

Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization

European and North American Perspectives

Alan Bairner

Sport and nationalism are arguably two of the most emotional issues in the modern world. Both inspire intense devotion and frequently lead to violence. In this book, Alan Bairner discusses the relationship between sport and national identities in Europe and North America—specifically Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, the United States, and Canada—within the context of a broader theoretical debate about the impact of globalization in the modern era. Through a unique comparative perspective, the author sheds new light on the ways sport impacts the construction and reproduction of national identities. Ultimately, the work considers the role of sport in allowing nations and nationalists to resist, or at least come to terms with, powerful globalizing pressures.

"This book offers a new perspective in the study of sport and nationalism by underlining the links between the recent evolution of sporting nationalism with globalization processes. Moreover, to my knowledge, this is the first single-author book about sport and nationalism offering such a variety of case studies. The fact that the same framework is applied to all the case studies offers a very good comparative perspective. This book will become a reference in the field of sport and nationalism."

— Jean Harvey, coeditor of *Not Just a Game: Essays in Canadian Sport Sociology*

"No book on this topic has as consistently and as powerfully examined the relationship between sporting nationalism and globalization."

— William J. Morgan, coeditor of *Philosophic Inquiry in Sport* and author of *Leftist Theories of Sport: A Critique and Reconstruction*

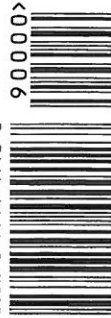
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Sporting Nationalism and National Identities

A THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

SPORT AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Despite the lingering protestations of sports people themselves, there is little dispute among those who study sport in the modern world that it is political to the extent that it not only reflects social divisions but also frequently exacerbates these. As a result, sport has been discussed at length in terms of ethnicity, gender, race, sexuality, age, social class, and so on. It has also been identified as being related to questions of nationality. However, while the linkage of sport and nationalism is now widely accepted, there has been a lack of precision in terms of the types of nationalism involved and the precise ways in which they interact with sport.

For those who adhere to a simplistic view of globalization this lack of precision would scarcely constitute a problem. If the world is becoming homogenised, then nationalism or national identities in all of their manifestations are rapidly losing their social significance. If, however, one adopts the more sophisticated approach, as outlined in chapter 1 of this book, then it becomes obvious that nationalism coexists alongside globalization and is at times strengthened by it. There is a growing body of literature on the precise relationships between sport and nationalism. Some studies have concentrated on specific sports, most notably soccer (Duke and Crolley 1996; Sugden and Tomlinson 1994; Wagg 1995). In particular, this can be attributed to soccer's global appeal and the fact that it is regarded as the national game in so many countries. As shall be revealed

later in this chapter, however, the precise meaning of the concept of a "national game" itself needs closer scrutiny. Indeed, it is valuable in this respect, that other studies of the relationship between sport and national identity have dealt with particular types of society rather than specific sports. For example, there are examinations of sport in multilingual societies such as Switzerland (Tomlinson 1999), ethnically divided societies, including Belgium (Vanreusel et al. 1999), historic nations that have been submerged within larger nation states, such as Catalonia (Duke and Crolley 1996), and multiracial nations such as Brazil (Lever 1983; Leite Lopes 1997). Valuable work has also been done on states and societies that were the product of colonization and subsequent struggles for independence. These include South Africa (Nauright 1997) and the West Indies (Beckles and Stoddart 1995), for which area studies have been combined with analyses of particular sports, rugby and cricket respectively. In some instances, the analysis has concentrated on the relationship between national identity and other sources of identity formation such as gender. Interesting examples of this approach are provided by Archetti (1994; 1996; 1999) in his studies of soccer and masculinity in Argentina. What each of these studies reveal, as do many others that have not been mentioned here, is that issues of national identity vary considerably from one social formation to another.

Indeed, it is important to remember that nationalism itself is multifaceted. There is a very real difference between the nationalism of a well-established world power and that of a submerged people, albeit that certain shared characteristics may also be discernible. Inevitably there will also be a marked variation in the manner in which sport is used in such different contexts to promote the nationalist cause. In some societies sport has clearly been employed as a means whereby rival identities are transcended in the interests of establishing national solidarity. Elsewhere, however, sport is in the forefront of efforts to foment division within empires or even established nation states. The case studies discussed in this book have provided examples of a variety of ways in which sport has been linked to nationalist ideology and politics. They have also revealed the degree to which sport has greatly assisted national endeavors to resist or, at the very least, to domesticate globalizing impulses.

None of this is to suggest that identities are indivisible. All human beings are characterized by a multiplicity of identities of which nationality is only one. Gender, sexuality, social class, and so on also help to make us the people we are. National identity is certainly of importance to most human beings, albeit to greater and lesser degrees. Yet even in purely spatial terms, attachment to a particular region, city, town, or village may take precedence over any affinity with the nation. This is equally true of gendered and sexualized identities. This is an important part of the problem when we try to conceptualize the relationship between sport and

national identity. Even as regards sport, the nation may simply not matter as much to some people as do other allegiances. I am in no doubt that if faced with the choice between unparalleled achievement by Dunfermline Athletic Football Club on the one hand and by Scotland's national soccer team on the other, I would choose the former. This does not make me any less Scottish and proud to be so. Rather, it serves to illustrate just one aspect of a multidimensional structure of identity. Furthermore, it is conceivable that a father could transfer his allegiance from a soccer club he has supported all his life to one for which his son has been signed to play even when the two teams are in opposition. In this instance, a new sports-based identity centered around being a parent transcends another, earlier sporting identity.

It should also be noted that team sports have tended to dominate much of the foregoing discussion. One justification for this is the fact that these activities enjoy high levels of participation. More important, however, is their capacity to attract large audiences, for it is undeniable that it is usually in the behavior and attitudes of fans rather than those of participants that the relationship between sport and identity becomes most apparent. Participants are frequently able to ignore rival pulls on their emotions as they pursue a sporting career. This explains why professional soccer players are able to move more easily from one team to another than is the case for most fans. It also helps us to understand why a francophone from Quebec can represent "federal" Canada in the Olympic Games regardless of separatist sympathies and how a Catholic from the north of Ireland can come to be playing for Northern Ireland's soccer team despite having no respect for the political entity that team represents. Shortly before his death, the notorious Ulster loyalist prisoner, Billy Wright, told me that anyone who puts a sporting career ahead of loyalty to his or her identity deserves no respect. But this again was to make the mistake of assuming that each of us possesses a single identity. In fact, Wright himself had problems with trying to reconcile his violence, which he regarded as politically necessary, with his Christian faith, which taught him that killing is wrong. In the end, he allowed the former to take precedence over the latter and, in so doing, he followed a similar path, albeit one with more deadly ramifications, as those who have put their sporting ambitions ahead of their feelings of loyalty to other social constructions. Fans, however, are less likely to regard this as a realistic choice.

FANDOM AND IDENTITY IN THE GLOBAL ERA

As the global media bring events from all parts of the world into people's living rooms, the nature of sports fandom has certainly evolved. Thirty years ago, it would have been unthinkable for a youngster living in

Liverpool or Leeds to become a fan of a major Italian soccer club such as Juventus or Inter Milan far less an American sports franchise such as the Chicago Bulls or the San Francisco 49ers. As surprising, if not more so, is that fact that someone growing up in either Liverpool or Leeds can become a supporter of Manchester United or even one of the big London soccer teams. There are undoubtedly soccer clubs (and Manchester United is an excellent example) and other sports franchises that draw their following from throughout the world. All this having been said, however, the fact remains that support for Juventus and Inter is at its densest in the cities of Turin and Milan respectively and for the Bulls and the 49ers in their own home towns. In addition, the child from Liverpool, while identifying with a foreign soccer team or a franchise in a different sport entirely, is still most likely to be a fan of either Everton or Liverpool football clubs and the young fan in Leeds is almost certain to favor Leeds United. Moreover, once these choices have been made, they are difficult to overturn.

With the yuppification of English soccer has come a consumerist culture that has permitted new fans to choose their teams in the same way that they would select a car or even an item from the supermarket shelf. Most traditional supporters, however, are in a position where the choice is virtually made for them on the basis of locality, family influence, or (as for example in the case of fans of Celtic and Rangers who travel from all over Scotland and beyond to support their favourite team) some additional identity factor. Similarly it is quite possible, as was suggested in the Canadian case study, for a francophone to support the Toronto Maple Leafs and for an anglophone Canadian to follow the fortunes of the Montreal Canadiens. At the level of symbolism, however, the two franchises continue to represent the collective interests of two competing nationalities.

As far as national teams are concerned, the situation is even clearer. Few people support national sides for reasons other than their own national identity. Most fans no doubt have second and third favorites—Brazil in soccer for example—and wearing the shirts of some of the world's great soccer nations (or, if one's instincts are toward retro images, of the former Soviet Union) has become something of a fashion statement in recent years. But it would be odd to hear from someone who had grown up with Scottish parents in Glasgow or Edinburgh that he was a Brazilian fan in any meaningful sense. However, we have seen in most, if not all, of the preceding chapters how the construction of identity through sport (in Ireland, for example, or in Canada) can create difficulties that are themselves a reflection of more general problems of nationality.

NATIONAL SPORTS

If each nation in the world possessed its own unique sporting culture, the relationship between sport and national identity would be largely uncon-

tentious. The fact is, however, that the concept of "the national sport" is a slippery one. Most societies do have their own peculiar traditions as regards sport and leisure activities. In general, however, these are regarded as having little more than antiquarian interest. On the other hand, in certain places, traditional pastimes have acquired much greater contemporary resonance. Of the case studies examined in this book, for example, Ireland provides the perfect illustration. Gaelic football, hurling, and the like are clearly national sports inasmuch as they are bound up with a specific idea of Irishness. Moreover, they are played and watched by large numbers of people throughout Ireland. To that extent they differ markedly from shinty, which is peculiar to Scotland and, thereby, evokes an idea of Scottishness but has limited popular appeal. Similarly, lacrosse is a "Canadian" sport only if one adopts a rather arcane definition of a national sport. However, despite the manifestly stronger claims of Gaelic games in this respect, it should not be forgotten that, although they are undeniably popular, unlike shinty in Scotland and lacrosse in Canada, so too are other sports which are certainly not peculiar to Ireland but which are arguably at least as important in terms of national sporting pride.

The point is that national sports take different forms and, in so doing, they provide us with important insights into the character of particular nations. Some national sports are peculiar to specific nations. As such they either confirm the exclusive character of the nation or, more commonly, reflect a contest between ethnic and civic representations of the nation. Ironically, however, those sports that are defined as national but are actually shared by countless other nations are arguably more successful at uniting the people of particular nations. Thus, soccer in the Irish Republic or in Scotland can be recognized as the national sport of the civic nation whereas native Gaelic games are inevitably linked to narrower definitions of the respective nations. The fact remains, however, that people are willing, in varying degrees, to lend their support to their sporting representatives regardless of which conception of nationhood a particular activity appears to endorse. For most sports fans, the nation that deserves their support is a given and in following their national teams they underline their sense of identity while simultaneously reflecting its complex character.

ON SPORTING NATIONALISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

The representation of the nation through sport, however, can differ considerably from one nation to another. Thus, American sporting nationalism puts relatively little emphasis on international success. Indeed, much of the affection for sports such as baseball, American football, and basketball is owed to the fact that they provide arenas in which the Americans remain supreme. "Playing with themselves" genuinely amounts to

world-class sporting action. In any case, given the sheer size of the nation as a whole and of its great cities, contests between rival franchises assume a quasi-international status. Americans do, of course, root for their nation's representatives in events such as the Olympic Games and golf's Ryder Cup but, while these events give competitors the opportunity to fly the flag, for most sports fans domestic competition in "American" games is what really counts.

In Ireland and Canada, the situation is slightly different. Although both countries can claim that certain sporting activities support the idea of national distinctiveness, they do not have sufficient prestige to permit the belief that "playing with themselves" is adequate for the promotion of the nation. Thus, producing a great many hockey players and seeing the game promoted as something intrinsically Canadian is all well and good, but it is as important, if not more so, to be able to beat other nations, and not only at hockey. As a result, the Canadians in general arguably take the Olympics more seriously than do most Americans and they are even supportive of far less prestigious events such as the Commonwealth Games. Similarly, Irish sporting nationalism, while maintaining a strong interest in Gaelic games as the sporting guarantors of a distinctive national identity, is equally, and in some instances more, committed to those sports, such as soccer and rugby union, that provide the Irish with opportunities to take on the world. Ironically, Ulster unionists have chosen to play "British" games as part of their national heritage, yet frequently find themselves playing and watching these games not as British nationals but as Irish men and women. In addition, those who have sought a more precise sense of who they are by way of the exploits of the Northern Ireland soccer team have been obliged to come to terms with the twin paradox, namely of Irish nationalists playing for Northern Ireland and of the English being regarded as detested opponents in the eyes of people who regard themselves as loyal to the United Kingdom. In another context, the relationship between Scotland and England has been such that sporting nationalists have been more likely to choose playing (and hopefully beating) the old enemy at their own games than to seek comfort in native pastimes. More secure in themselves and their own identity, on the other hand, the Swedes have combined the global and the local quite successfully and thereby constructed a relatively mature sporting nationalism.

SPORT AND CONTESTED NATIONAL IDENTITY

Even in the examples discussed in this book and referred to above, there is the additional problem that sport has not been wholly successful in any of them in uniting the entire nation or nationality. In each instance, in

addition to contributing to the construction of a single national identity, sport has also been implicated in the creation and perpetuation of divisions centered around questions of identity—between different sorts of Irish nationalists and Ulster unionists, between francophone and anglophone Canadians as well as between both groups and First Nations peoples, between "old" Swedes and "new" Swedes, lowland and Highland and Catholic and Protestant Scots, and so on. Furthermore, in all of these examples, perhaps above all in the United States, and indeed in most countries, where sport is played, there are also divisions based on race, gender, and social class, which sport can sometimes help to heal but more often merely serves to exacerbate. This obviously impacts upon sport's relationship to national identity in specific social formations.

We should always bear in mind that in many nation-states, nationality itself remains contested terrain. Tebbit's cricket test represented a somewhat offensive attempt to tease out this issue. When someone of Pakistani origin but living in England chooses to support the Pakistan cricket team against England's cricketers, he or she may be indicating a continued preference for Pakistani national identity despite, or arguably because of, British citizenship and English residence. On the other hand, it might be dangerous to read too much into such an expression of sporting nationalism. It may indicate little more than a nostalgic sentiment for the "old country," which does little or nothing to undermine that individual's sense of being a British citizen, happy to pay British taxes, willing to serve in the British armed forces, and so on. To infer political disloyalty from a simple expression of sporting nationalism, as Tebbit did, may be foolish at best and reprehensible at worst. However, we should not ignore the fact that in most nation-states there exists a hegemonic national identity that is not necessarily inclusive. In such instances, some citizens may well choose to celebrate an alternative national identity, with sport playing an important part in their activities.

For example, when Turkey beat Germany in the qualifying stage of soccer's European Championship on 10 October 1998, there was almost as much celebration in the streets of Germany's major cities as there was in Turkey itself. In the context of Tebbit's cricket test, there was evidence that the Turkish immigrants and their German-born families had not become real Germans. But to what extent had hegemonic representations of German nationalism encouraged these Turks (and other immigrant groups) to become Germans? Denied full citizenship, members of ethnic minority groups have found it difficult to represent their "new" country at sport (Merkel 1998). In circumstances such as these, it is scarcely surprising that the achievements of the nation that continues to provide them with a national identity, although not a home, become the focus of a sporting nationalism that has broader political implications. As the

example of France reveals, there is no guarantee that, by allowing members of immigrant groups to represent their adopted nation, racism will abate and all immigrants will begin to strongly identify with the national identity of their hosts. But there is certainly little point in complaining when people seek alternative outlets for the expression of nationalism if it is clear that they have been excluded from embracing fully the hegemonic national identity of their places of residence.

As regards competing nationalities within nation-states, it should also be noted that when new states emerge and are recognized by the United Nations, this need not indicate that a single identity, national or otherwise, has been put in place. Sport has been used in many of the nation-states of sub-Saharan Africa to assist in the construction of civic nationalist identities. But these have only been partially successful in societies where tribalism remains a major cultural signifier. Similarly, when the state of Bosnia emerged out of the wreckage caused by the 1992–1995 war, this did not mean that a cohesive Bosnian national identity had been formed. The national soccer team, for example, consists mainly of Muslim players and there are currently three Bosnian leagues in operation, each dominated by one of the three main ethnic groups (*Independent*, 13 October 1998). Thus, sport is as likely to play a part in undermining the cohesive potential of certain national identities as in ensuring their emergence and subsequent resilience.

There is an added difficulty, however, in that sport plays little or no part at all in the construction of many people's identities. For a variety of reasons that lie beyond the scope of this particular study, only a small minority of women through the years have been a position to draw upon sport in the construction of their identities. In addition, and in order to avoid stereotyping, it should be added that not all men seek part of their identity in a relationship with sport either.

REFLECTIONS ON SPORT AND NATIONALISM IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA

The case studies in this book were selected in part on the basis of the author's own personal interests but also because sport is phenomenally popular within each of the nationalities discussed. Arguably, the same could be said about virtually every nation in the world today. But it is undeniable that sport provides the people examined in this study with important symbols to the extent that sport and national identity are inextricably linked. If we were asked to list things we associate with the people involved, we would almost certainly mention sport at some stage. Were we required to identify famous people from the various nationalities discussed here we would probably name a sports personality or two

along the way. In part, this tells us a lot about the omnipresence and ready accessibility of information about sport in the contemporary world. But this is not to deny that sport is accorded high levels of respect in the societies discussed in this study.

Consider, for example, the T shirt legend—"Canada Is Hockey." This is only a figure of speech perhaps and not meant to be taken too seriously. But that is doubtful. In fact, something very serious is being stated even if tourists who buy the T shirts are largely unaware of their deep significance. The meaning of this statement, however, is highly illuminating. On one hand, it identifies who the true Canadians are, i.e., the hockey players and fans. On the other hand, by implication, it is also transmitting a message about those who are not true Canadians, that is to say, those who are less than captivated by hockey's charms. Among the latter group are many women. Are they less Canadian than their hockey-playing brothers and sons? Moreover, what about the boy who has been sexually abused by his coach? What does the linkage of hockey and identity mean to him as he matures into adulthood? The other difficulty with the words—"Canada Is Hockey," is that it leaves open the questions, "whose Canada?" "which Canada?" for, as we have seen, the world of Canadian hockey is by no means homogeneous. The "national" sport is played throughout the "nation" but the nation itself remains contested terrain and hockey reflects and contributes to this contestation. That sport is important in the construction of Canadian national identity, however, remains irrefutable and the same holds true, in varying degrees, as regards national identity formation in Scotland, Sweden, and the United States as well as among the divided peoples of Ireland. So what does a study that includes these examples tell us more generally about the relationship between sport and national identity? Are sporting nationalism and political nationalism simply two sides of the same coin? Or are we speaking about two distinct phenomena?

It is crucial that any observations about sporting nationalism take full account of the peculiarities of the situation in which specific nationalities are operating. There is little point in simply stating that all nations celebrate the achievements of their sports people and, as a result, sport can be said to play a vital role in the construction and reproduction of the national identities involved. How people celebrate sporting performances will vary markedly from one situation to another and, indeed, from one sports contest to another. To understand why this is so, a detailed knowledge of the political context is required. What then are the salient points concerning the nationalities examined in this book?

The national identity of the Ulster unionists is problematic. They are British but in a peculiar way. Part of their Britishness, indeed, is simply non-Irishness. But the Irish identity to which they stand opposed is only

one of a number of possible representations of what it means to be Irish and, according to other criteria, the Ulster Protestants are themselves Irish. These dilemmas are manifested quite clearly in the world of sport, as indeed are divisions within the two main traditions in Ireland in terms of national identity. The British (or English) sporting culture has been enthusiastically embraced by a majority of Protestants. Yet one odd consequence of this has been the fact that Ulster unionists have consistently represented Ireland in sports such as cricket and rugby union. They have eschewed Irish games but they have not made a fundamental break with Irish sport. One exception to this rule is soccer, the organization of which follows the contours established by partition. As a result, the national team provides a focus for a form of national (or quasi-national) identity that is neither British nor Irish but which actually addresses the unique character of the Ulster unionist people. The sporting nationalism of Northern Ireland's Protestants is a complex affair, therefore, for the very reason that the relationship between this particular group of people and the concept of nationalism is itself problematic.

On the face of it, the Scots have no such difficulties with the concept of nationalism in general and sporting nationalism in particular. Scotland's nationhood is not in doubt unless one cares to argue that a nation without a state is unworthy of the name. Despite superficial coherence, however, Scots remain divided as to what their nationalism requires at the level of politics and the resultant debate is reflected in the construction of sporting nationalism. In addition, the latter cannot disguise the internal divisions within the country, which are reflected and, arguably, deepened in the world of sport. For many years, therefore, a degree of unity in both political culture and sporting nationalism has been secured by way of anti-Englishness. Arguably, however, this sentiment has been consistently stronger in sport than in politics. Whether or not this remains the case will be crucial as far as further moves toward Scottish independence are concerned. Conversely, it is at least possible that, with the arrival of a separate assembly and some degree of self-government, the Scots will have far less need of sporting nationalism than in the past. Once again, the complex relationship between the people and nationality is reflected in the world of sport.

With the Irish case, it might be reasonable to anticipate a far greater degree of unanimity than in Ulster unionist or even Scottish identity formation. But in this example too, sport reflects complexity and, in particular, provides a window through which we can observe the division between exclusive ethnic and inclusive civic nationalisms. Is true sporting nationalism only to be constructed around the edifice of the GAA? Or is it possible to be an Irish sporting nationalist committed to so-called foreign games. The answer, of course, is that both types of sporting activity

contribute to Irish sporting nationalism and this, in turn, reflects the different shades of political and cultural opinion that constitute Irish nationalism more broadly. In the case of Irish nationalism too, it is essential to get beyond the homogeneous facade, and sport allows us to gain valuable insights into the complexities that will be revealed.

Unlike Ireland, the United States do not figure prominently in studies of nationalism and nationality. But the analysis in this book indicates that there are serious questions to be asked about the national identity of Americans. Furthermore, sport has not only been in the forefront of attempts to construct a cohesive national sentiment but has also performed a prominent role in highlighting some of the main reasons why such cohesion has proved difficult to attain. With the development of a unique sporting culture, Americans from a multiplicity of different racial, ethnic, and national backgrounds have become "Americanized" through playing and watching sport. But this process has not been without its difficulties and, in any event, this basis for the creation of a national identity excludes many for whom sport is of little importance. Moreover, just because people become sporting Americans has never been a guarantee that they come to be regarded as real Americans in other spheres of human activity. Similarly, while sport has made the realization of the American Dream a reality for many, it has also been involved in cruelly dashing the hopes of many more.

Canadians, for their part, have been faced with similar problems—to decide what it means to be Canadian and to confront divisions that undermine the search for a unified national identity. Sport is deeply implicated in both issues. Meanwhile, Canada has also been faced with the additional problem that with the United States as a neighbor, a distinctive national identity in sport and more generally has been particularly hard to maintain.

Finally the book examined the case of Sweden, where both political and sporting nationalism have been relatively insignificant forces. The weakness of the latter is a manifest product of the undeveloped state of the former. Yet this is not to suggest that the Swedes are wholly without a sense of sporting nationalism. Indeed, as was suggested earlier, because it exists in an environment where political nationalism has traditionally been of little importance, Swedish sporting nationalism is arguably the only example of true (as opposed to quasi-political) sporting nationalism discussed in this work.

Three general points emerge from all of this. First, sporting nationalism is closely linked to political nationalism in each case. Second, neither political nor sporting nationalisms are ever as homogeneous as superficial readings might suggest. Third, by examining the links between sport and the formation of national identities, we are able to get a clearer

understanding of the complex character of nationality. For instance, it is of particular importance when the links between sport and national identities are being studied that attention is paid to the key concepts of civic and ethnic nationalism.

CIVIC AND ETHNIC SPORTING NATIONALISMS

So long as the nation-state remains the most common form of political organization, it is vitally important that the citizens of each state are permitted, if it is their wish, to feel part of the nation upon which that state has been constructed. Indeed, the whole principle of citizenship is tar-nished if it is not accompanied by a sense of real belonging. Sport can play a vital role in this respect. If the sporting culture of a particular nation or nationality is organized and presented in an exclusive manner, an important point of access to the national community is inevitably denied to large numbers of citizens. Naturally, this type of social exclusion does not relate to the issue of nationality alone. When sport is deeply embedded in patriarchy, women are either denied access completely or offered only restricted opportunities to participate in this particular element of the national culture. A sporting culture that celebrates the virtues of youthful vitality, at the expense of other human qualities, is equally likely to be discriminatory. For the purposes of this book, however, the central concern is with exclusion centered around understandings of national identity.

In those circumstances in which sport becomes linked to expressions of ethnic nationalism, the dangers of exclusion are palpable. Nationalism, in any setting, runs the risk of being indistinguishable from the worst excesses of chauvinism. This can be as true of civic nationalism as it is of ethnic nationalism. However, where nationalist politics are based almost entirely upon ethnic exclusion, the risk becomes virtually unavoidable. Of course, ethnic nationalism is never solely the product of the human will. It emerges as a response to specific politico-cultural and material circumstances. Thus, there is a degree of inevitability about the way in which it has impacted on the sporting experiences of certain nations and nationalities. To recognize its existence and potential harm, however, is to go some way at least toward negating its pernicious influence. All of those who are involved with sport whether as participants, fans, administrators, journalists, and even sports sociologists might be well advised to advance the cause of civic sporting nationalism since the emotions this inspires are frequently at worst relatively harmless (except from the standpoint of international harmony, and even in that context sporting rivalry may well have a beneficial, cathartic effect) and, at their best, may possess an integrative potential that helps people to live together more

harmoniously. However, it is equally important to recognize the shortcomings of civic nationalism, which at times can be no less problematic. For example, the kind of civic nationalism that has been practised in the United States has a long history of forcibly incorporating nationalist and ethnic minorities. For those members of the latter who become "real" Americans, there may be great rewards to be won. But what happens to the sensibilities of the Native American, for example, who cannot endorse the civic nationalism of a country in which the representation of his people through the Chief Wahoo logo of the Cleveland Indians is still regarded as acceptable? With reservations about civic nationalism in mind, therefore, one is tempted to argue that sport as well as society in general would benefit to a considerable extent if nationalism in whatever guise was allowed to disappear. The inherent danger in such an approach, however, could be to leave the way clear for the ultimate triumph of the homogenizing tendencies of globalization.

SPORT, NATIONALITY, AND THE RESISTANCE TO GLOBALIZATION

In addition to the fact that a close relationship between sport and national identity is discernible in each of them, another reason for choosing the case studies for this book was the fact that Western societies might be regarded as being particularly susceptible to the homogenizing process. This book began with an examination of the concepts of globalization and nationality and discussed, at the level of theory, the extent to which nationalism is capable of resisting the pressures toward global conformity. It was pointed out, at the outset, that one can, and indeed should, adopt an approach to global forces that stops short of stating a case for Americanization or even greater homogenization more generally. The case studies confirm this theoretical proposal. In each case, other than that of the United States, it is clear that while general global trends and the cultural influence of the United States in particular have impacted in different ways on the sporting experience, the local or perhaps the global remain of paramount importance in terms of how sport is played and watched. As a result, sport continues to play a greater role in the maintenance of distinctive national identities than in the construction of some uniform global identity. In the United States, moreover, there is also evidence of the influence of cross-fertilization of sporting cultures while the national identity, which is rooted in a distinctively American sports culture, is still as strong as ever.

It is undeniable that in virtually every society in the world the number of sports people are able to play and watch has increased dramatically. Limitations persist as regards such crucial factors as gender, race, and social class. But there are few restrictions that originate from the exigencies of particular national sporting cultures. Even if specific sports

CONCLUSION

Sport and national identity, no matter how complex the specific relationships, are inextricably linked. Global forces have affected the nature of their relationship to varying degrees from one place to the next. But through sport, nationalism and nationalities have successfully resisted globalization unless we adopt a very weak definition of the latter. It looks as if national flags will be on show at sports stadia throughout the world for a very long time to come. To understand what this means to the people waving the flags, however, it will be essential that each particular context is explored. It is hoped that when other researchers take up the baton, some of the ideas explored in this book will help them on their way.

According to Cronin and Mayall (1998), "Sport cannot win territory or destroy an opposing ideology or religion which the nation seeks to demonise" (2). Perhaps not. But bearing in mind Hoberman's (1984) description of sports people as "proxy warriors," the fact is that, throughout the twentieth century, sport has been one of the most valuable weapons at the disposal of nationalists, whatever their situation and respective aspirations. This book has focused on societies that might appear to be susceptible to a changing geopolitical environment in which national identity is thought by some to be increasingly unimportant. However, the evidence uncovered on the basis of a study of sport in a selection of North American and European countries indicates that cultural convergence is still some way off. Sport and nationalism will remain intimately linked at least for the foreseeable future. Their relationship, however, will be considerably more complex than a superficial reading might suggest. Certainly sport will play a part in allowing nations to resist global homogenization. At the same time, however, it will also continue to reflect the fact that national identity is a contentious and contested issue even in stable Western democracies.

predominate in given social formations, it is almost certain that most other sports are played even if only by relatively small numbers of participants. This confirms the assessment of globalization put forward by Maguire (1994). The various societies of the world have become increasingly similar to one another. Soccer is played in the United States and American football in Sweden. Gaelic games are played beyond the shores of Ireland, albeit mainly by members of the Irish diaspora. Cricket is relatively popular in Canada for the first time in well over a century. The pattern that emerges reflects what Maguire (1994) refers to as "diminishing contrasts." The result, however, is also to confirm the value of his concept of "increasing varieties." Each country may more closely resemble every other country far more than in previous years and yet each country, as a consequence, affords its inhabitants far greater choice in terms of what sports to play and watch.

That, then, is the main way in which globalization has impacted on sport and there are lessons to be learned here as regards the nature of the entire globalization project. To speak in terms of homogenization is to do a disservice to the multifaceted cultural impact of what has actually happened. Moreover, to refer to the process as one that has resulted in something called "Americanization" is to distort reality to an even greater extent. Even when American sports have been introduced to other countries, the process has often developed in such a way as to confirm national distinctiveness. Globalization as opposed to global conformity has frequently been the most common result. That said, however, there is little point in seeking to deny the extent to which global capitalism has affected the ways in which sport is played, administered, packaged, and watched throughout the world. This has clearly compressed the distance between the sporting nations of the world both physically and metaphorically. Indeed, as far as the most popular sports are concerned we can actually recognize the emergence and consolidation of a global sporting political economy involving the sale of merchandise, sponsorship, labor migration, and so on. In creating this particular sporting world, however, the same global forces have kept alive the possibility of international competition. Indeed, events such as the Olympic Games and soccer's World Cup are the flagships of the global sporting economy. In turn, these events ensure that far from being submerged, national sporting identities remain to the fore. It is for this reason that we can talk about nationalism having successfully resisted the encroachment of globalization's homogenizing tendencies. Or, to put it another way, sport and globalization have become accomplices in a process whereby the importance of national identity has been ensured despite, or arguably because of, supranationalist tendencies.