Globalizing the Nation-Making Process: Modern Sport in World History

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Many contemporary observers have viewed the spread of modern sports around the world as a sign of an emerging postmodern global culture that transcends the nationalistic forces that often balkanized the modern era. A leading American historian of imperialism, Walter LaFeber, begins his provocative new look at the emergence of the twenty-first century world, Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism, by telling his readers that ‘arguably the most recognized and revered’ person on the planet at the end of the twentieth century was Michael Jordan. LaFeber notes that schoolchildren in China had ranked Jordan with revolutionary firebrand Zhou Enlai as one of the two most important figures in modern world history. The universal language of sport has transformed Jordan into a global icon, LaFeber postulates.

Some scholars see in this new universal language of sport visions of the emergence of a harmonious global culture. They identify sport as a language that transcends not only national boundaries but also national identities. German scholar Ommo Grupe argues that sport provides the world’s diverse populations with ‘language, symbols, and rules’ that ‘are universally understood’. Uruguayan essayist and novelist Eduardo Galeano concurs with Grupe, at least when it comes to soccer football. Galeano asserts that the ‘language of the game’ has become universal, linking the world’s cultures together through the ‘Esperanto of the ball’. Allen Guttmann, one of the most insightful American students of sport and culture, ends his foray into history of sport and imperialism in a blaze of universalistic optimism about the role of sport in creating a shared global culture. ‘If sports are an occasion for the expression of communitas, which they can be, let them express the human community as well as the tribal one’, proclaims Guttmann.

Such assertions about sport and globalization are not solely the products of ivory towers. They crop up regularly in sound-bites from popular culture pundits. Nike founder Phil Knight, one of the leading forces in modern popular culture, has proclaimed that sport ‘is the culture of the world’. A 1999 issue of National Geographic devoted to ‘Global Culture’ reinforces Walter LaFeber’s argument. The magazine presents an image of a Chinese
youth in Shanghai shooting a basketball over a cardboard cut-out of Michael Jordan. The Nike representative who sponsored the event comments that ‘[Jordan’s] the most popular man in China who’s never been to China’. National Geographic presents this insight as proof of the emergence of ‘a world together’.\(^7\) Given the level of rhetoric about globalization and sport in the scholarly and popular media, it seems that the most important institutions in the ‘global village’, to employ Marshall McLuhan’s justifiably famous if promiscuously borrowed moniker,\(^8\) are playing fields, playgrounds and gymnasiums. Could it be that Baron Pierre de Coubertin’s now more than a century-old dream of constructing a harmonious new world order based on sport is as close to fruition as all of the speculation seems to imply?

Scholars such as Galeano, Grupe, Guttmann and LaFeber, and popular culture producers such as Phil Knight and National Geographic have certainly contributed valuable insights to unravelling the role of sport in the modern world. Sport is indeed a language. Modern sports have in fact spread across the globe. Yet such universalistic claims mask the profoundly nationalistic cadences of the language of modern sport.

An historical perspective on the role of sport in the process of globalization indicates that the exercise of greater caution about the power of sport to transcend nationalism might be warranted. Whilst sports have certainly been an occasion for the expression of communitas, they have almost always been, in their modern form, an arena for the exhibition of tribal and especially national identities rather than an occasion for the celebration of universal human communities. As a ‘cultural bond’, the language of modern sport manifests enormous complexities, as the historian of sport J.A. Mangan reveals. Mangan astutely recognizes that sport in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century British Empire functioned simultaneously and paradoxically as an ‘imperial umbilical cord’ for the various cultures that comprised the realm, as an instrument of solidarity for binding together the ‘white imperial fraternity’ that ruled the dominions, and as a tool for cultural resistance by colonial subordinates.\(^9\) As Mangan notes in an insightful consideration of sport and nationalism that reaches beyond the boundaries of the British Empire, ‘the potential of sport for unity and disunity should never be underestimated’.\(^10\)

Historically, the unities produced by modern sport are, in the main, national unities whilst the disunities are, mostly, fractures formed along lines of national identities – nascent or robust. Even the Olympic Games, an institution that many deluded by cosmopolitan rhetoric have offered as the great counter-example to the marriage of modern sport and nationalism, were conceived of by their founder and have historically functioned as a bulwark of particular nationalisms.\(^11\)
The globalization of sporting practices, in terms of the spread of certain games around the world, has paradoxically fuelled nationalism. This process certainly poses problems for scholars who see globalization as eroding the nation-state and melting national cultures. The eager trumpeting in certain quarters of China’s embrace of Michael Jordan as a world historical figure disguises the fact that in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of globalization sport served to invigorate national cultures rather than transform them into cosmopolitan partners in a new world system.

The historical patterns raise serious questions about whether or not the global spread of modern sports are, as the world enters the twenty-first century, early signs of the appearance of a cosmopolitan world culture. Whilst modern sports have certainly functioned as a language of shared symbols and traditions, the semiotics derived from sport have historically been employed in the same ways as the vulgar tongues of linguistic history have most commonly been used since the sixteenth century – as instruments of national interests. Too much uncritical devotion to the idea of sport as some new form of Esperanto, that unlike the original universal language project has actually captured the imaginations of people around the world, disguises the fact that the language of sport has historically been centred on the national identities. In fact, what the globalization of modern sports has in large part accomplished, is to make the expression of national identity and the imagining of national community through sport a global phenomenon.

Modern sports are tools for the construction of national cultures. One way to understand how sport serves as a culture-making tool is to focus on sport as a set of discourses that shape popular conceptions of national identity. Sport creates stories which people tell themselves about themselves. These stories, or ‘discursive regimes’ as scholars of a post-modern bent call them, provide the symbolic clay for making culture. As the anthropologist and cultural theorist Clifford Geertz insists, the ‘stories a people tell about themselves’ through sports and games, as well as through other mediums, represent the public expressions of what the human creators of cultures think and believe their cultures mean. Geertz asserts that these stories make ideas into ‘a working force in our common consciousness’. They make culture. In the modern era these discourses form the backbone of the ‘imagined communities’ that reside at the core of national cultures. These stories provide a symbolic language for modern nations. As the language of sport has spread around the globe it has historically functioned as an element in national discourses.

The idea of sport as a language opens the door to another paradigmatic possibility. Languages are powerful and essential social technologies.
Technologies, as the philosopher Martin Heidegger understood, represent efforts to organize the world for problem solving. Is sport a technology? In fact, understanding sport as a technology can lead to new and valuable insights about connections between national and physical cultures. Lewis Mumford, the perceptive mid-twentieth century American philosopher of modernity, was not very often wrong in his assertions about the nature of technological civilizations. However, in his arguments about sport Mumford was wrong. In the provocatively titled essay ‘Sport and the Bitch-Goddess’ in his massive 1934 edition of Technics and Civilization, Mumford explained that sport originated as one of the Romantic ‘compensatory’ reactions to technology. He observed that sport had failed to fulfil its compensatory role in any meaningful way. He lamented, presaging the later critiques by German and French Neo-Marxist scholars, that by the 1920s and 1930s sport had descended into a ‘bread and circus’ diversion for techno-capitalist civilization – a distilled romantic opiate for the miserable masses designed to keep their eyes off of more important realities.

By defining sport as a romantic response to technology Mumford missed the mark. Sport was not a reaction to technology. It was itself a technological system – like the monasteries, counting houses, armies and other human forms of technics which Mumford so perceptively identified as the culture-making tools of modern nation-states. If by the 1920s and 1930s sport was being used to sell diversion to the masses – like other language-based technologies such as the printing press, radio and, in a later era, television – that was because the capitalists remembered what the intellectuals had forgotten. Sport was one of the key social technologies for constructing modern nationalism.

The idea of sport as a technological system might initially seem odd. Remember that technologies are not just machines and ‘made’ things – inanimate objects. Technologies, in the Heideggerian definition, are also organizations of human energy designed for problem solving. Since the origins of agricultural civilizations, armies and navies have been important human social technologies. Since the early stages of the industrial revolution public schools have been employed as social technologies. When the advocates of modern sporting ideologies promise that sport will teach people the value of team play and cooperation, assimilate immigrants and colonized peoples, prevent crime and behavioural deviance, transmit the values of fair play and regulated competition, spark nationalism and invigorate patriotism, ameliorate racial divisions and smooth over class tensions, or create a common global culture and usher in a cosmopolitan utopia, they believe that sport is a social technology. Whether or not they overestimate the power of sport to change society, some modern thinkers consider sport the single most
significant social technology for shaping modern cultures. In the history of the modern world, sport has been used as an agent of national interests far more often than as an implement for constructing some sort of transnational global society. Those who have claimed to employ the modern social technology of sport in order to affect globalization have generally been masking their national intentions. Modern sport has a specific history that is directly related to the construction of modern nation-states. As an agent of globalization, modern sport has historically functioned as a tool for spreading particular national cultures. Yet, at the same time, modern sport has also been employed to resist efforts by certain nations to impose their cultures on the globe. The world-wide spread of modern sports has made the expression of national identities, and the imagining of national communities through athletic games, a global phenomenon. Some specific historical examples can illuminate this paradoxical process.

The modern social technology of sport was originally a British invention. According to Neil Tranter’s recent history of sports in Great Britain, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a powerful group of ‘sport proselytizers’ transformed athletics ‘from a simple source of fun and relaxation to a device thought essential for the continued success of Anglo-Saxon civilisation’. In the process they established a method for inventing national traditions that has had considerable impact on the modern world.

The classic nineteenth-century British text on the role of sport in imagining and realizing national community is Thomas Hughes’ 1857 novel, Tom Brown’s Schooldays. In this strenuous tale, Hughes explains that young Tom Brown has been sent by his father to Rugby School not to become a scholar but rather to become a member of the Victorian ruling classes. Sports, especially Rugby’s football game and cricket, serve as the foundation for Tom Brown’s introduction to leadership positions in Britain’s national community. In a crucial scene that establishes the central role of sport at Rugby School, Tom, just arrived on campus and fresh from a starring role in an astonishing football triumph, listens spellbound as the captain of his football team delivers a victory speech. The team captain gives credit for the great victory of their house over the superior numbers of the rest of the school not to Tom’s and his teammates’ superior athletic skills but to the communitas of their dormitory.

In the novel’s climactic cricket match, Tom and his friends explain that cricket, as well as football and other forms of team sport, are ‘more than a game’. They are an ‘institution’, the boys claim. They are ‘the birthright of British boys old and young, as habeas corpus and trial by jury are of British men’, the boys continue, linking sport inextricably to politics, nationalism and the empire. Throughout the novel Hughes presents sport as the essential
device in the maintenance of British global power.26

By the late nineteenth century the British had begun to believe that they could remake the globe in their own image through their ‘most enduring export’.27 English varieties of football, cricket and other games and pastimes spread around the world during the era in which Great Britain dominated global markets. ‘The history of all cultures is the history of cultural borrowings’, asserts Edward Said, one of the leading theorists of the processes of globalization.28 Tom Brown has been borrowed and transformed repeatedly. Tom Brown’s Schooldays had an enormous influence on the English-speaking world and beyond its borders. In France the novel served as a major source of inspiration for Baron de Coubertin’s plans to revitalize his nation by introducing Anglo-American sports through a revived Olympic Games. In the British West Indies a fierce critic of imperialism and one of the leaders of the region’s independence movement, C.L.R. James, was so thoroughly taken with Tom Brown that he modelled many of his ethical and political precepts on the novel. Ironically, James used the classic British imperial text to resist British imperialism and to inform West Indian nationalism. James understood sport as the key ingredient in making modern national cultures. Whilst he knew that sport, and especially cricket, was a language spoken around the world, he never forgot that it was a language for asserting national identity.29 In Latin America, one of the varieties of football inspired by the fictional Tom Brown and real British school boys serves as the essential device for defining that region’s national cultures. ‘Soccer counts in Latin America, sometimes more than anything else’, reveals Eduardo Galeano.30

The biggest plunderer of the British tradition of imagining nationhood through sport was Great Britain’s former colony, global rival, and successor as the world’s leading power, the United States. Having already borrowed and transformed into its own uniquely American packages the English language, political system, common law, industrial design, and a host of other cultural artefacts, the United States adopted the British penchant for building national culture through modern sports with a fervour that confirms Said’s epigraph about cultural appropriation.31 American emulation of British ideas about the making of national culture through sport reveals the paradoxes involved in the globalization of sport. The British assumed that their sporting traditions would make the world more British. As the United States adopted these British exports, they remade them in distinctively American patterns, insisting that they were uniquely American creations. Involved in a long culture war with the British that stretched from the colonial period far into the twentieth century, Americans went so far as to insist that their borrowing would aid in the construction of an American national identity that was free from all British
taint and influence. Misreading history in favour of national heritage, Americans declared that baseball and American football were not related to traditional English games. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries American promoters of sporting patriotism appropriated the ideology embedded in Tom Brown’s Schooldays for the national canon of the United States. They argued that sport represented the most important tool for making a solid American civilization. They also insisted that through sport the United States could spread American civilization around the globe. As the United States supplanted Great Britain between the 1890s and 1920s as the world’s foremost superpower, Americans began to assume that their sporting traditions would make the globe more American – precisely as the British had believed about British sports and a British world culture a generation earlier.

The end of the First World War marked an important milestone in the rise of the United States and the relative decline of Great Britain. At that moment it became clear to both nations and to the world community that the United States was the new centre of global power. A revealing document published in the American magazine that styled itself as the nation’s unique lense on the world, National Geographic, sheds important light on the how Americans adopted and adapted British ideas about sport, nationhood and globalization. Indeed, the 1999 issue of National Geographic is not the first to claim that sports can bring ‘the world together’. Eighty years earlier, in 1919, National Geographic published an essay entitled ‘The Geography of Games: How the Sports of Nations Form a Gazetteer of the Habits and Histories of Their Peoples’ that made the same claim.

J.R. Hildebrand, the author of that essay, argued that sport represented the key to understanding the basic nature of cultures. He also insisted that sport served as the most important tool for transforming cultures. Hildebrand began his essay by crediting sport for the Allied triumph in the First World War. The French, even more so the British, and especially the American love of sport had propelled the Allies to victory. The ‘wise men of Washington, London, and Paris’, in Hildebrand’s strangely bloodless and playful history of the Great War, had guaranteed the defeat of the Central Powers by promoting sport on the home front and in the trenches. Never again would the sporting nations have to apologize for their love of athletic games, having proved their prowess on the fields of Flanders and in the forests of the Argonne. Hildebrand went so far as to claim that the 15,000 baseball bats and 25,000 baseballs shipped to France by an American welfare agency were as important to the cause as any of the weapons in the Allied war chest. Not satisfied with his new athletic vision of the ‘arsenal of democracy’, Hildebrand blamed German defeat on their lack of sport. ‘Germany, with clanking armor and unsheathed sword, gone stale from
over-training for the fight she picked, may find in her neglect of play one reason for a colossal failure at arms and her maladroit diplomacy’, Hildebrand scoffed.35

Hildebrand assured *National Geographic*’s readers that the German neglect of sport represented a central flaw in their culture. ‘It seems as if by a people’s sports you know them’, he insisted, arguing that sporting practices, not politics, nor literature, nor economics, nor class structure, nor religion, nor military might, nor any of the other standard analytical devices normally offered by historians were the keys to understanding world history. He sketched the history of human cultures as the story of the triumph of athletic prowess over all other qualities. From ancient Greek and Roman athletes to the sport-loving English suffragettes who had recently won the vote for women in England, the athletic peoples always inherited the earth. Hildebrand reduced the complexities of history to a simple equation in which sporting endeavours were responsible for the vast majority of human progress. He explained that sport ‘conditions the moral fiber of a people and tempers those mental qualities that advance civilization’.36

Hildebrand understood that this tool for fabricating moral fibre and forging advanced civilizations had originated in the Anglo-American world and was not solely the product of American genius. He gave credit to the British for their long history of using sport to promote national culture. He also noted that the Great War would globalize this Anglo-American social technology. ‘Men from every clime – black, yellow, and tan – carry home the games they saw these sturdy Britishers and wiry Americans playing’, reported Hildebrand. Still, in spite of British contributions, Hildebrand made it clear that he believed that the globalization of modern sports would serve to Americanize the twentieth-century world. The rise of the United States to the first rank among the world’s nations made the international language of sport a distinctly American dialect. ‘Throwing, catching, and running are as old as man; but it took the American genius for play, no less distinctive than the American genius for science, industry, and commerce, to weld these motifs into’ social technologies designed to build healthy modern nations concluded Hildebrand.37

Modern sport had made the United States a strong and energetic nation. Modern sport offered the rest of the world the same dynamic potential. Hildebrand claimed support for his thesis from the sages of Western civilization. He declared that if Plato were living in the twentieth-century United States the Greek philosopher would ‘be urging municipal playgrounds and swimming pools’ rather than engaging in arid dialogues about the nature of reality. Hildebrand even gave sport credit for the major inventions – each of them the product of American genius in his estimation – that in 1919 were profoundly transforming world societies. Benjamin
Franklin’s sport with a toy kite had ‘snatched from the clouds’ the secrets of electricity. Automobile and aeroplane races represented ‘sporting propositions’ that sparked technological revolutions. Hildebrand proclaimed that ‘the sports of a nation afford an almost invariable barometer of its progress in civilization’. Nations of athletes were nations of technological geniuses. The United States was the world’s leading athletic power and hence the world’s leader in innovation. In fact the American national pastime’s inherent complexity and intensive organization revealed why the United States was leading the world into the new machine age. ‘A South Sea Islander no more could play it [baseball] than he could operate a linotype machine or deftly handle the paper money in a bank teller’s cage’, smirked an ethnocentric Hildebrand. Baseball symbolized both the technical virtuosity of American civilization as well as the gulf between Americans and other cultures. Hildebrand’s parable in National Geographic underscored the common belief that the chief difference between supposedly primitive and supposedly modern cultures was their sporting practices.

Based on that theory Hildebrand offered a plan for making primitive cultures into modern American-style nations. The globalization of sport would Americanize the world. National Geographic’s photographs, the centrepiece of all stories in the magazines, reinforced Hildebrand’s text. The pictures accompanying the ‘Geography of Games’ included a photograph of apparently sport-loving aborigines above a caption that made the spectacular claim that ‘under American influence, the tug-of-war has supplanted head-hunting as the favorite pastime of the natives of northern Luzon, Philippines’. National Geographic imagined that sport could make not only a national community for the United States, but an Americanized international community for the dawning ‘American century’. If sport could get head hunters to abandon their old ways and adopt the same tug-of-war contests that were a standard feature at every county fair and fraternal picnic in the early twentieth-century United States, perhaps sport could indeed create an Americanized world culture.

The final picture in the ‘Geography of Games’ was an aerial shot of Pershing Stadium, a massive arena financed by the United States army and named after the commander of American military forces in the First World War. Pershing Stadium was built in 1919, not in the United States but in the outskirts of Paris, France. It was constructed to host the Inter-Allied Games, or the ‘Military Olympics’ as they were commonly known. The ‘Military Olympics’ were supposed to lay the spiritual groundwork for the League of Nations, an American-designed international agency dedicated to peaceful conflict resolution and the creation of global harmony. According to the official United States military report on the Inter-Allied Games, ‘the Games
signalized to a vast number of soldiers of the various armies of the Allies the end of the Great War and the beginning, in this unique love feast of divers [sic] races and nationalities, of a greater and more hopeful peace than the world had yet known'.

The United States eventually refused to join the League of Nations, but it did sponsor the ‘Military Olympics’. The US military understood that the games were more than merely athletic contests. The official report insisted that ‘arousing universal interest in organized sports’ was a key element of the Inter-Allied Games. The American military set up a publicity department to disseminate ‘sport propaganda as well as athletic news’. Military dispatches sent information about the contests to newspapers around the world. Advertising the games was as important as playing them. The ‘Military Olympics’ put the ideas that J.R. Hildebrand advocated in the ‘Geography of Games’ into action.

The ‘Military Olympics’ and the National Geographic essay on Americanizing the world through sport represent parts of a concerted effort beginning after the First World War by the United States to globalize American culture through the mechanism of sport. If Michael Jordan, as Walter LaFeber claims, is the harbinger of the new global capitalism of the twenty-first century, then American Olympic teams were the icons of an older version of global capitalism. In the 1920s and 1930s, American athletic promoters, business leaders and government officials used the Olympic Games to promote the export of American culture. They thought that success in the Olympic Games and other international sporting events would advertise the virtues of American national culture and create a worldwide frenzy of emulation.

Addressing a gathering of the American Olympic Association in 1922, the president of the organization, Colonel Robert M. Thompson, proclaimed that the basic purpose for sending American expeditions to the Olympics was to ‘sell the United States to the rest of the world’. Repeating the phrase to a larger audience in an effort to raise funds to send the United States Olympic team to Paris in 1924, Thompson told an assembly of athletes, athletic officials and sundry hangers-on at the New York Athletic Club that United States Olympic teams were enormously influential in shaping world opinion about their nation. Again, the purpose of sending Olympic expeditions to the quadrennial spectacles, Thompson asserted, was ‘selling the United States to the world’.

Before the outbreak of the Second World War shattered the illusion, many Americans dreamed that they could use Olympic arenas to construct a global culture based on an American foundation. They believed that sport would usher in the ‘American century’. They dreamed, as the British before them had dreamed about cricket and varieties of football, that sport could
‘sell’ American civilization to the world. They believed that this product would in fact Americanize global cultures. The ‘uncivilized’ would swap head-hunts for baseball games, and the ‘civilized’, but non-American, would trade their ancient heritages for American sports. Inevitably, according to this logic, American sports would then lead the rest of the world to adopt American ways of life.

An article in the New York Times celebrating American Olympic domination in Paris in 1924, ‘An Ethiopian Takes Notes’, captured the essence of the campaign to Americanize the world through sport. The article purported to be a special dispatch from the Addis Ababa Evening News and was supposed to symbolize world reaction to American Olympians. ‘A single afternoon spent in the amphitheatre at Colombes [the Parisian site for the 1924 Olympics] is enough to furnish the intelligent observer with a complete picture of the habits and psychology of the American people’, reported the reputed special correspondent of the Addis Ababa Evening News. The correspondent ruminated that, ‘as I watched those clean-cut American youths acknowledging victory or defeat with the same modest smile, I knew that they came from a quiet, sportsmanlike people’. The fictional Ethiopian marvelled that, ‘when I saw the silent and magnificent efforts of their runners and their jumpers, I knew that they came from a people that loved action and abhorred palaver’. He told his make-believe audience in Addis Ababa that ‘when I saw the young Americans soar like birds over the bars and the hurdles, I said to myself that this is the way every American surmounts the obstacles in his path’.46

The correspondent gave special praise to the American fiction of racial and ethnic equality – an ideal far from reality in the United States in 1924. ‘When I saw on the list of contenders names like SCHOLZ and LE GENDRE, I understood that I was dealing with a people utterly ignorant of the debasing sentiment of racialism and sectionalism.’ The fictional Ethiopian embraced American nationalism. ‘When I saw the swiftness and certainty with which the young Americans met every emergency as it arose, I said to myself that this is a people of magnificent individual initiative, a people who would take orders from no one.’ The Addis Ababa correspondent concluded with a salute to America’s national fibre. ‘When I saw the splendid devotion of each athlete to the single cause of his country’s victory, I knew that this was a people which sacrificed self to common good.’47

If the New York Times’ tale from Paris in 1924 was to be believed, the world had begun to imagine community and identity in a very American fashion. By the next decade the rise of fascist national sport, showcased in the Italian spectacle at the 1934 World Cup in Italy and the ‘Nazi Olympics’ in 1936 in Germany, would undermine such claims. Indeed, other evidence from the Paris Olympics indicates that the New York Times had seriously
misrepresented global responses to American efforts to spread national culture. Ironically, just as the United States had borrowed from Great Britain the idea of using sport as a tool to construct national identity whilst at the same time rejecting the British notion that the tool would inevitably spread British-style culture around the world, so too did other nations accept the American notion of defining nationhood through sporting prowess but reject Americanization in favour of their own nationalisms.

The tiny South American nation of Uruguay won the Olympic championship in soccer in 1924. Uruguay would also win the Olympics again in 1928. In 1930 Uruguay hosted and won the first World Cup soccer tournament.48 Eduardo Galeano identifies those victories as the most significant events in shaping his nation’s identity. ‘The sky-blue shirt [of Uruguay’s championship teams] was proof of the existence of the nation: Uruguay was not a mistake. Soccer pulled this tiny country out of the shadows of universal anonymity’, proclaimed Galeano.49

The globalization of sport had not transformed Uruguay into a cultural colony of the United States or Great Britain.50 Instead, Uruguayans employed the social technology of sport in the same way that the Americans and the British had – as a language for defining nationhood. Such historical reminders should give pause to those who see in the globalization of sport a signal of the beginning of the end of the nation-state. The noble desire for sport to serve, as Allen Guttmann hopes, the expression of *communitas* in a universal human tongue rather than in tribal or national languages is both understandable and laudable. The historical reality seems to be that more than just modern Western sports have been globalized. The process of imagining national community and expressing national identity through sport has also been globalized. This latter development betrays cosmopolitan sentiments and seems to make nationalism an inescapable factor in global sport. The globalization of modern sport has not consigned nationalism to the scrap heap of outdated historical forces. In fact, it has given nationalism new vigour and increased power. The idea of demonstrating national prowess on playing fields is no longer unique to Great Britain nor to the United States, nor even to the Anglo-American world. ‘With ... the national colors on his [and, increasingly, her] chest, the player who embodies the nation marches off to win glory on far-off battlefields’, explains Eduardo Galeano. He reveals that in this new global cultural universe, ‘without question, the national uniform has become the clearest symbol of collective identity’.51 In the main, sport continues to reify the national *communitas* rather than the human one.

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NOTES


5. Guttmann, Games and Empires, p.188.


12. For a good discussion of these issues, see R. Holton, *Globalization and the Nation-State* (New York: St Martin’s, 1998).


16. Clifford Geertz’s ruminations on the philosophy and methodology of cultural interpretation have greatly influenced my perspective. See C. Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1984) and *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Geertz’s exact quote reads: ‘This is how anything imaginational grows in our minds, is transformed, socially transformed, from something we merely know to exist or have existed, somewhere or other, to something which is properly ours, a working force in our common consciousness’, ‘Found in Translation: The Social History of the Moral Imagination’, in *Local Knowledge*, p.47.

17. For an illuminating case study of the role of sport in the formation of modern national identity, see Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland*. Two excellent studies of sport and nationalism in European contexts are Mangan (ed.), *Tribal Identities*, and J.A. Mangan (ed.), *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon-Aryan Fascism* (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1999).


26. Ibid., pp.354–5. The seminal historical analyses of the role of sport in the British Empire are


33. Dyreson, Making the American Team.


35. Ibid., 103–5, 89.

36. Ibid., 89–100, 103. In fact, English suffragettes were not as supportive of sports as Hildebrand implied. Seeing bowling greens, golf courses, football pitches, and cricket grounds as fortresses of male privilege, the suffragettes routinely engaged in civil disobedience and property destruction at those sporting venues. One luckless suffragette, Emily Davison, hurled herself in front of the horses at the Derby Stakes in 1913 in a particularly dramatic protest, killing herself in the process. Baker, Sports in the Western World, p.189.


38. Ibid., 100–1.

39. Ibid., 100–3.

40. Ibid., 126.


42. Wythe, Hanson and Burger (eds.), The Inter-Allied Games, pp.153–62.


44. American Olympic Association, ‘Minutes of the Quadrennial Meeting of the American Olympic Association’, Willard Hotel, Washington, DC, 22 Nov. 1922. State Department Records Division, Record Group 59, National Archives and Record Administration II, College Park, MD.


47. Ibid.


