

**SPORT, DEVELOPEMNT AND AID: CAN SPORT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?**

**By**

**Professor Grant Jarvie  
University of Stirling**

**Professor Grant Jarvie  
University of Stirling  
Pro-Vice Chancellor  
Stirling  
FK9 4LA  
Scotland  
[grant.jarvie@stir.ac.uk](mailto:grant.jarvie@stir.ac.uk)**

**Thursday, July 01, 2010**

**Abstract** This article argues that the capacity of sport to influence social change should not be underestimated. The research for the article draws upon key interviews and newspaper reports. The paper examines three questions: (i) What is the role of sport in producing social change? (ii) Is sport an effective agent of humanitarian aid ? and (iii) How does one think about the value of sport as a resource of hope not just for individuals but for many communities.

**Key words: sport; social change; transformative capacity; humanitarian aid; hope.**

## **SPORT SOCIAL CHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL AID**

### **Introduction**

International recognition for the potential role that sport can play in attempting to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, a set of benchmarks agreed on by the international community to be achieved by 2015, has placed sport higher up the agenda of organisations aiming to facilitate humanitarian aid packages for countries in need. In areas of major crisis – such as war-torn zones, and locations of forced migration- sport has become a resources for hope to assist with various development projects aimed at ameliorating a range of interventions related to HIV education to as well as reconciliation and peace amongst warring fractions and countries. As an international language and a means to an end sport is increasingly being used by the United Nations and non-governmental organisations in partnership with local grassroots agencies. Increased aid, combined with debt reduction is supposed to make it easier for African countries to invest in health, education and infrastructure. The idea being to achieve a level playing field whereby African countries can compete with the rest of the world, emulating Asia by selling quality products and providing skilled labour.

The notion of poverty is not new but it is often suppressed, not just in the literature and research about sport and society, and yet it is often a fundamental reason and motivation for why some athletes run. Historically sport used to be a possible route out of poverty. Many NGO'S have been at the forefront of initiatives involving sport as a facet of humanitarian aid in attacking the social and economic consequences of poverty. The Tiger Club Project in Kampala Uganda is one of many such initiatives using sport. The objectives of the Tiger Club include: (i) helping

street children and young people in need; (ii) providing children with food, clothing and other physical needs; (iii) help with education and development; (iv) enabling children to realise their potential so that they can gain employment; (v) providing assistance to the natural families or foster carers of children and young adults and (vi) providing medical and welfare assistance (1). The 2003 Annual Report reported that in 2002 263 children had been offered a permanent alternative to the street; a further 116 street children and young people were in the START programme which meant full-time schooling; and 161 young people resettled in their village of origin and were provided with the means for income generation. 76% of those resettled children have remained in their villages (2).

At the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games African athletes from a range of countries helped to provide a spectacle for audiences around the globe. Every year about 200 million people move in search of employment- about 3 per cent of the world's population (3). Legal migrants who leave their homes in poor countries to provide labour or entertainment in other parts of the world are generally regarded as privileged. Many runners have provided exhilarating spectacles for global sports audiences but what is often forgotten is that the money raised from these performances often provides pathways of hope for other people. Sociologists such as Maguire (4) have helped to pave the way for an extensive body of research into the causes of sports labour migration across different parts of the world yet very little has been written about the part played by some athletes in earning money to support whole families and even villages in their country of origin. When the career of a leading world athlete from a developing country is brought to a premature end, the consequences often extend far beyond the track.

### **What is the capacity of sport to produce social change?**

It is perhaps early to assess the impact of the 2008 Olympiad in terms of its capacity to bring about social change and yet the role that sport has played in influencing social change in China through periods of revolution, evolution, socialism, communism and capitalism with Chinese characteristics has been mapped out in studies such as *Sport, Revolution and the Beijing Olympics* (5). By examining the role of sport during periods of social transformation such studies about sport in China remind us of the rich research that can be produced by researchers who place historical and social questions at the heart of the research endeavour. History tells us that sport in China has been influenced by processes of imperialism, communism and post-colonialism and that sport remains one of possible vehicles by which successive governments pursue a complex ideology of patriotism, collectivism, socialism and capitalism with Chinese characteristics. Perhaps, both imperialism and post colonialism may not explain the total development of sport in the Chinese social context however they have opened up new ways of thinking about sport both in and between non-Western and Western worlds.

When the first summit of the worlds leading nations met in 1975 it was an informal get to-gether involving the United States of America, Britain, France, Germany, Japan and Italy who met to discuss the recession caused by an Arab embargo on oil exports. The G6 summit became the G7 in 1976 when the then US President Ford invited Canada to balance out the Europeans and then in 1988 the G7 became the G8 with the inclusion of Russia. In June 2004 ahead of the meeting of a leading group of 8 nations in Savannah, Georgia one of the key recommendations of a special report on China was that China should be invited to join the group. The authors pointed out that with China becoming one of the major trading nations of the

world, its foreign exchange reserves being second only to Japan and its plans to reform its financial markets, justified and more importantly necessitated its membership at the top table (6). One month earlier in May of 2004 the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair had met with President Wen Jiabao to discuss issues of democracy and human rights in relation to Hong Kong and Tibet. Britain was concerned that the National People's Congress had effectively ruled out democratic elections in Hong Kong until 2007-8. The visit to London by the Chinese President meant that he was met by the Queen, the Foreign Office but also protesters from the Falun Gong Movement and the Free Tibet Campaign. The protesters at the time viewed Wen Jiabao as a part of the new generation of Chinese leaders and were reported to be remaining optimistic about his leadership and the issue of China's 54 year occupation of Tibet.

These two accounts in many ways reflect the challenge that is China in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In China privatisation is occurring before democratisation with China moving towards a closer relationship with globalisation on its own terms. In other words what has been referred to in this study as creeping towards capitalism with Chinese characteristics. Social, economic and cultural changes have been afoot in China following the perceived failure of Mao's egalitarian socialism in which an understanding of China's own approach to consumerism, Confucianism and communism is only part of the guidebook to making sense of China to-day. There has been a close East Asian Alliance between China and Japan which may eventually wish to challenge any perceived US- led world order. There is dialogue with Tibet, Hong Kong has been handed over and Beijing has been awarded and hosted the 2008 Olympic Games. The awarding of the Olympic Games in many ways encapsulates the challenge that is China in that the promise and possibilities are framed not in terms of

the strengths and weaknesses of communism and capitalism but the tantalising notion of reconciliation, internationality and wealth limited by divergent views and solutions to issues such as democracy, corruption and rural poverty. Problems that in themselves are widespread internationally and involve places and spaces that are far beyond the boundaries or borders of, for example, China, America or Africa but nonetheless open up opportunities for researching the role of sport in assisting with and being shaped by periods of social change.

In 1997, when Tiger Woods won the Masters and donned the green jacket that accompanied the winning of the coveted title, golf became thrilling to watch for an entirely new audience. On the hallowed putting greens of Augusta, where Woods would not have been allowed membership a few years earlier, history had been made (7). It would be wrong to suggest that Tiger Woods was a political trailblazer or even an activist for change. At the same time his very emergence as a leading golfer helped with social change in places such as Augusta. It would be wrong to argue that there was no impact. Not since Lee Elder squared off against Jack Nicklaus in a sudden death playoff at the American Golf Classic in 1968 had a black golfer gained so much televised attention (8). The sports press cast the feat of Woods as breaking a modern colour line, yet no one including Woods himself could fully describe exactly what colour line had been broken. The press conveyed his parental heritage as variously African American, Asian and Native American, overwhelmingly others portrayed Woods as a black athlete, a golfer who had brought about change in the same way attributed to the likes of Jesse Owens, Tommie Smith, John Carlos Muhammad Ali, Tydie Pickett, Louise Stokes, Vonetta Flowers and Alice Cochrane. Woods himself did not consider himself in such terms but embraced a more nuanced racial heritage

more representative of the melting pot imagery associated with American history and a determining demographic factor of so-called Generation X (9).

In October 2006 Luiz Inacio Lula de Silva was re-elected President of Brazil. The content of the first period of administrations were also influenced by football in that the first two laws that the President signed in May 2002 concerned football. Football in Brazil was one of the key battlegrounds upon which the battle to make the country a fairer place was being fought. The sport had been run by a network of unaccountable largely corrupt figures known as *carrolas* or 'top hats' who had become wealthy while the domestic football scene remained broke and demoralised (10). The public plundering of football was viewed by the President as a continual reminder of the previous administration's failure to stamp out corruption in areas of public life. Lula in an attempt to force the football authorities to become transparent ratified a *Law of Moralisation* in sport that enforced transparency in club administration (11). On the same day he sanctioned a more ambitious and wide ranging law the 'Fans Statute' which served as a modern day bill of rights for the football fan.

Unlike the actions taken by President Luiz Inacio Lula de Silva of Brazil in passing legislation in relation to the morality of Brazilian football, when faced with the option of intervening to prevent England cricketers touring Zimbabwe in 2003, both the chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board and Jack Straw the then British Foreign Secretary accepted by their actions that morality had no part to play in English cricket (12). In contrast Stuart MacGill the Australian cricketer refused to make himself available for the Australian cricket tour of Zimbabwe on the grounds that he could not maintain a conscience in the light of the human rights violations being perpetrated in Zimbabwe. He was commended by both the Australian Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. One year earlier two members of the Zimbabwean

cricket team, Henry Olonga and Andy Flower made a powerful political statement by wearing black armbands as they took the field in a World Cup match in Harare- a protest in their words against the death of democracy in Zimbabwe (13). A group of church leaders in Bulawayo hailed the gesture as hitting a six for freedom and democracy and it cost both players their position in the side. While the International Cricket Council (ICC) did not allow tours to be cancelled on political or moral grounds they did allow for *force majeure* and it was this failure by Jack Straw to issue a clear statement by the government cancelling the tour on these grounds that was a missed opportunity (14). Despite the preparation of a framework paper that could have lead to the abandonment of the 2003 tour in the end the Foreign Secretary stated that he did not have the power to order sportsmen (and women) around even when they begged to be ordered and this was from a government that had no problem with finding powers to invade Iraq on the basis of little substantive evidence (15).

What is being suggested here is far from utopian or indeed new and it also acknowledges that it is important not too overestimate what sport can do. Yet, the examples provided, in part, are evidence that sport can help to (i) change some people's lives and (ii) symbolize change and (iii) contribute to and facilitate social change. Sport has the capacity to work across societies and agencies to help or attempt make the world a better place. In a general sense the potential of sport to contribute to different visions of what the world is and should be should not be overstated nor underestimated Three are mentioned here in an illustrative sense and these might be referred to as (i) the global neo-liberal view of sport in society in which the convergence of the opportunity gap between sport in the richest and poorest parts of the world might be possible (dependent upon a strict adherence to liberal policies); (ii) the hard third way view of sport in society that requires a more limited

adherence to democracy but an enthusiasm for sporting partnerships funded between private/public sources, decentralisation, arms length sports policy, an acceptance of global sporting values and less of a concern with sporting inequality while still embracing certain egalitarian goals through provision for targeted or vulnerable sports groups; and (iii) a softer but less likely third way in which sporting relief is used as part of an overall policy of managing capitalism's social contradictions with the typical role for sport being that of being a means to an end or a bridge-builder of reconciliation in areas of conflict. Within this model, third world democracy and sport as a facet of social welfare come first, not last.

There are a number of fault lines running through the different worlds of sport that have sustained progressive agendas for change and the above are examples of any number of entry and exit points that may be chosen as a basis for substantiating the transformative capacity of sport. Forms of action may be classified along the continuum from reformism to radicalism or from ideological to non-ideological or from issue orientated to more collective forms of action. Forms of change may also have both intended and unintended outcomes but whatever the basis for thinking about sport and social change in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century it is imperative to acknowledge that the parameters of sport and social change are both geopolitical and socio-economic. The analytical distinction and separation of these two elements does not of course imply that they are literally distinct. In the different worlds of sport these two fault lines may become conjoined but as a method of thinking about sport and social change they help to highlight not just the particular social patterning of movements for change in sport but also that the impetus and pressure for change may often result from a more geo-political fault-line of north and south or east and west.

The migration of athletes from one country to another in search of resources and fame is not uncommon. One such example is Saif Saaeed Shaheen born as Stephen Cherono and raised in Kamelilo a village in Kenya in which there was no water tap and every day after school the 2005 World 3,000 m steeplechase champion walked three kilometres to collect 10 litres of water, which cost two dollars for three days. The change of allegiance from Kenya to Qatar was allegedly based upon an offer of at least \$1,000 dollars a month for life (16). About 50 people now depend upon the athlete's success for their livelihoods. He puts eight children through school with two at college in America and when asked to explain Kenyan running success said that the answer is simple 'an athlete in Kenya runs to escape poverty and I fight to survive (17). Listen to Nelson Mandela or Kofi Annan talking of the role of sport in International Development. The former United Nations Secretary General in 2005 noted the potential of sport to effectively convey humanitarian messages, help to improve the quality of people's lives while helping to promote peace and reconciliation (18). Haile Gebrselassie talking of the political responsibility of the athlete left one in no doubt about his priorities-'eradicating poverty is all that matters in my country'. He goes on 'when I am training I think about this a lot; when I am running it is going over in my mind -as a country we cannot move forward until we eradicate poverty and whereas sport can help - the real problems will not be overcome just by helping Ethiopians to run fast' Gebrselassie (14).

### **SPORT AS A FORM OF HUMANITARIAN AID?**

The [Norway Cup](#) has taken place every year since 1972. It's one of the world's largest soccer tournaments for children. Every year more than 25,000 kids play in the Cup. The aim of the tournament is to create bonds between participants across nations through education and sports, a foundation of friendship between clubs from the West

and particularly poorer areas of the world such as parts of Africa. The Norwegian Minister of International Development values the role that such a project plays in "producing internationalism and co-operation between Norway and many other countries such as Brazil, Kenya, and Palestine." In 1998 1,325 teams from 34 nations played 3,500 soccer matches on 49 fields.

Norway's placement of sports within its international development portfolio signifies a shift in emphasis within the international development assistance agenda. The organization, [Right to Play](#) was founded in Norway in 1994 (originally as the organization Olympic Aid) as part of the legacy of the Lillehammer Winter Olympic Games. The strategic objectives are to use sports and play programs to improve health, develop life skills, and foster peace for children and communities in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the world. Right to Play raises funds to support its programs from governments, foundations, individuals, and from members of the Olympic Movement including: athletes, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), National Olympic Committees (NOC), organizing committees of host countries, and corporate partners.

Outside the role of providing aid, sports have supported peace building. The concept of an "[Olympic Truce](#)" is noteworthy in terms of recognising the role of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in influencing and brokering international relations. An Olympic Truce was launched on January 24, 1994 for the period of the Lillehammer Winter Games in an attempt to resolve the conflict in Yugoslavia. This Olympic Truce involved representatives from the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNICEF, the Red Cross, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Norwegian Government. These groups evacuated coaches, athletes,

and members of the national Olympic committee from Sarajevo so that they could compete in the Games.

In 1998, during the Nagano Olympic Games, the observance of the Olympic Truce allowed the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to intervene to seek a diplomatic resolution to the crisis in Iraq. At the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, North and South Korea marched under the same flag of the Korean Peninsula. Given the success of the truce movement, the issue is permanently on the agenda of the UN General Assembly in the year prior to an Olympic Games. The UN flag also flies at all Olympic Games competition sites.

In a number of ways sports have long offered a means of social intervention and welfare aimed at supporting people who have been traumatized by conflict; in the promotion of programs of conflict resolution, and by helping in situations of military conflict where sports are used to draw people out of routines of violence. The [Twic Olympics](#) which have been staged in Twic County (Sudan) since 2000 are aimed at encouraging a moment of tolerance and compassion in an area of the world which has experienced conflict for more than half a century. For nations competing in this year's 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, the Twic Olympics offer a surreal parallel. At the opening ceremony, each district has a flag bearer at its head, carrying a homemade banner with stars, or leopards or bulls crayoned on it. Behind them march the athletes and an effort is made to keep colours uniform within each district. Few in Sudan can afford to choose their clothes with care, few of the athletes wore shoes and yet the significance is not the dress of the athletes but that it's taking place at all. Each January, teams of athletes gather to compete at soccer, volleyball, dance, athletics, and tugs of war. The competitors are full of people like "James" who was drafted into the army at the age of 11 and doesn't smile. He points out that even in playing sports,

"nothing is normal for us." At the end of the Twic Olympics the district with the most medals is declared the winner with the prize being a mechanised flour grinding mill. In a country with few roads or even brick buildings such forms of capital are worth competing for.

In part, the benefits from using sports as a development tool or for peace building involve not just athletics but more importantly, education through sports. Such programs have long since been viewed as agents of social change for individuals with the rationale being that they can:

- Provide opportunities for life-long learning and sustain not just education but an involvement in sports and physical activity;
- Increase knowledge and skills and in a broader sense contribute to the knowledge economy;
- Foster social capital through building relationships, networking, and making connections;
- Encourage critical debate about key public issues; and,
- Support development programs across the world that use sport as a tool or incentive for participation.

It's the ability to combine sport with other social forces such as education through sport that has facilitated an increased profile for sport by UNICEF, UNAIDS, and WHO.

## **SPORT AS A RESOURCE OF HOPE**

The truth about global and Olympic sport as a universal creed is that it is also an engine of injustice. The social dimension and possibilities of sport remain as empty

slogans, and constant historical reminders proclaiming the principles of equality, justice and the eradication of poverty have not sufficed to make a reality of it. There is just one thing that many corporate lobbyists and social movements both understand and that is that the real issue is not trade, whether it is the plundering of athletic talent or mineral wealth from Africa, but power. A fundamental gap continues to exist both within sport and between the outcome of universal, often western prescriptions, and local realities. Sport needs to be more just and less charitable but it continues to provide a pathway for hope for some in different parts of the world.

There is the reality of Maria Urrutia the women from Colombia who lifted 245 Kilos to win Colombia's first ever Olympic Gold Medal at the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games. The country as you know usually hits the headlines for other reasons but speaking to her nation following her success she was clear about what sport had helped her to do:

'She hoped that her success would reach others like her poor, black and female'- she went on –“ I hope others see that you can make a living, see the world and get an education, through sports, or even in music and other arts' (19)

Very little has been written about the part played by some athletes in earning money to support whole families and even villages in their country of origin. When the career of a leading world athlete from a developing country is brought to a premature end, the consequences often extend far beyond the track. Maria Mutola the Mozambican, former Olympic and five-time world indoor 800m champion and world record holder routinely sends track winnings back to her country of origin. Chamanchulo, the suburb of Maputo in which Mutola grew up, is ravaged by HIV, passed on in

childbirth or breast milk to 40% of the children. In 2003 when Mutola became the first athlete to collect \$1million for outright victory on the Golden League Athletic Grand Prix Circuit, part of the cash went to the foundation she endowed to help provide scholarships, kit, education and coaching for young athletes. Farms and small businesses have often been sustained by her winnings on the circuit, which have provided for the purchasing of tractors, fertilisers and the facilities to drill small wells.

Sport continues to hold both a promise and possibility for some in different parts of worlds but it also has the potential to be a symbol of change. Catherine Astrid Salome Freeman became the first Aboriginal to represent her country at the Olympics, at Barcelona in 1992, its first world champion, and first Olympic champion. In doing so she became a symbol for reconciliation between a black and white Australia in which she had much to forgive. Her grandmother, Alice Sibley, was one of the so-called stolen generation, taken from her parents at the age of eight by a reviled Australian government policy that was designed to help integration. As a consequence of the 1950s programme which saw Aboriginal children removed from their parents and settled with white families Freeman remained unaware of here ancestry on her mother's side. Her father an outstanding footballer left home when she was five, died of an alcohol-induced stroke aged 53, she was sexually molested at 11 and later abused by whites. Her Olympic success has perhaps helped to change the face of prejudice, almost a taboo subject in a modern Australia. Her Olympic reception following Victory in the final of the 400 metres may be viewed in stark contrast to the day she travelled to an athletics meeting aged 13. Waiting outside Melbourne's Flinders Street Station, she was ordered to move on by a group of middle-aged white housewives, when the whole adjacent seating area lay vacant. As Cathy Freeman held the Olympic torch aloft during the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympic

Games she did so in an allegedly different Australia from the one experienced by her parents. She herself had become perhaps one of Australia's greatest ever sporting icons but also a symbol of the struggle that aboriginal Australians had to endure in order to win social, civil and political rights.

Improving life chances requires a co-ordinated effort and as such any contribution that sport can make must also build upon a wider coalition of sustained support for social and progressive policies. The life chances approach to narrowing the gap between rich and poor has a key role to play in producing social change. It requires harnessing a strong political narrative and action plan that fits with many people's intuitive understanding that life should not be determined by socio-economic position and that people do have choices, whilst drawing attention to the fact that some people and places face greater risks and more limited opportunities. Equalising life chances and focusing on areas such as poverty should sit together as part of a vision for a better society. In part the promise and possibilities of sport are encapsulated in the words of the former Olympic and Commonwealth athlete Kip Keino (20):

*'I believe in this world that sport is one of the tools that can unite youth- sport is something different from fighting in war and it can make a difference- we can change this world by using sport as a tool'*

*'I've run a lot for water charities and children's charities. I believe we share in this world with members of our society who are less fortunate. This is important. We came to this world with nothing and we leave this world with nothing. So we can be able to make a better world for those who need assistance'*

The late writer Susan Sontag talking about the novel commented that any novel worth reading was an education of the heart in that it enlarged your sense of possibilities and of what human nature had the capacity to do. She was fervent believer in the capacity of art to delight, to inform and transform the world in which we live. Such arguments

are readily accepted about the arts but they need also make sense in relation to other areas of social life such as sport and in particular the possible capacity of sport to fulfill its potential and to enlarge one's sense of human possibilities, to delight, to inform and ultimately help to transform the worlds in which we live.

Sport it has been suggested should be thought of more as a potential resource of hope in that sport has some limited capacity to assist with social change, can have an impact on life chances, be part of a holistic approach to what a recent report by an international think tank referred to as 'Narrowing the Gap'. Intervention can come in many forms, legislation, policy, writing, investigating, uncovering silences, pressure groups, social forums, campaigns and activism, re-allocation of resources, not accepting injustice in sport, intervention. Historically sport and education have been key avenues of social mobility and an escape from poverty for some. Thinking systematically about emancipatory alternatives and the part played by sport and is only one way or element in the process by which the limits of the possible can expand and the promise and possibilities of the power of education through sport can become more of a reality for more people.

The promise of sport should not detract from the fact that increasing competition within some of the poorest areas of the world often depletes social capital and leaves its potential fragmented. The informal sector sometimes dissolves self-help networks and solidarities essential to the survival of the very poor and it is often women and children who are the most vulnerable. An NGO worker in Haiti, describes the ultimate logic of neo-liberal individualism in a context of absolute immiseration (21) Davis, 2006:184):

*'Now everything is for sale. The women used to receive you with hospitality, give you coffee, share all that she has in her home. I could go get a plate of food at a neighbour's house; a child could get a coconut at her godmother's, two mangoes at another aunt's. But these acts of solidarity are disappearing with the growth of poverty. Now when you arrive somewhere, either the women offers to sell you a cup of coffee or she has no coffee at all. The tradition of mutual giving that allowed us to help each other and survive- this is all being lost'*

Sport can be a resource of hope. Its power is limited but the contribution sport has made in relation to developing people, raising aspirations and being a resource of hope, nationally, internationally and locally should not be underestimated either. As the calendar of international sporting events unfold each year and the spectacle of the Beijing Olympics (2008) is followed by the Football World Cup in South Africa (2010) and the Commonwealth Games in Delhi (2010) and Scotland (2014) it is worth remembering that while there is no single agent, group or movement that can carry the hopes of humanity alone, there are many points of engagement through sport that offer good causes for optimism that things can get better.

### **Concluding Remarks**

While it is important to explain and understand economic, social, historical, physiological, psychological and many other explanations of what sport can do for society, the more important intellectual and practical questions often emanate from questions relating to social change. Historically the potential of sport lies not with the values promoted by global sport or particular forms of capitalism for these are invariably unjust and uneven. The possibilities that exist within sport are those that can help with radically different views of the world perhaps based upon opportunities

to foster trust, obligations, redistribution and respect for sport in a more socially orientated humane world. Sport's transformative capacity must not be overstated, it is limited, but possibilities do exist within sport to provide some resources of hope within a world that is left wanting on many fronts. To ignore the capacity of sport to assist with social change is not an option, particularly for students, teachers and researchers of sport all of whom have the capacity and the platform to act as public intellectuals.

The emergence of a more socially committed approach to global or international sport has to start from actively acknowledging the huge differences of opportunities, wealth, democracy, sporting tastes, and models of professional sport that divide the world. The deep challenge facing global sport is to outline the mechanisms by which sport can be actively seen to contribute to social and economic welfare on an international scale. At the international level the more powerful sporting nations would seem to have the power to enforce many of the rules and decisions affecting world sport and yet there are perhaps unprecedented opportunities at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century for change. Perhaps the most obvious and disturbing concern is the extent to which the core institutions of sport are trusted and sensitive to ways of addressing the interests of the majority in the non-Western world. The chief causes of inequality in global sport remain twofold the transformation of global sport by financial capital and the displacement of democratic political power in sport by unaccountable market power.

Perhaps, as has been argued in this article, sport should be thought of as a resource of hope in that sport has some limited capacity to assist with social change, can have an impact on life chances, be part of a holistic approach to what a recent report by a international think tank referred to as 'Narrowing the Gap'. Intervention

can come in many forms, legislation, policy, writing, investigating, uncovering silences, pressure groups, social forums, campaigns and activism, re-allocation of resources and not accepting injustice in sport are but a few potential possibilities. This perhaps involves the readers of this journal and many others taking on the mantle of the public intellectual in sport. There is no single agent, group or movement that can carry the hopes of humanity, but there are many points of engagement through sport that offer good causes for optimism that things can get better.

Writers such as Said (21) were openly explicit about the role of the intellectual which was to ‘uncover the contest, to challenge and defeat both an imposed silence and the normalised quiet of unseen power’ wherever and whenever possible. Said laid out a powerful case for regarding intellectuals as those who are never more themselves than when moved by metaphysical passions and disinterested principles of justice and truth, they denounce corruption, defend the weak and defy imperfect or oppressive authority. They are those who speak the truth to power and refuse the constraints of disciplinarity and specialisation that Said believed tended to weaken and depoliticise the intellectual strengths of academic writing. In our time and almost universally phrases such as globalisation, global sport, free-market, privatisation, public/private funding for sport are all within the public domain and yet all of these need to be properly explained and tend to be accepted tacitly as if they are the pre-ordained only way to do things. They are not and they need to be continually challenged and re-worked.

### **Notes**

1. Tiger Club Project, Annual Report, Kampala: Uganda, 2003.
2. Ibid. 4.

3. Seabrook, J. (2003) 'Don't Punish the Poor for Being Poor'. *New Statesman*, 23 September, pp 6-7.
4. See Maguire, J. A. (2004) 'Sport Labour Migration Research Revisited' *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 28(4): 477-482; Maguire, J (1999). *Global Sport: Identities. Societies, Civilizations*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
5. G. Jarvie, D. Hwang and M. Brennan, *Sport, Revolution and the Beijing Olympics*. London: Berg, 2008.
6. See O'Neil, J and Hormats, R. (2004) *Special Report on China*. New York: Goldman Sachs. O'Toole, J Sutherden, A, Walshe, P and Muir, D (2006) 'Shuttle Cocks and Soccer: The State of Sport in China' in *Sport business* No 119, December: pp.46-49.
7. Spiers, G. (1994). 'The Devil Lurks in Golf Heaven' *Scotland on Sunday*, 10 April: pp.6.
8. Bass, A. (2002). *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: The 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
9. *Ibid.* xvi.
10. Bellos, A. (2003) 'The President wins the Midfield Battle'. *New Statesman*. 3 November, pp.32-34.
11. Bellos, A. (2003) 'The President wins the Midfield Battle'. *New Statesman*. 3 November, pp.32.
12. Wilson, D. (2004). 'Cricket's shame: the inside story' *New Statesman*, 6 December: pp.27-30.
13. See also Tatchell, P. (2003a). 'Let's turn off Mugabe's lights' *New Statesman*, 9 June: 30.
14. Tatchell, P. (2003b). 'Ambassadors of Tyranny' *New Statesman*, 19 May: 16.

15. Tatchell, P. (2003b). 'Ambassadors of Tyranny' *New Statesman*, 19 May: 16.
16. Gillon, D (2005) 'View from man who races to escape poverty' *The Herald*, 15 January: p.10.
17. See Jarvie, G (2007). 'The Promise and Possibilities of Running in and Out of Africa: Survey Results of Top East African Women Runners'. In Pitziladis Y (Ed). *East African Running*. London: Routledge, 24-40.
18. Gebrselassie, H. (2003). 'Triumph and Despair' *The Times*, 10 March: p.12.
19. Gillon, D. (2004). 'Candle who brings a ray of hope' *The Herald*, 24 November: 12. See also Simms, A and Rendell, M (2004) 'The Global Trade in Muscle' *New Statesman*, 9<sup>th</sup> August, pp24-25.
20. Keino. K interview with the author 5<sup>th</sup> February 2007, University of Stirling.
21. Davis
22. Said, E. (2001). 'The Case for the Intellectual' *The Age*, May: 5-12.

**Grant Jarvie** is Professor of Sports Studies and Pro-Vice Chancellor at the University of Stirling.

**Address: University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4LA, Scotland (UK).**

Email [grant.jarvie@stir.ac.uk](mailto:grant.jarvie@stir.ac.uk)