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Colonialism, Christians and Sport: The Catholic Church and Football in Goa, 1883-1951

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Abstract

The chapter uses the development of football in Goa, the Portuguese colony in India until 1961, as a case study with which to critique existing histories of sport and colonialism. The start point of the article is that when taken together existing studies of football in particular, and to an extent sport in general, in colonial contexts bear a range of similarities. Broadly speaking a model can be drawn from them, one in which Christian missionary activity and colonial government projects act to introduce and encourage western sports among colonised populations who then eventually adopt and adapt the games. The Goa example offers a fresh perspective as it argues that while elements of the story of football there are familiar from these other studies, the role of indigenous agents in propagating the game at its earliest stages is crucial to understanding how the sport took off and became embedded in local society and culture.

Introduction

A range of studies of sport in colonial contexts that have been published over the last decade or so point to the importance of Christian missionaries in introducing modern games and sporting activities to non-western societies. J.A. Mangan's oft-repeated publications on the mission schools in India are perhaps the best known of those that have examined the role of Western Christians in colonial contexts. In his most recent examination of the issue he returned to the examples of Theodore Leighton Pennell and Cecil Earle Tyndale-Biscoe in the North West Frontier Provinces and Kashmir respectively.¹

The North West Frontier region had a pre-existing indigenous interest in physical preparation for martial pursuits that manifested in displays of 'tent-pegging'. Pennell's objective was to harness this local physical culture, the region was famous for its warlike bands and for fierce displays of military aggression, to the orderly ethos of the football field. He hoped to encourage the continued development of strong and healthy bodies but in ways that emphasised characteristics valued by Victorian Christians and colonisers alike, namely discipline, obedience to authority and teamwork. He also used the game to instil the sense of belonging to a wider church and imperial community. He took a team from Bannu High School to play teams from other mission schools across North India and concluded that 'tours such as this undoubtedly tend to promote that feeling of friendship and union between the races of various parts of India which has hitherto been so little in evidence'.²

Cecil Earle Tyndale-Biscoe's institution, the church Missionary Society School in Srinagar, similarly demonstrates that colonialism, church activity and modern sport were closely intertwined. While Pennell worked in a region where he thought it necessary to reign in and temper a vigorous physical culture of martial pursuits and war, Tyndale-Biscoe arrived in a place where the placid body appeared to be prized above all others. The sign of elite status was the non-muscular body as brawn was represented as the outcome of labour, which was strictly for the underclasses of local society. As such Tyndale-Biscoe's objective was not simply to introduce sports as a means of moral training, as it had been with Pennell, but to use it as a way of transforming local bodies as well. He imposed a number of sports on the local schoolboys to effect these changes. Rowing was so integral to the school's activities that oars were included on the school badge. Swimming was another important activity and Tyndale-Biscoe was able to establish a life-saving corps that saved more than four hundred people from drowning. Football was forced on the schoolboys under threat of a beating from the masters' sticks, and though strenuously resisted at first it gradually came to be played freely and enthusiastically.

Overall then, Mangan makes two observations. Referring to football he concludes that:

The game carried within it a moral order based on the ethics of commitment and dedication, of team spirit and the subjection of the individual to the demands of the group and of valour and personal bravery. Colonized peoples were often portrayed as lacking just such attributes and thus football was seen as one method introducing them to such desirable characteristics.³

He notes, however, that 'the game also had the practical impact of transforming Indian bodies into the shapes and to develop the capabilities considered desirable by the British who required local servants to put into place their wider visions of imperial reform'.⁴ This neat summary of the relationship between sport, Christian churches and colonialism has been developed over the last ten years or so: that the introduction of sports at missionary schools was intended to serve the two purposes of physical and moral transformation.

While Mangan focuses on British imperial, examples in boys' schools in India a similar relationship has been traced in other contexts. In an African example from a French colony, Phyllis Martin has traced the role of Catholic priests in promoting sport. Education was left in the hands of the church in the Congo as the region remained a backwater of French colonialism well into the twentieth century. As such in 1913 missionaries established a Youth Club in Brazzaville with the stated aim of promoting 'the civilizing work that France undertakes in the colonies'. Central to its activities were organised sports, and the Vicar-General confessed that such physical pursuits had a moral agenda

behind them; 'we have all kinds of games, and by this means we will remove them from the influence of immoral dancing and dangerous companions'. Martin concludes that:

The organized activities at the Youth Club quickly gained popularity and hundreds flocked to participate. As happened elsewhere in the colonial world, therefore, many Africans in Brazzaville were first introduced to European forms of sport such as gymnastics, football and athletics in the mission yard, following Mass on Sunday, after school or during holidays.⁵

While examples are available from both Asia and Africa and British and French colonial contexts, other case studies emphasise that the target was not always boys. Janice Brownfoot has argued that female missionary workers in Malaya had the objective of freeing Asian women and girls from traditions and customs that, according to the western Christians, were preventing individual fulfilment and the modern development of the local economy and society. Sport was central to their programme as it was thought to improve the physical state of the girls while introducing them to the moral virtues of self-control and self-reliance as well as the social lessons of western sports, 'team games were particularly endorsed for providing a training ground for life',⁶ as they developed co-operation and understanding of corporate action. Brownfoot seems convinced that the colonial context allowed female Christian evangelists to work so successfully that 'what the white women missionary educators achieved by introducing sport along with English language education for at least a proportion of Asian girls was quite revolutionary . . . the lifestyles of many Asian girls and women had been transformed'.⁷

A similar story emerges from another context, that of China, where western colonialism was only ever of an indirect rather than a formally direct nature. The Confucian culture of the Chinese elites had prescribed female docility that was enforced by the physical practice of foot-binding. This involved crushing the feet of females from an early age using tightly wound bandages. The missionary schools introduced in the nineteenth century as western governments imposed the unequal treaty system on China in order to penetrate its economy targeted this practice and, by extension, the subordinate position of women that it was intended to enforce. Central to the curriculum of Christian institutions for Chinese girls then was sport and Fan Hong has noted that 'physical exercise was practised in most of the missionary schools for girls'⁸ and by 1906, when fifty boys' schools in Hankou participated in an athletics meeting, six girls' schools also attended. Hong concludes that the changes wreaked by these new corporal experiences were dramatic and fundamental to understanding the growth of the female emancipation movement in China:

New physical exercises provided a pathway to women's physical well-being. Chinese women demanded both freedom from culturally founded physical sufferings and the destruction of cultural prejudices against women's participation in physical activities. These demands laid the foundation for a change in women's image and position in Chinese society.⁹

In short then, these examples show how across a range of colonial and quasi-colonial contexts authors have identified a broadly similar relationship between Christian church activity, colonialism and sport. Quite simply, Western churches have been central in the British and French empires, in formal and informal colonial contexts and across Asia and Africa, to the establishment of modern sports in non-western societies. The introduction of these sports was intended to serve the broad purposes both of the churches and of the colonial governments. These involved transforming the bodies and the moral worlds of colonised populations into forms considered more desirable by, or more useful for the objectives of, those evangelists or administrators that found indigenous norms to be offensive and obstructive.

The case to be discussed in this article provides a useful contrast to these studies and this model of Christian activity, colonialism and sport. It contains familiar elements but suggests that the importance of the church in establishing football in Goa was entirely unrelated to the colonial power relations of the period. Indeed, it goes further and shows that the colonial authorities in Portuguese India had no role in establishing or developing the sport there, and only belatedly realised the possibilities of sporting activity.

The Church and the Early Origins of Goan Football

The Catholic church came with the Portuguese invaders of Goa when Vasco da Gama's expedition arrived in 1498 and throughout the sixteenth century it took the projects of the Counter-Reformation and the Inquisition into Asia. Closely allied with the colonial state in the Portuguese territories of Goa, Daman and Diu, the evangelical clerics spread Christianity and attacked Hinduism, banning its practice in Portuguese domains and employing programmes of forced conversion among the local Indian population where persuasion and preaching failed to get results. Of course, this alliance between church and state was not peculiar to Portuguese India, as both Iberian powers had closely integrated religious objectives with the commercial interests that had driven them to take on empires in Africa and the Americas as well as in Asia.

Although these early religious campaigns were strident and often violent, the energy that marked the early years of Catholicism in Goa was not sustained. The evidence suggests that the church had lost much of its momentum by the second century of the Portuguese presence, and Michael Pearson suggests that 'a slackening of zeal even in the Inquisition seems to be discernible in the

seventeenth century, while the Jesuits also by then had lost their earlier Claretian enthusiasm and seem to have concentrated on trade'.¹⁰ Rather than continuing as an aggressive vector of an alien cultural imperialism the church established local roots and became quickly embedded in Indian society. By the mid-nineteenth century when figures can be taken as broadly reliable, about two thirds of the population of Goa were Christian.¹¹ Moreover, by 1834 about 280 of Portuguese India's 300 or so regular clergy were of local extraction and indeed in 1833 the laws against the practice of Hindu rites within Portuguese territories had been rescinded. In other words by the nineteenth century the Catholic church was in the hands of local Goan society and was no longer at pains to set itself at odds with other beliefs within that society.

The reasons for this were that the Catholic church was felt by many Goans by the nineteenth century to be their church rather than a colonial institution. A process of adoption and adaptation of Christian ways had occurred since the arrival of the Portuguese in 1498 and a recent study emphasises that 'the religion that the converters brought over four centuries ago has been "familiarized", accepted and configured in terms of the local matrix'.¹² Indeed, Rowena Robinson goes on to conclude that 'one may wish to say that the faith itself, European in origin, seems to have been indigenized, incorporated into and adapted to the existing socio-ritual order and pattern of hierarchy and privilege'.¹³

An understanding of the nature of the Catholic church in Goa in this period is important as it was to play a central part in the early spread of football in Portuguese India in the later nineteenth century. It was a visiting British priest who first brought football to Goa in 1883. Father William Robert Lyons arrived in Siolim from Udipi to recover at the coast from a bout of illness that he had experienced inland. Soon enmeshed in the activities of the local church, he founded St Joseph's School at Siolim that was later moved to Arpora. Other headmasters soon became convinced of the attractions of integrating football into their educational programmes and by 1893 the private English language school at Assolna was also playing the game under the leadership of its senior master Antonio Francisco de Souza. Although working in south Goa, de Souza was from Siolim where football had first been introduced by Father Lyons. More importantly still, the Rachel seminary, which was the chief centre for the training of local priests in Goa, was also soon fielding teams. Indeed in later years these were banned by edict by the Bishop of the East Indies from participating in football tournaments as he considered the spectacle of cassocked future priests chasing a ball to be one that undermined the dignity of their calling. The significance of the players at the seminary was that they took the game with them when they went to serve in the villages so football quickly found its way into rural areas away from its original introduction to the urban educated elites. In many ways the village set up in Goa, known as the *gaunhr* system, was ideal for the introduction of football:

The gaunkurs were the male members of the dominant caste, either *brahmin* or *kshatriya*, in a village: in theory they were descended from the original settlers of the village. They could be either Hindu or Christian. They ran village associations which controlled most of the affairs of the village: roads, drainage, irrigation, public security, religion (they supported the local church or temple depending on whether the village was Christian or Hindu), education and health.¹⁴

In other words, the villages had pre-existing organisations with experience in mobilising the local population for community matters. Moreover, they concerned themselves with education and health and were closely allied with the local priests. Quite simply, the structure of village society in nineteenth century Goa, remembering that 85 per cent of Goans lived in villages in 1910,¹⁵ was well suited to the formation of local football teams by enthusiastic clergy.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the competitions held were between teams that had either Catholic school¹⁶ names or village associations. St Mary's College at Saligao, St Mary's School at Assolna and St Xavier's High School at Margao competed with such village teams as Boys Social Club of Colva and Calangute. The latter were the winners of Goa's first recorded organized tournament, the Grande Torneio de Futebol do Gremio Literio e Recreativo de Mapuca. The final was played in 1925 in front of a crowd of 4,000. Although introduced by a British missionary, the church's involvement with football in Goa is more directly comparable with the experience of Catholic teams in Scotland than with mission sport in British India. The latter, as discussed above, was a direct exercise in colonial hegemony, where 'sport was a significant part of imperial culture and an important instrument of imperial cultural association and subsequent cultural change'.¹⁷ Games were self-consciously adopted as a means of imposing an alien moral order on a reluctant local population in British India, 'sport was a means of transmitting a set of British beliefs and standards about fairness, honesty and straightforwardness in a context of respect for traditional authority'.¹⁸ Indeed, they were often violently imposed by such men as Cecil Earle Tyndale-Biscoe.

In Goa, however, the indigenised state of the church by the end of the nineteenth century means that the historian needs to look elsewhere for an understanding of the role of religious institutions in promulgating football. The game was similarly adopted by priests within the Irish Catholic community in Scotland in the later nineteenth century. Famous Scottish clubs like Hibernian and the west coast copy-cats and magpies, Glasgow Celtic, were initially closely bound up with the church and with individual priests like Canon Hannan who energetically helped form Hibernian from his parish in Edinburgh's Cowgate.¹⁹ Their aims in founding these clubs had less to do with the imposition of an alien moral order on a colonised population and more to

do with the consolidation and improvement of an existing religious constituency. In focusing on Hibernian, Celtic and Dundee Harp in the nineteenth century, John Weir has concluded that:

it is certain that the original intention of those Roman Catholic clergy involved in football clubs was a patristic, rather than a managerial one. Results on the park were not of importance, rather the immersion of young Catholics in the ways of the Catholic church, providing relief for the catholic poor, and keeping Catholics away from the influence of non-Catholics were the goals.²⁰

The Catholic church was, and indeed still is, important in promoting football in Goa as it provided an institutional means of introducing young men to the game in both the cities and the villages and among both the schooled elites and the church-going peasantry. A look at comparisons from other contexts where priests involved themselves heavily in promoting sport among their congregations suggests that in sport and sporting organisations the clergy saw a means of perpetuating religious and community ties and in promoting 'virtuous' pursuits. The Catholic church in Goa seems to have been the means by which football was first introduced and by which it quickly spread in the towns and in the villages, among the educated elites and into rural society. But it must be remembered that unlike the colonial contexts mentioned earlier, Portuguese Goa by the late nineteenth century was a situation where the church was entirely indigenised and where much of the local population would have seen its institutions as their own. This was no alien institution seeking to impose a foreign moral order.

Indeed, the influence of the church can be seen in the role it played in the continuing development of football in the Goan diaspora. The sport became embedded in the Goan identity as a result of the migrations of workers. The Goan economy under Portuguese rule stagnated for much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and historians tend to point to 'the backwardness of Goa's agricultural sector' and to observe that 'the commercial sector remained feeble [and] there was no industrial development at all'.²¹ For many, the expanding Asian economy of the period and the growth of nearby Bombay, British India's west coast commercial centre, provided important opportunities for success not available in the tightly controlled village hierarchies mentioned above or in the moribund commerce of Portuguese possessions.

By 1921 it was estimated that 469,000 Goans lived in Goa, Daman and Diu while up to 200,000 Goans lived away from home, in British India, East Africa or Mesopotamia. About a quarter of the expatriate community lived in Bombay alone. Most of those in Bombay worked in low status employment servicing the vibrant economy of the ports, although up to a fifth were part of

that floating group just out of a job or in town looking for a job 'of those in Bombay, the main occupations were seamen (37 per cent), cooks and waiters (18 per cent), clerks, tailors and ayahs (each eight per cent) and musicians (two per cent) but another 18 per cent were unemployed'.²²

With such a sizeable community in the city and with such difficulties to negotiate as unemployment, homesickness and cultural alienation, Goans in Bombay quickly organised themselves into clubs and institutions based on the familiar loyalties from back home. Pearson emphasises this, concluding that 'a notable feature of this migration was the way in which village and family ties were maintained . . . the famous Goan clubs in Bombay, to which the majority of the community belonged, were village based. A Goan in Bombay joined people from his home village in a club, and his social life, and many aspects of his social welfare, were focussed on these clubs'.²³

The implications of this for football were both cultural and practical. On a practical level, expatriate communities used their emerging economic clout²⁴ to expand the institutional base of Goan football by founding and funding clubs for migrants to Bombay. This shows that expatriate football was also important for the cultural emergence of football in the Goan psyche. The sport was being used as a means of confirming ties with the homeland by migrant communities through the sending back of football teams to compete there. It also shows how football had quickly become established as a means of Goan self-identification when abroad. Indeed, football remained an important part of expatriate relations with Goa throughout the twentieth century. By the 1940s the best of the Bombay migrant teams, Young Goans, were touring Portuguese India and well-connected individuals like Augusto de Noronha e Tavora were arranging exhibition matches in Goa for major teams like the Tata squad from British India. Indeed as recently as January 2000 there was a Goan World Cup organised by Goan communities from around the world in which each migrant group arranged to send a team back to Goa to compete for a trophy.

The name of the team that participated in the first such tour emphasises the continuing importance of the Catholic church for these developments. St Mary's College of Bombay sent a squad back to Goa as early as 1905 for a game against Panjim Boys that was played in the hometown of the latter team, the capital of Portuguese India. In other words the first expatriate team to have the wealth, and the organisational ability, to send footballers back to Goa to play local sides was based in a Catholic institution in Bombay. While the church was central to establishing soccer in Goa then it also seems to have had a role to play in organising the game among the migrant Goan communities.

Portuguese Colonialism and Football

The example of soccer in Goa provides further contrasts with many studies of sport in colonial contexts. Allen Guttmann has demonstrated that colonial government in British India was central to the introduction of cricket there as

administrators, such as Lord Harris, Governor of Bombay in the 1890s, consciously encouraged the game for political purposes.²⁵ Paul Dimeo has argued that a similar situation existed in Calcutta with football, particularly under the stewardship of Sir Charles Elliott who served as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in the same period.²⁶ These sports were fostered by officials in the government schools to promote physical fitness, to impose new ethics and to encourage comradeship among students from different religious backgrounds.

In Goa, however, the colonial government only became interested in promoting football once it had become fully established in Indian society. The 1950s were a curious decade in the history of Goa as it was the last one in which the Portuguese dominated and it was the first in the twentieth century when Portugal seemed to wake up to the possibilities of Goa. Under increasing pressure to cede Goa to the Republic of India, which had been granted independence from the British Empire in 1947, Portugal embarked on an ultimately doomed policy of drawing the territories closer to it. It did this through two main strains of policy, industrial development and cultural bonding, both of which had important implications for football in the colony.

Portugal's cultural policies in the 1950s grew from an attempt to assert that Goa was in no way Indian and was in fact an essentially European society that had grown out of four centuries of Portuguese rule. As such, it was argued, the Indian Republic had no legitimate claim to the territories that were portrayed not as colonies but as integral provinces of the state of Portugal with full and equal representation in the metropolitan Parliament:

The Portuguese have always revealed the tendency to create a morally united motherland with territories and peoples which in time would become incorporated in the nation; at no time was an impediment to this seen in racial or religious differences or in the dispersal of lands . . . the truth is that the peoples in question have demonstrated throughout history the same living solidarity with Portugal as the branches of a tree have with its trunk and roots.²⁷

Writing in 1956, the Portuguese dictator Oliveira Salazar was adamant that 'he who is born and lives in Goa or in Brazil or in Angola is as Portuguese as he who lives and is born in Lisbon'.²⁸ The problem with this attempted justification for Portuguese rule was that most of it was self-evidently untrue. By the 1950s only three per cent of Goans in Goa could speak Portuguese and during this period even the Catholic church was becoming careful to dissociate itself from the colonial government, 'Cardinal Gracias, himself of Goan background, laid down from Bombay that "as far as the Catholics of Goa are concerned their culture is not Portuguese but Goan"'.²⁹

As such the Portuguese attempted some last ditch attempts to create in Goans an awareness of the benefits of European rule and of their ties to the

Iberian state. Football proved to be an important means of attempting to promote this cultural association and of highlighting the effectiveness of Portuguese administration. In 1951 the Conselho de Desportos da India Portuguesa was established and for the first time an all Goa-based league was set up with a first and a second division. This replaced the Associacao de Futebol da Indian Portuguesa which had become defunct within a decade of its foundation in 1939 and which had failed to either organise a league or to gain recognition from the Portuguese Football Association.

The objective of the Conselho de Desportos was to rejuvenate Goan football and to demonstrate through a popular medium the efficiency of Portuguese rule. Infrastructure was improved in the period with such innovations as floodlit games introduced in 1958. Improvements were made in the administration of the game as players were for the first time expected to register with a single club and the Conselho introduced and administered an identity card system. Goan football was now divided into four zones, Bardez, Panjim, Margao and Mormugao and each had an administrator appointed to oversee it. The first league was won by Clube Desportivo Chinchinim, which beat off FC Siolim to take the title. Clube de Desportos de Vasco da Gama won the title three times, Associacao Desportiva de Velha Goa won it twice and Sporting Clube de Goa, Grupo Desportivo da Policia, Clube Independente de Margao and Clube Desportivo Salgaocar each won it once under Portuguese rule which ended in 1961.³⁰

In an attempt to have Goans become aware of their place in the Portuguese world, tours of major teams from around the Portuguese Empire were arranged in the territories. In 1955 Ferroviarios de Lourenco Marques travelled from Mozambique to play a state representative team. In front of crowds of 20,000 they forced a 2-2 draw in the first leg before going on to thrash the Indian team 5-1 the next day. The political agenda behind the selection of touring teams was obvious in the invitation extended to one of Pakistan's leading clubs in 1959. Port Trust Club of Karachi played in front of crowds of 7,000 and 15,000, winning the first game and losing the latter and of course symbolising the solidarity of two anti-India footballing nations. Perhaps most famously of all the Benfica team visited Goa in 1959. They played the Military and won 2-1 and then played Goa twice. The Portuguese government of the state was careful to associate themselves with this prestige visit and the final game was played out in front of the Governor General of Portuguese India, General Vassalo de Silva. Goa lost the first game 4-0 and the final game 1-0. The momentum generated by the visit of one of the greatest teams in the world to Goa was carried forwards into the separation of football from the other sporting concerns of the Conselho de Desportos da India Portuguesa which, as its name suggests was a general sports council. On 22 December 1959 the Associacao Futebol de Goa was founded, a body that under the name the Goa Football Association continues to administer the sport until today.³¹

The second part of the Portuguese attempt to create an enthusiasm for its rule in Goa was economic:

Portugal in the 1950s also made belated efforts to develop Goa with a view to making its people clearly better off than those in neighbouring India. In 1952 a Development Plan was decreed. This boosted Goa's fledgling iron ore exports. Revenue from this, and from migrant remittances, meant that per capita income in Goa was some one-third higher than in India.³²

Alongside the exploitation of the territories' iron ore reserves, which were chiefly exported to Japan, the Portuguese also developed manganese exports to the United States. The result of this was that while the ordinary mine workers were exploited a small clique of well-placed Goans profited enormously from this sudden expansion in the Goan industrial sector.

Football clubs that grew out of industrial organisations had been a minor if consistent feature of Goan football since its very earliest days, as the Western India Portuguese Railway School had regularly organised a team from among its students. During the 1950s however, substantial investment began to be made by private industrial concerns in clubs that came to carry their names and to act as both advertising and self-aggrandisement for the companies concerned. The most successful of these clubs has been Salgaocar Sports Club. Founded as Vimson FC in 1955 by the House of Salgaocar company that is a major miner and exporter of iron ore to Japan and South Korea, the club benefited from enormous financial support and won the second division in 1957 with an unbeaten record. It then won the First Division League Championship in the last year of Portuguese rule in 1961. In an interesting reflection of the continuity in both industry and football between Portuguese rule and membership of the Indian Union, Salgaocar then went on to win the first two seasons of the league after liberation. In total they won the league four times in the 1960s twice in the 1970s, five times in the 1980s and four times in the 1990s. They were the first Goan team to represent the State in a major all-Indian competition, the Durand Cup in 1962 in Delhi, where the Prime Minister Jawarharlal Nehru was careful to have himself photographed with them on the lawns of his residence. At a time when the Indian Union still had occupying troops in Goa and Goans were appealing to the United Nations for independence, this was an important image of incorporation and reconciliation designed for the newspapers. Salgaocar is the only Goan team to have won the Durand Cup, in 1999, the season when they became the first team from the State to win the National Football League that had started in 1995. They also won the Rovers Cup and the Super Cup in this season. While the team have been a playing power in India football since liberation it is also worth pointing out that the House of Salgaocar has always been careful to maintain a close

relationship with administrative power in the States football structure. In 1959 a Salgaocar was vice-President of the General Body of the Goan Football Association and forty years later the President of the club is also the President of the Goan FA's executive committee.³³

Other major industrial players similarly adopted or founded clubs. Dempo Sports Club grew out of the adoption of Bicholim Football Club by the House of Dempo in the 1960s and went on to be the first Goan club to lift the Rovers Cup, the oldest competition in Bombay. Sesa Goa Sports Club was founded and the football team established in 1965 by the Sesa Goa company, a subsidiary of the Italian iron ore company Ilva. The team quickly flourished and won the Goan League in 1968 and in 1973. The parent company moved from Italian to Japanese hands, however, and with this, the commitment to a football team waned. Moreover by the 1990s the wage demands of players had spiralled, and, reflecting on its original foundation as a means of giving back to the community through sports, the management decided that the budget was better spent on a football academy for youngsters than on paying the wages of players. In 1998 the team was formally disbanded and the Sesa Goa Football Academy was established with the aim of providing both formal education and football training for 25 boys in the fourteen to eighteen years age bracket.³⁴

In short, the final decade of Portuguese rule was an important one for understanding the evolution of Goan football as it was in this decade that the great industrial companies of the region were established. These companies would go on to provide extensive funding for Goan football and to finance and provide the administration for its most successful clubs. If this is the chief legacy of the period then it must also be remembered that the Goan Football Association also grew out of this decade. This was because the Portuguese attempted to use football administration as a means of demonstrating the efficacy of its rule on a popular level in the years when it was trying to justify its government to the Goan population in the face of growing pressure to decolonise from the newly established Indian Union.

In this, Goa once again offers an interesting contrast with British India. The period in which the British most vigorously championed the cause of their sports in India was the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their objectives were to introduce these games to the locals to emphasise the superiority of their own culture and also as a means of transmitting the values of that culture to indigenous players. By the 1920s and 1930s cricket had been effectively commandeered by Indians³⁵ and it has been argued of soccer that 'the British had stopped being a significant presence in Indian football by the 1930s'.³⁶ Indeed, the evidence presented in a recent article seems to confirm the last conclusion as Boria Majumdar has shown how, in the power struggle between Bengalis and other Indians for control of football in the 1930s the British simply featured as makeweights in the politicking and it was Indian individuals who were busily setting agendas for the future of the game.³⁷

In Portuguese India, however, the colonial authorities seem to have had no role in the introduction and establishment of western, modern sports among the subject population. As stated, it was the institutions and personnel of the indigenised Catholic church that acted as a vector for football which was to become the most popular and widely played of the modern games in Goa. The Portuguese authorities only belatedly sought to become involved with the game, having both a direct and an indirect impact through their policies in the 1950s. They became directly involved only when they sought to manipulate the medium provided by the well established support for the game among the subject population to transmit the message that Portuguese colonialism was benevolent and that it governed in the interests of local society.

In other words, there is no resemblance between British India and Portuguese India in the history of sport in general or of football in particular. The British used the game to assert superiority and to effect social and cultural change, and their involvement in and influence over the sports that they introduced waned as the decades progressed. The Portuguese did no such thing and seem to have had no role in introducing European sports in India. Instead, they had an impact only at a late stage of football's development, choosing the sport precisely because it was already a well-established and popular cultural medium in a vain attempt to make popular their colonial administration.

Conclusion

This article has used Portuguese India as a means of challenging ideas about the relationship between colonialism, sport and Christian activity that have developed over the last decade or so. These ideas have emphasised that in a number of contexts there seem to be remarkable similarities in the histories of the introduction of modern, Western games and sports. The colonial context provided the setting for the establishment of these games and sports in the non-Western world and Christian missionaries were chief among those promoting the activities. They were doing this because, in common with their colleagues in the colonial governments, they viewed Western sports as a means of transforming indigenous bodies into forms considered more useful or desirable by their own standards. They also recognised that these sports carried within them an ethical code woven around such sentiments as team-work, self-discipline and perseverance that they hoped to impose on the cultures of those that they had subjected.

The example of football in colonial Goa therefore provides an interesting case in which none of the above model applies despite the fact that many of the elements of the story are familiar. It was indeed the case that the Catholic church played a key role in promoting the game, and yet the church was not an evangelical force or an alien missionary institution, but was rather a fully indigenised concern that saw the game as a means of maintaining congregations and of shoring up existing social structures rather than as a

means of introducing anything that was socially or culturally novel or challenging. It was also the case that the colonial authorities intervened in football, but they did so not to introduce football or to effect a social or cultural transformation through it. Rather, they viewed football as something that was already deeply embedded in the culture of the subject population and, as such, they hoped to yoke the popularity of the game to their government by being seen to act in its interests.

Here is an example that can be used to challenge ideas about colonial sport and about the activity of Christian organisations in that realm of activity by looking to the agency of the local population. In Portuguese India football indeed took root and blossomed in a period of imperial domination through the activities of the Catholic church. But, in contrast to the number of studies that emphasise their importance, this seems to have owed little to either the colonial authorities or to Christian missionaries and instead it is to indigenous groups and institutions that the historian must turn in order to explain soccer in Goa.

NOTES:

1. J.A. Mangan's use of these examples began in 1985 in the *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (Aylesbury: Viking, 1985). pp. 168-92.
2. J.A. Mangan, 'Soccer as Moral Training: Missionary Intentions and Imperial Legacies' in P. Dimeo and J. Mills, eds., *Soccer in South Asia: Empire, Nation, Diaspora* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), p. 44.
3. Mangan, 'Soccer as Moral Training', pp. 53-4.
4. Mangan, 'Soccer as Moral Training', pp. 53-4.
5. P. Martin, 'Colonialism, Youth and Football in French Equatorial France', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 8, 1, 1991, p. 58.
6. J. Brownfoot, 'Emancipation, Exercise and Imperialism: Girls and the games ethic in colonial Malaya', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 7, 1, 1990, p. 67.
7. Brownfoot, 'Emancipation, Exercise and Imperialism', p. 78.
8. F. Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom: The Liberation of Women's Bodies in Modern China* (London: Frank Cass, 1997), p. 58.
9. Hong, *Footbinding, Feminism and Freedom*, p. 61.
10. M. Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India I: The Portuguese in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 148.
11. Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 150.

12. R. Robinson, *Conversion, Continuity and Change: Lived Christianity in Southern Goa* (London: Sage, 1998), p. 214.
13. Robinson, *Conversion, Continuity and Change*, p. 214.
14. Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 154.
15. Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 152.
16. Both Catholic schools and non-religious English language schools (see discussion later in text) formed the basis for some of the earliest Goan teams, This is directly comparable with the origins of football in other contexts. See for example, T. Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 22-4.
17. J.A. Mangan, 'Britain's Chief Spiritual Export: Imperial Sport as Moral Metaphor, Political Symbol and Cultural Bond' in J.A. Mangan, ed., *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), p. 4.
18. T. Mason, 'Football on the Maidan: cultural imperialism in Calcutta', in Mangan, *The Cultural Bond*, p. 142.
19. J. Weir, ed., *Drink, Religion and Scottish Football 1873-1900* (Edinburgh: Stewart Davidson Renfrew 1992) p. 43.
20. Weir, *Drink, Religion and Scottish Football*, p. 44. See also G. Finn, 'Racism Religion and Social Prejudice: Irish Catholic Clubs, Soccer and Scottish Society I', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 8, 1, 1991, pp. 80-3.
21. Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 154.
22. Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 156
23. Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 156.
24. By 1951 it was estimated that Goa's net gain from remittances from migrant communities was Rs. 22 million. See A. Rubinoff, *The Construction of a Political Identity: Integration and Identity in Goa* (London: Sage, 1998) p. 39.
25. A. Guttman, *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 33.
26. P. Dimeo, 'Football and Politics in Bengal: Colonialism, Nationalism, Communalism', in Dimeo and Mills, *Soccer in South Asia*, pp. 63-4.
27. O. Salazar, 'Goa and the Indian Union: the Portuguese View', *Foreign Affairs*, April 1956, p. 9.
28. Salazar, 'Goa and the Indian Union', p. 4.

29. Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 159.
30. N. da Lima Leitao (ed.), *The Grass is Green in Goa: Celebrating 40 Years, 1959-1999*, Goa Football Association. Goa: Panjim, 2000.
31. Leitao, *The Grass is Green in Goa*.
32. Pearson, *The New Cambridge History of India*, p. 159.
33. Leitao, *The Grass is Green in Goa*.
34. Leitao, *The Grass is Green in Goa*.
35. See R. Guha, 'Cricket and Politics in Colonial India', *Past and Present*, 161, 1998, pp. 165-90.
36. J. Mills and P. Dimeo, 'Introduction: Empire, Nation, Diaspora' in Dimeo and Mills, *Soccer in South Asia*, p. 6.
37. B. Majumdar, 'The Politics of Soccer in Colonial India, 1930-1937: The years of turmoil', *Soccer and Society*, 3, 1, 2002, pp. 22-36.
38. For details of Goan football in the post-colonial era see J. Mills, 'Football in Goa: Sport, politics and the Portuguese in India, in Dimeo and Mills, *Soccer in South Asia*