

POLITICAL IDEOLOGY, MODERNITY AND SPORTS POLICY:  
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SPORTS POLICY  
IN BRITAIN AND JAPAN<sup>1</sup>

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*Introduction*

In the contemporary literature on globalisation there is an on-going debate about the role of the state. Some commentators wish to suggest, if not the demise, a major weakening of the significance of the nation-state (Hirsch, 1997; Morris, 1997). Such claims are linked to discussions of the 'hollowing out' of the state, in which it is argued that many of the powers and responsibilities formerly discharged by national governments have been removed 'upwards' to the jurisdiction of transnational bodies (such as the European Union), 'downwards' to sub-national bodies (regions or local governments), or 'outwards' from the public to the commercial or voluntary sector (Mann, 1997). Thus notions of *government* by the nation-state have given way to characterisations of governance - referring to networks of relations across levels of government (from transnational through national to local) and across sectors (public, private and voluntary).

In contrast to this view, other commentators (Hirst & Thompson, 1995; Shaw, 1997) have argued that the globalised system is best conceptualised as the product of state action, and that rather than 'hollowing out', the state is better described as spreading its activities into a more extended set of networks (Brenner, 1998).

An element of the argument about the significance of the nation-state also relates to the question of whether and how politics (in terms of political party control of government, and political ideologies and value sets inscribed in party programmes) actually make a difference to what states do and what policy programmes they adopt. The suggestion is that where the room for manoeuvre for individual governments is reduced the opportunity for differentiated policy approaches is reduced. According to this argument, in a globalised and interdependent economy, if one state or economic block, for example, seeks to reduce labour costs by reducing taxation thus lowering social expenditure, then other governments (*ceteris paribus*) will be required to follow suit, regardless of whether they espouse neo-liberal values, because if they retain higher social expenditure this implies higher taxation, thus higher labour costs and subsequently an inability to compete effectively in world markets.

This paper seeks to compare the development of the sports policy in two contrasting contexts since the 1970s, those of Britain and Japan. It seeks to outline the key changes in sports policy over the three decades, the rationales which governments have adopted for invoking such change and the impacts such changes have had on the population (or sectors of

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the population) in both cases. The object of this exercise is to establish the extent to which the trajectory of policy change in the two systems has reflected the ideological positions adopted in both contexts. In other words it seeks to establish whether politics has made a difference to sports policy, and if it has traditionally made a difference, whether the increasingly globalised nature of economies / societies / politics has reduced such policy variations.

Thus what follows is:

- A brief account of the political context in both countries as a background against which sports policy is developed;
- A description of the nature of sports policy change in both systems;
- A comparative analysis, identifying in particular the extent to which this comparison sheds light on claims that the significance of politics and specifically of political ideology and the values in policy has diminished.

### *The Political Context in the UK and Japan*

British politics in the second half of the twentieth century can be characterised as having manifested two dominant moments of ideological convergence. The first was during the period of post-war economic growth in which, under the Labour Party which held power between 1945 and 1951, a framework for the welfare state was constructed and was subsequently consolidated under both Conservative (1951-64) and Labour Governments (1964-70). This ideological consensus of social democracy was not restricted to Britain, and was a sufficiently common feature of political systems in western liberal democracies that Bell felt able to refer to the “end of ideology” (Bell, 1960).

During the 1970s, this first period of consensus around a social democratic ideology gave way to growing ideological divisions in response to Britain’s experience of the global recession which emerged in that decade. Social democracy had been founded on the redistribution of income (rather than wealth) through progressive taxation to fund the growth of welfare services. With failing economic growth, two ideological responses emerged at either end of the political spectrum. On the radical left it was argued that if redistribution of income was not possible when economic growth had stalled, then redistribution of wealth would provide the only viable means of funding continued welfare provision. (Benn, 1979; Seyd, 1987). However, such left oriented analyses were to be marginalised, while those of the New Right became dominant. The New Right adopted economic liberal ideas, arguing that in a recession lower taxes were required to foster the survival of British industry and hence resources available for investment in welfare services would be reduced (Evans & Taylor, 1997; Green, 1987). This position, championed by Margaret Thatcher’s governments (1979-1990) and also (though less enthusiastically) by the Major administrations (1990-1997), implied reduced spending on services generally, and on sport and recreation in particular.

The arrival of Tony Blair’s New Labour government in 1997 followed Labour’s adoption of the spending plans of the Conservative government to avoid being labelled a ‘high tax and spend political party’ during the election campaign. Thus although, after their election victory, Labour adopted a different policy rhetoric with greater apparent commitment to dealing with problems of social exclusion and inequality, it developed and continued a theme of prudent

management of the economy into its second term of office from 2001. Indeed, for many the Blair government has been closely linked with the economically liberal agenda of its predecessor under John Major, to the extent that some commentators refer to it as 'Blaijorism' (Hay, 1997). Thus while Bell had erroneously trumpeted the end of ideological debate with the victory of social democracy in the 1950s and 1960s, Fukuyama was to pose the question of whether globally we were at the "end of history" with the victory of neo-liberalism over other ideologies in the 1980s and 1990s (Fukuyama, 1993).

If British politics has as a background to the politics of sport and sports policy over the last half century seen polar shifts from social democratic to neo-liberal thinking, the Japanese context has been rather more one of continuities across the same period. This is in large part reflected in the dominance of the Liberal Democratic Party, which has held power either on its own or in coalition, for all but two brief periods since its inception in 1955. Although the Party has been less evidently ideological and more pragmatic in its approach to social and economic policy, than its British counterparts (Abe, Shindo, & Kawato, 1994), it has adopted a low level of state involvement in welfare (Goodman, White, & Kwon, 1998). Whether in the period of post-occupation economic growth (1956-70), the response to the oil crises and recessions of the 1970s and early 1980s, the development of the bubble economy (1986-91) or dealing with subsequent domestic recession of the 1990s, the dominant approach has been to rely on a corporatist approach in partnership with large scale business (which provided much of the framework of welfare for its workers) and the powerful state bureaucracy (which provided enabling economic frameworks for industry). The particular make-up of this corporatist framework Pempel and Tsunekawa (1979) refer to as the 'Japanese anomaly' of corporatism without labour. This approach is not neo-liberal as such, since the Japanese state intervenes to a considerable degree in the operation of the economy, but it does imply a much smaller welfare role than that associated with western liberal democracies.

With the exception of the establishing of welfare legislation in the immediate post-war period, there is perhaps only one period in post-war history in which the government briefly indicated an interest in expanding welfare provision, (Takao, 1999). As Goodman *et al* indicate,

with the exception of a brief episode in the early 1970s, priority has always been on economic growth and industrial development. In this sense the basic orientation of the Japanese government towards social welfare has not changed significantly since the Meiji period.... even during the period of high economic growth between 1955 and 1975, the government kept the expenditure on social welfare relative to national income stable at around 2 per cent of the GNP (Goodman and Peng, 1996: 201)

Welfare policy and welfare expenditure has therefore been of a considerably lower order than has been the case in Britain.

### *The British Sports Policy Context*

The development of leisure policy in the post-war period in Britain has been described elsewhere as falling into four more or less distinctive periods. While our focus here is on sports rather than leisure policy this chronology serves as a useful point of departure. Thus our

commentary will focus on the principal policy directions in the four periods and the impact of / reflection of ideological change in government, before we go on to focus more specifically on policy change at the turn of the century.

#### *1944 - 1976 Growth and Maturing of the Welfare State*

The emergence of sport in the immediate pre-war period as a policy issue had been clearly reflected in the 1938 Physical Recreation and Training Act. This piece of legislation which announced a significant amount of capital to be made available to local government and the voluntary sector, was motivated less by a concern for state involvement in sport than by a series of concerns particularly related to the involvement of unemployed youth in 'wholesome' activity, the countering of the attraction of fascist youth movements, and physical fitness among the young in preparation for war. In other words the state became involved in sport for extrinsic reasons, rather than to promote sport as intrinsically valuable.

In the immediate post-war period the new Labour Government involved itself in a wide range of welfare activities, promoting the role of the state in meeting housing, educational, economic and other social needs. Although this government did involve itself in the arts and countryside recreation (with the formation of the Arts Council in 1946, and of National Parks in 1949) this was again largely justified by extrinsic concerns (to preserve the nation's heritage in respect of culture and landscape). Even when the Wolfenden Committee was established to review Britain's sporting system this was provoked by two extrinsic concerns with youth (this time the affluence of post-war youth, rather than the young unemployed), and with Britain's declining national sporting performance. The Wolfenden Committee however recommended the establishing of an Advisory Sports Council, which the Labour Government of Harold Wilson (1964-70) inaugurated in 1965. In 1972 however the Conservative Government of Edward Heath (1970-4) changed the status of the Council, funding it 'at arm's length' as an external independent body in order to avoid 'political manipulation' in decisions about sport.

The Wilson governments of 1964-70 and 1974-1977 in effect completed the defining of welfare rights which had been undertaken by its Labour predecessors in 1945-51, adding leisure and sports services to the portfolio of welfare services recognised by the state. The arts and countryside recreation were the subjects of White Papers respectively in 1964 and 1968, and with the publication of the 1975 White Paper *Sport and Recreation*, the government formerly recognised sport and recreation, in a much quoted phrase as "one of the community's everyday needs ..... [and] ...part of the general fabric of social services" (Department of Environment, 1975: p. 5).

In addition to recognising sport as a social service in the White Paper, sports policy was given an added boost by the reorganisation of local government which took place in 1974, since local rather than national government was the major provider of public sector sports facilities. The restructuring of local government in effect provided a significant impulse for the establishment of leisure departments in towns and cities which incorporated significant policy development for sport, and was accompanied by a large scale and rapid investment in sport and leisure facilities. Table 1 demonstrates the growth of local government and Sports Council expenditure across the period, and illustrates the financial investment which went alongside the government's adoption of the promotion of 'Sport for All' as a policy goal (McIntosh & Charlton, 1985)

TABLE 1. PUBLIC SECTOR LEISURE EXPENDITURE 1972/3 - 1990/1 (selected years) and 1991/2 - 1999/2000.

Year	Local Govt. Revenue Estimates for Leisure <sup>1</sup>	Sports Council <sup>2</sup>	English Sports Council	UK Sports Council	Arts Council <sup>2</sup>	Arts Council of England	Countryside Commission. <sup>2</sup>
1972/3		3.6			13.7		
1977/8	453	11.5			41.7		
1982/3	882	28.0			90.8		11.1
1987/8	1189	37.1			138.4		22.6
1991/2	1725	46			205.0		29.7 <sup>5</sup>
1992/3	1781	47.6			221.2		42.6
1993/4	1762	50.6			225.8		45.6
1994/5	1786	49.8			NA <sup>4</sup>	186	45
1995/6	1839	49.8			NA	191.1	42.1
1996/7	1935	47.4			NA	186.1	25.4 <sup>5,6</sup>
1997/8	1937	NA <sup>3</sup>	36.9	11.8	NA	185.9	
1998/9	2010	NA	36.5	11.6	NA	189.4	
1999/2000	2066	NA	37.9	12.6	NA	218.8	NA

<sup>1</sup> Source: C.I.P.F.A. Annual Leisure Revenue Estimates

<sup>2</sup> Source: Government Expenditure Plans White Papers; Sports Council, Arts Council of GB and Countryside Commission Annual Reports.

<sup>3</sup> The Sports Council ceased to exist (replaced by the UK Sports Council and the English Sports Council) in 1997.

<sup>4</sup> The Arts Council was replaced in England by the Arts Council of England in 1994 with separate Arts Councils established for Scotland and Wales.

<sup>5</sup> The Countryside Commission merged with the Rural Development Commission in 1999 to form the Countryside Agency

<sup>6</sup> The Countryside Commission budgets are inflated in 1991 and deflated in 1997 by the initial addition and the subsequent withdrawal of responsibility for the Countryside Stewardship grant aiding scheme.

### *1976 - c.1984: New Economic Realism and the Re-structuring of the Welfare State*

However, just at the point when sport and recreation were being recognised as 'welfare rights', Britain's financial problems following the recession of the early 1970s, resulted in attempts by the Labour Government, and the incoming Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher from 1979, to stem the growth of public expenditure. In such circumstances, sports expenditure might be seen as a luxury item when cutbacks have been made, and therefore likely to be significantly reduced. However, though welfare spending was attacked it tended to be 'restructured' (spent on different priorities) rather than simply reduced. Britain's industrial relations had been volatile throughout the 1970s and with the onset of urban riots in the early 1980s, sports expenditure for the inner cities was reinforced by special government programmes such as Urban Aid, and by Sports Council programmes targeting disadvantaged areas. Thus, sports policy had, in effect, in this period moved from a concern with sport for all to a concern with sport for the most volatile groups, particularly young, unemployed, males, living in the deprived areas of Britain's inner cities (Henry, 2001).

TABLE 2. INNER AREA PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE 1987-90

	1987/8	1988/9	1989/90
Sport and Recreation	20.7	19.3	12.2
Community Centres	18.3	13.1	10.2
Health	12.2	11.6	11.9
Education	9.2	6.4	4.7
All Social Objectives	83.3	66.7	56.6
Housing Objectives	24.4	24.6	24.6
Environmental Objectives	49.1	46.1	44.3
Economic Objectives	100.5	115.6	120.5

Source: Treasury. (1990). *The Government's Expenditure Plans 1991/2 - 1993/4*. London: HMSO.

#### *1985-1997 State flexibilisation and disinvestment*

By the mid-1980s it was clear both that urban riots were in decline, and that they had posed no significant threat to overall social stability. Government expenditure on sport, as in other areas, began to be redirected in a number of substantive ways. First, central government spending on sport in the inner city for social purposes was significantly reduced. Table 2 illustrates the shift in expenditure for the Inner Areas funding scheme (an element in the government's Urban Programme). The focus on social and community development for urban areas was to be replaced by an emphasis on economic development. Second, local government expenditure on sport and recreation was finally curbed by central government in the 1990s (CIPFA, 1995). Third, commercial management practices and companies were introduced into public sector owned sports facilities, the Conservative government introducing legislation to require local authorities to allow commercial companies to compete with the local authorities themselves for the contracts to manage their sports facilities from 1989. This process was termed Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) and was applied to a wide variety of local authority services.

The fourth significant change was that the Sports Council's traditional policy priorities were subtly altered by government when in 1992 the Minister for Sport announced that the government viewed the promotion of sport for all to be the concern of local government rather than the Sports Council which should limit itself to the twin priorities of sporting excellence and sport for the young. Indeed, when the Conservative government published its plan for sport in the shape of its policy paper *Sport: Raising the Game* in 1995 (Department of National Heritage, 1995), no mention of sport for all or of the role of local government was made at all. This shifting of responsibility onto local government took place at the same time as local government was being pressed to reduce its expenditure on services.

Although local government was being pressured to reduce financial costs it was also recognising the usefulness of sport not as a social service but as a vehicle for promoting the city, or 'civic boosterism' (Gratton & Henry, 2001), and this represents a fifth significant policy change. Sport was increasingly employed as a tool of economic development for city marketing.

The final and perhaps the most striking change to mention was that of the introduction of

the National Lottery in 1994 which was to provide a major new resource for funding sporting excellence and to provide capital also for community based facilities (as well as for the arts and heritage and millennium projects). We shall return to this below.

The cumulative effect of these policy changes in relation to sport was to reduce levels of provision by the public sector, increasing commercial sector activity in the field of sport (meeting some of the demand previously met by the public sector but at a market, unsubsidised price). The gap between the more and less affluent sectors of the community grew in such a way that it might be said that the policy of 'sport for all' has given way to one of 'sport for those who can afford to pay market prices in the private sector or near market prices in the public sector'.

The publication of *Sport: Raising the Game*, with a foreword by the Prime Minister in July 1995 was the first fundamental governmental policy statement for sport since the publication of the 1975 White Paper *Sport and Recreation* (Department of Environment, 1975). Its principal policy goals - aid to elite sport and in particular the establishment of a British Academy of Sport, promotion of sponsorship, promotion of 'core team games' and competitive sport in school, and the funding of sports scholarships at Britain's universities, represented a mixture of near market approaches, and an appeal to nationalistic sporting aspirations with schemes to be funded through the National Lottery. The emphasis on sponsorship, on the market value to schools and universities of sport (in attracting students and therefore funds) reflects a judicious mixture of neo-liberal economics and the one nation philosophy of traditional Conservatism in the paper.

John Major's own introduction to the statement is indicative of the ideological implications of these policy initiatives. He lays great emphasis on the unifying qualities attributed to sport:

Sport is a binding force between generations and across borders. But, by a miraculous paradox, it is at the same time one of the defining characteristics of nationhood and of local pride. We should cherish it for both of these reasons. (Major, 1995: p. 2)

The point is made more directly in relation to British identity:

Sport is a central part of Britain's National Heritage (sic) We invented the majority of the world's great sports. And most of those we did not invent we codified and helped popularise throughout the world. It could be argued that nineteenth century Britain was the cradle of a leisure revolution every bit as significant as the agricultural and industrial revolutions we launched in the century before. (Major, 1995: p. 2)

Sport, and culture more broadly, are policy areas which lend themselves to such assertions. It is perhaps not coincidental that at the beginning of the run up to the 1997 general election, and at a point when the Conservative Party was riven by internal battles between 'Euro-enthusiasts', and 'Euro-sceptics', the Prime Minister could promote a high profile policy statement, arguing for £100 million pounds of investment in a British Academy of Sport, to foster British sporting success. Such a move would have wide populist support, would emphasise the Conservative commitment to British cultural sovereignty (though legal and political sovereignty would prove to be an ongoing source of strife, viz. Laffan, O'Donnell, &

Smith, 2000) but would be funded outside the tax system by the Lottery. The Prime Minister's interest in the sports field was well documented, and this explains, to some degree, his enthusiastic and high profile support for the policy statement, but the timing of the statement, its tone and message chimed so well with the needs of the Party and Government. Nationalism was an essential element both in One Nation Conservative thinking and in Mrs. Thatcher's own philosophy, which tempered free market neo-liberalism with commitment to the idea of the British nation (Hayes, 1994: p. 92).

The claims made about the value of sport and therefore the rationale for promoting certain types of sport in schools were also redolent of Roger Scruton's position referred to in the last chapter, and outlined in his book *The Meaning of Conservatism* (Scruton, 1980):

Competitive sport teaches valuable lessons which last for life. Every game delivers both a winner and a loser. Sports men (sic) must learn to be both. (Major, 1995: p. 2)

As with the Conservative government's moves to establish a core curriculum in physical education, the emphasis placed on school sport in this document was on competitive sport, and on what Major referred to as "our great traditional sports - cricket, hockey, swimming, athletics, football, netball, rugby, tennis and the like [which are to be] put firmly at the centre of the stage." (Major, 1995: p. 3). The emphasis on tradition, on heritage, on national pride borrowed from the one nation Conservative line, while the funding of the initiatives through the National Lottery avoided the breaching of neo-liberal spending concerns.

The lasting contribution of the Major administration would not, however, be the new UK Academy of Sport, proposed in *Raising the Game*, and which would take on an altogether different form under New Labour, but was to be the National Lottery. The introduction of the Lottery in November 1994 was a master stroke in terms of leisure policy, since it allowed the Conservative government to both decrease tax-driven subsidy and to increase financial support for sport, the arts and heritage, three of four good causes (the other being the Millennium Fund) which were to benefit from this new source of funding. Despite attracting some initial criticism that it constituted a tax on the less affluent who bought most tickets, it proved to be highly popular and a huge commercial success. It vastly increased the amounts of money in the public sector sports and arts economy. In England alone, by April 2000 £ 1.12 billion had been allocated to sport. This greatly exceeded Exchequer (i.e. direct government) support, which even for 2000/1 stood at £ 38 million for the English Sports Council and £ 12.6 million for the UK Sports Council (Department of Culture Media and Sport, 1999).

The Lottery did not, however, constitute a replacement for welfare spending, since funding depended on successful bidding rather than on straightforward assessment of need. The bidding process, particularly initially, was complex, demanded professional resources, and, in the case of the sports fund, required a financial contribution of 35% of the total project costs to be made by the applicant. Disadvantaged communities, which arguably were most in need of financial support, were thus least able to bid successfully, since they were least likely to have access to planning, accounting and other professional skills to present a strong case, and were least likely to be able to generate the 35% contribution required.

The Sports Council responded to this situation and by January 1996 had launched a Priority Areas Initiative, identifying 70 geographical areas of greatest need, for which up to 90% project funding would be made available. However, criticism that the selection of priority



areas was inconsistent and left out large numbers of disadvantaged groups, was evident from the first announcement (Duncan, 1995), and the strategy failed to generate a sufficiently significant increase in successful applications from disadvantaged groups (English Sports Council, 1998), a problem to be addressed by New Labour in its revamping of the Lottery in the 1998 Lottery Act.

The introduction of the Lottery replaced a welfare culture (where services are planned and targeted given a particular policy rationale, but where grant dependency may set in) with a bidding culture (where funds go to those able to bid most effectively). Challenge funding and bidding may have been accompanied by a growth in the funds available to sport and the arts, but a major concern was that the eventual beneficiaries would not be those most in need of support. Such a system was, if unmodified, likely to increase the distance between affluent communities and those in need.

It is clear that, although the Major administration represented a departure from the overtly confrontational and aggressive style of Thatcherite government, it broadly continued the reduced emphasis on public sector spending and greater reliance on market funding in leisure as in other fields of policy. It is ironic, therefore, that while the divided nature of the British social structure was becoming more apparent (Levitas, 1998), and while bidding culture in the field of public funding of sport, if anything, expanded such divisions, the Conservative appeal to a 'common culture' was also an evident theme in sport and leisure policy pronouncements.

#### *1997-2001 New Labour in Search of the Responsible Market*

In relation to sport and leisure policy, the early days of the Labour Government elected in 1997 showed few surprises in terms of policy initiatives. The renaming of the Department of National Heritage as Culture, Media and Sport, (with Chris Smith as Secretary of State, the first openly gay MP to be elected to Parliament) and the appointment of Tony Banks as Minister for Sport (with his background of radical work in local government leisure policy with the Greater London Council in the early 1980s, Bianchini, 1987) might seem to have indicated a drift away from a concern with tradition and national heritage. However, the Labour Government agreed to implement the Conservative policy proposal to establish a national Academy of Sport (to be named the UK Institute of Sport) though with a series of regional centres rather than a single green field site as envisaged by John Major. The government also signalled the end of compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) in local government services (including sport). However CCT had not proved as revolutionary as the Conservatives had intended and it was to be replaced anyway by a requirement that each local authority should demonstrate that it is obtaining 'best value' from the arrangements for service delivery which it adopts, implying a far from straight forward return to traditional public sector management. Market approaches were seen as wholly acceptable, assuming the market could be persuaded or regulated to act in a 'responsible' manner.

Thus although the period of the latter half of the Thatcher era and the Major years is described in our typology as a period of 'flexibilisation and disinvestment' on the part of government, the early days of the Labour Government appeared to many not to have offered a radical alternative. The active pursuit of privatisation which had happened under the Conservatives, was not evident but the concern to control local government expenditure was a common theme, as was the concern to reform the major leisure quangos.

However, though there are some obvious policy continuities between the Major and New Labour administrations, there are also some significant policy differences which have emerged. Perhaps the most significant difference between the Blair government and its predecessor is the New Labour's avowed commitment to tackling social exclusion in and through sport and the arts. The Social Exclusion Unit set up by the Cabinet Office in 1997 incorporated programme action teams, focusing on different aspects of exclusion, and its Programme Action Team 10 reported in 1999 (Department of Culture Media and Sport, 2000a) on policy options to be adopted.

This policy advice underpinned, for example, the establishment by Sport England (the new name for the English Sports Council from 1999) of Sport Action Zones in 2000, which were priority areas for promotion of sports development.

The Government's Social Exclusion Unit's Policy Action Team on sport and arts (PAT10) puts forward clear recommendations and key principles for how sport should be used to help combat social exclusion. The implementation of Sport England's Lottery Fund Strategy 1999 - 2009 sets out initial proposals for how Sport Action Zones will be implemented as part of our concerted effort to help reduce economic and social deprivation through sport. (Sport England, 2000)

The SAZs, like their predecessors 'Areas of Special Need' defined by the Sports Council in the previous Labour administration of the 1970s, were selected on the basis of indicators of deprivation from the Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions' 'Index of Local Conditions'. They thus shared with their predecessors all the limitations of an area-based, social indicator constructed, focus for policy (Henry, 1984). However they did reflect New Labour's concern to mediate the impact of the reduction of welfare policies. While the Conservatives announced in the early 1990s the abandonment of Sport for All as a policy goal (or at least a piece of policy rhetoric) in 1994 (Rodda, 1994), Labour reasserted its commitment to Sport for All both in its pre-election document (Labour Party, 1997), and in the Government's sports policy statement *A Sporting Future for All*, (Department of Culture Media and Sport, 2000b). In addition, it recognised the inequities inherent in bidding culture for funding via the National Lottery and introduced legislation in the 1998 National Lottery Act to allow distributors to be proactive in seeking grants from underrepresented communities. Thus, there has been a real attempt to ensure that resources reach disadvantaged communities.

While both the Labour government's policy paper *A Sporting Future for All*, published in 2000 (Department of Culture Media and Sport, 2000b) and the Conservatives' *Sport: Raising the Game* placed great emphasis on sport in schools, the emphasis on the part of Labour is with the use of schools as community focal points, particularly in disadvantaged communities where the school may represent one of the few physical and policy resources available to foster improvements. Labour announced its intention to expand the number of Specialist Sports Colleges (providing for sporting excellence and community sports provision) nationally to 110, and to use them as a vehicle not simply for developing young talent, but also to develop sports provision in other associated schools in the catchment. 600 school sports co-ordinators were to be employed to promote wider sports participation, the sale of publicly owned playing fields was to be halted, and 'after-school clubs', funded by the Lottery, would promote sporting opportunities and would be an additional source of physical education teaching in a less formal

setting. All this stands in contrast to the emphasis on positive socialisation and national identity through traditional team sports which represents the emphasis for education in *Raising the Game*, the Conservative statement.

A further distinctive feature of New Labour's approach was its willingness to regulate the free market, by (selective rather than widespread) intervention. The dangers of the interpenetration of ownership between media interests and those of professional sport, particularly in the British case professional football, is one high profile area where market regulation has been evident. The government's blocking in 1999 of the BSkyB bid to buy a controlling interest in Manchester United was the most publicised such intervention. However, the establishing of the Football Task Force and its subsequent final report (Football Task Force, 1999), seeks to find ways of protecting the interests of consumers by modifying the ticketing and merchandising practices of clubs, and promoting supporter influence in the running of clubs, which had been greatly affected by the increasing tendency for clubs to be floated on the stock exchange.

The nature of the state, or what is seen as the state's legitimate role in sport and leisure, had shifted in the last two decades of the twentieth century. While the strident ideology of Thatcherism was no longer evident, the balance between the market, the state, and the rest of civil society had been reset, and with an increasingly globalised economy (and globalised polity, with the deepening of the European Union) there seemed, to some commentators, to be less opportunity for intervention at the level of the nation state to 'make a difference'. In the preceding section on New Labour, we have suggested that such claims are overstated and that there has been evidence of an approach to sports policy on the part of New Labour which distinguishes it, to some degree, from its Conservative predecessors. Nevertheless, although the general affluence of the population was growing (Mintel, 1998b), inequalities in use of sport and leisure facilities (Mintel, 1998a) and expenditure (Henry, 2001) were still strongly evident at the end of the century

### *The Evolution of the Japanese Sports Policy from 1950*

#### *Establishment of the sport system of post-war period in Japan*

Although Western sports had been imported into Japan during the nineteenth century in the Meiji period, participation was largely limited to university students, who formed part of the Japanese social elite. Prior to this indigenous Japanese sports had existed such as kendo, judo, karate, naginata and so on, and they continued alongside the western imports into the twentieth century. Foreign sports were prohibited by the 1939 People's Fitness Act which reflected the concern for fitness for military duty and required people to check their fitness twice per year. The significance of sport for the Japanese war effort is illustrated by the fact that in 1942 the Prime Minister became president of the Japanese Association For Amateur Sport (JAAS) with the Ministers of Education and of Health and Welfare becoming vice-presidents.

During the immediate post-war period of administration under the Allies, physical education was introduced in the context of a westernised curriculum, and after staging the Asian Games in 1958 and gaining the nomination to stage the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, the Japanese legislature passed the 1961 Sports Act which incorporated articles on both elite sport and mass participation, though the former, which was deemed important in terms of national

pride and international image, was given greater prominence.

Japan's post-war sports policy system really emerged in the period after the staging of the Tokyo Olympics. A national fitness campaign was launched in 1964 in the immediate aftermath of the Games, involving thirteen ministries and government offices. The factors behind the launching of this campaign included concerns about poor Olympic performance, about national fitness levels and fitness for work in the light of the growing economy, and about the spiritual integration of the nation in preparation for the 1968 centenary of the Meiji restoration. Other policy developments included the formation of voluntary sport organisations such as the New Japan Sport League (Shintairen), and the inauguration of the Physical Education School of the Armed ('Self Defence') Forces. These initiatives might be said to constitute the pre-history of a fully-fledged national sport / sport for all policy (Uchiumi, 1993).

*The Early 1970s - Establishing "the National Sport" (Sport for all) policy*

In the period 1972 - 73 'the national sport' policy was established, supported by the publication of *Keizai Shakai Kihon Keikaku* (Economic and Social Master Plan for a Revitalised Welfare Society) by the Economic Planning Agency, (cabinet meeting, February 13, 1973). In fact, 1973 was termed the "year of the beginning of welfare policy" in Japan since this was the year in which the government adopted not only GNP but also a new national welfare index as indicators of social development.

The factors which gave rise to this promotion of a welfare orientation included criticism from other countries concerning prolonged and intensified working hours, the influence of environmental pollution and environmental destruction, low levels nationally of existing welfare provision, and the increasing leisure demands of the population. Welfare programmes did exist in the major companies but these were not universally available and Japan was losing ground in leisure and welfare terms to other nations.

In the Master Plan, 'community' was emphasised as a crucial element in the actual embodiment of welfare. Each ministry and agency had to construct community plans or designs, and a new term, 'community sports', was used publicly for the first time. As a common project of sport-related ministries and government offices, the promotion of community sports was inaugurated, and thus the need for leisure policies arose, involving the establishment of organisations to take responsibility for leisure (and sports) policy in each ministry or agency. The Advisory Council of Health and Physical Education also submitted to the Minister of Education a report *On the Fundamental Policies for the Promotion of Physical Education and Sport* in 1972 which reflected the policy of welfare concern and was the first to promote sport for all. The development and maintenance of information and statistics relating to community sport (including much of the information drawn on for the purposes of this paper) dates from this period, which represents the beginning of a new era in sports policy.

*The Growth of Neo-liberalism in Japanese Policy, and the Implications of the Rise and Fall of the Bubble Economy*

The welfare orientation of the Japanese government was relatively short-lived, since, in response to the global recession of the late 1970s, public spending was squeezed as a neo-liberal economic philosophy emerged. The Nakasone administrative reforms in Japan paralleled the Reaganite and Thatcherite campaigns in the USA and Britain, and incorporated measures to

FIG. 1. SPORTS BUDGET OF MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

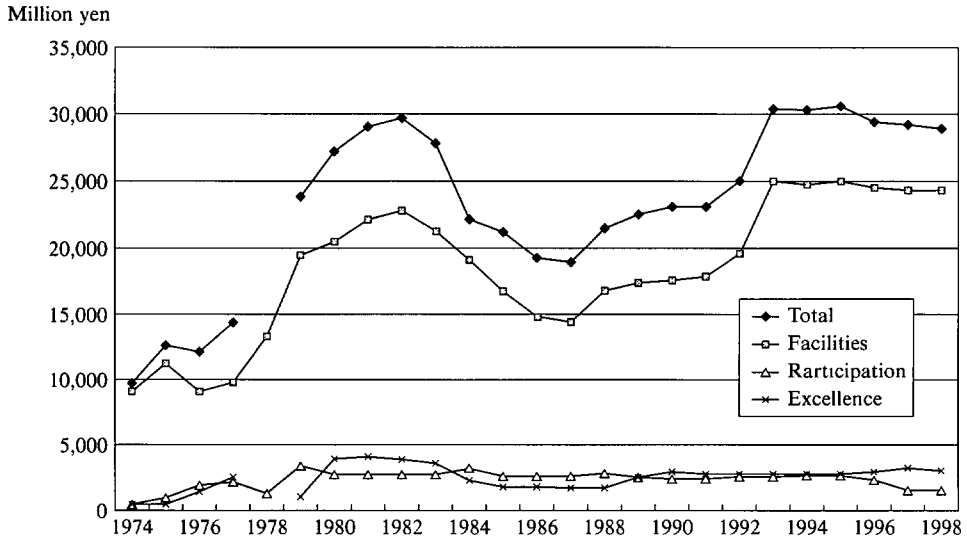
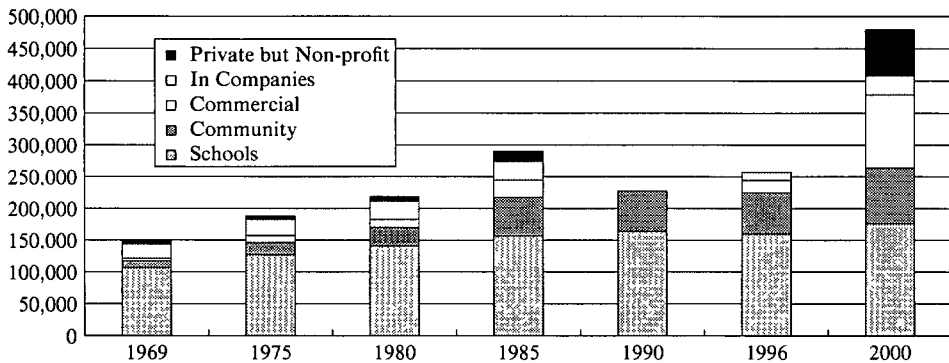


FIG. 2. NUMBERS OF SPORTS FACILITIES IN JAPAN



Source: 'Sports Facilities in Japan' by the Ministry of Education

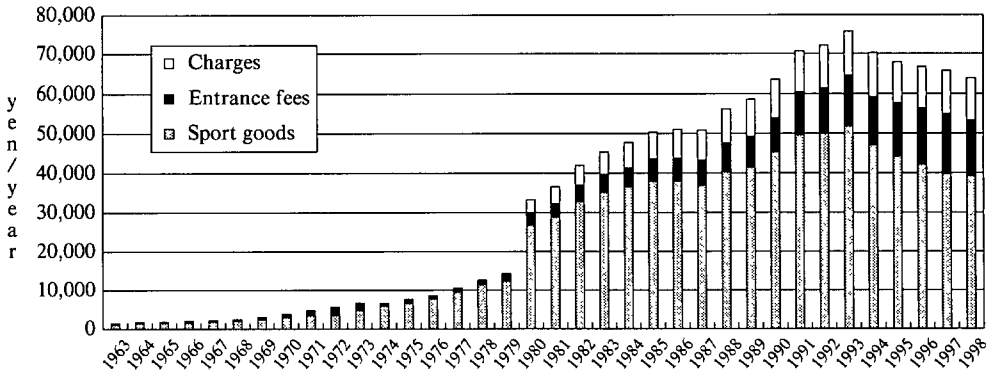
Notes: 1. The figure of 2000 was estimated by the 'Sports Vision 21' by the Ministry of Trade and Industry in 1990 at the peak time of the Bubble Economy.

2. The data of the commercial etc in 1990 was impossible.

protect the interests of multinational corporations with attendant problems for domestic manufacturing industry, rising unemployment and a drastic curtailment of welfare spending.

In relation to domestic sports, policy planning activity virtually ceased throughout the 1980s. The government failed to consult its own Advisory Council of Health and Physical Education until 1989, and the sports budget of the Ministry of Education (the principal ministry in respect of sports policy) fell in real terms across the 1980s and 1990s from its height in 1982 (see fig. 1).

FIG. 3. SPORT EXPENDITURE IN HOUSEHOLD



Sources: "Annual report of Household" General Affairs Bureau

Notes: 1. 'Sport goods' contains 'sport goods', 'ball', 'baseball goods' and other goods from 1963 to 79, 'golf goods' from 1980.

2. 'Entrance fees' contains 'entrance fee for watching matches' till 1979 and from 1980 plus 'using charge of facilities'.

Following the collapse of the bubble economy in 1991, and the subsequent economic depression which has continued across the 1990s many multinational corporations have relocated to other South East Asian countries, with attendant growth in Japanese unemployment and deregulation. In addition almost 30,000 commercial sports facilities have disappeared. (Fig. 2) In response local authorities have endeavoured to meet the demand for sport from local people by making huge local bonds to finance provision.

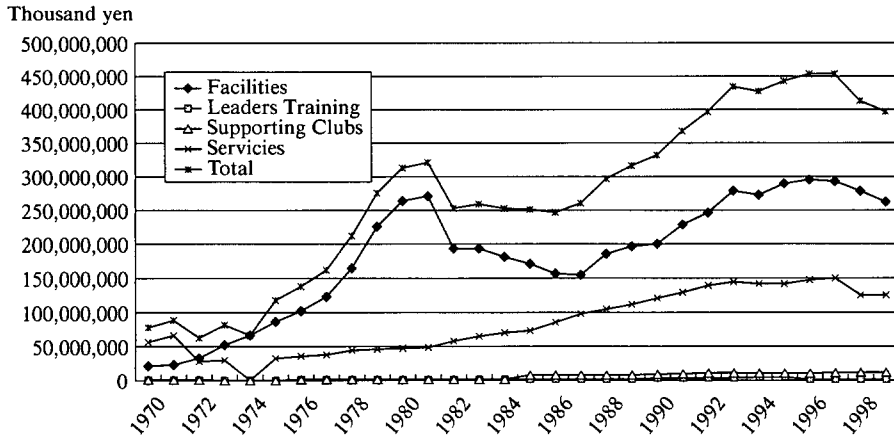
#### *The Position of Sport in Japan in the 1990s*

In response to the economic decline of the 1990s, the public finance strategy in Japan has been to promote 'the construction state', investing in major public works of 50 trillion yen, and social security of 20 trillion yen. The ratio of capital investment to social security expenditure in Japan of 2.5:1 has continued for the last 40 years, while in Western countries the ratio has been the reverse, namely 1:2 (Miyamoto, 1998; Igarashi & Ogawa, 1997). In the 1990s, following Japan-USA discussion, it was agreed that 430 trillion yen (later to rise to 630 trillion yen) would be used to stimulate domestic demand over ten years. This policy has however been deemed to have been wasteful with large-scale environmentally destructive public works. Local authorities established local bonds to finance these initiatives and have thus accumulated very big debts and associated financial difficulties.

In terms of the work environment, although annual total working hours decreased in the 1990s, and dropped by 1842 hours in 1999 alone, there have continued to be many 'deaths by overwork' (Karoushi) and the actual figure of overtime work without payment is unknown.

The impact of the recession since the collapse of the bubble economy is clearly evident in expenditure on sport. As shown in fig. 3, sport-related consumption by household increased steadily from the early 1960s, with the growth in household expenditure on sporting goods being the highest. However, it has fallen considerably since peaking in 1993, with the stagnation of expenditure on sporting goods especially remarkable.

FIG. 4. BUDGETS OF ALL CONCERNING MINISTRIES(12) FOR PHYSICAL FITNESS



Source: Budgets of All Concerning Ministries for Physical Fitness' by The General Affairs Agency

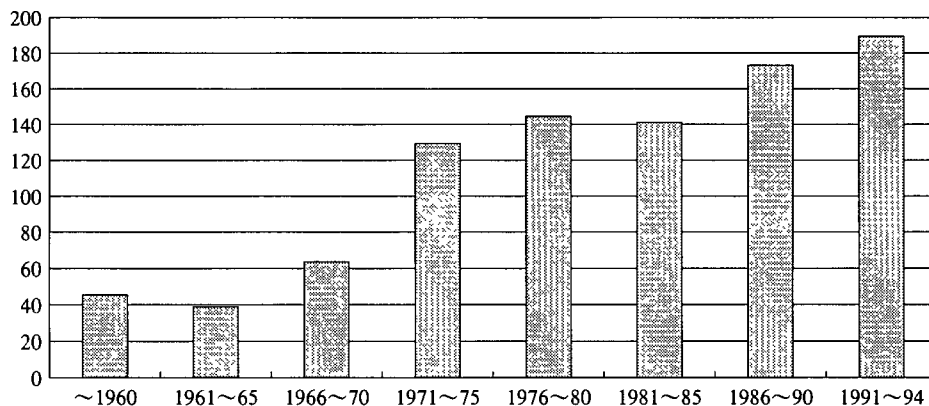
*Sport administration in the 1990s*

The transition of the budget dedicated to physical fitness of all related ministries is as illustrated in fig. 4. After the rapid rise of the budget in the 1970s, it fell away in the 1980s with the introduction of administrative reform, rising again during the period of growth of the bubble economy from the second half of the 1980s through to the early 1990s, only to stagnate and fall in 1998 and 1999.

The items of the budget for the 'physical fitness' enterprise of each the 13 ministries/agencies fall largely under the headings of 'facility management (mainly construction)', 'leadership training', 'club support' and 'service development'. The elements for each organisation are as follows:

- the Management and Co-ordination Agency: services promotion such as the national movement for physical fitness;
- the Economic Planning agency: services promotion such as the people's life administration;
- the Environment Agency: facility maintenance such as natural parks, leadership training;
- the Ministry of Education: services promotion, facilities maintenance, leadership training, organisation training;
- the Ministry of Health and Welfare: health centre and juvenile welfare facilities, facilities maintenance, organisation training, services promotion;
- the Social Insurance Agency: facilities maintenance such as a health management services;
- the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries: health promotion in the forest, milk services for school lunches etc;
- the Ministry of International Trade and Industry: support for health improvement services, facility maintenance;

FIG. 5. NEWLY BUILT SPORTS SECTIONS IN MUNICIPALITIES



Source: 'Report on the Sport Participation Development System in Municipalities'

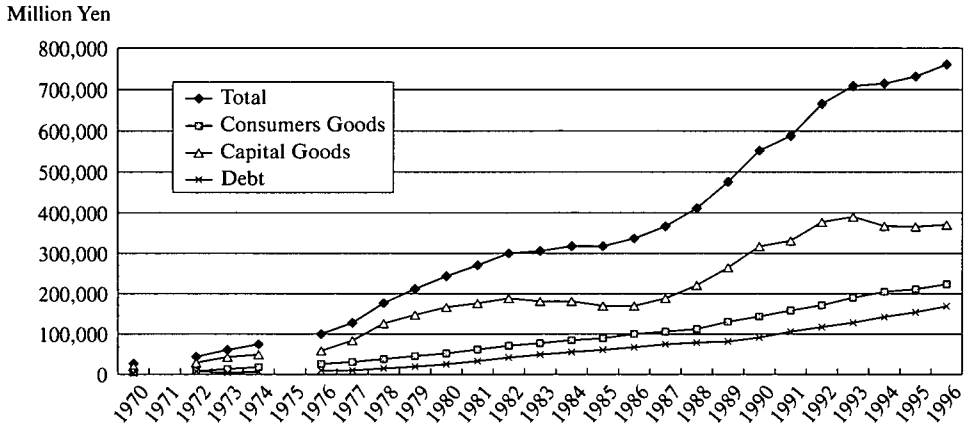
- the Ministry of Transport: seashore environment, facility maintenance, service promotion etc.;
- the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications: recreation facilities, a radio-gymnastics programme, services promotion, organisation training and a health support services, facility maintenance;
- the Ministry of Labour: workers' sport facilities, youth labour leaders 'university', organisation training, leadership training, services promotion;
- the Ministry of Construction: facility maintenance, welfare-facilities maintenance such as city parks;
- the Ministry of Home Affairs: for the local bonds of social welfare facilities, and recreation sport facility, 'facility maintenance.

In relation to local government activity in sport, sport sections in municipalities (fig. 5), the number of sport staff, and the development of sport promotion plans, all increased during the 1990s. The sports budgets for all municipalities in Japan are indicated in figure 6. While the budget of the Ministry of Education has been in major decline as illustrated in figure 1, many municipalities have been able to respond somehow to the demands of their local residents. Even following administrative reform in the 1980s, and the rise and collapse of the bubble economy local authority sports budgets have tended to increase. The level of debt repayments for local authorities (who have tended to fund facility construction through bond issues) is however a worrying phenomenon.

In terms of central government sports policy, the Physical Education Bureau in the Ministry of Education is the leading section managing all sport policies in schools, community areas and excellent sports. Its sport related budgets is as illustrated in fig. 1 its 'diffusion programme for lifelong sport' and the 'development of sporting excellence' have changed little in cash terms since the 1970s, reflecting a significant decrease in real terms. Thus funding for the promotion of national sports participation (sport for all) and sporting excellence simply has not been available from this source. Moreover, the budget for facility construction which

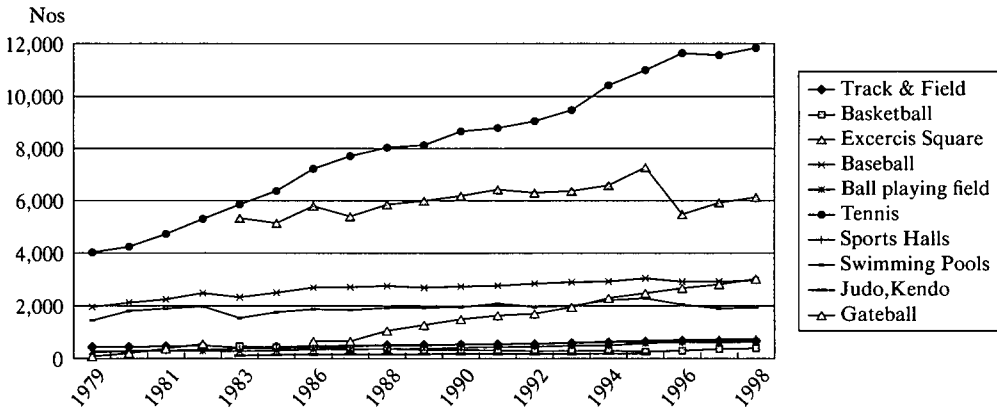


FIG. 6. SPORTS BUDGET OF ALL MUNICIPALITIES(approximately 3300)



Source: 'Report on the Local Education Budget' by the Ministry of Education

FIG. 7. SPORTS FACILITIES IN CITY PARKS(Ministry of Construction)

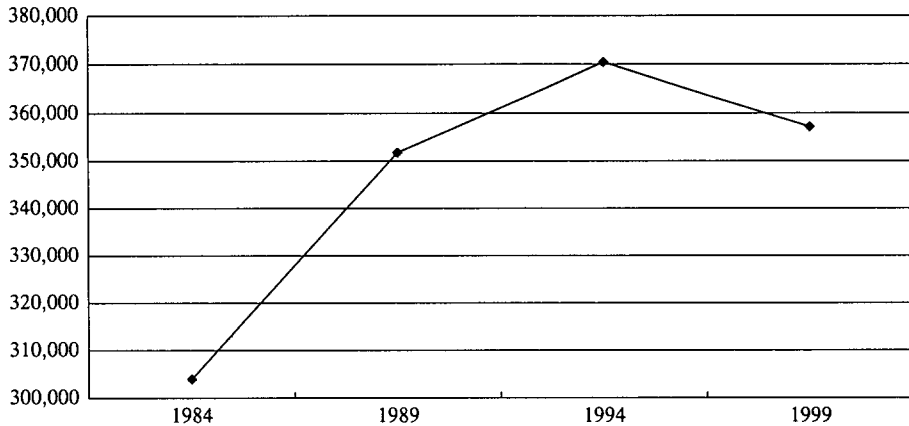


Source: 'Kouen-Ryokuchi(Parks and Green Area)' by Japan Association of Parks and GreenArea

stood at its height in 1982 at 23 billion yen had been reduced by 15 billion yen in 1987, and although it subsequently increased, it has stagnated since 1993.

The number of sports facilities in existence in 1996 after the collapse of bubble economy had declined substantially from the level in 1985 in all sectors (see fig. 2). Whether for 'non-profit private sector' sport facilities, or for sports facilities in the 'place of work', or in the 'profit private sector', all had decreased in number significantly. The absolute number of sport facilities has thus fallen. The picture may look somewhat confusing since the number of facilities indicated for 2000 was that estimated in *Sports Vision 21* a report produced by the study group of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry in 1990 which made grossly

FIG. 8. NUMBERS OF SPORT CLUBS USING PUBLIC FACILITIES



Source: 'Survey on Sport Clubs' by Japan Association on Sports Clubs

over-optimistic projections for the year 2000.

The construction of sports facilities in city parks was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Construction, assisted in many cases by funding relating to the National Sports Meeting held every year and supported by the state. Fig. 7 shows the growth for each type of facility, and demonstrates that tennis and gateball (similar to croquet) have grown consistently. Recreational open spaces fell in number to a slight degree in the 1990s.

Although the number of sports participants decreased from 350 million per year to 300 million people in the second half of the 1980s, it had risen slightly by 1993 only to fall again after the collapse of the bubble economy, and descended below 300 million by 1997. While it recovered a little in 1998, the overall tendency in the 1990s has been one of decline. Moreover, the number of community sport clubs, which use predominantly public facilities, fell between 1994 and 1999 as shown in figure 8, further reflecting the decline in participation.

#### *The Leisure Market and Sport*

The size of the leisure market in 1980 was about 40 trillion yen rising to about 86 trillion yen in 1995, reflecting the growth of leisure and sport cited above. If sport is considered on its own (see fig. 9), the growth was from 2 trillion yen in 1982 through 6 trillion yen in 1990 to 5.4 trillion yen in 1998. However, it had reduced gradually in the 1990s after the collapse of bubble economy. In *Sports Vision 21* published in 1990 by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry a projection was made to 2000, and this projection along with the actual out-turn for other years in terms of sports facility construction is seen in figure 2. According to this document, the projected value of the sports market in 2000 would have been 16 trillion yen.

The nature of the sports market can be seen in fig. 10. It follows a similar pattern to that for the classification in the market of household economy expenditure seen in figure 3. Although the sports market grew up to 1992, the subsequent depression of 'facility and lesson fees' and 'ball game goods' is very marked from 1993.

There was also a remarkable trend in spectator sport in the 1990s. In particular the

FIG. 9. SIZE OF CONSUMER MARKET AND SPORTS EXPENDITURE

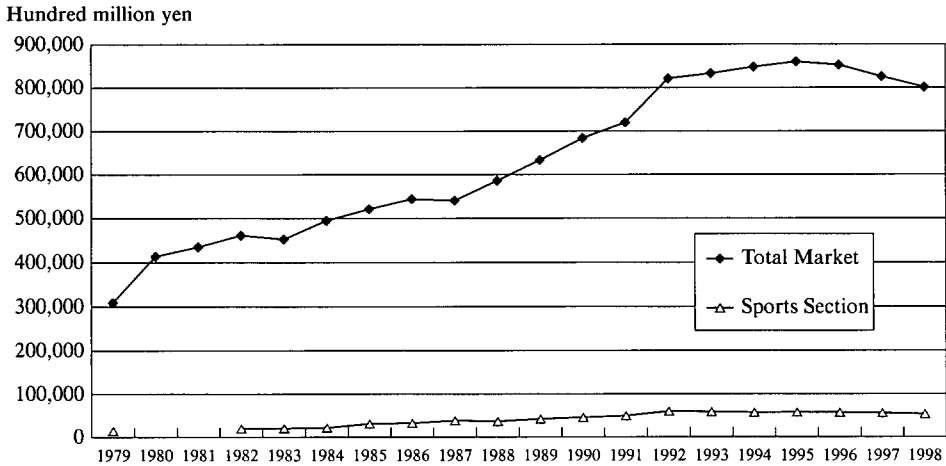
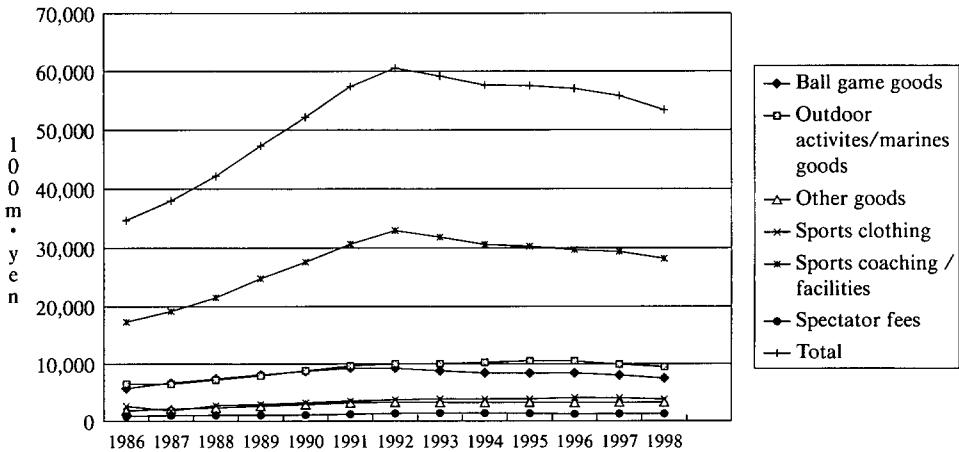


FIG. 10. SPORTS EXPENDITURE IN THE MARKET

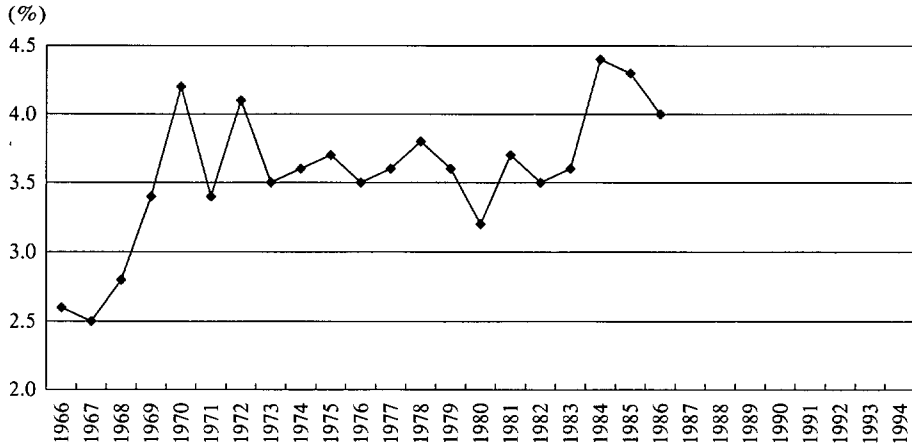


Source: "White paper on Leisure" Leisure Development Centre, 1986~1998

establishment of J. League in soccer in 1993 and the behaviour of supporters provided the stimulus for an inquiry into 'What is Spectator Sport?' I will limit myself here to three sets of observations on spectator sport in the 1990s - sports broadcasting, attendance at professional sport and sports journalism.

Fig. 11 indicates the proportion of televised time devoted to sports programmes in commercial broadcasting. (NHK does not issue such statistics.) Although 'sports programmes' as a separate item have not been declared since 1988 but subsumed under other items (probably 'amusement'), nevertheless one can say that it rose significantly from the 1960s up

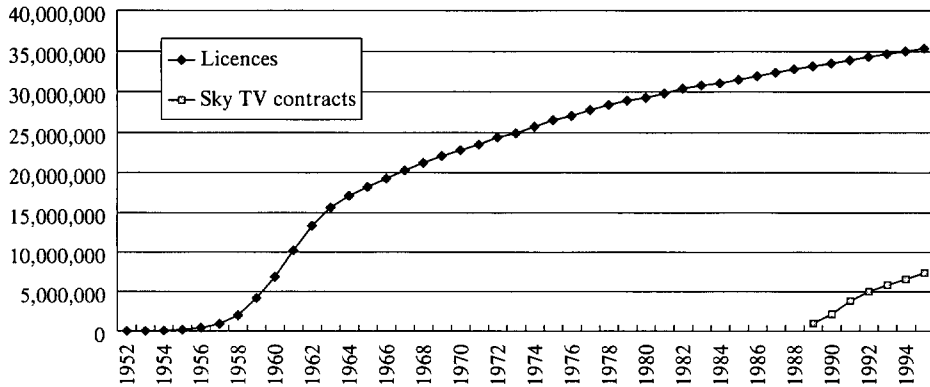
FIG. 11. RATIO OF SPORT IN TV PROGRAMMES



Source: "Annual Review of Broadcasting in Japan", Japan Private Broadcasting League, 1980, 1994

Note: Since 1988 the item 'Sport' disappeared

FIG. 12. NUMBER OF TV LICENCES

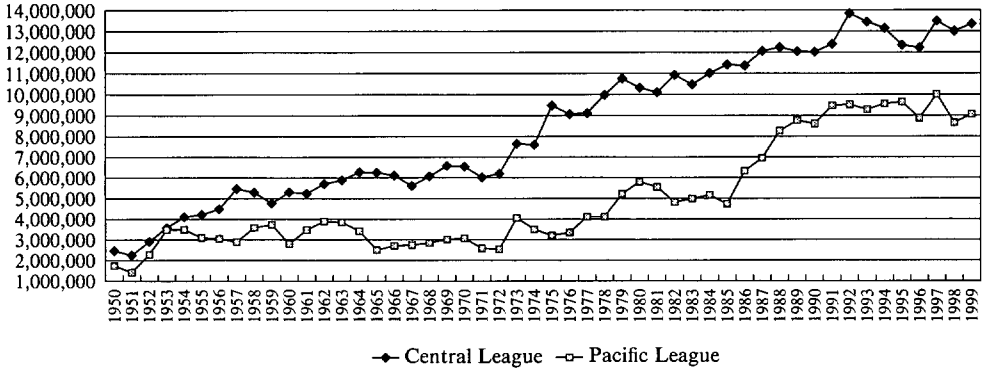


Source: "TV contracts statistics" NHK, 1995

to 1980s. However, though this implies more sport on television, we are unable to discern which sports have been broadcast and whether programming took place in prime time or not. Nevertheless, it seems clear that sport broadcasting has grown and indeed much sport broadcasting is incorporated in other programmes and would not be visible in statistics anyway. For example, news programmes incorporate 'politics, the economy and sports' as their three main items and therefore sport may account for far more than official statistics indicate.

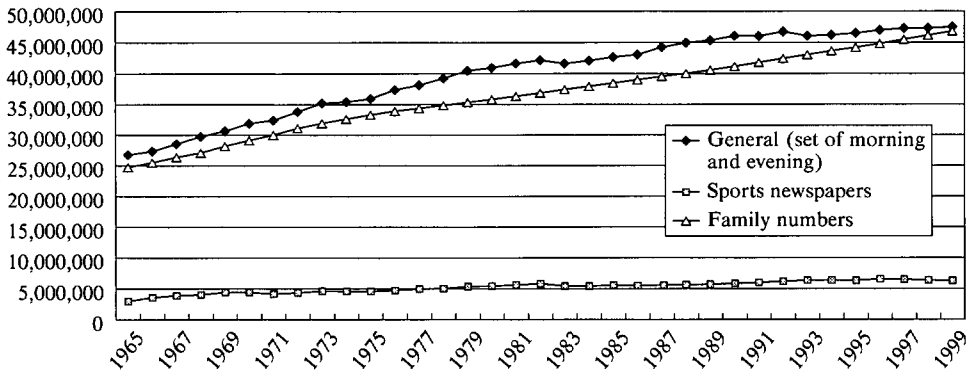
Fig. 12 shows the total number of television licences issued in Japan (for NHK: Nippon

FIG. 13. SPECTATORS FOR PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL



Source: Central League, 2000 Green Book, 50th Anniversary 1950-2000.  
Pacific League, 2000 Blue Book, 50th.

FIG. 14. NEWSPAPERS(GENERAL, SPORT): DAILY CIRCULATION



Source: Japan Newspapers Association

Housou Kyoukai, Japan Broadcasting Corporation). The number increased considerably with the Tokyo Olympic Games in 1964 and this growth has continued. Japan is moving from the position of one TV for every house to one TV for every inhabitant. When we consider these two previous items together, the proportion of sports programming and the number of TV licences, the considerable influence of sports broadcasting is evident.

Fig. 13 plots the growth of post-war professional baseball spectatorship. In the 1990s, the Central League's average attendance was approximately 13 million people per year and the Pacific League about 9.5 million. In terms of the influence of the J. League, the Pacific League does not appear to have been affected but the Central League experienced some decline between 1993 and 1996, though it is not clear whether this is an effect of competition or simply of economic downturn in the 1990s.

Fig. 14 shows the growth in circulation of newspapers (general and sport). General

newspapers and the sports newspapers have extended their circulation almost in parallel with the growth of the number of families. While this might explain to some extent the growth of circulation in general newspapers it does not explain why sports newspaper circulation has grown in parallel. The sports section of general newspapers have been greatly expanded since the 1980s, but so too have the political and financial columns of sports newspapers, and thus it is argued that they are converging. Nevertheless it seems evident that sports reporting per se has grown significantly. Spectator sport and ancillary broadcast and press coverage has thus grown considerably in the 1990s becoming an integral part of people's lives.

### *Conclusion*

Even from this brief review of sports policy change in Britain and Japan, it is clear that we can point to common themes emerging in both systems. These include the commercialisation of sport; increasing privatisation of provision; the growing 'mediatisation' of sport, which is also reflected in provision of spectating through commercial channels; and the increasing individualisation in patterns of participation. However, these broad similarities do not support any crude notion of policy convergence. Global trends and conditions have had an impact on sport and policy in Britain and Japan but they have been experienced differently and though there are some similarities in terms of policy response there are important differences.

In Japan the economic downturn of the 1990s has been considerably greater than that experienced in Britain. The Japanese policy response of focusing on construction as a means of responding to the need for stimulation of the economy represents a neo-Keynesian strategy. The Japanese political response has not been wholeheartedly but rather has been selectively neo-liberal. The emphasis on construction (and with it the benefits of construction of public sports facilities) does not have an equivalent in the UK context, though Lottery money has been used for promoting construction to some degree. By contrast the downturn in commercial investment in sport noted in the Japanese context has not been experienced in the same way. Commercial investment in sport and recreation and the commercialisation of the management of publicly owned facilities has grown steadily in the 1990s in Britain.

The two policy traditions of Britain and Japan have been weakened by the global slumps and booms of the last three decades but the contemporary policy position cannot be understood without reference to those policy traditions. The post-war corporatist approach of the Japanese state relying heavily on business partners, especially the zaibatsu, to provide for the social needs of workers, has been weakened by the impact of unemployment and the loss of lifelong carers within the same company. However the Japanese approach remains one of essentially complementing provision for social needs by employers. Similarly, though in the British case the welfare state has been severely weakened by Conservative and even new Labour policies of squeezing public expenditure and promoting privatisation of provision, nevertheless policies such as the establishment of Sport Action Zones, and anti social exclusion measures incorporating sport, reflect the welfare tradition.

While there is some 'policy learning' going on across sports policy communities internationally, reflected in the reasonably widespread 'sport for all' slogan, or more recently the emphasis on national sports elite production systems, such policy endeavours have been interpreted differently in different contexts. The differences evidenced are a reflection of the

differing cultural and political histories of the national systems. While the modernisation thesis and some crude elements of globalisation theory refer to growing policy consensus and convergence, this review of sports policy suggests support for the notion of 'local modernities', that is the differential experience locally of the same global phenomena, and the differential policy responses based on local conditions and histories, but with increasing interaction between what were previously relatively localised and separate national policy systems.

The research reported in this paper draws on material from a comparative study of sports policy at the national and local level in Britain and Japan. In the next volume of this journal we will evaluate the development of policy at the local level in both national contexts.

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