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## **The World Cup and social cohesion: bread and circuses or bread and butter?**

**Prof Fred Coalter**

### **Abstract**

Given the wide variety of histories, cultures, economies, relationships between government and civil societies it is impossible to generalise about the impact of large scale events on social cohesion. Further, there is a lack of relevant systematic and robust research on such issues, most especially in relation to developing economies, each with their own social, cultural and economic trajectories and each with sporting structures and histories (a major aspect of understanding such issues in South Africa).

Within this broad context this paper explores four possible ways that the World Cup might contribute directly and indirectly to increased 'social cohesion' in South Africa. These are: imagined communities; the development of forms of social capital via processes of event bidding, managing and delivery; the centrally important role of volunteers and investment in sport-for-development organisations.

### **Introduction; a personal journey**

When I was invited to present this paper I thought that it would have been a simple matter of pointing out the rather obtuse, intangible and difficult-to-measure nature of some of the concepts – social cohesion; social regeneration; social inclusion; making a few sceptical remarks about the commercialisation, corporate and political interests surrounding the World Cup and the overblown hyperbole, rhetoric, claims and rationalisations used to promote their economic and political interests (Schimmel, 2001) which are more about the spirit of corporatism than the spirit of community; the potential contradictions between the forces of commercialism, markets, consumerism and individualism which drive much of the activity around large scale sports events and the aspirations to more collective notions of nationhood, social cohesion and so on (Hiller, 2000). I would then have reviewed some generic issues about how it might be possible to capitalise on such events in a way that previously has not been done.

Then, in February, I spent two weeks working and travelling in South Africa – experiencing the extreme rural poverty in areas of Limpopo; the extraordinary disparities of wealth in Johannesburg; touring the Cape Flats, with its extraordinarily high levels of violence and murder, in part illustrating the depth of the damage inflicted by apartheid; visiting a wonderful NGO in Soweto which cares for children with terminally ill HIV/AIDS parents; reading about the debates and disputes within

the ANC about the future nature of South African society, economy and the relationship between civil society and the state; a debate about the relative merits of civic, ethnic and cultural nationalism as a basis for national identity; the emerging tensions between communities of interest based on race and economic class; experiencing the practical and political effects of random power cuts; reading the debates about quotas in rugby and cricket, with fundamental implications for nation and ‘representativeness’. More mundanely, but perhaps more significantly for our concerns, I watched Bafana Bafana failing to reach the quarter finals of the African Cup of Nations for the second time. Finally, on a more personal note, being told that South Africans were tired of ‘liberal white men coming here to criticise us’.

If I had received my invitation to speak after this trip, I might not have accepted. Not simply because I could be viewed as a liberal white man, but because I cannot claim to understand the dynamics and complexities of what I have seen and heard. In part this is reinforced by my own experiences in Northern Ireland, where the famous advice to outsiders is ‘whatever you say, say nothing’.

So, rejecting my own advice and instincts I am going to say something, but what I have to say must be understood within the recognition of the complex and dynamic political, economic and cultural situation that is present-day South Africa and my superficial understanding of it.

This complexity is compounded by the fact that when we go beyond the political and interest group rhetoric associated with such events, there is little substantive evidence about the nature and extent of the short and long term *social impacts* of large scale sports events. What does exist seems to require relatively modest claims. Further, as Cornelissen (2004) argues, the general lack of evidence and guidance is compounded by the complexities posed by the uneven development of society, economy and cultural identities in developing societies.

Within this context of ignorance and ambiguity I will explore four possible ways that the World Cup might contribute directly and indirectly to increased ‘social cohesion’ in South Africa.

- Imagined communities.
- The development of forms of social capital via processes of bidding, managing and delivery.
- The centrally important role of volunteers.
- Investment in sport-for-development organisations.

### **Imagined communities**

Perhaps it is the complexity and uneven development of ethnic and civic identities that attract some to the notion of *imagined communities* (Anderson, 1991). Its supposed relevance to sport is most succinctly expressed by Hobsbawm (1990) – ‘the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people’.

Such communities are ‘imagined’ because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members. Anderson (1991) argues that communities are distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in

which they are imagined. Language, media and symbolic practices are centrally important elements of this. In this regard several commentators have argued that nation-states use sport to shape and cement national identities (Guilianotti, 1999), that sport permits the articulation of such identities (Blain et al, 1993) and sport and sports events can contribute to a symbolic sense of stability and pride (Maguire, 1999).

This seems close to Miller's (1997) suggestion that while civic and ethnic national identities might pose substantial difficulties in South Africa, a culturally based nationalism might be possible – allegiance to certain cultural common denominators and symbols, of which sport is frequently proposed as a major contributor. The relative importance of this might be illustrated by the debates about the symbolic importance of the Springbok or Protea as the sporting emblem of South Africa; the issues of quotas and the nature of 'representativeness' in national teams, or if it is time for Bafana Bafana to grow up!

Whereas rugby and cricket have been associated with the minority white population and have been sites of symbolic and institutional debates about national identities, soccer is rooted firmly in the communities, culture, history and local political structures of the majority of the South African population. For example, Nauright (1997, p123) argues that in addition to being a major part of the struggle against apartheid, the discourses of soccer have supported concepts of individual freedom, team spirit and emancipation.

Soccer throughout its history in South Africa has been a signifier for 'respectability', African initiative, political struggle, individual freedom, escapism and capitalism through its pervasive role of urban black communities

However, terms such as nation, community, cohesion, imagined communities and symbolic representation are often used rather loosely and superficially. For example, Allison (2002) argues that concepts such as nation and community are "among the most shifting and elusive in the entire study of society".

It is often forgotten that Anderson's (1991) use of the term relates to political communities and he argues that, regardless of the actual levels of inequality and exploitation, the nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship. In this regard some commentators accept that sport can be used as a diversionary circus – an opiate - disguising more fundamental material and cultural divisions. For example, (Maguire, 1999, p138) suggests that "it can sap the thoughts and energies of people to an extent that it serves only those who retain social political and ideological power in society".

Here objective complexity and personal confusion limit what I can say with any confidence. Clearly, there are ongoing debates about the nature of the Rainbow Nation, the nature of Africanism (Filatova, 1997) whether this is a South African World Cup, or part of a wider 'African Renaissance' (Cornelissen, 2004; Cornelissen and Swart, 2006) and the differing balances between civic, ethnic and cultural nationalisms as a basis for mobilising a vision of the 'nation' (Baines, 1998).

However, here I share the scepticism of some commentators about the depth and significance of such symbolic cultural celebrations. For example Lechner, (2007) argues that “the soccer nation crystallises at tournament time and otherwise leads a mostly virtual existence’. In Scotland a nationalist politician – Jim Sillers - referred scathingly to Scottish football supporters as ‘90 minute patriots’, implying a rather superficial and symbolic nationalism, which did not translate to political action.

We may consider the example of another symbolically affirmed ‘rainbow nation’ represented by the 1998 French World Cup winning team, with 17 of the 23 players from racial minorities (provoking the right wing politician le Pen to argue that the team was not French enough). Within three years an international match against Algeria was abandoned after a riot, within seven years there were extensive race-related riots throughout France and in 2006 there was a race-related death at a football game at the Parc de Prince.

These examples are used *not* to argue that sport and sporting events cannot have positive symbolic impacts or provide opportunities for national *celebration*. Rather, I use them to express a degree of scepticism about the depth, meaning and longevity of such symbolic cultural moments. As Fodimbi (1999, p 50) argues:

we must remember that the role of sport in the whole broad issue of social cohesion is necessarily minor. The big problems are political, economic and social and sport cannot work miracles.

Thabo Embeki, in a speech to sports sponsors, quoted John Nauright (1997) who, while referring to the momentary feelings of national identification generated by the Rugby World Cup, cricket and the African Cup of Nations soccer victory in 1996, nevertheless argues that:

the overall conception of what South Africa is, or should be, is still being negotiated through lived experience and discursively through the media and other forms of public discourse...Sport is but one area where the South African nation can exist, however, the divisions that exist in sport and within wider South African society mean that it will take a long time before a truly ‘national’ identity of forged and takes account of race, class and gender differences.

In addition to this some argue that many sports’ maleness and the maleness of certain forms of nationalism are frequently ignored in such debates (Schacht, 2001).

So, while nation building may have cultural and symbolic elements it also has more fundamental political and economic elements. For example, Farquharson and Majoribanks (2003), referring to the on-going debate about the role of the Springboks’ contribution to nation-building, argue that there is a need to move from the symbolic level to the level of institutional practice

As I am not a cultural theorist I will move on from such speculations and grand theorising and return to where I am most comfortable – middle range theory (Merton, 1968).

### **Playing in mid field**

Middle range theory does not seek to deal with abstract entities and produce a grand narrative, which is so often associated with ‘sporting evangelism’ (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 2004) and sport’s supposed limitless transformative powers. Rather it seeks to deal with networks, mechanisms, processes and ‘purposive action’ (Pawson, 2006; Coalter, 2007). What is it about the World Cup that can produce social cohesion? What are the relevant *mechanisms and processes* and can they be designed and implemented to maximise positive outcomes? What is the area and scope of the effective impact? This is especially important because, unlike some other sporting mega events, the South African World Cup’s immediate and local impacts are not confined to one city, but are distributed throughout 10 communities in nine widely dispersed and different cities – maximising the potential local or regional impacts and reducing our ability to generalise.

Here we need to go beyond simplistic assertions about ‘sport’ and ask certain questions about the very nature of social cohesion – what are the generic factors which are deemed to underlie cohesive communities and how can sport contribute? An understanding of middle range mechanisms should lead to conceptual clarification and improved programme design and, probably, increased ability to achieve the desired *intermediate* impacts. Here I think that we can find more realistic and potentially positive outcomes and certainly can formulate reasonable recommendations.

### **Social cohesion: beyond rhetoric**

These issues can be illustrated if we take the concept of social cohesion seriously – rather than use it as an intangible rhetorical peg on which to hang a rationale for sports events. I clearly cannot produce an agreed definition of such a vague, amorphous and contested concept. The problem with issues of social cohesion is that they are core concern of modern sociology – what hold societies/communities/groups together, especially in periods of social change? This question is a difficult one to answer in industrialised societies, but presents even more complex issues in developing societies and economies.

In some ways one definition is as good as another, so I will just refer to two simply to illustrate the issues at stake. In the UK one approach to the definition of social cohesion is provided by a committee of the Office of the deputy Prime Minister (2004) which defined a cohesive community as one where:

- There is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all.
- The diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued.
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities.
- Strong and positive relationships are developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

Another approach is illustrated by Inter-American Development Bank, which defines social cohesion as combining:

- the sum of factors promoting equity in the distribution of opportunities among individuals (e.g. poverty, educational opportunities, social mobility), and
- the capacity for cooperation based on the set of positive effects accruing from high levels of social capital (compliance with the law, interpersonal trust, trust in public institutions and politicians).

Whatever definition one takes, it is clear that people's social and economic material reality is central to the consideration of social cohesion.

### **A (social) capital prospect**

Much of the sociological (if not cultural studies) debate about social cohesion has increasingly been framed in terms of the broad concept of *social capital*. Although this is also a disputed term, I want to outline briefly two approaches to social capital which are directly relevant to discussions of the World Cup. In a paper of this type it is not possible to provide a full exposition of the strengths and weaknesses of social capital in relation to sport or development (see Field, 2003; Portes, 1998; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Coalter, 2007; Coalter, 2008), although this approach contains substantial dangers of over-simplification of a frequently misused and misunderstood term. Nevertheless, I want to outline the main elements of two key thinkers to provide a framework for thinking about three possible ways that the *mechanisms and processes* involved in the organisation and delivery of the World Cup might be able to contribute to increased social cohesion.

#### *Putnam and team work*

For Robert Putnam (2000, p18-19), 'the core idea of social capital is that social networks have value . . . [it refers to] connections between individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them'. From Putnam's perspective social capital can be regarded as a public good, which serves to bind communities together. Communities with high levels of social capital are viewed as being characterized by three main components – strong social networks and civic infrastructure; strong social norms (that is, informal and formal rules about personal and social behaviour and associated sanctions); and mutual trust and reciprocity among members of a community.

Putnam's appeal to policy makers is his interest in the role of organized voluntary associations (the title of *Bowling Alone* indicates the potential contribution of organised sport). Putnam views the civic engagement, associational life and volunteering associated with social capital as important because they improve the efficiency of communities and societies by facilitating coordinated actions, reducing transaction costs (for example, high levels of trust mean less dependency on formal contractual agreements) and enabling communities to be more effective in pursuit of their collective interests. In other words, social capital is not just a public good, but is *for* the public good (Szretzer, 1998).

Putnam (2000) distinguishes between two types of social capital – bonding and bridging. *Bonding social capital* refers to networks based on strong social ties between similar people – people 'like us' – with relations, reciprocity and trust based on ties of familiarity and closeness. This is a type of 'sociological superglue', whose

function is to enable people to ‘get by’ and which works to maintain a strong in-group loyalty and reinforce specific identities (Putnam, 2000, p23). *Bridging capital* refers to weaker social ties between different types of people – more ‘colleagues’ than family and friends. This is less of a glue than ‘a sociological WD40’ (Putnam, 2000, p23) and facilitates ‘getting ahead’ via, for example, the diffusion of information and employment opportunities.

Woolcock (2001) extends this by introducing the notion of *linking capital* – whereas bonding and bridging social capital are concerned with types of horizontal relationships, linking social capital refers to *vertical* connections between different social strata, including those entirely outside the community (thereby offering access to wider networks and the potential to leverage a broader range of resources). In fact, Skidmore et al (2006: viii) suggest that broader policies to promote community participation in governance are frequently concerned with linking capital, the theory being ‘that being involved in the governance of services, participants build relationships with public institutions or officials which give their community access to valuable external resources like money, support or political leverage’.

### *Coleman and personal goals*

The second theorist is Coleman (1988-89), who views social capital in terms of the contribution that social relations and networks can make to the development of *human capital* (education, employment skills and expertise). Whereas Putnam takes a rather organic view, Coleman stresses the conscious actions of individuals in the development and use of social capital. For him social capital is the set of resources that inhere in family relations and, increasingly, in community social organisation that are useful for the cognitive or social development of a child or young person. Coleman (1988-89) takes a less organic approach than Putnam and views social capital as representing social processes resulting from the free choice of individuals to further their self-interest. However, like Putnam, Coleman views social capital as consisting of networks based on obligations, expectations and trustworthiness; norms and effective sanctions, which facilitate ‘closure’ of such networks and ensure that obligations are met and ‘freeloaders’ are expelled; and importantly which act as information channels (Johnston and Percy-Smith, 2003). From our perspective it is interesting that Coleman laments the decline of the ‘close or dense ties’ associated with ‘primordial’ institutions based on the family, and emphasises the need to ‘substitute obsolete forms of social control based on primordial ties with rationally devised material and status incentives’ (Portes, 1998, p10).

### **World Cup and social cohesion: the ‘soft infrastructure’**

Using both Coleman’s and Putnam’s concepts of social capital there are three possible ways that the World Cup *organisers* might contribute to this - two direct and one ‘indirect’. The two direct contributions that an *effectively organised* World Cup can make to social cohesion – or the development of certain types of social capital - are what Solberg and Preuss (2007) refer to as the ‘*soft infrastructure*’ of large scale events – (i) partnerships and alliances formed to bid, develop and deliver the Cup and (ii) the army of volunteers required to deliver it economically.

### **Partnerships and bridging and linking capital**

Firstly, the partnerships and alliances required to bid for, develop and stage events provide the possibility of the development of forms of both *bridging* and *linking* social capital. However, in most cases these partnerships and alliances are highly exclusive, consisting mostly of political and urban elites and commercial interests, with the organisational and commercial skills monopolised by a small elite group (Schimmel, 2001).

In this regard, Kim et al (2004) report on a 10 city before-and-after study of South Korean residents’ perceptions of the 2002 World Cup. Their findings deal with something that is frequently ignored in the ‘boosterism’ rhetoric which almost always, and frequently irresponsibly, raises unrealistic expectations (Hiller, 2000). They found that the moment of celebration and national pride (South Korea unprecedentedly reached the semi-finals) was followed by relative disappointment. Overall expected benefits had higher mean values than perceived benefits, as they realised that the cost of building the World Cup facilities and public facilities for visitors was much greater than expected. Their interesting conclusion is that “residents are more concerned about their personal economic impacts i.e. how much extra income and how many

jobs they will receive from the money spent by visitors” (Kim et al, 2004, p94) More generally, although South Korea also the 1988 Olympics and the 2002 World Cup

”neither of the sports mega-events appears to satisfy the residents’ needs/expectations, in particular, the economic benefits. This may be attributed to the lack of the South Korean residents’ involvement in the planning and decision-making process (Kim et al, 2004, p94).

This issue of the nature and scale of the involvement of local residents is one addressed directly by Misener and Mason (2006) who, in an analysis of the Manchester Commonwealth Games, argue that such processes can be developed to maximise their impact on *social regeneration*. In order to achieve this they argue that the development of such events must consciously be organised to take account of a range of issues – most of which are clearly related to both bridging and, most importantly, linking social capital. The issues are:

- (i) Community values should be central to all decision-making processes – i.e. sporting events need to embrace the core values of residents, community groups and neighbourhood associations.
- (ii) Various stakeholders, particularly community interest groups, should be involved in strategic activities related to events (i.e. bid process, management, legacy).
- (iii) Collaborative action should empower local communities to become agents of change, ensuring linkages between community members and local elites and power structures (this can provide knowledge and a framework for further participation in community building) – a clear case of linking social capital.
- (iv) Open communication and mutual learning throughout strategic activities related to events to minimise power brokering and community exclusion.

In a South African context it is worth noting Hiller’s (2000, p449) comments regarding the Cape Town bid for the 2004 Olympics. He suggests that although:

local Olympic Steering Committees were considerably successful in creating a sense of local empowerment...the problem was that often such meetings focussed on transmitting information about Olympic plans for reaction...more than they did on ... exploring the assumptions behind hosting the Olympics.

In this regard, Glasgow City Council claim that the partnerships established for the Commonwealth Games bid with various community and commercial interest groups will be maintained and provide the basis for an ongoing commitment to community development and regeneration. However, this has yet to be proven.

## Volunteering and active citizenship

Volunteers are the second direct element of the 'soft infrastructure'. For Putnam the nature and level of volunteering are key indices of the strength of social capital. In the UK, the Social Exclusion Unit (2000, p53), adopting a position heavily influenced by Putnam, stressed the potential contribution of volunteering to the rebuilding of social capital:

It often brings people into contact with those outside their normal circle, broadening horizons and raising expectations, and can link people into informal networks through which work is more easily found.

Like sport in general, all sports events depend heavily on volunteer labour. The dependence of such events on unpaid, voluntary labour, represents a major hidden subsidy which raises significant and usually unexamined, questions about the nature and scale of the true economic cost. For example, Laesser et al (2003) developed an *impact scoreboard* for the economic, social and ecological impacts of sports events, which included the amount of *unpaid voluntary labour in days*.

For the Sydney Olympic Games, 46,000 volunteers were recruited (with an attrition rate of only 2%) (Chalip, 1999) and 10,000 volunteers (selected from 22,000 applicants) were required for the Manchester Commonwealth Games. Chalip (1999) estimated that at the volunteers at the Sydney Olympics would work approximately 5,450,000 hours, with an economic value of Aus\$109,756,925 – a saving of about 4.5 per cent on the total budget.. When the cost of uniforms was included Chalip estimated that for every dollar invested in the volunteer programme, almost Aus\$10 dollars worth of labour would be generated. Solberg (2003), in a case study of the 1999 World Ice Hockey Championship in Norway, using a price equivalency model, estimated that their economic value was equivalent to 1.7 million euros.

The scale of such volunteering indicates not only a high economic value, but also the high *social value* and status of such work. In part this is reflected in the many surveys recording the high level of enjoyment and satisfaction experienced by the volunteers (Solberg, 2003; Kemp, 2002). Laesser et al (2003) include the *levels of satisfaction of volunteers with regard to their work* as part of their social dimensions scoreboard for successful events. Work with Olympic volunteers (Kemp, 2002) indicates that, in addition to feeling a part of a unique event, volunteers' job satisfaction depended on aspects of volunteer management - relationships, supervision and autonomy.

Kemp (2002), adopting a human resource management perspective, reports on surveys of volunteers at the Lillehammer Winter Olympics and the Sydney Olympics. The results indicate that high proportions of students at both games perceived that they had developed social skills, improved their knowledge of society and most importantly increased job skills and established contacts for future jobs. Older volunteers were more likely to focus on function-specific and service skills and using existing skills in a new environment, which built confidence and self-esteem (this was especially so for women who had left employment to raise children). This emphasis on skills is reflected in Solberg and Preuss's (2007) definition of the 'soft-infrastructure', with volunteering having a more 'Colemanlike' perspective, being

associated with the enhancement of the knowledge and skills - the human capital - of residents.

*What happens when the circus leaves town?*

Kemp's (2002) emphasis on management is vitally important - properly managed and planned the clear economic benefits of volunteers are complemented by contributions to social cohesion and social capital. In fact to maximise the potential to achieve such outcomes there is a need for a strategic approach to volunteer development, including the post-event period – what happens when the circus leaves town?

In this regard many events are adopting a more systematic approach to the recruitment, training and retention of volunteers – using events as a catalyst to establish broader volunteer programmes and develop forms of 'social capital'. In some cases the formal development of human capital is pursued via programmes of training and vocational certification. Further, volunteer strategies increasingly looking beyond the event. For example, after the Manchester Commonwealth Games, local volunteers were given the opportunity to take part in the Post Games Volunteer Programme (PGVP). The aim was to keep to the volunteers involved in community projects - develop forms of social capital - and forthcoming events and festivals. For example, some volunteered as city guides for the 2003 UEFA Champions League final. The PGVP continues to offer support to volunteers seeking to gain new skills and experience, or looking for a route back into employment.

*Will the 'right' volunteers step forward?*

The final, and most important point, in this section is the issue of the selection of volunteers. If the intention is to use sports events to contribute to social regeneration and an increase in, or strengthening of, forms of *social capital*, this would need to be reflected in recruitment strategies. Most of the evidence from research on sports volunteering (e.g. Manchester Commonwealth Games) indicates that a high proportion of applicants selected for volunteering positions are active sports participants, relatively well educated (e.g. university students compiling experience and CVs) and already in well-informed networks (i.e. with substantial social capital). Consequently, any strategy which seeks to address issues of the development of human and social capital via volunteering needs to have a clear strategy for selection, a systematic programme for development and the post-event phase.

### **Let's think about sport.....plus**

This discussion of event-related volunteering brings me to the third, mostly indirect, contribution that the World Cup can make – the promotion and support of what is referred to as *sport-for-development*, *sport-in-development* or *sport plus*. (Coalter, 2007). It is clear that the World Cup will act as a catalyst for commercially-led sponsorship and investment in various forms of football development. However, there is a need to avoid the simplistic assertions of the sports evangelists and to understand the precise nature of the contribution of football (and sport in general) to personal and social development.

I would argue that *sport* in any simple sense rarely achieves, in any systematic manner, the variety of desired outcomes attributed to it and that issues of organisation, process and context are key to understanding its developmental potential (Coalter, 2007). As Papacharisisi et al (2005: 247) argue, ‘there is nothing about ...sport itself that is magical....It is the experience of sport that may facilitate the result’ – they might also add, the context and organisation of sport. Consequently, there is a need to give much more systematic consideration to what we mean by the ‘*plus*’ in *sports plus*. For example, commentators argue that in terms of social cohesion sports programmes need to be complemented by other measures to stimulate social regeneration (Skidmore et al, 2006; Delaney and Keaney, 2005). This approach is in part illustrated by FIFA’s Football for Hope initiative. This has established five long term projects (plus another 15 in other parts of Africa) via investing in existing NGOs which will support the development of football (including a small size pitch) alongside health care and educational facilities.

The United Nations (2003, p14), borrowing heavily from Putnam, argues that sports volunteering – which is central to most sport-in-development projects - contributes to:

social welfare, community participation, generation of trust and reciprocity, and the broadening of social interaction through new networks. Consequently, volunteerism creates social capital, helping to build and consolidate social cohesion and stability.

But, this requires purposive action and systematic planning. For example in MYSA, one of the Football for Hope NGOs, football is simply an entry point to a comprehensive, interdependent programme, in which all elements are mutually reinforcing in order to produce a both a form of Putnam’s social capital and one similar to Coleman’s emphasis on the development of human capital. Some of these elements are outlined by Munro (2005) in relation to the Mathare Youth Sport Association as follows (for a more systematic analysis of MYSA see Munro; 2005; Coalter, 2007, 2008):

- (i) To link sport to compulsory community service.
- (ii) Youth are owners and decision-makers.
- (iii) To help youth to help themselves by helping others. reflecting a key component of bonding social capital, Munro (2005: 3) argues that ‘when you are poor cooperation and sharing are crucial for survival’
- (iv) To develop human capital by helping young leaders to stay in school – in MYSA’s case via a points-based educational scholarship system, with points being awarded for the performance of volunteer duties.

In many traditional sports development programmes leaders and coaches are regarded simply as *inputs* – qualified sports development officers who use their professional expertise to develop programmes for local communities. However, a central feature of most sport-in-development organisations is the use of ‘peer leaders’ – the involvement of young men and women at various levels of planning, implementation and decision-making, providing important experience of control, empowerment and a sense of collective responsibility. This is especially important for young women in traditional patriarchal societies. To confront such issues in the strongly masculine

world of sport not simply via increased participation in sport, but more importantly, in leadership roles, may begin not only to develop their human capital but also change community norms about their roles and capacities. (Brady and Kahn, 2002; Saavedra, 2005; 2007). In other words, *people* (or “responsible citizens”) are a major outcome of many such organisations, one that is central to their sustainability and precedes the *programmes* whose impacts are often the subject of evaluation.

As I am concerned with middle range *mechanisms and processes* rather than grand narratives, it is worth noting that the use of peer leaders is based firmly on educational and learning theory. For example, as young people’s attitudes are highly influenced by their peers’ values and attitudes, peer educators are less likely to be viewed as “preaching” authority figures and more likely to be regarded as people who know the experiences and concerns of young people (YouthNet, 2005; Kerrigan, 1999). Further, Payne et al (2003) illustrate that, to be effective, role models must be embedded, based on the development of supportive, longer term trusting relationships. In line with social learning and self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1962), evidence suggests that the effectiveness of role models is heavily dependent on their characteristics and their *perceived similarity to the learner*. Learning is more likely to occur when the learners perceive that they are capable of carrying out the behaviour (*self-efficacy expectancy*), think that there is a high probability that the behaviour will result in a particular outcome (*outcome expectancy*) and if the outcome is desirable – all of which can be reinforced via peer education. The nature of such trusting and mutually reinforcing relations could be regarded as a form of *bonding social capital*.

Rather than reflecting Putnam’s somewhat organic communitarian view of social capital – which seems to underpin a lot of football evangelism and metaphors about ‘teams’ - the sport-in-development approach is closer to Coleman’s ‘rationally devised material and status incentives’ (Portes, 1998, p10), needed to compensate for the weakening of family, community and local government structures. It also illustrates aspects of Coleman’s perspective on the relationship between social capital and the development of human capital and his greater emphasis on the conscious and self-interested aspects of social capital. For example, in some cases initial parental resistance to girls’ participation in such projects is overcome once parents realise the educational and other benefits to be obtained via membership.

We must be aware of the danger of de-contextualised, rather romanticised, communitarian generalisations about the ‘power’ of sport-in-development. Firstly, it is clear that it is not simple sports participation which can hope to achieve such outcomes, but *sports plus*; it is not sport which achieves many of these outcomes, but *sporting organisations*; it is not sport which produces and sustains social capital, enters into partnerships and mobilises resources, but certain types of social organisation. Further, evidence would suggest that some of these organisations are consciously and systematically organised to maximise the possibility of achieving such outcomes - developing forms of Coleman’s rationally devised material and status incentives, rather than depending on Putnam’s rather more organic perspective.

### **Going beyond the touchline**

The importance of sports organisations, rather than ‘sport, is indicated by the UN reference to sport as ‘an important sector in civil society’ (UN, 2005: 2). While the

concepts of *bridging and linking social capital* are not explicitly stated, they are implicit in the UN (2005, p7) statement that,

Local development through sport particularly benefits from an integrated partnership approach to sport-in-development involving a full spectrum of actors in field-based community development including all levels of and various sectors of government, sports organisations, NGOs and the private sector. Strategic sport-based partnerships can be created within a common framework providing a structured environment allowing for coordination, knowledge and expertise sharing and cost-effectiveness.

Such statements can be viewed as reflecting a broad shift in the aid paradigm (Renard, 2006), from an emphasis on an often top-down economic dimension to a much greater emphasis on community networks and human capital and 'bottom-up' development.

Some writers on development (e.g. Woolcock and Narayan, 2006) are sceptical of the rather romanticised communitarian view of bonding social capital which underpins sports evangelism. They fear that bonding social capital, with its strong group loyalties and collectively enforced obligations, can serve to isolate members from such resources as employment opportunities and confining them to positive and supportive, but resource poor networks (Portes, 1998).

In this regard Seippel (2006) makes a distinction between *connected* sports organisations (i.e. members have ties to organisations) and *isolated* organisations, which focus solely on their sport and local community. The latter are a vehicle for the mobilisation of resources *for* sport and may develop certain forms of bonding social capital. However, it would seem that the United Nations' (2005) aspiration for strategic sport-based partnerships clearly relates to *connected clubs*. This relates to the much more important *bridging and linking* social capital and sport-in-development organisations' ability to achieve this will vary by their type, size and location (e.g. isolated or connected; single or multi-sport; urban or rural; competitive or recreational; single or mixed sex) and their relationships with the community (both local and sporting). Woolcock and Narayan (2000, p231) refer to the combination of bridging and linking social capital as the *networks view*, arguing that 'strong intra-community ties and weak extra-community networks are needed to avoid making tautological claims regarding the efficacy of social capital'.

In many cases sports clubs and sport-in-development organisations are part of a wider sports community, via participation in leagues, competitions, governing bodies, ground sharing and so on. This provide opportunities for the development of forms of bridging and (maybe) linking social capital, although the extent to which this is restricted to "sporting social capital" – i.e. mobilisation of resources *for* sport, within the sports community - is an important empirical question in relation to their precise contribution to broader processes of development. In this regard it is worth noting Coleman's (1988, pS108) speculation that 'organisations once brought into existence for one set of purposes can also aid others, thus constituting social capital available for use which are set up for one purpose'.

But, we also need to introduce some realism to such an analysis. Here, it is useful to refer to Woolcock and Narayan's (2006) *Institutional View* of the role of social capital in development. They argue that civil society organisations are not simple substitutes

for the state and can only really thrive to the extent that the state actively encourages them. In other words, in the absence of what they refer to as ‘civic and government social capital’, such well-intentioned efforts will have limited general impact.

### **The road to hell.....**

I started by saying that there is limited robust research on the social impacts of large scale events and, for obvious reasons, practically nothing for such events in developing countries. The research that does exist indicates that there are few naturally occurring ‘trickle down effects’ (Hindson et al, 1994; Coalter, 2004) and that most tangible and, especially, intangible benefits require systematic identification and planning (with no guaranteed outcomes). In this context I have identified three broad potential ‘middle range’ contributions which the World Cup *might* make to processes of social cohesion (or the development of forms of social capital).

- The processes of bidding, managing and delivery and the extent to which they are inclusive.
- The systematic development of volunteers and forms of social and human capital.
- More indirectly, the investment in sport-for-development organisations.

However, it is worth quoting Hiller’s (2000, p454) ‘road to hell’ scepticism about the Olympic Games, but with obvious application to all such events:

Since the Games are not about development per se, the Games could only be developmental to the extent that there was a deliberate will to make them so. Embracing principles and putting them into operation are two different things – constantly endangered by finances, time constraints and politics.

There is a need to move away from the political and self-interested rhetoric of the promoters of such events and the various forms of sports evangelism. There is a need to recognise the implications of Pawson’s (2006, p5) comment that ‘social interventions are always complex systems thrust amidst complex systems’. In such circumstances there is a need for a systematic understanding of both the issues – low levels of social cohesion and social capital – and the possible limited contribution that a single intervention might make.

On the basis of current research evidence the general conclusion is that using the World Cup to increase social cohesion will require, like competing in the World Cup, sustained hard work, based on a coherent strategy and an understanding of the importance of tactics.....and even then you might not win all your games.

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**Prof Fred Coalter**  
**University of Stirling**  
**Scotland**  
**j.a.coalter@stir.ac.uk**