

and interviews with individuals involved in making sporting policy during the period under investigation.

At the forefront was the emphasis on symbolic propaganda and national unity that facilitated the development of sport programs (e.g. participatory sports). However, these programs resulted in creating a mirage of national progress at the expense of the people. It was an elite sport system that few common people could access, but placated their desire for mass entertainment, resulting in a sort of Orwellian turn of events. The masses were satisfied with these sporting achievements, while politicians delighted in the development of a national following. However, the people failed to recognize that they were victims of political mass manipulation, and these sport programs diverted their attention from more important matters of national development.

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The Ultimate Imperial Sporting Force: The Modern Olympics and Capturing the “Other”

Historians of sport have long explored the phenomenon of the spread of British sport through the imperial networks of the British Empire and the trade networks set up by the British in the nineteenth century. Historians such as Allen Guttman, J.A. Mangan and a host of others have examined the expansion of sports from Britain into the global arena. In addition, much work has been devoted to the rise of the modern Olympic movement under the leadership of Baron Pierre de Coubertin of France. However, the conceptualization of the modern Olympics rarely involves mention of the word imperialism or discusses the Olympics as a colonizing force.

Following the work of John Bale on the sportization of African body cultures in Kenya and Rwanda and some of the critiques of the International Olympic Committee by John Hoberman, I explore the framing of the Equatorial Guinea swimmer Eric Moussambani at the Sydney 2000 Olympics as evidence of the totalizing imperial forces of the body culture of elite Western sport as housed in the modern Olympic Games. I draw on the historical development of the modern Games and argue for a reconceptualization of the Olympics as the leading

imperialist force in the twentieth century expansion of achievement sport as the dominant form of physical body culture in the world. A critique of the eulogizing of the Olympics among many sport historians will be offered as part of the argument for a need to rethink the role of the modern Olympics in modern society.

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The Short, Exciting Life of the Penn State Professional Basketball League, 1914-1921

At the turn of the twentieth century there was a great spirit of “can-doism” (e. g. Sinclair Lewis’s *Babbitt*) among many Americans and innumerable American towns aspired to achieve “big league” status. What constituted such an appellation; a stop on the railroad? That was a start, but in the heavily industrialized Northeast, it seemed that every town had a rail stop. Did the number of trains per day, arriving and departing, constitute big league status? Another possibility, but merely being in a crossroads location might lead to that. What about housing a large, well known industry? Certainly this was a vital foundation for growth, development and recognition. Did possessing a professional sports team make a city or town big league? There was a mark that not every town could claim, though the definition of “big league” was still rather elusive and inconsistent.

Basketball’s recent invention (in 1891) and growth made it possible for new, smaller towns to assert their importance, to make them candidates for further growth and, thus, development through the establishment of more industries in those towns. Basketball had spread rapidly west from its invention in Springfield, Massachusetts. Carried largely by the enthusiasm of Settlement Houses and YMCAs, the game had great appeal to the children of immigrants in the cities of the Northeast. The game was attractive because it required little space or equipment to play in some manner and this lack of space or resources was common for the impoverished children of the towns and cities.

Basketball’s rules were still evolving and the game was an expression of independence by young men who could shape the game’s development without the interference of the older generation who had never played the game. The game could be