

THE STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION OF SPORT

IN KENYA AND MALAWI: A COMPARATIVE

ANALYSIS

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Physical activities have traditionally been an integral component of African Society; typically they were fundamental to social and vocational life, and thus embraced both recreative play and development of skills required for survival and prestige (physical prowess). Some of these activities were seen by missionaries and colonial masters as "degrading to the body, mind and character" and were corrected or eliminated (Jones, 1924 p 32); repression, displacement and eventual replacement characterised progress towards 'civilization' and imposed westernisation. Colonial infusion was accompanied by a concomitant concern for health of the indigenous population as well as the colonial passion for sporting pursuits: "...Wherever the Englishman went, his games went with him," (Bennett et al 1975, p 108).

Kenya and Malawi have emerged from similar and common socio-historical backgrounds i.e. tribal societies steeped in traditional ceremony, ritual and informal education, and subjected to gospel and colonialism. The cultural integration of western thought and practice was in part delivered through sporting activity which proved to be most popular, one of its inherent values being its ability to bring various social and cultural groups together; soccer, for example, wore

its way into the fabric of life: it was "a basis for a common culture - a link between the educated and the uneducated, different ethnic groups, a common language and mode of communication", (Scriven, 1973 pp 15 - 16).

The legacy of colonial institutionalisation of sports infrastructures was much in evidence in both countries at the time of the demise of British control. Since gaining their independence in the 1960's, the basic organisational framework has been subject to shifts from decentralised voluntary associations and government support orientation to increasing centralisation and government (i.e. political) control. These shifts need to be seen within the context of geographical, economic and socio-political influence.

Contextual Background

1. Kenya

Lying astride the equator, Kenya is bounded by Ethiopia and Sudan in the north, Somalia and Indian Ocean in the east, Tanzania in the south, and Uganda and Lake Victoria in the west. There are five contrasting regions: the Arid North, comprising more than half of the whole country, supports only a sparse population;

the Coastal Lowlands, with high temperatures (28°C) and annual rainfall 40-50 inches, produces copra, sisal and food crops; the Slopes of the Plateau is an undulating savanna region with low rainfall (10 inches) supporting pastoral farming and vast game reserves, hence tourism is a major economic activity; the Kenya (or White - so called because of European settlement) Highlands, with its cool and invigorating climate, is the most fertile region, supporting both arable and pastoral farming and the highest concentration of population, and the Lake Victoria Uplands, a largely forested savanna region supporting some subsistence farming villages. Since gaining independence in 1963 the country has changed from a multi to a single party state (1986). Administratively, it is divided into 8 provinces: Coast, Central, Rift Valley, Nyanza, Western, Eastern, North Eastern and Nairobi which is also the capital city with a population of over 1 million. The overall population numbers about 24 million comprising predominantly native Africans with an admixture of Europeans, Asians and Arabs.

2. Malawi

The landlocked state of Malawi is surrounded by Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. There are two distinct regions: the High Tableland, West of Lake

Malawi; and Southern Malawi composed of a mixture of highlands drained chiefly by the Shire river and tributaries of the Zambezi. Climatically there is a marked wet (November-April) and dry (May-October) season; temperatures range from 38° C (October) in low lying areas to 14° C in the Shire Highlands; rainfall varies from 66 inches in the north to 54 inches in the south. Farming is the dominant occupation (chief cash crops are tobacco, tea, sugar and cotton) with tourism ranked second as an economic activity. This former British Protectorate (Nyasaland 1891 - 1964) under President Banda is a one party state which has enjoyed sustained political stability. The population (7.2 m) is unevenly distributed between three administrative areas: North (16%), Centre (34%) and South (50%).

Structural Organisation of Sport

1. Kenya

Historically, the organisation of sport dates from the colonial period when it developed around a framework of sports clubs instituted by administrators, settlers, missionaries and teachers. As in the 'mother country', order to sport and especially to competition at national level had to be brought by national governing

bodies, which had begun to emerge by the 1920's. . . Similarly, it was the demands and regulations of international sport that ushered in 'umbrella' organisations beginning initially with the Kenya Amateur Athletic Association briefly holding a coordinating role in amateur sport, and then followed by the Commonwealth Games Association (1952) and Kenya Olympic Association (1954). The latter was formed after an international Olympic Committee stipulation on acceptance of Games entries only from officially recognised bodies. In 1955 the two associations merged as the Kenya Olympic Association.

At grassroots level, local authorities were encouraged by government to develop community sport, from which competitive sport evolved into a hierarchical form comprising inter village (sub-locations), inter-locations, divisional, district, provincial and national championships. To service this highly structured system, a network of officials was created. At national level a "Colonial Sports Officer" supervised teams in domestic, East African, regional and international spheres. District Commissioners (the most senior civil servant in each district) delegated responsibilities to district officers at divisional level, who in turn delegated to locational and sub-locational chiefs respectively, who became the sports officers charged with the responsibility for the organisation and development of sport at local levels. Pres-

tige attached to success was a prime motivator in stimulating chiefs to take their devolved duties in sport seriously. Complementary to this network of administrators were county and municipal authorities which were major providers of stadia essential in the process of competition. These local authorities were empowered to raise revenues, generated from taxation and rates for area services, one of which was sport. With independence, this system was abolished because of economic inequalities between the areas and central government thus wrested the financial powers from the local authorities and increasingly modified its role from support to a controlling agency.

In essence the current structure centres on three agencies: Kenya Olympic Association, Kenya National Sports Council and the Government Department of Sports; and some 40 national governing bodies of sport.

The tasks of the Kenya Olympic Association encompass the promotion of amateur sport interests, the encouragement of interest and representation in Olympic, Commonwealth, Pan-African and other international competitions, the promotion of the Olympic Movement's aims and maintenance of IOC affiliation, the coordination and articulation of trans-associational issues,

and the raising and disbursement of funds. Since its inception, it has attempted to carry out its tasks within a framework of three broad policies:

- i) entry of teams for Olympic, Commonwealth and All-Africa Games.
- ii) fund raising to help athletes train and travel.
- iii) training of officials.

The Kenya National Sports Council (KNSC) was established in January 1966 following an early post-independence government policy statement on community development and social services, whereby the Ministry of Labour and Social Services would coordinate all forms of amateur sport in the country (Department of Social Services, 1983 p 37); the Ministry chose through legislation (Societies Act Cap 108) to fulfil this role by setting up the National Sports Council. Thus, the KNSC was set up to advise government and to encourage sport and recreation at all levels for raising standards and the general health and well-being of the population, to formulate policy plans, to coordinate sports and foster collaboration between sports bodies as well as cooperation with similar interest bodies, to assist with personnel, facilities, equipment and publicity at local levels, and to advise on international affiliations; i.e. the KNSC had a

mandate to administer, develop and organise sport.

It is interesting to note that the immediate post-independence period was marked by priorities which excluded sport but Government's changed intentions towards it were signalled in Kenya being seen to be "entering a new era... in which we are moving from East African calendar to the international field of success", (Kenya Sports Review, 1966, p 7).

Certainly the KNSC's major tasks were concerned with raising levels of competitive performance, coaching and facilities: indicative of the attempt to produce ever more Kip Keinos were the Council's deliberations and discussions with the Kenya Amateur Athletic Association on the provision of a national sports centre. The increasing state influence on and politicisation of sport was also mirrored in Sport Minister Ngala's Annual General Meeting (1967) address when he linked sport with national policy in relation to those of other African nations when sanctioning team visits into and out of the country: henceforth, approval for such teams would "...be considered in merit by the KNSC...." and subject to "...government.... (and) ... the organisations concerned(not being)....embarassed by such visits." (Kenya Sports Review, 1967 p 6). Clearly government was assuming control through KNSC

and weakening the position of the voluntary bodies, a situation, which the latter were obliged to accept, particularly as KNSC disbursed financial aid.

In order to meet its obligations, the KNSC developed a network of Provincial and District Offices. These served to implement measures to stimulate participation in sport, an example of which were the so-called "Harambee" (pulling together) or Self-help projects in rural areas, partly assisted by government grants. The 'Harambee' scheme was extended to national governing bodies of sport, who received proportionate sums of grant aid towards sports-related projects. Other government initiatives through the KNSC embraced sponsorship of coaching and development courses and scholarships for overseas' study by promising athletes and administrators.

The substantial impact of the All-Africa Games held in 1987 caused President Moi to announce a Department of Sports and an associated National Sports Institute. The Committee set up to formulate respective roles and functions reported that it was timely to create ".... a full fledged Department of Sports to implement a coherent and coordinated policy for sports...." (Government Committee 1987 p 2). The Department was

established within the Ministry of Culture and Social Services, where it functions in an advisory capacity. It is required to plan and formulate policy, sustain and enhance sports achievements, give material, financial, technical and personnel assistance to voluntary organisations, provide and optimize use of facilities, foster sport for all and identify talent; additionally, it has control of sports funds, including approval and auditing of national governing bodies' expenditures, advises public and private sector bodies on the promotion of sport, formulates training programmes at the National Institute of Sport, and is to provide sports medical clinics and other health facilities. It is also required to collaborate with the Ministry of Education to promote sport in the curriculum. The initial net cost of funding the newly created Department and its administrative services at headquarters' Provincial and District levels amounted to Kf2,717,842. Together with expenditure on the Moi International and Nyayo Sports Centres the total net cost to Government was Kf3,850,620, (Ministry of Culture & Social Services, 1987).

The central agencies have benefitted in sports development projects from sponsorship by private sector companies (e.g. Bata Shoes, Berger Paints, Coca Cola,

Kenya Brewers, Standard Chartered Ltd). Additionally a significant contribution to the overall structural organisation of sport is associated with Private Members' Clubs. Such clubs, established by colonial administrators and settlers now enjoy multi-racial composition and are leading providers in urban areas. They have also set the template for additional provision by works/business-related sports clubs such as Stanbank, Barclays Bank, Kenya Power and Lighting Co., Public Service, Central Bank, Railways etc.

The largest contributor, however, to the development of sport in Kenya is the Education Sector. Physical education is a compulsory subject in primary and secondary schools (as well as in primary school teacher training institutions) and Higher Education Institution's offer a range of activities. Whilst it is true that secondary school physical education has suffered problems of shortages of physical education qualified teachers, it has enjoyed a strong extra-curricular programme through school clubs, which have facilitated opportunities for broader participation and the development of gifted children, many of whom have become house-hold names especially in Track and Field.

2. Malawi

Colonial period Malawi (Nyasaland) was epitomised by the enforcement of 'new' education and religion to create the 'new being', and physical education and sport had their part to play in it: rounders and netball (for girls), athletics, cricket and soccer (for boys) were actively encouraged. Indeed, in the 1960's successful top performers were all the products of secondary schools where missionary teachers rigorously promoted sporting activity. The essence of structural organisation as with Kenya lay in voluntary clubs and associations at grass-root and national levels.

With independence, the institutional framework for sport entered a new phase. The government created the Department of Sport, (Within the Ministry of Local Government), which has overall responsibility for sport. Its overriding policy is to ensure the development and coordination of efforts in the promotion of sport. Functionally, it liaises with other Ministries and Departments (especially with Education, Youth and Community Services) as well as Institutions, thus providing a corporate approach to development. In addition, it prepares annual budgets for sport, overseas inservice training for administrators, athletes, officials and teachers,

controls international soccer events, is responsible for crowd and stadia management, security clearance for international events and personnel welfare. These functions are largely discharged by three officers, headed by a Chief Sports Officer, who advise the Minister responsible for Sport on day to day matters, through 3 Regional Officers and 24 District Sports Organizers.

At Regional level, Organizers coordinate sports programmes at recreative and competitive levels (including the training of regional sports teams, administer inservice courses for dictrict organizers, supervise district programmes, and advise and guide local (district) authorities on sports' provision and finance. At District level, the Sports Organizers plan sports programmes, oversee coaching and screening for talent in all sports on offer, prepare budget estimates, give technical assistance and advice to clubs and educational institutions, and submit reports to the Regional Officer.

In 1974, the Government passed legislation (Act of Parliament No.10,1974) to establish a National Sports Council, to function as the government agent on all issues related to sport but in particular on elite,

sport, for which it acts in personnel recruitment for national level coaching, selection and training of top-class athletes. It is in this context that it also deals with the 17 active governing bodies of sport, and to some extent complements the work of the non-government body, the Malawi National Olympic Committee (Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association) whose prime responsibilities relate to the Olympic Movement, the Olympic and Commonwealth Games. In relation to sport in general the Sports Council advises government on policies and plans, and monitors legislation and its effects on sport.

The Ministry of Education and Culture carries responsibility for physical education and school sport, together with primary school phase teacher training colleges. All primary school teachers are expected to teach physical education. The Ministry, through District Offices, allocates 4% of school fees revenues on sports and text books, and grants permission through the same Offices for school participation in district, regional and national sports events.

The Department of Youth and Malawi Young Pioneers, though mainly concerned with training for agriculture, domestic activities (cooking, handicrafts etc), poli-

tical education and with ethical behaviour, is also associated with young people's sport through youth clubs. In the past, it has offered initial training to secondary school physical education and sports teachers but has increasingly come to rely on the Department of Sport within the Ministry of Local Government for the training of personnel. Another Ministerial Department which contributes to sport is that of Community Services which, whilst its pre-occupation lies with rural development, provides facilities and staff for young people with disabilities.

Comparison

Historically, Kenya and Malawi have similar antecedents base in tribal societies, in which transmission of survival skills was paramount, and in infusion of missionaries and colonialisaton by British Imperialists who displaced native activities, and in the name of 'muscular christianity' imposed alien forms of sporting pastimes and organisation on indigenous structures. The infrastructural foundations laid down during the colonial period became the basis for the organisation of modern sport.

It was a legacy, however, which could not be maintained in political climate where economic and socio-cultural realities brought policies and priorities

there has been increasing...

designed to develop and consolidate identities as new states. The respective geo-economic situations of Kenya and Malawi had (and have) characteristics which reveal more similarities than differences: regional relief variability with climate and soils sustaining economic activity, ranging from subsistence-level agriculture in less fertile or more hostile environments to dominantly cash product based farming in areas largely occupied by white settlers, and supported by tourism, the second largest foreign exchange earner; and lack of primary and secondary industries based on minerals and manufacturing usually associated with economic wealth, important in the superstructural provision for social institutions such as sport.

Independence was accompanied by reconciliation of interests of, and integrating disparate ethnic and cultural groups which provided challenges for the various institutions. In this connection, it is perhaps somewhat ironic that running parallel to their respective acceptance of British institutional patterns, which was more of a demonstration of the reality of political control than denominational missionary influence, so in post-independence times, there has been increasing political control within

both of those single party states as witnessed in the centralisation of sports administrative organisation within government Ministerial departments: Departments of Sports and National Sports councils in both Kenya and Malawi. Likewise, juxtaposition of structures, functions and policies of central organizational agencies suggests similarity by degree in the overlapping and often duplicated responsibilities, with government interventionist potential through measures designed to produce financial accountability of national governing bodies of sport for example. Within the context of 'Sport for All' the most distinctive differences between Kenya and Malawi are to be seen within the sphere of education. Whilst in both countries, physical education (a significant pre-requisite in the process of establishing positive attitudes to participation in sport) suffers in relation to other subjects, in Malawi it has substantially lower status and esteem: the Malawi physical education curriculum is poorly structured; there is a dearth of trained specialists and shortage of material provision; many physical education teacher educators themselves are Malawi Young Pioneer Members with little professional training and expertise in physical education and sport. The general situation is also evident at

higher education level, where unlike its four Kenyan counterparts, the University of Malawi does not have programmes in physical education. Nonetheless, though clearly not as widely acknowledged as Kenya's global reputation for achievements in world competitions especially in track athletics, Malawi with three times less population, has achieved international and African success in boxing, netball, soccer and track and field.

With their emergence as nation states, both countries have attempted to modernise their institutional structures. The infrastructures laid down during the colonial period have subsequently undergone, and continue to undergo, change with focus on 'Africanization' of the 'foreign' founded and based structural organisation of sport; hence, both Kenya and Malawi, whilst similarly moving towards increased centralization and politicisation of sport, have separately established frameworks which indicate independent developments. These in turn reflect the interplay of geo-economic and socio-political determinants.

Note

1. Such a profile corresponds with that shown in instrumental use of sport for political ends in

some socialist bloc countries from c 1950 on.

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