

The Promise and Possibilities of Running In and Out of Africa

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Introduction

In addressing the promise and possibilities of running in and out of Africa this contribution begins by making a number of introductory remarks. First, that while it draws evidence from specific parts of Africa, notably Kenya and Ethiopia, many of the themes in this chapter could relate to other parts of Africa in the 21st century. With a population of about 690 million people living in 53 countries and one disputed territory, covering a total area of 11.7million square miles, Africa is the world's second- largest continent (Meredith, 2005). The Sahara covers 3.3 million square miles, almost 25 per cent of land mass. Cairo is the biggest city in Africa, home to 9.2 million people. Sudan is the largest country covering 968,000 square miles but the most populated country in Africa is Nigeria, which, with more than 125 million people, is also the tenth most populated country in the world. Liberia has not only the highest unemployment rate in Africa (85%) but the highest in the world. Angola has the highest infant mortality rate, 192.5 deaths per 1,000 live births, while 18 of the top 20 countries world-wide with the highest infant mortality rates are in Africa. The richest country in Africa per capita is Mauritius, with US\$11,400 of GDP per head. Somalia and Niger are amongst the world's poorest countries with Somalia, the second poorest in the world, at \$500 of GDP per capita. Sixteen African countries are in the top 20 poorest in the world, with 70% of Africa's population surviving on less than \$2 a day. To put this in some comparative context, for the season 2003-4 the wage and transfer bill of the four English football divisions stood at £1,049billion, a figure which eclipses the gross domestic product of

some small African nations such as Lesotho and Mauritania, and could wipe out most of the debt of many countries both within and outside of Africa. The first point then is that the relational position of Africa in the world and the relations that make up Africa itself are complex, and uneven in the same way that the social and economic resources that flow in and out of parts of Africa are also complex, uneven, differentiated and in some cases unjust.

While running and athletics provide the focus for this collection of essays, this is only part, albeit a significant part, of the history and explanation of sport in Africa. Athletics itself is part of a larger complex history of sport in Africa which has highlighted some of the promise and possibilities of sport to unite, divide, reconcile and produce social change. The development, background and symbolism of sports in 'other' communities, the All-African Games, the African Nations Cup, the past Rugby World Cup in South Africa (1995) and the future World Football Cup in South Africa (2010) has made parts of Africa a particularly fertile soil for thinking more internationally about sport, culture and society in places other than Europe or the West. Attempts had been made to hold African Games in Algiers as early as 1925 and Alexandria in 1928, but they failed owing to, amongst other reasons, colonial politics and economic difficulties. The impact of colonialism was such that in the early 1960s the Friendship Games were held amongst French-speaking countries in Africa. At the conference of African Ministers for Youth and Sport held in Paris in 1962, it was decided that the Games would thereafter be called the Pan-African Games, as they would include countries other than those colonized by the French. The African Games eventually emerged in 1965 as a force for African solidarity and a means of uniting the continent against South Africa's apartheid regime.

That same year the Games were granted official recognition by the IOC. Some 2,500 athletes from 30 independent African States attended the 1965 All-Africa Games held in Brazzaville, Congo. The sixth African Games were held in 1995 with the inclusion of (post-apartheid) South Africa for the first time (Levinson and Christensen, 1996).

The 2003 Eighth African Games were hosted in Abuja, Nigeria with the specific mission to act ‘as a wake-up call for an African continent threatened by war, disease, hunger and poverty and to respond positively to the challenge by using sports as a strong weapon’ in this struggle (www.8allafricagames.org). The world has recently viewed the images and pleas for help highlighted by the international singer and songwriter Bob Geldorf in parts of Africa such as Ethiopia. It is often forgotten that humanitarian political leaders, such as Nelson Mandela, the former South African President, have repeatedly stated that sport is a force that mobilises the sentiments of a people in a way that nothing else can (*The Observer*, 13 July 2003:14). The second point then is this –that perhaps the promise and possibilities of running, in and out of East Africa, lie in the potential of running and other sports to make a difference to *some* people’s lives in certain parts of Africa.

Many analysts have attempted to highlight and isolate particular aspects of the Kenyan, Tanzanian or Ethiopian running success, or the emergence of the Cameroon or Nigerian football teams or South Africa’s Rugby 1995 World Cup victory in an effort to explain or analyse the state of sport in Africa. Throughout the 1970s Julius Nyerere of Tanzania often remarked that in developing nations sport helped bridge the gap between national and global recognition. Immanuel Wallerstein suggested that African citizens could feel affection for the victorious athlete and the nation (Jarvie, 1993). In the first

match of the 2002 World Football Cup in Japan and South Korea, Senegal defeated their former colonial rulers and the then World Champions France. The country's President praised the success of the team in terms of defending the honour of *Africa* (*The Times Higher* 14 June 2002).

With particular reference to the success of runners from Kenya, Ethiopia, Algeria, Sudan and Tanzania, particularly middle and long-distance running, varied and complex explanations have been offered to-date. This book reflects and develops some if not all of the common explanations. These include (i) physiological explanations relating to diet, energy balance, neuromuscular functioning, anatomy genetic make up and body composition; (ii) anthropological explanations relating to ways of life, the place, traditions, customs and rituals in African life and the meaning of running to different groups of people; (iii) historical explanations concerning colonialism, imperialism, racism and the way in which different African nations have responded to independence and the part that sport has historically played in nation building ; and (iv) sociological and political economic explanations highlighting a division of labour, power and corruption in both world and local athletics, the struggle for recognition and respect by both men and women runners from different parts of Africa, the development of sport in Africa and the role of sport in the development of Africa.

Finally by means of introduction it is perhaps insightful to consider just one example and suggest that the explanation of Kenyan or Ethiopian running success principally lies in local explanations. While the G8 political leaders of some of the World's leading nations met in 2005 in Gleneagles , Scotland – the same Gleneagles that gave name to the 1977 Gleneagles Agreement which banned South Africa from world

sport- to evaluate how best to intervene in Africa, is it perhaps too much to suggest that much of the promise and possibilities of athletics, sport, governance and social change principally lie in African hands and that any policies or explanations about sport in Africa must first and foremost take into account what Africa is saying?

The 3000m steeplechase at the 2005 World Athletic Championships held in Helsinki was won by Saif Saaeed Shaheen in a time of 8 minutes 13.31secs. The official world championship records will show that the gold medal went to Qatar, a country in which Saif Saaeed Shaheen is viewed as an athletic icon. The athlete's successful defence of this world championship 3000m steeplechase gold medal was his 21st successive victory since 2002 (*The Herald*, 10 August 2005). His elder brother Chris Kosgei won the gold for Kenya in 1999 but unlike Shaheen did not defect to Qatar. Saif Saaeed Shaheen, born Stephen Cheron, won his first world steeplechase title 17 days after defecting to the oil rich state which had granted him a passport. (*The Herald*, 15 January 2005:10). In that same race Shaheen's brother ran for Kenya, refused to call him anything other than Stephen and did not congratulate him after the race. Kenyan athletic officials, writes Gillon, were so upset at losing this steeplechase world title for the first time since 1987, that they stopped Shaheen running for Qatar at the 2004 Athens Olympics (*The Herald*, 15 January 2005). Kenya won gold, silver and bronze medals in the men's 3000m steeplechase at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games.

Athletes such as Shaheen are single minded and mono-causal when it comes to explaining both personal and Kenyan athletic success. It is important here not to be confused by simple western stereotypes about non-western cultures. The context is such that as a boy Shaheen's family 'had 60 cows and 30 goats until a droughtleft the

family with 7 cattle and 3 goats... and it cost him his education', since the animals would have been sold to pay for his school fees (*The Herald*, 15 January 2005). As Stephen Cherono he was raised in Kamelilo a village in Keyo in which there was no water-tap and every day after school, which cost two dollars for three days, he walked three kilometers to collect 10 litres of water. The move to Qatar was allegedly based upon an offer of a least \$1000 dollars a month for life (*The Herald*, 15 January 2005). About 50 people now depend upon that 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' (*The Herald*, 10 August 2005).

Stories of war, famine, disease, corruption and other Western stereotypes should not blind academics and analysts from the many success stories that sport in Africa provides, but nor should the fact that sport provides many resources of hope and self-help stop us from listening to and understanding what Africa has to say. Can Kenyan and Ethiopian athletic success be recognized as an international sporting force on its own terms or is there a price to pay for buying into the contemporary global commercial world of sport? In attempting to provide a brief insight into the promise and possibilities of running in and out of East Africa the remainder of this chapter provides a substantive comment on the environmental context that has contributed to an exodus of running talent from Africa; an examination of the motivations behind running for Kenyan woman and a reflection upon the relationship between poverty and running in Ethiopia. These social and historical explanations will hopefully compliment other explanations provided

in this book while also providing additional and original substantive material upon which to base the above.

The Environment, Capitalism and African Athletic Migration

Despite colonialism Africa remains a place that is powerfully molded by its harsh environment. Environmental determinism as an explanation for East African running success tends to appear in *at least* two different forms of narrative which are illustrated in the following : (i) *The Sunday Times of April 2004*, commenting upon a sedentary western way of life, noted ‘ that Kenyans have been running while the developed world has been using cars, trains and planes, ‘ and (ii) *The Toronto Star of March 2004*, again in reference to Kenyan running success, talks of ‘ the physics of running as good genes, impeccable form and bodies built to run as the only real secrets of the long-distance runner’. But if environmental determinism is the answer to the production of a long line of athletic talent emerging out of Africa, East Africa in particular, then why does this not happen in other places such as Peru and Lesotho? Furthermore, rarely in such discussions is the environment taken to mean the workings of international capitalism which have historically influenced Africa’s stocks of mineral wealth but also levels and rates of athletic migration in and out of parts of Africa. The tension between athletic dreams, income and education, and why parents are willing to send their children away while they are still too young in the hope that they make the family rich through athletic success, is also partially an outcome forged by an environment in which the flow of capital is increasingly international, but rarely fair or just (Fulcher, 2004).

The reasons for athletic export and import are multi-faceted and often need to be analysed on a case-by-case basis. The most common explanations for the migration of

athletic labour tend to include some or all of the following: (i) that athletic labour is drawn by economic forces to where the core sources of economic wealth tended to be located, a process that leads to a relational situation whereby those countries on the periphery are influenced by those at the core. In such instances the migration of athletic labour can lead to the de-skilling of talent in donor countries; (ii) that specific historical relations between certain places often leads to athletes migrating for cultural and historical reasons to certain other places; (iii) that different categories or typologies of migrants can be identified and thus migration groups and patterns may be seen to be as different as they are similar. The work on sports labour migration pioneered by Maguire identifies pioneers, mercenaries, settlers, returnees and nomadic cosmopolitans as specific types of nomadic sports groups (Maguire, 1999; 2005); or (iv) political reasons for migration which might include lack of government support for the athlete or the withholding of training grants or, alternatively, the decision by some countries to offer forms of citizenship to some athletes in return for switching nationalities. The reasons for labour migration are complex with motivations being interdependent upon a number of factors including all of the aforementioned. Multi-faceted accounts provide a more comprehensive and complex picture of athletic labour migration between and within places, in the same way that multi-faceted accounts of East African running success are more satisfactory than those that tend to highlight mono-causal explanations. It may be useful at this point to think about where African athletes move to and what are some of the reasons given by the runners themselves for moving to and from certain places.

Insert Figure 1: The Export of Athletes by Continent

Sources: IAAF newsletters at www.iaaf.org plus athlete race biographies from the 2005 world cross country championships, 19-20 March 2004.

African sports labour migration has been commented upon extensively and existing research has been keen to note the complex economic, political, cultural and emotional processes that have contoured labour migration amongst athletes (Armstrong, G. and Giulianotti, R. 2004; Bale and Sang; 1996; Bale and Maguire, 1994;). Issues of dependency, de-skilling, employment rights, child labour, and development have all been central to this body of research. Figure 1 provides a substantive insight into the number of athletes exported from different continents –Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe and Oceania. This specific data set allows one to note that 50% (N=56) or more of migrating athletes, in the cases highlighted, come out of Africa.

Insert Figure 2: Export of Athletes by Country

Sources: IAAF newsletters at www.iaaf.org plus athlete race biographies from the 2005 world cross country championships, 19-20 March 2004.

Figure 2 breaks down the export of athletes country by country, and again illustrates that Morocco, Kenya, Ethiopia and Nigeria are high exporters of athletic talent in comparison with other countries. Of the 50 countries affected by the export of athletes, 21 were from Africa. As shown in figure 3, Europe is the main importer of defecting athletes with 68 out of 111 (61%) of athletes moving to Europe. Asian countries, which were less of a significant exporter of athletes, feature more prominently in terms of

importing athletes, with 20% of defecting athletes moving to Asia. Africa, the main exporter of athletic labour in 2005 remains, with 3%, the continent with the lowest levels of imported athletic labour. This partially confirms that even in terms of the migration rates associated with athletic labour, the de-skilling of certain continents and countries and the unequal flow of athletic talent in and out of Africa is highly differentiated when compared to other more developed parts of the world.

Insert Figure 3: Import of Athletes by Continent

Sources: IAAF newsletters at www.iaaf.org plus athlete race biographies from the 2005 world cross country championships, 19-20 March 2004.

The international flow of athletes from Kenya has recently been referred to as a global trade in muscle in which Kenya athletes have switched allegiance from the country of their birth to the oil rich states of Qatar and Bahrain (Simms and Rendell, 2004). This scramble for African talent, write Simms and Rendell (2004), may be equated with the exploitation of Africa's mineral wealth during different periods of colonial rule. The assertion being that those living in poverty provide the muscle while the rich countries of the world capture the benefits. The new scramble for Africa started as early as the 1960s with athletes being lured to American colleges, but now the oil rich countries of the world simply buy athletic talent that is then lost to Africa. Gyulai (2003) recognizes that the freedom of movement of athletes may give rise to conflicting interest between different member federations of the International Athletic Federation (IAAF), but believes that there should be no exception to the increased mobility of individuals within the rules of

free-market trade and global sporting capitalism. The IAAF notes that the rules with regard to the movement of athletes should not be to the detriment of the member federations (Gyulai, 2003). Kenya has recently moved to try to stem the flow of athletes out of Kenya by tightening up on the circumstances and conditions under which athletes may be granted visas to leave the country.

In the same way that the all too easily accepted truths about globalization have ignored the uneven and differentiated forms of capitalism emerging in the 21st century, so too it is crucial not to ignore the injustices and uneven patterns of sports labour migration. It is essential that any contemporary understanding of global sport must actively listen and engage with other sporting communities, places and voices. Perhaps it is impossible for humanity or global sport to arrive at an understanding of the values that unite it, but if the leading capitalist nations ceased to impose their own ideas on the rest of the sporting world and start to take cognizance of ‘other’ sporting cultures, then the aspiration of global sport may become more just and less charitable. It is not charity which Africa or African runners want but the tools by which Africans can determine their own well-being and life chances in a more equitable sporting world (Jarvie, 2005; McAlpine, 2005). If large parts of Africa are kept poor as a result of unfair trade arrangements, which facilitate cheap European and American imports that keep parts of Africa poor and dependent, then why should the resources afforded by running not be viewed as a viable route out of poverty for those that can make it?

Running In and Out of Kenya

What exactly are the motivations and barriers that some Kenyan runners have to overcome to maintain a presence on the international athletic circuit to-day? Since the

Kenyan National Team first participated in an inter-continental event in 1954 the emergence of what some have called 'the Kenyan running phenomenon' has both progressed and regressed at different rates and at different times. Between 1980 and 2003 48% of the top male middle-distance performances were attributed to Kenyan runners, they were unbeatable in the 3000 meters steeplechase throughout the 1990s with 100 per cent of the top performances in the world and 87 per cent of the top three performances. Morocco temporarily broke the Kenyan dominance in 2001 and 2002 before the title returned to a Kenyan in 2003, although Stephen Cherono as previously mentioned had switched his allegiances to Qatar for financial incentives by this time. To put this in a comparative context we can use the location quotient utilized by Bale and Sang (Bale and Sang, 1999). To calculate the Location Quotient the percentage number of elite runners from a certain country (in this case athletes in the world top three), is divided by the population of the country expressed as a percentage of the total world population. A quotient of above unity indicates that the country is producing runners at more than the average rate. In 2002 there were 18 male and female Kenyan athletes in the world top three at all distances between 800m and the marathon, which amounts to 37.5 per cent of the total. As the Kenyan population is 32.4 million, 0.5% of the world population, this gives a 'location quotient' of 75. However this number disguises the gendered output of athletic talent from the country. When genders are calculated separately, Kenya is seen to produce elite males at 134 times the predicted rate, while females have a location quotient of 16.

The common factors produced by the conventional wisdom when answering the question how do we explain the success of Kenyan runners, include variables such as

altitude, physiology, genetics, diet, culture and psychology, all of which are admirably covered in this book, yet an audit of property in the Eldoret Central Business District owned by athletes reveals a remarkable departure from the past when athletes only had their medals to show for the years of jet-setting and scaling heights of sporting success (*East African Standard*, 17 November 2003). Nowadays money is arguably the most important motivation for athletes. While Kenya is better off than many other African countries, people are still poor and unemployment is high. To a European athlete, an Olympic gold medal maybe the pinnacle of their career however for most Kenyan athletes it is simply a gateway to earn money which could transform the lives of themselves and their communities. That running can also be a fundamental escape from poverty for some girls and women in Kenya is supported by the findings from a survey of 250 elite female Kenyan athletes between the ages of 12 and 50 carried out during 2003. All 80% of the respondents could be classified as being elite in the sense that they were either Olympian, International or Junior athletes who had shown major potential. Participants had been involved in running for an average of 7.9 years. The following hierarchy of reasons was given as the key factors that influenced the women's decisions to run (figure 4).

Insert Figure 4: Motivations for Running amongst Elite Female Kenyan Runners

An overwhelming majority of the female athletes admitted their primary motivation for taking up athletics was money (49.2%). In contrast only six percent were motivated by the Olympics. From these results it is quite clear that athletic success is

viewed as a gateway to money and an improved life. Money could also be seen as providing a means for women to gain independence when they have traditionally been reliant on and answerable to the men in their lives. Athletes from the entire age range cited money as their primary motivation (13-50), even before the amount of money available reached the epic proportions of today. Only a small minority of the athletes were driven by fun (1.5%) or fitness (3.5%). Those who did cite fun or fitness as a motivation tended to be younger men or women (average ages 22.0 and 16.4 respectively). Five and a half per cent of the female athletes questioned were driven by the thought of winning an athletics scholarship (average age 16.22).

Kenyan women are not afraid to set their sights outside Kenya and are keen to travel across continents to further their education and improve their quality of life. Significant others were an important motivation for Kenyan female athletes (12.1%). This is noteworthy as it shows the importance of family support as young girls embark on their athletic careers. Clearly, if more families were supportive of their daughters, one could expect a lot more of them to emerge as successful athletes. Those who did cite significant others as a motivation tended to be relatively young (average age 17.5). Similarly, the influence of role models is quite significant – 22.1% of those questioned cited this as their primary motivation. This goes a long way to explaining the time it has taken for Kenyan female athletes to make an impact on the world stage. The oldest athlete who reported to being motivated by a role model was only 30 years old (average age 17.1). Athletes of older generations had no visible role models to emulate. It took time before young Kenyan women were able to view the impact of successful athletes such as Tegla Louroupe, Joyce Chepchumba, Lornah Kiplagat, Sally Barsosio and others.

In a country where the average wage is less than a euro or a dollar a day, the lucrative European and American road race circuits are attractive career options for Kenyan athletes. When Catherine Ndereba broke the world record in the Chicago marathon in October 2001, she received a \$75,000 prize purse, \$100,000 for breaking the world record and a Volkswagen Jetta worth \$26,125. This was in addition to a not insignificant appearance fee merely for turning up (Schontz, 2002). A world championship gold medal has been estimated to be worth \$60,000, as well as opening other lucrative avenues in terms of qualification for appearance fees in big races (*East African Standard*, 17 November, 2003). Money is perhaps more of a motivation to women due to the independence it buys them. “Once a woman begins to earn her own money, she is valued immediately by her family and her community” (Schontz, 2002, online). The barriers for women acquiring wealth in Kenya are inherently unequal, for instance, women cannot inherit land and they often invariably live on land as a guest of their male relatives, but athletic wealth in some cases can help buy land. Therefore as Kenyan women win road races and track meets, they can acquire control of substantial amounts of money which allows them to invest in their own land – a once unlikely prospect for women not born into wealthy families.

African Promises, Sport and Poverty

Nelson Mandela has described child poverty as the modern slavery; thousands have demonstrated against it; New Labour on coming to power in Britain in 1999 vowed to eliminate child poverty within a generation; eradicating it has been viewed as been one of the most successful strategies to halt terrorism and it has been the object of fund raising campaigns by some of the World’s top musicians and sportsmen and women.

James Wolfensohn, head of the World Bank noted in July 2004 that, in terms of expenditure, the priorities were roughly \$900billion on defence, \$350billion on agriculture, and \$60billion on aid of which about half gets there in cash (Settle, 2004:16). Oxfam recently noted that it would cost £3.2billion to send all the world's children to school. Poverty may be one of the few truly global phenomena in that in relative and absolute terms it exists world-wide and while governments and policies change, the needs of the world's poor invariably remain the same.

The notion of poverty is not new but it is often suppressed, not just in the literature and research about sport, culture and society, but in this case it is highlighted as a fundamental reason and motivation for why some athletes run. Historically sport used to be a possible route out of poverty in the Western world. 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 (Tiger Club Project *Annual Report*, 2003). 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 ((Tiger Club Project *Annual Report*, 2003).

Every year about 200 million people move in search of employment- about 3 per cent of the world's population (Seabrook, 2003). 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 African runners have provided an exhilarating spectacle 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 (1999, 2005) 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. 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 (Gillon, 2004). 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 (Gillon, 2004). 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.

Perhaps one of the last words in this chapter prior to concluding should be left to the Ethiopian athlete and politician, once Olympic champion and former world record holder, Haile Gebrselassie who has left us in no doubt about both the social and political responsibility of the athlete and the limits and possibilities of sport in relation to poverty in his country. In an interview reported in *The Times* of March 2003 Haile Gebrselassie drew attention to the context and circumstances that were his early life. Talking of his life aged 15 'This was all at a time when my father was cross with me because I was doing athletics and my country was going through famine in which millions died and all I had was running- I just ran and ran all the time and I got better and better'. Talking of the necessity to run-'I only started running because I had to-we were six miles from school and there was so much to be done on the farm that I ran to school and back again to have enough time to do farming as well as school work'. Finally his talking of the political responsibility of the athlete left one in no doubt about the priorities-'eradicating poverty is all that matters in my country. 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'. In reality sport can only make a small contribution, but small contributions can sometimes make a difference. How sport can help in the fight against poverty should not be shelved as a historical question until much more has been done to fight both relative and absolute experiences of poverty worldwide and to note what sport can or cannot do to help.

The truth about global sport as a universal creed is that it is also a ruthless engine of injustice. The social dimension and possibilities of global 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 capitalism between the outcome of universal, often western prescriptions, and local realities. Sport including athletics needs to be more just and less charitable, however it continues to provide a pathway for hope for some in different parts of the world. It continues to hold both a promise and possibilities for some in different parts of Africa.

Concluding Remarks

Increased aid, combined with debt reduction is supposed to make it easier for African countries to invest in health, education and infrastructure. The idea behind this is to allow the continent to achieve a level playing field whereby it can compete with the rest of the world, emulating Asia by selling quality products and providing skilled labour. It is ironic that while the G8 leaders in Scotland was meeting to discuss Africa's future the African Union, involving the leaders of 53 African Countries met in Libya. This organization is important because it provides a potential forum for Africa to speak with one voice.

Africa is excluded from so much global decision making- no permanent seat on the UN Security Council and poor representation in the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. African leaders of course attended the Gleneagles summit but only at the invitation of the eight real world powerbrokers. In contrast Africans were in charge of the meeting in Libya and with one voice they made it clear that the efforts of the G8 summit to write of African debt fell far short of what was needed. The G8 plan aimed ultimately

to write off £32 billion of debt for 38 poor countries not all of them in Africa. Africa's total debt burden in 2002 was estimated to be in the region of £168 billion. The United States of America remains resistant to moves to alleviate world poverty and in particular the stipulated Millennium Goal Target that the wealthy countries of the world should donate 0.7% of national income to the developing world. The African Union did pass a resolution expressing gratitude for the progress that was being made on aid but above all asking for a fair and equitable trading system in the world and not charity. Trade justice is what many African anti-poverty campaigners have been asking for. To save Africa those outside of Africa must first of all listen to it and this applies as much to explanations for athletic running success as it does to explanations of poverty and the workings of capitalism. Africa will make its own future, running cannot free people from poverty but in some cases poverty and the need for money can be a powerful motivation to run in and out of Africa. This is as powerful an explanation for running success as many of the other reasons highlighted in this book.

At the time of writing this chapter it was impossible to ignore that in other parts of Africa, notably Libya one cannot but ignore the fact that George Weah. Liberia's greatest ever football is expected to become President following the General Election results of 11th October 2005 (Kuper, 2005). One of 13 siblings, Weah was raised in a Monrovia slum, played as many as three football games a day until in 1987 a Cameroonian club bought him for \$5,000. Stops in France, Italy and England followed. In 1995 he was voted world footballer of the year and he ended up in New York commuting to training sessions in Europe on Concorde. Weah's playing career coincided with Liberia's civil war. Weah tried to help; he gave money, urged child soldiers to go to

school and ran the national football team almost as a private charity. He provided the team kit, hotels and goals although rarely quite enough of those. Increasingly athletes such as George Weah, Haile Gebreselassie, and others have realised that African countries are increasingly electing their leaders and as athletes on the world stage they command a degree of visibility, loyalty and in some cases increased credibility because they have got rich honestly by their own efforts and have not forgotten the local context. Sport in these cases has helped to fashion resources of hope in many different ways.

Finally Yet 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 as we have shown in this chapter 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 and it needs to get its own house in order, but possibilities do exist within sport to provide some resources of hope within a world that is left wanting on so 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. This has to be near the top of any research agenda for those working in this and related fields for the foreseeable future.

Notes

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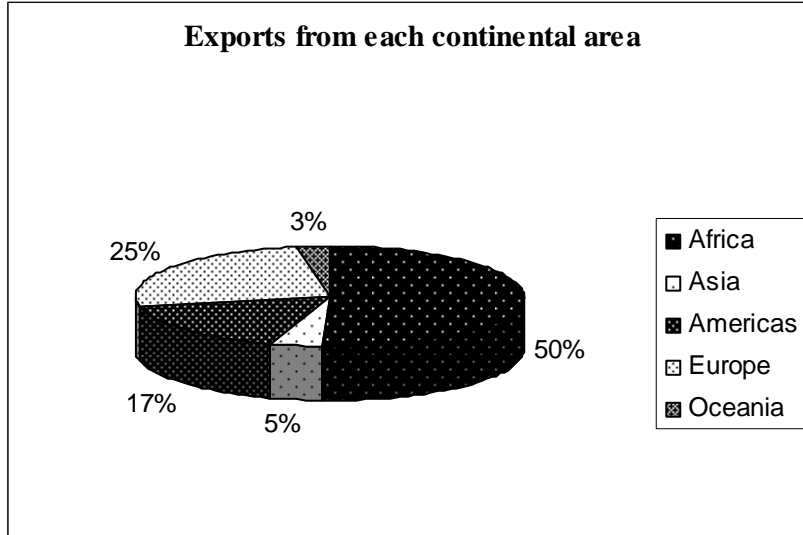
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Biographical Note:

Grant Jarvie is Chair and Head of the Department of Sports Studies at the University of Stirling. His first book back in 1985 was about Class, Race and Sport in South Africa while his most recent book *Sport, Culture and Society: Can Sport Change the World?* (2005) provides further insights into sport's social role in different parts of the world, including Africa. He is an Honorary Professor with the Academy of Physical Education and Sport, Warsaw, Poland. Grant is a past, President of the British Society of Sports History and Convenor of the British Sociological Association Sport Study Group. Born in Motherwell, Scotland he has lectured throughout the world and currently serves as a Panel Member on the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise for Sport-Related Studies.

Appendix One – Figures to be inserted into text

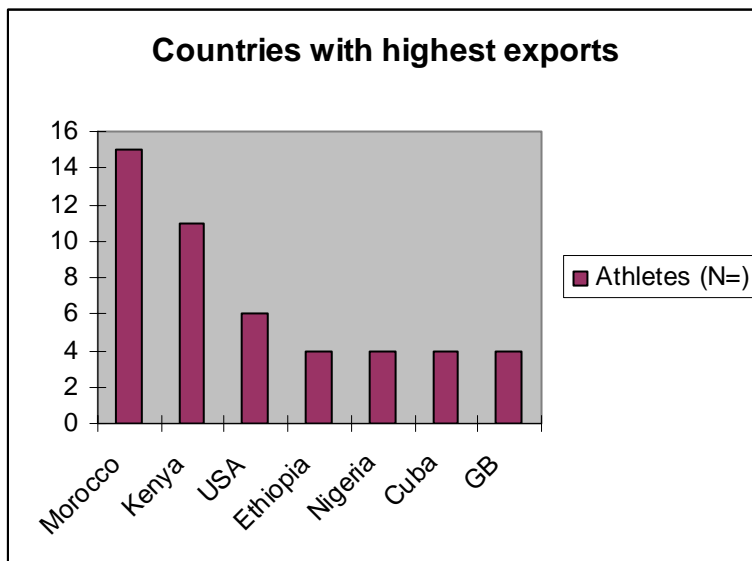
Figure 1 – The Export of Athletes by Continent



Continental area	Amount of athletes (n=)	Percentage of athletes (%)
Africa	56	50
Asia	5	5
Americas	19	17
Europe	28	25
Oceania	3	3

Sources from IAAF newsletters www.iaaf.org and 'Athlete race biographies' World cross country championships 2005, 19-20 March 2005

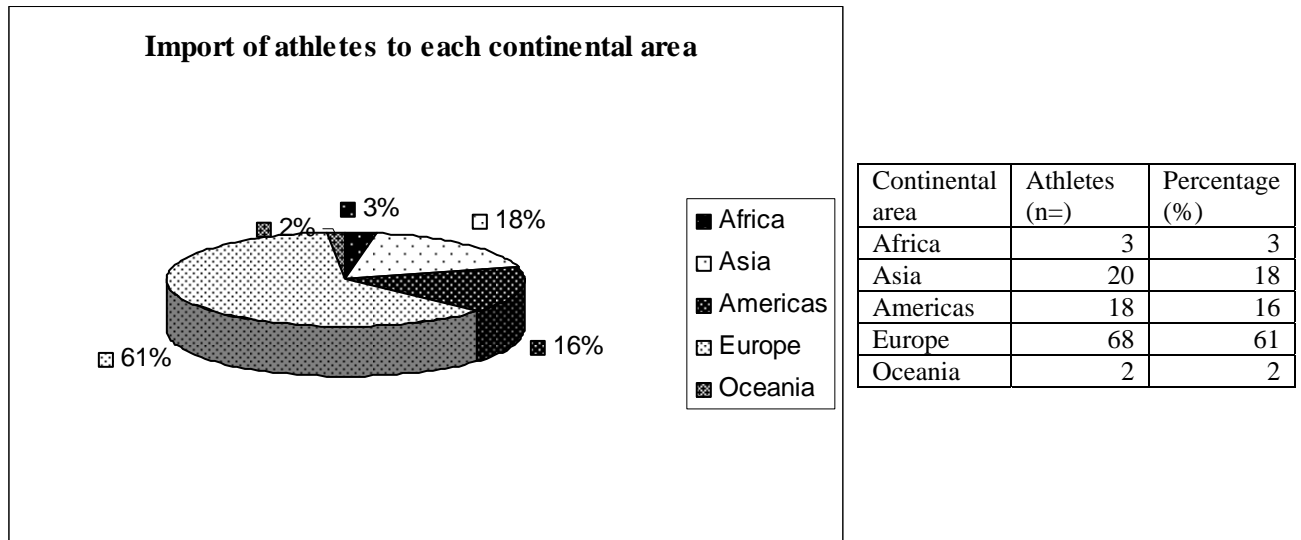
Figure 2 – The Export of Athletes by Country



Country	Athletes (N=)
Morocco	15
Kenya	11
USA	6
Ethiopia	4
Nigeria	4
Cuba	4
GB	4

Sources from IAAF newsletters www.iaaf.org and 'Athlete race biographies' World cross country championships 2005, 19-20 March 2005

Figure 3 – The Import of Athletes by Continent



Sources from IAAF newsletters www.iaaf.org and 'Athlete race biographies' World cross country championships 2005, 19-20 March 2005

Figure 4- Motivations for Running amongst Elite Female Kenyan Runners

