenetic and sociogenetic levels, internal controls became more powerful than external controls.

Elias's focus is on human interdependence. To resolve the conflict of the individual and society and to put the focus on people and their relationships, Elias uses the word

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52 P. Miller, *Transformations of Patriarchy in the West, 1500-1900* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998).

53 J. Goudsblom and S. Mennell, eds., *The Norbert Elias Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998).

54 See J. Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

'figuration' to evoke the process of configuration, the sense and movement of interdependence and interconnection. An individual only exists in relation to another individual, and a society is not separate from the individual but constitutes the different individuals. The expression 'individuals' neither evokes the sense of connections nor functions, as though they are self contained, like statues, when in fact they are interdependent. Equally, to use 'society' as a collective noun for individuals does not bring out the critical 'interdependence' or 'relationship' between the individuals. Neither does it embody the processual quality of relationship, that is, one which involves extending, reducing, negotiating, competing, and the sharing of time and space. Figuration, as Elias describes it, refers to:

the changing pattern created by players as a whole – not only by their intellects but by their whole selves, the totality of their dealings in their relationships with each other. It can be seen that this figuration forms a flexible lattice-work of tensions. The interdependence of the players, which is a prerequisite of their forming a figuration, may be an interdependence of allies or of opponents.

Since each player performs a function, everyone in a particular figuration holds some degree of power. Players move from figuration to figuration, for the different functions they perform and with each function, the degree of power they assume is dependent on their relationship with other players. It is neither equal nor constant. Power therefore, Elias argues, "is not an amulet possessed by one person and not by another."<sup>55</sup> It is but "a structural characteristic of a human relationship, of all human relationship."<sup>56</sup> Power fluctuates from relationship to relationship, shifting, negotiating and competing in each relationship; it is not an isolated and static object that is employed or utilized like a piece of rock.<sup>57</sup> This relational and polymorphous character of power again evokes a processual quality. Moreover, such a conceptualization also departs from tendencies to locate power in institutions or in the hands of a select few. It conceives relationships not as existing between one between the powerful and the powerless, but rather as existing between the more powerful and the less powerful.

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<sup>55</sup> Elias, *What Is Sociology?*, 74.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

This characterization of power not only emphasises its relational property but also "empowers" the conceptualization of the position of those subjugated and marginalized.

### **Elias and Structuralism**

Historical knowledge, McCullagh argues, forms the basis of how society can be understood.<sup>58</sup> Elias's insistence on the importance of close empirical analysis in his theoretical paradigm reflects elements of McCullagh's position. The emphasis of empirical evidence in the Eliasian approach avoids the tendency of sociological analysis "to pick the bones of sport, glorifying in finding salmonella in the process,"<sup>59</sup> as Howell and Howell express it. Arguments that are made based on particular events, which demonstrate one perspective of sport are at best an incomplete, and at worst an inaccurate representation of sport in its entirety.<sup>60</sup> Empirically driven research, Elias argues, should be concerned with gathering material facts that enable the understanding of the underlying pattern. He describes this process as:

penetration of the underlying regularities by which people in a certain society are bound over and over again to particular patterns of conduct and to very specific functional chains, for example as knights and bondsmen, kings and state officials, bourgeois and nobles, and by which these relationships and institutions change in a very specific direction.<sup>61</sup>

The selection and interpretation of empirical evidence, however, are important factors in any attempt to explore the development of sport. Debate between historians and sociologists over the importance of knowledge and understanding their respective disciplines can offer often focuses on the adequacy of the regulation of subjectivity in the two disciplines. The tension between social theorists and historians dates back to the nineteenth century, when Comte (1864) and Spencer (1904) berated the works of

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58 C. B. McCullagh, *The Truth of History* (London: Routledge, 1998).

59 R. A. Howell and M. L. Howell, *The Genesis of Sport in Queensland: From Dreamtime to Federation* (St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1992), 4.

60 *Ibid.*

61 Goudsblom and Mennell, eds., *The Norbert Elias Reader*, 65.

historians.<sup>62</sup> Burke summarised their sentiments in his *History and Social Theory*: "At best, the historians were collectors of raw material for sociologists. At worst, they were totally irrelevant because they did not even provide the right kind of material for the master builders."<sup>63</sup> Historians are rebuked for their selective representation of the past which, sociologists and social theorists charge, provides only a construction of a partial historical account rather than a comprehensive and balanced account of the range of experiences, views and practices. In defence of history, Morgan argues that attempts to develop more empirically comprehensive and theoretically sophisticated analysis of sport in past societies also lack 'scientific objectivity', as they are already themselves socially predetermined.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the criticism of historical work as "atheoretical" is at best irrelevant and at worst polemical.

The purpose of social science remains therefore, using Howell's description of the task of sport historians, to "examine the gaps of our knowledge and encourage studies to fill those gaps."<sup>65</sup> Historians' accounts, McCullagh asserts, like those of sociologists, are couched in the concepts of their culture and focus upon the features of the perceptual field which interest them.<sup>66</sup> The validity of a historical presentation should only be suspect, when the analysis can be shown to be untenable by its inherent logic of argument and material evidence, rather than by alternate explanations drawn from a theoretical paradigm. "Historical knowledge, like all our knowledge of the world, is fallible" as McCullagh reiterates.<sup>67</sup>

Elias's paradigm, in the tradition of nineteenth century sociologists such as Comte and Marx, was grounded in empirical evidence and, like theirs, it also employed a theoretical conceptualization that sought to draw broad, general understandings rather than to simply recount particular narratives. However, Elias's paradigm differed from

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62 See P. Burke, *History and Social Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992).

63 *Ibid.*, 9.

64 Morgan, *Leftist Theories of Sport: A Critique and Reconstruction*.

65 M. L. Howell, "Toward a History of Sport," in *Research in the History, Philosophy and International Aspects of Physical Education and Sport: Bibliographies and Techniques*, ed. E. F. Zeigler and M. L. Howell (Champaign, Il.: Stipes Publishing, 1971), 8.

66 McCullagh, *The Truth of History*.

67 Burke, *History and Social Theory*, 23.

theirs in both principle and orientation. It can be described as positivistic insofar as Elias conceives a kind of order in the developments Elias traces.<sup>68</sup> However, to say there is an order is markedly different from saying that the process is orderly and unproblematic, a point that I will return to in comparing Elias's conceptualisation with Foucault's. For the moment, it is sufficient to state that Elias's historical analysis focuses on investigating how the present has emerged from the past rather than how the past engendered the present. By examining retrospectively, the process of development reveals a pattern, which Elias describes as neither mysterious, on the one hand, nor merely a case of probabilities, on the other. Whilst it can demonstrate the processes through which the present form emerged from the past, it cannot and does not seek to offer a causal explanation of the developments it charts or postulate or pretend to determine, as Marxists theorists do, what will emerge next.<sup>69</sup> The interweaving of intended actions often results in an outcome that is unplanned and unpredicted.

Firstly, Elias like Marx does not reduce the complexity of the formation of society into one determining factor. Process sociology takes into consideration the significance of economics in the dynamics of the interweaving of the social figurations. "It sees processes as structured and structures as processual," which is the critical integration of process sociology.<sup>70</sup> Theories, as Dunning argued, are not untestable *idée's fixes*.<sup>71</sup> To conceive, as Marx did that "the 'history of humanity' must always be studied and treated in relation to the history of industry and exchange,"<sup>72</sup> reduces the explanation of the complexities of human dynamics to just one causal sphere – the mode of production. Using Marx's words, Elias's theoretical conceptualization would argue that any history that takes account of only the material basis "is uncritical."<sup>73</sup> Such an approach also provides grounds for historians' accusation that sociological theories reduce the complexity of the social institution of sport when they examine only one

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68 Goudsblom and Mennell, eds., *The Norbert Elias Reader*.

69 Elias, *What Is Sociology?*, 160-162

70 Dunning, "Introduction: Sports in Comparative and Developmental Perspective," 6.

71 *Ibid.*

72 K. Marx, *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1978), 77.

73 *Ibid.*, 79.



dimension of the institution, and where the evidence comprising such an account could be merely "pin pricks when the total picture is analysed."<sup>74</sup>

The economic factor is an important consideration in the process of functional democratisation and indeed Elias does not deny that industrialisation is a major factor in the development of modern sport.<sup>75</sup> However, the developments in society do not lie nor are determined solely by the mode of production as Marxist theorists suggest.<sup>76</sup> Equally, the increasing regulation of rational conduct was not, as Weber argues, "born... from the spirit of Christian asceticism."<sup>77</sup> To privilege one factor over others, suggests that the complexity of social development has not been appreciated. However, Elias, like Weber, recognises that the multipolar character of power cannot be considered only at the point of contact between the working and capitalist classes. Also like Weber, Elias does not locate power in only economic relations or reduce social stratification to class. Power is to be "valued for its own sake" and status is an equally important consideration in understanding social stratification.<sup>78</sup> Weber's conceptualization of power however has the tendency to reify power as an "amulet"<sup>79</sup> tied to specific status or honour. Elias's conceptualization of power as dynamic constituent in any relationship, thus offers a more open, rather than limiting consideration of power.

Theoretical conceptualization based on examination of the interconnections between the various spheres or factors, such as economics or politics, epitomised by Parsons, Elias again argues, reifies the institutions as separate from the very people

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74 Howell and Howell, *The Genesis of Sport in Queensland: From Dreamtime to Federation*, 4.

75 N. Elias, "An Essay on Sport and Violence," in *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, ed. N. Elias and E. Dunning (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

76 B. Rigauer, "Marxists Theories," in *Handbook of Sports Studies*, ed. J. Coakley and E. Dunning (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

77 Weber cited in G. Jarvie and J. Maguire, *Sport and Leisure in Social Thought* (London: Routledge, 1994), 52.

78 Weber cited in J. Sugden and A. Tomlinson, "Theorizing Sport, Social Class and Status," in *Handbook of Sport Studies*, ed. J. Coakley and E. Dunning (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 317.

79 Elias, *What Is Sociology?*, 74.

who formed them.<sup>80</sup> Indeed, the tendency of such orientation is to conceptually divide society into institutions and people, locating power in institutions and compelling, privileging or marginalizing specific social groups. It sees social order or conflicts as maintained or driven by institutions. Parsons' theoretical model, in particular, does not illuminate the conflicts and tensions interwoven in the process of development. However, as Elias points out, "social tensions and conflicts will never be banished from society by suppressing them in theories."<sup>81</sup> Dunning argues, further, that such "static sociological approaches, which are not focused on the processes at work in sport and society, are at best severely limited and at worst fundamentally flawed."<sup>82</sup> The fusion of history and sociology in Elias's framework enables a penetrative social inquiry into the social façade of sport. Horne and Jary endorse the approach for its:

thoroughgoing and uncompromising theoretical and empirical sociological focus on the interrelations of social structure and individual 'affects', and its bringing into view aspects of the process of social social development previously 'hidden from history', has clearly achieved much more than most approaches.<sup>83</sup>

### **Elias and Poststructuralism**

One of the more influential of social theorists over the second half of the twentieth century, Michel Foucault has dominated emergent poststructuralist analyses of sport.<sup>84</sup> Foucault's and Elias's views appear to have some important similarities, although closer inspection reveals critical differences. Central to Foucault's work was an examination of the relationship between truth, power and knowledge, an analysis which raised compelling uncertainties about the adequacies of theoretical paradigms in the construction of knowledge. Since 1939, although with notably less success, Elias

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80 *Ibid.*

81 *Ibid.*, 173.

82 Dunning, "Introduction: Sports in Comparative and Developmental Perspective," 2.

83 J. Horne and D. Jary, *The Figurational Sociology of Sport and Leisure in Elias and Dunning: An Exposition and a Critique*, ed. J. Horne, D. Jary, and A. Tomlinson, *Sport, Leisure and Social Relations* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), 87.

84 Andrews, "Posting Up: French Post-Structuralism and the Critical Analysis of Contemporary Sporting Culture," 121.

has also consistently raised concerns of the inadequacies of modern theory. A comparison of Elias's concerns with the development of sociology and his theorizing orientation with a Foucauldian poststructuralist position suggests that while they are not the same, Elias's work takes a different approach from that which Foucault criticised. If indeed the twentieth first century is in the postmodern world of social thought and the postmodern world is characterised by the fall of theory, Elias represents a 'third space'.

A sub-discipline, in this instance the sociology of sport, while comprising a variety of competing discourses or 'positions', disciplines them as a means to maintain the "self-identity of a discipline."<sup>85</sup> From a Foucauldian perspective, the knowledge of sport produces, or constitutes, sport in a particular way, and simultaneously makes it appear that this is simply 'what sport *is*'. In the process, it conceals other possible understandings of sport.<sup>86</sup> The hierarchising of knowledges entails the process of subordination of some knowledges, which thus diminishes the understanding of sport. This concomitantly limits the conceptualization of the nature of sport and its problems, the understanding of sport's significance in society and the capacity to address its problems.

Elias had pointed out similar problems in his account of the tendency of sociological theories to assimilate attempts to demonstrate the "primacy of ideals," to the attempt to demonstrate the "primacy of *particular* ideals," and had also argued that this impeded the development of the field.<sup>87</sup> Goudsblom, an advocate of Elias, also argues that theoretical paradigms and concepts predicate certain assumptions.<sup>88</sup> Research that sets out to examine, for instance, social inequalities or patriarchy in sport pre-determines the limits of the knowledge it might seek, and therefore intentionally or unintentionally reinforces prevailing ideological positions, images and practices of

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85 M. Lloyd and A. Thacker, "Introduction: Strategies of Transgression," in *The Impact of Michel Foucault on the Social Sciences and Humanities*, ed. M. Lloyd and A. Thacker (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 3.

86 A. Apperley, "Foucault and the Problem of Method," in *The Impact of Michel Foucault: On the Social Science and Humanities*, ed. M. Lloyd and A. Thacker (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 22.

87 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 460.

88 Goudsblom, *Sociology in Balance: A Critical Essay*.

sport. When social theorists project their ideological positions into their investigations, whilst at the same time using appropriate theoretical positions to legitimize their argument as science, they intentionally or unintentionally engage in theoretical alliance. Power struggles are equally located in the academic world as they are in the world academics study, and the authority of science gives currency to the ideological positions in the social world in which they study. According to Dunning, one of the strengths of figurational theory lies in its capacity to offer an account of the development of sport without ideological embroidering.<sup>89</sup> For the moment, I am not concerned with whether Foucault or Elias offered the more effective escape from the liminal characteristics of theory, but rather to show that neither Elias nor Foucault assumed that problems of objectivity could be resolved unproblematically through the application of theoretical concepts.

Gouldner asserts that "social science is a *part* of the social world as well as (a) *conception* of it."<sup>90</sup> Knowledge, as Said demonstrates in *Orientalism*, is intertwined with politics.<sup>91</sup> Social science therefore "is not and has never been a neutral enquiry" of human conduct.<sup>92</sup> The parallel between the development of twentieth century social thought and the political movements in specific historical junctures and place is acknowledged by both Foucault and Elias.<sup>93</sup> The selection of what to observe and investigate and how to represent the selected images are themselves processes which are power laden. How theorizing is conducted is central to the production of knowledge. Scientific explanation marks itself as different from metaphysical and commonsensical explanation by its regulation of the processes through which knowledge is constructed. Markers of scientificity, such as detached articulation of thoughts, emphasis on technically measurable variables (e.g., Parsons' four-fold

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89 E. Dunning, "Preface," in *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, ed. N. Elias and E. Dunning (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

90 A. W. Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (New York: Basic Books Inc, 1970), 13.

91 E. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1995).

92 D. Cameron et al., "Power/Knowledge: The Politics of Social Science," in *The Discourse Reader*, ed. A. Jaworski and N. Coupland (London: Routledge, 1999), 141.

93 J. Faubion, ed., *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, vol. 2, *Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984* (London: Penguin Books, 1994), 433.; Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 465.

scheme), and arguments about deductive and inductive reasoning, structure and agency, objectivity and subjectivity, history and sociology in social theory, characterize the discourse of scientific knowledge. This regulation of the pursuit of truth identifies and distinguishes itself as an authority of truth. Hence, implicit in truth is the tacit assumption that the more regulated scientific knowledge is, the more truth there is, and the more authority (truthful) knowledge holds. Scientific paradigms are therefore, in Foucault's argument, not a means to truth but rather a discourse of truth. Expert discourse is positioned with "regimes of truth" which enable the legitimization of particular social reality.<sup>94</sup> Foucault argues that discourse is governed by "the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning,"<sup>95</sup> whereby in the intertwining discourse of science and the particular discursive work of an author, knowledge is established by marking off other knowledge and meaning. Particularly in the field of sport studies, whereby the subject matter appears relatively lightweight and trivial compared to politics or education, scientific method distinguishes sport theorists from journalists, critical analysis from journalistic writing, and sociological explanation from historical narration.

Proponents of Foucauldian theory and analysis argue that whilst existing theoretical paradigms do provide useful knowledge, they are also "peculiarly sensitive to the claims of theoretical and hierarchising knowledges."<sup>96</sup> Knowledge and power, as Hargreaves argues from a Foucauldian standpoint, are "two sides of the same coin."<sup>97</sup> Whilst knowledge is a "defence against power," it is also an instrument of power, which can divide, repress and empower.<sup>98</sup> Power therefore holds both productive and repressive functions and is located not in institution or specific social groups but rather in discourse.<sup>99</sup> The "author" of knowledge is bounded in, by and through discourse.<sup>100</sup> If

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94 Cameron et al., "Power/Knowledge: The Politics of Social Science," 142.

95 Faubion, ed., *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 221.

96 M. Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 12.

97 Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain*, 4.

98 Apperley, "Foucault and the Problem of Method."

99 *Ibid.*, 15.

100 *Ibid.*, 17.

the author is "interiorised" in discourse, this indissoluble connection between author and rules and substance of discourse that exist prior to and beyond the author heavily constrain the author's production of knowledge.<sup>101</sup> By examining the constraints in the discursive formation of knowledge, Foucault develops Nietzsche's assertion that "knowledge is always a matter of perspective."<sup>102</sup> Social research, therefore, is not only a site of power struggles but the knowledge it produces is also interconnected with pervasive network of power relations in the wider society. The interplay of repressive and productive functions in the constructions and representations of sport influences the development of both sport and the social thought regarding it. Knowledge engenders knowledge and is thus incomplete and problematic.

This characterisation of power and the constraints on the author are not in principle in conflict with Elias's views. As his deliberate selection of the word "figuration" as opposed to "society" to describe the groupings of interdependent beings suggests, Elias recognises the constraints of language and conventional modes of thinking; it is a selection that seeks to manage this power-laden-ness of language since, arguably, the former carries less rather than more ideological meanings or conceptual baggage than the latter.<sup>103</sup> The concept of figuration evokes the concept of relationships and the processual quality of human connections and interdependencies.

For Elias, this processual character of figurations means that while power is fundamental to any figuration, it is not static.<sup>104</sup> This conceptualization is similar to Foucault's argument that power "must be analysed as something that circulates, or rather as something that functions only when it is part of a chain."<sup>105</sup> Particularly, Foucault's substantive theme of governmentality and Elias's interest in the regulation of courtly and social conduct are more similar than different.

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101 *Ibid.*, 21.

102 A. Thacker, "Foucault and the Writing of History," in *The Impact of Michel Foucault on the Social Sciences and Humanities*, ed. M. Lloyd and A. Thacker (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 35.

103 Elias, *What Is Sociology?*

104 *Ibid.*, 131.

105 M. Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended": Lectures at the Collège De France*, ed. A. I. Davidson, trans. D. Macey (London: Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 2003), 29.

Elias argues that the pressure to monitor and regulate the social conduct is both sociogenetic and psychogenetic. As the social figuration becomes increasingly differentiated and complex, the threshold of embarrassment and repugnance over social conduct increases. Elias's account of the history of manners shows that 'embarrassment' refers to the sensitivity aroused by the social monitoring of certain behaviour. Together with the feeling of repugnance which is aroused by self monitoring, the controlling agency of social conduct is situated in the personality structure. This structure is intertwined with the monopolization of physical violence and taxation by the state, which intensifies the self restraint on social conduct.<sup>106</sup>

The Foucauldian 'gaze' and the panoptical sense of power in the reflexivity practices of the self and the modes of government are not unlike Elias's conceptualization of the restraint of social conduct.<sup>107</sup> The intertwining web of disciplinary pressure from repugnance within the self, the sense of embarrassment incurred from the monitoring by the social members and the policing by the state reflects a panoptic conceptualization of power. More importantly, both Elias and Foucault conceive power to involve a complex process of negotiation, and as relational rather than absolute. Further, a key premise of figural theory is that social theorists are not independent of the social world they conceive. Therefore, the constraints in the wider social figuration, including but not exclusive to language and social conduct prevail in the figuration of science.

"No one can start from scratch; everyone must start where others left off," as Elias points out.<sup>108</sup> Social theorists are bound within traditions of knowledge which to some extent enable them to stand on the shoulders of those before them but at the same time, constrain how their subject matter is conceived. If the discourse of sociology limits the thinking in a certain way, a 'sociological imagination', as C. Wright Mills espoused may hold true, up to the point of the "sociological mission" or "sociological spirit," but may need to abandon the adjectival condition which marks off how truth and knowledge can be explored.

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106 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*.

107 M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

108 Elias, *What Is Sociology?*, 34.

It was these liminal characteristics of social theory, particularly grand theory that Elias and Foucault both emphasized in arguing the need to ground investigation in historical analysis. Although they differ in approach, they are not in conflict. Both prescribe historical analysis, although their prescriptions are different. Both seek an understanding the present in relation to the past, rather than a memory of the past. Both recognise history as problematic rather than as narrative of the non-conflicting development of events. The present is conceived as unplanned and unpredicted although it embodied a "history" of interconnections between the actions of related and unrelated events, continuities and discontinuities of particular social developments.

To manage, rather than resolve the limitations of the constitution of the author in the discourse and subject matter, both Elias and Foucault privilege empirical investigation over theoretical rationalisation. Foucault proposes a historical method that employs "archaeology" to provide insights into the order of discursive formation, and genealogy to understand the relationship between the discourses. Elias, on the other hand resolves the tension of involvement and detachment by conceiving history to be ground in which figurational sociology can project the past and which it can use to illuminate the present. A retrospective developmental investigation enables an isolation of probabilities and therefore, Elias argues a higher degree of certainty of deriving the emergence of an irreducible figuration.<sup>109</sup>

Dean argues that Foucault constructs less of a "theoretical edifice" than Elias. Foucault, he suggests, offers an "analytical space populated by the dispersion and entwinement of discursive, governmental and ethical practices."<sup>110</sup> However, whilst Dean may not characterise the clarity in the directions, regulations and focus in the "analytical space" as a "theoretical edifice," it is difficult to argue that it does not embody the markers of theoretical discourse. The dissociation with theory in this case, may contrast with the embracing of theory in Elias's case, but both frameworks are conceived to open up or loosen analysis from rigid structuralist, functionalist and determinist analyses and narrow causal predilections, albeit more so in Foucault's case than Elias's.

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology*, 204.



Differences between them appear even more marked in their respective treatments of 'development'. Foucault seeks to locate trajectories of perspectives and meanings, and deliberately refuses to consider them in terms such as 'development'. In this regard, Foucault takes an implacably anti-teleological position: history, for Foucault, is directionless. Elias, in contrast, not only notes such trajectories, but conceives (some of) them as development, grounding his concept of development in the quality and density of interconnections. His notion of development is also non-teleological, in that he makes no presumptions about the empirical relations among the events that mark particular trajectories, but, rather, seeks to establish, through empirical analysis, precisely what those relations might have been.

Two particular trajectories are of particular interest to Elias, first, the extension of the webs of interdependencies among people, in particular social figurations and second, the increasing extent and density of regulation and control in the affective domain of the personality. His interest in these two developments may appear to suggest a resort to, or predilection for an a priori explanation of particular developments, as Dean suggests.<sup>111</sup> He is correct to a degree, in that Elias argues that the trend of overall development is one of greater differentiation in all social functions and greater regulation of social conduct. However, Elias insists that this 'trend' of development is not linear with only civilizing spurts – that is, that it only takes the form of progressive development – but that it is also characterised by de-civilizing or counter-civilizing spurts, that is, regressions from the direction of development.<sup>112</sup>

In this respect, Elias, like Foucault, recognises that there is no starting or ending point in history. However, while Foucault keeps the analysis open by rejecting the notion of a definable pattern in development, Elias conceives the process of development to be both "orderly and unplanned, structured yet unintentional."<sup>113</sup> This pattern that Elias identifies is neither deterministic nor teleological. It is conceived only from the hindsight of retrospection. The constituent quality of history is not just the interconnection of time, but the interconnectedness of human relationships, interconnectedness of discourses; the past is not divorced from the present, but rather,

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111 *Ibid.*

112 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*.

113 Elias, *What Is Sociology?*, 148.

the present emerged from the past. When these interconnections of human relationships and the discourses are plotted over time, and viewed retrospectively, Elias characterizes this pattern more boldly than does Foucault.

As in other matters, Foucault's and Elias's methods of interpretation differ in degree and form rather than in principle. Elias's method takes its interpretation from what is revealed in the empirical evidence and seeks to understand how the present has emerged from the past. He states that "[t]he sociologist's history is not the historian's history."<sup>114</sup> By that, he meant that the gathering of facts, whilst necessary for knowledge, should not be the matter of primary interest, directed (and reduced) to the mere collection of voluminous tomes of particular facts. Rather, the point of empirical investigation is to make it possible to focus on the organization of these facts, to identify their connections and interdependencies.<sup>115</sup> Foucault, equally, places great weight on empirical evidence. However, his process of analysis goes beyond the interpretation of linguistic statements as evidence for 'facts' of the past, to the "pure description of the facts of discourse."<sup>116</sup> This involves the identification and analysis of how statements of 'fact' are selected, organized, united, disunited and dispersed so as to establish how one discourse emerges over another in the particular time-space.<sup>117</sup> The facts of a discourse, he argues are to be seen not as "documents," which conceal, but rather as "monuments" allowing an archaeological investigation.<sup>118</sup> The deficiency in Foucault's method, Dean observes, is his reticence in providing a framework of how the discourse can be mobilised in terms of its purpose.<sup>119</sup> Equally, the location of an irreducible discourse has the tendency of reifying both the concept of discourse, and particular historic discourses, whilst competing discourses are viewed as problematic; immanent in Foucault's approach to discourse is a unity and order that suggests it is unproblematic.

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114 Elias, "An Essay on Sport and Violence," 153.

115 Goudsblom and Mennell, eds., *The Norbert Elias Reader*.

116 Faubion, ed., *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 306.

117 Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology*.

118 Faubion, ed., *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, 310.

119 Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology*.

Elias, thus, provides a less opaque conceptualization of knowledge than Foucault and in doing so avoids three traps. Firstly, he refuses to counter the problem of over-marking by sliding into potentially nihilistic accounts in which knowledge is reduced to discourse detached from any considerations of its two-way relation to social and material reality. Secondly, he avoids any tendency to focus only on the dominant, and to mark off the subjugated and concealed, a tendency which opens up the danger of allowing author's ideological leanings to seep into the analysis. Discursive formation is but the manifestation of human interdependence. And thirdly, he recognises that social theorists' do not exist only in a theoretical site or negotiate their position only in theoretical discourses but are involved directly or indirectly in the very subject matter they set out to examine. The use of a theoretical paradigm to negotiate their subjectivity does not effect a state of objectivity; rather the acknowledgement of their involvement and the process of conscious detachment from their subject matter facilitates greater regulation of subjectivity. Even then, this process does not entail absolute objectivity and truth. Theory is a necessary but not the only condition in resolving the issue of subjectivity and objectivity. Elias is therefore more 'open' than Foucault, in his framework, by looking at human interdependence, which diminishes the attachment of ideological connotations, or repeating the tendency of conventional theoretical paradigms that construct reifying conceptions.

Elias's theoretical conceptualization therefore offers on three levels the possibility of a more fruitful analysis than Foucault. Firstly, it neither conceives clarity in explanation and knowledge to be compromised when uncertainties, conflicts, ambiguities and paradoxes are revealed in the development of sport nor conceives 'critical' scrutiny to be articulated by grand narrative of a different variety, that of pre-theorizing the problem of theory and thought, as epitomised by Weber and Foucault, who reify the conceptualization and explanation of the problem. The complexity of human interdependence and power relationships in sport is not simplified for the purpose of presenting a non-conflicting and unambiguous explanation. Equally, to understand the development of sport in Singapore, it is necessary to avoid conceptual polarization and reification. Utilizing Elias's theoretical framework in the analysis of sport departs from the dominant literature available on Singapore that privileges the government and the economy as the determining force on sport. Elias's conceptualization of the state formation and notion of development provide a close

examination and explanation of the tensions between different social groups and the state which is particularly useful in accounting for the continuities and discontinuities in the development of state control in Singapore. It also departs from reducing sport to just one Western ideal or definition, but at the same time it neither positions it as a separate Asian model. Rather, it recognises that to understand sport in Singapore, it is necessary to examine the relationship between sport and the different functional strata. The figuration of sport in Singapore is not just a network of interdependencies within Singapore but out of it as well. The power relationships, the axes of tension and the webs of functions that form the structure of sport reveal the enabling and constraining factors that confront its development. This structure, Elias argues, gives sport its "direction and specific stamp."<sup>120</sup>

### **Sport Scholarship: Diminishing Contrasts and Increasing Varieties**

Scholarship in the field of sport studies can yield more meaningful insights when the emphasis is on the interchange and cross-fertilization of different perspectives on sport rather than merely on the abomination of one theoretical position to justify another. A retrospective examination of the emergence of postmodernism is useful in understanding how social thought in sport has developed to its present variety. Postmodernists argue that the emergence of postmodernism is a departure from modernist thought, which conceives society in binaries and represents one voice, rather than different voices.<sup>121</sup> Whilst criticism of grand explanations of society and sport is proper, to suggest that the current stock of knowledge of sport has no validity or value, as postmodernist criticism tends to do, is not only pessimistic, but it can serve only polemical purposes. Rather than use Elias to mount a counter-dismissal of postmodernism as merely the antithesis of modern thought, it is thus more useful, less polemical and more in keeping with Elias's own theoretical orientation, to consider postmodernism from an Eliasian perspective in terms of an increasing differentiation of theoretical paradigms. As Gouldner points out, "intellectual tendencies do not

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120 Goudsblom and Mennell, eds., *The Norbert Elias Reader*, 65.

121 See Fernandez-Balboa, "Introduction: The Human Movement Profession - from Modernism to Postmodernism."; Andrews, "Posting Up: French Post-Structuralism and the Critical Analysis of Contemporary Sporting Culture."

develop in social vacuum."<sup>122</sup>The development of social thought reflects and is part of the civilizing process and postmodernism reflects a phase in the development of social thought which is characterized by an increasing differentiation and integration of knowledge. The increasing demand to conceive and articulate the complexities of the contemporary society engenders a shift away from singular conceptualization and explanation and a differentiation and integration of the seemingly conflicting positions and perspectives. Thus the developmental pattern in social scientific explanation reflects characteristics of a civilizing process, in particular, an increasing regulation in the conduct and presentation of thought, enlarging the scope of analyses and diminishing the contrast between positions.

This can be illustrated, with the advantage of hindsight, by considering a sample of texts dealing with sport, written at different historical junctures. The work of the social theorists of sport is engaged directly as empirical documentation not only of the ideas of these particular thinkers, but of the formation and development of the social knowledge of sport itself. The analysis also attempts to demonstrate the elements in different theoretical positions that the figurational approach embraces or, alternatively, avoids. These texts have been critiqued to varying degrees, but the purpose here is not to indulge in a synchronic examination of the literature on social thought about sport in order to position an Eliasian framework as superior. Rather, by revisiting these well-critiqued texts, the purpose is to take on a diachronic examination to show how some of the knowledge of sport has developed. Elias argues that for social thought to contribute to the process of emancipation, theorists have to engage more in critical consideration of how new knowledge and discoveries can elaborate and refine present knowledge and conceptualization. Through this process, theoretical and empirical knowledge can become "more extensive, more correct, and more adequate."<sup>123</sup> It must be emphasized at the outset that this discussion of the civilizing process of the critique of sport herein represents only a tentative beginning.

The development of the study of sport will be discussed in light of Maguire's analysis of the connections between the globalization process and phases of sportization. Elias used the notion of "industrialization" to coin the term "sportization"

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122 Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, 27.

123 Elias, *What Is Sociology?*, 53.

to describe the transformation of English leisure activities into a work-like structure.<sup>124</sup> From an Eliasian analysis, Maguire parallels the sportization phases with the five phases of globalization identified by Robertson as: germinal, incipient, take-off, struggle for hegemony and, uncertainty.<sup>125</sup><sup>126</sup> Conceptually, the development of the study of sport can also be conceived along the five phases but the period of its development is less synchronized. The institutionalization of the field of study occurred almost a century after the institutionalization of sport. The first sportization phase, according to Maguire began in an inchoate form towards the end of the germinal phase in mid-eighteenth century. During this period, there was growth in national communities and the intellectual conceptualization of the world. Although Montaigne and Rousseau exemplified the philosophers who deliberated on the importance of physical development in this phase, their critique was not about modern sport.<sup>127</sup> The analysis will thus begin from the incipient phase when sport became institutionalised and the period of each phase is extended to facilitate a more meaningful representation of the development of the field of study.

If action is the genesis of thought, then correspondingly, the social thought on sport follows the development of sport.<sup>128</sup> Dewey's logic only applies so far as that social thought may follow the development of sport but it is not necessarily predicated or preceded by sport. Rather, the two developments gradually intertwined, developing interdependently. The development of sport critique forms part of the sportization process. It is both a product as well as a constituent of the process. Whilst each phase is connected, it is also relatively distinct from the other stages. This conceptual framework maintains a temporal-historical sense of development as well as a sense of "relationship" and "relative autonomization" of each phase, as characterized in

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124 N. Elias, "The Genesis of Sport as a Sociological Problem," in *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, ed. E. Dunning and N. Elias (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 129.

125 Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*, 77-78.

126 For a detailed analysis on the globalization process, see R. Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992).

127 See Davis and Miller, *The Philosophic Process in Physical Education*.

128 Dewey, J. cited in *Ibid.*, 6.

Robertson's globalization and Maguire's sportization analyses.<sup>129</sup> There exists in each phase a contrasting collection of thoughts. However, despite the contrast, some orientations dominate more than others in each phase. As a new phase emerges, the elements in the preceding phase do not disappear but become less dominant. The selection of phases and representative work may therefore appear contentious, but the primary intention is to demonstrate changes and continuities in the critique of sport. Individually, each piece of critique provides a conception of sport in a particular time and space; collectively they provide a multiple representation of sport. These representations are not only record of sporting history, but are themselves record of the history of sport critique. They form part of the development of sport.

### **Development of Social Thought on Sport**

The discussion of antecedent forms of sport can be traced to antiquity. However, it is important to distinguish modern sport from antecedent forms of sport. The English word 'sport' has its origin from the old French *desport*, meaning pastime, pleasure and recreation. It is different from the 'games' of feudal societies, which were not sport, but rather a "serious and important aspect of life."<sup>130</sup> Although the word 'sport' was first recorded in 1440, Maguire asserts that modern connotations of the term were only acquired in the eighteenth century.<sup>131</sup> In the nineteenth century the word 'sport' and its various representations gradually diffused out of England, which marked the rise towards the global understanding of the term.<sup>132</sup> Games contests in antiquity were battles of honour and bravery, victory or defeat was regarded by the contestants and their peers to have serious social and religious implications. As Elias observes, there is a tendency in contemporary critique of sport to maximise the similarities and minimise the differences between modern sport and antiquity.<sup>133</sup> Ancient sports are romanticised

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129 Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, 60.

130 Bendix, R (1960) cited in Loy, McPherson, and Kenyon, *The Sociology of Sport as an Academic Specialty: An Episodic Essay on the Development and Emergence of an Hybrid Subfield in North America*, 4.

131 Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*, 79.

132 Elias, "The Genesis of Sport as a Sociological Problem," 126-27.

133 N. Elias, "Sport as a Sociological Problem," in *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, ed. N. Elias and E. Dunning (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 132.

as the ideal and origin of modern sport, which often misrepresents and entangles the mind from conceiving problems arising from the departure from the ideal or original form. This distortion of the genesis of modern sport has a tendency of perpetuating the mythical idealistic purpose of sport that forms the social thought of sport.

According to Maguire, it was in the incipient phase of sportization, from the mid-eighteenth century to the 1870s that sport emerged in its modern form. It coincided with the parliamentization processes in England that Elias discusses.<sup>134</sup> The increasing restraint exhibited in the parliamentary conduct of the Whigs and Tories was paralleled in recreational conduct, a development which Elias describes as a "civilizing spurt" that transformed the social habitus of Western society. One of the manifestations of this civilizing process was the formation of clubs, which played an instrumental role in the development of modern sport. Another manifestation of the civilizing process was the birth of sociology, which marked an increasing restraint in the construction of social thought. The roots of sociology of sport also emerge during the eighteenth and nineteenth century.<sup>135</sup>

One of the more influential texts during this period was Spencer's essay on Physical Education, published in 1860.<sup>136</sup> Spencer's contribution to the libertarian ideology and the tension of life chances and competition remains central to the organization of resources and power in society and in sport and is thus selected over other texts.<sup>137</sup> The principle of 'survival of the fittest' is manifested in spectacular form by the contest of sport. Although the focus of the text is physical education rather than sport, the two fields share key ideological intentions. Specifically, the relationship between physical education and discipline shows how the knowledge of physical education and mental development, physical education and health, and games and sport embodied a utilitarian rationale. Spencer's functionalist perspective is reflected in his conception of

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134 Elias, "An Essay on Sport and Violence."

135 See J. Coakley and E. Dunning, eds., *Handbook of Sports Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 2002).

136 H. Spencer, *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1910).

137 Examples of other texts during this period, include P. Beckford, *Thoughts on Hare and Foxhunting* (London: Croom Helm, 1796); M. Shearman, *Football: Its History for Five Centuries* (London: Longmans, 1887); M. Shearman, *Athletics and Football* (London: Longman, 1889).



physical education as a means to enable individuals to become more competitive. Physical education embodies purposeful and positive functions in shaping a competitive body. The nature of English society during the nineteenth century featured prominently in Spencer's essay on physical education. He argued that a healthy and fit body was instrumental in the burgeoning commercial and socially competitive environment. Spencer's apparent intent for the essay was to address the importance of the role of physical education in raising the fitness levels of children whilst at the same time combating the general decline of health that had been brought about by two major social transformations in England. After the Crimean War, the relatively peaceful nature of English society resulted in a de-emphasis upon the need for a 'military' body that embodies muscular power and strength, whilst at the same time the increasing levels of commercial competitiveness had increased the emphasis placed upon the 'economic' body which embraces both intellectual power and physical endurance. Physical education, he argued, plays an important role in keeping the body fit for the demands of modern life. This utilitarian function of physical education, specifically games and sport, is succinctly illustrated in his claim that:

The competition of modern life is so keen, that few can bear the required application without injury. Already thousands break down under the high pressure they are subject to. If this pressure continues to increase, as it seems likely to do, it will try severely even the soundest constitutions. Hence it is becoming of especial importance that the training of children should also be carried on, as not only to fit them mentally for the struggle before them, but also to make them physically fit to bear its excessive wear and tear.<sup>138</sup>

Spencer's close parallel between physical education and competitiveness emphasized the tight connections between body and capital, body and power. He asserts that "growth is the dominant requirement to which all others must be subordinated."<sup>139</sup> Thus, the development of the mind is underpinned by the development of the body, a dualism that characterizes a competitive body.<sup>140</sup> Spencer

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138 Spencer, *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical*, 177.

139 *Ibid.*, 228.

140 *Ibid.*, 229.

reinforces Plato's conception of the human being as a composite of soul, body, mind and spirit but he departs from the metaphysical in placing an essentially utilitarian value on physical education. The latter was perceived as increasingly important as society became more complex. Friedrich Froebel's contention that games are integral in the preparation of a child of God, for life, and for establishing civic and moral virtues<sup>141</sup> is, in essence, similar to Spencer's view of games as being a way to prepare the child for life in the competitive world, and for establishing the physical and mental endurance to compete. Spencer's pragmatic belief unintentionally and ironically reflected and justified the promotion of muscular Christianity. Schools conducted physical education and games for behaviour regulatory purposes as demonstrated with Thomas Arnold's intentional use of football as a means of disciplining the boys at Rugby School.<sup>142</sup> The issues of morality and character development were emphasized with ideals such as fair play, courage, excellence becoming intertwined in physical education and sport.

Spencer criticised the emphasis placed on gymnastics and drills in physical education in England during this period. Reforms in physical education, he asserts, must be made to fulfil the demands of the high-pressure life. Spencer argues that the body is not a machine to be conditioned by regimental and scientific procedures such as gymnastics, which he describes as "artificial exercises" and "defective" for the high emphasis placed on control and regulation of movement. In order to train the body to be productive, Spencer argues, children need the "riotous glee" and "rougher frolics" in games and play to prepare them for the "excessive wear and tear" of the unpredictable physical challenges of life.<sup>143</sup> What is significant, here, is the characterization of physical education as a means of releasing or deregulating the body from the stress of restraint on conduct. Physical education and games therefore constituted a paradoxical means to discipline the body and mind by providing a regulated form of release for the body.

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141 Davis and Miller, *The Philosophic Process in Physical Education*, 52-53.

142 See E. Dunning and K. Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football* (New York: New York University Press, 1979).

143 Spencer, *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical*.

Spencer also highlighted the need for girls to participate in physical activities. His argument that women's complexions would be more attractive to men if they participated in physical activity suggests an association of "sportive activity" and the markers of the "lady" and the "gentleman." The design and selection of games and sport clothing for girls and women involved balancing the discursive practices constructing both of sport and the "lady," and this extended even into the twentieth-first century. Whether his justification is indicative of Victorian chauvinism or clever persuasion is not relevant here; what is of significance is that, intentionally or unintentionally, it added pressure to consider the needs of women in the theorizing of society. Women are neither excluded nor spared from the pressure of competition and the progress of society. Further, contemporary media emphasis on female athletes as sexual objects resonates with the Victorian construct of women as exemplified by Spencer's justification of women's participation in sportive activities for health and aesthetic reasons.

Maguire identified the 'take-off' phase of sportization between the 1870s and the 1920s when a wave of global developments emerged: sport and its associated ethos and images spread from England, international sport organizations and competitions were established, and rules and regulations of sport were codified.<sup>144</sup> This increased regulation in sport was itself a manifestation of increased regulation in the organization and conduct of the wider society. Although social theorizing of sport can hardly be conceived to have embodied similar characteristics of the take off phase, the inclusion of sport in the critique of society was emerging. One text in which this tendency can be identified is Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*, published in 1899, which provided a critical analysis of modern sport. Although sport was not the main focus of his text, Veblen's analysis marked the formal penetration into the critical consideration of sport in society, and has been identified as a 'classic' text.<sup>145</sup>

The regulation of sport was not only limited to how sport was played and organized but extended to the perception of what sport should or should not be, and how it should be understood. Writing from a different theoretical standpoint from that of Spencer,

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144 Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*.

145 R. Gruneau, *Class, Sports and Social Development* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1983), 1.

Veblen offered a critical perspective that considered the relationships between class and sport. Sport was conceived as a bourgeois practice that contributed to class differentiation, identity-formation, and thus helped shape the dynamics of the society. The cultural practice of the bourgeoisie was characterized as deliberately "conspicuous," a view that is paralleled by Elias's contention that as the contrast in the social conduct between the upper strata and lower strata narrows, the former distinguished their conduct by increasing its complexity.

Veblen was writing in the late nineteenth century, at a time when what he called the 'leisure class' began to gain a distinct and prominent role in American society. His conception of class structure was relatively undifferentiated and consisted of three strata, the country landlords, the leisure class and the manual labourers. Whilst Veblen distinguishes these groups from each other, he treats each as essentially homogenous. His focus was the leisure class. From his observation of the nature of American society in the 1890s, he contended that there existed in modern society a conflict between pro- and anti-evolutionary instincts. He conceived the leisure class to embody the latter instincts, and argued that sport was one of the displays of economic excesses which detracted their attention from industrial development. He argued that the blurring of the social lines with industrialization and civilization resulted in a social need amongst the leisure class to distinguish themselves as the superior class. This desire was served by indulging in conspicuously wasteful production and consumption that contradicted the grain of economic purposefulness. Sport was one of the practices that expressed "substantial futility,"<sup>146</sup> as well as predatory and dominating inclinations. But of equal importance, he suggests, it afforded the added "make-believe" purpose of physical and character development, which satisfies the fundamental human need of an objective end.<sup>147</sup> Veblen believed sport could flourish in modern society because it satisfied the excessive proclivities of the leisure class.

He argued that the need to justify the participation in sport for a non-invidious purpose, in terms of such ideals as, the virtues of competitiveness and strength, collectively legitimized as sportsmanship, indicated that the reasons for participating in sport were contrived and superfluous compared to the "primordial instinct of

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146 T. Veblen, *The Theory of Leisure Class* (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 259.

147 *Ibid.*, 260.

workmanship."<sup>148</sup> The inclination towards sports, according to Veblen, "connotes a prevalence of sharp practice and callous disregard of the interests of others, individually and collectively."<sup>149</sup> Whilst Veblen's analysis was 'conspicuously critical' in its reduction of all virtues of sport to mere masks for the barbarian proclivity to exploit, it focused on the dysfunctionality of sport, in contrast to Spencer's emphasis on the functional dimension of sport. It also extended significantly the scope of the social analysis of sport. Again in contrast to Spencer, his utilitarian criticism of the leisure class brought the relationship of class, sport and society under closer scrutiny though his interest was specifically to show that the nature of sport corresponded with the habits of thought of the leisure class.

At the same time as Veblen extended his analysis of society to include the significance of sport, he viewed leisure sport as separate from the wider social reality, and, in contrast to Spencer, allowed it no utilitarian function in the development of society. It was only instrumental to the perpetuation of the dysfunctional qualities of the leisure class. Although Veblen's concept of sport is contrary to that of Spencer, both held a utilitarian perspective. Whilst the latter considered sport as an asset to facilitate the evolutionary process, the former saw it as a means towards wasteful practices. His conceptualization of sport as waste overlooked any positive functions of sport, just as Spencer's conceptualization overlooked any negative function. Whilst both Spencer and Veblen opened up their own causal explanations of the place of sport in society, they unintentionally and implicitly closed off other explanations. Equally, they appeared to suggest that the relationship they identified between the variables they focused on was clear, unambiguous and unproblematic. To say this is not necessarily to assert that they failed to recognise other explanations, but rather to point out that because they presented only one explanation, a dissonance emerged between theory and the complexity of social reality.

The 'struggle for hegemony' phase lasted from the 1920s to the mid-twentieth century. Maguire contends that this phase, together with the take-off phase, formed the basis of the present sport culture.<sup>150</sup> He argues that the dominant British model of sport

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148 *Ibid.*, 270.

149 *Ibid.*, 274.

150 Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*.

was expanded and refined by an American model of sport which placed a more acute emphasis on achievement. At the same time, the patriarchal ideology and capitalist control of sport were increasingly threatened by higher levels of female participation and by the establishment of organizations to protect the interest of professional athletes. Although sport was in its mature phase, academic interest in the relationship between sport and society had only just begun, with Heinz Risse's *Soziologie des Sports* as the first specialized text on the sociology of sport.<sup>151</sup> The popularization of sociology towards the end of the phase also coincided with the emergent academic interest in sport.

Before the formalization of sport sociology as a discipline, literature on sport and society was dominated by historical and philosophical analysis. Gardiner's *Athletics of the Ancient World* (1930) and Huizinga's *Homo Ludens* (1955) were published at a time when the movement towards professional sport had accelerated following the First World War. Greater spectatorship in American baseball, football in England and an increasing level of media coverage of sport characterized this process of the massification of sport. *Athletics* deals specifically with the development of sport from the Homeric period to the Roman Empire while *Homo Ludens* is a historical and philosophical analysis of the relationship between play, sport and culture. Both texts positioned professionalism as an inferior form of practice to amateurism, which expressed the tension between amateurism and professionalism at this particular historical juncture. The bifurcation of Rugby into the amateur form of Rugby Union and the professional form of Rugby League after 1895 exemplifies the divide of amateurism and professionalism.<sup>152</sup> The tension was also intertwined with the association of amateurism with the bourgeoisie and the professionalism with the working class. Gardiner positioned Ancient Greece as the source of modern sport, which imputed to modern sport a deep-rooted Ancient Grecian heritage that embraced the Socratic ideals of making a good man through athletics, and the absence of desire for material gratification as divine. These ideals are projected as the pure, original and

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151 Coakley and Dunning, eds., *Handbook of Sports Studies*.

152 See Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football*.

inherently proper intent of sport.<sup>153</sup> Although Huizinga, in contrast with Gardiner, identified England as the "cradle of modern sport,"<sup>154</sup> his conceptualization of the image of the amateur also reflects this view of ancient ideals.

Gardiner, a classicist, was viewing sport from the position of a classical scholar, a sporting amateur. He juxtaposed what he saw as the problems facing modern sport by showing how specific factors, primarily professionalism, caused the decline of Grecian athletics. He contends "the Nemesis of excess in athletics is professionalism, which is the death of all true sport."<sup>155</sup> To substantiate his argument, Gardiner examined the image of sport constructed by ancient Grecian philosophers. He showed that Aristotle criticised excessive competition in athletics amongst the young for the harm it did to their bodies, whilst "Plato a keen advocate of physical training, can find no place for the athletics of his time in his ideal state."<sup>156</sup> From Euripides, Gardiner substantiated his position on professionalism with this quote: "Of all the countless evils throughout Hellas none is worse than the race of athletes."<sup>157</sup> The Grecian ideal is positioned as the ideal – perfect for modern sport. Considering Plato as the "fountainhead" of theory on sport, Gardiner takes the ideals formulated in ancient Greece as universal, and imposes them on the industrial society of the twentieth century. Whilst Gardiner made a distinction between sport in ancient Greece and modern sport, he overlooked the obvious distinctions between the two societies. By imposing Ancient Grecian ideals as the benchmark for modern sport, he positioned modern sport as distant from the ideal.

His criticism of the transformation of ancient athletics towards professionalism, and his dismay at what he thus considered the deteriorating reality of sport reflected the voice of those who idealised the past and were oriented towards conserving an image of the ancient heritage of sport. Equally, his condemnation of professionalism articulated the belief that sport is properly the enclave of the amateur, and that amateurism is the only form of sport practice that is right and good, a belief which

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153 E. N. Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), vi.

154 J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 197.

155 Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World*, 99.

156 *Ibid.*, 102.

157 *Ibid.*, 103.

echoed the voices of those in the nineteenth century who opposed the changes of society through industrialization and extolled a better past.<sup>158</sup> Whilst his conceptualization does not focus on the class function of sport as Veblen's did, it implicitly normalised an amateur and middle class construct of sport. The binary of professionalism and amateurism thus was reproduced and gained currency at a theoretical level.

Like Gardiner, Huizinga uses the "great competitions in archaic cultures" to show and exalt the image of "pure play quality."<sup>159</sup> Professional athletes are characterized as lacking in "true play spirit," unlike amateurs.<sup>160</sup> This conceptualization suggests that the practice of professional sport holds no cultural merit, therefore, by association, the professionals, who belonged to the working class, were projected to be uncultured and did not contribute to the development of culture. Inversely, those who were able to invest in play, the amateurs, were producing and developing culture. Huizinga identified the tension between amateurs and professionalism in sport. Likewise, Gardiner also reasoned that the "ordinary man" lost interest in sport because he was reluctant to focus all his efforts and time on sport and therefore felt inadequate to compete.<sup>161</sup> The construction of play as a natural practice that produces and reproduces culture, in contrast to sport as a contrived practice that corrupts culture, engenders a polemical conceptualization of play and sport, as though one should exist in exclusion of the other and position, with one form as positive and the other as negative. The representation of the practices, identity and interest of the established group as "pure" and the outsider group as "corrupt" in an intellectual space, which is accessed more by the established group, reflected and reproduced the position of the dominant social group. Huizinga reinforced the amateur ideology, which was also the ideology of the bourgeoisie. More importantly, the knowledge of sport is shaped by such binary thinking embedded in a text which is regarded as privileged discourse and accorded the authority of truth. These texts produced and reproduced knowledge and in the process defined and constituted the cultural capital of sport.

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158 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 461.

159 Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, 13.

160 *Ibid.*

161 Gardiner, *Athletics of the Ancient World*, 101.



Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*, arguably one of the most influential texts on sport, reinforced Gardiner's criticisms of professionalism in sport. His positioning of sport as the antithesis of play reproduced the bourgeois ideology of sport. Play is conceived as the fundamental feature of culture and civilization.<sup>162</sup> It is the "seed" of "ideal growth"<sup>163</sup> and it is in and through the creative, free and non-purposive nature of play that culture was created and developed. A separation from the material and a submission to the non-purposeful and creative act of play is instrumental to the preservation and advancement of humanity. In contrast, modern professional sport is characterized as "profane," "unholy" and "sterile,"<sup>164</sup> and as occupying "a place alongside and apart from the cultural process."<sup>165</sup> He argues that play lost its purity with the advent of industrialization, technologization and the expansion of science in the nineteenth century. Corresponding to social development, sport became increasingly rationalized, systematized and bureaucratized, which eroded its "pure play quality."<sup>166</sup> The more inseparable play was from the serious side of life, the less it was play. Professionalism in sport thus epitomises the destruction of play. Professionalism is "neither play nor earnest life."<sup>167</sup> Thus, there is no merit in sport. This dichotomous analysis supports Huizinga's argument that the preservation of play was necessary to the preservation of humanity.<sup>168</sup> "True play knows no propaganda; its aim is in itself, and its familiar spirit is happy inspiration," he argues.<sup>169</sup> Sport has become devoid of the spontaneity, carelessness, freedom and the "interlude" function from daily life.<sup>170</sup> Huizinga described the change towards professionalism in sport as "atrophy."<sup>171</sup>

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162 Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, 5.

163 *Ibid.*, 82.

164 *Ibid.*, 113.

165 *Ibid.*, 13.

166 *Ibid.*, 197.

167 *Ibid.*

168 *Ibid.*, 211.

169 *Ibid.*

170 *Ibid.*, 7-9.

171 *Ibid.*, 197.

Huizinga perceived the tradition of sport to be decaying with the acceleration of professionalism in sport which suggests either sport should be unchanging or that the needs for and expectations of sport should be constant. He positioned sport as a passive victim of industrialization, rather than a process and product of industrialization. The conceptualization of the decay and development of sport is reduced to that of an explanation determined by industrialization.<sup>172</sup> Such simplification undermines the consideration of the processual nature of play, sport and industrialization. When industrialization is conceived as a threat to sport, to humanity, the changes in social relations and social conduct are overlooked. The inadequate exploration of material history is a major flaw in his thesis, as the very practices that separate play from reality, as Gruneau argues, are themselves determined "by, and constitutive of that reality."<sup>173</sup> Industrialization did not prevail over sport and subsume its identity. This dichotomous conceptualization of industrialization and sport suggests that people who were involved in the latter were not involved in the former. Rather, in Eliasian terms, development can be seen as an extension of chains of interdependency in which sport and other social spheres interpenetrated. Play and industrialization have been developing over time and their developments are neither separate nor conducted by two different groups of people. Rather, the two processes interweave as the lives of the same people interweave, making adaptations and responses in their conflicts and agreements.

Sport became increasingly complex in the fifth phase of sportization, which Maguire characterized as a phase in which the struggle for world hegemony became more intense and expansive.<sup>174</sup> Post-colonial countries, non-Western countries, women, and servants of sport are currently exerting more and more influence in shaping the Western model of sport. Although the process has been slow and uneven, it is clearly gathering momentum. Contrast in sporting practices is also diminishing and through the creolization of sport cultures more varieties of sport are emerging. More and more academic interest has been attracted by the significance, paradoxes and conflicts of sport since the emergence of this phase of development. Loy, McPherson and Kenyon

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172 Elias, "Sport as a Sociological Problem."

173 Gruneau, *Class, Sports and Social Development*, 27.

174 Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*.

attribute the acceleration in the interest in sport sociology to the efforts of individuals who demonstrate a direct or indirect interest in the critique of sport,<sup>175</sup> in particular, the university lecturers in physical education and early sport sociologists who formed the 1964 International Committee for the Sociology of Sport (ICSS) which facilitated discussion and communication of the field. Whilst both the individual scholars and the rise of a formal scholarly network were critical to the development in the field of sport research, it is not appropriate to attribute this development solely to their efforts or to the formation of a single organization.

Coakley and Dunning argue that the process of institutionalization in sport occurred in conjunction with five inter-related developments.<sup>176</sup> Three of these developments were specific to the academe, and included the rising interest amongst the physical education lecturers in the study of the historical and cultural significance of sport and physical education; the interest shown by a few sociologists in the area; and the expansion of university education in the 1960s, which intensified competition between and within disciplines and added pressure on academics to research and publish. The other two represent wider social developments, and include the dawn of the "permissive revolution," and the global tension manifested in the Cold War. They describe the permissive revolution as equalizing shifts in power in society that enhanced the position of the subordinate groups. This development facilitated sociological interest in areas such as religion, education, arts and sport, particularly from a left-oriented perspective. They see the struggle between the East and West, nuclear threats, capitalism and communism as promoting an interest in the role sport plays in the global power network. The interconnection between ideology and sociology was also aptly noted by Elias here:

The social sciences, especially sociology, can be said to have the same social parentage as the belief systems of the great mass parties, the major social ideology of our age.<sup>177</sup>

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175 J. W. Loy and G. S. Kenyon, "The Sociology of Sport: An Emerging Field," in *Sport, Culture and Society: A Reader on the Sociology of Sport*, ed. J. W. Loy and G. S. Kenyon (London: Macmillan Company, 1969), 1.

176 Coakley and Dunning, eds., *Handbook of Sports Studies*.

177 Elias, *What is Sociology?*, 65

The 'academic spurt' in the study of sport was thus indicative of the underlying transformation of European and American societies, which demanded a greater regulation and differentiation of conduct in all aspects of life, including sport and academic life. For instance, the formation of unions for workers in sport in various European countries reflects an increased regulation and control of sport.<sup>178</sup> Likewise, the conduct of knowledge construction and the production of sport underwent processes of institutionalisation and centralization as demonstrated in the formation of ICSS. These processes were more evident in societies at a higher stage of the civilizing process, just as modern sport itself developed first in these countries rather than in those at a lower stage of that process. Up to the late 1960s, sport had been regulated by the West; the discursive practice of sport was, particularly, dominated by the American model of achievement sport.<sup>179</sup> This would, to a degree, address Loy, McPherson and Kenyon's question why sport sociology developed earlier in North America and Europe than in other parts of the world.<sup>180</sup> It would also tend to explain its higher profile in Australia and Japan as opposed to other parts of Asia.

Loy and Kenyon observe that the beginning of any new field is characterized by an orientation of the parameters, which is often manifested by a preoccupation with definitions and classifications of concepts.<sup>181</sup> Caillois' neat game typology<sup>182</sup> and Stone's conceptualization of the spectacle of sport as transforming an "inherently moral and ennobling" cultural form into an "immoral and debasing" display<sup>183</sup> exemplified some of the definitional efforts made as the study of sport became institutionalized.

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178 Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*.

179 *Ibid.*, 84.

180 J. W. Loy, B.D. McPherson, and G. S. Kenyon, *The Sociology of Sport as an Academic Specialty: An Episodic Essay on the Development and Emergence of an Hybrid Subfield in North America*, *Caheper Sociology of Sport Monograph Series* (Ottawa, Ontario: University of Calgary, nd), 13.

181 J. W. Loy and G. S. Kenyon, "Frames of Reference," in *Sport, Culture and Society: A Reader on the Sociology of Sport*, ed. J. W. Loy and G. S. Kenyon (London: Macmillan Company, 1969), 11.

182 R. Caillois, "The Structure and Classification of Games," in *Sport, Culture and Society: A Reader on the Sociology of Sport*, ed. J. W. Loy and G. S. Kenyon (London: Macmillan Company, 1969).

183 G. P. Stone, "American Sports: Play and Display," in *The Sociology of Sport: A Selection of Readings*, ed. E. Dunning (London: Frank Cass, 1976), 60.

This preoccupation reflects an increasing demand in terms of precision in human thought, which also distinguishes scientists from the subjects they study. The concern with definition reflects an attempt to reach an irreducible meaning that distinguishes one concept from others. Whilst definition creates a pragmatic delimitation for theorizing, it also engenders the construction of ideological binaries and concomitantly constructs a one-dimensional reality, so that problems identified in theoretical analysis may not represent the problems of those actively engaged in the field of practice under analysis. Further, attempts to define the concept of sport, constructed it within quite different relations to play: either as oppositional to play, or as a later stage in the development of play. However, both approaches have a tendency to position sport as synonymous with professionalism and play as synonymous with amateurism.<sup>184</sup>

In North America, the social dimensions of sport are emphasized in defining the concept of sport. Loy and Kenyon, who founded the ICSS, led and epitomised the shift towards a positivistic orientation of sport. Their edited book, *Sport, Culture and Society*, served as the standard text on the sociology of sport in America and British universities and teaching colleges.<sup>185</sup> On a methodological level, the shift from a narrative to an explicitly theoretical discourse emerged. Quantitative research method, laboratory experiment and descriptive analysis were promoted to mark sport sociology as a credible science. Loy and Kenyon explained the role of a sport sociologist as "neither a spreader of gospel nor an evangelist for exercise" and positioned themselves as value-free natural scientists interested only in describing and explaining sport, not in changing sport attitudes or values.<sup>186</sup> The greater restraint in research conduct that this signals is exemplified by their text, in which 40% of the contributions employed statistical analysis to derive and create facts and truths about sport.<sup>187</sup> The problem of

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184 See for example, Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture.*; Stone, "American Sports: Play and Display."; P. C. McIntosh, *Sport in Society* (London: C. A. Watts & Co., 1971).

185 Jennifer Hargreaves, "Theorising Sport: An Introduction," in *Sport, Culture and Ideology*, ed. Jennifer Hargreaves (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 4.

186 G. S. Kenyon and J. W. Loy, *Toward a Sociology of Sport*, ed. J. W. Loy and G. S. Kenyon, *Sport, Culture and Society: A Reader on the Sociology of Sport* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1969), 38.

187 See J. W. Loy and G. S. Kenyon, eds., *Sport, Culture and Society: A Reader on the Sociology of Sport* (London: MacMillan Company, 1969).

focussing on technically measurable variables, Goudsblom argues, in concert with Adorno and Mills, is that it makes "fundamental problems disappear from view."<sup>188</sup>

Loy's conceptualization of sport constitutes a departure from a 'value laden' definitional effort. A distinct restraint is exercised to avoid the explicit vilification of professionalism in sport manifest in the works of Huizinga, Gardiner and Stone. Rather, his focus was on describing and explaining the social significance of sport as a multi-dimensional institution with conflicting forms which is not necessarily bad or destructive. Loy's use of a taxonomic device to define sport reflects the dominance of Parsons's influence in the 1950s and 1960s. He constructed a set of abstract, generalizing concepts to describe sport, embodying four levels of descriptors of sport: as a game occurrence, an institution, a social institution and a social situation.<sup>189</sup> Sport as an institutionalised game is divided into organizational, technological, symbolic and educational spheres. The validity of the conception of sport and play as mutually exclusive and in conflict was challenged. Sport is not devoid of the play element. In fact, the play element is one of the defining characteristics of sport. Whilst Loy integrated the concept of play and sport, his compartmentalization of sport into different occurrences, different spheres de-emphasized their connections. This de-emphasis may be faulted for its implicit suggestion that either all occurrences or spheres do not interweave or that they interweave without conflict. At the same time, it circumvents the tendency to make value laden interpretations about conflicts, and the subjective judgement of the author less apparent. It also suggests the premise of an inverse relationship between objectivity and subjectivity, that is the more concealed subjectivity is, the more objective is the analysis. Loy's taxonomy of sport demonstrates an attempt to present a more elaborate, more orderly, and more differentiated conceptualization of sport. This attempt suggests a greater regulation of the conceptualization and presentation of ideas and knowledge.

Whilst Loy's definition of sport represents an *à priori* formulation, Kenyon's statistical effort in his conceptualization of sport represents a more explicit

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188 J. Goudsblom, *Sociology in the Balance: A Critical Essay* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), 171.

189 J. W. Loy, "The Nature of Sport: A Definitional Effort," in *Sport, Culture and Society: A Reader on the Sociology of Sport*, ed. J. W. Loy and G. S. Kenyon (London: Macmillan Company, 1969).

"scientization" shift in the discussion of sport.<sup>190</sup> It utilizes identifiably 'scientific' markers, such as a Likert scaled survey method, to obtain empirical results and a subsequent statistical analysis. Responses were sought from both men and women, which suggests a shift towards recognizing that sports were not exclusive to men. Kenyon's proposed model of physical activity is also multidimensional in nature. It was formulated to test the validity of functions of physical activity identified by other means. These functions are organised into six sub-domains: social experience, health and fitness, pursuit of vertigo, aesthetic experience, catharsis and ascetic experience. Criticisms of and support for statistical analysis are voluminous<sup>191</sup>, but what is of interest here is that Kenyon's study epitomises the rising emphasis of integrating 'laboratory' science into the sociological analysis of sport. It reflects an expansion of the research methodology in the field and indicates an interpenetration of the scientific discourses. Further, it produces and reproduces the increasing scientization of the measurement, training and evaluation of sport performances.

Elias and Dunning question the adequacy of such a theory, formulated from small group testing.<sup>192</sup> They argue that such models provide findings about the properties of the different groups of individuals, but overlook the universal properties in the configuration of people. Moreover, the findings are derived from a contrived setting simulating reality, which critically threatens their validity. Perhaps the inconclusiveness of Kenyon's conceptual model of physical activity attests to this problem. The lack of generalizability in the results derived from small group testing limits its usefulness in exploring larger and contextually different social units. Elias and Dunning contend that it is more useful to examine "natural" groups to study the dynamics of the configurations.<sup>193</sup>

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190 G. S. Kenyon, "A Conceptual Model for Characterizing Physical Activity," in *Sport, Culture and Society: A Reader on the Sociology of Sport*, ed. J. W. Loy and G. S. Kenyon (London: Macmillan Company, 1969).

191 For an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of statistical analysis, see for instance R. B. Burns, *Introduction to Research Methods*, 4th ed. (Frenchs Forest, NSW: Longman, 2000).

192 N. Elias and E. Dunning, "Dynamics of Sport Groups with Special Reference to Football," in *The Sociology of Sport*, ed. E. Dunning (London: Frank Cass, 1970).

193 E. Dunning, "Introduction," in *The Sociology of Sport: A Selection of Readings*, ed. E. Dunning (London: Frank Cass, 1970), 9.

Using the game of football (soccer) as their example, they demonstrate that this approach provides an explanation of what they refer to as the tension balance of the groups.<sup>194</sup> This is important because the fundamental property of all sport-games is the dynamics produced by generating controlled tensions between opposing groups. The understanding of these dynamics will enable a better understanding and formulation of problems facing sport and their possible solution. This approach avoids the reified conceptualization of sport as a separate entity from the people who play it. Reality is not neatly compartmentalized and neither is it in a static state. Sociological theories that do not consider the development of the subject matter are implicitly employing the principle of *ceteris paribus*, which does not capture the dynamic nature of reality. Elias and Dunning propose a framework that places a greater emphasis on facilitating a more reality-congruent analysis. It recognizes that sport is a configuration of different groups of people. As a configuration, it is always in a state of flux. Elias illustrates this dynamic exchange within a football game, in which the configuration changes throughout the game, when a player is dribbling a ball, all the rest of the players of the same team and the players in the opposing team would be repositioning themselves too.<sup>195</sup> Society, like a football game, they suggest, should be conceived as a configuration.

Elias and Dunning's framework urges the examination of the dynamic nature of reality, which represents an increasing sophistication in the effort of studying sport and society. Empirical evidence is drawn from history rather than collected from a controlled environment. Further, the process of knowledge production is regulated by the framework of the theory which suppresses the predilections and biases of the researcher. Therefore both deductive and inductive processes are employed in the analysis. This quiet revolution in sociological theorizing is an indication of the process of knowledge refinement and elaboration.

Whilst the Eliasian perspective suggests a civilizing spurt in the development of social thought, its slow take-up as a research paradigm makes it difficult to argue that it effected a shift in theorizing. Rather, the polemical position offered by an increasing number of leftist social theorists widened the gap between the different forms bodies of

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194 Elias and Dunning, "Dynamics of Sport Groups with Special Reference to Football," 75.

195 *Ibid.*, 200.



knowledge about sport, on one hand, while they facilitated a greater refinement and elaboration of different conceptualizations that accelerated the study of sport, on the other.

Just as conflict is present in most spheres of sport<sup>196</sup>, the study of sport is also a contested terrain. The New Left position championed by the Frankfurt School of Critical Sociology rivalled the position of Academic Sociology represented by functionalist school of thought, led by Parsons.<sup>197</sup> It not only compelled a re-examination of the positivistic portrayal of sport, but revealed the hegemonic content of sport and the effects of the widening control of sport by corporate capital. The increasing influence of sport, in particular its role in producing and reproducing structures of power, heightened its significance in society.

This social development was, however, not unique to sport, as a critical approach was gathering momentum in the field of sociology in North America.<sup>198</sup> Up till the 1960s, the principal producers of the knowledge of modern sport had been journalists. Although for the general community, newspapers and other mass media are still the primary sources of knowledge, the increased regularity in the publication of formal texts challenges the validity and accuracy of the readily available knowledge of sport. The publication of academic journals and formalized textbooks legitimised their knowledge, imparting to it the authority of "truths." This was an important development in the study of sport and society as it provided an increasing differentiation of the knowledge, which reflected an increasing seriousness in the production of the knowledge of sport. Scientific discourses became devices which produced and reproduced the restraints of knowledge generation. The practice of a literature review and definition of terms are exercises in the regulation of knowledge.

This formalization of sport knowledge is a manifestation of a more orderly and more regulated manner of thought. The heavily 'scientific' research method suggests a need to distinguish their work as scientifically credible, rather than as merely "journalistic," and to identify this work with mainstream academic sociology.

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196 Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain*, 220.

197 Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, 26.

198 *Ibid.*

However, within the field of sport sociology, as in any academic field, the pressure of publication intensified with the increasing competitiveness between and within universities.<sup>199</sup> Competition, as well as the increasing collaboration of work contributes to a greater scrutiny of research methods and theory formulation to evaluate their validity and accuracy. The production and presentation of knowledge thus became increasingly regulated. The more conflict there was in the conceptualization of sport, the more polemical was the discussion and this accelerated its development and gained it credibility as a worthy 'critical' academic endeavour.

Left-wing scholars in Europe were engaged in the study of sport well before the popularization of the field in America.<sup>200</sup> Heinz Risse's *Soziologie des Sports* was published in 1921, but it took close to fifty years for the left theorists in the Anglo world to popularize the critique of sport it initiated. Whilst Morton's *Soviet Sport* (1963) recognizes and criticises the appropriation of sport by the Communists to perpetuate the dominant political ideology in Russia<sup>201</sup>, Hoch's text, *Rip Off the Big Game* (1972), was the first academic text that examined the problems of sport in United States of America, a democratic country with a rich and entrenched achievement oriented sport culture, from a Marxist perspective.<sup>202</sup> The resistance to the positivistic portrayal of sport began with the confrontation of the perceived hypocrisy, contradictions and paradoxes of sport, in particular as exemplified in the highest sport form, the Olympic Games. The manifestation of the Black Power movement at the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games, and the Black September terrorist attacks at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972 emphatically demonstrate that elite sport had reached, as Brohm said, "a crisis point."<sup>203</sup> But the crisis in sport, as Brohm asserted, was not an isolated phenomenon, but represented the current general crisis that beset

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199 Coakley and Dunning, eds., *Handbook of Sports Studies*.

200 As cited in J. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), see, for example, H. Risse *Soziologie des Sports*. (Berlin: Verlag von August Reher, 1921); H. Wagner *Sport and Arbeitersport*. (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1973)) Original Publication, 1931; F. Wildung *Arbeitersport*. (Berlin: Bucherkreis G. M. B. H., 1929)

201 H. W. Morton, *Soviet Sport* (New York: Collier Books, 1963).

202 P. Hoch, *Rip Off the Big Game: Exploitation of Sports by the Power Elite* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1972), xvi.

203 J. Brohm, *Sport, a Prison of Measured Time: Essays* (London: Ink Links Ltd., 1978), 5.

bourgeois society at that time. That epoch was characterized by an intense ideological debate ignited by the conflict of bourgeois institutions with contemporary values, as exemplified by the protests against the Vietnam War and apartheid in South Africa, the cultural revolution in China, and a host of protests against class, gender and racial inequalities and discriminations in industrialized countries. They were manifestations of an increasing display of the level of intolerance against the dominant regime, which was also indicative of a narrowing of power relations. The increasing democratisation of functions and equalizing of power made class subjugation less and less tolerable.

In the field of sociology, the critical voice was also challenging the positivistic theoretical positions. Similarly, as sport sociology gained ascendancy, the publication of the *Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education* in 1970 and the (American) *Journal of Sport History* in 1974 demonstrated the formalization of sport history as well as a re-establishment of the historical method of sport critique. Correspondingly, resistance towards the way sport was being organized and played became increasingly vociferous in both the sporting arena and in the world of academic critical analysis. The left position expanded the stock of knowledge both quantitatively and qualitatively. Not only was there an increase in the number of perspectives and research methods but the conflicts elaborated and refined the knowledge about sport. These leftist perspectives on sport critique challenged and elaborated the dominant functional conceptualizations of sport as positive. Their emergence paralleled the resistance towards the capitalistic and political control of sport and leisure spaces which Maguire identified in the 'struggle for hegemony' phase.<sup>204</sup>

As Guttman notes, Biro Rigauer's *Sport und Arbeit (Sport and Work)* marks the first radical criticism of sport.<sup>205</sup> Rigauer's conceptualization of sport as a mirror image of work challenges the binary view of leisure and work and the cultural capital in sport. Whilst he revisited the class-leisure relationship, he departed from Veblen's bourgeois excesses theory. Instead, his exploration of the parallel between sport and work presents sport as a bourgeois instrument that reinforces the existing social structures.

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204 Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*.

205 B. Rigauer, *Sport and Work*, trans. A. Guttman (New York: Columbia University, 1981), xiii.

Even the assumed health benefits of sport were argued to be non-existent.<sup>206</sup> By emphasizing the broad social functions of sport, Rigauer shows the connections between sport and social structures. Although his close comparison of sport and work overlooks the functional ideals of sport, it does not trap itself in moralizing the professionalism-amateurism tension in top level sport. As the title of Rigauer's text indicates, his focus was on the relationship between sport and work. By showing how the achievement principle of industrial society and the rationalization characteristic of work are manifested in the motivations, training methods and measurements of top athletes, Rigauer reignited the discussion of the perils of top level sport but from a different perspective different from that of the more 'classical' writers.

In sport, Rigauer contends, the discourse of work and achievement is reflected in the hierarchical model of the selection and ranking of athletes, the specialized and scientific training methods used to produce the maximum output most efficiently, the scientific measurement of athletes' performance to minute fractions of centimetres, grams and seconds, remuneration based on output and utilization of numerous work-like terms in the language of sport. Athletes are positioned as workers for the owners of sport, as performers for consumers, as units of production of sport in the sport industry. Rigauer asserts that the ideology of achievement places an intrinsic "social coercion" on society to achieve.<sup>207</sup> The achievement principle inherent in the nature of sport tightens its similarity with work but Rigauer did not state that, more importantly, it also tightens social conduct. His conceptualization of sport and work shows the increasing regularity of sport and work, which reflects Elias and Dunning's argument that modern society is increasingly "unexciting." Similarly, whilst his argument regarding the hegemonic notion of achievement may be tenable, it is difficult to accept that the manifestation of the ideology has a universal meaning and significance. It is, as Morgan points out, exactly this emphasis on achievement which could also separate sport from work.<sup>208</sup> The manifestation of the achievement ideology takes on a gratuitously more intense form in sport than work. Unlike ordinary work, ranking is the *raison d'être* of elite sport. The glorification of the outcome in sport reduces its

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206 *Ibid.*, 90.

207 *Ibid.*, 17.

208 Morgan, *Leftist Theories of Sport: A Critique and Reconstruction*.

entirety to distinguishing the winners from the losers, first from the last, the achievement from the failure. This extrinsic gravity is less obvious in the output of ordinary work.

Whilst Huizinga and Gardiner showed professional sport to be a threat to civilization and Loy and Kenyon showed the different social functions of sport, Rigauer's analysis illuminated the work-like structures of sport, which added to and differentiated the concept of sport. Sport is distinguishable from games and play by the degree of regulation. Whilst achievement sport embodied "repressive measures of rationalization" and a "fetish of achievement," amateur sport is useful as it possesses the capacity to "disintegrate the behavioural patterns of industrial society."<sup>209</sup> By so doing, Rigauer replaced the professional and amateur binary with that of top level sport as repressive and alienating and recreational sports as liberating. Working on this conception of top level of sport, solutions to the identified problems of sport became seductively apparent. Rigauer's suggestion that the tendency to conformist thought might be countered by appropriating sport to "socialize democratic patterns of behaviour"<sup>210</sup> shows that he, as Morgan argues, takes issue not with the work-like structures but with the incorporation of the wrong work-like structures.<sup>211</sup> This argument resonates with the functionalist notion that there is an absence of conflict between the interests of different groups.

Like Rigauer, Brohm's *Sport: A prison of measured time* was one of the key texts of sport that has been either vilified or supported. Written with the objective of presenting a "critical negation of the 'positive' " analysis that was dominant at that time in the critique of sport and society, Brohm's analysis was deliberately passionate and intense, and went beyond showing the analogous nature of sport and work.<sup>212</sup> In echoing Veblen's position Brohm contends that sport mirrors not only work, but bourgeois society. Sport is an ideological apparatus for capitalism and since the form of the bourgeois society is determined by the political economy, so too is sport. Thus, a sociological analysis of sport cannot, argues Brohm, avoid the discussion of the

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209 Rigauer, *Sport and Work*, 103.

210 *Ibid.*, 104.

211 Morgan, *Leftist Theories of Sport: A Critique and Reconstruction*, 48.

212 Brohm, *Sport, a Prison of Measured Time: Essays*, 1.

political economy and in particular the effect of the political economy on the development of elite sport.

Central to Brohm's argument is the tenet that top-level competitive sport is a "symbolic parallel"<sup>213</sup> of the social system, reflecting the capitalist ideology whilst at the same time driving the mass and leisure sport.<sup>214</sup> Sport mirrors the social system, the values, orientations and organization of a capitalist society. Its hierarchical structure, profit-orientation, and the monopolization of power and resources reflect the bourgeois social structure. Sport promotes and demands the "absurd, inhuman obsession with winning."<sup>215</sup> It socializes the people into a state of false consciousness and becomes an opiate which distracts them from developing the class struggle. Sport is thus conceived as an important institution to reinforce the status quo. Brohm asserts that, "sport is basically a mechanisation of the body, treated as an automaton, governed by the principle of maximising output."<sup>216</sup> It is a continuing constraint as it "removes all bodily freedom, all creative spontaneity, every aesthetic dimension and every playful impulse."<sup>217</sup> Sport is also viewed as the breeding ground of repressive and divisive values such as, "virility, sexual athleticism, physical dominance, the superman, muscle worship, fascistic male chauvinism, racism, sexism."<sup>218</sup> Athletes are dehumanised and mechanized into "human robots,"<sup>219</sup> "voluntary guinea pigs,"<sup>220</sup> "top class thoroughbreds,"<sup>221</sup> "machines,"<sup>222</sup> "labour,"<sup>223</sup> and "commodit[ies]."<sup>224</sup> The training process can be described as "legalised torture," "fantastic manipulation," "manufacturing of champions" which involves not just coaches but doctors,

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213 *Ibid.*, 69.

214 *Ibid.*, 5.

215 *Ibid.*, 17.

216 *Ibid.*, 55.

217 *Ibid.*, 41.

218 *Ibid.*, 15.

219 *Ibid.*, 18.

220 *Ibid.*

221 *Ibid.*, 19.

222 *Ibid.*, 41.

223 *Ibid.*, 71.

224 *Ibid.*

psychologists, biochemists and trainers.<sup>225</sup> Sport is a mask of class relations, which commodifies and alienates athletes, spectators and the 'sport experience'. Sport also crystallizes the ideology of competition, the ideology of indefinite and linear progression and the ideology of the body as a machine.<sup>226</sup> The ideology of fair play and merit in competition involves deception regarding inequalities of access to resources to facilitate the appearance of a "fair" reality. Brohm's analysis demonized sport as a capitalist institution for the purpose of perpetuating class distinction, gender inequality, racial and national division, and for exploiting and alienating the masses. Every function of sport is thus conceived as instrumental to the systematic perpetuation of the capitalist order and bourgeois rule.

Brohm's negative presentation of sport reflects the position of those who were anti-professionalism in sport. Unlike Huizinga or Gardiner, Brohm neither conceived sport as separate from the wider society, nor a sanctity tarnished by professionalism. Rather, he conceived sport as a manifestation of the capitalist society and indissolubly linked with the class structure. His allegations concerning sport are directed not just at sport but at capitalism as well. The tenor and mode of Brohm's conceptualization of sport was in contrast with the positive and relatively more restrained texts that emerged from the functionalist perspective. Unlike Rigauer, Brohm's criticism was directed at all consumers of sport, as though the practice of sport achieves the same socializing outcome for all, whereby all the players and consumers and every individual who is involved in sport in any form will be drowned by the opiate of sport. Congruent with neo-Marxist theory more generally, the monopoly of control over the production of sport is conceived to be gained without any conflict. The individual is normalized to be a passive dupe of the capitalist system. As Gruneau noted, Brohm's eclectic neo-Marxist perspective on sport reduced human culture to mere material practice and a passive mirror of dominant ideology.<sup>227</sup> Equally, it can be said that Brohm reduced the forms of capitalism and class structure to one. In his eagerness to address the tensions of this society, Brohm overlooked the complexities in both sport and society. Furthermore, by reifying sport, society and political economy into capitalist categories,

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<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>227</sup> Gruneau, *Class, Sports and Social Development*, 37.

he has failed to address the tensions of conflict and harmony in sport and between sport and society. Sport is frozen into an unchanging static entity, separate from the participants. Synchronic analysis alone has a tendency of providing an incomplete understanding and identification of the forces constraining and enabling sport to develop. The tendency of critical theorists, such as Brohm and Rigauer to view sport ahistorically means that they overlook the impact of diachronic changes which account for the present state of sport. Consequently, as Gruneau accurately observes, Brohm and Rigauer were too inclined to see oppression and despair to be able to produce a dialectical understanding of the problems of modern sport.<sup>228</sup>

Problems of class inequalities and domination in sport were also central in Gruneau's writing. Unlike Rigauer or Brohm, Gruneau's conceptualization demonstrates a shift towards greater restraint in providing a one-dimensional perspective of class relations and the narrow deterministic nature of sport. In his *Class, Sport and Social Development*, Gruneau utilizes Giddens's structuration theory to show that the development of sport in Canada was shaped by conflicts between and within classes. Although Gruneau views class relations and domination as central to his discussion, the tenor of his text was in contrast with Brohm's. Athletes and fans are not positioned as powerless and "unreflective dupes."<sup>229</sup>

Accordingly, Gruneau returns to the discussion of play, games and sport. He argues against the polarising of play and sport and proposes instead a focus on them as "constitutive social practices"<sup>230</sup> which are inseparable from social reality. Equally, his conceptualization avoids reducing sport to a constitutive practice of bourgeois society or capitalism, as Brohm had conceived it. As forms of social practice, they are bound by limitations and possibilities. This argument achieves two important departures from the historical-philosophical work of Huizinga as well as from the neo-Marxists work of Brohm. Firstly, by arguing that play, games and sports are all social practices, Gruneau avoids the tendency of positioning play as an ideal and sport as its repugnant corrupt

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228 R. Gruneau, "The Critique of Sport in Modernity: Theorising Power, Culture, and the Politics of the Body," in *The Sports Process: A Comparative and Developmental Approach*, ed. E. G. Dunning, J. A. Maguire, and R. E. Pearton (Champaign, IL.: Human Kinetics Publisher, 1993).

229 Gruneau, *Class, Sports and Social Development*, 140.

230 *Ibid.*, 50.



form. Secondly, it refutes the metaphysical explanation of sport as a natural emanation of the human spirit. Thus his consideration of sport neither regards it as independent or as abstractly dependent on social reality nor does it ignore its historical and social precedents. Sport may mirror aspects of social reality but is itself an active constitutive social practice that, Gruneau argues, like all cultural practices can be repressive as well as liberating, reproductive as well as conflicting.<sup>231</sup> He thus pushes the examination of the paradox of sport from a reifying and mystifying position to one demanding the sociological analysis of sport as a cultural history of material practice. Thirdly, he focuses on the dialectical link between human agency and structure which positions all players as active agents in the production and reproduction of the social conditions and conceives structures as having the capacity to both constrain and enable human decisions and choices. Correspondingly, Gruneau examines the power structure of society as dialectical and characterized by hegemonic relations to capture more adequately the contested nature of the social relations.<sup>232</sup> The subjugated class is positioned as an active maker of power relations, bound by historically changing limitations and pressures of the industrial society. The static notion of power and asymmetrical conceptualization of class struggle was increasingly replaced by a dialectical conceptualization. Furthermore, Gruneau's examination of the class struggle focuses not only on inter- but also intra-class conflicts. The development of sport in Canada was shaped by conflicting and mutual interests as exemplified by the top management of amateur sports which consisted of members not from the dominant class but rather of young and less established individuals representing different industries. Gruneau's work demonstrates an increasing differentiation in the conceptualization of class struggles, from a two-layer analysis to a multi-layered differentiation.

Gruneau's approach attests to Marx's emphasis on historical materialism rather than an ahistorical and static discussion of sport. He was as opposed to sociological analysis that ignores change and development as he was to uncritical historical studies that ignore political economy. If Gardiner typifies the latter and Brohm the former, Gruneau's approach typifies the fusion of the two approaches. Although Marx's tenets

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231 *Ibid.*, 38.

232 *Ibid.*, 89.

regarding political economy form the basis of the left's analysis of sport, not all of them gave as much emphasis as Marx did to historical determinism. Thus Gruneau argues for a "turn to concrete studies in history and political economy for answers"<sup>233</sup> in the field of sport studies. His approach to history and his discussion of the relationship between class and sport integrates the two disciplines of history and sociology, reflecting Elias's tenet of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties in the field. Whilst he departs from the static class argument exemplified by Brohm and Rigauer, Gruneau, too, locates problems of sport in its "entrenchment in capitalist hegemony."<sup>234</sup> His response to the problem this posed, however, was more expansive and optimistic than those of Brohm and Rigauer. Sport need not be "smashed" as Brohm suggests but, by linking reforms to the wider social structure and integrating the various "oppositional forces" and "nonclass elements" such as gender and racial oppression, a "more humanely rational society" can be created.<sup>235</sup> The varieties of critical analyses nevertheless directed an intuitive and significant focus on the ever-increasing exploitation of sport that exists in an increasingly capitalistic society and in the process added a greater differentiation in the social theorizing of sport.

Whilst sport is arguably the most effective institution in popular culture in achieving bourgeois hegemony, the process is a negotiation of the competing and conflicting interests of dominant and subordinate groups.<sup>236</sup> Since 1960s, counter-hegemonic trends became increasingly evident in sport as they did in society at large.<sup>237</sup> As Maguire notes, the monopoly of control of international sporting bodies by the West was slowly weakening.<sup>238</sup> After its 1966 success in the soccer World Cup, England has been defeated by post colonial countries in cricket, soccer, netball, rugby and it was not until 2003 that England lifted another world cup trophy. Similarly, throughout the West, the presence of less dominant social groups in elite sport was

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233 *Ibid.*, 142.

234 *Ibid.*, 152.

235 *Ibid.*, 153.

236 Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain*, 220.

237 Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*, 87.

238 *Ibid.*, 86.

also becoming apparent, as demonstrated in United States of America by its dependency on African American track and field athletes to achieve national and club success.<sup>239</sup> To a lesser extent, exclusion from sporting participation on the basis of race was also becoming increasingly less tenable in Australia. Reflecting and becoming inescapably intertwined with changes in legislation, which in 1971 recognized Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as citizens of Australia, an increasing number of Aboriginal athletes began to compete in a more diverse range of sports, particularly the popular football codes of Rugby League and Australian Rules Football.<sup>240</sup> Changes in attitudes towards women's participation in sport, the institution of governing bodies for women in sport and the institution of the Equal Opportunity Act in 1972 in North America also diminished the practice and image of sport as a male preserve.<sup>241</sup> The passing of the Women's Charter in Singapore in 1962 also suggests that there was an emerging expansion of the social role of women in an apparently changing social environment.

The development of the critique of modern sport has predominantly been driven by the philosophical thought that emerged in the period of Enlightenment.<sup>242</sup> From methods to explanation, Enlightenment philosophy has both enabled and constrained theoretical formulations of the social world. As can be seen from the critique of modern sport, the practice of identifying and isolating the variables for analysis, as well as, of finding causal relationships between variables, dominated scientific inquiry. This modern view of Enlightenment philosophy has established greater levels of control and order in the understanding of the social world yet, as Balboa asserts, it has also resulted in the domination of a mechanistic dichotomization and a Western orientation in the production and understanding of the meaning of the world.<sup>243</sup> Since the 1970s, the left have identified problems of social inequalities, oppression and

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239 A. Guttman, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 33.

240 C. Tatz, *Obstacle Race: Aborigines in Sport* (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 1995).

241 Guttman, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports*, 35.

242 Fernandez-Balboa, "Introduction: The Human Movement Profession - from Modernism to Postmodernism."

243 *Ibid.*, 3.

exploitation in sport. Balboa argues that these problems are unresolved in the late twentieth century, pointing to the need to depart from modernist views of the social world. With sport still plagued with the seemingly entrenched problems of Western capitalism but at the same time being represented in more and more social and intellectual space, the conceptualization of sport also became more mediated, transdisciplinary and globalized. It reflected the uncertainty phase in the global sportization process, in which the influence of the non-dominant social groups such as the East, and women, rose and began a slow shift in the power ratio between the West and the East.

The contrast between countries celebrating the riches of industrialization through the extravagant spectacles of the opening and closing of the Olympic Games and the desolating effects of war, poverty, famine and destitution suggests that the social balance of prosperity, peace and happiness is perilously uneven. However, the focus here is not so much on the imbalance of resources and power, but rather on the increasing intolerance of this imbalance. The fall of socialism and the prosperity of capitalistic societies undermined the sustainability of the leftist position; equally, war, poverty, crime and breakdown of families have weakened the core of the functionalists' position. This disenchantment of established views of modern sport's harsh reality gives credence to Balboa's accusation that the global crisis is "brought about by modern thought and action."<sup>244</sup>

The dissonance between the leftist theories and the sporting reality is an important concern both at a theoretical level and at the level of practice. Modern sport is in crisis, but so too is the Left. Their position is becoming increasingly untenable and seemingly irrelevant. What is needed, therefore, is a reconstruction of critical theory. William Morgan's *Leftist Theories of Sport* exemplifies the efforts in the revolution of critical theory. Assessing the work of neo-Marxists theorists, hegemonists and ideological critics, Morgan convincingly concludes that leftist theorists have "lost their critical edge" and their emancipatory solutions to what they see as the problems in sport are now ineffectual in their attempts to transform sport or society.<sup>245</sup> The primary cause of their failure, according to Morgan, is that the standard they employ to criticise sport

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244 *Ibid.*, 4.

245 Morgan, *Leftist Theories of Sport: A Critique and Reconstruction*, 180.

practices reflects the same standard that they attempt to criticize, which entraps them into an irreconcilable position.<sup>246</sup> This paradoxical state could be seen in the light of Elias's concept of the double-bind effect. As the established left becomes increasingly critical of the sport, they also become increasingly dependent on using an economic determinant argument to validate their theory. The result of this is that the leftists' own argument becomes its own strongest criticism. These dichotomised and reifying conceptualizations are compounded by the tendency of the established Left to engage in what Elias refers to as *Zustandreduktion*, that is, to conceptualize practice and human agency as "actionless, changeless, non-processual social structures."<sup>247</sup> This tendency to reduce observable processes into an unchanging state inaccurately depicts the changing nature of social reality, and has the effect of demonstrating that the only changes possible are ineffectual.

Morgan's proposal to establish a different set of evaluative standards and discourse practices to reform critical theory is commendable, but he, too, fails to depart from conceptual reductionism, and this weakens his theoretical framework. Central to his reconstructed critical theory is a shift away from a focus on sport in terms of institutions towards an examination of the immanent logic of the practices of sport. Unlike the Left's position, Morgan makes the social practices of sport the theoretical and practical focus for analysis. This perspective, he argues, avoids framing a vision of sport as a social practice or a bourgeois institution that merely reflects other structures and enables an analysis of the deeper structures underlying the sport practice itself distinct from other social forms. Such a philosophical reflection will, he suggests, reveal that sport is neither, natural and potentially inviolate nor as indissolubly tied to capitalism.<sup>248</sup> Thus, according to Morgan, the discourse of sport, and the standards for the evaluation of sport are not the same as those that apply to other cultural institutions.<sup>249</sup> By uncoupling the practices of sport from the institutions that accommodate them, Morgan suggests, analysis will reveal tension between the two, providing a space to contest the social organisation of sport without condemning the

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<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>247</sup> Dunning, "Preface," 9.

<sup>248</sup> Morgan, *Leftist Theories of Sport: A Critique and Reconstruction*, 216.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

practices of sport themselves. This approach differs markedly from that of the traditional left which, as Morgan suggests, continues to rely on a distorted reflection of the very standards which capitalist society employs to judge itself.<sup>250</sup> The mode of analysis appropriate to such an examination of social practice of sport and the principles and standards that are intrinsic to this is the philosophical practice of immanent critique. Although his reconceptualization of sport and his consequent shift of the focus of analysis to the practice of sport itself, avoids the pitfalls of the established Left, Morgan is still caught in the act of conceptual reduction. He might have changed the view but he has not changed the lens. As the established Left reifies sport into an institution, Morgan has reified the practice of sport. The practice of sport is not separate from the people engaging it. In order to critically penetrate into the prevailing structure of the institutions and social practice of sport, the diachronic changes of sport need to be examined to obtain a more complete understanding of the present sport practice.

This underestimation of the importance of the processual nature of sport practice and human agency results in an emancipatory proposal that is at best naïve, and at worst, socially divisive. Morgan's proposal for reform is problematic in a structurally different way from that offered by the established Left. The latter sees merit only in core social structural reform that is, in reforming the crux of the problem, capitalism, in order to achieve sustainable reforms for a capitalist manifestation, sport. Morgan, on the other hand, does not conceive sport to be a "cut out of the same cloth" as capitalism.<sup>251</sup> Therefore, unlike the proposals of Rigauer and Brohm that exhort the destruction of the entire established social order or for sport to be "smashed," Morgan's approach actually accepts the social order, but demands a more effective partitioning of the existing divisions so that market and institution practices cannot intrude into sport practices. These partitions act as sluice gates to keep the ill effects of market forces, such as the misappropriation of sport by institutional or capitalist interests, separate from the practices of sport, but open up to allow market forces to assume responsibilities that they are more competent to undertake, such as providing sport to the masses. Morgan makes a theoretical shift from many classic structuralist analyses

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<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 216.

by refusing to accept either the tendency of structuralist analyses to conceiving capitalism and socialism as binary opposites, or the argument that it is impossible to broker a sustainable socialistic solution in a capitalistic society. On the contrary, he proposes political liberalism as the key to redeeming the degradation of modern sport, as it opens up the option of separating sport and social practices. Using Walzer's liberal art of separation, Morgan contends that by keeping the practice of sport separate from wider social practices, whether political, religious or economic, might enable sport to "prosper and even flourish," as at the heart of this liberal division, is a liberal form of socialism.<sup>252</sup> However realistic or otherwise this argument may be, what is of significance here, is the integration of conflicting positions, reflecting Elias's tenet of "diminishing contrasts and increasing variety."

Morgan's proposal to separate the whole discourse of sport from all other social discourse puts a new spin on the revival of amateurism, although in this case, Morgan is proposing "sportism." Although he attempts to prevent these partitions from working both ways, by isolating and reifying sport, he overlooks the fact that whilst sport embodies distinguishable characteristics that set it apart from other social practices, it is "cut out of the same cloth," not of capitalism, but of threads of people's lives, woven together. Sport, like all social practices, is the practice of the same entities: human beings. The distinctive logic of sport that Morgan identifies, may distinguish sport from work, but it does not isolate it.<sup>253</sup> In developing his analysis and, especially his proposals for remedying the problems of sport derived from that analysis, Morgan seems to have placed too much weight on the particularities of sport, at the expense of an appreciation of the commonalities between sport and other aspects of people's lives.

Morgan's logic of establishing a practice-communities body to manage the practice of sport is, in many ways, idealistic.<sup>254</sup> Unlike profit-driven capitalists and power-driven politicians, this body would consist of members who hold an emotional bond and a common interest in improving the state of the practices of sport – people such as athletes and sport critics. Morgan argues that the selection of such stakeholders, who are both producers and consumers of the product, would prevent

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252 *Ibid.*, 204.

253 *Ibid.*, 214.

254 *Ibid.*, 234.

problems of 'free-riding' or the pursuit of 'ulterior agendas' not in the interests of the sport, from appearing. As he believes the practice of sport can be separated from other social practices, he conceives that these members will also be able to keep their thoughts, beliefs and values independent of particular interests and "come into the athletic forum armed only with their arguments, leaving behind all titles, goods, and vantage points that derive from their standing in other spheres."<sup>255</sup> They would deliberate on the actions appropriate to the advancement of the practice of sport using their "ordinary understandings" of sport, rather than understanding from an esoteric standpoint or constructed according to institutional imperatives.<sup>256</sup> Morgan argues that the power structure of practice communities is linear rather than hierarchical<sup>257</sup> and that this would allow those who possess understanding of sport that reflects "cultivation, discipline, study and diligence"<sup>258</sup> to exercise that understanding in shaping practice. Such people he classes as rational authorities, while those who are less "accomplished in discernment and judgement" are and novices, who are positioned as "apprentices" to these rational authorities, and will have to accede to the judgements of their "masters" until they "qualify as rational authorities of the game."<sup>259</sup> Morgan appears to be giving the position of control of sport to the hands of sport critics. The most critical issue is, however, that Morgan's mechanistic view asks too much of the practice communities and in return gives too much to them. He downplays the conflict nature within the practice of sport, particularly his entire expectation of the deliberation process, overemphasizing the ability of people to pick and choose as they wish to accede and concede harmoniously. No matter how Morgan constructs his argument as a departure from the suggestions of the established Left, his application of political liberalism is liberal to the point of utopianism, lacking in reality congruency.

Offering an opposite conceptualization of sport to Morgan is Maguire's *Global Sport*.<sup>260</sup> In contradistinction to Morgan, Maguire conceives sport to be an intricate web

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255 *Ibid.*, 242.

256 *Ibid.*, 243.

257 *Ibid.*, 244.

258 *Ibid.*

259 *Ibid.*

260 Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*.



of interdependencies between and within nations and individuals. Although he structures his analysis on an Eliasian framework, Maguire offers a different emphasis from Elias and Dunning. Maguire departs from the discussion of the emergence of sport, instead he focuses on the globalization process of sport, showing that the development of sport entails an increasing intertwining of nations, which affects a diminishing contrast and increasing variations in social and sporting discourse. Sport is no longer considered as purely a product of the English or the West; the permeation of non-occidental culture makes sport a globalized product. It is an embodiment as well as producer of global identity. Maguire notes that, "Sport is a significant touchstone of prevailing global, national and local patterns of interchange."<sup>261</sup> Studying sport therefore involves the examination of the globalization processes and the inter-civilization struggles of the different societies and strata. The globalization process of sport entails labour, knowledge and culture migration interwoven with the processes of commodification, media massification and politicisation of sport. The commingling of cultures engenders a diminishing contrast between nations and individuals at the same time as there emerges a greater variety of cultural identities.

Maguire's attention towards non-occidental contributions in the development of sport reflects a postcolonial tendency to dismount from the imperial steed. Said, in his luminary text, *Orientalism*, urges an examination of things in their plurality and particularity.<sup>262</sup> However, whilst Maguire avoids gazing from the colonial monocle, he does not put on the other extreme vision of prejudicing colonial relevance. Sport is positioned by Maguire as a product of global constitution and global identities. Using Robertson's five-phase globalization framework and Elias and Dunning's sportization thesis, Maguire skilfully and systematically shows that the diffusion of sport was uneven and multidimensional. Whilst he agrees with Huizinga that England was the "cradle" of modern sport in the germinal and incipient phases of sportization, he also sees the colonized countries, particularly North America, as instrumental in accelerating and shaping the sportization process in the later period.<sup>263</sup> Global sport, as Maguire conceptualises it, binds and separates cultures and communities. However, as

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<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>262</sup> Said, *Orientalism*.

<sup>263</sup> Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*, 82.

he characterizes the development of sport to be one with global extensions, he is careful not to present a one-dimensional conceptualization of the diffusion of sport. His analysis considers competing and reciprocal cultural influences in shaping modern sport. Thus, he demonstrates that sport is mutable, adaptable and changing. The reach of sport extends from England to different parts of the globe. However, the extent of this diffusion is neither homogenous nor smooth. It is capable of changes as it penetrates into different countries and cultures. Sports, such as football and cricket, were transformed in the adopting countries of America and Trobriand respectively. The global flows of cultures, people and products diminish the contrasts of cultural identities between societies but at the same time increase the varieties.

Maguire's analysis raises three important issues in the development of sport critique. Firstly and fundamentally, the titling of the text, "global sport," explicitly orientates the conceptualization of sport as of global significance and relevance. Semantically speaking, "global sport" is a sociological oxymoron, suggesting that the term sport embodies a "local" variation. Nonetheless, Maguire succeeds in defining sport as a global figuration. He showed that different power balances in individual countries enable and constrain their respective development of sport. And, collectively, these constraints, influences and conflicts are the constituents of global sport. Secondly, his conceptualization of sport as a global construction emphasizes the process of negotiation of discourses. Sport binds and separates cultures and societies, and is also a site for constructing and reconstructing identities and power relations. This conceptualization frames sport as an active social construct, rather than a reified cultural product. The global flows of people, ideas, practices, images, commodities and identities construct and reconstruct sport. In his text Maguire focuses upon the global binding of people thus demonstrating that the globalization process is not a recent development, particularly in sport. European, Asian and Australian influences must also be taken into account when examining the development of sport. Although Maguire convincingly shows a "decentring of the west"<sup>264</sup>, he recognizes that "the West is still very powerful... this hegemonic control is not complete, all-powerful and all-pervasive. Representatives of different civilization traditions not only resist Westernization and Americanization but also seek to express and develop their cultural

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264 *Ibid.*, 88.

heritage."<sup>265</sup> By so doing, Maguire explicitly shows the intertwining of different struggles in the development of sport, attesting to Sage's argument that sport is "an active constructing process."<sup>266</sup>

Maguire, unlike Morgan does not assume a specific interest group of people to be competent and capable of improving the state of sport as he recognizes that the figuration of sport consists of intended and unintended actions of interdependent people at different levels and in different ways. Maguire's acknowledgement of the significance of unintended actions hints at the outcome being uncontrollable and undeterminable. This claim runs contrary to the grain of the mission of science, of seeking for emancipation, rectifications and remedies. It seems also to echo theological convictions espoused in the pre-Enlightenment era or worse, unscientific conclusions. This is not the case, however, for what Maguire has achieved, is to highlight the interdependencies of human actions and how these intended and planned actions of people from different parts of the world can commingle and result in an outcome most unplanned. By putting forth the idea that social reality is a construction of intended and unintended actions, Maguire demonstrates that social reality, sport in this instance, its problems and its contributions, its potential and its weaknesses are neither a result of deliberate careful planning nor a case of divine determination or random probability. It is a reality that is quite ambivalent, for it affords a considerable amount of control to the actions of the people but also suggests a significant limitation of control, given the unpredictability of the outcome of the interaction of these actions. Unlike Marxists who could offer and seek to offer a tight solution albeit one lacking in practicality, Maguire, like Elias and Dunning, provides a concerted emphasis upon the degree of uncontrollability in the globalization process of sport. As Maguire asserts, "it is these unintended consequences that provide the seedbed in which future power struggles are played out."<sup>267</sup> Maguire is neither downplaying the possibility that there are problems of sport that need to be rectified, nor is it that his primary concern, but rather, what he

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<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>266</sup> G. H. Sage, "Sociocultural Aspects of Human Movement: The Heritage of Modernism, the Need for a Postmodernism," in *Critical Postmodernism in Human Movement, Physical Education and Sport*, ed. J. M. Fernandez-Balboa (Albany: State of University of New York Press, 1997), 26.

<sup>267</sup> Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*, 215.

has put forward is a reorientation from the dichotomised view of sport as either bane or boon, Western or Eastern, masculine or feminine, to an examination of the "multicausal and multidirectional dynamics."<sup>268</sup> Global sport is a figuration of conflicting and cooperating forces of the West and the East, the masculine and the feminine, the rich and the poor.

Increasing restraint towards conceptualizing a unidimensional or monolinear analysis is seen with the growing influence of postmodernism. In his introduction to, *Critical Postmodernism in Human Movement, Physical Education and Sport*, Balboa asserts that sociological analysis needs to take into account "a *plurality* of narratives and a *polyphony* of voices."<sup>269</sup> Balboa argues that the modern view has only perpetuated and increased the power of the "top of the hierarchy" and in order to emancipate those at the lower rung, who are increasingly sinking "into lower and lower levels of hopelessness," a departure from the white monocular view is necessary.<sup>270</sup> Grand theory, as Gouldner asserts, is imbued with the theorist's political disenfranchisement.<sup>271</sup> In part, it is a "substitute for politics."<sup>272</sup> However, this need to consider a "plurality" of meanings, specifically the meanings of those who have been marginalized by modernism, is indicative of the increasing degree of functional democratization. As the chains of interdependence become tighter and longer, the extent of self-regulation over the level of embarrassment and repugnance towards views which do not take into account those less privileged or less powerful increases. The increasing demands and expression of democracy is a manifestation of the rising levels of civilization. In the study of sport, a self-regulation of the analytical process can be recognized by the shift towards an increasingly pluralistic consideration of the development of sport.

Boundary issues and the demand for sociological exploration and explanation are discussed with a greater level sophistication. No longer is it acceptable for power to be

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268 *Ibid.*, 210.

269 Fernandez-Balboa, "Introduction: The Human Movement Profession - from Modernism to Postmodernism," 8. (my italics)

270 *Ibid.*, 4.

271 Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, 153.

272 *Ibid.*

conceived as situated in an institution or a class, neither is it acceptable to consider social reality as fixed; as Balboa puts it, "the status of things is never quo."<sup>273</sup> In particular, Balboa rejects the views of the "white males" whose analyses, he argues, "benefit a few at the expense of many."<sup>274</sup> Instead, a multifarious and multidimensional consideration of power is preferred. Power is situated in knowledge, in language. As Balboa explains, "identities, meanings, and relations are not seen as fixed and constant"<sup>275</sup> but rather they are "governed by linguistic codes organized and categorized in particular ways that are beneficial to some and detrimental to others"<sup>276</sup>. This attitude suggests an increasing degree of embarrassment and repugnance towards privileging the dominant class and marginalizing the less-dominant class. However, the departure from a dichotomised view is not complete. Balboa argues that postmodernists reject the dichotomised consideration of the world but by arguing that the master narratives in the Enlightenment period are "muddling" and "creating false images," Balboa implies that the dawn of postmodernism is a departure from such theoretical delusions. Thus he, too, has dichotomized modernism and postmodernism.<sup>277</sup>

Although postmodernist theory indeed marks a reorientation of the tenets and assumptions of the modern theory, Elias, in 1939, with considerably less success, appealed for a reorientation of sociological tenets. He urged a departure from a monocular view which grounded the conceptualization of society on economy or politics, claiming that:

no more today than formerly is it 'economic' goals and pressures alone, or political motives alone, which are the primary driving forces of these changes. Neither is the acquisition of 'more' money or 'more' economic

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273 Fernandez-Balboa, "Introduction: The Human Movement Profession - from Modernism to Postmodernism," 5.

274 *Ibid.*, 7.

275 *Ibid.*, 5.

276 *Ibid.*, 6.

277 *Ibid.*, 7.

power the actual goal of state rivalry and the extension of state rule, nor the acquisition of greater political and military power.<sup>278</sup>

Elias's central concept of figuration, articulates his recognition of the dynamic nature of social reality. Sage's argument that history is not a "mono-linear unfolding towards a predetermined end"<sup>279</sup> and that sport is "intricately linked to the larger society"<sup>280</sup> is congruent with Elias's principal tenets. The greater acceptance of this sociological orientation suggests the increasing degree of sophistication in human thought. As Elias asserts, "[a] person is an extraordinarily malleable and variable being."<sup>281</sup> The increasing differentiation of meaning and the tolerance towards theoretical formulation demonstrates the increasing demand on the social theorists to produce sport critique that is more and more reality congruent.

The development of the field of sport studies indicates a diminishing contrast between cultures and societies as well as between different sociological persuasions rather than merely theoretical inadequacies as postmodernists suggest. Whilst the latter broke away from the "master narratives," they have drawn themselves closer to each other. This paradoxical development produces increasing varieties of conceptualization of sport geared towards obtaining multi-dimensional explanations. Secondly, the demand for a multidimensional consideration of sport is also a manifestation of increasing functional democratization. The webs of interdependence have become wider, enabling and constraining the development of sport in different contexts. It therefore becomes increasingly appropriate to consider sport with a greater degree of inclusiveness, that is, as a multi-layered or global rather than an English or North American construct. However, as Maguire notes, the development of sport in the West is still ahead of the East. Although it cannot be ascertained to what extent sport will become less Western or more Eastern, it is fair to conclude that sport will inescapably be part of the increasing cross-penetration of different cultures and values. Nevertheless, even with the dawn of the post-modern era, the discussion of sport has

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278 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 437.

279 Sage, "Sociocultural Aspects of Human Movement: The Heritage of Modernism, the Need for a Postmodernism," 26.

280 *Ibid.*

281 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 402.

still not departed from grappling with the difference between the ideal and reality. The decay of, or departure from, amateurism still lingers on as a motivation for reforming sport. Addressing the Victorian cliché, "it's just not sport" has been, arguably, the central concern in the critique of sport.<sup>282</sup> This reluctance to detach itself from the ideal perpetuates false hopes about the possibilities for sport and intensifies disappointment over its actual achievements and the directions in which it is developing. Balboa's disenchantment with modernism epitomises the effect of the desire to reconcile the ideal and the real. What is necessary, therefore, is not, as Morgan suggests, liberal separation of sport from other social spheres, but rather a detachment from emotional considerations of sport, grounded in imagined ideals, so that it becomes possible to examine sport as a figuration with the capacity to change as people do.

## **Conclusion**

This discussion has introduced Elias's theoretical framework and compared it with the three main approaches, namely, narrative historical, structural and post-structural. It has also examined a selection of texts in the field of sport studies to broadly outline the development of the construction of the concept of sport. The analysis of these texts suggests that the development of the field is characterized by an expansion from a singular perspective to multiple perspectives. Equally, it suggests that the construct of sport was elaborated from a starting point which explicitly excluded professionalism in sport, through an approach which included it by polemicizing professionalism and amateurism as rival, normative values, to one which integrated the two and indeed became more concerned with professionalism than other forms of sport. Further, the scope of discussions of sport expanded to include the activities and involvement of more social strata, as well as different aspects of sport.<sup>283</sup> At the same time, the degree of restraint in the production of knowledge also tightened. As the work of different authors become increasingly available for cross examination following the institutionalization of the field, their various knowledge also became more subject to

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282 Maguire, p. 143

283 For an overview of the themes in the field of sport sociology, see G. Luschen, "Towards a New Structural Analysis - the Present State and the Prospects of the International Sociology of Sport," *International Review of Sport Sociology* 23, no. 4 (1988).

collective scrutiny and self-regulation, and the process of elaboration and refinement of knowledge became more intense.

The tightening of relationships within the field of sport research, and of the regulation of that research is paralleled by an increasing globalization of sport which diminished the contrast of sport practices in different locality. Research on sport in post-colonial countries, in particular, is increasing as education becomes more globalized. For instance, the development of the field of sport sociology in Japan and China was facilitated predominantly by the education on the field in North American universities.<sup>284</sup> The establishment of a Chinese Sociological Research Association in 1979 in China demonstrates the expansion of the discipline.<sup>285</sup> The diffusion of sport knowledge was also facilitated by the migration of sports academics to post-colonial countries, such as in the context of Singapore. As seen in the research on sport in Singapore, the discourse and conception of sport in Singapore adds to the knowledge of the varieties of sport but the discourse remains largely oriented to the West. For instance, it largely focuses on top level sport and the state, and routinely incorporates theoretical frameworks from the West in the analysis of sport. In this, it reflects Maguire's contention that the signs of decentring from the West in sport are more tentative than convincing and equally with respect to the knowledge of sport. The more varied the selection and interpretation of theoretical frameworks and subject matter in the field of sport study, the more opportunities are available for cross fertilization, elaboration and refinement of knowledge. The use of Elias in the examination of sport in Singapore thus adds to the process of civilizing the field of sport studies.

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284 S. Morikawa and J. Rogers, "Sports Sociology in Japan," *International Review of Sport Sociology* 22, no. 1 (1987).

285 X. A. Kong, X. Niu, and B. Qiu, "A Summary of Sport Sociology Research in the People's Republic China," *International Review of Sport Sociology* 25, no. 2 (1990).



## Chapter 2

### Sport in the British Colony (1819-1940s): Formation, Diffusion and Bourgeoisification

In 1823 Sir Stamford Raffles, in his address at the founding of the Singapore Institution, exalted the significance of British colonization in the following words:

Let it still be in the boast of Britain to write her name in the characters of light; let her not be remembered as the tempest whose course was desolation, but as the gale of spring reviving the slumberance and oppression. If the time shall come when her empire shall have passed away, these monuments will endure when her triumphs shall have become an empty name.<sup>1</sup>

Although Raffles, recognised as the founder of Singapore, was referring to "literature and philanthropy"<sup>2</sup> as being that which distinguished the British from other empire builders, it is not inappropriate to include sport as one of the defining British legacies. Whilst the colonial history of Singapore is fairly well documented, less is known of the spread of British civilization through its sport forms in influencing the development of Singapore society. Singapore's sport culture is not just a manifestation of British leisure practices, but was and remains a ready site for ideological transmission. However, the sports that remain popular and the culture of sport in post colonial Singapore demonstrate that this process of cultural diffusion is neither complete nor uncontested. The diffusion process was characterised by processes of negotiation and adaptation between not just the social groups but also with the physical infrastructure of the island. How the physical and social structures interplayed with the sporting interests of the British sojourners in Singapore forms the focus of this chapter. This incipient phase of sporting development reflects and reveals the wider social transformation of Singapore.

Sport was introduced and spread to the rest of the community both formally and informally. The initial stages of development were more informal and unorganized than the latter stages. Sports and the discourse of sport were informally introduced by

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1 Raffles cited in Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 16.

2 *Ibid.*

the Europeans through their own recreational engagement in sporting pastimes. The acquired necessity of non-Europeans to facilitate their sporting pastime directly spread sport and its discourse to the other social groups. As the economic and social exchange increased between these groups, non-Europeans modelled the social and recreational practices of their European counterparts and sport which was ubiquitously British was one of them. Formally, the British did so in three principal ways: firstly, the organization of sports events; secondly, the establishment of institutionalized sports clubs and lastly, through the teaching of sports in schools. The latter certainly was the most explicit direct introduction and induction to sport that engendered the diffusion of sport to the masses. This induction of the rest of the community to sport was a most active part of the process of colonization. It occurred as the social practices and conduct of the former permeated into the lower social classes. Thus, the activities of the upper social class and lower social class became more similar, and space between them shrank. However this phase of colonization, as Elias explains, can be unintentional as well as intentional.<sup>3</sup> Sport was, in fact, introduced and diffused at different social levels, in different directions and with different outcomes.

This chapter examines how sport began in Singapore so as to establish an understanding of the direction and manner in which it developed. Since the early twentieth century, sport in Singapore during the colonial epoch has been discussed both in passing and as the focus of attention; although, as I showed in Chapter 1, the literature on this aspect of Singapore's history and society is relatively meagre. This chapter utilizes this literature not merely as a secondary resource but also as a primary source of data, as the representation of sport in Singapore was itself part of the overall development of sport. The work of early twentieth century writers such as Buckley (1902), Owen (1921) and Makepeace et al. (1921) were all based, in part, on their direct observation, and often participation in the sporting activities in Singapore. Therefore, their analyses are not isolated accounts of sport but constituent parts of the process of sport development in Singapore. They thus provide a basis for the discussion in the subsequent chapters of the way sport developed and, in fact reflect a particular order in history. Equally, the analysis of colonial sports by late twentieth and

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3 N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, trans. E. Jephcott, 2 vols., vol. 2: State Formation and Civilization (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 430.

early twentieth first century writers such as Horton, and Aplin and Quek not only reflect the perspectives of recent times, but also represent a civilizing change in analysis. The colonization of Singapore occurred at a time in which sport was spreading to different parts of the world. In the middle of nineteenth century to the earlier half of twentieth century at the height of the diffusion of sport, Singapore's economic, social and physical environment enabled the popularization of sport. Unlike England's other colonies, such as India and Australia, Singapore did not have a significant or powerful indigenous community to confront. Although the European community was one of the smallest social groups in Singapore, virtually the entire population were sojourners who were drawn to Singapore because of the economic opportunities it offered. This common motivation facilitated the legitimization of the position of the European community and diminished the validity of usurping their power. Concomitantly, the social environment was relatively stable. Furthermore, it was enhanced by the relatively small land area, economically strategic location, and a climate that was described by John Cameron, the proprietor and editor of *The Straits Times*, as "one in which more out-door amusement can be enjoyed than in that of most other tropical countries,"<sup>4</sup> all of which facilitated not only the development of economic opportunities, communication and transportation networks but also recreation opportunities.

This constellation of factors and opportunities reflected and produced opportunities for the development of networks of interdependencies of the different social groups. The colonial era thus precipitated the beginning of sportization in Singapore. This development and diffusion of sport parallel the process of industrialization and urbanization. Sportization embraces structural and organizational features similar to those of economic development.<sup>5</sup> From a meagrely populated and subsistence-oriented island, Singapore underwent dramatic social and economic transformation following the entry of the British and the influx of migrants. Economic development and sportization thus represent aspects of the overall civilizing process. And the most fundamental and general structural process underlying the civilizing process, argues

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4 Cameron, J. cited in Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 738.

5 Elias, "The Genesis of Sport as a Sociological Problem," 129.

Elias, is the progressive division of labour, or division of social functions. It continues to bind all classes and strata to each other in progressively more equal interdependence. He denotes this process as functional democratisation that refers to the increase lengthening and differentiation of the chains of dependence between every individual, which leads to a diminishing of the power differentials and greater reciprocal dependency. This produces an enhanced level of multi-polar control within and among groups.<sup>6</sup> Both industrialization and sportization are symptomatic of the underlying transformation of the European society that predicated greater regularity and differentiation of conduct of the people.<sup>7</sup> This process leads to greater internal pacification or self-restraint and consequently 'diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties' of standard behaviour between the different classes.<sup>8</sup> The economy grew rapidly following the establishment of Singapore as a free port status, supported by the rapid introduction of a code of laws and regulations.<sup>9</sup> The socioeconomic environment both provided the preconditions, and functioned as a catalyst for the development of sport in the settlement.

Elias argues that with the lengthening chains of interdependency and the process of state formation, the secular upper classes, as much as they strive to, could not preserve their special conduct, which was, essentially, a mark of distinction from the lower classes. This resulted in a reduction in differences between the upper and lower classes and, concomitantly, the integration of two forms resulted in the expansion of forms of conduct available to different classes. Sport in Singapore diffused from the middle-class Europeans to the lower social classes. Equally, it was the middle class non-Europeans who were quick to mimic the leisure practices of the middle class Europeans. Thus, in this process, the upper classes were and are now involved in a process of 'reciprocal supervision' of their own behaviour, as well as that of others. This resulted in a 'double-bind' tendency that Elias explains in his conception of the

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6 E. Dunning, "The Dynamics of Modern Sport: Notes on Achievement -Striving and the Social Significance of Sport.," in *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, ed. N. Elias and E. Dunning (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 218.

7 Elias, "Introduction," 151.

8 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 256.

9 D. C. Bougler, *The Life of Sir Stamford Raffles* (Amsterdam: The Pepin Press, 1999; reprint, 1899), 333.

phases of 'colonization' and 'repulsion'.<sup>10</sup> Intentionally or otherwise, members of the established upper class interacted with and colonized the culture of the lower class by imposing their own pattern of conduct during the colonization phase. As this phase gained momentum, the 'phase of repulsion' followed, which is, a phase in which the rising group grew in social power and self-confidence and the upper class was thus compelled to construct social barriers to isolate themselves from the colonized groups whom they regarded as inferior. However, despite the increased restraint and isolation of the upper class, they could not prevent a gradual percolation of their social code of conduct and activities, such as sports, into the other groups. Thus, in the colonies of the British Empire this process eventually led to a reduction in differences of social power and conduct.

However a feature of the British rule of Singapore was that throughout the Colonial period, there was limited state-centralization and national unification. Although more formal attempts to intervene in social and economic matters were apparent when administration was transferred from the British government's Calcutta Office to the London-based Colonial Office in 1867, the development of the settlement was the result of the cumulative effect of the separate efforts and successes of the various communities. With the opening of Suez Canal in 1859, the emergence of steamships, the development of telegraphic communications and the extension of British protection of Malay states, growth in the economy accelerated. Singapore began to change rapidly however this did not create a complex network of interdependencies between separate communities. Within each community, the extent of their dependencies lengthened, consistent with Elias' notion of the chain of interdependencies. Although the wealthy Straits Chinese regarded themselves as British subjects and some of them participated in the governance of Singapore, they like other non-Europeans were accorded limited voice in business and various councils, such as the Singapore Chamber of Commerce and the Legislative Council. The majority of the non-European migrants were thus largely indifferent towards the government.<sup>11</sup> Physically, Raffles' Cantonment system of dividing the residential and trade areas along racial lines created

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10 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 311.

11 K. C. Chui, "Political Attitudes and Organizations: C.1900-1941," in *A History of Singapore*, ed. E. Chew and E. Lee (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

a physical as well as symbolic barrier against interaction between the different racial groups. The wealthy merchants were an exception; they were not compelled to live in the areas allocated to their communities, but, instead, were encouraged to trade and live side by side with the British, thus forming the basis of Singapore's plural society, one which, as Turnbull suggests, was to be based upon wealth and not the colour of one's skin.<sup>12</sup> The lack of state control of the settlement coupled with the abundance of opportunities facilitated the separate development of each ethnic group. The Chinese increased their economic and social power and withdrew from the Singapore Chamber of Commerce and established the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce in 1882. An official commission report of 1875 highlighted this dependency on the state, commenting that 'We believe that the vast majority of Chinamen (sic) who come to work in these Settlements return to their country not knowing clearly whether there is a government in them or not.'<sup>13</sup> Thus, the chains of dependency between the each stratum were clearly short and simple during this early phase of economic development. However, the chains of dependency within each community were lengthening and becoming denser because of the greater levels of control of the upper strata in each community. This created greater divisions between various groups. The diffusion of sport thus occurred on three inter-related levels: from the Europeans to the wealthy non-Europeans as manifested in the formation of clubs; from the Europeans to the masses through education and New Year's Day Sports and; from the wealthy non-Europeans to the lower strata of their respective community through their clubs and schools.

This chapter traces and examines the development of sport through three stages: incipient (1819-1860s), colonization (1860s-1900s) and establishment (1900s-1940s). The discussion in the three stages focuses on three main levels of diffusion: New Year's Day Sports, clubs and schools. It seeks to illuminate and discuss the immanent dynamics in the initial phases of sportization during the colonial period and their effect upon the development of sport in independent Singapore. The diffusion of sport in Singapore will be discussed in light of Elias's tenet that when the degree of state-centralization and monopolization is low, the interdependencies between different

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12 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 20-21.

13 *Ibid.*, 76.

social groups are relatively lower but within each group are relatively higher. It will show the diffusion of sport on different class level and how sport developed from a relatively unorganized and exclusive form to a relatively more organized institution and how this process was intertwined with the social development of Singapore as well as with the global development. This resulted in a process of sporting development that was uneven and riven with division.

### **Incipient Stage: Sport in Early Nineteenth Century Singapore**

Modern sport, as Dunning shows, began its first wave of development in the mid eighteenth century and its second in 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> This initial sportization coincided with the settlement of Singapore in 1819 when Raffles obtained, for the East India Company, treaty rights to establish a British settlement on the land of the Tememgong of Johore. Although sport has rarely been a stated purpose of colonization and never featured in Raffles' vision of Singapore, it developed interdependently with the development of the settlement. The economic interdependence inherent in the free trade system was instrumental in developing the barely inhabited island into the "emporium and pride of the East"<sup>15</sup> and the success of this economic structuring enabled and constrained the development of sport. The economic opportunities contributed to the social stability and sustainability of most clubs and the promotion of sports and recreation in the bourgeois class. Whilst the close economic relations facilitated the diffusion of sport from the bourgeois Europeans to the bourgeois non-Europeans, the competitiveness of the economic opportunities and the monopolization of opportunities amongst the wealthy constrained the democratization of sport. To a large extent, Raffles' initiative and foresight in establishing the Singapore Institution was another critical infrastructural feature of the diffusion of sport to the masses, even though Raffles' primary interest was to civilize the youths through "the promotion of European literature and science"<sup>16</sup>. The fact that the emergence of sport was facilitated, quite unintentionally, in this way demonstrates that sport did not develop in isolation

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14 E. Dunning, "Culture, "Civilization" and Sociology of Sport'," *Innovation* 5 (1992): 13.

15 Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 789.

16 Raffles cited in G. G. Hough, "Notes on the Educational Policy of Sir Stamford Raffles," *Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society:150th Anniversary of the Founding of Singapore* (1973): 175.

but was interconnected with the wider social development of the settlement, while also showing that sport was not always the result of the intentions of a particular person or institution. Therefore, it can be argued that whilst the actions of individuals or institutions could be identified as responsible for the process of introduction, formalization and popularization of sport, it must also be emphasized that these processes cannot be reduced to an individual or institution, rather that they were enabled and constrained by the wider social and economic environment.

Evidence of sport being engaged in by the inhabitants prior to colonization is fragmentary and obscure. Buckley speculated that sport might have been present as far back as the thirteenth century; however even if his claims about the existence of these activities were correct, they were certainly not, as he describes them, "sports,"<sup>17</sup> but rather, at best, a chivalric challenge of strength and had no bearing on the sport of modern Singapore. At the time in which the island was colonized, there were around 150 inhabitants on the island, majority of which was Malay with the Chinese making up only a fifth of the population.<sup>18</sup> According to Newbold, the inhabitants were mostly fishermen and or pirates.<sup>19</sup> The Malay inhabitants were made up principally of migrants sent by the Tememgong of Johore to settle in Singapore. The balance of the Malay inhabitants consisted of various small nomadic tribes who lived mainly on the water and included the Orang Laut of the Riau-Lingga archipelago, the Orang Selatar who wandered the northern creeks of the Johore Strait and the strictly speaking, only indigenous inhabitants of the island, the Biduanda Orang Kallang. The latter are described as primitive people, who lived in swamps and gathered their food from the river and the jungle and did not attempt to trade or make contact with the rest of the people on the island.<sup>20</sup> The indigenous inhabitants therefore made up a very small number and made insignificant contributions to the development of the settlement.<sup>21</sup>

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17 Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 94.

18 T. J. Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca*, vol. 1 (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1971), 279.

19 *Ibid.*

20 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 5.

21 S. H. Saw, "Population Growth and Control," in *A History of Singapore*, ed. E. Chew and E. Lee (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991), 219.



It is necessary, at this point, to clarify the usage of the term "native." Literature on Singapore by early twentieth century British writers, often describe Malays and sometimes the Chinese as "natives" but certainly by no means should the term be misunderstood as being synonymous with "indigenous" to Singapore. Although the Malay population was the largest social group up till 1826 and the island had been ruled by the Sultan, the Malay community as explained earlier, was mostly, if not all, migrants in the Malaya Archipelago.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the Malays in Singapore have been recognized by the British, Japanese as well as the Singapore government as the indigenous people of the island. The purpose here is not to argue the status of the Malay, but to firstly clarify that the term "natives" is used to describe all Malays in the settlement, who were, contrary to definition of the term, migrants. Secondly to support the argument that the the migrant history of Singapore was shared by all racial groups and the social dynamics of Singapore emanated essentially from the interactions between diverse migrant groups. The interest of this chapter is thus to examine how the colonisation process as manifested in sport occurred and developed into the culture of the settlement, and not just that of the British. Whilst anthropological research may illuminate the sporting activities of the early inhabitants, it is not the focus of this chapter. Rather the focus is to understand how the Western concept of sport developed in a largely Eastern settlement.

Migrants from different parts of the world were attracted to Singapore mainly for the economic opportunities that were presented. Central to the attraction was its free trade policy. Although the British government had first attempted to institute the policy in Penang between 1786 and 1801, it was in Singapore that it proved a success.<sup>23</sup> This principle of free trade was revolutionary and its implementation in Singapore during that period was unique to the East.<sup>24</sup> In the neighbouring Dutch settlements, trade was subjected to monopolies and high duty tax.<sup>25</sup> The free trade policy coupled with the geographic location of Singapore drew traders from the East

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22 Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca*, 283.

23 L. K. Wong, "Commercial Growth before the Second World War," in *A History of Singapore*, ed. E. Chew and E. Lee (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991), 47.

24 *Ibid.*

25 Moore and Moore, *The First 150 Years of Singapore*, 146.

and West. In its very first year of settlement, Raffles claimed that the population had risen to well over 5000.<sup>26</sup> Although the figure is now considered to have been exaggerated<sup>27</sup>, Raffles was correct in claiming that the "number is daily increasing."<sup>28</sup> By the time the first census was conducted in 1824, the population was above ten thousand.<sup>29</sup> In terms of community size, the European community was overwhelmed by the Chinese and Malay. The Europeans who migrated to Singapore were, however mostly merchants, officials from London and Calcutta. Although there were itinerant European seamen stranded on the island hunting for jobs, the majority of Europeans were predominantly of a socioeconomic class higher than most of the Chinese, Malay or Indian migrants. Despite being the minority group in terms of population strength, the Europeans were quick to transplant their recreational activities and practices to the colony. The availability of time and resources certainly added important structural impetus in enabling the pursuit of their sporting pastimes. More importantly, the pleasurable satisfactions derived from sport and the routinization of work continued and perhaps became even more relevant factors for the Europeans who were so far from their homelands. As Sharp suggests, the low number of females that resided in Singapore during this period made sports "an important palliative for boredom."<sup>30</sup> At the same time, it served to provide a collective identity within the confines of the exclusive clubs whilst participating in activities that expressed and distinguished the British identity and culture.

Sport, as Elias succinctly puts it, "is an enterprise of human beings."<sup>31</sup> Thus sport can only be considered in isolation from other aspects of social life, if the various aspects of social life are treated as different enterprises of the same human beings, rather than as enterprises of different human beings. Those who engage in sport are

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26 T. S. Raffles, "The Founding of Singapore," *Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society: 150th Anniversary of the Founding of Singapore* (1973), 90.

27 Saw, "Population Growth and Control," 220.

28 Raffles, "The Founding of Singapore," 90.

29 Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca*, 283.

30 I. Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852* (Singapore: The Singapore Cricket Club, 1993), 15.

31 Elias, "Introduction," 35.

also people who engage in the economy, politics and in the wider society. The sporting figuration is intricately interwoven with the wider social figuration. Elias observed that sport became an identity marker for the eighteenth century English upper classes not merely because they had the wealth to engage in leisure, but it was a manifestation of the changes in their economic structure as well as personality structure, particularly the sense of repugnance and embarrassment towards violence.<sup>32</sup> This demand on personal conduct was imposed on every sphere of human activity. Leisure activities of the British migrants therefore were themselves a tension of excitement, recreation and an exercise of restraint on their conduct of behaviour. In the first decade of the settlement, pastimes that bore characteristics of sport were undertaken. According to Buckley, the Europeans often went for walks, drives or engaged in dancing after an early dinner.<sup>33</sup> From April 1824, the streets were lit in the evening and gradually it became a "fashionable time for exercise."<sup>34</sup> The Europeans were soon to be seen riding their horses or driving in their carriages in town in the evening; in not just a leisurely fashion, but in a purposeful manner. They finished each ride with a few turns around an oblong square (the Padang).<sup>35</sup> Although such activities were not sport as we know it today, they marked the beginning of the practice of leisure-driven physical activity. It was a far more restrained and deliberately constructed form than play, in the sense that it was not undertaken frivolously, but for the health and leisure outcomes, as demonstrated by the manner in which those involved constructed tasks and obstacles in their riding circuit.

Whilst there are accounts of the recreational pursuits of the Europeans during this period, those of the non-European community are virtually ignored in the *magnum opus* texts of Buckley and Makepeace et al. The scant literature may suggest the relative disregard for the non-Europeans' recreational practices but it could also indicate the non-Europeans' low level of interest in sporting pursuits. The distinction between the recreational pursuits served as a marker of cultural, class and moral identity. Indeed, the considerable attention on the gambling activities of the Chinese

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 135.

<sup>34</sup> Moore and Moore, *The First 150 Years of Singapore*, 201.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

suggests that gambling was their only recreational pursuit.<sup>36</sup> *The Straits Times* described this "devotion to the games of chance"<sup>37</sup> as follows: "Every person brought into contact with the Chinese, cannot fail to observe their disposition to gaming and the sad influence which this addiction has on their social and moral characters."<sup>38</sup> Malays on the other hand, were observed to participate in some form of physical pursuits, but their practice was regarded as a caricature of sport. This distinction can be seen in this description by a British journalist of the Malay's sporting pursuits:

Indeed it is remarked how very few games or exercises of an active and athletic nature the Malays have; even boat-racing, as a sport, is an exotic: and the only games peculiar to them appear to be a sort of football and kite-flying, the latter being an exercise practised in various ways in many parts of the civilized world, in a manner in which the poor Malays have the smallest idea.<sup>39</sup>

When the British government gained full sovereignty and property of Singapore in 1824, they had also secured an expanded land area<sup>40</sup>; and hunting was a pastime that benefited from the expansion in land ownership. In the first two decades of the British colonization, only the area closest to the harbour had been developed into a town whilst the rest of Singapore largely remained a "thick jungle."<sup>41</sup> The rich fauna of tigers, deer, wild pigs, birds and crocodiles in the relatively undeveloped island was described as a "perfect venue for the sportsmen and lover of nature."<sup>42</sup> Elias has argued

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36 See Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867.*; W. Makepeace, G. E. Brooke, and R. J. Braddell, "A Century of Sport," in *One Hundred Years of Singapore.*, ed. W. Makepeace, G. E. Brooke, and R. J. Braddell (London: John Murray, 1921); O. S. Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1967).

37 "Chinese Gambling at Singapore, Its Influence and Effects," *The Straits Times*, 16 September 1845, 77.

38 *Ibid.*, 78.

39 "New Year Sports," *Singapore Free Press*, 8 January 1939.

40 E. Chew, "The Foundation of the British Settlement," in *A History of Singapore*, ed. E. Chew and E. Lee (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991), 39.

41 Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 219.

42 G. P. Owen, "Shikar," in *One Hundred Years of Singapore*, ed. W. Makepeace, R. J. Braddell, and G. E. Brooke (London: John Murray, 1921), 370.

more generally that fox-hunting was one of the earliest pastimes that embraced characteristics of sport.<sup>43</sup> He observed that the connection was not only in the symbolic usage of the term "sport" to describe fox-hunting but also in the structural regulations that are constructed to restrain the practice. Elias shows that fox hunters did not kill indiscriminately but rather in a deliberate and restrained manner hunting only for foxes.<sup>44</sup> This practice of self-imposed selectivity distinguished the act of hunting as a sport as opposed to that of sustenance or barbarism. "A gentleman," wrote Elias, "did not go hunting in order to bring home delicacies for the table. He did it for the sport." This sporting discourse has developed since the mid eighteenth century and by the time the Europeans came to Singapore in the nineteenth century, it was very much a normalised social practice for middle class gentlemen.

Hunting in Singapore reflected tensions of restraint and violence and class identity formation which Elias discussed in his analysis of fox-hunting.<sup>45</sup> Whilst hunting was undoubtedly practised by the natives and the Chinese, it was only for subsistence or pecuniary purpose. The British form of hunting was described specifically as a sport. The description of hunters as "sportsmen" and the jungle as a "venue" demonstrates the association of hunting as a form of sport. They could be identified by the safari sportswear they wore during their sport.<sup>46</sup> When the government implemented a reward system for the capture or killing of tigers, it was mostly the Chinese and natives who hunted for tigers for the bounty. The term "sportsmen,"<sup>47</sup> being reserved for those Europeans who pursued the tigers for sport, was not a term associated with the "natives,"<sup>48</sup> "Chinese,"<sup>49</sup> or those Europeans who pursued the tigers for financial reward.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, the practice of hunting for a "sportsman" demanded selectivity

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43 Elias, "An Essay on Sport and Violence," 160.

44 *Ibid.*

45 *Ibid.*

46 See picture of Owen, "Shikar," 369.

47 Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 342.

48 *Ibid.*, 546.

49 Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, 60.

50 According to Buckley, a French Canadian and a Eurasian pursued tiger hunting for its reward. See Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 221.

and restraint in the hunt. The line of revulsion was clearly drawn for unrestrained violence as shown by Owen:

Quail are occasionally put up...but their numbers are so few that they are not considered enough attraction for the sportsman...A species of water-fowl is also to be met, but is not shot by Europeans. The native gunner, however will shoot anything that gets up. To him nothing is sacred, not even does in the breeding season.<sup>51</sup>

The pleasure of hunting was derived more so from the excitement and challenge of the process of making the successful shot rather than the killing of an animal. The choice of the hunt represented not only a prize of the sportsmen's efforts, but also in a paradoxical way, the level of their humanity for animals which distinguished their level of civilization and sophistication from the "native gunner" as well as their skill level in the "mock battle."<sup>52</sup> Their hunting practice was also a sport because it usually did not have a pecuniary or practical outcome other than the intrinsic pleasure itself. Tigers were hunted for as much the degree of excitement as to rid the settlement of their menace. Although feral dogs were "one of the greatest nuisances" on the island, there were no accounts of sportsmen hunting them. Game was scarce and the popular British quarry, partridges did not inhabit Singapore.<sup>53</sup> When the landscape of Singapore began to lose more of its jungle and fauna, a curious form of sporting 'goods' were imported by two Europeans, G. P. Owen and James Miller. They introduced Indian red-legged partridges, in an attempt to breed them for the 'sport' of hunting.<sup>54</sup> While rifles and guns were obviously important pieces of "equipment" for hunting, the object of the hunt, in this case, the birds had been considered to be, as obviously they are, just as important. Although the attempt proved to be a failure because of the unsuitability of the climate, it demonstrated that hunting as a sport in colonial Singapore was highly contrived and anything but 'natural'. The selection of the hunt therefore was premeditated and influenced by not just the logistical aspects but by the tension of risk, conscience and excitement.

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51 Owen, "Shikar," 380.

52 Elias, "An Essay on Sport and Violence," 167.

53 Moore and Moore, *The First 150 Years of Singapore*, 203.

54 Owen, "Shikar," 349.

Those who took part in hunting as a "sport" however, did not always hunt alone. Whilst eighteenth and early nineteenth century fox hunters in England employed hounds, Europeans in Singapore often employed trackers and beaters to assist them in navigating the jungles and in the sighting of animals. Such trackers were native men and their intimate knowledge of the jungle made them very useful, if not indispensable. Although they led the sportsmen to the "venue" and lured the animals to favourable positions, they were not referred to as sportsmen but rather as trackers, beaters or "shikaris."<sup>55</sup> The identity of a sportsman was well defined. His act was one of a sporting fulfilment and not for pecuniary reward. The dependency on trackers and beaters also directly but unintentionally introduced the sporting pastime to other social groups. In addition, the display of their hunting practices either directly through the encroachment into the plantations and living areas of other social groups or indirectly, by their erection of notices and warnings to regulate the violence against animals, created a visible display of their leisure and its peculiarities.

However, hunting was a pastime that was not sustainable in a rapidly developing and in reality very small settlement. The growth of rubber plantations in the late nineteenth century destroyed not only virgin forest but also the fauna.<sup>56</sup> "Singapore," Owen pronounced in the early twentieth century, "was no longer the place for the sportsman."<sup>57</sup> Whilst evidence of non-Europeans hunting for tigers is available, it was clearly stated that they only did so for the rewards. The manner in which they went about was also very 'unsporting' as it involved the setting of traps in pits so as to snare the tigers rather than hunting them on foot. Similarly, the Chinese who hunted for wild boar did so only for sustenance rather than for sport. Although there is no firm evidence to suggest that non-Europeans became involved in hunting as a sporting pastime, the observations made by the Europeans demonstrate the process in which the latter constructed their practice as sport and their identity as sportsman. Their self-imposed regularities, peculiar as they might be, marked the practice as sport.

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 375.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 367.; Moore and Moore, *The First 150 Years of Singapore*, 478.

<sup>57</sup> Owen, "Shikar," 368.

## Early Formalisation of Sport: Club Formation

The formation of clubs is central to the development of sport.<sup>58</sup> It embodies and propagates the practices, ethos, identity and the sport itself. The Billiards Club established in 1829 represented the embryonic form of sport clubs in Singapore. There is little data available on the Billiards Club but what there is reveals the relationship between class, identity and sport. The Billiards Club, not surprisingly, ceased operation after a year, as it was established at a time when the European population was only just over 120.<sup>59</sup> However, it was another 57 years before such a club was to be formed in England.<sup>60</sup> It was only the second fraternal organization to be established in Singapore, preceded only by the Raffles Club which was established in 1825 by the British for the purpose of organising the annual celebration of the settlement's foundation.<sup>61</sup> The significance of the swiftness in the establishment of a sporting club is further amplified given that the Singapore Chamber of Commerce was only established in 1837.<sup>62</sup> The Billiards Club was formed by a group of merchants for their own collective purposes as a particular social group. The possibility of forming such a club was discussed at a meeting by six Europeans in the home of the merchant, E. Boustead, who had arrived a year earlier.<sup>63</sup> The relatively informal process in the establishment of the club demonstrated the practice of "free association of gentlemen," which Elias observes was a characteristic of English gentlemen in eighteenth century.<sup>64</sup> This practice was continued out of England and it was in this fashion that an institutionalized sport club was introduced into Singapore at this early date. The Billiards Club was a juxtaposition of the practice of the right of freedom to assemble and the voluntary submission of members to the regulation of their social conduct by the collective body they had formed. It had the markers of an institutionalized club

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58 Elias, "Introduction," 39.

59 Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca*, 283.

60 British Society of Sports History World Wide Web Service and Sports History [On-line]. Available: <http://www2.umist.ac.uk/sport/index2.html>.

61 Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 439.

62 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 68.

63 Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 206.

64 Elias, "Introduction," 39.



with an organizational structure, formal meetings, an admission fee of 50 Spanish dollars, an annual subscription fee of 4 Spanish dollars, rules and regulations, including a fine of 2 Spanish dollars for members who missed a meeting. Members could also be expelled from the club for missing more than three meetings without providing an explanation.<sup>65</sup> Members of the club were exclusively European and they ran the club by the regulations they wrote and imposed themselves. This demand on their recreational conduct is one of the key differences between modern sport and its antecedent forms. Although the club was a recreational one, it was also a means of symbolizing their prestige and class. The members were not subjected to social pressure to join; rather their participation represented a particular status. It was a leisure activity that afforded them pleasure whilst at the same time was a vehicle for expressing their identity and values. To a lesser extent, the Fives Club established in 1836 was another example of the practice of voluntary association by the European gentlemen of the settlement. Although it was far less regulated than the Billiards Club, its conception was similarly a result of the camaraderie of the small group of Europeans who shared the love of Fives.<sup>66</sup> These sports were also introduced to other Europeans and in this respect Singapore became a site for the diffusion of sport not only from Europeans to non-Europeans but within the European settlers as well.<sup>67</sup> The Fives Court was erected four years before that at the Eton School and indicates, firstly, the relatively rapid rate of the diffusion of the sport and, secondly, the close similarities in the development of sport between Britain and its colonies.

The Billiards Club and the Fives Club had only fleeting presences in Singapore's sport history. The Singapore Cricket Club was established in 1852 and unlike its predecessors, it endures until the present. It also became the model upon which other clubs, European as well as non-European emulated. Such clubs were important sites in which the playing of sporting activities was a display of the British cultural practice, whilst the display of their healthy bodies at play also accentuated their strength and power. Indeed, the importance of sport in keeping the British in good health was acknowledged in *The Straits Times*:

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65 Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 206-07.

66 *Ibid.*, 304.

67 *Ibid.*

We are the healthiest community in the East, and attribute no small share of it to our activity and love of outdoor sports, so that, long life we say to Fives and Cricket, and the other exercises that make us so.<sup>68</sup>

The most significant development during this period, however, was the establishment of the Singapore Sporting Club in 1842.<sup>69</sup> It represents the first central sporting organisation in Singapore. Although it largely focused its efforts on horse-racing, the original intention of its formation was to "encourage outdoor sports and amusements."<sup>70</sup> In this regard it reflects the purpose of a contemporary centralized sporting body, such as the Singapore Sports Council. Two of its most significant contributions were the New Year's Day Sports and horse racing. Although the former was largely organized and supported by volunteers with the Singapore Sporting Club (SSC) playing a relatively minor supporting role, the Club's formation indicated an early step in the emergence of a more deliberate, systematic and organised form of sport. The SSC was, however, responsible for the development of horse racing with its activities efforts bearing all the features of an established horse racing organization. It established a race course, complete with a grandstand, and organised regular race meetings. The first meeting was held in 1843 with the Singapore Cup being the first race, with prize money of \$150.<sup>71</sup> Its name symbolises the pride felt amongst the European community for achieving the goal of holding a horse racing meeting in 'their' settlement.

### **Diffusion of Sports to the Lower Strata: New Year's Day Sports**

Whilst clubs and horse racing were principally responsible for the development of sport amongst the middle class and (as I show below) the Chinese, the New Year's Day Sports was one of the sporting legacies that was integral to the diffusion of sport to the lower classes, and predominantly to the Malays. It was one of the legacies that formed part of the momentum towards increasing formalisation of sports. The New Year's Day Sports festival first began in 1834 as the New Year's Day Regatta and by 1839 had

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68 "The Fives Club," *The Straits Times*, 17 August 1861, 1.

69 Makepeace, Brooke, and Braddell, "A Century of Sport," 320.

70 "Singapore Sporting Club," *The Straits Times*, 29 March 1862.

71 Makepeace, Brooke, and Braddell, "A Century of Sport," 320.

expanded to include 'land sports' in the festival. The celebration of the New Year through community gatherings and sporting competitions reflected the seventeenth century sport festivals such as those organized by Robert Dover at Much Wenlock in England and the late nineteenth century versions of Highland Games such as those at Braemar, St. Fillans, Inverness and Lonach.<sup>72</sup> The New Year's Day Sports were held every year and they were disrupted only by monsoonal rain and war. It was not only the first national sport event but also one of the earliest leisure events that was organised on a mass level. Yet, even though it has such an enduring tradition, some 128 years, the New Year's Day Sports has been given scant and only a passing mention by sport critics. It was through the New Year Sports, that the non-European migrants were first formally introduced to sporting practices. Unlike the clubs, which were exclusive to the middle class, the New Year Sports was intended for the lower social classes. Certainly, however, the motives for the New Year Sports suggest as much a class dividing practice as they do of a narrowing of class differences it enabled the established group to accumulate greater social power in the leisure-sphere and at the same time established their identity and class. Simultaneously, however, by introducing the non-Europeans to the discourse of sport, it also engendered a diminishing effect on the contrast between the Europeans and other social groups. Whilst the diffusion of sport was facilitated by the New Year's Day Sports, the process was uneven and riven with class tensions. Despite the provision of monetary rewards at the New Year Sports, the event did not attract much interest from the biggest social class in the settlement, the working class Chinese. It was the Malays who consistently showed the greatest interest in the event. However, in 1893, the middle class Chinese replicated the event with their introduction of Chinese New Year Sports. From this discussion it thus follows that the development of New Year's Day Sports was bound up in inter-civilizational exchanges.

The New Year's Day Regatta began as a relatively small affair. The responsibility for the organisation of the event rested on a group of Europeans and the events were structured around the resources that were available. Sailing was a ubiquitous mode of transport for all the migrants and a way of life for some of the natives. Surrounded by water and heavily dependent on boats in trade and transportation, holding a Regatta

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72 British Society of Sports History World Wide Web Service and Sports History [On-line].

was a convenient extension of the functions of the resources present. The four events in the first Regatta included a rowing match and a sailing match between sampans, a yacht race and a sailing match between several *tongkangs* or cargo-boats.<sup>73</sup> Thus, the trade and transport vehicles were utilized on that day as sporting equipment. In each event, a route was charted and basic regulations were established. As illustrated in the following description of the first Regatta, the initiation and conception of the event was relatively informal:

The Amateurs in boat-sailing residing at this settlement, having determined on some sport and to enjoy themselves agreeably on New Year's Day, made arrangement two or three days previously for a "grand affair."<sup>74</sup>

The format of the event remained largely unchanged after the inclusion of land sports in 1839. It was organised around three broad areas: sea sports, land sports, and amusements, the latter included "amusing spectacles" such as treacle-dripping, walking a greased *tongkang* boom, sack races and pony races.<sup>75</sup> The Europeans established the event to "enjoy themselves"<sup>76</sup> and part of this enjoyment was derived in organising and watching the sports which were "intended to please and amuse the Malay, and the Kling, and the Chinese."<sup>77</sup> It provided a vehicle for them to display their philanthropic and paternalistic values and practices. By so doing, they distinguished and reinforced their higher social positions. The New Year's Day Regatta was organised by the "Amateurs" of the boat-sailing fraternity, the Singapore Yacht Club, a term of reference which suggested the middle class status of the organisers. The expression of class distinction in the event is illustrated in the following newspaper description of the New Year's Day Sport in 1839:

European Gentlemen of the Settlement have for some time back observed the laudable practice of ushering in the New Year with sports and pastimes

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73 "Regatta," *Singapore Free Press*, 2 January 1834, 3.

74 *Ibid.*

75 "New Year Sports," *The Straits Times*, 3 January 1874.

76 "Regatta."

77 "New Year Sports," *The Straits Times*, 2 January 1894.

among the native population, in which suitable rewards are appropriated to those who compete.<sup>78</sup>

Philanthropy was again reiterated in the 1925 event; "For once in the year the European community, or many busy members of it, forget the Almighty Dollar, and arrange the gala day."<sup>79</sup> The importance of the organisers in the event is also demonstrated in the newspaper reports of the New Year Day's sports which more often identified the members of the organising committee than the winners. Reports on the event focused more on the "best of humour"<sup>80</sup> and "good feeling"<sup>81</sup> generated which enabled the moralizing of their organization of the event as a mark of their social class and humanity.

### **Schooling the Body and Mind of Youths: Sport and Physical Education**

One of the aspects of social life in which the effects of the limited extent of state control were most visible was the development of education in the settlement. Raffles was far sighted with respect to not only commerce but education as well. His vision of Singapore as the hub to educate "the higher classes of the native population"<sup>82</sup> and his recognition that "education must keep pace with commerce in order that its benefits may be ensured and its evils avoided"<sup>83</sup> were instrumental in the establishment of the Singapore Institution, later renamed Raffles Institution. Whilst in England the government provided no funding to education until 1846, Raffles convinced the East India Company, the Sultan and *Tememgong* of Singapore, William Farquhar the Governor of Singapore and private organisations to fund the set up of the Institution in 1823. Raffles not only contributed \$2000 but also reserved a piece of land for the school. But apathy on the part of the government and the trustees delayed the operation

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78 "New Year Sports."

79 "The New Year: Fine Weather for Holiday Sports," *The Straits Times*, 2 January 1925.

80 "New Year Sports," *The Straits Times*, 3 January 1849.

81 "New Year Sports," *The Straits Times and the Singapore Journal of Commerce*, 10 January 1854.

82 Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 122.

83 Raffles cited in *Ibid.*, 789.

of the institution for over a decade.<sup>84</sup> Schooling for the large part of the first century of British colonization, was controlled and conducted by small autonomous groups of individuals. It was only in 1872 that the British government set up an Education Department for the Straits Settlement and it took another thirty years before they assumed a greater responsibility in the actual provision of schools.<sup>85</sup> Prior to 1903, missionaries played a central role in the education of the youths in the colony. Most schools were therefore sites for the direct colonization of the practices, values and images of Christianity. Religion, in this way, was arguably one of the earliest globalizing vehicles.

Before the 1850s, the number of female migrants was small, and the majority of the migrants were young men with no children.<sup>86</sup> Thus there was a relatively miniscule population of boys and girls. In addition to the two English-medium schools established during this period, the Raffles Institution and Raffles Girls' School, two Chinese-medium schools established to teach a total of 34 boys.<sup>87</sup> Whilst not much is known about the curriculum and activities of these schools during this period, Wijeyasingha cites a newspaper claim that the object of the Raffles Institution was to "diffuse domestic and social happiness through sound education."<sup>88</sup> The latter had separate departments for the education of Chinese, Malay and Indian pupils. However, whilst the two hundred pupils were segregated in their formal instruction, English was taught to them alongside vernacular languages. Sports were also featured in the school curriculum as indicated by the construction of courts, a gymnasium and the erection of a wall to separate the playing ground when Raffles Girls School was established in 1844.<sup>89</sup> Given the absence of annual reports from the school during this period of time, it is difficult to surmise anything about the diffusion of sports. But quite clearly, the

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84 For the development of Raffles Institution, see E. Wijeyasingha, *The Eagle Breeds a Gryphon: The Story of Raffles Institution 1823-1985* (Singapore: Pioneer Book Centre, 1989).

85 E. Lee, *The Colonial Legacy*, ed. K. S. Sandhu and P. Wheatley, *Management of Success: The Moulding of Modern Singapore* (Singapore: 1989), 19.

86 S. H. Saw, "Population Trends in Singapore: 1819-1967.," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 10 (1969), 42.

87 Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*.

88 Wijeyasingha, *The Eagle Breeds a Gryphon: The Story of Raffles Institution 1823-1985*, 71.

89 *Ibid.*, 64-72.

fact that they made sport facilities available suggests they did place some level of importance on sport in the school curriculum. The process was also assisted by the teaching of English language which facilitated unification as well as the learning of games and their ideals. Indeed, as Mangan suggests, language and sport were the two most successful "spiritual exports" of the British Empire.<sup>90</sup> 'Western civilization' and more importantly the possession of the *lingua franca* were limited to those who attended English-medium schools and as demonstrated throughout the course of the history of Singapore, most of the economically and socially powerful individuals emerged from the English-medium school system.

Between the 1820s and the 1850s, it was individuals rather than formal institutions that introduced sport and its practices to the settlement. Whilst the organisation of sport was relatively informal and less organised, self imposed restraints in their sporting pastimes were clearly emphasized in their hunting practices as well as their club activities. Pleasures that were derived from the sporting pastimes were centred more on the process rather than the outcome. The social homogeneity of those who played and of organised sport also enabled a largely uncontested sporting identity to be displayed and constructed. Moreover, as sport in England was also in its incipient phase during this period of time, the varieties of sport played in Singapore therefore largely reflected those of England. These developments of sport provided the conditions for sport in Singapore to transform in the direction of greater 'civilization'.

### **Colonization Stage: Sport from the 1860s to the 1900s**

In the 1860s, sport in Singapore began to spread to the wider society. This period of development reflected the take-off phase in Maguire's analysis of the globalization of sport.<sup>91</sup> He characterised it using the spread of sport globally, the increase in international competition, greater regularity and the acceptance of sport rules and ethos and the establishment of global competitions, as epitomised by the modern Olympic Games. In Singapore, this phase was manifested in the increased number of sports played, the continued expansion in the scale of the New Year's Day Sports, formation

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90 J. A. Mangan, *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire and Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 2.

91 Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*, 82.

of clubs, establishment of inter-club and inter-colony competitions, and the emergence of The Singapore Sporting Club; the organisation that came closest to functioning as a central governing body of sport to be established during this period. The increased regulation and competitiveness reflected and connected with the social transformations in Singapore. More sports were introduced and diffused through clubs and schools. These developments were underpinned by the expansion of the middle class amongst the non-Europeans, the rise in the number of schools and the educational transformations in the organisation of the schools. Fundamental to these social transformations were the establishment of Singapore as a Crown colony in 1867 which facilitated a greater degree of state control over the settlement, the rise in population, and in 1867 the opening of the Suez Canal. This predicated a greater dependency on steamships in the 1870s which not only made transportation of goods and migrants more efficient, but facilitated international communication and implicitly, globalization. In addition, a more efficient transfer of information was enabled by the establishment of the first telegraphic connection in 1859, from Batavia to Singapore, which was extended to Europe in 1870.<sup>92</sup> By 1879, telephone service was available in Singapore and three years later the telecommunication network was extended to Johore.<sup>93</sup>

These developments facilitated more effective central control which enabled greater unification of the disparate migrants. An integral feature of this development was the increasing number of upper and middle class migrants, who represented the larger critical mass necessary for the expansion of sport. The establishment of sport clubs and schools were manifestations of the British colonisation of the leisure sphere of the society. However, as the economic and social practices of the Europeans and non-Europeans became more intertwined, the centrifugal pressure to distinguish their identities in the increasing complex social structure also increased. Whilst the clubs were formed for the pleasure they afforded, they were also important institutions through which their members could express, define and distinguish their identity and reputation. Inexplicably, the interconnection between sporting rivalry and the pressure to distinguish one's status added momentum to the diffusion of sport in Singapore.

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92 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 40.

93 *Ibid.*, 80.



## **Diffusion of Sports on the Middle Class Level: Clubs and Class Differentiation**

The diffusion of sport in Singapore was principally led by clubs and schools. Whilst the latter promoted sport to a greater mix of social classes, the former was an important institution not only on a sporting level but also on the levels of identity and status. The mid-nineteenth century could be considered as the golden era of sport in Singapore with a plethora of clubs being established in the settlement. Whilst the formation and membership of these voluntary associations were exclusive to the higher social strata, they were also differentiated on the lines of race and gender. As the Singapore Sporting Club became less and less exclusively European, more and more differentiated clubs were established during this period. Elias's concept of "diminishing contrast and increasing varieties" describes the development of clubs in Singapore.

### *Social Integration: Singapore Sporting Club*

The importance of horse racing to the European community was demonstrated by the abandonment of the Singapore Sporting Club's minor interest in other sports and its specialization in horse racing in 1862.<sup>94</sup> The sport had also become increasingly serious and exclusive with the introduction of a new regulation that permitted only jockeys and horses belonging to members of the Singapore Sporting Club to use the club's facilities.<sup>95</sup> The Government also assisted this autonomous club by granting a peppercorn lease on its ground. The significance of horse racing is summed up here:

Horse racing is a peculiarly English institution and springs up in almost every British settlement abroad that can muster (sic) three or four hundred inhabitants. The sport is a fine and a manly one, and we should take that community to lack the national character that interdicted or did not encourage an annual race-meeting.<sup>96</sup>

Horse racing was arguably one of the most developed sports in Singapore. Its organisation and diffusion process were not only relatively quick but extensive. Jockeys in the mid-nineteenth century were predominantly amateurs but by the late

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94 "Singapore Sporting Club."

95 *Ibid.*

96 "Horse Racing," *The Straits Times*, 14 June 1862.

nineteenth century the shift towards professionalism was increasingly visible. In 1870s, Makepeace observed that there was discontent with the increasing number of professional jockeys.<sup>97</sup> In the first race meeting in 1843, all the jockeys were all gentlemen but in a race in 1894, the shift towards professionalism was becoming glaringly intense with the presence of only one amateur jockey.<sup>98</sup> The network of the participants of the Singapore Sporting Club was also increasingly differentiated into separate functions for owners, trainers, jockeys and members in contrast to the initial period, where, for example, W.H. Read was not only the steward of the Club but the owner as well as the jockey of the winning horse.<sup>99</sup> The dependency on the import of foreign talent, particularly horses effected an international connection in the sport. Horses came not only from England and China but as far south as Australia.<sup>100</sup> Initially the owners of horses competed in local races but by the 1890s the Singapore Sporting Club was associated with several neighbouring turf clubs which formed the Straits Racing Organisation. Participation in races was also extended to the neighbouring Malayan States and even to India.

The seriousness of the sport was also reflected in the prize money and the organisation of bookmakers. By 1898, the prize money for the Viceroy's Cup was \$100, 000. It is interesting to note, at this point, the distinction of horse racing from other gaming practices. Raffles in 1823 wrote in the legislation of Singapore that "it was the duty of Government to suppress both gaming and cock fighting as far as possible without trespassing on the free will of private conduct."<sup>101</sup> However, the government not only provided a notional lease to support horse racing, but permitted bookies to service the punters, and for lotteries to be organised. Horse racing was distinguished as a sport rather than a game of chance, as a civilized appropriation and display of animals rather than brutal barbarism. It was a sport of the upper and middle classes. The wealthy Chinese, specifically the Straits Chinese were quick to become involved in the sport. The Straits Chinese aligned themselves closely with the British

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97 Makepeace, Brooke, and Braddell, "A Century of Sport," 349.

98 *Ibid.*, 360.

99 *Ibid.*, 320.

100 "Horse Racing."

101 Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 112.

and sport was just one of dimensions in which they did. The close affinity is expressed in the following declaration in *The Straits Chinese Magazine* in 1900:

The Straits-born Chinese are subjects of the Queen. Let them look to the Union Jack alone for advancement, and let them identify themselves fully with the British cause. They must advance! They must reform! Or else they must forfeit their rights, yes they will forfeit them by their own inability to profit by them, and then they will fall to the lowest level where they will deserve to remain. Let them be true Britishers heart and soul! Then the all-embracing aegis of the British shall be sufficient for them for ages to come. Rule Britannia!<sup>102</sup>

The process started with one of the most influential Chinese merchants and philanthropists, Tan Kim Seng, hosting a ball for the Race Week in 1861.<sup>103</sup> This was followed shortly by the inauguration of various Cups sponsored by Chinese merchants, such as the Cheang Hong Lim Cup in 1867 and the Confucius Cup in 1869.<sup>104</sup> Some of the wealthy Chinese also became members of the Singapore Sporting Club and race horse owners. The insertion of the Chinese identities in the sport diminished the exclusive European identity and image of the sport.

#### *Social Differentiation: Singapore Cricket Club*

When the Singapore Cricket Club was established in 1852, the European population numbered less than 500.<sup>105</sup> The club's initial membership was approximately thirty<sup>106</sup> but by 1901, this had increased to over 500, more than 12% of the total European population.<sup>107</sup> It was, as Horton describes it, the "epitome of Victorian middle-class

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102 The Straits Chinese Magazine, Volume IV (14), June 1900, 86 cited in P. S. Png, "The Straits Chinese in Singapore: A Case of Local Identity and Socio-Cultural Accommodation," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 10 (1969).

103 Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, 154.

104 *Ibid.*

105 Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*, 13.

106 Makepeace, Brooke, and Braddell, "A Century of Sport," 323.

107 Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*, 31.

chauvinism."<sup>108</sup> Like one of its predecessors, the Billiards Club, it was established by the European mercantile community.<sup>109</sup> However, these founding members, according to Sharp, were not products of the English public schools; it was only in the late nineteenth century that it attracted the business and political elites who had been educated at English public schools.<sup>110</sup> The change in the member-profile of the Club heightened its middle class identity. It became not only a bastion of sport and British culture, but also a symbol of wealth and power, as epitomised by the selection of the Club's presidents, who included Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, who was Governor of the Straits Settlements from 1887 to 1893.<sup>111</sup> Indeed, the social and economic power accorded to a cricketer was illustrated by Major EIM Barrett's statement, "Qualifications for government appointment were considerably enhanced under this regime if the applicant was a cricketer."<sup>112</sup> Young middle class Europeans therefore were also attracted to the club. Unlike the Billiards Club which used the house of one of its members as its premise, the Cricket Club was located on the Padang, the heart of the settlement. Its visibility and location on prime land accentuated the importance of the leisure practices of the Europeans.

Before the Cricket Club was established, the cricket matches that were played often involved incomplete elevens. According to Sharp, the only times complete teams could be fielded were when naval vessels docked in the settlement.<sup>113</sup> Even after the formation of the club, it was not until 1853 that a first eleven-a-side match was played.<sup>114</sup> Dunning and Sheard in their analysis of the development of rugby also noted that the mid-nineteenth century independent football clubs had limited members and had to seek competition with other sports clubs.<sup>115</sup> The absence of other clubs meant

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108 Horton, "Padang or Paddock': A Comparative View of Colonial Sport in Two Imperial Territories," 9.

109 Makepeace, Brooke, and Braddell, "A Century of Sport," 324.

110 Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*, 31.

111 *Ibid.*, 33.

112 *Ibid.*, 37.

113 *Ibid.*, 19.

114 Makepeace, Brooke, and Braddell, "A Century of Sport," 326.

115 Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football*, 107.

that matches were either played between the members of the club or against the Army or Navy. This rudimentary beginning nevertheless displayed and promoted the game in and out of the settlement. In the eighties, these *ad hoc* matches shifted towards organised forms with the establishment of new clubs in Singapore as well as in the neighbouring British colonies. Local inter-club matches were organised in Singapore with the establishment of the Singapore Recreation Club in 1883<sup>116</sup> and two years later the Chinese community established the Straits Chinese Recreation Club.<sup>117</sup> The competition was extended to inter-colony level with the increasing number of clubs established in Malaya. By 1890, inter-colony matches were widened to colonies in Hong Kong, Ceylon and Shanghai.<sup>118</sup> It was not just the sport of cricket that was diffused but the British identity, image and ideology. Embedded in this diffusion, was also the increasing pressure on the colonies to distinguish themselves from others, which Elias argues, contributed to the connection between international sport and status symbol of nations.<sup>119</sup> Equally, in Singapore, the seedbed of competition and identity formation was also formed between the respective clubs as cricket and other sports gained momentum locally and internationally.

The Singapore Cricket Club was the model for the Singapore Recreation Club and the Straits Chinese Recreation Club. These clubs were respectively the pioneer sporting clubs for the Eurasian and the Chinese communities. Cricket was initially the main sporting activity of these clubs. Outside competition was sought in the very first year of establishment. The first reported fixture for the Singapore Recreation Club was against the Royal Artillery in 1883<sup>120</sup> whilst the Straits Chinese Recreation Club played against the Sepoy Lines Cricket Club in 1885.<sup>121</sup> Clubs therefore were contradictory sites that produced a double-bind effect. On one hand, they represented the effect of colonisation, on the other the diminishing contrast between the Europeans and the non-

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116 D. Wyatt, "Looking Back," *Singapore Recreation Club 100th Anniversary: 1883-1983* nd, 32.

117 Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, 216.

118 Makepeace, Brooke, and Braddell, "A Century of Sport," 327.

119 Elias, "Introduction."

120 Wyatt, "Looking Back," 32.

121 Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, 216.

Europeans was obstructed by restricting their membership to respective races. The restriction of membership to men only also accentuated the patriarchal identity of the respective social groups and tightened the association of sport as a male preserve. Whilst the government supported the establishment of both clubs by providing them access to land to build their clubhouses, it remained the responsibility of the respective social groups to sustain the activities of the Club. Therefore the intra-chains of dependencies between the club and the community were tightened at the same time as the dependencies with other social groups. Sport clubs accentuated the social and cultural division between the Occidental and Orientals.

Sport was more of a foreign institution for the Chinese than the Eurasians. The establishment of the Straits Chinese Recreation Club by the wealthy Chinese was thus integral in the diffusion of sport to the youths and lower social classes of the Chinese. In particular, the New Year's Day Sports was not attracting the Chinese, which made the role of the Straits Chinese Recreation Club even more significant. In addition to the social and economic connections within the Chinese community, the bilingual competencies of some members enabled them to promote the sports to the lower working class who were not English speakers. The formation of this club was soon followed by the Straits Chinese Football Association in 1891, as the youths who were educated in the local schools had learnt and played football, the club provided an avenue for them to continue their sporting interest. In 1894 the Straits Chinese Football Association organised an Athletic meeting on a similar scale to the New Year's Day Sports for the Chinese and natives to celebrate the Chinese New Year. In fact the following response by the British journalist to the event suggests a hint of protectiveness:

It was only a few years ago when the Chinese of the Straits became enamoured of athletics, or at any rate, the modern British form of athletics, and it may be considered that the Association of Chinese Footballers owes its existence to the enthusiasm aroused at that period...

The results could not be considered as being excellent, as the majority of the Chinese appeared to look upon the proceedings as a new phase of festivity in celebrating the new year, and altogether the proceedings appear to our representative to resemble one of the "wakes" which are indulged in

by the peasantry of Staffordshire and Cheshire where everyone competes for festivity's sake, but not for sport.<sup>122</sup>

Sport was not a major feature of the culture of the Chinese. The Straits Chinese became more enthused with sport as a consequence of their schooling in English schools, their social and economic association with the British and also their alignment of their identity and image to that of the British, whilst the Chinese from China, particularly the lower working class, had fewer opportunities to participate in sports. The less wealthy but influential Straits Chinese were also the pioneering members who established the Chinese Swimming Club in 1905<sup>123</sup>, mirroring the Singapore Swimming Club formed by the British in 1894.<sup>124</sup> Located in close proximity to each other, both clubs were established close to the sea where their pioneering members had their regular Sunday dips before they formed their respective clubs. The Straits Chinese Recreation Club and the Chinese Swimming Club therefore played an important role in introducing sport to the culture of the Chinese as the following address by the Chinese Consul in 1887 indicates:

Whilst in China, I am sorry to say, no play whatever is allowed to students in the school. Those who study too hard very often suffer from consumption or other diseases merely on account of not having sufficient exercises. It is a pity that they do not understand what the proverb says: 'All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.' I believe no member of this Club is likely to be a dull boy: certainly not. Should any outsider feel dull, let him lose no time in joining the Club, and then he will, no doubt, feel much better...<sup>125</sup>

The Straits Chinese Recreation Club and the Singapore Chinese Swimming Club were established by middle class Straits Chinese and shared similarities with their British counterparts, the Singapore Cricket Club and the Singapore Swimming Club.

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122 "Chinese New Year's Sports," *The Straits Times*, 8 February 1894.

123 "Singapore Chinese Swimming Club: 88 Years and Beyond," (Singapore: Singapore Chinese Swimming Club, 1998).

124 T. J. Yeo, ed., *The First 100 Years: Singapore Swimming Club* (Singapore: Y TJ Total Communications, nd).

125 Tso, P. L. quoted in Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, 226.

Whilst their members espoused and promoted the value of sports, they were also reinforcing their association with the British. On a sport specific level, the European connection was equally evident, for instance the Physical Education Director of the YMCA, Mr J. W. Jefferson, introduced the newly-developed crawl stroke to the swimmers of the Singapore Chinese Swimming Club and initiated a water polo league that the club could compete in.<sup>126</sup> On a symbolic political and social level, European gentlemen were invited to the Club's major activities, such as the opening of their clubhouse and their Chinese New Year's Day Sports.<sup>127</sup> The Chinese Consul's address shared the same view of sport as the Deputy Governor's address in 1895, in which he articulated the growth of the community is dependent on the Club in training the Chinese youths to emulate the "manly arts" and there "was nothing better for the body than physical exercise... And it had also done them a great deal of good mentally, for the mind could be healthy."<sup>128</sup> The function of sport for the maintenance of good health and good mind was thus the main driving motive for sport. The Governor's address to the youths in 1905 reiterated the supporting function that sports play when he expressed his hope that "in giving their attention to physical recreation, they should not lose sight of what he considered a matter of still greater importance, viz., education!"<sup>129</sup>

Cricket lost its popularity in the late nineteenth century, particularly among the Chinese.<sup>130</sup> The variety of the sports played in Singapore was expanded with the introduction and popularization of tennis in the 1870s, Association football in the 1880s, swimming, polo, hockey and golf in the 1890s. The affluent not only could participate in more sporting activities but the opportunities to increase the levels of association with other social groups also intensified with the growth of specialised clubs. With the expansion of the leisure sphere of the upper and middle class, the identification of sport as a middle class practice was also heightened. The regulation of social conduct therefore also intensified with the rise of more and more regulated leisure activities.

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126 "Singapore Chinese Swimming Club: 88 Years and Beyond."

127 Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, 226y.

128 "Chinese New Year Sports," *The Straits Times*, 26 January 1895, 3.

129 "Chinese New Year Sports," *The Straits Times*, 13 February 1905, 5.

130 Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, 216.



A plethora of specialized clubs emerged following the Cricket Club. Elias argues that, in general, with the lengthening chains of interdependency and the process of state formation, the secular upper classes, as much as they strove to, were unable to preserve their special conduct, which was, essentially, a mark of distinction from the lower classes. European women were making an increasing presence in the Club. Although they were not considered as members and had restricted access to the facilities, the entry of women into the sport club was indicative of the changing position of women in the society. The observation of men and their recreational practices influenced the women to set up The Ladies Lawn Tennis Club in 1884.<sup>131</sup> Indeed, the women of the Tennis Club were in fact wives of the men of the Cricket Club.<sup>132</sup> This imitation of the men's recreational practices is congruent with Elias's tenet that states that the lengthening chains of interdependency make it difficult for the secular upper classes to preserve their specific social conduct, which distinguishes them from those of the lower classes. The Club established rules and regulations that denied the entry of non-Europeans completely, thereby distinguishing the identity and practice of the European men from the Asian men. Clubs therefore accentuated sport as an institution that was "coloured by class imagery."<sup>133</sup> This resulted in a reduction in the differences between the upper and lower classes and concomitantly the integration of two forms resulted in the creation of increased class forms. In this process, the upper classes were (and are now) involved in a process of 'reciprocal supervision' of their own and the behaviour of others. This resulted in a double-bind tendency that Elias explains in his conception of the phases of 'colonization' and 'repulsion'.<sup>134</sup> Intentionally or otherwise, members of the established upper class interacted with and colonized the culture of the lower class by imposing their own pattern of conduct during the colonization phase.

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131 "Ladies Lawn Tennis Club Tournament" *The Straits Times*, 24 February 1896.

132 Makepeace, Brooke, and Braddell, "A Century of Sport," 34.

133 A. Ingham and R. Beamish, "The Industrialisation of the United States and the 'Bourgeoisification' of American Sport," in *Sport Process: A Comparative and Developmental Approach*, ed. E. G. Dunning, J. A. Maguire, and R. E. Pearton (Champaign, Illinois: 1993), 181.

134 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 311.

### **Balancing Class Integration and Division: New Year's Day Sports**

Whilst the organisation of a sporting event that included the non-European community provided a medium that integrated the different social groups, the contrast in the role and control of the event also sustained the gulf between the Europeans and the non-Europeans. The provision of monetary rewards for the participants acted as a barrier that distinguished the sporting practice of the Europeans from the Asian community. *The Straits Times* report of the 1865 events, for example, described them as "a mercenary affair on the part of the natives" and a "somewhat absurd and tiresome spectacle to the European."<sup>135</sup> Although some Europeans did compete for the prizes in 1862, they formed only a small group and consisted of mainly of soldiers (NCOs) and seamen.<sup>136</sup> The events in which they competed often involved the larger sail boats or were "somewhat heavier than the native sports."<sup>137</sup> Moreover, the contests were organised on racial lines, with each race competing independently, whilst the 'amusement' races appeared to be reserved for the natives with the Europeans participating in the contests that were more physically demanding. The following report demonstrates the difference in perception of the Europeans' and natives' athleticism:

They began at precisely eleven o'clock when the people assembled along the shore to witness (sic) a laughable scene, - a crowd of dusky natives trying to walk a greasy boom over the bow of a tongkang and snatch a twig from the end, many were the tumbles and ducking got ere the coveted twig could be secured.

The sports for the natives lasted until nearly two o'clock, when they concluded by a very exciting pony race round the Esplanade, which was contested by four or five hack ponies, and afforded a vast deal of amusement.

The sports for the Europeans then began, and were contested by a large number of soldiers, seamen and others. They were somewhat heavier than

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135 "Overland Summary," *The Straits Times*, 14 January 1865.

136 "New Year Sports," *The Straits Times*, 6 January 1872.

137 *Ibid.*

the native sports, but were entered into with great spirit, and the interest in them was unflagging throughout.<sup>138</sup>

However, the support for the event was relatively encouraging. By 1872, it was reported that the turnout for the New Year's Day Sport was in excess of ten thousand, which represented about 10% of the total population. However it was more attractive to the Malays than the Chinese. The 1894 reports laments: "Yet the sports are intended to please and amuse the Malay, and the Kling, and the Chinese also, if the latter would also come forward to compete, but he won't. The Malay rolled up in great force."<sup>139</sup> There is no evidence available to explain the reluctance of the Chinese. Their relatively more enthusiastic participation in the Chinese New Year's Day Sports suggests that they were not resistant to the concept of the event; possibly the New Year's Day had a much lower social significance to them than the Chinese New Year. The majority of the Chinese trading houses celebrated the latter with a holiday but few celebrated the former. The bulk of the Chinese were from the lower social class and the opportunity cost of not working or making themselves available for work would have been a major deterrent.

### **Diffusion of 'Muscular Christianity': Schools and Missionaries**

By the beginning of the twentieth century, a limited degree of state-control was evident in education as well as in health care. Leisure concerns preceded education and health problems, as exemplified by the fact that the Singapore Sporting Club and the Singapore Cricket Club were both established well before the establishment of the Education Board in 1909.<sup>140</sup> Schools were organised into two categories: vernacular schools and English schools. The British recognized the Malays as the native race and thus felt obliged to provide for Malay schools.<sup>141</sup> They, however left the organisation of the Chinese, and Tamil vernacular schools, to their respective communities. English schools were given some funding but were largely left to agency of the missionaries.

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138 *Ibid.*

139 "New Year Sports."

140 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 117.

141 F. H. K. Wong and Y. H. Gwee, *Official Reports on Education in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malaya: 1870-1939* (Singapore: Pan Pacific Book, 1980), 2.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century the latter established seven mission schools in order to provide primary education for the boys and girls of the settlement. Education, however, did not "keep pace with commerce" as Raffles had intended.<sup>142</sup> In 1870, the Legislative Council was informed of the "backward state" of education in the Colony.<sup>143</sup>

Missionary schools and the English schools were critical institutions in the provision of sports, with the former focused on the proselytisation of 'muscular Christianity'. As the ideology of 'muscular Christianity' was central to the physical education programme in Britain<sup>144</sup>, it too was reproduced in the British colony of Singapore. The function of these schools for the government was to provide them with clerical employees for their British agencies but the civilizing of the conduct and bodies of these non-Europeans youths was as integral a feature of their education as the development of their minds. Schools were sites for the colonization of practices and conduct in a direct and non-violent approach. Moreover, schooling was on a voluntary basis which facilitated the strengthening of the British cultural hegemony. This system of education produced and reproduced the class structure and the British cultural hegemony, in which sport and the English language were the two principal features. One of the more outstanding examples of the outcome of the diffusion of sport through schools was Chia Keng Chin, who was schooled at Raffles and later became one of the founders of the Straits Chinese Recreation Club.<sup>145</sup>

Physical education and sport, with their implicit ethos of 'muscular Christianity', were also perceived as mediums in which a more liberated generation of Christian women could be engaged.<sup>146</sup> Whilst the European female missionary perceived the emancipation of women as of moral and social importance, the dominant perception of the British as well as the non-European migrants of gender roles was, to varying degrees reflective of the Victorian era. Women's participation in sports on the club

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142 Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore: 1819 -1867*, 789.

143 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 115.

144 P. C. McIntosh, *Physical Education in England: Since 1800* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1968).

145 Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, 159.

146 J. N. Brownfoot, "Emancipation, Exercise and Imperialism: Girls and the Games Ethic in Colonial Malaya," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 7, no. 1 (1990).

level was low in comparison to men's. This social positioning of women in sports was a critical constraint in the diffusion of sport to the girls in schools. Wong argued that the entrenched patriarchal culture of the non-Europeans meant that women were marginalized and confined to domesticity.<sup>147</sup> The differing forms and extent of the patriarchy of the British and the non-Europeans effected to some extent, an inter-civilizing effect. Contrasts between the practices and images of European and non-European women distinguished their relative social positions. The tension in the process of 'othering' between the established group and the outsider put pressure on each group to mark their respective social identity.

According to Song, the more educated and wealthy Straits Chinese males recognized that "systematic education is the only remedy" to improve the state of the Straits Chinese women.<sup>148</sup> However, they proposed an education curriculum that emphasized domesticity, embracing such subjects as needlework, cooking and moral education. Moreover, girls were only taught one language which demonstrated a 'lighter' curriculum than the boys. This education curriculum limited, in an institutionalized way, the education capital of the women as compared to the men. The significance of education for women was reflected by the relatively lower enrolment in all girls' schools compared to their male counterparts throughout the nineteenth century. Reflecting the class pattern in education, the majority of girls were from the middle and upper middle classes largely from the Chinese, Indian and Eurasian communities.

Participation in physical education was still viewed with considerable suspicion, so much so that the girls' participation in sports was generally restricted to school-based games and activities until the 1920s. Moreover, one of the factors that impeded the diffusion of sports was the lack of infrastructure. This problem was not limited to the girls' school but all schools. The Raffles Institution, the only school which provided secondary education, had its own playing field, a gymnasium and game courts; none of

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147 A. K. Wong, *Women as a Minority Group.*, ed. R. Hassan, *Singapore: Society in Transition.* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976).

148 Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, 358.

the other of the English boys' schools had any sporting facilities.<sup>149</sup> The lack of funding to facilitate the development of sports in schools reproduced the practice of sport as that of the middle class male.

Up until 1893, games were the main focus of physical education in schools. The Boer War at the turn of the century made apparent Britain's want of military-ready soliders and the government took urgent steps to address the problem. In 1902 the British government in Singapore introduced its official Education Code. In the same year, the Board of Education in England issued its first official physical education syllabus which focussed specifically on developing combat ready youths. The significance of strengthening the British's military force extended to its Empire. The development of a military body became a political priority and physical education was identified as a site for the production of military-ready bodies.<sup>150</sup> Games and sports were rationalized to lack efficiency in developing a military body. They were instead replaced by physical training and rational military drill.<sup>151</sup> With the shift in emphasis, the ethos of muscular Christainity became more and more intertwined with nationalism. McIntosh said this shift in emphasis in Britain was so extensive that "the playing fields... were associated with the imperial battlefields."<sup>152</sup>

The military body was positioned to be synonymous, if not the epitome of a good health and fitness. British colonies, such as Singapore, might not have been involved or severely affected by the Boer war, but the new emphasis was also introduced to the colony. The contextual differences between Singapore and England engendered a health objective rather than one of a military persuasion. The arrival of decrepit, sick and destitute migrants in the burgeoning population was compounded by appalling living conditions. The majority of the labourers lived in overcrowded and utterly unsanitary conditions. The lack of state control in health matters was evident in the negligible level of progress in the establishment of medical services. Singapore's mortality rate was higher than that of Hong Kong, Ceylon or India, with tuberculosis,

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149 Wijesingha, *The Eagle Breeds a Gryphon: The Story of Raffles Institution 1823-1985*, 64.

150 Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*.

151 McIntosh, *Physical Education in England: Since 1800*, 70.

152 *Ibid.*

malaria, dysentery and beriberi posing the greatest threats to life.<sup>153</sup> The hygiene conditions, until the early twentieth century, were so appalling that Singapore was diagnosed as "a nursery for diseases."<sup>154</sup> Sports and the ideology of muscular Christianity therefore had practical functions in the maintenance of health. With the implementation of a drill and fitness oriented PE programme, sport in the settlement became more regulated. Whilst military drill and Swedish gymnastic activities were and are by no means sports, the emphasis marginalised the importance of sports in Singapore.

### **The Establishment of a Sporting Network: 1900s-1960s**

The three sporting developments at schools, in clubs and the New Year's Day Sports' continued with greater momentum during this period. Whilst more sports were introduced and diffused to different sections of the community, there was also an increasing complexity in the organisation of sport. The media report of sport was organized in a specific column with the heading of, "Sporting Intelligence" in the newspaper from 1910, the establishment of a radio broadcasting station in 1935 made available direct relays, including sport from the British Broadcasting Corporation to the settlers in the colony.<sup>155</sup> The spread of sport extended to an international level which paralleled the wider social development of Singapore and the world. In this period, the ramifications of the increasing dependencies on the international world also increased its vulnerability and the development of sport. Throughout the whole colonial era, until its invasion by the Japanese, this was the period during which Singapore's political and social stability was severely tested. The population of Singapore exceeded 200 000 after the turn of the century, with the Chinese forming an overwhelming majority of over 72%.<sup>156</sup> With almost half the total population in the 15-29 age bracket, the competition for work and resources intensified.<sup>157</sup> Although the

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153 Tan, "Health and Welfare," 341.

154 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 113.

155 A. Y. Chen, "The Mass Media, 1819-1980," in *A History of Singapore*, ed. E. Chew and E. Lee (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991).

156 E. Lee, *The British as Rulers: Governing Multicultural Singapore (1867-1914)* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1991), xiii.

157 S. H. Saw, *The Population of Singapore* (Singapore: 1999), 55.

First World War and the Chinese Revolution triggered a relatively soft impact on the security and peace of settlement, the Depression in the 1920s and the fall to the Japanese in 1942 transformed the political and economic structure of the Singapore. The settlement lost its momentum with the Depression shattering the two principles of free trade and immigration in which the settlement was built on. In 1931 for the first time in its history, the emigrants outnumbered immigrants.<sup>158</sup> The replacement of the Immigration Restriction Ordinance with the Alien Ordinance in 1933 restricted the number of Chinese immigrants to the settlement. The government also imposed imperial preference tariffs and quotas on foreign textiles in 1932.<sup>159</sup> Discriminatory practices, changes in tax policies, severe unemployment rate, shortage of capital, formation of slums in the settlement heightened the resistance against the government whilst the reforming movement in China and the rapid establishment of Chinese schools in Singapore raised the sense of China nationalism. The defeat of the British in Singapore, and the rest of South-East Asia in the Second World War and the paradoxical combination of violence and peace under the Japanese administration, also facilitated the shift towards independence.

These social transformations paved the way for a greater differentiation of the social groups. One of the major manifestations of social stratification was the expansion of the clan associations of the Chinese.<sup>160</sup> The formation of these associations engendered a greater differentiation of the Chinese community in the settlement threatening the role of the state in the control of the Chinese. The clans not only had control over the majority of Chinese coolies, but also became involved in the establishment of schools.<sup>161</sup> China loyalists became more organised in their political uprisings, posing a threat to the economic and political structure of the settlement. Their boycotts of American trade in 1905 and Japanese trade in 1915 and the pressure of communist infiltration posed a major threat to the state.<sup>162</sup> The Straits Chinese also changed their

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158 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 134.

159 *Ibid.*, 135.

160 S. A. Carstens, "Chinese Associations in Singapore Society," (Singapore: 1975), 24.

161 L. E. Tan, *The Politics of Chinese Education in Malaya, 1945-1961* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1997), 10.

162 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 129.



attitudes towards the British government with the growth of Chinese nationalism.<sup>163</sup> At the same time, the Government became more involved in the organisation of the settlement with the formation of bureaucratic bodies such as the Education Board and the intervention into vernacular schools to lessen their autonomy and to shift control to the state. The development of sport up to this point had been largely a process of bourgeoisification, in which the middle class held a large ownership of sport clubs and sport resources. Now, the pressure from the working class gathered momentum with the establishment of more vernacular, in particular, Chinese, schools.

### **The Established and the 'Outsider': Clubs and Cultural Distinction**

The organisation of clubs continued on race, class and gender lines. There was, however, an extension of the sports played by each club. The Singapore Cricket Club remained the last bastion of Cricket but its members also engaged in other sports, such as billiards, tennis, rugby and soccer. The expansion of the sports repertoire in each club indicates the increasing complexity in the club as well as in the settlement. With the increased number of sports, more competition was organised at intra- and inter-club levels. Thus, competitiveness and achievement ideology were increasingly accentuated. However, the extent of competitiveness was moderated by the fact that clubs were not dependent on gate-takings from spectators to sustain their viability. Club activities continued to involve only their members, and sought not to attract a wider following, this exclusivity enabled them to continue to focus on their private collective interests rather than on a wider public interest. This close identification of clubs with their members provided fuel to racial tension between the different clubs. Competition between the Europeans and the non Europeans was intensified with descriptions such as Asiatic versus the Europeans or the Europeans versus the Rest. The economy was also becoming increasingly competitive with the rising population. The cost of sport to the economy was raised with this reminder in 1927: "Firms do not keep large staffs for the purpose of providing teams to trapeze round the Far East playing games."<sup>164</sup> The more time needed in cricket than a game of soccer or tennis could be a reason for the decline of the sport.

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163 Chui, "Political Attitudes and Organizations: C.1900-1941," 77.

164 The Straits Times cited in Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*, 61.

Soccer and tennis proved to be the two most popular sports in this period. According to Sharp, there were more non-European soccer tournaments than before and tennis courts were built not only by clubs but in the homes of the wealthy, particularly the Chinese.<sup>165</sup> The non-Europeans' abilities to organise and administer their sporting activities and the increased competition demonstrated their independence in leading the development of sport in the settlement. The Chinese also extended the scale of their sporting activities beyond the local level with the organisation of the first inter-Settlement football and tennis match between a Penang Chinese team and a selected Singapore Chinese team in 1901. The members of the Chinese Swimming Club were also part of the all-Malaya team which competed in the Chinese Olympics in 1927.<sup>166</sup> With the non-Europeans becoming more and more organised in sport, and more and more competitive, the rivalry between them and the Europeans also became more and more intense. The tension between the established sporting group and the 'outsiders' was manifested with the former withdrawing from the local soccer league because of the apparent intolerable aggression from the non-Europeans team.<sup>167</sup> The British Malaya magazine also dismissed the local Asian soccer team that was about to tour England in 1928, suggesting that it was "premature to think about invading the home of the game."<sup>168</sup> When a Singapore soccer team composed of non Europeans lost a match to China in 1936, the Europeans were quick to explain that "it wasn't a proper Singapore side."<sup>169</sup> Indeed when the Cricket Club played against Australia, they identified themselves as the "Singapore" team.<sup>170</sup> But when the Chinese Swimming Club competed against the Japanese Olympic waterpolo team in 1936, the competition was described as a club against a national team.<sup>171</sup> Prior to 1948, Singaporeans' participation in the Olympics was under the flag of China. There was no evidence of any attempt by the British government to identify or select athletes in Singapore to

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165 *Ibid.*, 85.

166 "Singapore Chinese Swimming Club: 88 Years and Beyond."

167 Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*, 64.

168 *Ibid.*, 84.

169 *Ibid.*

170 *Ibid.*, 77.

171 "Singapore Chinese Swimming Club: 88 Years and Beyond," 72.

represent the colony or the British Empire. It was only with the establishment of the Singapore Olympic Sports Council in 1948 that Singapore had its first official representation.<sup>172</sup> In positioning non-Europeans as inferior, as aggressive, and not "proper," the Europeans were constructing the Other image of the Orientals to maintain their own social and sporting position. The rising presence of the non-Europeans in sport blurred the cultural identification of sport as British but it also accentuated the identity of the respective social groups.

Women in the community continued to have limited access to the sport clubs. But the changes in the role of women in the wider society coupled with the increased number of women migrants and the increased number of schools for girls enabled more women to put pressure on the male domain of sport. Although the Lawn Tennis Association organised regular tournaments that allowed the European women to engage in the sport, it remained the only sporting club for women. Participation in organised sport by non-European women was still uncommon. This imbalance in sport participation between the men and women was consistent with the position of women in the wider society. However, a transformation was on its way with more and more girls going to schools and introduced to some form of sport, albeit to a lesser extent than the boys in schools, building up a critical mass of women in sport.

In 1929, twelve Eurasian girls who attended various mission and English medium schools formed the Goldburn Sports Club to enable them to play "unladylike" games such as hockey, netball, tennis and athletics, rather than to be confined to "feminine" games like catching and "Balloon."<sup>173</sup> Intended to be a girls only club, it made its exclusivity even more explicit by changing its name to the Girls Sports Club a year later. Like the Singapore Recreation Club, only Eurasian girls were allowed to join the club. However, unlike the Singapore Recreation Club, these were young girls who did not have the financial resources to establish a club house with the necessary facilities. The government demonstrated their support by lending the Club a piece of land, but the members had to raise funds to establish the club house.<sup>174</sup> Whilst the development

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172 "Best Wishes," *The Straits Times*, 30 July 1948.

173 *Girls Sports Club: 50th Golden Anniversary of the Founding of the Club: 1930-1980*, (unknown, nd), 1.

174 *Ibid.*, 9.

of the club was not facilitated by wealthy members, it followed the same pattern of development as other independent clubs. By 1930, the Club had organised the Clarke Netball Challenge Shield. In 1933, it played its first inter-state game against the Malacca Girls' Sport Club. The Club was not only the first and only non-European female sport club during the colonial period, it was also the first club of any sort established by the lower middle class. The formation of this club was, therefore, the result of the intertwining of the formal diffusion of sport from schools and the informal diffusion of sport from the Singapore Recreation Club.

Clubs in Singapore during this period of time were also increasingly exposed to the social changes in the wider world. During the First World War, almost all the sporting fixtures were suspended, particularly for the Singapore Cricket Club, which was more affected than other social groups during the war.<sup>175</sup> The Depression also affected the membership and activities of the clubs. Whilst sport in Singapore could not escape from the political and economic changes, it was also influenced by the sport trends and development of sport in the world, specifically Britain. British migrants in Singapore were largely from the upper and middle class and the sports that they brought corresponded to their class. The diffusion of soccer and Rugby Union from public schools to clubs in Britain was extended to Singapore from the 1850s to 1900s. Because more of the grammar schools and public schools at that time concentrated on soccer than rugby, the diffusion of soccer occurred at a faster rate. When Rugby League split from Rugby Union, it failed to spread into the wider society of Britain; it failed equally to spread to Singapore.<sup>176</sup> Moreover, given the nature of the settlement, professional sport was undeveloped and the tension between amateurism and professionalism was relatively mild compared to Britain. The working class had limited opportunities to play sports, and the class homogeneity of the independent clubs in Singapore meant that middle-class sports formed the core of sporting activity and culture. Although soccer, Rugby Union and tennis displaced cricket, billiards and

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<sup>175</sup> Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*, 65.

<sup>176</sup> Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football*.

Fives as the dominant sports in this period, the " 'Corinthian'-like amateur status"<sup>177</sup> was retained in Singapore.

### **Internationalization of Sport: The New Year's Day Sports**

Although in the earlier twentieth century, at least one of events for the boats of the Royal Sailing Yacht Club included a mixed crew of Europeans and Malays, the Europeans and non-Europeans competed in largely separate events. Even amongst the non-Europeans there were separate races for Chinese and Malays. In addition, at the event the Europeans were allocated the exclusive spectator stand whilst the non-Europeans jostled for viewing position in the public area surrounding the Esplanade. The demarcation of space highlighted more than just class differences, the erection of barriers accentuated the cultural and class identity of the Europeans. Yet at the same time, the discursive practices of sport, such as, the selection of a designated venue at a specific time organized with the clear distinction in space between spectators and competitors, the imposition of regulations on how, when and where they sailed, the grading of the competition according to boat class, tiering the prizes to achievement, and the use of sport as an expression and display of the image and identity of the middle and upper class were facilitated by the event. These changes demonstrated a shift towards a more competitive, regularized and achievement oriented emphasis in the discourse of sport.

Even during the Depression, it was reported that "a large number of entries, keen competition... contributed to making the sports a great success, and justified those who held that despite the depression the New Year Sports should be continued at all costs."<sup>178</sup> The last New Year Day's Sports in 1962 was reported to have attracted 50 000 people. Although the majority of the participants were consistently the Malays and there is hardly any indication of women competing in the contests, the social groupings of the participants became more and more organised along institutional lines. By the early twentieth century, events were increased to include not only individual sports but team sports, not only ad hoc teams but representative teams from organisations and

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177 Horton, "'Padang or Paddock': A Comparative View of Colonial Sport in Two Imperial Territories," 10.

178 "Racing Craft in the Roads," *The Straits Times*, 3 January 1933.

institutions. Correspondingly, there was also an increase in the number of sports compared to "amusements." There were specific events for schools, military forces, clubs and private firms. Moreover, participants were not restricted to those in Singapore, but included competitors attracted from the neighbouring settlements. Equally, in the same period of time, non-Europeans were to be found on the organising committee of the event. Furthermore, the sponsorship of the event became more and more explicit, and shifted from philanthropic individuals to corporate firms. These developments in the New Year's Day Sports were connected with the changing structure of the society as a whole. The social configuration of the participants not only indicates an increasing bureaucratisation in the society, but also a shift from emotional to functional bonds.

### **Building a Critical Mass: Sport and Schools**

With a greater control of the vernacular and English-medium schools, the government could nationalise and regulate the sport and physical education programme. The English Board of Education Syllabus was implemented, specialised physical training for teachers was conducted, and a Superintendent of Physical Education was appointed to monitor the teaching of physical education and sports in schools.<sup>179</sup> The First World War highlighted the importance of building up disciplined and fit bodies amongst the youth for the government. Games which dominated the sports in schools before the war were substituted by social control drills and calisthenics. The fact that only a limited number of schools had sporting facilities also made these physical exercises convenient substitutes for games. The drill and physical exercises were based on practices promoted in England and this continued throughout the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>180</sup> The popular Swedish gymnastic system, devised by Per Henrik Ling, was also adopted to complement the military drill routines. This trend in physical education was not unique to Singapore, but was also occurring throughout Europe, Scandinavia and North America.<sup>181</sup> By disciplining the body, these drills and physical exercises

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179 "Annual Report on Education," (Singapore: Education Department, 1921), 206.

180 "Education Code of the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States," (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printing Office, 1914).

181 J. Riordan, *Sport in Capitalist and Socialist Countries: A Western Perspective*, ed. E. G. Dunning, J. A. Maguire, and R. E. Pearton, *The Sports Process: A Comparative and*

provided the government with the social control over the bodies of the youths. The Education Code instituted three twenty minute physical instruction sessions in the week for all schools. These sessions were conducted with the whole school rather than in separate classes with pupils arranged in groups according to height.<sup>182</sup> The mass regimentation of pupils regulated not only their bodies but their conduct. In order to generate greater interest and intensify the efforts, inter-class and inter-house drill competitions were introduced in 1929. The interest in the drill was uneven with the Malay boys showing a greater interest<sup>183</sup> with Tamil schools showing the least.<sup>184</sup>

In 1929, the Education Department encouraged schools to insist upon participation in school sport and games in the form of extra-curricular activities to be held after school hours.<sup>185</sup> Whilst this change in policy facilitated increased participation, it also separated sport from the curriculum and effectively defined sport as a 'separate compartment' of school.<sup>186</sup> The Y. M. C. A. was given a grant to teach swimming to the boys and this also provided a channel for the proselytisation of its values and ethos.<sup>187</sup> The government also supported indigenous Malay sports, such as Sepak Tekraw for the Malay boys and traditional Malay folk games for the Malay girls.<sup>188</sup> Funding by the government also enabled the provision of an increased number of municipal sports fields and school facilities, which contributed to the rising levels of interest in sports.<sup>189</sup> However the allocation of funds was prioritised in favour of boys' schools and hence even by 1934, none of the English girls' schools had a full-size playing field.

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*Developmental Approach* (Champaign, IL.: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1993); D. B. Van Dalen and B. L. Bennett, *A World History of Physical Education: Cultural, Philosophical, Comparative.*, Second ed. (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1953).

182 "Annual Report of the Straits Settlements," (Singapore: Education Department, 1929), 913.

183 "Annual Report on Education," (Singapore: Department of Education, 1916), 261.

184 "Annual Report on Education," (Singapore: Education Department, 1931).

185 "Annual Report of the Straits Settlements," 925.

186 *Ibid.*, 913.

187 "Annual Report on Education," 206.

188 "Annual Report on Education," (Singapore: Education Department, 1932), 796.

189 "Annual Report of the Straits Settlements," (Singapore: Education Department, 1934), 802.

More significantly, the ideology of achievement and competitiveness was given a greater emphasis as a consequence of the organisation of competition on an inter-house and inter-school basis. However the House system and inter-school competition were implemented largely in boys' than girls' schools. By 1932, practically all the boys' schools had held an Athletic Sports Meeting.<sup>190</sup> In addition to the School Swimming Championship instituted by Y. M. C. A. in 1921<sup>191</sup>, the government organised the inter-school football competition for the Ambok School Shield in 1927.<sup>192</sup> The Education Department expressed their support for these competitions, as "having a very good effect; it is stimulating a keener feeling of 'esprit de corps' and developing a spirit of self-reliance and a sense of responsibility and leadership."<sup>193</sup> Since schools were differentiated by their language medium, the inter-school competition was a nursery for social division. In particular, the schools which had the facilities and resources for sport were often the English-medium schools; inter-school sports thus reinforced the view that English education was superior. Moreover it was not until 1947 that regional rather than racial schools were established in the vernacular school system.<sup>194</sup> Inter-school competition thus harnessed the distinction of ethnic identity.

Whilst the 1900s marked the expansion of schools, the Chinese schools however contributed to the largest rise in numbers. Ethnic identity was shaped and harnessed on an institutional level by the curriculum and schooling practices. By 1941, the enrolment of 38 000 in Chinese schools surpassed the collective enrolment of 34 000 in all of the other-medium schools.<sup>195</sup> Unlike other vernacular schools, secondary education was provided for both boys and girls.<sup>196</sup> Since 1914, all overseas Chinese schools officially fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education in Peking.<sup>197</sup>

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190 "Annual Report on Education," 796.

191 "Annual Report on Education," 206.

192 "Annual Report on Education," (Singapore: Education Department, 1928), 230.

193 "Annual Report on Education," (Singapore: Education Department, 1933), 651.

194 "Annual Report on Education," (Singapore: Education Department, 1947), 20.

195 T. R. Doraisamy, *150 Years of Education in Singapore* (Singapore: TTC Publications, 1969).

196 "Annual Report on Education," 792.

197 P. Loh, *Seeds of Separatism: Educational Policy in Malaya 1874-1940* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975).



The government of Singapore largely ignored these privately funded Chinese schools. Moreover, most of these schools did not receive funding from the government, enabling them to maintain their autonomy.<sup>198</sup> With this centralisation of control from Peking, the process of nationalisation of the Chinese was facilitated. The teaching of the national Chinese language facilitated the integration of the heterogenous working class Chinese community who were functionally and emotionally bonded along dialect or regional lines. The colonial government since Raffles was mindful of "of the distinctions among this peculiar people."<sup>199</sup> Whilst a pan-Chinese identity had been assigned and assumed to varying extent, the Chinese community in Singapore was markedly distinguished by their dialect and particular cultural practices. When the Kuomintang assumed leadership of the government in China in 1927, the production of a militant citizenry was pursued with even more rigour and thus physical education was actively promoted.<sup>200</sup> Chinese nationalism was thus actively harnessed through the curriculum as well as through and by sports. The nationalisation of the Chinese to the China government diminished the control of the British government over the largest social group in the settlement.

The debacle of the 1895 Sino-Japanese War in which the Chinese troops were seen to be so clearly physically and mentally inferior to the Japanese also led to the introduction of military drill in schools. The model of education however was adopted from the Japanese school system in which military drill was a compulsory subject. The aim of inculcating mental and physical resilience to overcome national crisis and military distress was consistent with the Government. Mass calisthenics were introduced in the physical education programme whilst sports and games, promoted by the American YMCA in China, were introduced in the schools. Two of these were basketball and volleyball. The pattern of sport diffusion in the settlement became more complex with the addition of the America-China route of diffusion. They were, however, most suitable for the schools in Singapore. The lack of space in most Chinese

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198 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 142.

199 Raffles cited in A. W. Lind, *Nanyang Perspective: Chinese Students in Multiracial Singapore* (Hawaii: The University Press of Hawaii, 1974), 39.

200 H. Fan, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China* (London: Frank Cass, 1997).

schools in Singapore also made table tennis immensely popular.<sup>201</sup> Thus, whilst Rugby, cricket, hockey and tennis became synonymous with the English medium schools, volleyball, basketball, table tennis, badminton were synonymous with the Chinese schools of Singapore. The cultural identity was therefore expressed and reinforced through the participation of the respective sports.

The first experience of war, a depression and the change of government make the period of 1900 to 1950s the most turbulent era in its history. Ironically it was also during this period of uncertainty that more and more migrants were inclined towards settling permanently in the island.<sup>202</sup> The development of sport reflected the paradoxes of this period. With an increasing integration of the different social groups through commerce, education and leisure, there was also an increasing pressure and capacity to distinguish the position and identity of the each social group. Clubs and schools became sites for the construction and perpetuation of identity. In particular in this phase, the diffusion of sport departed from the route of middle class Europeans to the middle class non Europeans. Instead the expansion of schools, club activities and New Year's Day Sports accelerated the diffusion from the middle class to the lower strata.

## **Conclusion**

During the colonial period, the relatively limited level of state intervention and the location of power in the upper and middle class resulted in the development of strong bonds within each social group. Sport spread principally in two directions: firstly from the upper and middle class Europeans to the middle class non-Europeans and secondly downwards from the middle class to the working class. Whilst the first path of diffusion occurred with minimal intervention from the state, the second was the result of formal intervention by the state and the middle class communities. However deviations from the two diffusion routes were also evident. Cricket, for instance, was established by middle class Europeans but it soon attracted upper class Europeans and lower middle class Europeans. The diffusion of basketball, volleyball and table tennis on the other hand, did not originate from the Europeans but from the Americans from whom it spread to the Chinese. Despite the downward diffusion, sport in Singapore

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201 "Annual Report on Education," 796.

202 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 145.

remained largely middle class. The bourgeoisification of sport parallels the industrialization of Singapore with the middle class sports and ideology dominating the practice of sport. The limited central administration of sport, the relatively poor organisation of sports in schools, the dominance of non-sport activities in the New Year's Day Sports and the class-exclusive nature of clubs constrained the expansion of sport to the lower strata. Therefore the development of sport during this period was centred on the tensions of the collective interests of the middle class.

### Chapter 3

#### Sport in Syonan (1942 – 1945): Centralization and Nipponization

On 15 February 1942, the Union Jack was lowered in Singapore, and the Rising Sun was raised in its place. The surrender of Singapore to the Japanese was a major turning point in its modern history. Churchill describes it as "the worst disaster and largest capitulation in the British history,"<sup>1</sup> but in Singapore history, the capitulation of the British was the catalyst for independence. During the three and a half unstable years of occupation, the Japanese renamed the country, and initiated a series of changes to transform the former British colony into their Syonan, 'Light of the South'. This period was characterized by centralized control, domination, monopolization of physical force, and economic and social instability.

The Japanese government regarded Singapore as central to the establishment of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Daitōa Kyōeiken*) and acted expeditiously and compellingly in Nipponizing the people. Sport was one of the first cultural institutions to come under the complete control of the Japanese government. It was regarded as a useful vehicle for inculcating *Nippon Seishin* (Japanese spirit) because of its emotive quality in unifying and harnessing a "them" and "us." The monopolization of sport involved waves of regulation of sport and its functions and, consequently, increased what Elias calls the 'seriousness' of sport.

The scarcity of information about sport and physical education during the Japanese era, in particular from English texts, limits the extent to which this chapter can present a detailed and intimate analysis. The chapter pursues two objectives. Firstly, it seeks to put together a specific study of sport and physical education under the Japanese rule from primary data gathered from the newspapers, available research on Japanese Occupation in Singapore and Japan's sport and physical education programme. Secondly, it seeks to place this juncture of sportization in the history of Singapore so as to locate the significance of the Japanese connection in the overall development of sport in Singapore society. In this context, I not only examine innovations introduced by the Japanese in the development of sport under centralized control, but show the

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1 W. Churchill, quoted in Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 183.

resistance to and the continuity of the British influence on the sport culture under Japanese rule.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first provides a brief background of Syonan; which examines the change and continuity between the British and Japanese administration, the dynamics of Japanese colonization in a racially divided colony. The second examines sport and physical education policy under the Japanese, and the relevance and impact of centralization. The third argues that the influence and foundations of Japanese rule provided the seed bed for sport in independent Singapore.

### **The Rising of Syonan: Dynamics of Nipponization**

During the Japanese Occupation, the old order, characterised by relatively free competition for chances in all aspects of social life, including sport, ceased and became replaced by a new social order: the order of monopoly. Centralization of control of the settlement was the source of the expansion of the functions of sport and set it on what can be seen in retrospect as its journey of change towards its modern form: this period of social change laid the preconditions for the development of independent Singapore. Specifically, sport began to change in the direction of greater bureaucratization and shifted from a private to a public level, which reflected a higher level of 'sportization'. The transformation of sport developed as a result of a series of interwoven changes, which took place on separate yet interconnected levels of social integration. Centralization set these interwoven changes in motion and played a complex part in this process of development.

Elias has shown in his *Civilizing Process* that state formation, particularly, the establishment of an effective monopoly on the use of physical force and taxation, was a necessary precondition for the pacification of Western European societies.<sup>2</sup> The emergence and impact of the monopoly mechanism was the result of all opportunities being controlled by a single authority. In this phase taxation and control of violence were the two inter-related principal means by which the state strengthened its position as the central authority in society. Its monopolization of taxation enabled it to fund its monopoly of military and police force and that in turn sustained the monopoly of

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<sup>2</sup> Elias, *The Civilizing Process*.

taxation neither of which, as Elias states, had precedence over the other; both were different sides of the same monopoly. Concomitantly, the process of internal pacification occurred as the central authority gained a greater level of control and weaker groups became more dependent on the central authority. The existence of a monopoly for raising taxes and exerting physical violence is, as Elias contends, the precondition for the restriction to economic, non-violent means of free competition.<sup>3</sup> Whilst this monopoly structure can be gained by military conquest, Elias argues, it is only firmly established and enduring when it emerges from a society with a complex division of social functions.<sup>4</sup> Only then is the focus on overthrowing the monopoly rule removed.

Elias's argument points to a way of understanding the differences between British and Japanese rule in Singapore. The essential difference between the position of the British and Japanese government, from this perspective, lay in how this monopoly structure evolved under their respective administrations. Whilst the British colonized the island and regarded the migrants as subordinate to them in class, physical force was not the dominant form of governance or the principal means by which they moulded the population. The British colonized a largely uninhabited island and their position evolved as the immigrants arrived and the population grew, the division of functions increased and dependency on government grew stronger. Opportunities, whether social or economic, were neither restricted nor monopolized by the British government; rather, they were competed for, relatively freely, by the various interdependent parties, whilst the government depended upon the migrants to develop the island into a prosperous colony.

The early social figuration was therefore characterized by free competition, private monopolies and laissez-faire government control. Although the British, by virtue of their position, held official monopoly of tax and physical force, they relied less on these monopolies than on the network of interdependencies established by the more or less stable nature and form of social and economic exchange that integrated and regulated the conduct of the people. It is important to emphasize here that this developmental process took more than a century and was relatively uninterrupted.

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

Moreover, in the case of Singapore, the upper strata of the Chinese community were associated with and shared these monopolies in both formally, or officially, and in practice.

Undeniably, the British colonization of Singapore involved a certain degree of violence, but the form, intensity and impact of such violence was on a much smaller scale and more subtle than that imposed by the Japanese. The Japanese did not invade an uninhabited land but, rather, by sheer violence they conquered a relatively well established settlement with the division of functions, rather than the monopolies of physical force and taxes, sustaining the social structure. However, it was the frequent and indispensable use of the sword by the Japanese, which destabilized this social figuration and forcibly drove it to a lower level of civilization. It also, paradoxically, propelled it towards the phase of transformation from private to public monopolies, which, in Elias's terms, characterizes a higher level of civilization. The use of violence was for the Japanese a necessity in the regulation of a state. As Elias explains:

Without violent actions, without the motive forces of free competition, there would be no monopoly of force, and thus no pacification, no suppression and control of violence over large areas.<sup>5</sup>

Syonan was established by conquest. The British Empire, defender and protector of the 800 000 people<sup>6</sup> of Singapore, was defeated in the very first battle that the colony had confronted on its home shores. It seems reasonable to hypothesise that, had the British won, their presence would have been validated and they would have enhanced their social position and increased their physical power. Their surrender of Singapore catapulted the invincibility of the Japanese and sank the unquestioning trust in the British. Unlike their predecessors, the Japanese identified and projected themselves as a military force, victorious in conquest and defence. They governed Syonan through a military administration, the *gunseikan-bu*, which held authority over the municipal government, or *tokubetsu-si*. The physical power of the new government pervaded in the conquered land until the formal surrender of the Japanese to the British on 12 September 1945.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 310.

<sup>6</sup> E. Thio, "The Syonan Years, 1842-1945," in *A History of Singapore*, ed. E. Chew and E. Lee (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991), 95.

Obedience, allegiance, cooperation were fundamental qualities necessary for the people of Syonan. Those who served and followed the government were rewarded whilst those who appeared suspicious or doubtful in their loyalty were tortured and executed. By virtue of this power, and through their shared, collective submission to it, the people were bound together even though they were divided socially, culturally and economically. Monopoly rule, characterised by monopolies of taxation and physical force, replaced relatively free competition and laissez-faire governance. This was the foundation of Japanese power that was established during the most unstable of times, it also generated the centrifugal forces to domination, monopoly and centralization. However, the administration of Syonan was neither even-handed nor consistent, for with two controlling levels of government, the *gunseikan-bu* and the *tokubetsu-si*, conflicts of interests and intentions added to the uncertainty of the times.

Like the British, the Japanese government recognized the economic potential of Syonan and intended to retain it as a permanent Japanese colony after the war having designated her as the future capital of their southern region. And, like the British, in order to realize their economic and political objectives the Japanese needed the cooperation of the local people, in particular, the Chinese community, which represented more than 70% of the population.<sup>7</sup> However, the numerical and economic strength of the Chinese community also made them the greatest threat. Moreover, the *gunseikan-bu*, including its leader, Colonel Watanabe, harboured a strong hatred and suspicion of the Chinese.<sup>8</sup> Memories of the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1941) and most particularly, the Dalforce, which was made up of about 1000 Chinese volunteers who had fought against the Japanese during their invasion, widened the rift between the Japanese and the Chinese in occupied Singapore.<sup>9</sup>

The Chinese community was not only large and powerful, but complex, and accustomed to a high degree of autonomy. It had traded and acted largely independent of the British government and established within the community a host of different political factions, from far Left to Empire loyalists. Their spheres of control extended

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7 Saw, "Population Trends in Singapore: 1819-1967.," 41.

8 Thio, "The Syonan Years, 1842-1945," 97.

9 *Ibid.*; M. Shinozaki, "My Wartime Experiences in Singapore," in *Oral History Programme Series No. 3* (Singapore: 1973), 29.



from commerce and politics to the social levels and the Japanese government had to contend with them. The established power relations had a strict regularity of their own which the Japanese could not transgress without completely destroying them.

To place themselves in the most powerful position, the government went about changing the power dynamics in two ways by coercion and indoctrination. Because of the speed with which the Japanese defeated the British and their subsequent display of physical force over resistance elements, the community was quickly pacified into subservience, as the first Prime Minister of independent Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew attests in this description: "Punishment then was so severe that even in 1944-1945, when many did not have enough to eat, there were no burglaries and people could leave their front doors unlocked, day or night."<sup>10</sup> The task was also made easier, in particular in the initial transition year, by the fact that there was no strong or ready local militia, as Singapore had always relied on the British for protection. Moreover, the Japanese government, as much as they attempted to promote *Nippon Seishin*, continued with the separatist British policy of institutionalized ethnic distinctions, in commerce, culture, sport and education. The limitation of interaction between the different ethnic groups reinforced the distinction and sustained the tension between the groups. It thus strengthened the position of the Japanese government as it discouraged the emergence of a unified community to challenge their position which concomitantly, increased the interdependence between state and each of the different ethnic groups.

Whilst the communities making up Singapore society were not unified socially, the social division of functions regulating their relations was fairly advanced. Since the position of the Japanese government was forcibly gained in the face of such a social structure, it was far from securely integrated into that structure. It buttressed its position, through the establishment of the *Kempeitai*, a military police force which was the epitome of the use of explicit and direct coercion. The *Kempeitai* was responsible for *sook ching*, or 'purification through purging', which involved the identification and destruction of all resistance to the Japanese government.<sup>11</sup> These were established

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10 Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*, 213.

11 For details of the brutality of the *Kempeitai* see Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*; N. I. Low, *When Singapore Was Syonan-To* (Singapore: Eastern Universities

almost immediately following the surrender of the British, as General Yamashita was very mindful that his military strength was weak and that any guerrilla attacks had the potential to pose a serious threat to the Japanese position.

A significant part of this 'purging' was a mass screening of all Chinese males between the ages of eighteen and fifty, conducted just three days after the British surrender. Individuals who displayed any signs of potential overriding loyalty to potentially hostile groups, such as the adornment of a tattoo, and anyone thought to be a member of a guerrilla group, were regarded as a threat to the Japanese Government and were duly tortured or killed.<sup>12</sup> Those who were deemed to be harmless lived on tenterhooks with their receipt of the title of "Examined." The arbitrariness and tendency to abuse this power injected a palpable level of fear in the people, particularly the Chinese, who were the main focus of the Japanese oppression. Eurasians and Jews were also targeted but to a lesser extent than the Chinese.

The Indian and Malay communities on the other hand, "were looked after by the Japanese Army very kindly" as they surrendered without resistance when approached.<sup>13</sup> The Malays, who made up less than 15% of the population, were the second largest community.<sup>14</sup> They held far less power than the Chinese community under the British rule and were therefore more malleable and readily became acquiescent. By explicitly giving the Malays preferential treatment, the Japanese easily won over the majority of Malays. At the same time, this preferential treatment of others heightened the degree of fear in the Chinese community, and accentuated distinctions and divisions between groups.

As Elias insists, "No society can survive without a channelling of individual drives and affects, without a very specific control of individual behaviour."<sup>15</sup> During the Japanese Occupation, it was the fear of direct physical force that the Japanese government used to pacify the people that drove them into submission. The degree of

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Press, 1973).;S. L. Chen, *Remember Pompong and Oxley Rise* (Singapore: Chen Su Lan Trust, 1969).

12 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 190.

13 Shinozaki, "My Wartime Experiences in Singapore," 88.

14 Saw, "Population Trends in Singapore: 1819-1967.," 41.

15 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 443.

fear was accentuated by the unpredictability of how and when this force would be exerted upon them. More intensely, perhaps, the constant surveillance of behaviour and the activities of the people, heightened the tension within the society. The need to maintain a surveillance of everything is, as Elias explains, typical of autocracy.<sup>16</sup> By keeping a close supervision of everything, the Japanese government simultaneously increased its power over the population, and made the social structure relatively fragile.

In the initial period of transition, the dominant standard of conduct not only changed but was forcibly and often fatally imposed. The people were accustomed to the monopolies of force of the British as well as clan and ethnic leaders and the predictability of any violence resulting associated with them, but the unpredictable violence of the initiation into Japanese conduct and the overwhelming military force underlying it injected into the populace an abject feeling of fear. It was not only because it was different but also because it was far more barbaric than anything they had experienced.

The uncertainty of the political position of the Japanese government and the uncertainty of the resistance within the community coincided and reinforced the government's attempt to establish control over the people. Very soon, the new Japanese subjects were bowing to officials and non-officials alike in the manner of the Japanese, which typified the regulation and restraint of any expression of anti-Japanese sentiments, thereby creating a greater acquiescence to the Japanese rule. Whilst the society continued to be divided on ethnic and class lines under the Japanese rule, they were united in fear.

Rapidly, however, the Japanese government began to regulate and restrain its use of force, depending more on its monopoly of resources, on propaganda and on the tensions of the community, to strengthen its position. The threat of retaliation from the Allied Forces was always present and the pressure to strengthen the position of the government and the capacity of the military and the necessity to eliminate any internal threat dominated the governance of Syonan. The first New Year message from the

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

Mayor illustrates the overshadowing presence of the military context and its imperatives:

The development of the war situation permits no idleness to all even for a moment... Any citizen who simply hopes for living in idleness and dreaming of peaceful times, thus forgetting the noble mission to attain the prosperity of Dai Toa peoples, is a traitor as far as the prosperity of Dai Toa is concerned and should be punished.<sup>17</sup>

Since the Japanese already had a monopoly of control over the most fundamental aspects of life, the establishment of a monopoly of resources might be considered a trivial extension. But it was not. It is well recognised that long-term reliance on naked violence is untenable. Whilst physical violence is instrumental to means of production, Elias argues that "every action taken against an opponent also threatens the social existence of its perpetrator; it disturbs the whole mechanism of chains of action of which each is a part."<sup>18</sup> Thus, the Japanese government could not continue to act despotically lest the fear factor should escalate to despair and eventually to indifference, which might undermine the functionality of the relationship between state and people, and the viability of its vision of the place of Syonan in its broader post-war plans. In practice, in order to maintain its military strength, the government required vast funds, which was dependent on the effectiveness of the monopoly of taxation. However, immigration from China and Indian subcontinent rapidly came to a halt,<sup>19</sup> inflation escalated to the point that the currency became worthless and food supplies rapidly dwindled. Although the government promoted subsistence farming, population control and resettlement to combat the scarcity of resources and inflation, the instability of the economic environment, locally and internationally, made these measures ineffective and unsustainable. Without a thriving economy, financial resources to support the government to maintain its monopoly of physical force were inadequate. This weak hold on the monopoly limited the growth and stability of the functional and emotional bonds of the people to the Japanese government. Thus, while its monopoly of physical violence formed the core of its administration and endowed

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17 "Mayor Naito's New Year Message," *The Syonan Times*, 1 January 1944.

18 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 318.

19 Saw, *The Population of Singapore*, 12.

the Japanese government with the power to cut across the network of independencies, in order to expand their social and physical power, it clearly needed the local community, especially the Chinese, to contribute to the defence and wealth of their vision of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

After a relatively short period, the *Kempeitai* was ordered to exercise greater restraint in their methods of monitoring and suppressing potential threats. Mass screening was replaced by more discreet identification of potential threats.<sup>20</sup> Monopoly rule centred on the monopoly of physical force was very quickly supported by the monopoly of taxation. The government appropriated the established economic networks and dictated the distribution of opportunities and resources. Free trade, as practised under the British system was therefore restricted. As Shinozaki recounted, the economic practice of Singapore was transformed in three distinct ways. Firstly, the government took control of the distribution of basic necessities. *Kumiai*, or distribution centres were established for the locals to obtain their rations. Secondly, Japanese firms or *kaishas* were backed by the military and therefore had a greater authority and power to dictate the trading terms. Local merchants were threatened to supply raw materials to them at very low prices. Thirdly, local merchants who had economic links with the military *butai* (corps) were accorded special treatment; they were not only protected during the Occupation but also prospered.<sup>21</sup> Hence the people were under constant pressure not only from the military but also from the pressure and tensions of competing for such opportunities and resources. There even emerged a rift between the local communities, those who were in the established group and those who were out of it. The institutionalization of these dependencies provided a necessary degree of security to the government.

Although the Japanese government's totalitarian regime allowed it to have a monopoly of the control of resources and lives, it was equally dependent on its subjects to acquiesce to its regime in order to sustain economic development. One of the manifestations of this ambivalent relationship was the formation of the Overseas Chinese Association (OCA). According to Shinozaki, the OCA was his suggestion, as it provided a "signboard" that showed that the Chinese were cooperating with the

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20 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*; Thio, "The Syonan Years, 1842-1945."

21 Shinozaki, "My Wartime Experiences in Singapore," 57-59.

Japanese Army whilst masking its true purpose of protecting the Chinese community.<sup>22</sup> By late February 1942, approval to proceed with the establishment of the OCA was given and several important Chinese leaders were released from the detention centre to organize and manage the economic and social affairs of the Association.

More important than the reasons for establishing it, are the functions the OCA performed.<sup>23</sup> With the formation of the OCA, an institutionalized link was created between the dominant community and the state.<sup>24</sup> The government had limited revenue as they were expected to raise it themselves rather than receive assistance from Tokyo.<sup>25</sup> When the government needed to raise revenue, they turned to the Association and, in effect, extorted \$10 million from them. This immediately resulted in deep suspicion in the Chinese community that the OCA had been established to be a default tax collector for the government.<sup>26</sup> Despite this suspicion, the OCA became more and more involved in the organization of commerce and welfare, the network of interdependence became more stable and concomitantly, the dependency on the government became more stabilized too.

Similarly, though with less success, Shinozaki later initiated the formation of Eurasian Welfare Association.<sup>27</sup> This association enabled the Eurasians to organize their affairs in a more consolidated manner and in a way that incurred less disapproval from the government but unlike the Chinese, they were spared from similar extortion. The extensive manner in which the Japanese exerted their monopoly of control and physical force over the people while pacifying the people into submission also evoked a strong hatred and resentment, particularly among the Chinese. This tension reinforced the distinction between the Chinese and the government, as well as between the Chinese and other ethnic groups, who were spared the same hard-handed treatment.

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22 *Ibid.*, 29.

23 See N. I. Low and H. M. Cheng, *This Singapore* (Singapore: 1947); Y. S. Tan, "History of the Formation of the Overseas Chinese Association and the Extortion by J. M. A. of \$50,000,000 Military Contribution from the Chinese in Malaya," *Journal of the South Seas Society* III, no. 1 (1946).

24 Shinozaki, "My Wartime Experiences in Singapore."

25 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*, 195.

26 Shinozaki, "My Wartime Experiences in Singapore."

27 *Ibid.*, 88.

Forming economic interdependencies and indoctrination very quickly became central to the establishment of an effective hegemony. The Japanese government was intent on transforming the populace into subjects of Japan, embracing the same vision and loyalty as their conquerors, and not merely being sojourners of Syonan. This critical distinction is exemplified by the extensive approach to accelerate the Nipponization of the people, to unify the divided loyalties and to reinforce the position of the government. Indoctrination was carried out by proselytising the Nippon spirit and it was principally conducted through the media, education system and sport. The importance of indoctrination was well appreciated by the Japanese government as demonstrated by their expediency in re-establishing the conduits of propaganda, newspapers, schools and sport clubs. Less than a week after the British surrender, the leading English language newspaper, *The Straits Times* was replaced by *The Syonan Times*. Two months later, schools were reopened to formally educate the pupils in the Japanese language and indoctrinate subservience and loyalty to the Japanese government. By June, preparation was underway to establish a Syonan Sport Association. Sporting institutions were reopened and restarted as the *Kempeitai* was carrying out their *sook ching*. However, the acceleration towards normalcy was juxtaposed with massive upheavals in the social and economic lives of the people and this created both destabilizing and stabilizing tensions.

Propaganda material to reinforce the superiority of the Japanese was presented directly and indirectly in different media. By systematically regulating the words of emotion, the words of logic, the words of success, the Japanese government attempted to gain the heart of the people. Almost immediately after Japan conquered Singapore, Commander of the Nippon Army, Tomoyuki Yamashita seized the opportunity to shift the loyalty for the British towards Japan. In a declaration speech published in *The Syonan Times*, he reinforced how the British had failed and faltered in their defence of Singapore, to convince the people, particularly, the English-speaking community, of their displaced loyalty. Britain was positioned as being the "the common enemy of humanity" who had "spoiled the whole world,"<sup>28</sup> whilst the Japanese were characterised as the "sword of evil-breaking" which "smashed" and "collapsed" the

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28 T. Yamashita, "Declaration of the Commander of the Nippon Army," *The Shonan Times*, 20 February 1942.

British Empire "in a moment" with the ability of "curing the wound caused by British bloody squeeze."<sup>29</sup> General Yamashita called on the people to "cooperate with Nippon army" and adopt the *Nippon Seishin* so as to "sweep away the arrogant and unrighteous British elements" and unite as one in the East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere.<sup>30</sup> By drawing the division, he explicitly reinforced the new established group and the outsider, and the grave implications for being an outsider. Subtly but forcibly, he set the tone for the imminent autocratic rule.

The seriousness of influencing the mind and emotion of the people could be seen in the establishment of a specialized department that was to oversee the delivery of propaganda. The *gunseikan-bu* set up a propaganda department, the *Sendenbu*, to manage propaganda and enculturation policies and programmes. Even the relevance and significance of propaganda was explained and expounded by the newspaper.<sup>31</sup> Indirectly, the mouthpiece of the Japanese government presented its policies with predictably liberal positiveness and efficiently controlled the flow of information.

The newspapers also served the function of inculcating the people to become Japanese (*Nippon-go*) through direct language instruction. Language was a key means of socializing and unifying the linguistically diverse settlers to facilitate the construction of a Japanese citizenry. The learning of *Nippon-go* was promoted as the "duty of every man, woman, and child not only to themselves, but to our government."<sup>32</sup> To support this indoctrination process, the newspapers also illustrated a wide range of Japanese cultural practices, from hygiene to *bushido* (samurai spirit).

The government exercised close censorship of films, radio broadcasts, theatrical performances and permitted for screening only those that would ensure that the whole society was immersed in Japanese culture and ethos.<sup>33</sup> Japanese instruction programmes, music for listening and music to exercise with were played on the radio

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29 *Ibid.*

30 *Ibid.*

31 "Propaganda a Valuable Aid to Reconstruction," *The Syonan Times*, 5 September 1942, 2.

32 "Your Future Depends Upon a Knowledge of Nippon-Go," *The Syonan Times*, 6 June 1942, iv.

33 For details on the use of film as propaganda, see A. Kurasawa, "Films as Propaganda Media on Java under the Japanese, 1942- 1945," in *Japanese Cultural Policies in Southeast Asia*, ed. G. K. Goodman (Hampshire: Macmillan Academic and Professional, 1991).



to promote Japanese culture and to discipline the body.<sup>34</sup> Schools were given a piano and radio to listen to and learn Japanese songs. In addition to instruction at school, students were taken to a broadcasting station once a month to learn Japanese songs. They were also taken to the cinema to watch Japanese movies for free.<sup>35</sup> The media was clearly an important apparatus in the government's Nipponizing process. In unequivocal terms, *The Syonan Times* described the full extent of propaganda:

From now on education institutions, the local radio programmes, the cinema films and the local press will share to the fullest extent the full burden of re-educating the masses in Malaya and of controlling public opinion. From now on, and for the duration of the war the people of Malaya will be subjected to the influence of these different forms of propaganda directed at them by our Government...<sup>36</sup>

Similarly the reopening of schools was pivotal in the proselytization of Japanese culture and social ethos. The learning of the Japanese language in schools, the singing of the *Kimigayo* (Japanese anthem) and physical and character training were included in the curriculum to build up allegiance and military readiness to serve Japan as integral components of the indoctrination process.<sup>37</sup> Schools provided not only the means for direct and mass indoctrination, they were also important in creating an institutionalized dependence on the government. The almost immediate reopening of schools after the invasion activated the chain of dependence connecting the network of teachers, support staff, parents and pupils to the new state.

This functional dependence also carried with it the potential to establish emotional bonds between the community and government. Firstly, the prompt reopening of schools suggested that the government was keen not only to restore stability but also to invest in a future which they considered would be 'Japanese'. This also demonstrated a restoration of stability and security in the settlement. Secondly, and more potently, the proselytization of the ethos of Japanese through promotion of the language and culture

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34 L. Kong, S. A. Low, and J. Yip, *Convent Chronicles: History of a Pioneer Mission School for Girls in Singapore* (Singapore: Armour Publishing, 1994), 108.

35 *Ibid.*, 109.

36 "Propaganda a Valuable Aid to Reconstruction," 2.

37 Shinozaki, "My Wartime Experiences in Singapore," 48-49.

humanized Japan and reduced the contrast of the two cultures. Teachers became the voice of the *Nippon Seishin* and also, by default, their pupils became promoters of it to their families. In practice, however, and in part because of the relatively short period over which it was implemented, the outcomes of the Japanese language education did not meet the expectations of the government.<sup>38</sup>

The schools' functions went well beyond merely promoting social control; they were the sites for schooling Japanese citizenry. The government made extensive efforts to Nipponize the younger population, particularly the Malays. Teacher training centres were established and teachers were screened for the level of their commitment to the Japanese government. The Malay pupils were given special attention, not in the paternalistic manner of the British, but rather with the motive of developing a critical mass of supportive Malay leaders so as to strengthen the position of the Japanese government and to rival the dominant racial group, the Chinese. To this end, Watanabe established the *Syonan Koa Kunrenjo*, a youth training centre to groom promising youths, particularly Malays, as future leaders of Syonan. The government was keen to train the Malays to change the power balance by replacing the Chinese in leadership positions.<sup>39</sup> Akashi's study of the graduates of the programme indicates that many of them later emerged as leaders of Malaya.<sup>40</sup>

Equally, the significance of sport as a tool for indoctrination did not escape the Japanese. The connection of the changes in sport and Nipponization will be dealt with more specifically later. However, whilst schools were the site for a direct and systematic Nipponizing of the youths, sport was the site for indirect Nipponization. The monopolization of control over schools and sport therefore facilitated the establishment of functional and emotional interdependency on the government.

These attempts on the superstructural level were limited by the instability that arose from the deleterious effects of the war. Further, all the rebuilding, restoring and readjustments in Syonan during this period, was undertaken against the ever-present reality of the Japanese need to secure their position in Syonan, against both the

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38 "Your Future Depends Upon a Knowledge of Nippon-Go," IV.

39 Y. Akashi, "Education and Indoctrination Policy in Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Rule, 1942-1945," *Malaysian Journal of Education* 13, no. 1/2 (1976), 18.

40 *Ibid.*: 19-20.

constant threat of the Allied forces and potential internal threats. The monopoly of control of military power facilitated the command of the other classes in the settlement, particularly the powerful leading groups. The execution and display of violence pacified the people, assisted by the absence of a well-resourced and strong militant group. Further, it was this context that demanded that the government find ways to more economically hold its position and ensure the continued functioning of the society and economy.

The developments under three and a half years of Japanese rule were not only significant for the position of the Japanese during that period; they also constituted a major period of transition for Singapore *per se*. The period began with extreme disintegration of existing social organisation, and then slowly developed as new forms of reintegration on a larger scale emerged. The monopolization of control of all resources by the Japanese government and the Nipponization efforts gave momentum to national power, not of the state but of the migrants. Whilst Singapore was a British colony, it was not just colonized by the British; rather the uninhabited island was colonized also, and indeed, predominantly, by the Chinese, Malays and Indians. On the other hand, the Japanese, far more than the British, accentuated the identity of the state and colonialism with their invasion of Singapore and their colonizing efforts through centralization of resources and power. Both the Japanese and British were thus positioned as the ruling outsiders and the migrants as the established insiders. As the social power of, first, the British, and, second, the Japanese, declined with their failing administrations, the power of the bourgeois migrant groups within Singapore society increased, engendering powerful moves towards nationalization and self-rule.

### **Sport in Syonan**

Sport was a key resource monopolized as part of the Japanese government's efforts to align the migrants to the state. The restoration and promotion of sport was regarded as important both for propaganda and as a means to increase the government's military resources. State centralization, in particular the establishment of a monopoly on the use of physical violence, was a necessary precondition for pacification, and implicitly, the extension of the people's dependency upon the state. This concentration of power made it conducive for what Dunning and Sheard described, in a different context, as the

"incipient bureaucratisation" of sport.<sup>41</sup> Bureaucratic control of sport during the Japanese era took on a markedly different form from that which it manifested under the British. The most significant organ in process being the Syonan Sports Association (SSA) for with the formation of this national controlling body, all sports lost their autonomy. The changes in sport that occurred during the Japanese Occupation were interrelated and accompanied by paralleled changes in the social structure of the society.

Centralization and sportization were parallel processes. In the first stage of centralization, the Japanese government controlled the whole of the area of Syonan with unequivocal physical force, and provided almost no services. Sport disintegrated completely, with the Japanese government seizing the sport facilities, conducting *sook-ching*, scrutinizing all activities, and enforcing the curfew. Time, space and resources were limited and uncertain. Having established their military power, they began to move towards increasing their social power through the provision of services and taxation. As part of this transition, sport re-emerged, more fully integrated in the life and structure of government and society. Thus began a process in which more and more recreation and sport clubs and numbers of people became interdependent and tightly organized in integrated units.

### *Colonizing the Clubs*

Sport in Singapore had been developing slowly since the 1920s, after the initial sprouting of sport clubs. Clubs had formed the backbone of the development of sport in Singapore under the British administration. As discussed earlier, these clubs functioned relatively independent of each other and their function in marking identity and distinction was as important, if not more important, than their sporting activities. It was only through the New Year's Day Sports and sports in schools that sport was diffused to the lower social strata on a mass scale. Even so, there had been no attempt to nationalise the migrants into constituting a British citizenry. The Japanese government, in contrast, focused not on naturalising the people with a local national identity but on seeing themselves as part of Japan. In that sense, the British conducted

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41 Dunning and Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A Sociological Study of the Development of Rugby Football*, 232.

themselves as sojourners and treated the migrants also as sojourners whilst the Japanese intended to be residents right from the moment they conquered Singapore. The appropriation of existing clubs for the recreation and military purposes of the Japanese government thus accumulated another resource and shifted power from community organisations to the state, whilst it simultaneously diminished the power and opportunity of the bourgeois members of each club to exert their influence on their respective ethnic community.

Whilst sport clubs disintegrated and became defunct, sport, its practice and ethos were retained and promoted. Sports of British origins, such as soccer and boxing were promoted, as was the British ethos of fair play. Competitions continued to be organised in the inter-ethnic format although the sport clubs were no longer in control. The British cultural-ware of sport therefore played a central role in the Japanese government's effort to Nipponize the people and to eradicate the British influences and loyalty. This was less ironic than it might appear at first sight. The sporting values of fair play and competitiveness were strongly emphasized by the Japanese. These values were not incongruent with the qualities of the *bushi* (warrior).<sup>42</sup> The centrality of imperialism in the Japanese culture heightened the significance of sport. Since the late nineteenth century, sport had penetrated into the culture of Japan.<sup>43</sup> As Abe and Mangan demonstrate with the articulation of sport by Seto, "Happiness in one's life is realized through games which not only bring the unconscious observance of rules and friendship but also cultivate the spirit of patriotism, courage and perseverance."<sup>44</sup> The parallels between the Japanese and English culture entailed certain contradictoriness in the Japanese attempt to expunge Western influences.

The Japanese government, however, promoted sport differently from the British. The sports clubs, which were the bastions of sport, leisure and class, ceased to perform

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42 I. Abe and J. A. Mangan, "'Sportsmanship' - English Inspiration and Japanese Response: F. W. Strange and Chiyosaburo Takeda," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 19, no. 2,3 (2002): 102.

43 For details on the diffusion of sport to Japan see I. Abe, Y. Kiyohara, and K. Nayajima, "Fascism, Sport and Society in Japan," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 9, no. 1 (1992); Abe and Mangan, "'Sportsmanship' - English Inspiration and Japanese Response: F. W. Strange and Chiyosaburo Takeda."

44 Seto, K. cited in Abe and Mangan, "'Sportsmanship' - English Inspiration and Japanese Response: F. W. Strange and Chiyosaburo Takeda," 103.

their customary functions. These sport clubs were appropriated by the Japanese and became officers' messes or recreation facilities for the senior Japanese officials. Thus, for example, the Cricket Club was initially transformed into a high class restaurant for the enjoyment of high ranking military officers and their geishas, although due to excessive rowdiness it was soon closed. It then became a tea-room and meeting place for the military officials.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, the Singapore Swimming Club was used by the Japanese military forces as a recreation centre for the officers who brought in comfort women for their own pleasure.<sup>46</sup> In contrast, the Singapore Chinese Swimming Club was commandeered by the *Kempeitai* who also used the clubhouse for interrogation purposes as well as for recreation.<sup>47</sup> The facilities in both the Singapore Swimming Club and the Singapore Chinese Swimming Club were not maintained. While the various club facilities were taken over by the Japanese, sports continued to be played on the Padang, where the Cricket Club was no longer restricted to 'Whites' only, and all races were permitted to enter the pavilion to get refreshment.<sup>48</sup>

Without the dominating presence of the sporting clubs, sport took on a different dimension. Sport, which had been a means of social identification and distinction for the Europeans and for the bourgeoisie of all racial groups, now became an important political tool. Similarly, sport clubs which had performed the function of class representation no longer did so. Although most sport clubs became defunct, and correspondingly the associated class differentiation was emasculated, the seeds of disintegration planted by the British continued to be propagated. Inter-racial competition dominated the nature of sport.

Despite the loss of clubhouses and the tumultuousness of the times, the first soccer match was played barely five months after the conquest of Singapore, with Eurasians pitted against Indians.<sup>49</sup> Organized by the *gunseikan-bu*, the "revival of sporting

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45 Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*, 100-02.

46 J. A. Gagan, *The Singapore Swimming Club: 1894-1968* (Singapore: Singapore Swimming Club, 1968).

47 "Singapore Chinese Swimming Club: 88 Years and Beyond," 92.

48 Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*, 102.

49 "Soccer Makes Auspicious Start on Syonan Esplanade," *The Syonan Times*, 3 July 1942, 4.

activities"<sup>50</sup> was regarded as important as it provided a pleasurable distraction or opiate, as well as presenting a sense of the restoration of stability in Syonan, as suggested by headlines such as "Sporting Life of Perak *Back to Normal*,"<sup>51</sup> "Malay Teams provide *Thrilling Soccer*,"<sup>52</sup> "Chinese Beat Eurasians in *Thrilling Game*,"<sup>53</sup> "Chinese show glimpses of *old form*,"<sup>54</sup> and "Eurasians and Chinese Draw in *Keen Soccer*" (my italics).<sup>55</sup> By August 1942, a sport section appeared in *The Syonan Times*. This coincided with the organization of a national competition, the Mayor's Football Cup, which included the four major races in Syonan, the Chinese, Indians, Malays and Eurasians.<sup>56</sup> The competition reflected and reproduced the racial segmentation of the social structure. Under the watchful eye of the referee, Lieutenant Okomoto, the Malays competed against the Chinese for the Mayor's Cup. Centralized control swept the nation and the dominance of the *gunseikan-bu* was apparent even in sport. Leisure became an integral aspect to the total domination of the Japanese government.

*Widening the playing field: the massification of sport*

With the Japanese government becoming the central coordinator and monitor of the direction and form of sporting development, the chains of interdependence were tightened. As with education, the Japanese authorities established a ruling body for sport quite quickly. By April 1942, the authorities approved the formation of the Syonan Sports Association (SSA), and by September, it became the official controlling organ of sport.<sup>57</sup> The speed with which it was established was as much an indicator as it was a catalyst of "rapidity of the return to normalcy."<sup>58</sup> Its primary objective was to

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50 *Ibid.*

51 "Sporting Life of Perak Back to Normal," *The Syonan Times*, 9 July 1942, 4.

52 "Malay Teams Provide Thrilling Soccer," *The Syonan Times*, 14 July 1942, 4.

53 "Chinese Beat Eurasians in Thrilling Game," *The Syonan Times*, 21 August 1942, 3.

54 "Chinese Show Glimpses of Old Form in Padang Soccer," *The Syonan Times*, 21 July 1942, 4.

55 "Eurasians and Chinese Draw in Keen Soccer," *The Syonan Times*, 18 August 1942, 4.

56 "Mayor's Football Cup Still to Be Competed For," *The Syonan Times*, 18 August 1942, 4.

57 "Mayor to Be Honorary President of Syonan Sports Association," *The Syonan Times*, 9 September 1942, 4.

58 "Sport and Universal Brotherhood," *The Syonan Times*, 16 October 1942, 2.

"encourage, promote and control all branches of sport"<sup>59</sup> and under its authority, sporting facilities were repaired, rebuilt and reconditioned.<sup>60</sup>

Headed by the Mayor of Syonan, the SSA was closely connected with the government.<sup>61</sup> Both the *gunseikan-bu* and *tokubetsu-si* were strongly represented in the SSA, although a Chinese, G.H. Kiat, was appointed Chairman of the association to oversee its operations. The connection with the military was as evident in the SAA as it was in other aspects of the administration of Syonan. At the opening of the SSA clubhouse, the power hierarchy of sport was highlighted in the newspaper. "The people and all those interested in sport... were exceedingly grateful to the Military Authorities for having granted them this privilege," explained the Mayor.<sup>62</sup> At the same time, the appointment of a Chinese Chair indicates the dependency of government on the dominant Chinese community so that the political objectives of sport could be achieved. Nevertheless, the institution of a central controlling body of all sports created a network of interdependencies of the sports and the SSA. Membership of the SSA grew from 154 at its formation to over 3000 by the end of 1943.<sup>63</sup>

Although the SSA was established with the permission of the *gunseikan-bu*, it was funded by the "various supporters and friends" as well as the Sports section of the Welfare Department of the *tokubetsu-si*.<sup>64</sup> The latter was responsible for overseeing the SSA and, through this association the monopoly of control of sport was enabled.<sup>65</sup>

Centralization facilitated a greater degree of democratization. Unlike the racially oriented nature of the recreation clubs, membership to the SSA was open to all.<sup>66</sup> Race and gender exclusions that characterized sport under the British rule were confronted.

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59 "Mayor to Be Honorary President of Syonan Sports Association," 4.

60 H. M. Rappa, "Sport Carnivals Feature Holidays in New Malai," *The Syonan Times*, 2 October 1943.

61 "Domei Interviews President of Syonan Sports Association," *The Syonan Times*, 8 September 1942, 3.

62 "Opening of the S. S. A. Clubhouse by Mayor: Epochal Event," *The Syonan Times*, 19 April 1943, 2.

63 Rappa, "Sport Carnivals Feature Holidays in New Malai."

64 "S.S.A Clubhouse to Be Formally Opened by Mayor," *The Syonan Times*, 6 April 1943, 2.

65 "Domei Interviews President of Syonan Sports Association," 3.

66 "Mayor to Be Honorary President of Syonan Sports Association," 4.



By doing so, the SSA gained a greater monopoly of control of sport and thus became increasingly important to the recreation clubs. Sport was an important arm in strengthening the position of the Japanese government. "Japan's imperialism was at the heart of Japanese 'sportsmanship'."<sup>67</sup> It was regarded as "the most successful" medium in unifying the diverse racial groups in Syonan.<sup>68</sup> More significantly, the parallel between sport and the Japanese ideals made the formation of the SSA a most predictable outcome of political instinct rather than a mere organizational necessity. An editorial in *The Syonan Times* described the significance of SSA as follows:

[T]his association is to assist in the creation of a spirit of harmonious co-operation and good-fellowship between sportsmen and sports lovers of all races in Syonan-to as a preliminary to the acceptance and the practice of the ideals underlying Hakko Itiu or the spirit of Universal Brotherhood.<sup>69</sup>

Poignantly, positioned next to this editorial was an article on the spirit of Japan, entitled, "Universal Mission of a Nippon-zin is to Exhibit 'spirit of Great Harmony'."<sup>70</sup> It describes the spirit, the ideals of Japan. The parallel in the titles as well as the discussion in the article indicate the close relationship between sport and the Japanese ideals. The "spirit of Universal Brotherhood" is synonymous with the "Spirit of Great Harmony." Underlying the 'spirit' of Japan is the *Amaterasu Ohmikami*, the article explains, the "greatest goddess and founder of Nippon."<sup>71</sup> She proclaims the "unmovable faith" and "duty" of all Nippon subjects to protect and maintain the wealth of the Imperial Throne.<sup>72</sup> The similarity between the English word, "amateur" and the first name of the mythological goddess may be nothing more than a curious coincidence, but certainly in this context gave sport metaphysical or religious significance. When the significance of sport encapsulates a combination of religious, metaphysical, military and longevity values, it has the potential to escalate to a moral

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67 Abe and Mangan, "'Sportsmanship' - English Inspiration and Japanese Response: F. W. Strange and Chiyosaburo Takeda," 111.

68 "Sport and Universal Brotherhood," 2.

69 *Ibid.*

70 "Universal Mission of a Nippon-Zin Is to Exhibit 'Spirit of Great Harmony'." *The Syonan Times*, 16 October 1942, 2.

71 *Ibid.*

72 *Ibid.*

act, duty and obligation. A parallel between muscular Christianity and muscular Imperialism could be argued. Health and fitness are virtuous and facilitate servitude. As Abe and Mangan reveal, some of the elements of *kyogido* (sportsmanship) include imperialism, amateurism, strength and loyalty.<sup>73</sup> Sport, thus, was central not only to the social, economic and political restoration of Singapore but also to Japanese imperialism.

With increasing centralization, sport became increasingly democratized. Racial division was still common in sport, but the presence of the SSA transformed the power hierarchy within sport. By virtue of the fact that all clubs fell under the jurisdiction of the SSA, the power differentials between clubs became narrower. Power opportunities, which were competed for and distributed amongst the different clubs under the relatively 'free' system of the British, were accumulated in the hands of the Japanese government. This shift in power fits well with Elias's argument that centralization changes the social figuration from a system with open opportunities for relatively free competition to a system with closed opportunities and a high dependency on the state.<sup>74</sup> These clubs lost their autonomy as they became increasingly monitored and regulated. Since the Sports section of the Welfare Department oversaw the SSA, the actions and intentions of sport clubs and the government became more tightly interwoven. However, the nature of the chains of interdependence between the individual sport clubs and the SSA was grounded more in physical force than in a dependency on funds and resources. The individual recreation clubs had been managed by volunteers and funded by respective community members. The SSA allocated neither funds nor resources to these clubs. Rather, it was individuals and sport clubs who contributed the resources that enabled the formation of the SSA.

Since the SSA was formed with the approval of the *gunseikan-bu*, membership of the SSA would also legitimise the activities of the club. Further, membership of the SSA represented the members' cooperation with the Japanese government. This mutual interdependence strengthened the position of the SSA and contributed to the establishment of hegemony and centralization. There was no more news on the

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73 Abe and Mangan, "'Sportsmanship' - English Inspiration and Japanese Response: F. W. Strange and Chiyosaburo Takeda," 116.

74 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 269.

activities of individual sport clubs, as occurred under British rule, instead the media focus shifted towards national representation or sports and sport events with national significance. By shifting the emphasis towards a state level, the focus on intra-group identity was also shifted towards the development of a Syonan identity. This can be seen in such matters as the coverage of inter-state events, the announcements of plans to participate in the Greater East Asia Olympic Games and the construction of a public sport stadium; each of these facilitated the development of a 'we' identity, narrowing the gap between the people and the Japanese government. It contributed to the formation of a group identity with common values and developed a higher level of emotional association with the group, specific way of life and correspondingly the state.

The 'we' identity in political sporting discourse was constructed in the context of distrusts and tensions between the Japanese government and their violently captured subjects. By highlighting the focus on Syonan, and keeping the spotlight away from individual clubs, the government made the image of the state more visible and intensified the association of sporting triumph, friendly competition, camaraderie and the freedom of play with the state. Inter-racial group competitions therefore were allowed and encouraged to continue as they provided a form of regulated integration as well as rivalry in a defined and controllable context. Indeed, arguably, in order to monopolize the control of sport, it was just as important for them to restore and preserve the way sport had been played as to develop new forms. Chairman of the SSA, G. H. Kiat's address to SSA members and the wider community illustrates this widening of the emphasis of sport to include the cultivation of a collective identity:

I want to urge you all to do your best and co-operate to the utmost with the Authorities to do our just share – that which is required of us as loyal citizens of this country in bringing prosperity, advancement, progress and success in attaining the object of Dai Toa Kyo-eiken (Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere).<sup>75</sup>

There was noticeably less pressure to change the balance of power in relation to women than there was to break down or, at least, lower the height of the divisive racial

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75 "Opening of the S. S. A. Clubhouse by Mayor: Epochal Event," 2.

walls, and women remained severely marginalized in sport. As it did with many other sport clubs, the Japanese military took possession of the grounds of the only sports club for girls in Singapore, the Girls' Sport Club.<sup>76</sup> Media reporting of women in sports was rarer than during the British administration. However, for the first time women were allowed to be members of a non-women specific sport association. Although no women sat on the organizing committee of the SSA, they were able to become members of the Women's section of the SSA. The formation of such a section indicates a growing acceptance of women in sport, while the presence of women members in the SSA suggests the diminishing reluctance of females to participate.<sup>77</sup> The continuing ambivalence of women's position in sport was, however, demonstrated by the organisation of female participation in the Syonan Sports Meet. Whilst men were offered official athletic events, for women, the SSA organized a 50 metres race, a 50 metres novelty race, an 80 metres low hurdles race and a shot putting (8 pounds) event.<sup>78</sup> Thus, gender distinction and the limitation of opportunities for women were still very pronounced. Yet the impact of women was not overlooked. The vulnerability of Japan's position in Syonan accentuated the importance of each individual's contribution to the protection and wealth-creation of its conquered land. This is reflected by the *Senden-bu Cho*,

In Syonan and other places in Malai, there are a good number of idlers, especially women who have been notably lacking in spirit of service. This is really an unpleasant state of affairs during wartime when there is a general shortage in materials and food and labour is especially needed for production and reconstruction.<sup>79</sup>

The increase in interdependence between the women and men in the social figuration was a precursor to the formation of a similar pattern in the figuration of sport. The redefinition of sport to achieve the Japanese government's aim of "fitness of

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76 *Girls Sports Club: 50th Golden Anniversary of the Founding of the Club: 1930-1980*.

77 "S. S. A. Women's Section," *The Syonan Times*, 25 June 1945, 1.

78 "Syonan Sports Meet Was Biggest Event of Its Kind," *The Syonan Times*, 16 February 1943, 2.

79 "Senden-Bu Cho Urges Malaians to Lead Industrious Life," *The Syonan Shimbun*, 13 December 1943, 1.

a nation"<sup>80</sup> engendered unintended effects on the culture of sport. Under the supervision of teachers or military officers, mass callisthenics and bodybuilding exercises were promoted. Female pupils were therefore socialized into these physical activities which were closely associated with the concept of sport. Health and body image thus became more defining discursive practices of sport.

The British might have taught the locals to play but in the process they had also demonstrated how powerful sport could be as a means of class distinction. Amateurism in sport, whilst paraded as the true and pure – if not the only – form of sport, was divisive and elitist. Amateur sport was for the elite, with the exception of school pupils who had access to sport in schools. The masses, however, had no access to sport. Those who had no access to clubs or were not in schools were not given opportunities or access to the chances to participate in sport. Moreover, club policies limited participation of girls in sport. However, under the Japanese rule, opportunities for participation in sport became less socially differentiated and, in this sense, more democratized. The masses were encouraged to participate in sporting activities and although the physical activities that the masses were directed into were calisthenics as opposed to sport, these activities were at least associated as a form of sport. Physical fitness and sport were very much considered as mutually inclusive. The article, "Physical Fitness Keynote Throughout Malai Today" illustrates this connection here,

They (Malaian youngsters) enter sports with greater zest than heretofore, maybe for the simple reason that added emphasis is now being laid on sports and other forms of physical development through Toa (East Asia).<sup>81</sup>

Further, whilst the British had taught other migrant groups to play, it was the Japanese who emphasized the significance of physical fitness, bringing it into what was discursively constructed as 'sport'. Fitness building was a major thrust in the development of sport. Education of physical fitness to the masses took on different forms. On a mass level, it included directing a 10 minutes stretching exercises via the

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80 "Physical Fitness Keynote Throughout Malai Today," *The Syonan Sinbum*, 20 October 1943.

81 *Ibid.*

radio, and a publishing 10-part series, "Health is Wealth," in *The Syonan Times* to inculcate personal responsibility to health and fitness.<sup>82</sup>

In keeping with this emphasis, for the first time, formal testing of physical fitness was introduced into culture of sport and physical activity of Singapore.<sup>83</sup> The SSA conducted a fitness test for its members during the Meiji Setsu Sports Carnival. Forty percent of the participants passed this battery of 6 test items: 2000 metres run to be completed in 10 minutes and 30 seconds; 100 metres to be done in 16 seconds; long jump with a minimum distance of 3 metres; lifting 30kg weight over 50 metres in a time of 15 seconds; throwing a hand grenade over 30 metres and 4 pull ups.<sup>84</sup> The content of this test demonstrates clearly how tightly fitness was tied to military function. The construction of the test around specific measurements of performance, the calculation of percentage passes and the issue of certificates for those who passed, demonstrate the formality and seriousness of this fitness test. Mass display of calisthenics also became a feature on national festivals to promote individual responsibility towards health and fitness.<sup>85</sup> Schools were not overlooked in this development of fitness training. Physical training was one of the components involved in teacher training, and physical exercises and sport were introduced as one of the subjects for pupils in schools.

The rising emphasis on physical fitness and individual responsibility changed the complexion of the sport culture of Syonan. However, it was not just the political direction which exerted pressure on what had previously been an overwhelmingly social, class and recreational oriented sport culture. In addition, if not more significantly, the dramatically different social climate limited the inclination as well as opportunities to participate in sports. Sport became more and more reduced to physical fitness and personal responsibility regarding fitness became increasingly emphasized.

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82 The series of health lectures appeared on the Saturday Supplement section of *The Syonan Times* from 18 April to 21 June 1942. Three of these lectures make mention to sport or physical activity, "Health Is Wealth Vii," *The Syonan Times*, 30 May 1942; "Health Is Wealth Viii," *The Syonan Times*, 6 June 1942, and "Health Is Wealth X," *The Syonan Times*, 21 June 1942..

83 "Meiji Setsu Sports Carnival Proves a Great Success," *The Syonan Shimbun*, 4 November 1943.

84 *Ibid.*

85 "Physical Fitness Keynote Throughout Malai Today."

In the process, the opportunities for the development of the social elements of sport were increasingly reduced.

### **Nipponization through Sporting Glory**

The Japanese not only re-organised sport, but harnessed it to Nipponization. In the process, they transformed the relationship of sport and state in Syonan society. Whilst the British promoted the ideology of sport, the Japanese promoted the political functions of sport by displaying the spectacle of sport in mass celebrations, thus projecting images of strength and excitement. Consequently, sport helped provided a sense of restoration to normalcy, which legitimised the position of the state.<sup>86</sup>

Sport events were also used as a means to raise funds for the military efforts of the Japanese. In a charity soccer event organized by the SSA, proceeds were given to the wounded Japanese soldiers.<sup>87</sup> Right up to the end of Japanese rule, a \$2 million boxing event was planned to raise funds for the Syonan evacuees.<sup>88</sup> Bold and ambitious plans for sports as well as every improvement or achievement in sport were also publicly announced and applauded to reinforce the sense of normalcy and development. This is illustrated by headlines such as "\$2 000 000 Sports Stadium Scheme For Farrer Park: OLYMPIC GAMES ENVISAGED,"<sup>89</sup> "Million Dollar Boxing Show Planned to Aid Syonan Evacuee Fund,"<sup>90</sup> "SPORT PLAYING BIG PART IN DAILY LIFE OF SYONAN,"<sup>91</sup> "SSA Membership passes 2000 mark,"<sup>92</sup> "Sporting Life of Perak Back to Normal"<sup>93</sup> and "Syonan's Largest Swimming Pool Re-opens After Seven Month."<sup>94</sup>

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86 See article, Rappa, "Sport Carnivals Feature Holidays in New Malai."

87 "Champions Win Charity Soccer at Jalan Besar," *The Syonan Simbun*, 14 February 1943, 2.

88 "Million Dollar Boxing Show Planned to Aid Syonan Evacuee Fund," *The Syonan Times*, 19 July 1945, 2.

89 "\$2,000,000 Sports Stadium Scheme for Farrer Park: Olympic Games Envisaged," *The Syonan Times* 1942.

90 "Million Dollar Boxing Show Planned to Aid Syonan Evacuee Fund," 2.

91 "Sport Playing Big Part in Daily Life of Syonan," *The Syonan Times*, 19 June 1945, 2.

92 "S. S. A. Membership Passes 2000 Mark," *The Syonan Shimbun*, 5 May 1943.

93 "Sporting Life of Perak Back to Normal."

94 "Syonan's Largest Swimming Pool Re-Opens after Seven Months," *The Syonan Times*, 1 September 1942, 4.

Centralization of sport was characterized by regulation and achievement. These two interrelated processes were the fodder as well as catalyst for the establishment of hegemony in sport and in the wider social context respectively. With the formation of the SSA, the Japanese government gained control of opportunities for sport and, whilst the power of the individual clubs decreased, they became collectively more powerful. The SSA not only had to maintain the tension of ambivalence but preserve and increase its controlling power. By regulating the way sport was played, the SSA created an institutional dependency. Performance, training and competition were monitored and developed. Firstly, individual clubs had to compete for resources and legitimacy. In doing so, the SSA gained authority in determining the distribution and competition for the opportunities available. Secondly, to increase their access to these opportunities, and thus compete successfully, individual clubs also had to improve their performance. Consequently, sport became more performance and achievement oriented. The SSA's ambition to participate and host the Greater Far East Olympic Games increased the competitiveness and this strengthened the position and legitimacy of the SSA.<sup>95</sup> Just as it was important for the clubs to compete, the SSA had to ensure that the object of the competition was of significance. Although the competition for opportunities was neither free nor equal, it created a network of interdependencies between the SSA and clubs.

The increasingly high expectations regarding sporting performance were matched by the increasing competitiveness of sport. There were no more New Year's Day Games; they were replaced by the Syonan Amateur Athletic Meet (SAAM), held on the 15 February to commemorate the fall of Singapore.<sup>96</sup> By the name of the competition itself, the shift from the "amusements" of "games" to sport was explicitly demonstrated. The increasing seriousness of sport could be seen from the similarities between SAAM and an international athletic competition. These similarities extended from the name of the competition to the entire organization of events. Whilst the New Year's Day Games were held on the Padang and the Singapore River, the SAAM was held in a more formal and purpose-specific environment, the Jalan Besar Stadium. The

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95 "\$2,000,000 Sports Stadium Scheme for Farrer Park: Olympic Games Envisaged."

96 "Syonan Amateur Athletic Meet on Feb. 15, Details," *The Syonan Times*, 16 January 1943, 2.



competition included events for different age-groups, both genders, and different levels of performance. Although some novelty events were planned, many of the 23 events were standard athletic fare. What used to be a games-oriented festival to celebrate the New Year became a formal competitive sporting meet.

This development of a greater seriousness in sport and, in particular via track and field athletics, constituted a significant Japanese influence on the sport figuration of Singapore. Although the British had established the Singapore Amateur Athletics Association in 1934, the Japanese took athletics to a higher level of formalization. It was an important sport in Japan, as demonstrated by the fact that it had been the first sport to be institutionalized in Japan, in 1911. The Japan Amateur Athletic Association had been formed at that time to enable Japan to participate in the Olympic Games the following year.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, in Syonan, the Japanese government aimed to prepare representatives who could compete at international games. The centrality of athletics therefore was imported in an effort to shape sport in Syonan. It is, in practice, impossible to determine how much of its declared intention to prepare local athletes for international competition was mere propaganda, but the attempt is highly relevant to the civilizing process of athletics and sport. It accounts for this period of change in sport and the direction it set for the development of sport in the subsequent stages.

The same pattern of seriousness was also exhibited in the regulation of boxing, which received considerable attention from the Japanese government and in the process became increasingly civilized. Under the British, neither professional nor amateur boxing received as much attention as it did under the Japanese. Although the British Amateur Boxing Association was established in 1880, the British only established a boxing association in Singapore in 1930. The Japan Amateur Boxing Association had been established three years earlier.

Under the Japanese rule in Syonan, boxing became increasingly regulated. The parallel between boxing and *bushido* suggests a reason for the special interest paid to the sport. Although football and athletics were popular and integral to the fitness and military functions, it was boxing that received the closest attention, in terms of the way it was conducted. Equally, no other sport received as much media coverage or criticism

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97 I. Abe, Y. Kiyohara, and K. Nakajima, "Sport and Physical Education under Fascistization in Japan," *Journal of Alternative Perspectives* (2000).

as boxing. The SSA's boxing coach, Hisao Saito, had his own column in *The Syonan Times*, in which he criticised the poor regulation of boxing, which failed to abide by international rules.<sup>98</sup> He wrote critically of boxing with open gloves and of exceeding the stipulated 10 seconds countdown, and suggested that the failure to abide by the regulations of the Nippon Professional Boxing Association meant that boxing in Syonan was "full of fouls."<sup>99</sup> It must, he argued, be developed "on the correct lines and reveal the true spirit of Bushido."<sup>100</sup>

This veneration of boxing was epitomized by the criteria on evaluating the winner of the boxing trophy offered by the *Syonan Shimbun* Chairman. The winning boxer must display "the best fighting spirit, boxing science and clean tactics" at the competition.<sup>101</sup> Such pressures to emphasize, skill, spirit and fair play represented a distancing from a "fight" and characterised boxing as a "contest."<sup>102</sup> By placing an increasing demand on "clean tactics," an increasing degree of self-restraint was emphasized.

This civilizing process of boxing was also characterized by an increasingly complex structure for the administration of boxing. In Britain, the development of boxing in the nineteenth century was characterized by conflict and division over professionalism and amateurism. By 1929, the two forms of boxing were formally distinguished with the establishment of a professional boxing body in England.<sup>103</sup> According to Sheard, this split accelerated the civilization of boxing.<sup>104</sup> In the case of Syonan, boxing was also split into amateur and professional form. But both forms were regulated by the same body, the Boxing Board of Control.<sup>105</sup> The Japanese Boxing Association viewed both forms of boxing to embrace the spirit of *bushido* which placed this "noble art" as

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98 H. Saito, "Boxing in Syonan," *The Syonan Shimbun*, 2 March 1944.

99 *Ibid.*

100 *Ibid.*

101 "Syonan Shimbun Chairman Offers Trophy to Encourage Boxing," *The Syonan Shimbun*, 24 December 1943.

102 K. Sheard, "Aspects of Boxing in the Western 'Civilizing Process'," *International Review for Sociology of Sport* 32, no. 1 (1997), 39.

103 *Ibid.*: 38.

104 *Ibid.*

105 "Carrie, Eagle Favour Control over Boxing," *The Syonan Shimbun*, 1 December 1943.

integral in the Nipponizing the subjects with the desired practice, ethos and images.<sup>106</sup> Both the amateur and professional divisions held regular boxing competitions for their boxers. Prize money was increased to as high as a million dollars to encourage improved performance. Whilst there is no evidence to indicate that the same set of rules was applied to govern both forms of boxing, the monopolization of control by the Boxing Board demonstrates the increased regulation on the sport, with greater significance on professional boxing. It was also evident that increasingly the SSA together with the Boxing Board was closely involved with the organization of professional boxing competitions and the implementation of the rules. The close association between the two forms of the sport was also illustrated by the fact that amateur and professional bouts were held on the same card.

The Japanese government however, was not as elaborate in its promotion of more traditional Japanese sports, such as judo and baseball. Whilst judo was the first sport featured in *The Syonan Times*, it was the dominant local sport of football that was promoted to draw the different racial groups together. This 'deference' to the established sport suggests a level of pragmatism in the Japanese monopoly of control over sport. Familiar and popular sports, like football, rather than judo, were more productive and efficient in achieving the government's political (sporting) objectives. Permitting and promoting an English cultural institution was not seen to be contradictory to the process of Nipponization. On the contrary, sport had been entrenched in the Japanese culture since the Meiji Restoration, so that it was no longer associated as the preserve of the West.<sup>107</sup> This inter-civilization facilitated the development of sport and at the same time, expanded the meanings and discourse of sport. In particular, the spirit of *bushido* expanded the ethos of muscular Christianity which was perpetuated in clubs and school setting to a national level.

### *Sport through Education*

The Japanese government envisaged the colonization of Singapore as long term and permanent. Plans were put in place to create a successful *Dai Toa Kyo-eiken* and

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106 "Sport in Syonan," *The Syonan Times*, 9 March 1944.

107 Abe, Kiyohara, and Nakajima, "Sport and Physical Education under Fascistization in Japan."

education was central to the realization of this vision, since "The most powerful of all the means available to propaganda is education."<sup>108</sup> The fact that schools were opened barely two months after the defeat of the British attests to the value the Japanese placed on education. However, not all schools were reopened, or reopened at this time; others became the property of the Japanese military and were appropriated for their purposes. For example, both the leading school, Raffles Institution, and the influential Chinese school, Tao Nan, became Japanese military bases<sup>109</sup>, while girls' schools such as Nan Hwa Secondary Girls' School were transformed into geisha restaurants by the Japanese military.<sup>110</sup> Thus, before the war, there had been 514 schools, while a year after education was re-established under the Japanese rule, only a total of 83 schools had been re-opened. Enrolment in schools also fell by 79.2%.<sup>111</sup> School fields were also used as agricultural land.

Despite the drop in numbers of schools and enrolments, the transformation of education by the Japanese made a most significant impact on the later development of independent Singapore. In the initial period of the Occupation, the object of education was firstly schooling and secondly education. The centralization of schools reinforced an institutional dependency on the state by the teachers, the youths and their families. For the first time, all schools came under the jurisdiction of a central government. This dependency expanded the functions and implicitly increased the power of the state. With a large section of the community becoming increasingly dependent on the state, the latter was more able to exert an influence on social dynamics. Once again, the military played a prominent role in the determination of the education policies and in the overall administration of schools. Thus, schooling was directed at making both pupils and teachers agents of the Japanese government, who not only depended on the

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108 "Propaganda a Valuable Aid to Reconstruction," 2.

109 Wijesingha, *The Eagle Breeds a Gryphon: The Story of Raffles Institution 1823-1985*, 189; A. Foo, *Collecting Memories: The Asian Civilisations: Museum at the Old Tao Nan School*, ed. National Heritage Board (Singapore: National Heritage Board, nd).

110 Although the school was later returned to the Japanese government, it is not known what happened to those which became geisha houses. Shinozaki, "My Wartime Experiences in Singapore," 51.

111 Calculated from the data found in the Appendix Section of Akashi, "Education and Indoctrination Policy in Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Rule, 1942-1945," Appendix p.36-39.

latter for education, but also became loyal evangelists of Nippon, as well as the preparation of a labour force to sustain and advance the economic strength of Japan. As stated in the Educational Directives:

Education should be aimed at developing the discipline and temperance of the governed people, making them aware of the pride as citizens of East Asia, and training them in industrial skills useful for their livelihood.<sup>112</sup>

The process of Nipponization involved three elements. The first direct indoctrination was most obvious. The pupils had to learn to sing the national anthem, *Kimgayo* and learn Nippon-go. Although the teachers and pupils were able to put up a good show of singing *Kimgayo* for General Yamashita, they were not as successful in learning *Nippon-go* due to the lack of resources and difficulties of learning the language.

Secondly, and more indirectly, the government utilized a divisive strategy to simultaneously emasculate the Chinese and Eurasians and empower the Malays. Consistent with the political approach towards the Chinese and English culture and the disparity in treatment of the different racial groups, all English-medium private schools were closed and replaced by Japanese public schools.<sup>113</sup> The aggrandized English and Chinese names of schools were neutralized by the adoption of generic names based on its geographical location.<sup>114</sup> Restrictions on the staff, school practice and teaching subjects were imposed on these schools. Chinese-medium school teachers had to pass a character-assessment before they were allowed to teach.<sup>115</sup> Those who gained approval to return to schools were however not allowed to teach the Chinese

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112 "Fundamental Policy Concerning Education in the Southern Hemisphere," (Headquarters of the Southern Expeditionary Forces, 1942). Attached in appendix in Akashi, "Education and Indoctrination Policy in Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Rule, 1942-1945," 25.

113 Akashi, "Education and Indoctrination Policy in Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Rule, 1942-1945," 5.

114 "Education Dept Notice: Renaming of Schools," *The Syonan Times*, 2 April 1942.

115 "Fundamental Policy Concerning Education in the Southern Hemisphere." attached in appendix in Akashi, "Education and Indoctrination Policy in Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Rule, 1942-1945," 26.

language.<sup>116</sup> Malay and Indian medium school teachers, on the other hand, were exempted from this military scrutiny. Japanese, Malay and Indian were the only instructional languages approved by the government in primary schools.<sup>117</sup> Whilst the government took measures to strip away the legitimate and social power of the Chinese and Eurasians by suppressing the education in Chinese and English languages, at the same time, they increased the status of Malay and resources for the education of Malay children. In order to buttress the position of the government, the Indians and particularly the Malays were given added attention and priority. This contrasted sharply with the education of the Malays under the British. This had been, at best, tokenistic, and whilst they had provided free education for the Malays, they had made only feeble attempts to elevate the educational expectations of the Malays. The Japanese on the other were intent on elevating the Malays in order to develop them into leaders of Syonan and put pressure on the jobs held by the Chinese. Concomitantly, the interdependency between the Malays and the government increased and this increased their power over the other racial communities. Not only did the Japanese grant an official status to the Malay language in schools but more significantly they made a deliberate and systematic approach to produce an elite group of Malay students schooled on Japanese history, culture, politics, military, *bushido* and health.<sup>118</sup>

Thirdly, schools were reopened to facilitate mass Nipponization. The expediency in the reopening of schools was in part due to the petitions submitted to the Japanese government by the people.<sup>119</sup> Mamoru Shinozaki, the first Chief Officer of Education, responded to the initiative and resumed many of the schools buildings which had been occupied by Japanese soldiers. The primary school buildings were first to be released to the Education Department, and were reopened before the secondary schools.<sup>120</sup> As

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116 Akashi, "Education and Indoctrination Policy in Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Rule, 1942-1945," Appendix p.26.

117 *Ibid.*: Appendix p.25.

118 "Fundamental Policy Concerning Education in the Southern Hemisphere." attached in appendix in Akashi, "Education and Indoctrination Policy in Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Rule, 1942-1945," 28-29.

119 Shinozaki, "My Wartime Experiences in Singapore," 47.

120 *Ibid.*

did their predecessor, the Japanese government limited middle schools education to a "minimum need."<sup>121</sup> With schools reopened in April 1942, a catalyst was provided for the restoration of normalcy. Teaching opportunities became available and children were able to return to their routines of going to school. The school curriculum was designed to "remove westernized and anti-Japanese education... [and] emphasize respect of labour."<sup>122</sup> Japanese language, composition writing, physical education, singing, handicrafts, drawing and gardening formed the new range of prescribed subjects for primary schools and vocational subjects, particularly in agriculture and technical training, formed the middle school curriculum.<sup>123</sup> These subjects were consistent with the educational aims of the Japanese government. In the process many aspects of English culture that had previously dominated the curriculum were suppressed, and the Japanese images, practices and products were perpetuated.

In practice, the penetration of the Japanese culture, practice and values into the education system was impeded in several ways. Firstly, the locals were enlisted in the reopening and management of the schools by the Education Department. Specialists were recruited to assist in the organization of the English and Chinese medium schools. The teachers, too, were socialized and trained in their respective mediums of education practice. Although language instruction was restricted to Japanese in these schools, and although Japanese and Malay were officially the only permitted mediums for instruction, effectively the language of instruction in most cases remained unchanged. The limitation of resources, specifically, of Japanese teachers and textbooks, made it impossible to ban English, Mandarin or Tamil. Instruction in religion was also banned in schools, but resistance towards the rule remained, certainly, in the case of the Sisters of the Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus.<sup>124</sup> In other

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121 "Fundamental Policy Concerning Education in the Southern Hemisphere." attached in appendix in Akashi, "Education and Indoctrination Policy in Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Rule, 1942-1945," 23.

122 *Ibid.*

123 Tomi, S. S., "Matter Relating to Reopening of Primary Schools," (From Military Administrator to Mayor and Governors, 1942). Found in the Appendix Section of Akashi, "Education and Indoctrination Policy in Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Rule, 1942-1945," Appendix p.24.

124 Kong, Low, and Yip, *Convent Chronicles: History of a Pioneer Mission School for Girls in Singapore*, 109.

areas, such as geography and mathematics, the Chief of Education permitted the use of British textbooks, in the absence of alternative teaching resources.<sup>125</sup>

The structures and exigencies of government and the administration of schools undermined the attempts by the Japanese to harness schools to their own objectives. There was a clear inconsistency in the monitoring of the schools by the military and the education department, which demonstrated that within and between the two branches of the Japanese government there existed competing and conflicting practices and perceptions. More substantially, local education specialists were employed for their knowledge and expertise to the Education Department to lead education in Syonan. Thus the administration of schooling provided space in which schools and their teachers were able to pursue other educational activities than those dictated by the imperatives of Japanese propaganda.

Alongside other changes in the curriculum, sport in schools, and indeed physical education more generally, was also transformed under the Japanese, and constituted a significant force in shaping the way sport was played and promoted, complementing the integral role of the SSA in the changing figuration of sport in Syonan. In the initial phase following the reopening of schools, physical exercises were taught to keep the children occupied.<sup>126</sup> With the official restructuring of the curriculum, more emphasis was placed on physical education. One sign of this was that more time was afforded it within the structure of the curriculum, ranging from one to three hours per week, with the Malay schools allocating the most time and the Chinese school the least.<sup>127</sup>

More significantly, physical education was itself more formally structured, and divided into three categories – military drills, fitness activities and sports. Clearly, military demands again dominated the nature of the physical training in schools. The dominance of the military in determining the formal curriculum was reinforced in practice by the formidable presence of the military staff, in and out of schools.<sup>128</sup> A

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125 Shinozaki, "My Wartime Experiences in Singapore."

126 *Ibid.*, 52.

127 Akashi, "Education and Indoctrination Policy in Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Rule, 1942-1945," 11.

128 F. Brown, *Memories of S. J. I. : Reminiscences of Old Boys and Past Teachers of St Joseph Institution* (Singapore: St Joseph Institution, 1987), 37.



range of other measures were introduced to support the changed approach to physical education. Schools were provided with radios so that pupils and teachers could follow the national broadcast of physical exercises organized by the Propaganda Department.<sup>129</sup> These regimented exercises formed the bedrock of the Physical Education programme and became increasingly associated with the concept of Physical Education. The physical emphasis was accompanied by a clear 'command and obey' paradigm which reflected the centrality of the state. The nature of the physical education during this period can be gleaned from the description of physical training by a Japanese teacher, Mr Ishii, who said he, "used to hammer his lessons into the students – literally. The methodology was questionable but he got results." This suggests the emphasis was on the "physical" rather than the "physical educational."<sup>130</sup> Indeed, it would be more accurate to describe the time spent on physical activity as physical training rather than physical education. This shift was reinforced by the reduction in the number of secondary schools, and in particular, the closing down of private English secondary schools, which reduced the opportunities for youths to participate in inter-schools sports. Indeed, throughout the Japanese Occupation, there were no reports of inter-school sport. One final measure, to ensure that future teachers were equipped to conduct physical training in the required manner, was the introduction of physical education training in the program for trainee teachers in the newly formed Institute of Education, established on the grounds of the former St Joseph Institution.

Even when the military presence in schools was reduced, the need to attract the local youths to join the military force to strengthen the defence of Syonan and *Dai Toa Kyo-eiken* grew in intensity. One of the required key qualities in the volunteer army was physical strength.<sup>131</sup> The centrality of the body as a military weapon still dominated the discourse of physical education. As sport and physical education became more and more associated with physical training, they also became less and less associated with games. Dogmatic military drills, calisthenics replaced the structure of sports. Although

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129 Shinozaki, "My Wartime Experiences in Singapore," 48.

130 Brown, *Memories of S. J. I. : Reminiscences of Old Boys and Past Teachers of St Joseph Institution*, 37.

131 "Giyu-Gun Enrolment Begins in Syonan," *The Syonan Shimbun*, 22 January 1944, 2.

the objective of physical training was to serve a collective good, it promoted individualism as it did not offer as much social interaction as sports and games between pupils. The culture of sport was therefore redefined with a military driven campaign to achieve "Fitness of a nation."<sup>132</sup> At the same time, pupils were being schooled to obey authority figures as they carried out the required physical exercises.

Although the Japanese approach to physical education had some similarities to that provided under British administration, their explicit and direct military emphasis was more pronounced and more pervasive. This was driven both by the imminent threat to internal and external security which reinforced the importance of the preparation for military readiness and the longer-term Japanese aims for Syonan as part of the wider *Dai Toa Kyo-eiken*. Physical training, through physical discipline, thus became an important means to marshal youths into becoming loyal Japanese subjects. Physical education thus formed an integral part of the reform of the education system to serve the purposes of Nipponization.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has involved an examination of the centralization phase under the Japanese administration, a phase which formed a vital role in the long term developmental process out of which Singapore's current sport culture has emerged. The discussion revealed, firstly, that even under what is the widely regarded, the most barbaric period of Singapore's history, sport and society both underwent major civilizing spurts. As the local bourgeoisie lost control of their clubs and the government took control of all sporting opportunities, the role of sport shifted from articulating in class distinctions towards forming a national identity. The centralization of the control of sport transformed the function of sport from serving private purposes to serving a public purpose. With the public function of sport becoming dominant during this period of sporting development, the process of the bureaucratization of sport resources and functions not only led to a greater degree of the regulation of sport but also to the incipient formation of a national identity. Nipponization not only entailed the association of sport with national identity but also with a dependency on the government, as the different social groups and individuals competed for

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132 "Physical Fitness Keynote Throughout Malai Today."

opportunities and control within sport. The competition for opportunities increased the seriousness of sport and physical education, whilst at the same time the seriousness of war also had the unintended consequence of shifting the game emphasis of sport and physical education from a play and personal fitness function to one with an emphasis on the disciplining of the body into production of a loyal and combat-ready citizenry. These changes, as will be shown later, were major preconditions and influences in the later development of the more stable centralized control of sport that emerged in independent Singapore.

## Chapter 4

### **Sport in the New Republic of Singapore (1960s-1980s): Centralization, Democratization, Hegemony Formation**

The process of the centralization of sport accelerated with the formation of an independent nation. With the establishment of a local government and a nation of citizens, the culture of sport developed into a form that displayed fewer and fewer of the dominant features of the colonial model of sport. In particular, the control of sport by clubs and individuals became less dominant. This chapter examines the centralization of sport and shows how the process developed in the newly sovereign nation. It studies, firstly, the development of sport after World War II, and its interconnections with Singapore's transition to self government. It then discusses some of the key aspects of Elias's theory on state formation in relation to the context of the development of independent Singapore. Following the exposition of Elias's tenets, the relationship between development of the state and the sportization process is explored. The chapter illuminates the relationship between the process of state formation and the development of sport and the relationship between the figuration of sport and the overall social figuration.

#### **Negotiating Colonialism and Sovereignty: Sport in Transition**

Less than a month after the Japanese surrender, a formal soccer match was played on the Padang.<sup>1</sup> Inter-colonial sporting competitions were resumed the following year however the New Year's Day Sport only made its return in 1947. Whilst club facilities were gradually restored, the sense of freedom and recreation for pleasure were swiftly reignited. Under the aegis of the Japanese government, sport had been controlled by a centralized body, the Syonan Sport Association. Following the return of the British government, clubs were restored as the dominant hub of sport and the government took on a more subdued position than the Japanese.

The dynamics of post-war Singapore centred on self-government and sovereignty, and this political transformation was reflected and reproduced in sport. As the colony began its transition to nationhood, sport became more internationalised and

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<sup>1</sup> Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*.

centralized. This development paralleled and reflected the shift towards nationalizing the migrants as they prepared for sovereignty. In the wider social context, the institution of citizenship options for migrants who had settled in Singapore for more than fifteen years marked the formal beginning of a national identity.<sup>2</sup> The Japanese government had established the embryonic forms of centralized and nationalised sport, in particular, embracing the value of sport as a national identity-enhancing activity for young people. Whilst the Japanese government spearheaded the construction of a Nippon identity, in the incipient phase of constructing a Singapore identity through sport the clubs and individuals were more dominant than the government.

In this period of transition, the development of a national identity began even before Singapore became an independent nation. Implicit in international competition, is the process of establishing a 'we' identity, distinguishing Singapore from the rest of the Empire, as well the rest of the world. Concomitantly, international competition also entailed extending Singapore sport into a wider or global sport network and this process is, accordingly conceptualized as what Elias describes as a 'civilizing' change. Manifestations of a civilizing change included the formation of the Singapore Olympic Sports Council (SOSC) in 1948; the formation of sport associations for all the major sports played globally which, by 1955, were almost all affiliated to their respective international federations.<sup>3</sup> This demonstrated the increasing shift towards a greater seriousness, and tighter and more extensive global links in sport, as well as reflecting the political and social climate. When Singapore was granted self-governing status, the association between Singapore identity and sport became more pronounced and this accelerated the centralization of the control of sport. This section examines the connections and emanating tensions of the civilizing changes underlying the processes of the centralization, nationalization and internationalization of sport in Singapore.

The British both intentionally and unintentionally built their empire through sport. In Singapore this process was more evident through the clubs than by the direct intervention of the government. The latter, however, had introduced sport into the physical education programme in schools and, particularly after World War II, the re-

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2 "Separation of S'pore the Main Vice": Visiting M. P. On the Federation," *The Straits Times*, 2 January 1947.

3 "Colony of Singapore: Annual Report 1955," (Singapore: Colonial Office, 1955), 265.

installed British colonial government also provided much needed funds to clubs that had made war damage claims.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to the Japanese government, who had established a national body to organize the way sport was played, they did not centralize or assume direct responsibility for high level competitive sport. Under pre-war British rule, sport had been organized by the private sector, where clubs and their members played a central role in the diffusion of sport. After the war, clubs continued to be the dominant site of the diffusion and display of the largely British sports model.

These clubs, and in particular, the Singapore Cricket Club, were not only important in the diffusion of sport locally, but facilitated its internationalization, which prompted the association of sport and nationalism in Singapore particularly through the organization of inter-colonial games. Despite their apparent national status, these games continued to be organized on a private or club level rather than officially, at a national or governmental level. Singapore participated in several large scale international sporting events after the war. The formation of the Singapore Olympic Sports Council (SOSC) in 1948 widened the scope of international competition beyond the British Empire.<sup>5</sup> Whilst the Olympics represented and provided an extension of Singapore's sport on a global level, its participation in the Asian Games since its inauguration in 1951 was another key manifestation of the internationalization of sport in Singapore. At both, it was Singapore, the nation, rather than merely a club from Singapore that was represented in global competition. Thus the emphasis was on a national identity rather than, as it had been in the past, on a club identity. Yet, at the same time, a sense of nationalism directed towards China was also demonstrated by the keen interest shown by Singaporean Chinese in the selection trial organized by the Malayan Chinese Committee for the China Olympic team.<sup>6</sup> Concomitantly, whilst the formation of SOSC enabled the development of the nationalization and centralization processes, Singapore-focused nationalism was competing directly with nationalistic sentiments towards China.

Whilst the SOSC constituted a national body rather than a club and was formed independent of the government and clubs, it was closely connected to both. The

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4 Yeo, ed., *The First 100 Years: Singapore Swimming Club*.

5 "Colony Invited to Olympics," *The Straits Times*, 19 March 1948.

6 "Selections for China Olympics," *The Straits Times*, 9 March 1948.

overlapping of recreational and political space was exemplified by the appointment of a highly ranked civil servant, who was also the president of the Singapore Cricket Club, as the President of the SOSC. The first secretary of the SOSC, Wee Kim Wee was also later to be the fourth President of the Republic of Singapore. Underlying the apparent coincidence was a close connection between the development of sport and the development of wider social figuration.

Although athletes from Singapore had taken part in the Olympics prior to 1948, they had in fact represented China, rather than Singapore. Lloyd Valberg and Jocelyn de Souza, selected to represent Singapore in 1948, were thus, officially, the first Singapore Olympians.<sup>7</sup> Both were from the Eurasian community and members of the Singapore Recreation Club. Their selection also demonstrated the significance of the clubs in internationalizing Singapore sport. A substantial part of the funding for Valberg's participation in the Olympic Games came from the Singapore Recreation Club and the Singapore Boxing Association.<sup>8</sup> The relatively indifferent media attention given to their participation in the London Olympic Games, particularly in the case of de Souza, in comparison to coverage of the Singapore Cricket Club events, suggests the continued dominance of not only 'local' club sports but also male sports.<sup>9</sup> The clubs which had been the bastions of sport in Singapore continued to hold a dominant position in internationalizing sport and facilitating the association between nationalism and sport. The SOSC took on a largely administrative role, particularly for the Olympic Games, whilst clubs continued to play the key role in providing and promoting sport.

Whilst participation in the Olympic Games established more extensive global links between sport in Singapore and the rest of the world, regional links were tightened through the SEAP (South East Asia Peninsula) and Asian Games. The organization of regional competition demonstrated not only the rising level of competitiveness but also the increasing sophistication of sport in the region. Modelled on the Olympic Games, these regional competitions added to the demand for greater regulation of sport in Singapore. The role of the SOSC thus became more important, which concomitantly

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7 "Best Wishes."

8 "Valberg's Fund Gets Support," *The Straits Times*, 28 January 1948.

9 See "Best Wishes."

facilitated the production and perpetuation of nationalism. The Asian and the SEAP Games, institutionalized in 1951 and 1959, respectively, also provided a regional distinction as opposed to the global one, with the capacity to produce and reinforce the construction of both a South East Asian and an Asian identity. The development of nationalism was thus intertwined with all these layers of identity.

As the incipient sense of nationalism was established, the entrenched racial division in clubs implicitly demonstrated signs of weakening in the European-based clubs such as the Singapore Cricket Club (SCC) without any intervention from the government. According to Sharpe, the lack of European expatriate players made it necessary for the SCC to attract talented non-Europeans to maintain its competitiveness.<sup>10</sup> Also in 1951 the SCC appointed a Eurasian to be the President of the club. Clubs, which had been men's enclaves, were also shifting towards becoming a place for families. The increasing popularity of the Tanglin Club and the Singapore Swimming Club, which were more family-oriented, added pressure to clubs, such as the SCC, struggling to raise funds for development and to expand their social base.<sup>11</sup> The Singapore Chinese Swimming Club too made its membership less exclusive because of financial necessity.<sup>12</sup> In order to raise funds to restore and expand the club facilities, membership fees were reduced to attract more members to the club, thereby extending the base of middle class members. Changes in the membership of clubs were made on the grounds of necessity rather than by political intervention. Despite these developments in clubs' profiles, they remained predominantly a bourgeois enclave. Whilst the entrenched racial and class identity of these clubs did not change radically, such changes suggested that they were loosening up. The tentative and self-imposed broadening of their membership also provided an unintended lead-in for the establishment of nationhood.

In a more centrally driven manner, the process of organizing Singapore for self-government was directly incorporated into the school curriculum. The Education Board conceptualized and implemented a Ten-Year Plan for all schools in 1947 to improve the standard of education, and the provision of opportunities and facilities.

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<sup>10</sup> Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> "Singapore Chinese Swimming Club: 88 Years and Beyond."



One of the principal aims of the plan was to prepare the youth "for self-government and the ideal of civic loyalty and responsibility."<sup>13</sup> The significance of this aim was apparent when Singapore eventually became independent in 1965: over 50% of the population was under 19 years of age.<sup>14</sup> The aim of fostering "civic loyalty and responsibility" could be seen as both parallel to and an extension of the aim of physical education and games, which were recognised by the British government to play an important role in "moulding the character and developing team spirit amongst boys and girls."<sup>15</sup>

The increasing importance of physical education and games to the wider social context was indicated by an increasing sophistication in the way physical education, sport and games were organized. Although games in school were adversely affected by the destruction of sporting facilities during the war, the organization of physical education and games were intensified and became even more regulated. Two sport committees were established in 1948, for the English and Chinese schools respectively,<sup>16</sup> and by 1950 a Malay Schools sport committee was also established.<sup>17</sup> Inter-school competitions, facilities, training, coaching and any matter related to school sports fell within the responsibilities of these specialized committees. A reference library stocked with specialized books and films was also set up to provide additional resources for physical education teachers.<sup>18</sup> More teachers attended training courses in physical education and by 1951 teachers were provided with the opportunity to train in Loughborough Physical Education College in the UK. This rising skill level of physical education teachers was also supported by the close association between schools and the various sports associations in the colony. For instance, the Singapore Hockey Association provided coaches to train students in the sport, whilst the Singapore Amateur Football Association provided qualified referees to officiate most

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13 "Colony of Singapore: Annual Report 1955," 108.

14 Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*.

15 "Colony of Singapore: Education Report, 1949," (Singapore: Colonial Office, 1949).

16 "Colony of Singapore: Education Report 1948," (Singapore: Colonial Office, 1948).

17 "Colony of Singapore: Education Report 1950," (Singapore: Colonial Office, 1950).

18 "Colony of Singapore: Education Report 1948."

inter-school matches.<sup>19</sup> The rise in the standard of performance in school sports could be one of the contributing factors to the selection of three pupils to represent Singapore in the 1952 Olympic Games.<sup>20</sup> As a result, the development of the schools' sport and physical education programme became more tightly interwoven with the processes of nationalization and internationalization of sport.

By the 1960s, the image of sport as a European male bourgeois practice was also markedly diminished, and sport in Singapore was characterised by a greater representation of non-Europeans, women and the lower middle class. The figuration of sport constituted a greater variety of social groups, but the organization of sport was still dominated by private monopolies. The monopoly of control began to shift with the transition towards self-government which was reflected by the formation of national sport bodies that were associated with the world sport organizations, such as the SOSC. The formation of national sport bodies facilitated the participation in more international sport competitions but it also diminished the control of sport by private monopolies. As sport expanded from a local as well as British Empire level to a more global level, it also facilitated the development of nationalism which reflected the transition towards sovereignty. Subsequently, pressure mounted for the state to play a larger role in the development of sport.

### **State Formation: The Making of the Republic of Singapore**

The period between 1942 and 1965 embraced the two most turbulent decades in the political history of Singapore. The relationship between the British government and the migrants was markedly different after World War II than it had been previously. Singapore was in transition politically and economically: firstly negotiating and preparing for self government, then for political independence and finally for the formation of the new nation. Whilst the migrants celebrated the return of the British, the defeat of the British by the Japanese and the three years under Japanese rule had also destabilized the bond between the migrants and the colonial government. Faced with a growing power of the non-European bourgeoisie, the British government recognized the imminent emergence of the post colonial era, and accordingly, upon

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19 "Colony of Singapore: Education Report 1951," (Singapore: Colonial Office, 1951).

20 "Colony of Singapore: Education Report, 1952," (Singapore: Colonial Office, 1952).

regaining the colony from the Japanese, pledged to relinquish their position and to grant Singapore and Malaya self-government.<sup>21</sup> When the British reoccupied Singapore on 5 September 1945, the economic, social and political climates were urgently in need of a major reform.<sup>22</sup> Firstly, the British defeat damaged the invincible image of the British political and military might which had strengthened the position of the British as a social minority with hegemonic authority and power over other migrant communities in the settlement. Their political position had been weakened as their subjects became victims of the violence of Japanese rule. More significantly and urgently, the British government did not appear to be effective in providing or facilitating infrastructure, housing, services and employment. Further, as they tried to restore and rebuild Singapore, they were also confronted with the rising threat of communism.<sup>23</sup> The Hertogh racial riots in 1950, involving attacks by Muslims on Europeans and Eurasians, both reflected and exacerbated the weakening of the British hegemony.<sup>24</sup> In 1955, the first election was held and an internal government was formed. Four years later, Singapore became self-governed and the new government, the People's Action Party (PAP), began its uninterrupted reign. Singapore became a fully independent state on 31 August 1963 before it merged with Malaya to form the Federation of Malaysia fifteen days later. The merger proved politically unsustainable and following the expulsion of Singapore from the Federation after only two years, the Republic of Singapore was formed on 9 August 1965.

The formation of Singapore's government and independence were closely intertwined. After over a decade of political fighting between the left-wing and right-wing democratic parties and the communist party, the People's Action Party led by Lee

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21 K. W. Yeo and A. Lau, "From Colonialism to Independence, 1945-1965," in *A History of Singapore*, ed. E. Chew and E. Lee (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991).

22 *Ibid.*

23 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*.

24 The Hertogh riots were sparked by the Singapore government's decision to grant custody to the biological mother of a Dutch Eurasian girl, Maria Hertogh who was raised by a Muslim family when her parents were interned during the Japanese Occupation. Married to a Muslim and identified herself as a Muslim, Maria Hertogh offered the Malay Nationalist Party and Malay press more currency to protest against the government's decision and incited violence against Europeans and Eurasians which resulted in 18 deaths in the couple of days of rioting. See *Ibid.*

Kuan Yew was finally elected as the government of the nation in 1959.<sup>25</sup> This government, unlike all its predecessors, was elected into power under a relatively "overt"<sup>26</sup> form of democracy, in which automatic registration of voters, compulsory voting, and a selection of 13 competing parties was in place.<sup>27</sup> This democratic process both shifted the legislatively reconstituted the population as citizens, rather than as migrants, and marked the beginning of self-determinism and the formalization of the relationship between state and citizens.

The majority of the voters at this time were lower socio-economic Chinese, which clearly made them an important determining factor in the selection of the nation's government.<sup>28</sup> With the institution of a democratic process that legislated upon voting rights based on citizenship and age, what Elias describes as the power chances of each individual in relation to the state became less class or status determined and therefore more democratized. Indeed, Pang contends that the PAP was successful in the 1959 election precisely because the alliance between the party's English-educated members and its left-wing Chinese-educated members struck an immediate affinity with the majority of the electorate.<sup>29</sup> As the first Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, suggested in 1955, "Any man in Singapore who wants to carry the Chinese speaking people with him cannot afford to be anti-Communist."<sup>30</sup> This important support gave legitimacy to

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25 For a detailed analysis of the political development during this period, see K. W. Yeo, *Political Development in Singapore 1945 -1955* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1973).

26 B. H. Chua, *Communitarian, Ideology and Democracy in Singapore* (London: Routledge, 1997).

27 In April 1946, the British Military Administration was replaced by civil government and the Straits Settlements ceased to exist constitutionally. Singapore was formally separated from the Malayan hinterland and became a Crown Colony by itself. A Legislative Council with nominated and elected seats was inaugurated on 1 April 1948 and voluntary elections were held in 1948 and 1951. In 1955, a voluntary election was held for a new Legislative Assembly under a new constitution based upon the recommendations of the Rendel Commission. It was only in 1959, that election was made compulsory after the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on corrupt practices allegedly found in the election system. See C. C. Ong, "The 1959 Singapore General Election," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* VI, no. 1 (1975).

28 *Ibid.*

29 C. L. Pang, "The People's Action Party: 1954-1963," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 10 (1969).

30 Lee cited in *Ibid.*: 143.

PAP's anti-colonial and socialist orientation. The PAP's convincing victory in the election, winning 43 of the 51 contested seats was indicative of the sentiments of the majority of the migrants.<sup>31</sup> This symbolic act of democracy marked the end of the colonial rule, intensified the emphasis from a subject identity to a citizen identity, and from migrant to local, engendering a unification of all people of different ethnic communities and social classes, and giving prominence to a state-citizenry relationship and within a formalized nation-state. In the process, self government also brought the different communal and institutional threads together and began the weaving of the tapestry that was to become the chief centre of trade and commerce in Southeast Asia that Raffles had envisioned over a century earlier.

Following the establishment of an elected government, the degree and extent of centralized control increased. Sport was one of the cultural institutions that no longer continued autonomously, based on the independent regulations of the individual clubs and schools. Whilst clubs continued to be run as private organizations, they were subjected to some government's regulations, in particular, the membership racial profile. Like its Japanese predecessor, the government of the new nation centralised the control of sport with a quick but sure monopolization of the autonomous sport clubs, sport associations and sport resources. Central to this process, was the monopolization of violence and taxation by the government. These two processes, which have been discussed earlier, developed to a fuller extent. However, unlike the preceding phases, the chains of interdependency between the government and the citizens were relatively more tightly interwoven, and the task of attaining hegemony took on a less violent form.

Elias's explanation of the state formation, developed in the context of medieval Europe, centres on three dominant centripetal forces. The principal elements are: monopoly mechanism, royal mechanism and transformation of 'private' into 'public' monopolies. By the monopoly mechanism, Elias refers to the shift in the balance of power and control of opportunities from many unintegrated individuals to a smaller number. In the case of Singapore, the network of demand and supply of land, economic and social opportunities became more differentiated with the state gaining an

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31 *Ibid.*

increasing control. However, as the state accumulated more and more control, the latter also became increasingly dependent on their dependents. Elias argues that the state is able to maintain its position as the tension in the social figuration is balanced between groups on different social power levels who "keep each other in check as interdependent antagonists, as opponent and partners as once."<sup>32</sup> He terms this balancing principle the "royal mechanism."<sup>33</sup> By the transfer of 'private' into 'public', Elias refers to the monopolies of control shifting from private control and with personal gains to one with extensive division of functions and with collective interests. The monopolized resources, therefore, becomes a function of the social figuration. These elements, he argues, were intertwined, rather than successive stages in the overall process of development.<sup>34</sup> Factors such as the increase in population, the money economy, the development of communication and transport are also germane to an understanding of the development of the social figuration. Clearly, Europe in the Middle Ages was dramatically different from Singapore in the mid twentieth century. Nonetheless, these principal elements are reflected in the process of state formation in Singapore.

The process of state formation did not begin with the establishment of independent government, or the formation of the PAP as the dominant party in what was to become independent Singapore. Rather, it began with the settlement of the British colony, continued to grow right through to the Japanese Occupation and developed into its mature form with the election of the PAP. The British had the monopoly over land and force but they maintained a relatively laissez-faire system which allowed the establishment of a large number of small private monopolies. Opportunities, particularly in the first century, were to be found and made. The government's laissez faire system facilitated the growth of a strong fiscal health. The Japanese government's monopolization of taxes, violence and resources demonstrated a relatively crude form of the monopoly mechanism. Upon return to the British rule, free competition was restored and the monopolization of resources lay more with individuals or clusters of individuals rather than solely with the government.

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32 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 320.

33 *Ibid.*

34 Mennell, *Norbert Elias: Civilization and the Human Self-Image*.

Elias contends that the figuration of sport embodies and reflects the ideology of the central authority as well as the dynamics in the overall social figuration and equally this was evident in the context of Singapore.<sup>35</sup> Thus, under the British sport was no longer monopolized by the government but the control was divided amongst the various independent clubs and sport associations. With the PAP elected as government, like the Japanese, they systematically and swiftly monopolized resources, including sport, as they established their hegemonic rule. However, the manifestation of the monopoly mechanism under the PAP took on a more sophisticated form, based on a newly constructed shared identity in context of the conditions of existence of the new nation.

The majority of new permanent settlers on the island were Chinese migrants who were more reluctant to return to China because of the turmoil and social unrest associated with the Cultural Revolution.<sup>36</sup> With this growing population and the implicit increasing competition, the PAP implemented waves of centralization to restructure the economic and social configuration. The fundamental character and the extent of these changes were indicated by the government's approach to housing. It increased its monopoly of control over land by undertaking a massive re-building programme of residential accommodation, which involved the relocation of a very large proportion of the population. This enabled the government to gain control of more land and concomitantly, increase its relative social power. It also took the opportunity this afforded to abolish the racially segmented distribution of housing initiated by Raffles and to replace it with a calculated mixing of members of different ethnic groups to blurr traditional social divisions and effect a tighter and more differentiated network of interdependencies. These transformations were justified by the government on the grounds of 'survival', which was fundamental and common to all social groups in the nation.

For many, these sweeping changes were highly threatening. The Chinese had collective memories of the hardships of their early migrant history well to the fore of their consciousness, embellished with the memories of the previous 20 years which included the terrible conditions and hardships of the Japanese Occupation, as well as

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35 Elias, "An Essay on Sport and Violence."

36 Turnbull, *A History of Singapore: 1819 - 1988*.

the agony of their expulsion from the Federation of Malaysia, all coupled with the on-going problems associated with the withdrawal of the British forces from the island. The Malays in Singapore were too in a position, in which, on the one hand, they are acutely conscious that Singapore is in the 'Nusantara', or Malay world, on the other hand, their generally lower socio-economic status positioned them lower in the Chinese dominated Singapore.<sup>37</sup>

The race riots of 1950 and the 1960s also reinforced the tension present in the heterogeneous society. The series of social and political conflicts leading up to independence which destabilized the economic and social relations supported the government's description of Singapore as the "unlikely country"<sup>38</sup> and the sense of its fragility that it cultivated. The bond between the government and the people was illustrated in Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's regular reinforcement of the importance of the undifferentiated and common economic purpose in his 1966 speech to the manufacturing trade union in which he tried to convince them to increase their productivity whilst supporting a less generous pay system:

Accusations have been made that I suddenly decided to become anti-labour, anti-treble pay and anti-the worker... Is it true? Have I gone mad to abandon a whole life time of work and objectives? Or is it that I have become more matter-of-fact and I say, "look, in this situation, we do this or we die."<sup>39</sup>

The relationship between the ruler and the ruled involves a constant negotiation of interests. The ideology of survival dominated public discourse and concomitantly basic needs preceded and subsumed other interests, and this formed the basis of the hegemony and state-citizenry bond. A demonstration of this at work can be seen in Lee's graphic speech to the Ponggol residents at a dinner function:

Here tonight we have a thousand people, shelter, lights, microphones and good food. Do you believe all this and a secure prosperous future comes

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37 L. Z. Rahim, *The Singapore Dilemma: The Political and Educational Marginality of the Malay Community* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1998).

38 "An Unlikely Country by Any Definition," *The Straits Times*, 18 August 1987, 12.

39 "Lee: A System Where It Pays to Work Hard," *The Sunday Times*, 28 August 1966.



naturally? If you do, then I say we don't deserve to survive... And there are no dinners such as this, because behind the dinner lies the organisation of a society that can provide the infrastructure for the people to hire cooks, to have tables, chairs, food and other things... If we take these things for granted then we will die. These things are there because you and I, your father and my father worked for this, and we will fight and keep this and build on it. There is no other way.<sup>40</sup>

The process of winning the political hegemony involved not only activity at the worker level, but also at the pre-worker level. At a school parade, for instance, he inculcated the ideology of survival: "For we have suddenly found ourselves in a situation where if the people do not organise and mobilise themselves, their long-term survival can be extremely precarious."<sup>41</sup> The economic justification was central to winning hearts and minds, but the effectiveness of the process was sustained not so much by the political campaign or the validity of the rationale, as by the bonds established between citizens and the government as more and more resources became monopolized by the state.

With the establishment of a Singaporean government, the structural pressure on groups in the overall social figuration of Singapore grew as the level of state formation became higher and higher. The government demonstrated the force of its control with rapid establishment of a succession of key institutions, including the Housing Development Board (HDB) in 1959, the Economic Development Board (EDB) in 1961 and the Public Utilities Board (PUB) in 1963, all of which tightened the relationship between the government and the citizen. Money, housing and utilities are arguably fundamental to social life, and control over them thus promoted the condition for a highly effective bond. In addition to taking a more dominant control of the living and working spaces, the government also took control of recreational space with the establishment of the Singapore Sports Council. Moreover, the passing of a Women's Charter in 1962 signalled and facilitated the entry of women into more social functions and enabled greater contribution to the economy. This further tightened and lengthened the webs of interdependencies between men and women. By 1974, the government had

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40 "Lee: Don't Take What You Have for Granted," *The Straits Times*, 23 August 1966.

41 "Sees Boys' Brigade as Framework for Future Society," *The Straits Times*, 29 August 1966.

direct or indirect participation in 124 business companies.<sup>42</sup> It also established controls over the actions of the National Trade Union Board (NTUC) with an amendment of the Trade Unions Act in 1968 which "made it illegal for trade union to take strike or industrial action without a secret ballot."<sup>43</sup> Moreover, ministers took on leading roles in the union movement, so that it could now be seen as an extension of the government. Similarly, the establishment of the Political Study Center in 1959 allowed the government to impart political education to civil servants, and to inform them of its policies and ideology. As Cabinet Minister S. Rajaratnam explained,

It did not take long before we established a close link between us and the civil service. In fact, after the first two elections, the PAP became really an administration. It was no longer a party. And the civil service became a part of that.<sup>44</sup>

The monopolization of social functions was backed up by the effectiveness of centralized control in producing and reproducing the ideology that the opportunities to compete for resources were generally available and fair. This reinforced the legitimacy of the government in the minds of the people and facilitated the implementation of future policies. Between 1965 and 1969 Singapore enjoyed an average of 13% annual economic growth, with a total GDP that rose from \$3048.7million to \$4906.1 million and unemployment rate that fell from 13.2% in 1959 to 6.7% by the end of 1969.<sup>45</sup>

With no natural mineral resources, a small land area with an inadequate level of agricultural production, and a population density which increased from 2,799 per square kilometre in 1960 to 3,546 per square kilometre in 1970, industrial development in Singapore required a high level of cooperation between all sectors, as well as competition for resources.<sup>46</sup> Central to the development of Singapore's economy was an increasing interdependency on the economies of other countries. The

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42 G. Rodan, *The Political Economy of Singapore's Industrialization: National State and International Capital* (London: Macmillan, 1989).

43 Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*, 87.

44 cited in Vasil, *Governing Singapore: A History of National Development and Democracy*.

45 Rodan, *The Political Economy of Singapore's Industrialization: National State and International Capital*.

46 S. A. Lee, *Industrialization in Singapore* (Melbourne: Longman, 1973).

implementation of favourable tax policies to attract foreign investment and export locally manufactured products directly opened more economic opportunities.<sup>47</sup> With an increasing dependence on the international market to enlarge its economic fodder, the process of internationalizing intensified for an increasingly populated nation. As a newly formed independent nation, the process of nationalizing of resources was intricately intertwined with the internationalizing of the products, practices and images of Singapore.

Whilst international trade links were a significant part of the development of Singapore's economy during the colonial era, there was no explicit cultivation of a Singaporean national identity, with the majority of the population being sojourners rather than citizens, and even the locally-born inhabitants had anchored their cultural orientation to imaginary homelands as a result of socialization in schools and at home.<sup>48</sup> The nationalization of the population, changing residents from migrants into citizens, occurred alongside increased interdependency on physical, economic and social spaces. The process was also accelerated by the greater interdependency between citizens and the central government which had monopolized more resources and was what Elias describes as the "supreme coordinator and regulator for functionally differentiated figuration."<sup>49</sup> By contrast with Singapore during the colonial rule the PAP systematically shifted the bonding between social groups from segmental to functional. Their discourse of 'survival' militated against political self-interest and legitimised the monopolization of control by the government. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's justification of the symbolic gesture of the marching of the cabinet ministers in the first National Day Parade in 1966 reinforced the public perception of the state the government wished to encourage:

This is necessary and it is part of the verve, the mettle of the people that when we ask you to fight for your survival, we are prepared to fight with you and not ask you to fight for me.<sup>50</sup>

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47 Rodan, *The Political Economy of Singapore's Industrialization: National State and International Capital*.

48 Chua, *Communitarian, Ideology and Democracy in Singapore*, 101.

49 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 163.

50 "Our Future Not as a Chinese Society: Lee," *The Straits Times*, 13 August 1966.

This increasing interdependence of a larger range of social functions and populations gradually created a pattern that bound the people more closely to each other and to the state. The expulsion from the Federation of Malaysia marked a crucial galvanisation of a sense of nationalism in Singapore. With no alternative leadership available, the PAP's position was at this point secured, with the legitimacy of Lee Kuan Yew's leadership being unquestioned.<sup>51</sup> As the citizens became increasingly dependent on the government, the latter gained more and more control of an increasing range of social, cultural, economic, legal, and economic institutions. Taxation and the means of control became more sophisticated as the relationship between the state and the citizens became more interwoven. The level of policing also expanded from a physical and violent form to an omnipresent level, which included a high level of self-pacification. This phenomenon is described by Elias as:

Owing to this monopoly, the direct use of force is now largely excluded... The restraint of the affects imposed on the individual by his dependence on the monopoly ruler has increased. And individuals now waver between resistance to the compulsion to which they are subjected, hatred of their dependence and unfreedom, nostalgia for free knightly rivalry, on the one hand, and pride in the self-control they have acquired, or delight in the new possibilities of pleasure that it opens, on the other.<sup>52</sup>

Institutionalized punishment of crime is a central characteristic of first world societies. The policing of social conduct parallels and follows the development of the society. The tighter and more differentiated the society is, the more extensive the external regulation becomes. Generally, the more extensive the regulation is, the lower is the threshold of tolerance of violence. Self and social regulation may become more dominant and social conduct also becomes more and more grounded and legitimised on an ideological level. But external regulation of overt physical nature remains integral to the policing of the society. To mediate the lower tolerance of violence, a greater degree of regulation and justification can be observed in the determination of

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51 C. O. Khong, "Singapore: Political Legitimacy through Managing Conformity," in *Political Legitimacy in Southeast Asia: The Quest for Moral Authority*, ed. M. Alagappa (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

52 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 113.

the punishment of criminals. As the following rationalization and organization of the punishment of crime in Singapore by Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew illustrates:

After what I had seen of human conduct in the years of deprivation and harshness of Japanese occupation, I did not accept the theory that a criminal is a victim of society. Punishment then was so severe that even in 1944-1945, when many did not have enough to eat, there were no burglaries and people could leave their front doors unlocked, day or night. The deterrent was effective... We found caning more effective than long prison terms and imposed it for crimes related to drugs, arms trafficking, rape, illegal entry into Singapore, and vandalizing of public property.<sup>53</sup>

One of the most controversial forms of self-regulation in social conduct has emerged from the retention of the colonial Internal Security Act, initially implemented to police communism.<sup>54</sup> According to this Act, a citizen can be arbitrarily arrested on unspecified charges and jailed without trial for an initial period of two years which can be extended indefinitely.<sup>55</sup> The underlying regulatory policy of the press is, as Prime Minister Lee later explained it, "Freedom of the press, freedom of the news media, must be subordinated... to the primacy of purpose of an elected government."<sup>56</sup> However, there existed an equally if not more significant control of speech, as was demonstrated by the imprisonment of four editors of the Chinese language newspaper, *Nanyang Siang Pau*, and the closure of two English-language newspapers, the *Eastern Sun* and the *Singapore Herald*.<sup>57</sup> Other examples of this form of control were the legal suits filed by the government against political opposition party members such as J. B. Jeyaratnam, Francis Seow and more recently Chee Soon Juan, all of which perpetuate

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53 Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*, 213.

54 B. H. Chua, "The Relative Autonomies of the State and Civil Society," in *State-Society Relations in Singapore*, ed. G. Koh and G. L. Ooi (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 2000).

55 See Chua, *Communitarian, Ideology and Democracy in Singapore*.; H. L. Oey, *Power Struggle in South-East Asia* (Switzerland: Inter Documentation Company, 1976).; Rodan, *The Political Economy of Singapore's Industrialization: National State and International Capital*.

56 Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*, 190.

57 See L. Fong, "Three Newsmen Held," *The Straits Times*, 3 May 1971.; Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*.

the level of external regulation.<sup>58</sup> The imminent concern over permissible speech is exemplified by academic Chua Beng Huat in the acknowledgement section of his book, *Communitarian, Ideology and Democracy in Singapore*:

Among those who worried about the 'controversial' nature of some of the pieces within the Singapore context were various members of my family, some close friends and sociology students; their concerns often kept the essays more balance.<sup>59</sup>

The attainment of hegemony was thus facilitated with the increasing overlap of the external policing of speech with the self restraint on what was the acceptable conduct of speech. The 2001 General Election, which saw only two opposition members elected into Parliament, is indicative of this fusion. For the government to acknowledge these two opposition members with hardly any severe criticism could suggest that they welcome their presence, and the depoliticised nature of social figuration.<sup>60</sup> It also suggests that the attainment of political hegemony is intertwined with external regulation and self-regulation of social conduct and individual expression which raises the significance of sport as a release of social tension.

The reason that a central authority is able to sustain its rule even in a high and evenly distributed interdependence of functions is explained by the second principle, the royal mechanism. Elias describes this tenet as follows:

the hour of the strong central authority within a highly differentiated society strikes when the ambivalence of interests of the most important functional groups grows so large, and power is distributed so evenly between them, that there can be neither a decisive compromise nor a decisive conflict between them.<sup>61</sup>

The monopoly mechanism is a necessary but not an exclusive determinant of the PAP hegemony. Inextricably linked with the monopoly mechanism, were the chains of interdependency between the state and citizenry which were formed with the

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58 Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*.

59 Chua, *Communitarian, Ideology and Democracy in Singapore*, iv.

60 Vasil, *Governing Singapore: A History of National Development and Democracy*.

61 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 171.

government's provision of opportunities and competition for capital gain. Former Minister for Defence, Dr Goh Keng Swee, describes the dynamics of the state-citizenry relationship thus:

There is no such thing as going all out for economic growth or nation building or individual liberty, or this, that or other. We have to find a right mix of these desirable objectives, often sacrificing a measure of one to get more of another. In Singapore, we have mounted the main effort to achieve fast economic growth through the free enterprise system. There is no other realistic alternative.<sup>62</sup>

The provision of opportunities facilitated the ideology of free competition as well as what Elias describes as the quality of "ambivalence of interest" in the social figuration.<sup>63</sup> By "ambivalence of interest," Elias refers to the knowledge and pressure that any action taken to threaten the position of an opponent also entails threatening the position of the perpetrator.<sup>64</sup> It is inherent in the figuration of a highly developed society, Elias contends.<sup>65</sup> The government can neither sustain nor expand its position without depending on the citizens to manage the monopolized resources. Equally, when the citizens have access to these opportunities by way of the distribution and competition of resources, the sense of ambivalence is cultivated between citizens and between the citizen and the state. In the case of Singapore, the characteristic of ambivalence can be identified for instance, in the provision of private ownership of HDB flats since 1964.<sup>66</sup> This on the one hand shifted the citizens from tenants to owners' whilst on the other made them increasingly dependent on the state which was not only the seller of the homes, but the land title holder, mortgagor, estate manager and council planner; the chains of interdependency were clearly being tightened. The creation of economic opportunities, minimization of income tax facilitated by the state

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62 "What Price in Personal Liberty Must We Pay for Nation Building?," *The Straits Times*, 10 May 1971.

63 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 318.

64 *Ibid.*

65 *Ibid.*, 318.

66 S. E. Teo and V. E. Savage, "Singapore Landscape: A Historical Overview of Housing Image," in *A History of Singapore*, ed. E. Chew and E. Lee (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991).

control of the CPF and the provision of a network of infrastructure, served the interest of the individual, which in turn enhanced the attainment of political hegemony. The regular espousal of statements to reinforce the policies and ideology put in place to facilitate nation building is illustrated by the following statement:

If we did not have sufficient, economic growth at least to mop up the large numbers of unemployed youths which was then thought to be an insoluble problem, then any talk of nation building would be idle chatter.<sup>67</sup>

Ambivalence of interest is balanced by conflict and harmony. If conflict between the leading groups is too extreme, the negative side of the ambivalent relationships would result in abrupt shifts and a continuous struggle for power. Conversely, if the powerful functional groups are able to cooperate without any conflicts that threaten the social apparatus, the central authority would be of less importance. Thus, it is only when the situation of the majority of the functional groups is not too unbearable for them to risk their social existence and at the same time that they feel threatened by each other with power evenly distributed between them, that an uprising against the central rulers can be averted. This peculiar constellation is explained by Elias as the unique quality of "open or latent ambivalence" of human relationships, which he says emerges with the advancing division of social functions.<sup>68</sup> Elias characterizes this process thus:

In the relations between individuals, as well as in those between different functional strata, a specific *duality of even multiplicity of interests* manifests itself more strongly, the broader and denser the network of social interdependence becomes. Here, all people, all groups, estates or classes, are in some way dependent on one another; they are potential friends, allies or partners; and they are at the same time potential opponents, competitors or enemies.<sup>69</sup>

Through these very tensions, the social figuration evolves towards a more unequivocal form of hegemony and gives rise to new forms of the integration of the

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67 "What Price in Personal Liberty Must We Pay for Nation Building?"

68 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 167.

69 *Ibid.*



various functional groups with the central authority. Although the central authority has greater scope for decision-making than the rest of the community, it is equally dependent upon the structure of the apparatus. On the one hand, it must enter alliances with some groups to win battles and strengthen its position whilst on the other hand not demonstrate excessive support or share identical interests with those of any class or group. Elias argues that the central authority often makes alliances with the second most powerful group rather than the most powerful to ensure that the equilibrium in the field of tension in the social figuration. Indeed this principle has been clearly evident throughout the development of the PAP in Singapore. From its cooperation with the communists rather than middle class social groups in the 1959 election to its careful tread on the multiculturalism line rather than to demonstrate an overt alliance with the Chinese majority, the PAP drives a national ideology and a national identity that at best is multicultural and at worst is racially indefinable to diminish the identity and power of any individual group and thus increase its dependency on the central authority. Firstly, the symbolic features of a state, such as the flag which bears symbols of Islam and the national anthem which is sung in Malay. Secondly, the transformation in social policies put pressure in the social habitus of the different racial groups. For instance, the banning of inter-racial sport competitions and the removal of racial discrimination in membership of clubs limited the sites and opportunities to distinguish the different ethnic identities. Both symbolically and ideologically, the collective power of each group became diminished with the racial identity and capital. The sense of ambivalence was enabled by the shift away from a racial identity and towards a national identity. The PAP has been returned to government at every election since 1959 demonstrating that it has been very effective in balancing and increasing the chains of interdependency within the society thus sustaining and increasing its hegemonic control. Although the distribution of resources and opportunities by the central authority is anything but equal, as exemplified in differences in the development of sport and education, the royal mechanism is strong enough to legitimise the process and nature of sportization. The second principle is more apparent in the next phase of sportization when the web of interdependencies became even more complex.

The third principle, 'transformation of private to public monopolies' is the phase in which control over the centralized and monopolized resources shifts from the private

to public domain which is most obvious in societies with a very high and rising division of functions. Power that had been won through military or economic force now allowed the central authority to plan all future developments. Distribution of the opportunities and resources is thus a central task of the monopoly ruler and its administration, which accentuates the interdependencies of the government and the people. The web of interdependency of the social figuration emerges more and more clearly in organizational form which Elias describes in the following:

Permanent institutions to control them are formed by a greater or lesser portion of the people dependent on this monopoly apparatus; and control of the monopoly, the fulfilling of its key positions, is itself no longer decided by the vicissitudes of "free competition," but by regularly recurring elimination contests without force of arms, which are regulated by the monopoly apparatus, and thus by "unfree" competition. In other words, what we are accustomed to call a "democratic regime" is formed.<sup>70</sup>

The government's resumption of private land to build residential and commercial buildings with the establishment of the Housing and Development Board in 1960 and the Economic Development Board in 1961, effectively positioned the government as the largest landowner of the land scarce island.<sup>71</sup> This transfer of control from the hands of private individuals to the state is observable in the transformation of sport in Singapore. As the dominant landowner, the government gained an increased control over recreation space. Additionally, the formation of a centralized sport body, the Singapore Sports Council, shifted the dominant control of sport from the various independent clubs to the government. Concomitant to this process of state formation is the shift in the structural bonding of various social groups.<sup>72</sup> During the colonial era, the interdependency chains within each ethnic group were tighter than those between groups as demonstrated by the ethnic and class identity of the clubs. Dunning terms this as segmental bonding whereby each community is self-sufficient and dependency

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<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>71</sup> Lee, *Industrialization in Singapore*.

<sup>72</sup> E. Dunning, "Social Bonding and Violence in Sport," in *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process*, ed. N. Elias and E. Dunning (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

upon the state is low. With the lengthening of interdependency chains as a consequence of functional democratisation, segmental bonding becomes replaced by functioning bonding. The latter refers to nationally integrated communities being tied together by the extensive chains of interdependence with continuous pressure from above. With increasing functional bonding and dependency on the state, the power ratio is greater on the government which in Singapore was clearly more apparent after independence. The PAP enlisted the government ministries and national controlling bodies in various spheres and at various levels such as law, economy, education, health, and sport to significantly define and redefine the social figuration.

### **Centralization of Sport: Nationalization, Democratization and Massification**

The centralization phase displays a growing seriousness in the rationale of leisure and sport. The increased economic competitiveness that emerged as a consequence of the growing population, limited resources and economic instability, also tightened the chains of interdependence on the "supreme organ of co-ordination and regulation."<sup>73</sup> Equally the figuration of sport is intertwined with the changes in the overall social figuration. Indeed post independence, the shift of control of sport from private to public monopolies facilitated a web of processes, namely: institutionalization, rationalization, codification, legalization, democratization and the scientization of sport. As sport became more regulated and more public, the ludic element of sport established in the colonial era is broadened to include a 'purposeful' physical and social healthism directed at productivity, ruggedness for defense and eugenics. By contrast with its colonial predecessors, sportization in Singapore during Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew's era exhibited four distinct features:

1. A complex set of formally instituted written rules and programme which demand strict control over how sport is played and which prohibit inter-racial competition.
2. Clearly defined functions of sport to serve military, economic and social needs.
3. Centralized control of sport and physical education by the government institutions.

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<sup>73</sup> Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 316.

4. Establishment of sporting facilities which enabled and constrained the nature of sport.

This sportization process occurred as part of a continuous social process and reflects the direction of the social changes. The two most significant monopolizing agents of this phase were: (a) the institution of the Singapore Sports Council in 1965 and (b) the centralization of physical education and sports in schools. These two institutions began the increasing centralized control of sport from its birth (at schools) to its maturity (national representation) which redefine sport to embrace political goals. To speak of sport as having undergone this phase of sportization is not to state that it has become more popular or important as a social aspect of life. Rather it is to demonstrate that the dynamics in the figuration of sport are continuously constrained and enabled by the wider social figuration. Concomitantly, economic and social developments that have given rise to greater organization in sport have simultaneously perpetuated the value of sport to be one of fitness and productivity.

After Singapore achieved self governance under the PAP in 1959, a shift towards a more centralized control of sport was underway. The process of centralization of sport was part of and intertwined with the overall centralization process. One of the first manifestations of the centralization process was the formation in 1960 of the People's Association (PA). The PA was created to monitor and control the volunteer-run community centres. These community centres were first established by the colonial government after the Second World War primarily for recreational purposes which facilitated the segmental bonding of the respective ethnic groups. There were only twenty-four community centres when the PAP came into power.<sup>74</sup> Before Singapore became fully independent in 1965, the government built more than a hundred new community centres to provide social meeting places.<sup>75</sup> These public facilities and the PA itself also enabled a direction of how, where and when leisure could be practised. In the process, a greater chain of interdependency between the government and the people was facilitated and a tighter control of the leisure sphere of the people was

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74 L. C. Hill, "Report on the Reform of Local Government: Colony of Singapore," (Singapore: Colonial Office, 1952).

75 C. M. Seah, *Community Centres in Singapore - Their Political Involvement* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1973).

accorded to the government. Although the PA was established with the purpose of promoting multi-racialism and to diminish the social division in the community, Seah suggests that these centres also facilitated the communication between the government and the grassroots.<sup>76</sup> It allowed the PAP to have an additional channel whereby policies could be effectively communicated and implemented whilst concerns and feedback of the grassroots could be transmitted to the government, therefore these centres could be viewed as a "mechanism of political socialization and control."<sup>77</sup>

The establishment of the PA expanded the accessibility to recreation facilities for the citizens. Similarly, in 1962, the government demanded at least a 1 to 1 ratio of Singaporean and expatriate membership in all major clubs.<sup>78</sup> This process of the democratization of sport clubs suggests another direct attempt to end the sporting apartheid that was previously endemic in Singapore; it also reduced the opportunities for race distinction and implicitly supported the emphasis of a nation rather than a racial community. Inter-racial competitions were also banned to reduce ethnic rivalry and segmental bonding. The increasing political pressure on the clubs to shift towards a multi-racial identity competed with the traditional attitude, which is reflected in the following sentiment expressed by Andrew Gilmore, the President of the Singapore Cricket Club: "the best place to get our head down is amongst your own people."<sup>79</sup> A pioneering non-European member of the formerly European-exclusive Singapore Swimming Club also reflected: "We were only at ease when more locals joined. We didn't mix with the Europeans as they kept to themselves."<sup>80</sup> Whilst doors were opened and recruitment campaigns were orchestrated, the racial mixing in recreation spaces could not be as easily compelled or contrived.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, the seeds of multiculturalism were planted in the bed of development. More significantly however, was the fertilization of the seeds of post-colonialism, independence and nationalism as the bastions of European distinction, the Singapore Cricket Club and the Singapore

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>78</sup> Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*, 147.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>80</sup> Yeo, ed., *The First 100 Years: Singapore Swimming Club*, 65.

<sup>81</sup> Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*.

Swimming Club lost their exclusive image. The accessibility by non-Europeans elevated their relative status whilst at the same time diminished the status of the Europeans. This shift facilitates and reflects the rise of status and empowerment amongst the non-Europeans as they prepared for independence.

Social reform towards multiculturalism was also taking place in the residential arrangement. Through the efforts of the HDB, the government could systematically remodel the historic homogeneous housing distribution established by Raffles. The government, like Raffles, regulated the distribution of races in each residential estate. However, unlike Raffles, the government's housing plan was grounded on the basis of integrating the different races rather than separating them. This institutional effort of the government thus enabled them to foster a national identity which would transcend parochial affiliations. Implicit to this notion of national identity is Elias's concept of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties. The government's systematic collapse of the platforms or barriers of ethnic division facilitated a commingling of cultures like never before and their attempts to control and regulate the behaviour and activities of the various cultures added to the homogeneity of the social figuration. As Dunning argues, "the reciprocal pressures and controls that operated in urban-industrial societies generally are replicated in the sphere of sport."<sup>82</sup> As the living space became tightened, the recreation and trading space available in each residential estate also facilitated a greater interaction amongst different races.

Upon independence, the government stood on its own for the first time, without the support of the Malayan or the British government. The acceleration of the centralization of resources included the establishment of the Singapore Sports Council (SSC) in 1966. It is, arguably, reminiscent of the Syonan Sport Association established by the Japanese government and too was one of the most significant steps in the centralization of sport in Singapore. The SSC was the advisory and consultative body for the Sports Division of the Ministry of Cultural and Social Affairs and the body under which all the independent sport associations, established by volunteers, were brought under the government's centralized control. It created a tighter relationship between the government and sport clubs, which consequently meant that the latter lost

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82 Dunning, "The Dynamics of Modern Sport: Notes on Achievement -Striving and the Social Significance of Sport," 220.

some of their autonomy whilst the former gained a greater amount of control and supervision of their activities, effecting the transformation from the private to the public monopolization of sport. Political interest became increasingly colluded with the activities of the sports associations. This was reflected by the appointment of Minister for Cultural and Social Affairs, Inche Othman Wok, as the founding President of the SSC.<sup>83</sup> Similarly, the Minister for Law, E. W. Barker, became the President of the Singapore Olympic Sports Council (SOSC), which was established by a group of volunteers during the colonial years. Even sport associations began to be headed by Ministers, for example the Prime Minister Lee was the president of the prestigious Singapore Rifle Club whilst the President of Singapore, Yusof Ishak, was the patron of both the Rifle Club and the association in charge of the most popular sport, the Football Association of Singapore (FAS), Minister for Economics Goh Keng Swee was the Patron-in-chief of the Singapore Table Tennis Association which largely represented the sporting interests of the Chinese and Minister for Defence, S. Rajaratnam was Patron of the Singapore Amateur Wrestling Association which was a sport that mainly attracted the English-speaking community.<sup>84</sup> The most significant of all such political associations was when the Singapore Cricket Club conferred Lee Kuan Yew with the highest honour of 'Visitor' in 1970, as a "means of safeguarding the character and traditions of the Club."<sup>85</sup> Such associations may appear to hold more symbolic significance than control over the respective sport and practices, however, by association, greater opportunities and accessibility for the overlapping of political and sport objectives were made available.

Through the Constituency Sports Association (CSA), those from the lower-socio-economic groups who could not afford membership of exclusive sports clubs had an avenue through which they could participate in sport. It provided a means to integrate the different members in the medium of sport and to build associations and attach identity to the Constituency Sports Clubs and this added to the traditional status symbols of ethnicity or language. Together with the increasing necessity of the interaction and exchange of goods, space and experiences of different social groups,

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83 E. Frida, "Sports 'Factory' Is Set Up," *The Straits Times* 1965, 1.

84 Oon, "Government Involvement in Sport in Singapore: 1959-1982", 158.

85 Sharp, *The Singapore Cricket Club: Established 1852*, 171.

functional bonds gradually became more dominant than segmental bonds and, consequently a greater chain of interdependency emerged. The SSC together with the Sports Division were also responsible for the promotion of multiculturalism and international relationship through sport. Pesta Sukan (Festival of Sport) was initiated by the Ministry of Culture in 1964 as Singapore was entering into the Federation of Malaysia with the purpose of promoting sports and games as well as to foster international ties, particularly in an attempt to unify with Malaysia. Since the cessation of the New Year's Day Sport in 1962 Pesta Sukan provides the sport festivities of the annual social calendar. Like its predecessor, its emphasis was on fun and frolic rather than achievement, interaction rather than competition. Unlike the New Year's Day sport, the Pesta Sukan was directed and organized by the state. The paternalistic nature underlying the New Year's Day sport had developed into a political nature. The government recognized that sport could assist in unifying the nation as well as establishing an amiable relationship with its immediate neighbours and the rest of world. The festival became an avenue for the penetration of the political ideology into sport, effecting an overlapping of sport and public discourse, as illustrated in Prime Minister Lee's explanation of the purpose of Pesta Sukan:

Sport is politics – very much politics in a very international way. And sport, I'm sorry to say, is also very much internal politics. (Pesta Sukan was to) drive home one point – that a Malaysian multi-racial society gives out its best in sport and other pursuits, be it in economics or in the intellect or in outer space when it makes use of the best in Malaysia.<sup>86</sup>

Singapore continued to organize the Pesta Sukan after independence. Whilst it lost its lustre with the rising prominence of the SEA Games and Asian Games, its emphasis more on participation and regional relationship than sporting achievement distinguishes it from the competitive, medal counting SEA and Asian Games. It was a regional sporting event that provided the various sports associations and government bodies to work together, as the Minister of Culture and Social Affairs associated this

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<sup>86</sup> 'Sport is Politics', *The Straits Times*, 29 July 1965, 1.



event as a step into the "golden age of sport."<sup>87</sup> He described the significance of Pesta Sukan in glowing terms:

This national orientation, which is so essential for nation building in the field of sports promotion, is fast becoming more and more evident as sports leaders get together more often to work in collaboration to promote nation-wide sports project.<sup>88</sup>

The National Sports Promotion Board (NSPB) formed in 1971 replaced the Sports Division. It emerged shortly after the government had found that the fitness of the school pupils was not satisfactory for preparation for National Service. The Minister for Culture and Social Affairs Othman Wok was again appointed, as the Chairman of the Board. Pesta Sukan became an important event on its calendar to promote fitness for military and economic functions as well as national identity and international relations. Inter-constituency sports competitions were organized on a national scale in 1972 with the aim of promoting mass participation in sports; developing the physical fitness of Singaporeans, particularly the youth who have left school and to improve the standard of sports.<sup>89</sup> As the Chairman of the Singapore Sports Council Tan Eng Liang explained the importance of inter-constituency sports in creating avenues for sports participation for all,

Let us be realistic the determining factor between involvement and non-involvement in sports is usually money – personal disposable income. In sports, as in other pursuits of life, only those who have the means will get it.<sup>90</sup>

The NSPB was soon dissolved in 1973 when it was found wanting by the government in its promotion of sports. Ironically, the proposals of its deputy director, S. T. Ratnam, are implicitly embraced in later government sport policies. In his

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87 "Stepping into 'Golden Age'," *The Straits Times*, 4 August 1966.

88 *Ibid.*

89 "A Report of the Recommendations by Constituency Sports Association." (paper presented at the Constituency Sports Committee Seminar, Singapore, 21 September 1975).

90 "Speech by Tan Eng Liang, Chairman, Singapore Sports Council" (paper presented at the Officiating at the Opening of the Seminar for Sports Liaison Officers/Constituency Sports Officials, 21 September 1975).

*Philosophy and Proposals*, Ratnam spelt out his vision of sport in the future – a sports school, a physical education college, an emphasis on international sports, sports recognition and scholarships, professionalism in training, a sports village, life-insurance policies for athletes, nutrition support, and greater funding.<sup>91</sup> Given the progressive implementation of these strategies since the 1980s, it suggests that the timing of his proposals was unfortunately way ahead of the political, social and sporting developments of the period. His identification of the problems that plagued the sporting system and the constraints it confronted from the education system and the pressure of economic competition were also reiterated in the theses of Oon and McNeill.<sup>92</sup> Ratnam initiated a shift in the political perspective of sport, posing the proposition of not asking, "What can the national sportsmen do for the country?" but, for a change, "What can the country do for them?" However, these progressive ideas unfortunately did not meet Othman Wok's requirement of being "realistic and progressive in outlook."<sup>93</sup>

The formation and dissolution of the NSPB demonstrated firstly the manifestations of the monopoly of control of sport. It also enabled a greater emphasis on the public functions of sport as shown by the expediency and attention placed on the promotion of fitness. The NSPB collapsed and was amalgamated with the National Stadium Corporation (NSC) and renamed the Singapore Sports Council (SSC). The NSC like the NSPB was established by an Act of Parliament to oversee the construction of the national stadium in Singapore in 1971.<sup>94</sup> And in 1973 Parliament passed the Singapore Sports Council Bill to plan and promote sports in Singapore for both competitive and recreational purposes.<sup>95</sup> It also empowered the SSC to prepare, manufacture and supply sports equipment, establish hotels, hostels, restaurants, shops, stadiums or other facilities under its control. The opening of the latter marked a defining moment in the

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91 S. T. Ratnam, *Philosophy and Proposals* (Singapore: NSPB (Private circulation, paper available with writer), 1972).

92 See Oon, "Government Involvement in Sport in Singapore: 1959-1982"; McNeill, "Sport Specialisation in a Singapore Secondary School: A Case for Legitimation".

93 cited in Oon, "Government Involvement in Sport in Singapore: 1959-1982", 200.

94 National Stadium Corporation, "Annual Report," (Singapore: National Stadium Corporation, 1972).

95 Singapore Sports Council, "Annual Report," (Singapore: Singapore Sports Council, 1974).

development of sport. After over a decade of conflict over what sport should be in Singapore, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew empathically established and defined the role of sport on public television:

There are no national benefits from gold medallists for smaller countries... For the superpowers with large populations, superiority in sports is national propaganda to persuade other people of the superiority of their competing political system. But it is foolish and wasteful for the smaller countries to do this. Singapore's best return is to generate healthy, vigorous exercise for the whole population, young and old and enhancing the qualities it has – a keen, bright, educated people who will lead better and more satisfying lives if they are fit and healthy.<sup>96</sup>

Fitness then became the central objective in the promotion of sports. Using both power and persuasion Prime Minister Lee appealed,

From time to time we shall throw up a few natural record breakers. But any Olympic Sports Council member or any affiliate club which sets out to persuade above average sportsmen or sportswomen to devote the best years of their lives merely to training and becoming gold medallists will find their zeal misplaced and funds cut off. For they will do an injustice to these persons. First they are unlikely to achieve world class. Second, what happens to record-breaking aspirants when their prime years are over?<sup>97</sup>

Prime Minister Lee's speech demonstrated that the government's sport aim was primarily based on the health interest of the masses and that they had no intention of exploiting any sporting sacrifices for political glory. The uncertainty of sport and the sacrifices needed made it non-viable investment. This political speech might appear to be imbued with social rather than political agenda but, as PM Lee always reinforced that the PAP government "are by nature, by training, calculators, not feelers. We like to make sure."<sup>98</sup> Its paternalistic control overrode the interests of the sports associations or aspiring athletes and supporters but remained consistent to its already legitimised

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96 "Our Goal in Sports," *The Straits Times*, 22 July 1973.

97 *Ibid.*

98 *The Straits Times*, 27 September 1965

ideology of survival. This integration of conflicting interests of different functional groups and the government formed part of the hegemonic process in the social figuration. Certainly, the government's monopolization of control over social, sporting and economic institutions strengthened their influence over the development of sport.

The SSC implemented the Master Plan of Sport Facilities, Coaching Plan, Sports for All to achieve its fitness objective. The government added to the facilities of the colonial era and became the largest provider of sport facilities in the nation. The Master Plan proposed to build athletic football stadia, football fields, swimming complexes, tennis courts, squash courts, indoor stadium, multi-purpose indoor halls and a velodrome between 1976 and 1982.<sup>99</sup> The Coaching Plan was implemented to coordinate and standardize the various coaching programmes to produce coaches, instructors, sport officials and sport administrators. During the 1970s in order to promote participation in sports the Instructional Plan for youth was also introduced in football (soccer), badminton, squash, tennis and swimming. A 'sports for All' policy was instituted by the SSC to promote mass participation in sports and fitness activities.<sup>100</sup> The Chief Executive Director of the SSC, Lau Teng Chuan, described the main tasks of Sports for All were "to provide equal opportunities for all to participate in the regular practice of some wholesome form of sports and physical recreation of their choice."<sup>101</sup> However, he emphasized that the main task was sports promotion itself, which he explained as follows:

This means that the Singapore Sports Council seeks to offer programmes of participation in those sports of mass following. Thus sports such as swimming, jogging, walking and cycling receive our greater attention... it our desire that more people will play for recreation and enjoyment values rather than be part of a competition... It does not matter what they are playing for but that they play, run, exercise, swim and walk.<sup>102</sup>

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99 Singapore Sports Council, *Annual Report* (Singapore: Singapore Sports Council, 1975/6).

100 T. C. Lau, "The Role of the Singapore Sports Council in the Promotion of Sports in Singapore" (paper presented at the Teachers' Special PE Course, Singapore Sports Council, Singapore, November 1975).

101 *Ibid.*, 1.

102 *Ibid.*, 4.

Competitive sport began to become marginalized as a greater emphasis was placed on the promotion of such fitness activities. As Singapore's performance in sport became "perpetual over-runs in the international sports arena," Head of Research in the SSC, Desmond Oon, urged the political consideration of social and sporting reforms to "produce winners" in 1984.<sup>103</sup> By the 1980s, commercialization of sports was accelerated by the increasing affordability of television sets globally, and in Singapore nearly every household had a television set.<sup>104</sup> Sporting performance represented on television was mixed with imagery of nationalism and patriotism. Success and failure in sport became increasingly a public rather than a private testament as sport became increasingly massified and the athletes' nationality ostensibly expressed by the reference to their nationality in media commentary, which talked of the colours of their uniform, the flags, and the results. Oon's suggestion illustrates the pressure coming from the direction the government had taken sport. The monopoly of control the government now had enabled it to dictate the development of sport more so than private individuals. This phase of sportization embodied a more relatively contrived promotion than existed during the colonial era. Sport played in clubs and schools during the colonial era was competitive and territorial, as illustrated by the popularity of soccer and basketball. Fitness activities were part of the preparation for sports. However, with Sports for All, the SSC had sole control to "plan, create, implement, administer and manage sports promotion"<sup>105</sup> which enabled them to promote sport as fitness and fitness as, "recreation and enjoyment values" rather than fitness as a means to recreate and enjoy sport better. Therefore, it was not surprising that soccer, badminton and basketball were overtaken by jogging/walking and swimming as the most popular sports in the nation.<sup>106</sup> The increasing centralization of sport, greater legislation and plans and the construction of more facilities may signify a 'spurt' in sportization, whilst the penetration of the ideology of survival, marginalization of competition and actualisation through sport actually formed a desportization undercurrent in the figuration of sport which thus created a double-binding effect.

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103 H. Rai, "Time for Sport to Take Lead," *The Straits Times*, 20 September 1984.

104 "Guide to Your Net Worth," *The Straits Times*, 18 August 1987.

105 Rai, "Time for Sport to Take Lead."

106 Singapore Sports Council, "Extent of Sports and Recreation Participation in Singapore, 1980," (Singapore: Singapore Sports Council, 1982).

The systematic de-emphasis on the achievement of high level sport contests contributed to the general decline in Singapore's performance in major international sporting events after 1973. The only Olympic medal garnered by Singapore was won in 1960. Asian Games performance slid after 1951 whilst its Southeast Asian (SEA) Games performance was at its best only when Singapore was the host nation.<sup>107</sup> After hosting its first SEA Games in 1973, Singapore's gold medal performance never matched its initial levels until it again played host in 1983 and 1993. The research division of the SSC conducted a study on the high performance sports in Singapore for the period 1959-1984 and the findings essentially reflected the assigned position of sport in the society.<sup>108</sup> The top three problems faced by athletes were, in descending order: work commitments, financial constraint and study constraint. This response demonstrated the level of support given to them financially as well as the competing demands of sport and work, sport and school. Clearly, it was not an unusual or unpredictable response; professionalization of sport had not taken place in Singapore. But the athletes' responses on their sporting ambition revealed that only 5.4% wanted to win a medal in the Olympics and only 4% wanted to be the best in the world. Majority of the respondents placed being the best in Singapore as their highest ambition. Clearly their response and Singapore's medal performance reflected Prime Minister Lee's perception of sport as well as the government's success in directing the athletes to economic pursuits that were more reliable and viable. The interest of the people and the government became more similar as the hegemonic process had become more stabilized.

### **Meritocracy, Multiculturalism, Materialism: The Monopolization of Education**

Education was a key agency for sustaining and accentuating the position of the government. Upon assuming power the PAP government immediately set out to control education in Singapore. The demographics of the population of Singapore at the time of independence magnified the importance of the role of education. Over 50% of the population were under 19 which meant that it was vital for the government to

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107 Refer to Table 2 and Table 3 for Asian Games and SEA Games performances.

108 389 respondents were surveyed in this study. They were either athletes or former athletes. See Singapore Sports Council, *A Study of High Performance Sports in Singapore, 1959-1984*. (Singapore: Singapore Sports Council, 1986).

mobilize youth and set the standard of conduct. Prime Minister Lee stated unequivocally that,

It is the young that will determine what happens to this society, but it is what we do now that determines what they can be. Every year we must use our time better than the average person uses it in this part of the world. And we can.<sup>109</sup>

As discussed in the earlier chapter, the colonial government did not intervene extensively in schools, except in the English-medium and Malay-medium schools over which the government had a closer level of supervision. Therefore, schools were an important seed bed for the fostering of segmental bonds. Multiculturalism, national identity and manpower training became the primary purposes of education as one of the pioneer PAP ministers, Toh Chin Chye reiterates, "(the) concept of multiculturalism with which we are familiar in Singapore, must be strengthened in the university and colleges."<sup>110</sup> Schools were thus a crucial avenue to integrate the different social groups and to achieve its objectives. Prime Minister Lee explained the importance of integration in education:

If in the four different languages of instruction, we teach our children four different standards of right and wrong, four different ideal patterns of behaviour, then we produce four different groups of people and there will be no integrated society...<sup>111</sup>

The role education played in creating a national identity was clearly important to Prime Minister Lee, as he argued the importance of integration and unification even in his speech to Singapore's first battalion of National Service men in 1967:

We must build into our young that spirit of togetherness. Through common training and common experience we must inculcate the qualities of valour, comradeship, discipline, common social purpose, pride in themselves and their community. Only then will all that we have built be safe for

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109 *The Straits Times*, 12 August 1966

110 P. Chia, "Calamity If Rights Given on Basis of Race: Toh," *The Straits Times*, 1 August 1969, 10.

111 "The Role of Teachers - by Lee," *The Straits Times*, 9 December 1959.

posterity... If we do not have this, we will be brought down to the filth and squalor, the degradation and corruption, the poverty and misery which prevails in large parts of the newly independent countries.<sup>112</sup>

The government increased the provision of schools and assigned the Education Ministry with the task of establishing a national curriculum. The seriousness of their efforts was exemplified by the rapid expansion of schools, with about a hundred schools established between 1959 and 1968 to cater for the increased demand.<sup>113</sup> Post World War II baby boom, the changed attitude and expectations of women also opened up more educational opportunities for girls, the increased accessibility of free education, employment opportunities and the education campaigns contributed to the almost 34% rise in enrolment in the decade between 1962 to 1972.<sup>114</sup> This massive involvement in education by the government soon meant that it replaced communal groups as the dominant force in education, which illustrates Elias' tenet of the transformation of 'private' monopoly to 'public' monopoly in the process of state formation. As the nature of industrial development in Singapore was directed towards the global market, it created a rising importance of English. The government allowed the education system to continue under four different medium and adopted a meritocratic principle in its education to reinforce the notion of racial equality in education. However, just as the colonial government had done, the PAP continued to provide additional assistance to the Malays, giving them free education up to tertiary level. However, the motive of this could be said to be more pragmatic than paternalistic in the increasingly developed nation. Nonetheless, to 'objectify' the academic competition, a common syllabus was introduced to the four medium schools in 1964.<sup>115</sup> This regularization of content allowed the government to balance the sensitivity of language and educational goals. However the function of English as a language of commerce favoured the English educated in terms of jobs and salaries. The enrolment gap between English and other medium schools widened rapidly and

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112 "Top Standards Call to N-Servicemen P. M. : A Privilege," *The Straits Times*, 31 August 1967.

113 Doraisamy, *150 Years of Education in Singapore*.

114 S. Gopinathan, "Education," in *A History of Singapore*, ed. E. Chew and E. Lee (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991).

115 See *Progress in Education*, (Singapore: Ministry of Education, 1965).



even the Chinese schools were facing dwindling enrolments. After 1980, all Chinese schools were made to switch to English as their main language of instruction, with Chinese as the second language.

The British education system was considerably retained by the government. With the centralized control of education, its structure and administration also became increasingly regulated. The standardization of the schooling experience is exemplified by the government as the virtually the sole employer of teachers, the public provision of teachers' training, the construction of similar school buildings, the institutionalization of a standard curriculum, the implementation of a uniform schooling stages with a standard assessment at each academic promotion periods such as sitting for the compulsory Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), the Cambridge 'O' Level and the 'A' Level examination to fulfil graduation requirements at the primary, secondary and junior college levels. The standardization of schooling experiences and assessment was contingent to the legitimacy of the meritocratic principle. Its emphasis on equality conceals class differences and accentuates the apparent even distribution of opportunities to different social groups and an even distribution of power in competing for those education opportunities. This ideology of equal opportunities heightens the 'ambivalence of interest' between the different social groups and sustains the political hegemony and social figuration.

The availability of only two universities, the English-medium University of Singapore and the Chinese-medium Nanyang University (shortened in Chinese to Nantah) and the increased number of pupils heightened the competitiveness of scholastic achievements.<sup>116</sup> More importantly, the tight association between educational capital with economic capital, reinforced the significance of paper qualification. Singapore's per capita GDP rose by 114% from 1960 to 1970.<sup>117</sup> As demonstrated by Education Minister Ong Pang Boon's reinforcement to teachers just after independence that "our outlook must be re-adjusted to this new situation where

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116 The decline in enrolment in Nanyang University because of the poor job prospect of its graduates resulted in the amalgamation of Nanyang University and University of Singapore in 1980 to form the National University of Singapore (NUS) with English as the medium of instruction. The Nanyang campus became the Nanyang Technological Institute attached to the NUS. In 1991, it separated from NUS and became the Nanyang Technological University.

117 Gopinathan, "Education," 279.

our major consideration must necessarily be our survival."<sup>118</sup> Thus, the meritocratic principle enabled the rise in number of bourgeoisie from working class backgrounds. This accelerated growth generated deep-rooted and pervasive anxieties and insecurities as identity and status connected with traditional forms of class, authority, sex and age relations get eroded away, which reflects Elias's equalizing process that is inherent in functional democratization. The pressure generated in the competition for material and prestige rewards heightened the importance of education achievement and work.

Since 1966, the standardization of the schooling discourse also extended to include solemn daily flag raising and lowering ceremonies, singing of the national anthem and reciting of the national pledge. This formal routine is aimed at inculcating a sense of nationalism and patriotism and makes up part of the systematic construction of a national identity that takes part in schools in Singapore. Moreover, the selection of English as the official working language and the language of instruction in schools provides a unifying language that enables the development of functional and emotional bonds between the different social groups as well as averting the positioning one ethnic language as higher than another. Concomitantly, the national identity is also accentuated. The ethnic languages, namely Chinese, Malay and Tamil were still compulsory subjects in the respective schools from primary to the junior college level. Whilst their importance in education takes on a less dominant role, their compulsory status indicates that the ethnic cultures are not completely ignored or denied. Rather the emphasis on the national identity facilitates the development of a hybrid Singapore identity consisting of both the national and ethnic identities. Education was therefore a vital phase in the economic and national identity production process. The centralized control of schools set the standard and expectations of the conduct and activities of the individual and affected the development of the whole social figuration. As Prime Minister Lee succinctly expressed in 1966:

The emphasis must be on a rugged society... From now onwards we must concentrate our expenditure on the areas which will help directly to increase productivity and accelerate economic growth. For instance, take education. Expenditure on this is a necessity. In a highly urbanized society,

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118 *The Straits Times*, 17 August 1965

our future lies in a well-educated population, trained in the many disciplines and techniques of modern industrial society.<sup>119</sup>

### **Physical Education and the Wider Social Figuration**

Being the chief provider of education, the government could determine the nature of physical education (PE) and extra-curricular activities (ECA) in schools. The programme, established during the colonial governance, was given a major revamp to increase its uniformity in purpose and outcome. Under the colonial rule, Singapore had the protection of the British military forces. When the PAP came into power, it planned a future with Malaysia as its hinterland and as its military support. The sudden expulsion from Malaysia magnified the urgency to "build an army from scratch."<sup>120</sup> In 1966 the Singapore Armed Forces Training Institute was established, following that, the National Service (Amendment) Bill was passed in March 1967 to implement compulsory national conscription for 18-year-old male Singapore citizens for a period of two years, after which they would be permitted to return to civilian life but would then be placed on the reserve.<sup>121</sup> Therefore fitness and a 'rugged society' became the main objective driving the physical education curriculum. Besides its military purposes, fitness was also important to ensure productivity and the ruggedness required in facing the economic challenges for Singapore's "survival"<sup>122</sup>. Extra-curricular activities introduced under the colonial government were given greater emphasis to promote social integration as well as fitness. Sportization under the administration of the newly formed government involved the establishment of new centralized institutions, provision of specific facilities, centred on the military, social and economic goals. As the government allowed schools to function in their separate language media, inter-school competition became an effective way to provide the opportunity for the establishment of functional bonds as well as emotional bonds, which were based more on national identity rather than ethnic identity. The

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119 *The Straits Times*, 9 August 1966

120 Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*, 11.

121 H. C. Chan, *Political Developments, 1965 - 1979*, ed. E. Chew and E. Lee, *A History of Singapore* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991).

122 "'Mission of Truth' Off to Africa Tonight," *The Straits Times*, 20 January 1964..

transformation of physical education and sports thus paralleled the development in the overall social figuration.

### **Integration: A Standardization Approach**

Physical education, as one subject of the national curriculum, was also standardized. The standardization of content, pedagogy and resources enabled a greater regulation and uniformity of the outcomes for the pupils from the different ethnic communities. Whilst its British predecessor conceptualized and implemented a standard PE syllabus, the segregation of the school system based on language and the autonomy non-English language schools held, resulted in different PE programmes and outcomes. By late 1959 the first national physical education curriculum was written specifically for fitness and social integration.<sup>123</sup>

The conceptualization and implementation of a 5-point Plan and a new PE syllabus demonstrate how the centralization of PE and sport content and practices contributed to the blurring of racial division and the production of commonality between different racial groups. The 5-point plan identified the following new directions for physical education:

1. That emphasis in the field of physical education to be on mass participation
2. That every effort to be made to break down communal barriers through participation by schools of the four different language streams in joint activities
3. That the Singapore Schools Sports Council (secondary level) and the Singapore Primary Schools Sports Council be formed to organise sporting competition for all schools
4. That, based on geographical location, secondary schools be grouped under eight districts and primary schools under twelve districts to facilitate sporting competition
5. That competitions in, track and field, swimming, and other sports and games, be organised at the District and Inter-District levels.<sup>124</sup>

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123 *New Syllabus for Physical Education*, (Singapore: Ministry of Education, 1959).

124 "The 5-Point Plan for Physical Education," (Singapore: Ministry of Education, 1959).

This plan illustrated the political direction of physical education to fulfil its social goals. The emphasis on 'mass participation' was manifest in the form of fitness activities which diminished the opportunities for contests between individuals as well as between teams – contests which could be, and historically usually had been, racially divided. Although by reducing these opportunities, the reproduction of a sense of 'them' and 'us' was constrained, the emphasis on mass participation also diminished the opportunities of schooling the youths into the discourse of sport. The formation of two centralized councils, one for primary and the other secondary, to replace the eight language-based sports councils established during the colonial era consolidates the control of sport and increased the interdependency of the government and the people, as well as the different-medium schools. Similarly, the new grouping of schools based on geographical location diminished the ethnic division and encouraged the promotion of multiculturalism as well as functional bonding at different levels from a young age. The ban on inter-racial competition on clubs extended to schools. Sporting rivalry mimics social rivalry, therefore the displacement of the emphasis of sporting contests into one less ethnic-based dimension became an important means of regulating the social conduct of the people. The ECA programme was given more attention in schools than the physical education programme. The competitiveness and prestige attached to the competitions provided schools with the reward for participating. Inter-district competition, unlike physical education, facilitated the interaction between pupils of different medium schools. Moreover the establishment of the two sports councils fostered functional bonding between teachers and principals of the different schools. The government's initiative to create a more integrated society was therefore enhanced by the changes in school. The reduction in opportunities for racial representation and the increased opportunities for institutional representation facilitated the affinity to the national institutions which were also less racially marked institutions subsequently developing the national identity.

The curriculum retained the two central areas of the PE syllabus established during the colonial era: movement education and, sports and games. The emphasis of movement education illustrated the intensified interconnections between physical education, health and military functions. Movement education comprised of formalized tables of exercises to develop fitness levels. It demanded a greater regulation on the strength, flexibility, endurance and agility of the body. These attributes held public

functions and in that way, the private body became more and more public. Sports and games included track and field athletics, swimming and a host of sports and games aimed at inculcating sportsmanship and the enjoyment of sports. The ethos of muscular Christianity was clearly embodied in the curriculum and was regarded as being relevant to the demands of nation building and industrialization. This is illustrated in the Minister for Education Ong Pang Boon's national day message to 500 000 schools children a year after independence:

At play, you learn to win or lose graciously. That is, without grumbling or putting the blame on someone, or bragging about your own success. You also learn that it is the team rather than individual, that counts.<sup>125</sup>

Whilst physical education held important functions, it was assigned a lower position than subjects such as English, Mathematics and Art in the overall curriculum. The relatively small amount of time allocated to it, its status as a non-academic subject and a non-examined subject legitimised the perception of physical education as trivial. Following a commission report in 1962 on the education system, schools were provided with more autonomy in deciding the curriculum time for physical education.<sup>126</sup> Reductions in physical education periods were made across all levels from primary to junior college level. Furthermore, the absence of any recommendation and expectation for physical education during the critical graduation years, specifically Primary 6, Secondary 4 and final year at junior college suggests that it holds a lower priority than other subjects. The marginalization of physical education was most visible in the positioning of the subject as a non-examined subject with no bearing on the overall academic performance of the pupil. As a non-examined school subject, it was and still is seen as being synonymous with a non-academic and therefore "unimportant" subject. The institutionalized marginalization heightened its already lowly assigned academic position. This attitude reflects the opinion of the Assistant Superintendent of Physical Education's in 1921 who believed there was a presence of "artificial barriers that had kept it in a separate compartment from other subjects."<sup>127</sup>

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125 The Straits Times 9 August 1966

126 "Commission of Inquiry into Education in Singapore: Interim Report," (Singapore: Ministry of Education, 1962), 13-14.

127 "Annual Report on Education," 913.

Thus, 40 or so years later with the institutionalized marginalization of the subjects, these "artificial barriers" were thus made more concrete and real.

The need for facilities was a major factor in the promotion of physical education under the British and Japanese regime. The scarcity of space and the government's allocation of space to schools limited the extent sport and physical education could be promoted. Equally, the use of space and the types of facilities provided also promoted some sports more than others. Standard facilities were provided in all newly constructed schools, which facilitated the government's control of the form and direction of the development of sport. Most secondary schools and primary schools were provided with an assembly hall-cum-gymnasium block of approximately the size of three badminton courts, a cemented multi-purpose outdoor court mainly for basketball and a playing field, the size of a football pitch.<sup>128</sup> The multiple functions of these facilities also meant a further competition for the use of the space. Moreover, the competition is often between academic or formal purpose with a non-academic subject or trivial purpose. The restriction on the time of the day that outdoor physical activities are allowed also posed further constraints on the competition of space.

With the monopolization of education, the government has the opportunities to interlace the functions of the military and education. Physical education whilst marginalized in terms of time, curriculum status and facilities, its function was made increasingly serious too. The needs of the military became a function of the schools. The establishment of military strength and a 'rugged' nation gave a greater impetus to strengthen the physical training aspects of the physical education curriculum as well as in the ECAs. 1968 marked the acceleration of a more concerted campaign to create a rugged society.<sup>129</sup> A "rugged society" it was suggested embodied the virtues of "a nation always surging forward" therefore physically, intellectually and emotionally resilient, enterprising and successful.<sup>130</sup> Before the launch of the campaign, changes were also instituted in the physical education programme to school a "rugged society." The schooling of a military ready body that was regulated and disciplined dominated

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128 "Annual Report on Education," (Singapore: Ministry of Education, 1965), 5-6.

129 "National Day Decorations Theme Is Our Rugged Society," *The Straits Times*, 4 August 1968.

130 J. Sim and J. Ong, "The Rugged Society Day," *The Straits Times*, 10 August 1968.

the concept of "rugged." On the celebration of Singapore's third year as a Republic, the rugged image was emphasis from this description of the Vice President who reviewed the armed contingents: "soaked to the skin he stood in the Land Rover without even an umbrella"<sup>131</sup> to the images of school girls performing in the rain, which were described vividly as follow: "Bedraggled, soaked to the skin, these girls of the St. John Ambulance Brigade wait cheerfully for the parade to begin on the Singapore padang."<sup>132</sup>

The construction of a "rugged" image, practice and attitude was embodied in the the "Physical Fitness Test Programme" that was launched in 1967 to monitor and inject accountability into the promotion of fitness in schools.<sup>133</sup> By stipulating a compulsory assessment of pupils' level of fitness, and implementing a standardized assessment and criteria of fitness, a greater degree of regulation on the body was enabled. This assessment also constructed the knowledge and image of a 'fit' and 'unfit' body. The pupils were tested on their agility, muscular strength, flexibility and muscular endurance. Prior to this implementation, there had been no formal assessment to evaluate the outcome of the physical education programme or the pupils' fitness or sporting abilities. The nature of the test discourse, ie, test tasks, forms, criteria, recording of scores, testers mimicked that of an academic test. This test therefore created a sense of 'seriousness' about physical education and increased the uniformity of the programme in all schools. Consequently, fitness, centred on the battery of the five testing items: sit ups, a shuttle run, the standing board jump, pull ups (inclined flexed arm hang for girls) and squat thrusts became the main focus of physical education lessons. As the physical education programme became more and more of a site for military preparation, the promotion of sports became less and less important. The emphasis on schooling a military body therefore took on military precision. Greater specialization in strengthening specific parts and functions of the body engendered greater regulation on the movement of the body.

The promotion of a rugged society was not limited to schools but also extended to homes and workplaces. Reminiscent of the Japanese government's attempt to promote

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131 *Ibid.*

132 "The Rugged Breed," *The Straits Times*, 10 August 1968.

133 "Physical Fitness Test Programme," *The Straits Times*, 28 May 1967.



fitness, the government launched the National Fitness Exercise (NFX) to promote fitness on a national level in 1969. NFX was a 15-minute routine of calisthenic exercises heavily promoted by the media and schools to encourage the people to exercise at home, work or school. The Education Ministry was involved in spearheading the programme which again heightened the emphasis of fitness in schools. Although schools performed the NFX workout during morning assembly, it failed to sustain the interest of the public and by 1972, "nobody was following these exercises."<sup>134</sup> Whilst NFX was unsuccessful, the promotion of personal responsibility on the body continued. The public provision of fitness parks which, consist of jogging tracks, sit up benches, chin up bars and weight lifting for the upper body in each residential estate continued to regulate how the body should be trained.

The singular focus on fitness was evident through the subsequent three decades. Revisions were made to the syllabus and physical education programme to improve its outcomes. Between 1973 and 1978 the second physical education syllabi were introduced for primary and secondary schools in order to enhance the outcome of the programme.<sup>135</sup> A far more structured syllabus with explicit specific instructional objectives was drawn, illustrating a greater regulation in the method of instruction. As the PE programme became increasingly refined to perform military and health functions, the association of physical education with fitness also tightened. Concomitantly, with less time allocated to the promotion of sports in the PE programme and the rising emphasis on academic achievement, the significance of sport as a vehicle for nation building, as well as a venue of achievement and fulfilment became marginalized.

However despite the emphasis on fitness in the PE syllabus, the level of physical fitness in pupils was still unsatisfactory. It also confirmed the Army's complaints of the unsatisfactory level of fitness of the enlistees of National Service were valid.<sup>136</sup> This

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134 "Giving a Real Zing to NFX Swing," *New Nation*, 12 October 1972..

135 The primary school syllabus was published in 1973 whilst the secondary syllabus was introduced in two phases between 1976 and 1978.

136 "'Make S'pore Worth Preserving'," *The Straits Times*, 8 August 1981.

prompted Education Minister, Goh Keng Swee, to reinforce this concern to the pupils in his national day message,

Should war be forced on us, will our soldiers and officers fight well? But remember this – these soldiers and officers will be none other than the boys now in our schools. So, boys, should it ever come to the crunch, are you going to fight well?<sup>137</sup>

The manifestation of the military purpose was exemplified by the increased emphasis on fitness training in the schools' PE programme. The Physical Fitness Test was expanded to include an additional test item which test the pupils' cardiovascular fitness and renamed the National Physical Fitness Award (NAPFA) in 1982. The implementation of an objective measurement of performance, the hierarchical organization of performance level to fail, pass, "bronze," "silver" and "gold" and the very naming of it as a 'national' award that was accompanied by official formal certificates illustrated the increasing seriousness of the test. As the NAPFA is and remains the only mandatory formal evaluation in physical education and the fact schools' performances in the test are collected by the education ministry, sports and games are therefore marginalised as being viewed as the less important aspects of physical education syllabus. Moreover, the implicit capacity of sports and games in meeting the objectives of NAPFA is overlooked as the performance-emphasis of NAPFA and continued space constraints and lack of facilities make it efficient (and easier) to adopt a drill approach to teaching which simulates the test items.

Therefore, it can be observed that the development of physical education in post colonial Singapore retained a similar military and fitness emphasis as its colonial predecessors. However, unlike the preceding phases, the emphasis on a rugged body was more dominant than the emphasis on a military body. Whilst the ideology of ruggedness embraced military readiness, it also positioned the body as functioning for the individual, rather than as servicing the community. This shift in public discourse illustrates the government's negotiation of their position in the young democratic society. This association of government and people was not carried out in a direct propaganda manner, it had been under Japanese government; rather it produced and

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137 *Ibid.*

reproduced the political hegemony. Concomitantly, the image of a rugged body became closely intertwined with the image of a patriotic body. Physical education was therefore both an important site of discipline and a contributor to the construction of a national identity.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter examined the development of sport as Singapore transitioned from colony to nation. This phase of development was characterised by the greater regulation of sport with the formation of sport associations and centralized sporting bodies; a shift from ethnic identity to national identity, which was enabled by the increased international competitions and the de-emphasis on inter-racial competitions and a shift from private monopolies to a public monopoly of control of sport. Sport in Singapore formed more extensive links with the rest of the world through increased participation in regional and worldwide competitions, and locally, the dissolution of inter-racial competitions and the racial discrimination in clubs facilitated a greater level of integration between the different racial groups. The processes of integration and extension of the figuration of sport were linked with the centralization of resources and control in the new nation. With centralized control the influence of the clubs on sport diminished. The shift of control of sport from private monopolies to public monopoly was also critical to the shift from ethnic to national identity. Further, the increased involvement of the state also shifted the dominance of state functions over private functions. Whilst greater opportunities for international sporting competitions were organized, the political de-emphasis on sporting achievement put pressure on the private pursuit of sporting aspirations. Equally, with the centralization of education, the institution of a standard curriculum and the construction of more schools and facilities, more opportunities for participation in physical education and sport were provided. However, the emphasis on scholastic achievement and fitness testing in schools impeded the promotion of sport on the mass level. During this phase the development of sport whilst advancing with centralization and internationalization efforts, the acceleration was also restrained by changing economic pressure and the public functions of sport.

## Chapter 5

### **Sport in First World Singapore (1980s-): Hegemony, Globalization and Identity Formation**

The preceding chapters have illustrated the relationship between the industrialization of Singapore and the bourgeoisification of sport. The process was intertwined with the development of class, gender, ethnic and national identity. During the British administration, the development of sport was largely dominated by privately formed clubs, and sport was a marker of class, gender and ethnic distinction. This organization of sport changed with the fall of Singapore. Under the Japanese regime, sport, as with all resources were monopolized by the state. The centralization of control of sport facilitated the Nipponization of the migrants, turning them into Japanese subjects. This process of nationalization took on a different manifestation following the return of the British. Autonomous clubs and sport associations played a dominant role in the organization and participation of international sport events.

When Singapore gained sovereignty, sport became centralized and increasingly regulated. With the government gaining monopoly of control, how, why and what sport was practised were increasingly influenced by how resources were distributed. The production of a national identity through sport was manifested not so much in international competitions, but rather in the covert way by legislating anti-racial discrimination policies to diminish the ethnic identity of clubs, the emphasis of mass sport events which focused on individuals or families rather than ethnic or class identities and the dissolution of language medium schools which facilitated the organization of interschool sport events in which pupils and teachers of different ethnic groups had to compete and cooperate. Whilst sport became increasingly commercialized and achievement oriented in the capitalist Western countries, particularly in the United States of America, sport in Singapore remained largely an amateur practice with little emphasis on achievement at a global level. However, since the 1990s, there has been an increased emphasis in sporting success.

This chapter examines this change in emphasis in the development of sport in Singapore. It discusses, firstly, the changes in the political hegemony and its relationship with sport and Singapore identity. It then explains the relevance of Elias's tenet of 'diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties' in the discussion of the tension

between global and national identity. Following an outline of the change in political leadership, the chapter then discusses the development of sport policies and its relationship with the overall sport and social figuration of Singapore.

### **Sport and the Singaporean Identity**

Since independence, political hegemony has been discursively constructed through the three Ms of multiculturalism, meritocracy and money. Legislation to promote multiculturalism and regulate racialism, and the increasing density in living, economic and social spaces engendered a strong valency on functional grounds of the different social groups of Singapore. As the chains of interdependency tightened, the competition for opportunities also intensified, particularly when the opportunities were organized in relation to the ideology of meritocracy. This sustained the ambivalence of interests between the different social groups and in the process sustained the political hegemony. The standardization of education and the institution of a common language, nationalization efforts, and the increasing commingling of practices between the different social groups also reflected what Elias characterises as 'diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties' in the social figuration. It was not just the contrast between the different social groups in Singapore that was diminishing but also the contrast between the practices, values and images of Singapore and the rest of the world.

Post-colonial Singapore focused principally on developing a sustainable economy. In the rapid transformation of the society, the identity of a Singaporean became dominated by economics and with the success of the government, Singapore has, as Minister of Information and Arts, George Yeo, expressed it, gone from "poverty to middle class in one generation."<sup>1</sup> As proud as Singaporeans are of this economic success, as materialistic as they seem, economic success alone does not sustain the political hegemony. "I can't tell a foreign friend that I'm proud of Singapore just for our 10-per-cent growth" typified the opinion of the 70 undergraduates in a dialogue session with Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.<sup>2</sup> This relatively small scale study reflects the rising emigration of skilled Singaporeans. The migrant history of

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1 M. Lee, "Arts as Attraction (Arts in Singapore)," *Variety*, 9 June 1997.

2 L. Teo, "I Want to Be Proud of Singapore...But What About?" *The Straits Times Interactive*, 28 February 2001.

Singapore was taking on a different manifestation with the descendents of the immigrants becoming emigrants. Singaporeans could migrate with relative ease, particularly as local opportunities were becoming more competitive than those in other countries. They have acquired the capital of international mobility, a development which became a concern to the government.<sup>3</sup>

The expansion of the network of interdependencies between Singapore and the rest of the world inevitably had an impact on the local social figuration. When Singapore was a British colony, it was a proudly divided society of occidentals and orientals. Since independence, Singapore has undergone "civilizing spurts" to create an economically sound nation in an increasingly competitive world. The nation's dependence on the global market for its economic progress has increased as the network of international communication and transport has improved. This has resulted in the intensification of the interweaving of values and actions of Singapore with the rest of the world. Thus, ironically, the contrasts between Singapore and developed Western capitalist societies diminished after the British withdrew from the island.

Economic competitiveness has justified the need to 'westernize' whilst the increasing influence of the 'West' through the media and education has supported 'orientalizing'. The Singaporean government identified the emergence of specific aspects of social behaviour that threatened the development of their preferred social figuration, labelling them as negative Western influences so as to legitimise a renaissance of positive Asian values to counteract these forms of Western encroachment. Also, as Singapore's economy became increasingly exposed, the creation of a "Singapore Spirit,"<sup>4</sup> as Trade and Industry Minister George Yeo called it, became necessary to ensure that Singaporeans, who were enjoying the success of the political management, would support the political relationship despite the increasing external influences and changed economic reality. Thus, the process of 'singaporeanization' embraced the juxtaposing of the processes of 'orientalization' and

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3 See Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000; Prime Minister's National Day Rally Speech*, (Singapore Government Press Release, 1999).

4 I. Ng, "Good Government the Key to Progress," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 21 February 2001.

'westernization' to create a national identity that is locally and internationally congruent.

Similarly, during this phase of sportization there has been an emphasis on the process of 'singaporeanization' as demonstrated by the shift in goals and orientation of its sport policies and political discourse on sport. The economy continued to be of fundamental importance as the government attempted to promote the pursuit of sporting excellence, and sport was intricately linked to it. However, the discourse of sport had shifted from one where it was viewed as a waste of resources to pursue sporting excellence to one where the importance of pursuing sporting excellence was considered necessary to ensure Singapore would remain competitive and able to continue to progress.

In this phase of development, Elias's concepts of 'diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties', phases of colonization/repulsion and established/outsider figuration will be utilized to organize theoretically an analysis of the tensions in the discursive formation of a local identity that underlay the process of globalization of Singapore and specifically the process of 'singaporeanizing' in the medium of sport. The manifestation of an increasingly globalized Singapore involves a diminishing contrast between the practices, values and images of Singapore and those of the rest of the world, particularly the democratic capitalist societies.

The economic ties between Singapore and the United States of America were not restricted merely to the rarefied world of commerce or to the Gross National Product. When Singapore became independent, "the best hope [for its development] lay with the American multinational corporations (MNCs)."<sup>5</sup> As Singapore became increasingly affluent and established a closer network of communications and trade, the momentum of the diffusion of the American cultural practices grew. These economic ties became increasingly visible in living and recreational spaces, particularly, in the form of American cultural products, images and practices sold and televised in Singapore. This phase of American colonization demonstrates firstly, how the tightening of economic ties extends to the ideological and cultural practices and secondly it shows that the chain of interdependency itself facilitates and is necessary to the economic ties.

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<sup>5</sup> Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*.

However, as this phase of colonization gains momentum, the phase of repulsion follows. In the latter phase, Elias argues that the upper class or the colonial group becomes compelled to construct social barriers to isolate themselves from the colonized groups whom they regard as inferior. However, the phase of repulsion is not just one-way, in which the 'colonizers' are the ones creating the resistance, it is rather mutual, the 'colonizees' who have become powerful, as in the case of ex-colonies, such as Singapore, Japan and Australia would also attempt to differentiate themselves.

The phase of repulsion is linked with the development of established-outsider figuration. Maguire identified Elias's key features in the development of established-outsider figuration as follows: the relative degrees of cohesion of the social groups in the figuration; the strength of the collective identifications; the commonality of norms; the comparative superiority that is reflected by the establishment of powerful 'I/we/they/them images'; and the stigmatisation of less powerful groups.<sup>6</sup> The latter is thus a key aspect in the phase of repulsion.<sup>7</sup> Any social group that is well established in power can effectively stigmatise another group so long as the latter is excluded from its figuration. However, the power to stigmatise decreases as the chains of interdependency with the excluded groups tighten. This chapter will thus illuminate the immanent dynamics in the inter-related processes of 'singaporeanizing' and developing sporting excellence as Singapore becomes increasingly enmeshed with denser and wider webs of interdependencies.

### **Changing of Leadership: The Dawn of a New Phase of Development**

When the PAP first came into power, electors' experience with politics was still relatively limited. The migrant history, educational level, and the fact that most Singaporeans were never consulted by the rulers nor had a legitimate right to participate in polity at any level whilst under colonial rule were predetermining factors. Thus, to the masses, it did not matter to what extent democracy was practised so as long as the government enhanced their economic and social conditions.<sup>8</sup> By the mid-1980s, the economic and social climate of Singapore had been significantly

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<sup>6</sup> Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*, 52.

<sup>7</sup> M. Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism* (London: Sage, 1991), cited in *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Vasil, *Governing Singapore: A History of National Development and Democracy*.



transformed. In general terms, the government had delivered social and economic change and progress that brought about a greater level of affluence and social harmony in the nation. On the one hand, their achievements produced a greater interdependency between the government and the state whilst, on the other, they increased expectations of, and demands on, the role of the government. S. Rajaratnam, a former cabinet minister commented on this changing political relationship.

Singapore has been so successful that to the present generation any deterioration in living standards is totally unacceptable. But for the generation that voted us in, even if the standard of living was improved to half of what it is today, it was still a paradise. The Prime Minister could wallop people and they accepted it. He could tell the blunt truth, tell them they were softies and so on. They accepted it because to them he was entitled to it. But the people today will not accept that kind of rebuke by the new leaders until they have proved their worth on their own.<sup>9</sup>

The educational, economic and social reforms made by the government resulted in 42% of the population gaining secondary or tertiary qualifications, with 89% of the citizens achieving 'high' literacy levels by 1990. The median monthly income also rose to \$1100, with over half the population living in bigger units.<sup>10</sup> The economic and social conditions had clearly improved. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and his generation of government were fully cognizant that the Singapore reality had changed dramatically and in order to sustain the position of the PAP government, a new style of leadership, gentler and more consultative, was required for the future. In November 1990, Goh Chok Tong was elected as the second Prime Minister of Singapore. He described the new political management he was to instigate as:

trying to involve Singaporeans in building Singapore. That is the objective of my style. I want to reach out to every Singaporean. Let them have more space to develop themselves. Let them have more say on how Singapore

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>10</sup> Singapore Census Board, "Population Census," (Singapore: Singapore Census Board, 1990).

should be run. Let them have a say in how the Singapore government should be run.<sup>11</sup>

His leadership represented a shift in political management towards a more consultative approach, which was viewed as more appropriate for the changing nature of the electorate. More significant was his recognition that to ensure the legitimacy of the government, the ideology of survival had to be redefined and re-presented to ensure its validity. Complementing this ideology was the elevation of the sense of nationhood. The latter supported the established functional bond by building on it an emotional bond. This strategy expanded the role of the government to more than just a management board with Singapore as a corporation where economic security and profits were the main determinants of policy.

Such determinants are both strong and fragile in establishing the position of the government. Although they served the government well in the early chapter of independence and have an enduring appeal to fundamental needs, particularly in Singapore where materialism could be regarded as an opiate, they were also risky because Singapore's exposure to the international market meant that to a significant degree, control of the local economy was beyond the government's management. Ebbs and flow of the economy were, and are, a reality. The legitimacy of the government could thus be threatened in an economic crisis.

To sustain the hegemony that binds the social figuration, there was a need to fortify an emotional and less tangible bond through the vehicle of national identity. Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong was mindful of this in his observation about the English-educated Chinese in his interview with Vasil:

Their bond with the country is not there because the bond with the community is not there. They become individual economic animals, looking for the greenest pasture in the world... Now if that becomes a common phenomenon, where will Singapore be?<sup>12</sup>

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11 "Text of PM's Speech at N-Day Dinner: Why I Called for Polls Now," *The Sunday Times*, 18 August 1991.

12 Vasil, *Governing Singapore: A History of National Development and Democracy*, 210.

The government's monopoly of control over central services and the authoritarian leadership that established the early development of independent Singapore, positioned the government as the body principally responsible and accountable for the economic, social, educational and sporting successes and failures of country. The pressure on the government to deliver on a range of expectations, both material and ideological, was rising. Elias's royal mechanism is evident here, as the web of interdependency had become so complex that the power between the government and the various strata, particularly, the bourgeois base, had become evenly distributed. The weakening of control of the government and the rising control of the bourgeois meant that, to paraphrase Elias, neither group could move against the interest of the other without threatening each other's interests. In this relationship, "there can neither be a decisive compromise nor a decisive conflict between them."<sup>13</sup>

The shades of difference were therefore the points of contention, for instance, in continuously according a political mandate to the government whilst at the same time placing pressure on it to introduce policy changes. In contrast to the challenge by the communists in the early phase of independence, the bourgeois' interests were similar to those of other social strata as well as to the government's, forming a complex and differentiated social figuration. The manifestation of this pressure was not just at a grassroots level but was articulated by a growing base of politically conscious Singaporeans who commanded economic and social capital locally and internationally. The increasing restraint in social behaviour, as Elias notes in civilizing societies, was demonstrated here through an ideological contest rather than through riots and physical violence, as it had been in the early 1960s.

Acquiescence to the government's pragmatic or economic emphasis was and still is dependent on its economic performance. The publication of favourable statistical rankings of Singapore's economic, educational, political, internal security in the region and world by international organizations reinforces and validates the legitimacy of the government. The comparison positions the government's management of the society favourably. Conversely, for those whose realities do not reflect the statistics, the sense of dissatisfaction with the political system emerges. As Jesudason argues, the "cultural imperative to rank everything in Singapore... reinforces an ethnic pecking order"

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13 Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, 320.

which attests to Weber's contention that ethnic honour is the honour of the masses.<sup>14</sup> According to Moore, the economic hierarchy as reflected in income, education, housing, and virtually every social and economic category in Singapore could be characterized in terms of race, with "the Chinese on top, the Malays on the bottom, and the Indians straddle in the middle."<sup>15</sup> Thus, it functioned as a double-edged sword in the promotion of multiculturalism, meritocracy and national identity.

In his first National Day Rally Speech in 1991, Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong acknowledged that the 'flip side' of meritocracy was that it weakened the bond between the rich and the poor.<sup>16</sup> He delivered the message that he wanted "all Singaporeans to feel as one" and he urged "that successful citizens must help the less well-off."<sup>17</sup> The economic divide was tightly associated with the ethnic divide, when he expressed his fear that Singapore could succumb to the same fate as the ethnically-torn Yugoslavia, "If Singaporean Chinese, Malays, Indians, Eurasians do not begin to care for one another, to care for each other's welfare, we may go the same way."<sup>18</sup> Despite the campaigns and intervention in fostering racial mixing, the results of a study of racial mixing indicate that primary school pupils of different races do not mix, with 80% of the Chinese pupils and 70% of the Malay pupils not mixing with pupils of other races.<sup>19</sup>

Racial tension was not the only tension in the social figuration of Singapore. The class tension was heightened by the meritocracy policy, on the one hand, and economic policies that reinforced the position of upper class, on the other. The latter could be broadly divided into two main groups: one group which held a relatively higher economic power and for whom it was worthwhile to sustain the overall social figuration; and a second group which was equally powerful but was socially conscious and active about the political and social conditions of Singapore and the rest of the

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14 J. Jesudason, "How Ranking Affirms Ethnic Pecking Order," *Straits Times Interactive*, 2 August 2000.

15 R. Q. Moore, "Multiculturalism and Meritocracy: Singapore's Approach to Race and Equality," *Review of Social Economy* LV111, no. 3 (2000), 341.

16 "Bonds between Able and Less Able Loosening," *The Straits Times*, 12 August 1991, 16.

17 "PM: I Want All Singaporeans to Feel as One," *The Straits Times*, 12 August 1991, 1.

18 *Ibid.*

19 S. Davie, "Pupils Aren't Mixing, Study Finds," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 26 July 2003.

world. The latter, as Prime Minister Lee found, did not support such policies as the granting of privileges for graduate mothers.<sup>20</sup> Both groups fit into Prime Minister Goh's classification of "cosmopolitans": they were economically secure, with extensive functional ties, English-speaking but bilingual, and could fit easily into a capitalist Western society and were thus potential members of Singapore's 'brain drain'. Goh asserted that cosmopolitans were "indispensable" in sustaining Singapore's high efficiency and performance.<sup>21</sup> The lower class, which fitted into Prime Minister Goh's classification of "heartlanders," were less economically secure, with functional ties rooted in the country, and were 'mother-tongue' or 'singlish' (non-standard English) speakers. They were, and remain, the 'core' of Singapore and preserve the uniqueness of a Singaporean identity.<sup>22</sup> Again, this group was divided into two broad subgroups: the working middle class, and the struggling working class in an increasingly affluent and globalized society.

The government could no longer rely on economics as the sole binding force of the figuration although it remained the core of the figuration. "If cosmopolitans and heartlanders cease to identify with each other, our society will fall apart," warned Prime Minister Goh.<sup>23</sup> The creation and establishment of a strong national identity, one that was imbued with emotional and functional bonds, would diminish the contrast between various social groups and consequently legitimise the position of the state. Moreover, the distinction of "cosmopolitans" and "heartlanders" demonstrated an expansion of the means of social stratification. It de-emphasized racial distinction, and instead highlighted economic markers which were identifiable in different races. Economic growth was the central justification of the national bond alluded to by Prime Minister Goh in 1993, "My worry is whether we are able to maintain the cooperation and cohesion in our society in order that we can remain competitive and continue to make progress."<sup>24</sup>

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20 Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*.

21 *Prime Minister's National Day Rally Speech*, 26.

22 *Ibid.*

23 *Ibid.*

24 "Bonds between Able and Less Able Loosening," 16.

Nation building in Singapore was not just about binding the Chinese, Malay, Indians and Eurasians, the rich and the poor but also about the relationship between locals and foreigners. Singapore's small population and lack of natural resources have always made it dependent on migrants and other countries to assist its development. Migrants from different parts of the world contributed to the birth of Singapore and its economic template. Whilst the majority of Singaporeans were descendents of migrants, the role of immigrants remained important as the economy became increasingly competitive. The latter provided not just additional labour but also social capital which enabled Singapore to be internationally competitive. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Lee, a "Stop at two" birth policy was implemented in the 1960s to keep the population growth down whilst unemployment rate was high and education facilities were limited.<sup>25</sup> The policy was so effective that the birth rate dropped to a precarious level in the 1980s. To rectify the falling birth rate and talent rate, the policy was terminated and Prime Minister Lee's eugenics philosophy was promoted, for "talent is a country's most precious asset."<sup>26</sup> He argued that "male graduates who married less-educated women were not maximizing the chances of having children who make it to university." He encouraged them "to marry their educational equals," and urged "educated women to have two or more children."<sup>27</sup> The Social Development Unit was established specifically to match-make graduates to graduates, and tax incentives were given to graduate mothers and education priorities for their children to increase the number of talented young people in the country.<sup>28</sup> Although by 1997, the number of graduate unions went up from 38% in 1982 to 63% in 1997, the talent pool from local production was still considered inadequate, and foreign talent was lured to Singapore to assist in its development.<sup>29</sup>

In the 1990s, the resistance to competition posed by foreign labour was increasingly evident. It was not foreigners *per se*, that were the concern. Foreigners, who were employed in hard manual labour jobs such as in construction and domestic help, were

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25 "Families," *The Straits Times*, 9 August 1967, 10.

26 Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*, 135.

27 *Ibid.*, 137.

28 *Ibid.*, 138-40.

29 *Ibid.*

perceived to be a necessity because of the absence of abundant cheap local labour. Foreigners in white-collar professions, on the other hand, posed genuine competition. The rising affluence and the accelerating number of skilled local labour in white collar professions heightened the economic competition in that sector far more than before, and with the import of foreign workers, the economy became even more competitive. The government attempted to resolve the tension through economic rationalism. Prime Minister Goh highlighted this functional interdependency, "to compete successfully in the future, to build the best home for Singaporeans, we must tap the best talent from around the world."<sup>30</sup> Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong also reinforced the importance of foreign talent "if Singapore wants to be special, outstanding."<sup>31</sup> Whilst economic 'survival' sustained the political hegemony in previous phase of development, it no longer embodies as much currency in the first world economy. The reconstruction of economic rationalism from 'survival' to 'best home' and 'special' suggests merely a shift in semantics, however it positions the locals as being incapable of building a 'best home' for themselves, and as incapable of making their home 'special' which reproduces the divide between established group and the outsiders.

As discussed earlier, Elias uses the second principle of state formation, the 'royal mechanism', to explain that the ambivalence of interest between social groups is the key in sustaining the overall social figuration. This "open or latent ambivalence" binds the social groups and the government because the interests between them are an optimal balance of conflict and compromise. It is thus imperative for the government to ensure this balance so that no social group loses its power to the point whereby one group emerges clearly as superior to the rest. Prime Minister Goh implicitly suggested the importance of ensuring the efficacy of this royal mechanism, in stating that "[i]f the able do not have this obligation to help the slower learners, then your average Singaporean is not going to support your able and he is going to resent our spending

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30 "S'pore Must Tap Foreign Talent to Compete Successfully in Future," *The Straits Times*, 28 August 1998, 51.

31 Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Yang quoted in W. Fernandez, "Singapore Keeps Its Door Open to Talent to Stay Ahead," *The Straits Times* 1999, 50.

more money on the able."<sup>32</sup> In Singapore policies that powered the nation's common move towards economic success created pressure on the social figuration when the distribution of power and resources resulted in the ascendancy of specific groups, with a dissatisfied and disgruntled section of the community at the other end of the socio-economic continuum. Prime Minister Goh described the outcome of this emerging sub-culture, describing Singapore as "a nation of moaners and groaners" who expects the government to always improve the situation.<sup>33</sup>

### **Building a Homogenous Core in a Heterogeneous Society**

The development of a common cultural identity, or a Singaporean identity, would add to the functional bond and accentuate the ambivalence of interests and thus tend to bind the multiracial nation despite the differences and conflicts within and between its social groups. A national identity would also create the distinction between Singapore and the rest of world. This common identity thus had to perform two functions: unifying the heterogeneous cultures and distinguishing it from other societies.

Singapore is definitively multicultural with an active linguistic milieu that is composed of the four primary languages, English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil. Fairclough accurately suggested that language is part of society and "linguistic phenomena *are* social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena *are* (in part) linguistic phenomena."<sup>34</sup> He contends that language and discourse produce the "members' resources" (MR) that people use to produce and interpret texts and their social contexts. "People internalize what is socially produced and made available to them, and use this internalized MR to engage in their social practice, including discourse."<sup>35</sup> Hence, it is a delicate and difficult task to create a sense of "Singapore Spirit." Although English is the principal official language at work and school and has enabled the nation to become economically more competitive, mother tongues, namely Chinese, Malay and Tamil were taught as second language in schools and this

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32 "Let's Not Hold Back the Able and Talented - P. M. Goh," *The Straits Times*, 12 August 1991, 16.

33 A. L. Pang, "A Nation of Moaners? That's Us," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 6 December 2000.

34 N. Fairclough, *Language and Power* (Singapore: Longman Publisher, 1989), 23.

35 *Ibid.*, 24.



positioned English as the language of higher economic and social capital. This pragmatic bilingual policy served to balance the economic needs and cultural identity of Singapore. Prime Minister Lee justified the need to balance both by pointing out that,

The crux of the problem was that in our multiracial and multilingual society, English was the only acceptable language, besides being the language that would make us relevant to the world. But it did seem to deculturize our students and make them apathetic.<sup>36</sup>

Whilst the English language was one of the key enabling factors so that post colonial Singapore could continue to be part of the Western economic world, it was not the only language for the four principal racial groups. Since both English and their mother tongues shaped the MR of each individual, differences as well as similarities between each ethnic group were thus evident. Although Singapore has a modern history that dates back almost two hundred years the process of creating a national identity, an allegiance to the country, a pledge for Singapore only began in 1965.

English as a *lingua franca*, promoted functional bonds but the increasing emphasis on the ethnic languages also resulted in the transformation of the ethnic identity. Before independence, the Chinese identity, for instance, was differentiated by origin, and included both Straits Chinese and Chinese. The contrast in practices between the two ethnicities made them more easily distinguishable. By the 1990s, the Chinese identity was more homogenized as a result of the dependency of English language. The government's planned promotion of a common language for the seven different major Chinese dialect groups also diminished the traditional or cultural differences between the various Chinese groups. The implementation of the month long 'speak Mandarin' campaign in 1978 and the termination of all dialect programs on television and radio to encourage the Chinese to use Mandarin instead of Chinese dialects resulted in an increase in Mandarin-speaking families from 26% in 1980 to over 60% in 1990.<sup>37</sup> The increasing emphasis on English compelled the government to introduce the Special Assistance Plan (SAP) in selected schools in 1985 to combat the declining use of

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<sup>36</sup> Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story: 1965-2000*, 149.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

Chinese. In order to produce a group of quality bilinguals, the top 10% of each cohort in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) were made eligible for admission to these SAP schools to learn both Chinese and English as the first language. The increasingly homogenized Singapore Chinese identity was evident in comparison to the Asian Chinese migrants to Singapore.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the greater status given to Malay as the only national language, the more it produced mixed signals in a nation with more Mandarin and English speaking people than Malay-speakers. The two traditional national symbols embodied the Malay language and culture – the national anthem that school children have sung every school day since independence was in Malay and the national flag which bore an Islamic symbol. The social figuration in Singapore was thus a constellation of conflicts and compromises.

Economic pragmatism remained at the core of the political ideology. It formed the core of the ideology of survival and initiated the process of nation building. It thus also is a critical fundamental factor in ensuring the legitimacy of the government. Prime Minister Goh implemented the Strategic Economic Plan in 1991 with the objective of turning Singapore into a "first league developed country" within 30 to 40 years.<sup>39</sup> Four main characteristics were identified as features of qualitative development: economic dynamism, quality of life, national identity and global city.<sup>40</sup> This entailed developing Singapore into a city with comparable if not better living conditions as well as one about which Singaporeans felt a sense of ownership for, and cultivating a national identity that embraced the seemingly conflicting process of globalization as well as parochialisation. The former was obviously vital for economic advancement and inevitable as Singapore became enmeshed in longer and denser webs of interdependencies whilst the latter contributed to the legitimisation of the differentiation of the social system of Singapore from those of other developed nations and concomitantly sustained the social figuration. The tension between these two forces of 'pushing out and pulling in' intensified as the dependencies on the global economy became more pronounced.

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38 M. Nirmala and H. M. Neo, "Insight: In Singapore for Now or Forever," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 2 August 2003.

39 Economic Planning Committee, "Towards a Developed Nation," (Singapore: 1991), 2.

40 *Ibid.*

Similarly, the promotion of 'Shared Values' and 'Family Values' in 1991 and 1994 respectively, to create a greater level of collectivism or communitarianism in a multicultural society were also attempts to discursively shape the MR of the people.<sup>41</sup> The inculcation of these five Shared Values – of nation before community and society above self; family as the basic unit of society; community support and respect for the individual; consensus not conflict; and racial and religious harmony – would serve to buttress the position of the government as well as sustain the overall social figuration. Similarly, the promotion of the five core family values of love, care and concern, mutual respect, filial piety, commitment and responsibility, promoted personal responsibilities to family, particularly in a developed nation with an ageing population. Although the Shared and Family Values are not unlike Christian values, the government's reinforcement of these values to prevent them from eroding in the ways they observed happening in developed nations illustrates the phase of repulsion. The implicit stigmatisation of Western culture is suggested by this justification of promotion of these values:

However, recently many developed countries have witnessed a trend towards more permissive social mores as well as a heavier reliance on the state to take care of the aged. These include the increasing acceptance of 'alternative lifestyles' such as casual sexual relationship and single parenthood. Such lifestyles weaken the family unit.<sup>42</sup>

The social figuration was made up of the interdependent figurations from the primary unit of family, clan, tribe and schools to wider groups of race, communities and nation. Each individual figuration was joined in a series of widening theatres of interdependency. Thus, the promotion of Shared and Family values established a Singaporean identity and concomitantly facilitated the development of the hegemonic process and the veracity of the overall figuration.

The promotion of the two cultural institutions of sport and art also represented political attempts to fuse the two processes of globalization and parochialization into

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41 Aplin, "Values and the Pursuit of Sports Excellence: The Case of Singapore", 64.

42 Singapore government, "The five shared values," [On-line]. Available: <http://www.sg/flavour/values-5.html>.

one, to define the identity of Singaporeans. The Minister of State (Home Affairs and Law) Ho Peng Kee emphasized the importance of these two institutions:

As Singapore enters the new millennium, together with the arts, sports will help to create a gracious and well-rounded society, comprising active, creative and healthy individuals. These will be the key-supporting pillars girding Singapore's economic drive, giving fuller meaning to what Singaporeans aspire towards in this new millennium – a higher quality of life.<sup>43</sup>

The spectrum of art in Singapore embodied greater indigenous varieties than did sport. Although the latter functioned as another means to create a national identity and to fortify the bond of the various social figurations, the language of sport was English. Sport thus reflected the perfect juxtaposition of the two forces of globalization and nationalization. Sport provided the theatrical element that reinforced and fortified allegiance to Singapore and a Singaporean identity. The inherent competitive element in sport fostered the development of collective identity. And certainly, sport was more provocative and less explicit than singing nationalistic propaganda songs.<sup>44</sup> The words of the former Prime Minister Lee that "sport is politics" and that there were "no national benefits" for Singapore for pursue a gold medal became relevant in the new social and economic climate. He explained to the nation that "superiority in sports is national propaganda to persuade other people of the superiority of their competing political systems."<sup>45</sup> The changed realities of Singapore and the magnitude of sport, particularly in the 1990s, made it a viable vehicle too for national propaganda to build and harness a national identity. In 1993 Prime Minister Goh began to introduce sporting metaphors into his public addresses. On some occasions, for example, he reflected upon the sense of nationalism evoked by sport:

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43 "Opening Address by a/P Ho Peng Kee, Minister of State(Home Affairs and Law)/ Deputy Chairman, Committee on Sporting Singapore." (paper presented at the Sporting Singapore Seminar, Ballroom 2, Suntec City Convention Centre, Singapore, 24 February 2001), 1.

44 Since 1970s, the government has regularly introduced the singing of national songs to inculcate a sense of national identity. These songs are mainly written in English and are taught and sung in schools and on National Day.

45 "Our Goal in Sports," 1.

When I was watching the action from the poolside at Toa Payoh, I could feel the electricity in the air every time a Singapore swimmer stood on the starting block. And when Majulah Singapura was played, I felt the flood of pride and joy sweeping through the stadium. It was a tingling, warm feeling which I am sure the thousands of Singaporean who followed the Games either on site or TV also shared.<sup>46</sup>

### **Singapore Sporting Identity**

Sport was institutionalized in ways that were consistent with the political goals of health and productivity. Dunning highlighted three interrelated aspects of the emergent modern social figuration that contribute to the growing social significance of sport.<sup>47</sup> Firstly, sport has developed into one of the principal media for the generation of pleasurable excitement. Sport, as Elias and Dunning argue, has perhaps only one purpose, "to give people pleasure" and in this regard differs from other social figurations concerned with the more serious aspects of life such as work, religion and bureaucracies.<sup>48</sup> Prime Minister Goh emphasized the importance of making Singapore a fun place to live, for "if Singapore is a dull, boring place, not only will talent not want to come here, but even Singaporeans will begin to feel restless."<sup>49</sup> Sport and the arts were the two key cultural institutions which he identified as the means to project the "fun" and "funky" image.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, sport in the 1990s became hyper-commercialised and consummately possessed massive popular appeal. Multi-national sports goods manufacturers such as Nike and Adidas and global sports organizations such as the National Basketball Association (NBA), projected by the ever-encroaching global mass-media systems, provided highly palatable consumer fare that was compatible with Singapore's materialistic culture. It thus provided a politically and

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46 G. Robert, "A Booster Shot That Will Spur Singapore Sport," *The Straits Times*, 7 December 1993.

47 Dunning, "The Dynamics of Modern Sport: Notes on Achievement-Striving and the Social Significance of Sport."

48 N. Elias and E. Dunning, *Dynamics of Sport Groups with Special Reference to Football, Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 204.

49 *Prime Minister's National Day Rally Speech*, 19.

50 *Ibid.*, 19-20.

socially acceptable level of "fun" that could compete or counteract with other forms of entertainment proffered by the burgeoning pub and disco culture and the ever-growing popularity of the movie industry.<sup>51</sup>

The international expansion of sport, as Elias and Dunning noted, has been predicated partly on the growth of international interdependence.<sup>52</sup> Participation in international sports also facilitates the development of relationships between Singapore and the rest of the world. Additionally, the national prestige that success in international sport could yield is useful for enhancing the international standing of the nation. Secondly, sport has become one of the principal media of collective identification. The most significant global manifestation of sport and nationalism emerged in 1896 with the revival of the modern Olympic Games. Thus, the relationship has long been established and has a proven efficacy, albeit being more effective when the country is actually successful in the sporting arena! Participation in international sporting events obviously accentuates team spirit and cooperation as well as parochialism and thus increases for the actual team and the nation the polarity between Singapore and its rivals. It is not just the colour of the jersey but also, as Elias and Dunning explain in their analysis of football (soccer), the group figuration of a game that constantly displays the polarity between attack and defence, cooperation and competition. It is thus this inherent struggle for victory between two or more teams or individuals that accounts for the prominence of sport as a focus for collective identification.<sup>53</sup> Thus, for example, the fact that the ethnic differences in Singapore have not turned into violent conflicts is, arguably, mainly due to the acceptance of the policies and controls and, of course, the comparative docility of the fans! Because fans of a team are socialized to continue their support in success and failure, it is in fact the failure that fortifies the allegiance and establishes the identity of the supporters. This is a very useful socializing effect; sport can be a powerful vehicle for the reinforcement

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51 The government implemented a film rating system to permit a greater variety of film to be screened in Singapore in 1994. Films that contained explicit sexual or violent scenes were previously banned or heavily censored but with the implementation of this rating system, such films were allowed to be viewed by patrons of over the age of 21 with less censorship.

52 Elias and Dunning, *Dynamics of Sport Groups with Special Reference to Football*, 223.

53 *Ibid.*, 191-204.

of national identity. Lastly, sport has become a central source of meaning in the lives of many people. This point is perhaps difficult to prove in the case of Singapore, though the number of sport programmes on television, particularly since the introduction of cable-TV, the opening of the Manchester United Football Club restaurant and club in Singapore in 2000 and the previously pervasive support for the Chicago Bulls and Michael Johnson in the 1990s are indicative of an increasing popularity of sport in the country.

In this phase of sportization in Singapore, sport became increasingly serious, particularly in the view of the government. Prime Minister Goh regarded sports excellence as a means to "lift a nation's soul and spirit."<sup>54</sup> Sporting success was now given additional emphasis in sport policies so as to elevate the pleasurable excitement of sport to a level that would satisfy the masses sufficiently to build a viable national bond. Abdullah Tarmugi, the Minister for Community Development and Sports, certainly seemed to support this notion: "Whether as participants, spectators or supporters we believe people establish bonds by doing fun and meaningful activities together."<sup>55</sup> Sporting excellence was also expected to enhance its identity as a developed nation, making it more than simply an "economic star" in Southeast Asia.<sup>56</sup> It diminished the differences between Singapore and developed nations on the one hand and increased the contrasts with less developed nations on the other. The outcome of the two effects contributed to the establishment of a stronger identity of the figuration. National identity and globalization were thus the twin forces driving this process of development but the effects of the preceding phase still proved to be both enabling and constraining factors in this phase of sportization.

### **Collective Identification and Gold Medals**

Dunning observes that countries all over the world have transformed sport from a marginal, lowly valued institution into one that is central and much more highly

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54 Robert, "A Booster Shot That Will Spur Singapore Sport," 31.

55 "Speech by Mr Abdullah Tarmugi, Minister for Community Development at the Launch of Medals on Fri, 31 March 2000 at 5.00pm at Toa Payoh Sports Hall," (Singapore: Singapore Government Press Release, 2000).

56 G. Sheridan, "Looking out Our Back Door," *The Weekend Australian*, 8-9 December 2001, 26.

valued, an institution which, he argues, has become "one of the central, if not the central sources of identification, meaning and gratification" in the lives of many people.<sup>57</sup> Resistance to this trend towards growing seriousness and competitiveness has been overcome. Dunning describes this compelling social process as one, which exemplifies Elias's 'blind' or 'unplanned' long term social process.<sup>58</sup> It is a process that emerged from the unintended outcome of the interweaving of the purposive or planned actions of the members of several interdependent groups over several generations. A comparison of the preceding phase of sportization with this phase clearly conforms to this tenet of Elias's theory. During the colonial period, sport was left to volunteers and philanthropists with hardly any central organization. They planted the seed of sport in schools and in clubs. When Singapore became independent, the PAP under the leadership of Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew took central control of sport and made fitness for productivity its main if not its only priority, even to the extent of discouraging competition and medal-chasing efforts. Despite attempts by the Deputy Director of the NSPB, S. Rajaratnam, in 1971 to reform the sport and social policies to develop sporting champions and repeated appeals in 1984 by Desmond Oon, Head of Research at the SSC, the government, with the monopoly of control, determined the development of sport.

However since 1990, this practice has changed with the changing local and global conditions. Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong officially sowed the seed of sporting success in the country in 1993, with the purpose of nationalism very much in mind. Although the preceding sportization phase had clearly established the necessary infrastructure for the development of sporting success, the inculcation of the perception of sport as a "waste of time" and the emphasis upon the economy also produced high levels of resistance towards the realization of the goal, following former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew insistence that "there are no national benefits from gold medallists."<sup>59</sup> Prime Minister Goh's contrasting position was exemplified in his endorsement of sports excellence:

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57 Dunning, "The Dynamics of Modern Sport: Notes on Achievement -Striving and the Social Significance of Sport," 205.

58 *Ibid.*, 206.

59 "Our Goal in Sports," 1.



If the Sports Excellence policy produces gold medals at the Asian Games, it will be excellent. If it produces a medal of whatever colour at the Olympics, it will be marvellous. But whether we win medals or not, it must raise the overall competitive spirit of Singaporeans.<sup>60</sup>

The approach towards sport has thus shifted from one in which sporting success was seen as self-centred to one where it was seen as community-centred. In the previous sportization phase, Prime Minister Lee had argued that the most rewarding approach towards sport was to "generate healthy, vigorous exercise for the whole population... enhancing the valuable qualities it has – a keen, bright and educated people who will lead better and more satisfying lives if they are fit and healthy."<sup>61</sup> In this phase, the same qualities are equally, if not more important. But as the economic and social divide between those who are "keen, bright and educated" and those who are not widens, sport plays an increasingly important role in preserving and motivating the same qualities. The catharsis of sporting success, or more specifically a gold medal in an international arena, provides an emotional focal point for collective identification as it blurs the lines of demarcation of different social groups and in the process "lifts a nation's soul and spirit." The higher the level of competition the greater the level of regulation of the athlete's conduct and performances becomes. A sporting contest which is grounded on scientifically rationalized movement has the potential to release excitement that has a cathartic effect that unifies and divides.

In this phase of sportization, Singapore's small population and Asian physique as critical obstacles that disadvantages it from following the "superpowers with large populations"<sup>62</sup> was no longer seen as valid. Minister for Community Development, S. Dhanabalan, justified Singapore's poor performance in the 1985 Asian Track and Field Championships on grounds of limited talent pool and placed the onus on sporting pursuit on the athletes. With the same justification, he announced that,

Those who have talent have to have to set their own individual priorities between sports and studies or careers. Sports and other recreational

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60 "Sports to Get More Government Support and Funds: PM," *The Straits Times*, 17 July 1993.

61 "Our Goal in Sports."

62 *Ibid.*

interests must be left to the individual to pursue privately. These are not areas in which the Government should intrude too much.<sup>63</sup>

Prime Minister Goh debunked these myths by using New Zealand, which has a similar population, as an example.<sup>64</sup> Despite these demographics limitations, he argued, Singapore had achieved economic success because "(w)e set ourselves a clear target, picked the best team available, threw in the resources and worked single-mindedly towards achieving what we wanted."<sup>65</sup> Prime Minister Goh called this the "Singaporean way" and urged that the same attitude and approach that had been manifest in building the airport and port be extended to sport.<sup>66</sup> The greater the parallel, the less ambiguous or limited is the identity of Singapore. Sporting success thus generates a greater pride in being associated and recognized as a Singaporean and concomitantly establishes a stronger 'we' figuration.

### **SPEX – The Singaporean Way**

The most significant, if not the defining, moment in the move to achieving elite sporting success came on 6 December 1993 when the Ministry of Community Development (MCD) and the Singapore Sports Council jointly launched Sports Excellence 2000 (SPEX 2000). It was a strategic blueprint that was intended to "propel Singapore into the legion of sporting bigwigs."<sup>67</sup> Prime Minister Goh first mooted this plan after Singapore's outstanding success in the 1993 Southeast Asia Games.<sup>68</sup> Singapore hosted the event and won 50 gold medals, each of which provided an occasion for hoisting the nation's flag and singing the national anthem. Each gold medal performance was broadcasted on television and well reported in the newspaper. Sport thus presented itself as an attractive vehicle for the government to promote nationalism, particularly at a time when the economy was strong and the leadership of

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63 "Sport Should Be Left to the Individual," *The Straits Times*, 6 November 1985.

64 "Go the Kiwi Way," *The New Paper*, 19 December 1999, 70.

65 *Ibid.*

66 *Ibid.*

67 *The Dawn of a New Era for Singapore Sports*, vol. 22, *Sports: Sports Excellence 2000* (Singapore: Singapore Sports Council, 1994), 5.

68 "Sports to Get More Government Support and Funds: P. M.," *The Straits Times*, 18 July 1993.

the new Prime Minister was yet to be fully established. In the previous phase, elite sport was de-emphasized and only the health function of sport was promoted. The implementation of SPEX 2000 illustrates the expansion of control over the attitudes and practices of sport. Elite sport commanded a high level of public interest whilst at the same time it is also subjected to close scrutiny. Regulation of elite sport was thus far more complex and extensive than for recreational sporting activities. The emphasis on elite sport thus effected the tightening of the chains of interdependency between the government, athletes and wider community for a diversity of interest that included political hegemony, self actualization, economic profit, social status and entertainment. In addition, the promotion of sport and SPEX 2000 could also be seen to improve the health and fitness of Singaporeans, vital factors in an increasingly competitive world. Ng Ser Miang, chairman of the SSC, re-emphasised the government's new thrust towards sports excellence:

It is so that we can achieve our corporate mission, which says that we will foster a fit and healthy nation based on a policy of promoting participation in sports from the recreation to high performance level, so as to enhance the quality of life and contribute to nation building.<sup>69</sup>

An explicitly titled plan matched by an equally explicit slogan of "Winning for Singapore" and anthem, SPEX 2000 represented a serious effort by the government to produce sporting champions with the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games as the target.<sup>70</sup> The annual budget for sport excellence was dramatically raised to \$10 million. The government quadrupled their budget to \$4 million annually and the perennial corporate sponsor of SSC, Singapore Pools (Ltd), also quadrupled its contribution to \$4 million with the other corporate sponsors making up the remaining \$2 million. A systematic and rationalised approach was also undertaken to distribute the funds to ensure the best possible return from the limited resources. All sports in Singapore were categorized to determine the percentage of funding and assistance. Only core status sports and merit status sports received the increased funding and additional assistance, whilst all "other sports" received no additional funding or assistance.<sup>71</sup> The selection criteria

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69 "Ng Ser Miang: A Prime Mover of SPEX 2000," *Sports* 1996, 9.

70 See Appendix 1 for SPEX 2000 anthem

71 *The Dawn of a New Era for Singapore Sports*, 6.

categorically demonstrated the key focus on achieving sporting success. Core status sports were those that met the following criteria:

- Inclusion in the Asian or Olympic Games
- Strong medal-winning potential
- Good potential based on analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of competitor countries
- Little disadvantage where Singapore athletes' physique was concerned
- Good development plans for the sport
- Good track record in performance
- Sound administrative infrastructure
- Large school base
- Large public following<sup>72</sup>

Merit sports were chosen based on their strong performances in regional and international competitions. Sports that were awarded Core status were: badminton, soccer, swimming and waterpolo, table tennis, tenpin bowling, track and field and yachting. Merit sports were: bodybuilding, hockey, sepak takraw, shooting, squash, taekwondo, wushu.<sup>73</sup>

Clearly, not all of these sports had a strong medal winning potential in the Asian or Olympic Games. Bowling was not even an Olympic sport! Weightlifting, in which Singapore won the only Olympic medal in its history, is a sport which physique is not a critical factor was a notable omission. If the sole purpose of SPEX 2000 was to produce a medal, a different list of sports would have been selected. Similarly, if the promotion of sport was the key focus, popular sports which were taught and played in schools, such as basketball and netball, would not have been left out.

The decisions arrived at from consideration of these conflicting factors were crucial in defining the nature of sporting development for Singapore. On the one hand it

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

demonstrated an important development towards raising the overall status of sport with the focus of sporting excellence. The continuing and increasing popularity of sports such as netball, rugby, basketball and golf after SPEX 2000 illustrated the multiplicity of forces involved in the sporting figuration. On the other hand, the need to maximise the limited resources resulted in the decision to focus on only a selection of sports. Although the SSC emphasized that sports that were not selected would receive the same level of support as they had in the past, the margin of difference between the support they were to receive, and that offered to priority sports inevitably increased with SPEX 2000. The unselected sports, therefore, had to secure greater private funding or risk becoming increasingly emasculated in the face of greater competition between sporting institutions for resources and support. Indeed, sports such as weightlifting and boxing went into an almost complete oblivion in the 1990s.<sup>74</sup>

Just as Sports for All in 1973 laid the infrastructure for SPEX 2000, the latter established the infrastructure for sporting success. Elite athletes, National Sport Associations (NSAs), schools and parents were all targeted as stakeholders in the SPEX 2000.<sup>75</sup> Individual plans were drawn for selected elite athletes to assist them in training and competition. The Sports Excellence Assistance Programme (SEAP) that provided individual grants for elite athletes was doubled to a maximum of \$8000 to help defray training expenses. The number of SEAP for schools (SEAPS) grants was also increased from 140 to 1000. Elite student athletes in national and youth training schemes were also granted exemption from additional ECA workload. Sport scholarships were also increased and a special admission scheme to polytechnics was also made available for elite athletes who met the minimum eligible criteria. A pilot sports programme in schools was also drawn up to be implemented at Anglican High School in 1994 to examine the viability of tailoring a special curriculum to help student athletes balance school and sport. Working athletes were also granted up to \$2000 compensation per month under the Compensation for Loss of Income Scheme, an increase of \$500. National servicemen who were also national athletes were granted

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74 G. Robert, "Time for a Big Lift to Glory Days.," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 19 June 2001. no name, "Back in Singapore to Fight for a Dying Sport," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 8 July 2001.

75 *The Dawn of a New Era for Singapore Sports*, 8-9.

additional time during their national service to train and compete under the Singapore Armed Forces Sportsmen Scheme.

Two new divisions were created at the SSC, the Sports Excellence Division and the Market Development and Communications Division to spearhead SPEX 2000. The Sports Excellence Division was established to focus on all the affairs of Core sports whilst the other division was to be responsible for promoting public interest in sports events and to assist national sport associations in obtaining commercial sponsorships. In addition the Sports Medicine, Fitness and Research Centre was to be strengthened with the appointment of several new staff, a sports psychologist, a biomechanist and a sports physiologist to join the existing sport medicine physicians. The level of administrative subsidies for the NSAs was also increased to \$7000 per month and assistance was provided to set up their own medical support teams. Coaching and training facilities were also improved to assist NSAs in the development of successful athletes. Coaching received the largest share, 21.7% of the \$10 million budget, to facilitate the recruitment of foreign and local coaches as well as the development of local coaching expertise.<sup>76</sup> Educational courses, such as motivation and sports psychology were also planned for parents to enable them to provide better support for their children athletes. High performance sport in Singapore thus modelled the systematic regulation of the body, sporting and social practices adopted in the major sporting countries. It involved a wide range of professionals – in fact they outnumber the athletes they support. High performance sport commanded high commercial interest which expanded the figuration of sport, drawing in more and more people with diverse roles and interests. Concomitantly, the chains of interdependency tightened and lengthened at the same time in sporting and social figuration. Further, the development of sport in Singapore was not only illustrated by the increasing complexity and sophistication in the organization of sport resources and performances but in the production of knowledge in the field as well. McNeill's Ph.D. study on sports excellence and schools, and Aplin's Ph.D. study on the relationship between value orientations and sporting success demonstrate the increasing scientization of the knowledge of sport. In addition to the penetration of specific study of sport in Singapore in international journals, the formation of Singapore Olympic Academy to

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<sup>76</sup> See Appendix 2 for a graphic representation of the funding distribution.

promote Olympism and the study of Olympism and Olympic Games, the organization of sport and physical education related conferences and seminars, such as *Best and Fairest* seminar in 1996, which discussed the topic of drugs and sportsmanship, the annual International Sessions of the Singapore Olympic since 1995, the World Congress of AIESEP in 1998, Women in Sport Conference in 1999 demonstrated not only the increasing interest in the study of sport in Singapore but also the increasing regulation of knowledge production in the field. However, the penetration of the field of studies into the mainstream remains tentative. For instance, the study of physical education is not included as a specialized area in Singapore's first international conference on educational research in 2005 organized by the largest and most well funded institute in educational research in the Asia Pacific, National Institute of Education's Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice.<sup>77</sup>

A generous reward scheme was also implemented to motivate the athletes and all significant others to achieve the appropriate sporting success. The SNOC's Multimillion Dollar Award Programme (MAP) clearly defined what constituted sporting success to the government and signalled the nature of their efforts to produce gold medallists.<sup>78</sup> Only Gold medal performers in the Olympic, Asian, Commonwealth or SEA Games were to be eligible for the SNOC rewards. This explicit and specific evaluation of effort reflected the regulation and distinction of sport performances. On the one hand, it provided a huge incentive for athletes and their coaching teams to achieve sporting success, but on the other, the attainment of a Bronze or Silver or a World Championship title was positioned as having no value. This reward structure was also represented in a symbolic hierarchical layout that reinforced the prevalent social meritocratic principle which underlay Singapore's social, economic and educational practices.

The reward system is outlined below:

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77 The Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice, *Redesigning Pedagogy: Research, Policy, Practice*. [On-line] Available: <http://www.crpp.nie.edu.sg/Conferences/>

78 "A M. A. P. to Chart Singapore's Course Towards Sporting Excellence," in *Sports: Sports Excellence* (Singapore: Singapore Sports Council, 1994), 8.

<u>Event</u>	<u>Reward for individual gold medallist</u>	<u>Reward for team gold medallist</u>
Olympic Games	\$1 million	\$2 million
Asian Games	\$250 000	\$500 000
Commonwealth Games	\$100 000	\$200 000
SEA Games	\$10 000	\$20 000

The monopoly of the sporting institution allowed the government to dictate the purpose and direction of sport. With the implementation of SPEX 2000, the functional dependence of the autonomous National Sports Associations (NSAs) and the SSC and SNOC became tighter than ever before. The NSAs had a higher accountability and responsibility towards their performances to ensure the targets and goals established by the SSC were achieved as the power of control over NSAs and the respective sports resided in the SSC and SNOC. By rewarding only specific performances, sporting success became clearly defined. Non-medal winning performances necessitated a "re-think, and revise the state of affairs, or resign. If they do not resign, deregistration is one penalty the SNOC will not hesitate to impose."<sup>79</sup> The political significance of sport not only meant that success had tangible implications but has also raised the level of people's expectation of sport.

SPEX 2000 clearly illustrates the shift of sporting policies and the increased level of political emphasis on sport during the 1990s. However, the achievement of this new direction for sport in Singapore was encumbered by the entrenched pragmatism of the people and their attitude toward sport. Increasing global economic competitiveness heightened the demand on energy and effort towards the pursuit of the "serious business of life."<sup>80</sup> The competitiveness in sport and the reward for only Gold performances also reduced the likelihood of gaining the extrinsic return, thus the conventional options of being a driver or manager for example continued to be safer and more pragmatic options. Moreover, the political valuation of 'labour and its fruit'

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79 "Singapore National Olympic Council Cracks the Whip: Review, Revise, Resign," *The Straits Times*, 21 December 1999, 50.

80 Elias and Dunning, *Dynamics of Sport Groups with Special Reference to Football*, 204.



in SPEX 2000 conjured the advice of Lee Kuan Yew that it was "foolish" to devote the "best years of the lives" of talented Singaporeans to sport.<sup>81</sup> A year after the implementation of SPEX 2000, Singapore's performance in the 1995 SEA Games fell in terms of Gold and total medals, though in sailing (predictably, considering the cost of mounting yachting as a sport for the poorer Southeast Asian countries) it continued to shine.<sup>82</sup> Sailing was also, probably for the same reasons, the only sport that produced Gold medals in the 1994 and 1998 Asian Games. Indeed, it was the exclusivity of sailing and Singapore's economic advantage over its regional neighbours that prompted the Minister of Community Development and Sports, Abdullah Tarmugi, to suggest that Singapore should "focus on excelling in sports that suit our urban lifestyle, maybe going all out for the richer sports."<sup>83</sup> Also, as Prime Minister Goh noted, sailing "requires skills, intelligence and experience. Our small physique does not put us at a disadvantage in sailing."<sup>84</sup> Equally, Singapore's 5 gold medal haul in bodybuilding and bowling in the 2002 Asian Games demonstrate the issue of size could be addressed by selecting appropriate sports.<sup>85</sup>

SPEX 2000 was subsequently vilified in the newspaper as "SPLAT 2000" when it failed to produce significant success.<sup>86</sup> Nevertheless it was an illustration of a 'readiness' phase in sporting success. In 2000, sportization in Singapore moved to a phase of actualisation with the implementation of SPEX 21. Although its structure and targets remained similar to those of SPEX 2000, the specificity of the targets raised the accountability of sport organizations as well as providing a sense of optimism regarding the future of sport in Singapore. The targets were:

- A minimum of 25 gold medals at the SEA Games;
- Four to eight medals and at least one gold at the Asian Games;
- One or two medals at the Commonwealth Games;

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81 "Our Goal in Sports," 1.

82 See Appendix 3 for SEA Games Medal Tally.

83 *The New Paper*, 4 December 1995.

84 "Speech by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong at the Official Opening of the National Sailing Centre" (National Sailing Centre, Singapore, 26 June 1999), 2.

85 See Appendix 4 for Asian Games Medal Tally: 1951-2002

86 See Appendix 5 for a detailed medal tally of the Core sports.

- One medal from the Olympics, starting from Sydney 2000;
- Challenge 2008 – an Olympic gold from sailing by 2008;
- Goal 2010 – qualify for soccer's World Cup finals by 2010;
- Thomas Cup 2012 – to qualify for badminton's Thomas Cup finals by 2012<sup>87</sup>

Sports selected for the Core and Merit categories were changed slightly. All the sports identified in the Core sports category remained, with the exception of track and field athletics, which did not perform to the satisfaction of the SSC on administrative level and medal achievement.<sup>88</sup> Although it won five gold medals, whilst badminton, another Core sport, won none, the latter was not dropped from the list. The number of merit sports was also increased to 8 with the addition of billiards and snooker and *silat* (Malay martial arts) whilst the drugs scandal that plagued body-building and the dissolution of the Singapore Bodybuilding Federation resulted in its automatic elimination.<sup>89</sup> The promotion and demotion of NSAs increased the competition for resources and concomitantly increases their dependency on the SSC.

### **Sports Excellence: With a Little Help from our Foreign Friends**

Abdullah Tarmugi's statement, "We can only realise our shared goals if every stakeholder plays its part, and we can only win if we play as Team Singapore,"<sup>90</sup> reinforced the emphasis on collectivism in the sporting and overall social figuration. "Team Singapore" included not just NSAs and athletes, but sponsors, media, family, schools and foreign talent. The greater the similarity in aspirations, the closer became the bond of the figuration. By extending beyond the traditional social figurations to include foreigners, the government demonstrated that the chains of interdependency were not limited to Singapore. "Foreign talents can potentially give our sports a boost

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87 S. Singh, "It's Official: Olympic Gold or Bust, Singapore," *The Straits Times*, 17 January 2000, 46.

88 T. C. Chan, "Out! Track and Field Limping out of Race," *The Straits Times*, 14 January 2000, 52.

89 *Ibid.*

90 "Keynote Address by Mr Abdullah Tarmugi, Minister for Community Development at Sports 21" (The Grassroots Club, Singapore Sports Council, 15 January 2000), 3.

and lift," argued Abdullah Tarmugi,<sup>91</sup> just as they had historically, transforming the unknown little fishing village into a major entrepot centre and then into the most globalized country in the world!<sup>92</sup>

In keeping with this approach, Prime Minister Goh suggested the possibility of changing "immigration criteria to bring in top football talent and make them citizens, then one day we, too can get into the finals."<sup>93</sup> It was not unusual for Singapore to engage the services of foreigners in the economic sector, neither was it unusual in sport. The 1996 France World Cup Championship team, as Prime Minister Goh pointed out, included several 'foreigners', most notably Algerian Zinedin Zidane. The use of foreign athletes, however, was double-edged. On the one hand, it helped overcome the limitation of talent pool and increases its opportunities for achieving success more efficiently. On the other, it increased competition for resources and opportunities for local athletes. In the 2000 Schools National Individual Table Tennis Championships, for instance, all the four male finalists were recruited from China.<sup>94</sup>

Unlike the economy, sport is about pride and pleasure. Collective identification with the success of a national athlete can only be achieved if the latter is seen as a member of the group. Many Singaporeans accepted the role of foreigners in the economy, schools, health and religious services but they still "equate[d] national pride in sport with Singapore-born athletes."<sup>95</sup> The close relationship between sport and nationalism raised the expectation and thus regulation of who aptly represents the people. This distinction indicates that the government's migration policy alone did not determine the markers of a Singaporean. It also suggests that the sport culture of Singapore was critically different from those of other colonial countries such as Australia. Although the importation of foreign talent in sport in recent years has been very common in rich countries, the practise is still met with resistance in Singapore.

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91 *Ibid.*, 4.

92 L. Branson, "Singapore Tops in Globalisation," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 12 January 2001.

93 "National Day Rally Speech: Welcome to Singapore," *The Straits Times*, 26 August 1998, 37.

94 "Foreign Policy Hits the Schools," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 6 April 2000.

95 K. H. Yap, "Where Does Foreign Talent Fit in Team Singapore?" *The Straits Times Interactive*, 22 April 2001.

The resistance of the established community towards migrants specially chosen to represent their interests demonstrates an essentialized perception of a Singaporean, as well as an essentialized view of the relationship between sport and nationalism. Unpredictably, nationalism was not perpetuated in the sporting contest, but the mere introduction of foreign talent in sport had an unintended effect of marking out a Singaporean identity. For instance, when two Singaporeans planted the Singapore flag on the summit of Mount Everest in 1998, the euphoria was dampened by the knowledge that they were both not Singapore citizens but Singapore Permanent Residents. The association with the achievement was reduced in this instance, because of the legal identity of the two mountaineers. This delineation of what makes a Singaporean reinforces the distinction between the established community and the outsider. This resistance towards fully embracing the achievement drew the attention of Prime Minister Goh. To facilitate a unity between foreigners and locals, he urged a different interpretation of the success:

This team achieved what they did because Singapore gave them the opportunity. It was a Singapore team that put our flag on the summit; it was a Singapore effort, a Singaporean achievement.

Singapore values non-citizens who contribute to Singapore. The non-citizens on the Everest team made an essential contribution. We should embrace them as part of our community and be happy that they have taken up permanent residence here and identified with Singapore.<sup>96</sup>

Similarly, whilst Australians celebrated and embraced the success of Russian import Tatiana Grigorieva at the pole vault as an Australian achievement, Singaporeans expressed mixed feelings towards the identification of the achievement of their China import Jin Junhong at the Sydney Olympics. However, the government embraced their efforts totally to promote a greater acceptance of the contributions of these migrants in the country and awarded Jin Junhong Sportswomen of the Year for her contributions. By endorsing their achievements, they emphasized the importance of "Made in Singapore" as opposed to "Born in Singapore." This shifted the focus away from traditional identity markers of birthplace and cultural roots and emphasized the

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<sup>96</sup> "S'pore Must Tap Foreign Talent to Compete Successfully in Future," 51.

functional bond of the various social groups. The resistance towards embracing the migrant Chinese's success suggests also the positioning of sport migrants as 'outsiders'. This distinction between the identity of recent Chinese nationals who migrated to Singapore and the Singaporean Chinese indicates the formation of an established Singapore Chinese identity. The process of negotiating the Singaporean identity in the histrionics of sport magnifies the tension between the established group and the outsider group.

To succeed in sport, however, Singapore needed more than foreign talent. Full government intervention in sport was instinctively expected, as exemplified by this opinion:

The main reason why Singapore can compete so well internationally in other fields is thanks to the brilliant planning abilities of our leaders. If we can channel some of that creative energy into sports, who knows how far we can go?<sup>97</sup>

The chains of interdependency in Singapore were so interwoven with the successful government that the limited success in sport was seen as evidence of a lack of sufficient political control. Director of Sports and Youth Division Teo Eng Cheong's reflection on the development of government intervention in sport reinforced this point:

As far as sports is concerned, the government had in the past adopted quite a laissez-faire approach, compared to other aspects of our lives. That it has flourished and come so far is testament to the passion of the people involved. But without the support, there are limits. When the government comes in, we can bring it to the next level.<sup>98</sup>

Although the orientation towards sporting success visibly defined this phase of sportization, the emphasis on health and fitness, promoted by Sports for All since 1973 was not ignored, but was, in fact, given a greater attention in the 1990s than ever before; in some respects it was accorded even higher priority than SPEX 2000. In

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97 S. Murali, "Major Revamp Soon for Sports in the Republic," *The Straits Times*, 6 October 1998.

98 T. C. Chan, "Committe to Chart Direction," *The Straits Times*, 7 September 2000, 63.

1996, the SSC implemented Sports for Life to replace Sports for All.<sup>99</sup> It was, according to Prime Minister Goh, "about creating life-long habits, adopting new lifestyles and living a healthier, better life."<sup>100</sup> He emphasized the non-economic aspect of life in his description of a well-rounded Singaporean as:

one who is cultivated, sporty, caring and gracious. Such a Singaporean reads widely, enjoys music and the arts, sings or plays at least one musical instrument, is active in sports, and cares for his fellow citizens. Most of us are not such a complete person... But everyone can be competent in at least one sport.<sup>101</sup>

A growing trend for many Singaporeans to live unhealthy, sedentary lifestyles was reflected in the 1992 SSC National Survey on Sports Participation. This showed that 64% of all people aged 15 years and above did not participate in any type of physical activity necessitating a need to implement the programme. Additionally, Sports for Life was well placed to play a "key role in helping to reduce the social and economic impact" of the ageing of Singapore's population.<sup>102</sup> Sports for Life was thus particularly important in promoting sport to compete against the other leisure activities that became available with increasing affluence. SSC executive director Kwan Yue Yeong observed that "many Singaporeans have very unhealthy and sedentary lifestyles. They spend more time playing computer games, going to the movies or buffets."<sup>103</sup> The targets of Sports for Life were to increase the percentage of people who exercised at least once a week from 24% to 40% by 2000 and to 50% by 2005. It also sought to increase the percentage of people who exercised at least three times a week from 8% to 15% by the year 2000.<sup>104</sup> The government allocated a budget of \$315 million for its next five years to increase sports participation in Singapore, \$9 million of which was allocated to fund the recurrent expenditure to the programme. This was \$5 million

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99 "Sports for Life: It's More Fun Than You Think," (Singapore: Ministry and Community Development and The Singapore Sports Council, 1996).

100 "Speech by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong at the Launch of Sports for Life" (Bedok Sports Park, Singapore, 29 September 1996), 1.

101 *Ibid.*

102 "Sports for Life: It's More Fun Than You Think," 7.

103 D. Tan, "Sports for All near Every Home," *The Straits Times*, 30 September 1996.

104 "Sports for Life: It's More Fun Than You Think," 3.

more than its contribution to SPEX 2000.<sup>105</sup> The rest of the \$315 million was allocated to the improvement of sport facilities, to ensure that there would be a swimming complex, indoor sports hall and running track within 3km of every resident by 2005. These facilities were also important infrastructure for SPEX 2000.

The 1997 National Sports Participation Survey found that the non-participation rate in sport had dipped by 5% and that the number of people who participated in sports once a week had increased by 10%, which suggested that Sports for Life was making progress.<sup>106</sup> Similarly, the number of participants in national mass events such as cycling, walking, running had gone up by almost five times, from just over 50 000 in 1994 to almost 250 000 in 1998.<sup>107</sup> To attract more youth, women and elderly to participate in sport, the variety of mass events had also widened, to include, for instance, street soccer, 3-on-3 street basketball, vertical marathons, sports carnivals specifically for women, and Walk-a-mile for Senior Citizens. However the top three sports that Singaporeans participated in were again fitness-oriented and individual-centred sports: jogging, swimming and walking. Unsurprisingly, a majority of the participants selected fitness as the main reason for their participation whilst socializing with friends and family was one of the least important factors. The high number of respondents who did not watch sports at all (45%) also indicated that the interest in sport was largely related to fitness. This result thus reflected a significant degree of indifference towards sport as an entertainment or bonding activity, which diminished the effectiveness of achieving or energizing a "Singaporean spirit" through SPEX 2000.

### **Official Monopolization of Sport: The Establishment of a Sports Ministry**

On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2000, the government established the Ministry of Community Development and Sports (MCDS) to intensify its efforts in generating sporting success. This most evidently represented an intensification of the monopoly of control

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105 *Ibid.*

106 "National Sports Participation Survey 1997," (Singapore: Singapore Sports Council, 1997).

107 *Singapore Sports Council Annual Report 1998/1999*, (Singapore: Singapore Sports Council). See Appendix 6 for a statistical record of mass participation from 1978-1998.

of the sporting development in Singapore as SNOC President, Teo Chee Hean, proclaimed: "The launch of the new Sports Ministry is proof that the government is serious about encouraging sports excellence in Singapore."<sup>108</sup> The government now had a greater and far more pervasive role in determining the direction and nature of sport in nation building. The Minister of MCDS Abdullah Tarmugi described the role of MCDS as,

[reiterating the] commitment to strengthen the social fabric of our society. This is vital if we are to remain as one people to meet the challenges presented by the break-neck rate of change in the global economy... Sports excellence will remain a key objective of MCDS. We sorely need heroes and models. Through sports excellence, we hope to nurture more sports heroes, by extending the definition of success beyond the traditional boundaries of academic and material achievements.

Our accomplishments in sports will add to the pride of being Singaporean and bring us closer as a nation.<sup>109</sup>

The establishment of MCDS also demonstrated the role of sport in community development. MCDS was not exclusively concerned with sport but was also in charge of social services, nation building and family and youth development. MCDS established a Sport and Youth Division specifically with the purpose of instilling desirable values and attributes. Abdullah Tarmugi explained the rationale of this division:

It is not good enough to engage our youths only when they are in trouble. It is better that we engage them as they grow, channel their energies to useful ends and in the process cultivate the values that will stand them in good stead.<sup>110</sup>

In less than five months, MCDS also established the Committee of Sporting Singapore (CoSS), a "high powered committee" involving four Cabinet ministers to

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108 "Develop on Govt Initiative, Says Teo," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 13 April 2000.

109 "Speech by Mr Abdullah Tarmugi, Minister for Community Development at the Launch of Mcds on Fri, 31 March 2000 at 5.00pm at Toa Payoh Sports Hall."

110 *Ibid.*



chart the development of sport.<sup>111</sup> For the first time in its history, the different stakeholders in the sports fraternity, including representatives from government agencies, sports organisations, coaches, athletes, the private sector and the media were brought together. This institution allowed the government to create a "common vision... so that we can move in the same direction as one team, rising above individual interests, for the larger good of sports in Singapore,"<sup>112</sup> explained Abdullah Tarmugi. This common vision in sport replicated the common vision of Singapore that the government was orchestrating to create a greater sense of collectivism and homogeneity in outlook and actions of Singaporeans.

However, to effect any parallel between sport and economic success, the entrenched attitude towards sport needed to be changed. Minister Abdullah Tarmugi addressed this problem at the Seminar on Sporting Singapore:

If we see sports as merely something physical and a mere appendage to life, then no amount of recommendations will be able to lift sports to a higher plane.

We need to build a culture that appreciates and accepts sports as another worthwhile human endeavour and achievement in its own right.<sup>113</sup>

CoSS identified "Team Singapore" as the theme to guide the way. It emphasized the network of interdependencies between the SSC, SNOC, NSAs, athletes, schools, media and the government and thus diminished the contrast between actions and attitude. Prime Minister Goh defined this approach:

Team Singapore is about seeking win-win and cooperative approaches to challenges. It is about sharing limited resources, and rising above individual interests for the national good. Team Singapore is the bond of a Sporting Singapore.<sup>114</sup>

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111 Chan, "Committe to Chart Direction," 63.

112 *Ibid.*

113 T. C. Chan, "Plans to Reverse Negative Perception of Sport," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 25 February 2001.

114 "Keynote Address by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong" (paper presented at the Release of the Sporting Singapore Report cum Opening of the Chua Chu Kang Sports and Fitness Centre, Chua Chu Kang Sports and Fitness Centre, 1 July 2001), 1.

The CoSS provided the blueprint for the transformation of sport in Singapore. It aims to develop a successful sport culture and industry and lift sports from the "Third World quality to the first." It envisioned Singapore becoming one of the ten most successful sporting nations in Asia by 2010.<sup>115</sup> The commitment to this plan was backed by \$500 million in government funds for five years to achieve its aims. CoSS identified 40 specific strategies to achieve these six specific targets:

1. Create a sturdy sport culture by raising awareness and interest in sport and providing greater recognition to all stakeholders of sport;
2. Create a new sports environment whereby NSAs, schools, SSC work closely to promote sport;
3. Improve the effectiveness of NSAs by transforming them into professional corporate bodies;
4. Revise Sport for All Masterplan to promote a sporting lifestyle for all, the young, the disabled by improving sports and PE in schools and strengthening the relationships of sport providers such as the Constituency Sports Clubs;
5. Sports Excellence requires total support to be given to the athletes in school, work, training, retirement and a more concerted talent identification programme;
6. Selling Sport Singapore to create a vibrant sports industry in hosting events.<sup>116</sup>

The comprehensiveness of the plan in addressing recurring issues such as academic pressure, athletes' support, funding, organization "shows our seriousness in wanting to reach new levels of sporting achievement in Singapore," said Prime Minister Goh.<sup>117</sup> It also shows the increasing regulation of sport practices and the tightening of the chains of interdependency between the government, corporate sector, athletes and community.

The goals of national identity, fitness and economic advancement were encapsulated in the CoSS blueprint. With Singapore's increasing globalized approach,

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115 *Ibid.*, 2.

116 "COSS Report - the 6 Specific Targets," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 1 July 2001.

117 "Keynote Address by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong", 3.

the biggest fear for the government was that Singaporeans might lose their sense of identity.<sup>118</sup> The vision of CoSS was thus an important means to establish the Singaporean identity. Moreover the direct economic benefits from establishing a sport industry and the indirect economic benefits from forging a national identity would reinforce both the functional and economic bonds of the people. Prime Minister Goh's proposal to create a sporting event that is "uniquely Singaporean with international appeal"<sup>119</sup> illustrated the fusing of the two processes of parochialization and globalization. The development of sport also demonstrated the adoption of the markers of a developed nation to identify Singapore, as Prime Minister Goh concluded:

International sporting events add colour and vibrancy to our society. They are essential component of a global city, where the arts, entertainment and sports thrive. Such sporting events also help showcase Singapore to the rest of the world.<sup>120</sup>

Commercialization of sport played a critical role in the acceleration of sport in the West. By the 1990s nationalism in sport had come to be reflected and embodied in the success of an athlete. The athlete was thus the medium that invoked pride and national identification. Whilst the development of sport in Singapore in this phase demonstrated an increasing level of centralization in the pursuit of sporting success, commercialism and professionalism were still 'immature' in comparison with first world countries in the West, as well as Australia and Japan. The government played a dominant role in the provision of support for athletes. But comparison with more successful sporting nations suggests that the involvement of the private sector in sport had become integral to the development of sporting success. Whilst the private sector contributed to the sport excellence programme and Sports for All programme and sponsors sport events, their involvement with local top athletes was relatively low. In this way, the figuration of sport could be described as immature compared to a sporting powerhouse.

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118 "Speech by Minister of Information and Arts George Yeo on Information Technology and Singapore's Future" (paper presented at the EMASIA, Los Angeles, 4 June 1998).

119 "Keynote Address by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong", 3.

120 *Ibid.*, 2.

## Transformation in Physical Education

In this sportization phase, the official opening of the College of Physical Education (CPE) in 1990 was the highlight of the development of physical education in Singapore.<sup>121</sup> The idea of setting up a PE institution dates back to 1960, but it was only ignored.<sup>122</sup> The increased regulation in the training of PE teachers facilitates the development of a more scientific, systematic and regulated pedagogical practice of sport and physical activities. On the same day that CPE was opened, Prime Minister Goh announced that on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1991, it would become a constituent School within the new Nanyang Technological University. Symbolically, CPE signified the greater recognition of physical education and sports in the school curriculum. Practically, it provided a systematic training programme and facilities for physical education teachers. The role of the latter in promoting sports, health, and fitness was integral to the two SSC plans of sport excellence and Sports for Life.

The influence of the British in Singapore's education system extended to the CPE. Modelled after Loughborough University, it was first headed by a British sport academic, Dr Paul Robinson, who led a team of British expatriates and local lecturers.<sup>123</sup> By 1991, leadership in the institution was handed to a Singaporean. The raised expectation in the teaching of physical education and sport could be seen by giving it an official university status and introducing four-year degree programme, followed by masters and doctoral programmes. These developments reflected the increased expectation of the education as well as the rising importance of sport and physical education.

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121 CPE began in 1984 but it did not have its own facilities and operated on borrowed groups from various institutions whilst its facilities were built.

122 The plans had been mooted three times in 1960, 1966 and 1969 but were turned down by the government. The Ministry of Education commissioned three separate studies between the period of 1981 – 1983 before establishing the College of Physical Education in 1984 See Oon, "Government Involvement in Sport in Singapore: 1959-1982", 408-18 and P. D. Robinson, "A Brief History of the Establishment of the College of Physical Education," *CPE Forum: Journal of the College of Physical Education* 2, no. 1 (1989), 2-3.

123 "Annual Report," (Singapore: College of Physical Education, 1989).

Prime Minister Goh argued that "if we are not rugged, fit and healthy as a society, we will not be able to withstand the pressure of competition."<sup>124</sup> His statement demonstrated continuity in the political ideology. Although the justification of 'ruggedness' remained to be closely associated with military and economic functions, the problems confronting the development of ruggedness in this phase of development were different from the early years of Singapore's independence. With rising affluence, the incidence of obesity was increasing, which place a social and financial threat to the development of economic and military 'ruggedness'. The government's approach to addressing the problem of obesity demonstrates the increasing regulation of social conduct.

In the early twentieth century, it was the poor public health brought about by deplorable living conditions that necessitated the British government to implement a fitness oriented PE programme in Singapore. As Singapore advanced towards the turn of the twentieth century, the rising obesity brought about largely by the rising affluence and increasing sedentary lifestyle raised the significance of a health programme in school. The establishment of a specialized institution for the training of physical education teachers, and the implementation of a new physical education syllabus in 1990 were principally to combat the rising obesity rate amongst school children. The impact of obesity on public health cost and productivity made a private lifestyle decision increasingly public. A more specific strategy for addressing the obesity problem was the implementation of a Trim and Fit (TAF) Programme in 1992 in all schools.<sup>125</sup> Firstly, it assesses the students' body mass index. The assessment takes place twice a year which enables a close monitoring on the obesity level. Students' identity from Primary 1 onwards becomes closely intertwined by weight classifications such as overweight, normal weight, underweight, and excessively underweight. This practice of sorting and positioning the students by weight labels rationalizes the implementation of physical activities and diet programmes for overweight children. Those who were found to be excessively overweight and

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124 *The Straits Times*, 11 March 1990.

125 "Trim and Fit (TAF) School Handbook for Schools," (Singapore: Ministry of Education, 1992).

underweight were directed to the National Institute of Health for monitoring and counselling. Diet changes and increasing activity level form the two prongs of the weight management programme. The external policing of diet was carried out by restricting what and when students can eat. Restriction or banning of foods with high fat and sugar content from schools canteens was practised to manage pupils' food consumption in school. Foods were therefore positioned into healthy and unhealthy categories, which became synonymous with correct and wrong categories. The monitoring of eating habits and the organization of special fitness activities for pupils who are overweight also reinforced the positioning of overweight pupils into the 'wrong' categories and 'normal weight' pupils into 'correct' categories. Exercise was perceived to be the most efficient approach to weight reduction as demonstrated by the installation of outdoor fitness stations and indoor weight facilities. The launch of a 15 minute aerobic routine called the Great Singapore Workout as the feature of the National Healthy Lifestyle Campaign in 1992 also increased the emphasis on fitness in schools. At the same time, it reinforced the value of physical activity, exercise, fitness. These attributes were also valued in sport, and the more they were emphasized, the relative importance of sporting success became reduced.

The performance of all schools in monitoring their obesity rate and the percentage of passes in the NAPFA was also analyzed and banded from A (for the best schools) to D (for the worst performing schools). Accountability for fitness and TAF was thus heightened whilst accountability for the teaching of games skills was not given comparative emphasis. Outstanding schools were featured in the media whilst those that performed below the national average were examined by physical education inspectors. TAF and NAPFA thus resulted in a focus on fitness and weight control in the physical education programme. The percentage of overweight pupils fell from 11.7% in 1993 to 9.9% in 1998, whilst the passes for NAPFA went up from 62.8% to 74.2% over the same period.<sup>126</sup> However, the hours allocated to physical education

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126 "Speech by RADM Teo Chee Hean, Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence at the 39th Annual General Meeting of the Singapore Schools Sports Council" (Chinese High School, Singapore, 17 January 1998), "Speech by Radm Teo Chee Hean, Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence at the 40th Annual General Meeting of the Singapore Schools Sports Council" (Methodist Girls' Schools, Singapore, 16 January 1999).

remained the same, despite the rising expectations. Consequently, sports and games were increasingly marginalized, with the priorities placed on NAPFA and TAF.

Economic pragmatism and nationalism remained central in the education curriculum. In 1999, the PE syllabus, as did all other syllabi, underwent a major revamp to incorporate the 'thinking programme' and 'National Education (NE)'. These two initiatives were to produce a workforce with the skills and inclination to expand the economic potential of Singapore, and at the same time, remain loyal to the country. The manifestation of the thinking programme in the new PE curriculum was a student-centred, games-centred approach over the traditional teacher-directed, skill-centred approach. It aimed to encourage the pupil to be active in the learning process of sport, reflecting the aim of the 'thinking programme'. The introduction of National Education was to systematically instil national loyalty in school children. Minister for Education Teo Chee Hean explained that the purpose of National Education was to ensure that "values and instincts that are necessary for the survival of Singapore are passed on to [pupils]."<sup>127</sup> The PE ground was thus an important site for the construction of a national identity. Traditional non-British games were used to draw on the 'unique' history of Singapore's play practices to distinguish its culture and identity. As the contrast between Singapore and the rest of the Western world diminished, the reconstruction of a selected essentialized identity appeared to be a countervailing force for this seeming cultural loss. The physical education programme became increasingly complex and demanding with the focus of NAPFA, TAF, 'thinking programme' and 'National Education'.

However with the CoSS blueprint to develop the sport culture of Singapore, improvements could be seen in PE. It proposed a closer relationship between sport providers and schools, and a greater emphasis on motor skill development, participation rates and most importantly, the number of hours spent on PE.<sup>128</sup> Nevertheless, physical education and sports reached its highest profile in the 1990s despite the increasing emphasis on academic achievement and rising materialism. The

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127 "Speech by Radm Teo Chee Hean, Minister for Education and Second Minister for Defence at the Nie Teachers Investiture Ceremony" (Singapore Indoor Stadium, 4 July 2001), 2.

128 "COSS Report - the 6 Specific Targets."

establishment of the Singapore Sports School in 2004 demonstrated an increasing emphasis on producing sporting success as well as the expansion of the educational and economic opportunities.<sup>129</sup> Minister for Community Development and Sports Yacob Ibrahim explained that "Parents' mindsets are changing. More want their children to take up sports, and it is becoming a good career option."<sup>130</sup> Equally, the traditional character-building functions that sport was perceived to play were intertwined with the expanding conception of sport. As Prime Minister Goh contended:

Lessons from sports cannot always be taught in a classroom- winning and losing gracefully, the killer instinct, compassion, teamwork, fair play, sportsmanship. These are lessons that build character.<sup>131</sup>

The emphasis of a rugged and a 'normal weight' body indirectly, de-emphasizes the ethnic body whilst at the same time, directly facilitates the construction of a shared lens on images, practices and products. The inclusion of body image as a marker of distinction or unification adds to the recognition of differences as not just a factor of race, and concomitantly adds to the variety of social configurations. The overlapping of different social groups reflects the process of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties of a Singaporean identity and image.

## **Conclusion**

Sport was given its biggest emphasis in the 1990s to fortify a national bond between rich and poor, young and old, Chinese, Malay, Indians, Eurasians and foreigners. With the establishment of the Ministry of Community Development and Sports, the government tightened its monopoly of control over sport. The implementation of the CoSS blueprint set the path towards the next sportization phase, ironically at a time in which the government was attempting to subscribe to "less government intervention rather than more" in its economy.<sup>132</sup> The privatization of public companies, such as the Singapore Telecommunication and POSBank, in the 1990s enabled them to penetrate

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129 G. Sivakkumaran, "Sports School Off to a Flying Start," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 3 August 2003.

130 *Ibid.*

131 "Keynote Address by Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong", 2.

132 "Don't Look for Govt Help to Succeed.," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 3 August 2001.



into the global market. Whilst sport became increasingly centralized, it was also increasingly globalized. Singapore was represented in international sporting bodies such as the IOC, IAAF and FINA. Moreover, its fourth place in table tennis in the Sydney and Athens Olympics moved Singapore closer to participating in the medal tally. The desire to develop a successful sport culture was reflected by Minister of Community Development and Sports Abdullah Tarmugi's endorsement of the significance of one athlete's success to the local matrix:

She has galvanised the people of Singapore, she has taught our younger generation the true meaning of rooting together for the country and we will cherish every moment of it.<sup>133</sup>

Whilst there has been a shift in political emphasis on the level of sporting success, the cultural emphasis on education and wealth which characterize the Singapore identity remains entrenched. The year 2000 was an important year in that the Singapore economy demonstrated that it was strong in the face of economic adversities. It was the least adversely affected Asian country in the 1997-98 economic crisis and managed to return a budget surplus of \$2.8 billion for the year.<sup>134</sup> With an increasingly competitive market, economic and educational considerations continue to gain ascendancy over the pursuit of sport. Cabinet Minister George Yeo reiterated the importance of education: "We must give hope to those at the bottom that even if they themselves cannot do better, their children can."<sup>135</sup>

The emphasis on the economic function of education and the meritocratic organization of opportunities continue to regulate attitudes and practices. Even in the selection criteria for the Sports School, students have to meet a relatively high standard of academic achievement to qualify "to ensure sports champs graduate with glowing grades."<sup>136</sup> The figuration of sport is thus seen closely integrated with the wider social figuration. Perhaps the promise made by the third Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee

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133 J. Low, "Happy Homecoming," *The Straits Times*, 4 October 2000, 56.

134 *The Straits Times Interactive*, 6 April 1999.

135 M. Nirmala, "Poor Are Not as Badly Off as Made out to Be," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 30 June 2000.

136 T. Quek, "Sports School Adopts Creative Teaching Style," *The Straits Times Interactive*, 3 August 2003.

Hsien Loong, to "expand the space which Singaporeans have to live" and "recognise many paths of success, and many ways to be Singaporeans" will facilitate the attainment of sporting success and the glorification of the Singapore identity on the international sport arena.<sup>137</sup>

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137 H. L. Lee, "Let's Shape Our Future Together" (paper presented at the Swearing in Speech, Istana, 12 August 2004).

## Conclusion

This thesis sets out to outline and discuss an Eliasian approach and to apply this approach to examine the history of sport in Singapore. Through this analysis, several key questions are addressed. In pointing out that the development of sport in Singapore involved more than just political steering, I argued in the Introduction that it is useful and necessary to examine how the present state of sport has emerged out of the past. How did the germination of sport by the British for their own recreational pleasure develop into the more recent establishment of a Sport School specifically to harvest champions? How does the sportization process parallel and contradict the wider social development of Singapore? How have some aspects of the development continued whilst others changed? With the increasing global-local tension, how is national identity promoted and produced through sport? What are the tendencies that might shape the possible future of sport in Singapore? It is appropriate, therefore, both to summarize what answers have been offered to these main questions and to highlight some key questions that emerged from this analysis that need further exploration.

In tracing the development of the social study of sport, I demonstrated in Chapter 1 how Elias and Dunning's analysis of sport is the most constructive and empowering position to adopt in the critique of sport. The four phases of theoretical development in sport studies showed that Elias and Dunning's conceptualization of sport draws on aspects of the theories that preceded theirs. The emphasis on empirical evidence from historical analysis such as Huizinga and Gardiner was refined to consider history as a "pattern sequence of changes"<sup>1</sup> rather than random events of specific individuals or organization. Although sociology offers the necessary theoretical restraint in the interpretation of the empirical evidence, Elias's synthesis of elements from positivistic and negativistic studies, such as Loy, Brohm, Morgan and Gruneau and at the same time consideration of structures as process, as changing in both developmental and progressive manner, elaborates and sharpens the theoretical orientations available in the study of sport and society.

The sportization of Singapore was traced over the political developments of Singapore. In Chapter 2, the bourgeoisification of sport was shown through the

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<sup>1</sup> Elias, "Sport as a Sociological Problem," 156.

incipient, colonization and establishment phase in Singapore was discussed. Although the British brought sport to Singapore, the diffusion of sport did not preclude the migrants' connections and influences. The latter's establishment of recreation clubs provided a formal institution for the migrants to gain access to sport. While the British role in introducing sport in schools was important, the influence of the migrants at club and school level were equally if not more significant in providing additional momentum to the sportization of Singapore. In the incipient phase, sporting activities were more games than sport-like. Hunting for tigers provided tremendous pleasure to the British; the excitement was generated by the real and present danger of the beast rather than in a structured manner of a competitive game in a sporting arena with defined rules and regulations. The shift towards a more structured recreational activity was accelerated in part as a result of a greater control of the use of the scarce land and the influx of migrants.

Greater regulation of recreation was observed in the colonization phase. The establishment of recreation clubs was not merely a marker of British culture, but it was also a class divider. It provided an explicit symbolic marker of exclusion and inclusion, determined solely by race and class. The initial sportization phase was less organized and recreation activities were carried out in a relatively ad hoc manner by unformalized groups or individuals. However with the establishment of a club, these separate individuals became bonded together, accentuating the established group identity of the Europeans. This model of recreation was very soon legitimized by the non-occidentals who used their economic and social resources to establish their respective recreation clubs on the same racially divisive lines. These recreation clubs may on one level have represented a division of the social groups but on the other, it was, and provided another dimension of connection between the social groups. The concept of recreation through sport was no longer the preserve of the British but had diffused to the various migrant groups.

Sport became fully established in the society when it was diffused to the mass level, through schools. In a more explicit way, the proselytization of sport by the British and the missionary groups in schools elaborated the class lines that characterized sport in the colony. The promotion and teaching of sport in all English, Malay and Tamil schools by the British established a links between the bourgeoisie and the working class. Although the British did not have as considerable an influence in the Chinese

schools, the sporting influence of the Americans was demonstrated by the introduction and promotion of basketball. The webs of interdependence created through the practice of sport and the embodied values of sport engendered a tighter connection on a functional level. Organization and administration of resources for inter-clubs and schools competitions created greater functional links between the different social groups. Furthermore, the diffusion of sport to schools of the different mediums narrowed the social distance not just of pupils from different social groups but it also promoted collective identification of the various ethnic groups as well as that of the society of Singapore. The model of recreation refined the management of time in such a way that recreation became an integral part of social habitus. Moreover, sport as a model of recreation places a greater demand on the restraint in social conduct than other recreation activities such as gambling and drugs. The behaviour restraining characteristics of fair play, loyalty, masculinity and discipline embodied and promoted through, in and by sport also gave it the moral currency as a more civilized social practice than other forms of recreation.

The development of sport during the colonial era was initiated by the British but was also very much precipitated by the non-occidentals. Although the British could be positioned as the established group, their dependency on the migrants, particularly the Chinese majority, also made them the outsider in the administration of the colony. The distribution of power between the British government and the Chinese leaders was relatively even. The British held greater formal authority but the Chinese leaders' social and economic power enabled a substantial challenge to the power of the state.

This power relationship changed under the Japanese administration. Chapter 3 examined how centralization created a civilizing spurt in the development of sport. With the monopoly of control of resources, the development of sport became more state-directed. This tightening of state control on sport effected a greater regulation on how sport was played, organized and perceived. Functions of sport which strengthened the dependency on the state were therefore more dominant in this phase of sportization. The formation of Syonan Sport Association to oversee and regulate the resources and activities of individual sport clubs and associations enabled the state to infuse sport with the Japanese ideals. However, this process of Japanization produced

the ironic tension of "dislocating"<sup>2</sup> affinity and allegiance towards the British through the promotion of a largely British concept of sport. The similarities between sporting and Japanese ideals suggest similarities between the Japanese and British ideals. As a result the explicit display of identity politics by the Japanese government to crystallize and organize the symbol of sport as Japanese could be seen in the sport propaganda. However the approach towards dislocating the British was further confronted by the colonial history and the memory of the violent and authoritative rule of the Japanese as well as the ethnic identity of the respective social groups.

Centralization of sport gathered momentum when Singapore became an independent country. The construction of a national identity was relatively more successful for the independent country than when it was a British or Japanese colony. In Chapter 4, I showed that the centralization process in the development of sport in Singapore became increasingly more elaborate and extensive. Although the control of sport was also largely monopolized by the government, the binding of people to dominant national identity was not done through international team sport. Instead, national identity was promoted as the integration of races. There is a critical distinction in this approach from that in the previous stages. The construction of a national identity was neither achieved through cultural distinction of the social groups nor by international competition to create an established group and outsider dynamics. Instead, in the earlier years of Singapore independence, the national identity represented and constructed by sport was of integration between the different ethnic identities. This 'local' pluralization dominated the development of sport and political discourse.

Although the contrast in social habitus between Singapore and the first world nations is diminishing, distinctions remain. Globalization processes have an uneven effect in the development of Singapore social habitus. The low level of emphasis on achieving sporting success marks the dissonance of Singapore as a first world nation. As sport becomes an increasingly powerful image and representation of national identity, social development and economic muscle and the global-local tension intensifies, sporting success provides the connection with the rest of the world whilst at the same time acts as the distinction of Singapore to the world. However, as important

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<sup>2</sup> Maguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*, 180.

as achieving sporting success is, the struggle, tension and conflicts in achieving an Olympic medal provide the nation with collective memory which is integral to the reinforcement of a national identity. The international spectacle of sport offers not only a stage of world unification, but an identity distinction. As shown in Chapter Five, the process of globalization was a catalyst of sportization in Singapore post 1990. The construction of a national identity dominated the development of sport in this phase. With diminishing contrast, the walls of repulsion are erected to distinguish but not isolate the Singapore identity. This trend towards locating Singapore through the global medium of sport also adds momentum to the global flows of sport and the increasing diversification of sport cultures.

By analysing the development of sport in Singapore, issues of global-local, state-citizenry, integration and distinction of local ethnic identities are addressed. Process sociology enables the examination of the development of sport in Singapore as multi-directional and multi-causal processes rather than that of political influence alone. In the same way, the global-local tension confronting Singapore is not one of just Americanization or economic rationalism but a commingling of several competing processes including those of Chinesization, Malayanization, Indianization and Singaporeanization. The diminishing contrasts between the cultures of Singapore may have diminished, and Singapore's culture may be increasingly similar to that of the Occidental world, yet there also exist an increase in the cultural identities of Singapore. The development of sport embraces these tensions of intra and inter-group identities and as Singapore becomes more and more interdependent with the rest of world, the tension on centring Singapore identity will intensify.

Although this thesis sets out to provide a comprehensive synthesis of the development of sport in each historical juncture, there are limitations and aspects unexplored in the analysis. Firstly, in using figurational sociology, the emphasis is to synthesis the interweaving of the different factors in the development of sport therefore, the thesis does not present the depth of analysis in a social structure such as economics as may be seen in the works of Marxists. Secondly, on a method level, the relative primacy given to the empirical evidence has several inherent limitations. It is as stated in the Introduction, that the lack of English translations of primary sources of information on the Japanese Occupation made it necessary to rely on some secondary research. Further, the primary purpose of this thesis is to provide an analysis of the

development of sport from a figurational approach. Presenting a detailed description of the sport events, individuals or organizations was therefore of lesser importance in the examination of the development of sport in Singapore. Certainly, further studies of sportization in Singapore are necessary as sport becomes more and more integral to the social habitus of the nation, particularly, when Singapore is only in its infancy as a full participant in global sport. Singapore's sport industry may indicate that the consumption of sport images and products may be comparable to an affluent society, the production industry; that is the production of local sport products, images, practices and athletes has only just begun to be developed. Such studies will not only add to the documentation of the development of sport, they may also illuminate the tension of global-local flows, the parallel between sportization and Singapore's social development. At this juncture, it is apparent that Singapore's sport is centring towards the West, how will the increasing global-local tension enable and restrain the cultural identity formation of Singapore?

This thesis sets out to show factually, how sport in Singapore has developed into its present form and to make connections of the characteristics which account for the development of Singapore with that of its sport. The study's emergence is itself a representation of the development of sport and cultural thought in Singapore. Its focus and argument demonstrate a departure from the pervasive tendency to regard sport as trivial and as holding no value in the understanding of the social dynamics of Singapore society. Sport is not merely a reflection of social development but it parallels its development. Sport is also not merely a tool for political manipulation but an institution that binds and separates different social groups and, Singapore with the rest of the world. It embodies political currency as well as cultural, educational, historical and social currency. It forms a part of the collective history of Singapore. By examining the connections of sport and the wider social figuration, this thesis represents the increasing demand in seeking a more accurate, more relevant and more comprehensive understanding of the development of sport, culture and society.



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## Appendix 1

### SPEX 2000 anthem – Winning for Singapore<sup>1</sup>

It's time to make our dreams come true,  
Building the strength that will help us through  
The feeling of winning is in your heart  
A nation's strength of which you're a part

#### Chorus

Reaching out to be the best  
Taking the challenge as a pledge  
Doing well will mean so much more  
When you're

Winning for Singapore

Reaching out for the quest  
Bring on the glory, hand-in-hand  
Tears of joy means so much more  
When you're winning

Winning for Singapore

Set no limits, aim for the top  
Making sure you beat the odds  
Achieving more as we grow  
A sporting nation, a common goal

(Repeat Chorus)

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<sup>1</sup> *The Dawn of a New Era for Singapore Sports*, vol. 22, *Sports: Sports Excellence 2000* (Singapore: Singapore Sports Council, 1994).

Appendix 2

SPEX 2000 \$10 m funding<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *The Dawn of a New Era for Singapore Sports*, vol. 22, *Sports: Sports Excellence 2000* (Singapore: Singapore Sports Council, 1994), 9.

### Appendix 3

#### Singapore's Performance at the SEAP and SEA Games 1959-2003

Year	Host Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1959	Bangkok	8	6	17	31
1961	Rangoon	4	13	11	28
1965	Kuala Lumpur	26	23	27	76
1967	Bangkok	28	31	28	87
1969	Rangoon	31	39	23	93
1971	Kuala Lumpur	32	33	31	96
1973	Singapore	45	50	45	140
1975	Bangkok	38	42	49	129
1977	Kuala Lumpur	14	21	28	63
1979	Jarkata	16	20	35	71
1981	Manila	12	26	33	71
1983	Singapore	38	38	58	134
1985	Bangkok	16	11	24	51
1987	Jarkata	19	37	64	120
1989	Kuala Lumpur	32	38	47	117
1991	Philippines	18	32	48	98
1993	Singapore	50	40	74	164
1995	Chiengmai	26	27	42	95
1997	Jakarta	30	26	51	108
1999	Brunei Darussalam	23	28	45	96
2001	Kuala Lumpur	22	33	40	95
2003	Hanoi	30	33	50	113

#### Appendix 4

##### Singapore's Performance at the Asian Games 1959-2003

Year	Host Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1951	New Delhi	5	3	2	10
1954	Manila	1	4	4	9
1958	Tokyo	1	1	2	4
1962	Jakarta	1	0	2	3
1966	Bangkok	0	5	7	12
1970	Bangkok	0	6	9	15
1974	Teheran	1	3	7	11
1978	Bangkok	2	1	4	7
1982	New Delhi	1	0	2	3
1986	Seoul	0	1	4	5
1990	Beijing	0	1	4	5
1994	Hiroshima	1	1	5	7
1998	Bangkok	2	3	9	14
2002	Busan	5	2	10	17

## Appendix 5

### Core Sport Performances under SPEX 2000: 1994-1999<sup>3</sup>

Core Sport	SEA Games	Commonwealth Games	Asian Games	Olympic Games
Athletics <sup>4</sup>	4	0	0	0
Badminton	0	0	0	0
Bowling <sup>5</sup>	12	0	0	0
Soccer <sup>6</sup>	0	0	0	0
Swimming <sup>7</sup>	17	0	0	0
Table-tennis <sup>8</sup>	9	0	0	0
Yachting	6	0	3	0

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<sup>3</sup> S. Singh, "Spex 2000 Report Card," *The Straits Times*, 1 January 2000.

<sup>4</sup> All gold medals were won by a single athlete, thrower, James Wong.

<sup>5</sup> Bowling also produced one silver and two bronzes at the Asian Games.

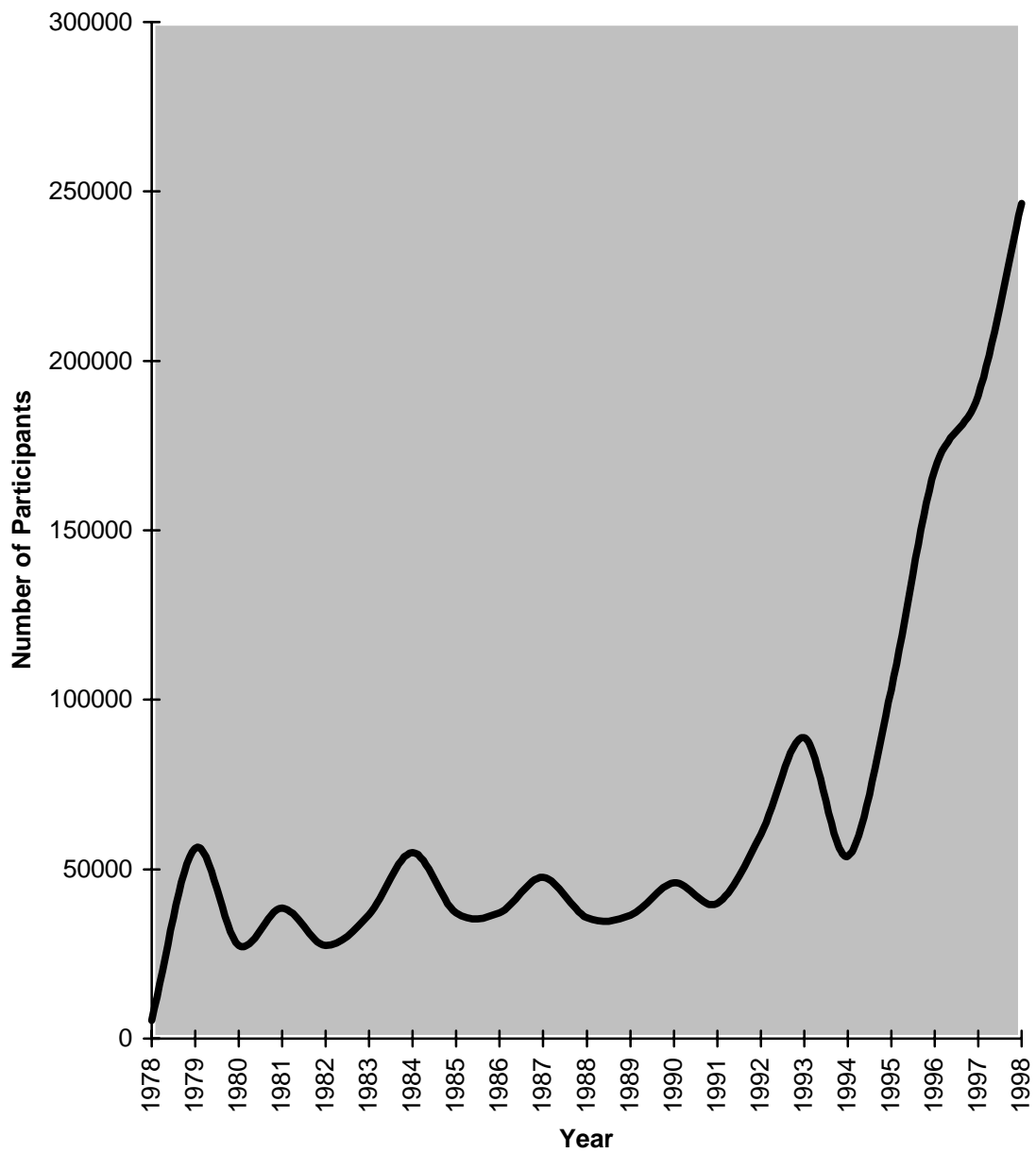
<sup>6</sup> The national soccer team did not win a medal of any colour in the SEA Games.

<sup>7</sup> Swimming won one bronze medal at the Asian Games.

<sup>8</sup> The women table tennis team won the Commonwealth Championship crown.

Appendix 6

Number of Participants in Mass Participation Sport Events: 1978-1998<sup>9</sup>



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<sup>9</sup> Compiled from the *Singapore Sports Council Annual Reports.1978-1998*. Singapore: Singapore Sports Council