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Company Strategies and Sport Models

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Company Strategies and Sport Models– a summary

The comparison in this article between companies in Japan and Sweden shows that although there are obvious historical and cultural differences between the countries different routes towards becoming modern democratic welfare states, differences in the industrialization and in modernization; differences in how sport were introduced and how it was shaped, there are similarities in how companies used sport in company strategies.

Company Strategies and Sport Models

The connection between sport and society is a growing field of interest both among Swedish historians and historians in other countries. Several studies show that sport offers a major opportunity for social groups to consolidate and extend their values; something that has become increasingly important with the growing complexity of modern society.¹ Organized sport does not simply reflect developments in political and economic spheres, but also helps to shape society.²

In several studies the Australian historian Brian Stoddart has focused on the British and the use of team sport and especially cricket as a means of implementing British culture in the colonies. His conclusion is that the game was not just a sporting code but also a political institution. Cricket was introduced by the imperial authorities for reasons other than recreation. Cricket taught the middle and upper ruling classes in the former colonies respect for authority, loyalty, honesty, courage, persistence, teamwork and humility. “The language of sport became a code, so that to play the game meant not so much to be involved in simply physical activity as to subscribe to the social conventions and beliefs which sport symbolized.”³ In addition, in a study on the origins of sport in Asian society, the British historian J. A. Mangan has shown that the establishment of English public schools in the colonies “embraced a belief in the games field as a

¹ Brian Stoddart, *Sport, culture and history*, Routledge, (2008)

² Brian Stoddart, (2008), p 45

³ Brian Stoddart, 2008, p 73

critical source of moral education.”⁴ Playing games was an integral part of an educational philosophy. Morality was a product of play, and the games field essentially a means of moral education.⁵ Indeed, sport was an integral part of an educational philosophy among industrial leaders. In this article my interest is on how organized sport was used in industrial companies in Sweden and Japan as a way of establishing cooperation.

Sport and companies in different countries

Several studies from different countries reinforce the conclusion that sport has been viewed as a means of achieving improved health and moral fostering, and above all a sense of removing class barriers and deepening social solidarity. In the case of companies that used soccer, and sports in general, as part of their welfare schemes, it became a way of setting up social control. Explanations given by various scholars as to why sports, and above all football, attracted support, suggest that the leader/leaders strove for local prestige and identification with the local community, and in some cases had a genuine interest in sport. Furthermore, sport was viewed as an arena that helped to legitimize the “natural” hierarchy and maintain hegemony. There are also scholars who indicate that sport was a site of class struggle and continuous debate, and that it provided the working classes with a voice to challenge the prevailing power relations in society.⁶ In the historiography of sport in Britain, several scholars have touched on the subject of management relationship with sport and above all football. Many of these works indicate that industrial companies had an instrumental view of sport and deliberately exploited it for their own interest.⁷ In his study of the football club West Ham United C. Korr indicates that it was started by A. F. Hill, the owner of Thames Ironworks in London’s East End. Hill’s explicit wish was that it would strengthen the “co-operation between workers and management.”⁸ He saw football also as a way of “raising the morale of his workers and the reputation of his firm.”⁹ John Bale underlines the tradition and the importance of the rootedness of English football clubs: “... A

⁴ Mangan J. A., “Imperial Origins – Beginnings” in *Sport in Asian Society*, Eds Mangan J. A. and Fan Hong, Cass, 2003

⁵ Mangan J. A., 2003, p 37

⁶ See for example S. G. Jones, *Sport, Politics and the working class*, Manchester, 1998

⁷ See for example C. Korr, *West Ham United*, London, 1986. J Bale, *Sport and Place*, London, 1989. J Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture*, New York, 1986

⁸ C. Korr, 1986, pp 3-4

⁹ C. Korr, 1986, p 4

tradition in British football is its localism to support football was to become involved in a pattern of local loyalties. Working class people could be helped to feel that they belonged to a community by the activities of the local football team and their attachment to that team.”¹⁰

Using the company magazine of the machine tool industry Alfred Herbert Ltd (1888-1983) in Coventry, the English historian Paul Gilchrist did an interesting study of the construction of a company myth referred to as the “Herbert Spirit”.¹¹ In focus was a concern for “modern patterns of life and leisure of the working classes.”¹² In those days rational recreation was important in order to “ensure the lower classes were healthy, moral and orderly.”¹³ To this end they provided companies and municipalities with new facilities for sport, leisure and recreation. It was thought that improvements to the workers’ physical state would lead to greater productivity. Patronage of sport and recreation at Alfred Herbert Ltd was important and, as the company provided modest facilities for its workers, sport became very popular.¹⁴ In fact it became so popular that Sir Alfred and Lady Herbert chose to visit sport festivals and team matches in order to “to be seen as a benevolent paternalist in action” and “play the role of aristocratic patrons by presenting cups, medals and prizes.”¹⁵ Another English historian, Roger Munting, says that from the second half of the nineteenth century sport provision became a common aspect of company’s welfare capitalism.¹⁶ Munting argues that sport had a “purpose beyond the immediate enjoyment; it was also important in extending a broader company culture.”¹⁷ In the companies included in his investigation the initiative at start came from the employees and the company provided the resources.¹⁸ The companies also stressed the virtue of games, fair play, “a healthy mind in a healthy body and so on” and working class men and women were presented with facilities for games which would otherwise not have been available.¹⁹ Munting concludes that the provision of

¹⁰ J. Bale, *Sport and Place*, London, 1989, pp 28-29

¹¹ Paul Gilchrist, “Sport under the Shadow of Industry: Paternalism at Alfred Herbert Ltd”, www.paulgilchrist.net/resources/2008, p 1-4

¹² Paul Gilchrist, 2008, p 3

¹³ Paul Gilchrist, 2008, p 3

¹⁴ Paul Gilchrist, 2008, p 16

¹⁵ Paul Gilchrist, 2008, p 18

¹⁶ R. Munting, “The games in ethic and industrial capitalism before 1914” in *Sport and history*, band 23/1, 2003, p 45-63

¹⁷ R. Munting, 2003, p 50

¹⁸ R. Munting, 2003, p 53

¹⁹ R. Munting, 2003, p 56

facilities for sports and games was increasingly systemized into corporate paternalistic management in order to reduce labor turnover and “potential dissatisfaction in the work place.”²⁰

In a study by the American historian Gerald Gems concerning Pullman car manufacturing in Chicago, the owner, George Pullman, who was influenced by the English industrial communities, came to the conclusion that “wholesome leisure habits would deter employees from radical elements with magnificent facilities that allowed for any interest, sans a saloon in his effort to promote temperance.”²¹ He founded the Pullman Athletic Association, which organized the first annual games in the spring of 1881. Employees were divided into teams to compete against other communities in baseball, cricket, soccer and track and field. “The comprehensive athletic programme enjoyed grater financial support than any other social agency, and sporting events and Pullman athletes won national recognition for the company and its owner.”²² Pullman’s firm conviction was that such programmes prevented strikes and labor organization, created better relationships between labor and management and increased loyalty to the company.²³ Team sports taught competition as well as teamwork, “self-sacrifice and obedience to authority in the form of a game official, team manager or captain.”²⁴ Pullman manufacturing was one of the larger companies in and around Chicago during the 1920s and into the 1940s that organized leisure time for its employees in the same way.

Managers like Agnelli in Italy (FIAT) and Peugeot in France did not only enter the sphere of football for sporting reasons. Initially, football was regarded as a prolongation of the paternalism practiced in industrial enterprises and operated by the likes of Agnelli and Peugeot. For example, FIAT workers were invited by Agnelli himself to watch matches played by Juventus’ first team free of charge. At the beginning of the 1920s the *Gruppo Sportivo* FIAT encouraged its workers and employees to play football or practice other sports. The president of *Gruppo Sportivo* suggested “that it was a question of a huge program of physical training,

²⁰ R. Munting, 2003, p 63

²¹ G. Gems, “Welfare Capitalism and Blue-Collar Sport - the legacy of labour unrest”, in *Rethinking History* 5:1 (2001) pp 43-44

²² G. Gems, 2001, p 43

²³ G. Gems, 2001, p 43

²⁴ G. Gems, 2001, p 47

harmony and fraternization between all the FIAT workers' families."²⁵ Implicit in this was the intention to maintain social order and peace among employees through sporting activity and engagement. A similar objective was found at Peugeot, where every effort was made to associate the club and its players with the "wider Peugeot family".²⁶ At Peugeot, the total integration of the football club into a company strategy aimed at both the modernizing of traditional paternalism and reinforcing the sports image of the firm.²⁷ Apart from its social role within the companies, the football team also served to promote FIAT and Peugeot products.

Sport as a popular movement in Sweden has been examined in several studies.²⁸ A number of studies also deal specifically with soccer.²⁹ Despite this growing body of work, sport and industrial companies are not well-researched in Swedish historiography. At present only three detailed studies are available,³⁰ all of which show that sport and overall soccer (football) was supported and became part of the company's paternalistic strategy to encourage the workers to view themselves as loyal "family members". In this article my focus is on whether sport became a means of industrial strategy and an integral part of an educational philosophy among industrial leaders to establish hegemony in their companies in Japan and Sweden. How did management use sport as a means of strengthening the local spirit of a community in order to create a strong sense of social solidarity or "we"-spirit? How did they use sport to create, in theory and in practice, a consensus and strengthen their hegemony in order to encourage local patriotism and cooperation in their companies? How it was organized and which institutional solutions were build up? Theoretically, the hegemony concept is mainly associated with Antonio Gramsci. A hegemonic power order is defined as the superior party – the hegemon – attempting to interpret reality in universal terms and, on the basis of his hegemonic power position, maintain that there are no conflicts of interest in the interpretation. The Swedish sociologist, Håkan Thörn,

²⁵ P. Dietschy & A. Mourat, "The motor car and Football industries from the early 1920s to the late 1940s: The cases of FC Sochaux and Juventus" in J. Magee, A. Bairner, A. Tomilson (eds) *The Bountiful Game? Football Identities and Finances, Meyer & Meyer Sport*, (UK) Ltd, Aachen 2005, p 52

²⁶ P. Dietschy & A. Mourat, 2005, p 52

²⁷ P. Dietschy & A. Mourat, 2005, p 57

²⁸ See the works of J. Lindroth.

²⁹ R. Palbrant, *Arbetarrörelsen och idrotten 1919-1939*, Uppsala 1977. T. Peterson, *Leken som blev allvar*, Lund 1989. B. Sund, *Fotbollens maktfalt*, Uppsala 1997. T. Andersson, *Kung Fotboll*, Stockholm 2002

³⁰ B. Andersson, T. Svensson, *Boken om Jonsered: Samhälle och idrott i Jonsered 1830-1980*, 1985. C. Ericsson, 2002 and *Fotboll, bandy och makt*, Stockholm 2004 and T. Andersson, "Fotbollen i Finspång" in L. Lagergren & A. Thörnquist (eds) *Finspång en bit av Folkhemmet*, Kristianstad, 2006, pp 65-93

define hegemony like this: “struggles for hegemony can be understood as a struggle about defining the world and about symbols and concepts that constitute central elements of social unity in specific historical contexts.”³¹ An important point is that a hegemonic power order is not a consensus relation, but a power relation between parties with conflicting interests. Gramsci differentiated between hegemony and dominance.

The outline of this study

I begin this study with a short description of the industrialization process in Sweden and Japan. Thereafter I describe how the sport movement was established in the two countries. These two descriptions provide the background to the main purpose, which is to compare how organized sport was used in industrial companies in Sweden and Japan as a means of establishing cooperation between industrial leaders and employees. It should be emphasized that the comparison is based on my own empirical studies of Swedish companies and studies of Japanese companies undertaken by various scholars from different countries. A comparison between Sweden and Japan is not especially common among Swedish historians. The comparison is of interest, however, particularly in the light of the countries different routes towards becoming modern democratic welfare states: Sweden’s via social movements, universal suffrage, democracy and peace and Japan’s Bismarck-inspired authoritarian rule with restricted franchise, Imperial cult, imperialism and war. In this comparison my intention is not simply to understand the similarities and differences between the different study objects and, on the basis of this, be in a position to generalize, but to also understand and explore their diverse and perhaps unique characteristics.

Swedish society and the origins of the Swedish sports movement

From the middle of the nineteenth century onwards, Swedish society was transformed by a rapid increase in population, migratory movements of people, urbanization and industrialization. Alongside these developments, new thoughts and ideas in the form of economic, political and religious liberalism and socialism were established. This transformation of Swedish society

³¹ Håkan Thörn, *Rörelser i det moderna. Politik, modernitet och kollektiv identitet i Europa 1789-1989*, Stockholm 1997, p 32

created, among other things, a sense of rootlessness and thus a need for new forms of social relations. A range of organizations, which we refer to today as national movements, were formed,³² and sought political influence and reform within Swedish society.³³ Foremost among these organizations were the revivalist (Free Church), temperance and labor movements. Given the scope of their voluntary activity, ideological influence and political significance, these three national movements occupy an important place in modern Swedish history. The 1880s saw the emergence of the revivalist and temperance movements, while the 1890s are considered to be the breakthrough period of the labor movement.³⁴ It is estimated that at the turn of the twentieth century national movements comprised roughly half a million people in Sweden, with around 15 per cent of the population over 15 years of age having acquired membership.

These were not the only national movements to grow and strengthen during the introductory decades of industrialization in Sweden. The sports movement, which in time was to become one of the largest and most comprehensive national movements, came into being during this revolutionary period. Historically, the sports movement in Sweden, as in the other Scandinavian countries, took the form of voluntary associations, or “popular movements”.³⁵ Organizations were regarded as the fundamentals of the democratic system in the Scandinavian countries, since participating in voluntary associations has been regarded as an important measure in fostering democratic citizens. Voluntary organizations are open to everyone regardless of age, sex, social and ethnic affiliation or place of residence. The Scandinavia sports movement has also been ideologically fundamentally inspired by English amateurism.³⁶

The first breakthrough for sport occurred during the 1880s, when a considerable number of associations were formed. The sports associations formed in Sweden during the 1870s and 1880s were primarily concerned with health promotion, and competition was kept to a minimum. During the 1890s the competitive element became increasingly prominent in both the older and newly-formed associations. In short, games, pastimes and physical activities went through a

³² S. Lundkvist, *Folkrörelserna i det svenska samhället 1850-1920*, Uppsala 1977, pp 190-91

³³ J. Lindroth and K. Blom, *Idrottens historia. Från antika arenor till modern massrörelse*, Malmö, 1995 p 190

³⁴ B. Öhngren, *Folk i rörelse*, Uppsala 1974, p 11

³⁵ T. Peterson, “The Professionalization of Sport in the Scandinavian Countries”,
www.idrottsforum.org/articles/peterson/peterson080220.html

³⁶ T. Peterson, www.idrottsforum.org/articles/peterson/peterson080220.html

process of sportification³⁷ and with that became more organized and oriented towards performance, competition and results. In 1893 there were 229 local sporting associations in Sweden with around 20,000 members. The real upswing, however, did not come until after the turn of the century, and in particular the years 1906-1908. In 1919 the number of associations and members of sports associations had trebled: there were 786 local sporting associations and 93,000 members. The increase continued and in 1930 there were around 180,000 members distributed among some 2,300 associations; figures which were to be more than doubled nine years later.³⁸ From 1904 onwards organized sports were governed by the Swedish Sports Confederation, SSC, (Riksidrottsförbundet, RF). The SCC is an umbrella organization with the task of supporting its member's federations and representing the entire Swedish sports movement in contact with the authorities, politicians and so on. It defends the legitimacy of sport and argues for its value. As a member of a voluntary organization in the SSC, one soon becomes involved in the democratic process.³⁹

Some notable research has been undertaken on the connection between industrialization and modern sport in Sweden.⁴⁰ It illustrates that the development of sport in towns was closely linked to industrialization and urbanization. For a long time the sports movement was primarily a big-city phenomenon, but sports associations outside the cities tended to be formed in sizeable communities, often in conjunction with the mining and sawmill industries. It has also been claimed that it was not until the introduction of the eight-hour working day in 1919 that conditions for the practice of sports were established in the lower local hierarchy. Researchers are also of the opinion that sport and its organizations should be viewed in relation to and dependency on changes in conditions of production and on social conflicts.⁴¹

From the outset, the higher echelons of the sports movement were recruited primarily from the middle and professional classes and included company leaders, businessmen and clerks.

³⁷ See Leif Yttergren, *Tävflan är livfet*, Stockholm 1996. For a discussion about sportification see for example Eric Dunning and his fellow sociology colleagues. E. Dunning, *Sport matters: Sociological Studies of Sport, Violence and Civilisation*, London, Routledge, 1999

³⁸ See J. Lindroth, *Idrottens väg till folkrorelse*, Uppsala 1974 pp 82-84

³⁹ For further reading see P. Sjöblom, *En svensk idrottsmodell I marknadstappning: Värderingar, normer och strategier I kommuner och föreningar 1970-1999*, www.idrottsforum.org (ISSN 1652-7224) 2006-03-15

⁴⁰ L. E. Tedebrand, "Idrott och etablissemang", *Historisk Tidskrift*, 2 1975. R. Palbrant, *Arbetarrörelsen och idrotten, 1919-1939*, Uppsala, 1977

⁴¹ See for example, R. Palbrant, 1977

Although the working classes were not to be found at this level of the sports movement, they were visible within various sports associations at district level.⁴² Public opinion on the sports movement was divided from the start. Within the political field, representatives of the rural areas and many Social Democrats adopted a negative outlook, whereas a majority of middle-class politicians in the urban areas were positive. In general, the further people were located to the left of the political spectrum, the more negative they were towards the sports movement.⁴³ The skepticism of the labor movement with regard to sport stemmed not only from the class and professional background of those who administrated the sports movement but also from a perception that sport, with its emphasis on performance, records, specialization and elitism, was “useless”. However, the middle classes viewed the potential political and societal impact of sport and the sports movement as more important than any possible shortcomings. During the 1920s and up to this day sport was and is seen as central to the creation of meaningful leisure time, and its defenders emphasized the morally educational functions of sport.

The sports movement has, in contrast to other popular movements such as the Free Church and temperance movements, maintained a decidedly consensual perspective, despite the sport movement being formed from above by the upper class. Unity across class barriers and fellowship between groups in the community were, from the outset, key objectives. In Sweden, the idea that sport is a phenomenon that transcends and levels out class distinctions and has the potential to unite classes and population groups has been expressed since the end of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴ At the turn of the twentieth century, the leading figures within the sports movement, particularly at national level, came almost exclusively from an aristocratic and middle-class background, although they held their positions through democratic election. The notion of sport as a consensual activity was directed at the working classes. This was possibly due to the fact that the middle-class people involved in the sports movement looked upon sport as a means of neutralizing the socio-political demands of the working classes, as a mechanism for the achievement of consensus between the classes. The Swedish sports model is entirely dependent on the voluntary support of local leaders as well as on public finances, especially from local government.

⁴² J. Lindroth, *Gymnastik lek och idrott*, Stockholm 1993, p 45

⁴³ J. Lindroth, *Gymnastik lek och idrott*, Stockholm 1993, p 45

⁴⁴ J. Wijk, 2005

Japanese society and the origins of the Japanese sports movement

Modern sport was introduced at the dawn of Japanese modernization in the 1870s from a variety of foreign countries and began to be enjoyed as recreation. The origin of Japanese baseball was, for example, a by-product of the country's education policy.⁴⁵ Sport and physical education are closely related phenomena, especially in Japan, where sport is widely considered a sub-category of physical education. Understanding Japanese sports also means considering the development of physical education in the country. When Japan was modernized the patchwork of local schools was replaced by an educational system similar to those in the US and Western Europe. Promulgating the Education Ordinance in 1872, the Meiji government institutionalized physical education in schools.⁴⁶ Physical education, and above all gymnastics, was also deemed to be a necessary part of the curriculum for girls, if for no other reason than to prepare them for their future role as healthy mothers of boys destined to become defenders of the nation. However, this motivation ran counter to traditional notions about female modesty and beauty.⁴⁷ Schools focused on modern sports and played an important role in the development of sports in Japanese society. Baseball in particular, and tennis, was the most popular both before and after the Second World War. These sports were recreational activities originally enjoyed after school by Japanese students.⁴⁸ Japan's educational system was also influenced by the English school system during the late-Victorian period. The idea of Japanese school sport germinated as student recreation acquired cultural meaning through students' values. English sportsmanship inspired, instructed and motivated Japanese youth – “physically, morally and politically”.⁴⁹ English sportsmanship was seen as equivalent to the qualities of the old samurai culture or *Bushi*.⁵⁰ It was stated in different publications during the late 19th and early 20th century that Japanese boys could learn moral qualities like fair play, observance of the rules, decision-making, self-reliance, compassion, decency and loyalty from games.⁵¹ In short, the nature of English sportsmanship was equivalent

⁴⁵ Y. Kusaka, “The emergence and development of Japanese school sport” in J. Maguire, M. Nakayama (eds) *Japan, Sport and Society, Tradition and change in a globalizing world*, Routledge, London and New York, 2005, pp 19-23. K. Kotani, “Sustainable sport and environmental problems” in J. Maguire, M. Nakayama (eds), 2005, p 92

⁴⁶ A. Guttman, L. Thompson, *Japanese Sports History*, University of Hawaii' Press, Honolulu, 2001, pp 90-93

⁴⁷ A. Guttman, L. Thompson, 2001, pp 92-93

⁴⁸ K. Kusaka, 2005, pp 19-22

⁴⁹ Abe I, Mangan J. A. “Sportsmanship - English Inspiration and Japanese Response: F. W. Strange and Chiyosaburo Takeda, in (eds) Mangan J. A. and Fan Hong, *Sport in Asian Society*, Cass, 2003, p 102

⁵⁰ I Abe, J. A Mangan, 2003, p 102

⁵¹ I Abe, J. A. Mangan, 2003, p 104

to the Japanese “samurai-spirit”.⁵² Both elements had in common the ambition of creating strong individuals for a strong state. Japan’s growing imperialism was based on Japanese sportsmanship and English sportsmanship was perceived as the source of English imperialism.⁵³ If modern English sportsmanship had made England strong and brought it to global eminence, “then Japan wanted both the means and the method”.⁵⁴

School sport was then vested with educational values recognized by society and, by 1935, had become an established cultural/social institution. Japanese sport creeds were focused on cultivation through sport, which was linked to and influenced by Zen Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism.⁵⁵ Sport in Japan was not about playing games or having fun, but was an educational tool. It taught children about obedience and hierarchy in an organization, as well how to withstand the pain of long training sessions. This made sport the ideal preparation for a working life in a Japanese company, in which the ability to work well in a group, accept a strict hierarchy and tolerate punishing work hours were all highly valued.⁵⁶ The promotion of sport through school education was very effective and, as K Kotani put it, the government’s promotion of sport through school education was “very effective” but “voluntary or citizen-led initiatives have not been fostered.”⁵⁷

Sport culture was soon diffused all over Japan.⁵⁸ According to Guttman and Thompson, during the Taisho period (1912-1926) sport was regarded by some as an end in itself to be pursued for its own intrinsic pleasure, and any positive results accrued for the body and soul were extrinsic – while others viewed it as a way of strengthening the nation by improving the physical condition and moral character of its people. The former view was probably prevalent, but, as the nation changed course and began its march towards war, this liberal, individualistic approach to sport was abandoned and a militaristic, collectivist, instrumentalist view of sport became predominant. The Taisho period saw a rapid acceleration in the diffusion of modern sports during the 1920s.⁵⁹

⁵² Abe I, Mangan J. A. 2003, p 109

⁵³ Abe I, Mangan J. A. 2003, p 111

⁵⁴ Quotation from Abe I, Mangan J. A. 2003, p 111

⁵⁵ K. Kusaka, 2005, pp 33-34

⁵⁶ S. Moffet, 2002, p 92

⁵⁷ K. Kotani, 2005, p 92

⁵⁸ K. Kotani, 2005, p 92

⁵⁹ A. Guttman, L. Thompson, 2001, p 129

During the Occupation traditional martial arts were banned, except sumo which was allowed to resume before the end of 1945. American advisors actively encouraged participation in baseball and other modern sports, however.⁶⁰ Sports were introduced into school curricula after the war, which meant that also children from the lower classes could experience sport. But mass participation was ignored, as sport was regarded as something to watch rather than something that ordinary people could take part in.⁶¹ In January 1946 the national middle-school baseball tournament was revived. It was stressed that this would contribute to “the development of democratic spirit and the reconstruction of Japan.”⁶² As Guttman and Thompson conclude, “Ideology changed: rhetoric did not: sport was for the good of the nation”.⁶³ At the beginning of the 1960s sport was still an amusement of the ruling classes and ordinary people were just spectators.⁶⁴ The post-war years saw the reconstitution of the industrial and commercial leagues that had offered pre-war Japanese an opportunity to continue to participate in sports after the end of their formal education. For most men and many women in the workforce it was the company’s sports program that provided the facilities for ball games and the martial arts. During the early 1960s and the rapid growth of the Japanese economy, industries began to advocate sport for their labor management. Uchiumi and Ozaki state that the main purpose of this was “the enhancement of worker’s physical fitness and health and the integration of young workers who had been influenced by socialism.”⁶⁵ It has been maintained that the special characteristic of Japanese sport has always been the role played by business enterprise.⁶⁶ The city of Koriyama is highlighted as an example of that situation in the first post-war decades. In 1962, 10,000 of the city’s 138,000 inhabitants were members of sports clubs, mostly at school or at their place of employment. It was not until the 1970s that sport policies “for all” became a bigger interest in Japanese politics.⁶⁷

Comparison

⁶⁰ A. Guttman, L. Thompson, 2001, p 163

⁶¹ K. Uchiumi and M. Ozaki, “History of Sport Policy and Sport Industry in Japan since 1945, in *Hitotsubashi Journal of Arts and Sciences* 34 (1993) The Hitotsubashi Academy, p 104

⁶² Quote from A. Guttman, L. Thompson, 2001, p 164

⁶³ *ibid*

⁶⁴ K. Uchiumi and M. Ozaki, 1993, p 106

⁶⁵ K. Uchiumi and M. Ozaki, 1993, p 107

⁶⁶ A. Guttman, L. Thompson, 2001, p 166, refer to Sugimoto Atsuo, p 166

⁶⁷ K. Uchiumi and M. Ozaki, 1993, p 108

If we compare the development of the sports movement in Sweden and in Japan we can conclude that there are obvious differences. In Sweden the sports movement started as a voluntary, popular democratic movement that was open to everyone, although from the beginning it was organized by middle-class men inspired by English amateurism. Voluntary organizations or clubs were organized by the SSC, which was autonomic in relation to the state, although from the 1930s it was economically supported by the state through the state-owned sport gambling corporation. In this sense the system is a corporate one. In Sweden, the idea of sport has been that it has the potential to unite classes and population groups in order to strengthen the political vision of the “People’s Home” (i.e. the welfare state). In Japan, contrary to the Swedish model, sport was organized from above as a political instrument in terms of discipline, obedience and hierarchy to prepare for life working in a Japanese company and thereby for Japan’s economic development through “effective” government-led projects such as school education. Sports in Japan have traditionally developed in school settings. Voluntary” or “citizen-led” initiatives have not been fostered. Membership of sports clubs has also, in contrast to the Swedish model, been correlated with social class. Unlike in Sweden, clubs at the community level that are open to all were and are virtually non-existent.⁶⁸ The highly educated and wealthy citizens were, and still are, more likely to be members of sports clubs and to participate in the clubs’ activities.⁶⁹ Today in Japan most sports and exercise programs are offered in four settings: schools, workplaces, private sport clubs and community sport clubs. Opportunities to continue regular participation in sport are limited once people have graduated.

Swedish company sport

In this article I have chosen the Sandviken Ironworks as a case study. Sandviken is situated in the county of Gästrikland, some 200 miles north of Stockholm. It was founded in 1862 with the establishment of the ironworks. I have not chosen Sandviken for its success in Swedish sport but because it is a good example of a “model industrial community” in the wake of the founding of the welfare concept of the “People’s Home”. However, the cooperation that existed between the company and the local community in Sandviken, in sport as well in other local matters, was

⁶⁸ M. Ikeda, Y. Yamaguchi, M. Chogahara, *Sport for All in Japan*, Sasakawa Sports Foundation, 2001

⁶⁹ M. Ikeda, Y. Yamaguchi, M. Chogahara, *Sport for All in Japan*, Sasakawa Sports Foundation, 2001

similar in other industrial communities in Sweden. In this sense the study's findings have broader implications.

In Sandviken, and especially during the 1920s, several informal and formal meeting-places for personal contacts between the company and its employees were formed in order to counteract the state of opposition between labor and capital. The company's proprietors believed that hegemony would be secured via integration through the consent of the other classes in society. Integration and consensus would be achieved through education: among other things the workers were to study national economic and social questions and discuss the problems of trade and industry at discussions clubs.⁷⁰ The way to hegemony could be established through local contacts, everyday conversations and discussions in the neighborhood about everyday problems. The manager of Sandviken's Jernverk (Ironworks), K. F. Göransson, emphasized that an authoritarian style was no longer necessary and that as long as the company showed interest in the workers it could count on increased loyalty. The message was that everybody at the foundry should be proud of working and living in the industrial community of Sandviken.⁷¹ The importance of building solidarity, unity and consensus within the established system was emphasized for "the common good".⁷² Sport, and above all football, was used in this project from the beginning of the 1920s. The company actively supported sport by granting land and making financial contributions for the creation of sport grounds. Jernvallen (the stadium at Sandviken) was built in 1937 as a gift to company employees and the other inhabitants of the community. K. F. Göransson appeared in a leading position at various sports events with the purpose of emphasizing his interest in sport and a common "love" for the ironwork's teams. Göransson pointed to the health and moral benefits of participation in sport, in particular emphasizing the use of sport as an example of what the people of Sandviken could accomplish thorough cooperation. Sport, and especially soccer (football), was viewed as a promoter of loyal cooperation among friends under the supervision of a competent management who understood the importance of team spirit.⁷³

⁷⁰ K. F. Göransson, *Hur man sköter sitt folk – Samförstånd mellan företagare och arbetare*, Stockholm 1927, p 3

⁷¹ K. F. Göransson, 1927, p 9

⁷² K. F. Göransson, 1927, p 8

⁷³ K. F. Göransson, family archive, Vol 52 RA

In 1901 the sports club Stjarnan (The Star) was established, according to tradition, by workers at the works: the name was changed in 1907 to Sandvikens AIK in connection with membership of the Swedish FA. SAIK became the first worker-dominated football club in the country to establish a reputation for itself. Besides SAIK, there was also Sandvikens IF in the community; this being originally formed under the name of Kronan (The Crown) in 1903. There does not appear to have been any class differences between the teams. The Ironwork's leader attempted to bring about a merger, in the conviction that a local identity and pride would most easily be formed if one powerful team represented the community. The fact that a new merger never came about indicates that the company's power might have been great but was by no means absolute.⁷⁴ The clubs consisted mainly of local talent, but occasionally signed players from other clubs. These "outside" players were offered good employment opportunities at the works.⁷⁵ The possibility of work also attracted many football players to Sandviken. From the 1930s to the end of 1950s 9 out of 11 regular players of Sandvikens IF worked at Sandviken's ironworks. Eight or nine of these were blue-collar workers, while the others were higher employees.⁷⁶ Besides signing good players, the company was able to pay for good coaches and arrange for the players to train often and at reasonable hours. The clubs demanded that the players behaved appropriately. Whenever members of the clubs behaved "improperly at club parties" they were excluded.⁷⁷ They made it clear that members "who behaved badly" were not welcome at parties arranged by the club.⁷⁸ Applicants for club membership went through a vetting procedure before being admitted. The clubs also emphasized the importance of the same moral characteristics as those of Göransson's didactic paternalism: steadiness, honor, a sense of justice and thoughtfulness. Both the clubs and the trade unions made strong demands for sobriety among their members.⁷⁹ As one sports journalist commented, one of the reasons behind Sandvikens IF's success was that "Sandviken has run dry, which contributes to the fact that its football stars are extremely steady."⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Sandviken's municipality archive (SKA) Saik archive, meeting records, 1907

⁷⁵ B. Sund, "Fotboll och makt" in E Blomberg, B. Hörgby and L. Kvarnström (eds) *Makt och Moral*, Linköping 1998

⁷⁶ *Idrottstidningen* 1933. *Rekordmagasinet* 1956

⁷⁷ SKA, for an example SIF meeting records, 29/3 1925

⁷⁸ SKA, SAIK meeting records, 21/3 1925

⁷⁹ SKA, Sv. Metallarb. Forb. Avd 135 Sandviken, meeting records, for example 12/3 1928

⁸⁰ *Idrottstidningen*, 27 september 1933.

Positive effects of the clubs' activities on the company can easily be identified. Involvement in sport encouraged discipline and respect for the community and for authority. They rejected alcohol and other demoralizing timewasters such as gambling. The members were fostered into collective and democratic ways of life through the culture of club meetings, where discipline and order were regular topics of discussion. The players of the various teams were also taught to obey the orders of the team captain without reservation. The recipe for success was hard work, steadiness, discipline and order. The company's interest in sport was not confined to the elite level either, since its proprietors felt that the spirit of Sandviken should be encouraged in as many people as possible. Thus, provision was made for a breadth of sport that created a more widespread sense of solidarity between individuals at the ironworks. The management used sports, especially football, as a means of strengthening local community spirit (*Sandviksandan*) in order to create a strong solidarity, we- or family spirit.

The community of Atvidaberg was dominated by Atvidaberg Industries/Facit AB. Here similar finding can be found. Also here the industrial management adopted an instrumental view, in which sport was seen as a way of leveling out class distinctions and creating solidarity.⁸¹ There was a conscious strategy on the part of the industry's management to use football to create a spirit of togetherness that would lead to a strengthened solidarity between the community and the company. The image the management wanted to create was one of a society in harmony, or a model society where the managing directors Elof Ericsson 1922-1952 and thereafter his son Gunnar Ericsson from 1952, considered the trade unions and the local Social Democrats as collaborative partners. In this model society sport, and especially football, served as a link between the management and the inhabitants. Atvidabergs Industries/Facit AB's economic support was huge, especially during the 1940s and 1960s.⁸² Both father and son were very interested in sport and especially football. Elof Ericsson was elected chairman of the Swedish FA in 1937 and regarded the local team of Atvidabergs FF as "Elof's boys". Football managed to communicate, both inwards and outwards, the image of Atvidaberg as a model industrial society

⁸¹ R. Andersson, "Elofs grabbar-Fotboll, industry och samhälle i brukssamhället Åtvidaberg" Linköpings Universitet, Vt 1997. T. Petersson, "Fotboll som företag- och varumarkesstrategi. Atvidabergs FF, Atvidabergs Industrier/Facit och familjen Ericsson, *Idrott, Historia, Samhälle*, 2006, pp 51-72. C. Ericsson, *Fotboll, bandy och makt*, Stockholm 2004.

⁸² T. Petersson, 2006, p 60

in which consensus and solidarity prevailed. Atvidabergs FF won the Swedish football league in 1972 and 1973.

Japanese company sports

The 1920s were also the formative years for Japan's industrial leagues. Innumerable companies institutionalized their commitment to paternalistic capitalism by sponsoring baseball teams or encouraging their employees to establish them. Although the Yawata Iron and Steel Works, situated in northern Kyushu, was government-owned, its managers' attitudes to labor relations were essentially the same as those in private enterprise. When Japanese industry was hit by a wave of strikes in the winter of 1920, Yawata Iron and Steel was not spared. In an effort to improve worker-management relations, which were less than cordial, the company sponsored a baseball tournament. A representative team was organized by the plant's workers in 1924 and recognized by the company in 1926. In 1927 the company team began to play against teams from other companies. Crowds of seven or eight thousand gathered to watch the games.⁸³ At first, workers were expected to play baseball in their own time, but the experiment in social control was so successful that members of the representative team were allowed to begin their daily practice at 1 p.m. The entire team was transferred to Yawat Steel's main office and provided with tasks considerably less strenuous than shoveling coal into a blast furnace.⁸⁴ It was worthwhile from the company's point of view too. The management was persuaded that on-the-job productivity would increase and that sports would promote harmony between capitalists and workers. They became, according to Guttman and Thompson, enthusiastic and self interested advocates of the ethos of fair play, good sportsmanship, teamwork and adherence to the rules of the game – all qualities of an ideal worker. The companies who sponsored baseball teams seem to have convinced themselves that their sports program was beneficial to their employees as well as to the firm.⁸⁵

After the Second World War the course and system of Japanese society was not entirely stable. Nakayama indicates that the Japanese Government found it necessary to suppress both the radical political movement and the organized labor movement. Recreation in the workplace and

⁸³ A. Guttman, L. Thompson, 2001, p 132

⁸⁴ A. Guttman, L. Thompson, 2001, p 132

⁸⁵ A. Guttman, L. Thompson, 2002, p 132

corporate sport were developed as countermeasures to the above political and labor pressures. An enhanced corporate consciousness and a focus on the welfare of employees were also emphasized. The Ministry of Education regarded the promotion of physical education in the workplace as a management responsibility. The Japan Federation of Employer's Association also launched a program to support recreation in the workplace in cooperation with the Japan Recreation Association, which was increasingly encouraged throughout the 1960s. According to Nakayama, recreation in the workplace was both a means of securing and retaining young workers in a corporation and was part of the social support needed by workers exposed to industrialization and urbanization processes. Moreover, for the companies, the strong promotion of efficient production relied "on the worker's will to work".⁸⁶ Therefore, the Ministry of Education argued, the significance of sport and recreation in the workplace came to be highly regarded as the maintenance of the health of laborers, although an adjustment in the human relations among and between laborers and their superiors was thought to be. Many employees of major corporations lived in a company flat or house in a company town, and received various company benefits needed to maintain their lives. Besides the company corporate community, the large enterprises provided "support extending to all aspects of regular workers lives."⁸⁷ Also, many medium-sized businesses formed sports clubs in addition to providing for sport and support systems for living. A survey undertaken by the Ministry of Education showed that especially large and medium-sized enterprises had improved their facilities for and organization of sport in the workplace, while public facilities for sport were poorly equipped and the organization of sport in communities were underdeveloped. "Enterprise-based welfare", including recreation in the workplace, was and still is an integral part of the Japanese style of management and regarded as an important factor in Japanese industrial development.⁸⁸ The life of processes of laborers are totally assimilated into the dominant corporate system, as human relations within the corporation extend to and penetrate their personal domains. A kind of "corporate community relations" is thus formed. On the basis of this "community feeling", the conflicts of interests between workers and management are absorbed into "corporate cooperative systems". That is, they are neutralized by the exaltation of the corporate consciousness.

⁸⁶ M. Nakayama, "Economic development and the value of sport" in J. Maguire and J. Nakayama (eds), 2005, p 62

⁸⁷ M. Nakayama, 2005, p 63

⁸⁸ M. Nakayama, 2005, p 63

Corporate sport, or recreation in the workplace, was considered important for the building and enhancement of corporate community consciousness.

The special characteristic of Japanese sports has always been the role played by business enterprise. This characteristic is hardly unique, but it is certainly prevalent. The post-war years saw a reconstruction of the industrial and commercial leagues that had offered pre-war Japanese opportunities to continue to participate in sport after the end of their formal education. For most men, and for many women in the workforce, it was the company's sports program that provided the facilities for ball games and the martial arts.⁸⁹ Company policy defined much of post-war Japanese life, and sport was no exception. Japan had no sport clubs for local community use and no teams representing local towns. Instead football, along with volleyball and basketball, was played in schools, colleges and companies. Company players were full-time employees who usually spent the morning in the factory or office and then trained in the afternoon, and had breakfast, lunch and dinner together in the canteen. S. Moffet says that in contrast to professional or amateur Western sport, Japan's company sport resembled a capitalist version of the state-amateurism practiced in Eastern Europe's communist era.⁹⁰ In order to improve their morale and help them identify with their employer, companies formed teams that played each other in a corporate league. Workers followed their company team's progress on radio broadcasts and cinema news bulletins.⁹¹ Companies also organized sports days, swimming excursions to the beach and educational classes. Events like these helped to nurture a culture of company as family, and enabled employers to manage workers' leisure time.⁹²

Corporate sport began in the 1950s, as Japan began its post-war reconstructions. The first big company sports teams were set up by textile companies.⁹³ After 1965 and improved media coverage, corporate sport also became an interest that united employees. It then became more important for the company's name to be seen on TV and in the newspapers.⁹⁴ Soccer was introduced by the British in the Meiji in 1873 through a British naval commander and then

⁸⁹ A. Guttman, L. Thompson, 2002 p 166

⁹⁰ S. Moffet, *Japanese rules*, Yellow Jersey press, London, 2002, p 7

⁹¹ S. Moffet, 2002, p 9

⁹² S. Moffet, 2002, p 9

⁹³ S. Moffet, 2002, pp 8-9

⁹⁴ S. Moffet, 2002, p 10

spread slowly via academic institutions, although remained a marginal sport until the 1960s.⁹⁵ On 10 September 1921, the Japan Football Association (JFA) was set up. Though most western sports were introduced into Japan around the end of the nineteenth century, baseball quickly outstripped all the others. Football was a minor affair. That changed in 1960 when a team from the electric wire manufacturer, Furukawa Electric Co., became the first company team to win the Emperor's cup. In 1965 an amateur football league, the JSL, consisting of company club teams, was established.⁹⁶ Moffet describes through Takayoshi Yamano what a footballer's day at the company Yanmar Diesel was like. He had a regular job at the company but "it wasn't really a job, and there wasn't anything for me to do". The real day started in the afternoon, when he would train at the company football ground from two to five o'clock. At the weekend he played matches against other companies, which was his real value to the company because the results appeared in the paper together with the company name.⁹⁷

The trade union initiated cultural and sports activities at the Toyota Motor Co. until about 1950, and these activities were considered quite remarkable. Management took a positive interest in cultural and sporting activities around 1951, while the union was weakened by a large-scale labor dispute in 1950. In this situation, the company constructed several different sports arenas for different sporting activities. The Toyota General Sports Meeting, which included 10 companies allied to Toyota, was also held. The company constructed a general sports arena in 1957 and formed the Toyota Club, an integrated organization, in 1959. Most members in the sports section of the Toyota club were clerks, engineers and trained factory workers, while representation from unskilled workers was low.⁹⁸ Around this time the company prioritized sports activities over cultural activities and the promotion of sporting activities for general employees over the development of sports clubs for athletes. In addition, sport and recreation, as well as the public relations magazine and the company communication system "play a most important role in uniting the various groups within the company."⁹⁹ The goal was to develop a Toyota-man and create a Toyota-spirit. Nakayama emphasizes that social studies and physical

⁹⁵ A. Guttman, L. Thompson, 2001, p 216. S. Moffet, 2002, p 8

⁹⁶ A. Guttman, L. Thompson, 2001, p 216. H. Ebishima and R. Yamashita, "FIFA 2002 World Cup in Japan: The Japanese football phenomenon in cultural contexts, in J. Maguire and M. Nakayama (eds), 2005, p 125

⁹⁷ S. Moffet, 2002, p 7

⁹⁸ M. Nakayama, 2005, p 64

⁹⁹ M. Nakayama, 2005 p 64, cit Nihon Jinbun Kagaku-Kai, 1963:116

education are included as part of the life guidance provided to the trained worker. Teamwork is stressed and regarded as important in physical education. Morale, human nature and trust in the corporation are shaped on the basis of co-operative consciousness, and this co-operative consciousness is produced by teamwork. The teamwork that develops through physical education soon leads to a person's consciousness of being a Toyota team member. The organization of trained workers in active service also has a committee for physical education which organizes sports teams at every job site and participates in training and inter-job site matches.¹⁰⁰ The role of sport in the workplace has been to develop general employees' energy for work, bring them into harmonious relationship and cultivate a feeling of solidarity and corporate consciousness. In 1960, Toyota city had a population of about 47,000. Approximately 14,000 inhabitants were employees of the Toyota Motor Co. Toyota city's sport governing body (Taiiku-Kyokai) consisted of 22 sports associations, many members of which were employees of the Toyota Motor Co. or allied corporations.

Conclusions

If we briefly compare company sports in the two countries we can conclude that in Sweden sports were, in the examples given from different companies, frequently used in the integration project from the beginning of the 1920s, both in theory and in practice. The companies actively supported sport by building sport grounds and providing economic support to the clubs. In their educational philosophy the management of the companies pointed to the health and moral benefits of participation in sport, in particular emphasizing the use of sport as an example of what the management, the employees and their families could accomplish thorough cooperation. Sport was viewed as a promoter of loyal cooperation among friends under the supervision of a competent management. In Japan, sport was also supported by companies from the beginning of the 1920s as an effort to improve relations between employer and employee. The management had the philosophy that sports would promote harmony between capitalists and workers and that production figures would increase. Like fair play, good sportsmanship and teamwork, sports ethos was an important concept. After the Second World War the support of corporate sport was intensified as countermeasures to political and labor pressures. Also, the Ministry of Education considered physical education in the workplace as a management responsibility. Corporate sport

¹⁰⁰ M. Nakayama, 2005, p 64

was considered as important for the origination and improvement of the corporate company community consciousness; a harmonious relationship.

We can conclude from this study that the attempt to nurture responsible and loyal co-workers could be optimized if a paternalistic strategy was used within all fields and employees were encouraged to pursue activities that would strengthen the ties between companies and their employees. These areas can be considered free zones in the struggle between labor and capital. The social integration project created a need for new and more efficient forms of socialization. During the 1920s and onwards in both Sweden and Japan sport was one of the new elements of the integration project; an arena in which hegemony over the workers was established and the possibility of conflict minimized. Spare time was identified as an opportunity to nurture and encourage the workers through the playing of new, organized, codified and rule-bound sports and learning to accept and respect authority figures. In Sweden, football was identified as a particularly valuable tool for achieving these ends, and the management of various companies felt that by supporting the establishment of a football club they could create a consensus or area of common ground with their workers and hence achieve hegemony. In Japan, in response to workers' radicalization and in order to prevent such influence, companies have made strong attempts to compete for their employees' leisure time, considering such efforts to be a part of management strategy. Companies have organized sporting and cultural events and supported sports activities in many ways and with large amounts of money. The main difference between the countries is how sport was organized and modeled. In Sweden it was regarded as a popular democratic movement that Swedish company managers understood how to use, whereas in Japan company managers organized sports as a means of establishing cooperation. As Swedish historian T. Andersson points out, in Sweden companies didn't make the clubs professional because consensus regarding amateurism was too strong.¹⁰¹ In Japan, the support from the government began to decline during the 1980s and commercially-based sports clubs increased dramatically.¹⁰² In order to be effective producers, the companies clearly needed physically fit and disciplined workers and both in Sweden and Japan sport was viewed as an important way of ensuring an effective workforce. This was clearly an important factor in the companies' support

¹⁰¹ T. Andersson "Fotbollen i Finspång" in L. Lagergren & A. Thörnquist (ed) *Finspång en bit av Folkhemmet*, Kristianstad, 2006

¹⁰² T. Yamashita, "The changing field of Japanese sport", in J. Maguire and M. Nakayama, (ed) 2006, p 161

for sports and sporting activities. However, the role of sport and the sports movement as an institution that taught moral virtues, sportsmanship and respect for authority, and inculcated a sense of fair play, was also important, as these were qualities that would be beneficial in the companies. The argument presented in this paper is that sport was an important free zone for creating consensus between employer and employee. Sport was a way of reaching stability and, ultimately, hegemony within the domains of the companies. The conclusion of this study is that although there are obvious historical and cultural differences between companies in England, the USA, Australia, Italy, Sweden and Japan - differences in both the industrialization and modernization of these countries and in how sport was introduced and how it was shaped - there are similarities in how sport was used in company strategies as an integral part of an educational philosophy. An essential explanation for this is that it was business enterprise that created these similarities. Companies saw sports activities as a way of strengthening company spirit and company harmony.