

“Multinational sport participation replaces apartheid sport in South Africa – 1967-1978”: The role of BJ Vorster and PGJ Koornhof

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Abstract

The sport declarations of TE Dönges as Minister of Internal Affairs in June 1956 and those of HF Verwoerd as Prime Minister in 1965 were aimed at strengthening apartheid sport participation in South Africa. These declarations were in reaction to increased international and local pressure on the National Party (NP) to allow integrated sport participation. However, they contributed to increased political and economic isolation as well as isolation on the sports grounds. In reaction to this increasing isolation BJ Vorster and P Koornhof formulated an evolutionary sport policy since 1967 in an effort to counteract increased international isolation. These efforts by Vorster and Koornhof have been interpreted by many critics and researchers as being the product of continuous international and local pressures on the NP and its policy of Apartheid. This article, however, argues that although the evolutionary sport policy could be interpreted as cosmetic, tactical and strategic moves, it also demonstrated important small changes in the normal thinking patterns of the NP elite. The policy changes as reflected in the evolutionary sport policy were the result of nuanced changes in the thinking of the NP regarding the policy of apartheid. These changes in thinking were not so much the result of external and local pressures but were merely encouraged by it. These changes in thinking led the way for increased social integration and complemented increased apartheid policy reforms since 1978.

Keywords: Multinational sport participation; Verwoerd; Vorster; Koornhof; local pressure; International pressure; Reform; Mixed sport; Afrikaner; Sport organisations; Apartheid sport.

Introduction

The relaxation of apartheid laws in sport has been a much debated topic over the last few decades among academics and those generally interested in the relation between sport and apartheid and much research has been done on the political and economic reasons for isolation, and its outcome.¹

J Gemmell's statement that: "Apartheid laws were relaxed in the 1980s as the regime attempted to reform itself in order to sustain international support"² contributes to this debate describing the reforms of the National Party (NP) as an attempt to sustain international support. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, racially integrated sport participation was permitted by the NP. The general belief in 1956 that South African "customs" and "traditions" kept sport participation separate³ and that this was therefore not an area in which a significant challenge to segregation existed,⁴ was replaced by the late 1970s, because of ongoing pressures, to one of which saw the gradual realisation of mixed sport participation. Gemmell supported by D Booth⁵ and A Guelke⁶ viewed the relaxation of petty apartheid measures in the 1970s by the NP as a public relations exercise and an attempt to show international friends that all was well in South Africa rather than a real move towards social integration.⁷

The attempts by the NP government to reform only increased international actions by pressure groups, not only to isolate South Africa politically and economically, but also on the sports field.⁸ It encouraged resistance organisations to support D Brutus and others in their campaigns against

1 It must however be acknowledged that a great deal of research has been done on the sport dimension of the isolation of South Africa from international sport participation. A few examples that can be cited are L Allison (ed.), *The politics of sport* (Great Britain, Manchester University Press, 1986); A Grundlingh (ed.), *Beyond the tryline, rugby and South African society* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1995); D Booth, *The race game; sport and politics in South Africa* (London, Frank Cass Publishers, 1998); A Odendaal, *The story of an African game, black cricketers and the unmasking of one of cricket's greatest myths, South Africa, 1850s – 2003* (Cape Town, David Philips, 2003); B Murray and C Merrett, *Caught behind: Race and politics in Springbok cricket* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press and KwaZulu-Natal University Press, 2004). These are however just a few of many examples of research on sport. In society that has been done.

2 J Gemmell, "South African cricket: The rainbow nation must have a rainbow team", *Sport in Society*, 10(1), 2007, p. 51.

3 D Booth, *The race game, sport and politics in South Africa...*, p. 58.

4 A Guelke, "The politisation of South African sport", L Allison (ed.), *The politics of sport...*, p. 119.

5 D Booth, *The race game, sport and politics in South Africa...*, p. 58.

6 A Guelke, "The politisation of South African sport", L Allison (ed.), *The politics of sport...*, p. 119.

7 J Gemmell, "South African cricket...", *Sport in Society*, 10(1), 2007, p. 53.

8 D Booth, *The race game, sport and politics in South Africa...*, pp. 77-80.

the apartheid system and apartheid in sport.⁹ Soon, South African sport and politics became intertwined, which added a new social, economic and political dimension to sport participation. It was during the 1960s and 1970s that the actions of “boycotting apartheid sport” became one of many important instruments in the condemnation of South Africa and its internal race policies.¹⁰ Guelke also argues that sport isolation in the 1970s and 1980s coincided with and contributed towards the beginning of the erosion of social apartheid. This, he added, was because “multinational” sport during the 1970s became the rubric under which the NP government allowed integration to take place.¹¹

The boycotting of apartheid sport along with the internal political unrests and ongoing suppression within South Africa made the period 1967-1978 one of the most important phases in South African history. The late sixties and early seventies also saw the development of initial progressive movements in the NP and wider Afrikaner thinking on the matter of apartheid.¹² BJ Vorster and P Koornhof’s reforms in respect of mixed race sport participation serves as an example of this new thinking. For many scholars, however, these new reforms did not mean anything. D Booth, for example, argues that Vorster never introduced any reforms to improve the position of blacks, but rather, in an attempt to temporise, he created a package aimed at improving the relations between Afrikaans and English speakers, fostered links with African states and encouraged immigration. For D Booth Vorster’s initiative was based on pragmatic political and economic considerations¹³ and therefore strategic moves in an attempt to convince pressure groups locally and internationally that the NP was indeed reforming.

9 D Brutus, “The blacks and the whites in South African sport”, *Africa Today*, 6, 1970, p. 2 (D Brutus was the President of the “South African non-racial Olympic committee” (SANROC) and a well-known critic of apartheid).

10 H Botha, “Ons en internasionale sport: Implikasies van die jongsteverwikkelling”, *Woord en Daad*, 16(170), 1976, p. 19.

11 A Guelke, “Sport and the end of apartheid”, L Allison, (ed.), *The changing politics of sport* (London, Manchester University Press, 1991), p. 158.

12 This period therefore not only witnessed increasing criticism of the NP but also the birth of small but important intellectual, political and social shifts within the thinking of the NP elite in general. These nuanced differences in thinking were already identified in 1959 by the editor of *Die Burger*, P Cillié, See *Die Burger*, 13Junie 1959: Dawie, “Uit my politieke pen”. DJ van Vuuren also expressed the important role Afrikaans newspapers played in reflecting this shift in Afrikaner thinking. See DJ van Vuuren (ed.), *Change in South Africa* (Pretoria, Butterworth, 1983), pp. 340-342. In academic circles Prof W de Klerk came up with the concepts “Verlig” and “Verkramp” in the late 1960s in his attempt to characterise the changes within Afrikaner thinking. Prof W Esterhuysen during the late 1970s early 1980s went further and characterised these changes within Afrikaner thinking as ideological differences among the Afrikaners and described them as “realists” against “fundamentalists”. See A Ries and E Dommissie, *Broedertwis, Die verhaal van die 1982-skeuring in die Nasionale Party* (Kapaastad, Tafelberg, 1982), p. 3.

13 D Booth, *The race game, sport and politics in South Africa...*, p. 89.

This article however argues that Booth, along with Guelke, BK Murray and many other scholars,¹⁴ fail to understand that even though blacks confronted more draconian regulations, discriminations and oppression under Vorster, his new pragmatic sport policy introduced in April 1967 represented a shift in normal NP line thinking. Although insignificant in the opinion of the international community, pressure groups and authors such as Booth, this paper argues that this policy and the many changes that followed, represented change to direct the South African society away from apartheid.

This new policy was so serious and real that it resulted in disagreement and conflict within the NP and among the NP supporters because for too many it represented a deviation from NP policy. It further argues that this move away from the initial NP sport policy, however small and not denouncing the policy of apartheid on a grand scale, did not within Afrikaner and NP supporter circles represent a mere smoke screen to the international community and pressure groups, but it represented a shift in thinking regarding the policy of apartheid, the thin end of the wedge.¹⁵ This shift in thinking inevitably resulted in a split within the NP in 1969 and the formation of the “Herstigte” National Party (HNP) under the leadership of J Marais which represented the first tangible proof of internal conflicts in the NP. Could it be possible to think that Vorster would risk a split within the NP just because he was strategically manoeuvring around to avoid international sport isolation? Would it be intellectually sound to continue to argue that the “reforms” introduced by Vorster were the sole result of continuous pressure, totally discarding the possibility that it could be the result of a shift in thinking visible within Afrikaner circles at the time?

In view of the above, this article investigates whether Vorster’s approach towards sport policies (developed with the assistance of PGJ Koornhof) was a reaction to external and internal pressures on the NP to reform, or if it was rather the result of an underlying shift in the normal NP line of thinking which led to the introduction of mixed sport participation?

14 BK Murray, “Politics and cricket: The D’Oliveira affair of 1968”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27(4), 2001, pp. 682-684.

15 ICH, Bloemfontein, PV 451, Dr. Albert Hertzog collection, General note book, 1967, p. 13518.

Vorster's reformation efforts in sport participation

Sport as vehicle for reform?

Based on the vast amount of research that has been done on the topic of sport and apartheid, one can conclude that the fundamental reason for identifying sport as an instrument to isolate South Africa was twofold. The first was to identify how apartheid sport violated human rights and the second was to pressurise the NP government to initially reform apartheid policies related to sport participation and later to abandon apartheid sport. It was for these reasons that anti-apartheid sport boycotts became general events, especially in rugby minded countries. Maclean, for example, refers to some of the most sustained anti-apartheid protests during the southern winter of 1981 outside South Africa. It was the tour of Aotearoa in New Zealand by South Africa's Springbok rugby team. According to Maclean, anti-apartheid demonstrators protested for 56 days against the Springboks touring New Zealand: "thousands of New Zealanders twice a week faced riot police... They were baton charged, assaulted and imprisoned. They had telephone calls intercepted, police surveillance became routine, organized teams were infiltrated, and there were public discussions of the possibility of the declaration of, in effect, martial law".¹⁶ This campaign, according to him, secured mass public and activist support and it demanded the total political, economic, social and cultural isolation of the South Africa government.¹⁷ According to P Donnelly, the one major example of a human rights campaign where sport was used successfully was the campaign against apartheid in South Africa.¹⁸

Sport organisations such as the Committee for International Recognition (1955), the SASA, the SANROC, and the South African Council on Sport were created with the aim to not only isolate South Africa from international sport but also to help destroy the policy of apartheid. It is for this reason that SANROC actively worked towards banning the South African Olympic Committee from the International Olympic Committee. SACOS worked towards banning any sport participation and administration that was based on discrimination, and replacing that with sport participation that was based on

16 M Maclean, "Anti-apartheid boycotts and the affective economics of struggle: The case of Aotearoa New Zealand", *Sport in Society*, 13(1), 2010, p. 72.

17 M Maclean, "Anti-apartheid boycotts and the affective economics of struggle...", *Sport in Society*, 13(1), 2010, pp. 72-73.

18 P Donnelly, "Sport and human rights", *Sport in Society*, 11(4), 2008, p. 386.

equality.¹⁹ According to R Thompson, SASA played a very important role in equalising sport participation and administration in South Africa. He makes the following statement: "... by constant negotiation, [SASA] eliminated many of the racial barriers among non-white South African sports bodies so that in most sports it became normal for Africans, Indians and Coloured to play together and to share the administration".²⁰ By creating a unified non-white front against white sport participation and administration the foundations were laid for gradually increasing pressure on the NP government to accept integrated sport participation in South Africa.

The reaction of the NP government under the leadership of Verwoerd up to 1966 was to stress the importance of sport participation along the principles of apartheid.²¹ The actions of the aforementioned organisations were interpreted as actions that wanted to place South Africa and its internal policies under the international spotlight for the "wrong reasons". The NP argued that the intention of these organisations was to apply pressure on and to convince the NP government to abolish the policy of apartheid. The response of the government before 1966 must be viewed in terms of two important aspects. The first was that it was already clear by 1958 that the practical implementation of the policy of apartheid in the field of sport had the potential to become increasingly problematic. Hence the apartheid government insisted that the principles of its policy had to be strictly adhered to when it came to sport participation by different racial groups in South Africa. If not, it was believed, sport participation could become the thin end of the wedge that could lead to the collapse of apartheid.²² Secondly, the view of new thinkers within Afrikaner academic, business, newspaper and sport circles that the policies of apartheid were entrenched deep enough in the South African society. This, it was believed, could withstand a possible collapse of the apartheid policy in general, if reforms related to sport participation were introduced in an effort to counter-act the sporting isolation of South Africa.²³ The theory that concessions related to sport policies could be the thin end of the wedge and

19 GB Saaiman, "Sport en politiek: Suid-Afrika se sportisolasië en die invloed op die binnelandsepolitiek" (MA dissertation, University of the Free State, 1981), pp. 44-47; J Brickhill, *Race against race: South Africa's 'multinational' sport fraud* (London, 1976), p. 9.

20 R Thompson, *Retreat from apartheid: New Zealand's sporting contacts with South Africa* (London, 1975), p. 6.

21 Republic of South Africa, *Hansard*, 2 September 1962, col. 875, *The Star*, 31 March 1962.

22 GJL Scholtz, "Liberalpolitiek en sportboikotte", *Koers*, 3, 1974, p. 173; ICH, Bloemfontein, PV. 132: Adv. BJ Vorster-collection, File 8/9/1/1: Speech of J Marais, 2 October 1969 (J Marais became the leader of the HNP which broke away from the NP in 1959).

23 *Rapport*, 2 December 1973; ICH, Bloemfontein, PV. 93: Dr HF Verwoerd-collection, File 1/24/10: Letter, HF Verwoerd/S Pretorius, 2 October 1960; SC Nolutshungu, "Party systems, cleavage structure and electoral performance, the South African general election of 1970", *The African Review*, 4, 1972, pp. 457-58.

result in the demise of apartheid was seen as something that was promoted by the “verkramptes” and therefore had no legitimate standing.²⁴

Reformation efforts in sport participation

It is in terms of these two fundamental points that the period 1966-1978 should be viewed. When Vorster became the leader of the NP and of South Africa, it was clear that the country would be increasingly isolated from future international sport participation if reforms related to the internal policies were not made. This became evident, firstly, with the creation of the Council for Sport in South Africa in 1966, with the aim of isolating South Africa totally from international sport participation. The second event was the fact-finding mission of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1967. The aim of this visit was to consider permitting South Africa to attend in the Olympic Games in Mexico in 1968, if teams consisting of black and white athletes were allowed to participate. Thirdly, the possibility that the Canada Cup Golf Tournament could take place in 1968 in South Africa and lastly, the possibility in January 1967 that B D'Oliveira, the South African-born coloured Cricket player, would be included in the MCC-team that planned to visit South Africa in 1968.²⁵ D'Oliveira was a Cape coloured who had moved to England in 1960. He was not named in the MCC's party for the winter tour of South Africa despite of his merit. This resulted in protest and allegations from sporting organisations that the MCC gave in to pressure from the South African government not to include him. As a result, D'Oliveira was quickly included.²⁶ In response, Vorster banned the tour claiming that the team was not the team of the MCC but the team of the Anti-Apartheid Movement.²⁷ Vorster also at this point remarked that D'Oliveira was no longer a sportsman but a political cricket ball.²⁸

Against the backdrop of these events Vorster introduced his new sport policy on the 17th of February 1967 in Parow. This article argues that Vorster with this policy gradually started to steer South Africa in the direction of mixed sport participation although it was strictly controlled. He did what

24 A P Treurnicht, *Noodlottigehervorming* (Professionele Boekverspreiders, Pretoria, 1982), pp. 1-15.

25 JA du Pisani, “BJ Vorster se nuwesportbeleid as faktor in die verdeelheid binne die Nasionale Party wat gelei het tot die stigting van die Herstigte Nasionale Party”, *Joernaal vir Eietydse Geskiedenis*, 9(2), 1984, pp. 39-40.

26 B Schoeman, *My lewe in die politiek* (Johannesburg, Perskor-Uitgewers, 1978), p. 367.

27 M Polley, *Moving the goalposts a history of sport and society in 1945* (London, Routledge, 1998), p. 30.

28 J Gemmill, *The politics of South African cricket...*, p. 154.

no NP leader would dare to do before him. This he did to prevent South Africa's international sport isolation but also to carefully move away from the implementation of apartheid sport.²⁹ Three years after the announcement of this sport policy, the *Utrechts Nieuwsblad* came to the same conclusion when it commented that:³⁰

John Vorster, opvolger van de in 1966 in het Kaapseperlement [SIC] vermoorde dr. Verwoerd, ledge zeven maanden nazijn ambtsaanvaarding eenverklaring over zijn (nieuwe) sportbeleid af, waarmee hijzich voorsictig van de Verwoerd-politiek distantieerde.

The importance and irony of this new thinking reside in the fact that Vorster as a sport loving person and former rugby administrator wanted South Africa to be included in future international sport participation with his new sport policy. This by implication could only be achieved if the NP moved away from implementing the policy and principles of apartheid, thus allowing mixed sport participation as demanded by international and local pressure groups. The irony of this new thinking, however, was the fact that Vorster at the same time constantly argued and assured NP supporters that he would not deviate from NP policy and principles.³¹ In this regard the South African newspapers played an important role as highlighted by the *News/Check* magazine when it commented on the different reactions from English and Afrikaans newspapers and concluded that: "The English-Language press praised an 'enlightened' step; the Afrikaans press assured its readers that no principles had been broken".³²

In analysing the elements of Vorster's new sport policy it becomes clear that he gradually drove himself into a political corner, which illustrated the fact that he was reforming the old sport policy to bring it in line with the policies of international sporting bodies. Thus, he announced that he would allow a mixed team to participate in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City. Secondly, he announced that he would allow mixed international sport events in South Africa, including the Canada Cup Golf Tournament and the Davis Cup Tennis Tournament. With regards to rugby and cricket he would allow a mixed Springbok team to take part in international games. He would, initially however, not allow mixed local sporting events to take place in South

²⁹ *Die Burger*, 18 February 1967; *The Natal Mercury*, 4 March 1967; *Die Vaderland*, 10 February 1967.

³⁰ *Utrechts Nieuwsblad*, 21 May 1970.

³¹ ICH, Bloemfontein, PV. 132: Adv. BJ Vorster collection, File 3/6/1968: Statement by the Prime Minister, 19 November 1966, at a meeting of the Witwatersrand National Party Congress.

³² *News/Check*, 21 April 1967.

Africa because it would go against the spirit of the policy of apartheid.³³ As has been indicated earlier, he gave his supporters the assurances that mixed local sporting events would not be allowed in South Africa.

Vorster's new sport policy on the one hand signalled a new approach based on the fact that he was less dogmatic, compared to Verwoerd for example, in his approach towards the implementation of the policy of apartheid. On the other hand, it signalled a desire to place less emphasis on the principle of apartheid and more emphasis on ensuring better and lasting international sport relations and participation. This new dimension in his thinking created tension within the NP, resulting in a split and the formation of the HNP in 1969. J Marais as Member of Parliament and the NP at the time before the split, made it quite clear in a speech in Pretoria on the 2nd of October 1969 that he feared that he, along with other party members, would be kicked out of the party because they criticised the new sport policy introduced by Vorster in 1967. He was of the opinion that those who criticised the policy would be side-lined and removed from the party in order to continue with new sport reforms.³⁴ This new thinking and the criticism that followed reflected the underlying change in normal party line thinking of the NP on policy matters. It echoed the realisation which has been present since 1966 that a move towards a re-thinking of the policy of the NP had not only become necessary but the right thing to do in order to ensure future international sport participation for a sport-obsessed Afrikaner nation.³⁵

The criticism against Vorster, by the newly formed HNP under the leadership of dr. A Hertzog, that his new sport policy could lead to sport integration and eventually political integration, and the issue of whether or not mixed international sport participation could be aligned with separate sport participation at home, prompted him to make a distinction between inter-state relations and inter-personal relations. This implied that mixed teams from South Africa could participate in international events because it was important for inter-state relations; this however could not be allowed in South Africa because it was argued that it would not be good for inter-personal relations within South Africa.³⁶ Vorster's approach involved firstly

33 Republic of South Africa, *Hansard*, 11 April 1967, col. 4108-4117.

34 ICH, Bloemfontein, PV. 132: Adv. BJ Vorster collection, File 8/9/1/1: Speech of J Marais, 2 October 1969.

35 JHP Serfontein, *Die verkrampte aanslag* (Pretoria, Human en Rousseau, 1974), p. 14; BM Schoeman, *Die broederbond in die Afrikaner-politiek* (Pretoria, Human en Rousseau, 1982), pp. 106-10, 113-16; BM Schoeman, *Parlementêre verkiesings in Suid-Afrika, 1910-1976* (Pretoria, Human en Rousseau, 1977), p. 441.

36 *Die Burger*, 22 February 1967.

announcing reforms and secondly assuring his supporters that the internal policy of South Africa would not change, and thirdly warning that if these reforms were used by pressure groups such as SASA, SANROC or SACOS to increase their demands for more reforms, he would act as Verwoerd did before 1966. This implied that no reforms would then be considered and that the policy of apartheid would be strictly implemented. His announcement that he would allow mixed South African international sport participation but not allow mixed local sport participation in South Africa led to more demands from pressure groups.

Normalising South African sport

In this context Vorster, with the assistance of Koornhof, introduced further new changes to the sport policy, not in reaction to ongoing pressures but rather as an effort to normalise sport relations in South Africa based on the realisation that apartheid in sport had to be dismantled. It must be stressed that for the successful implementation of this new approach Vorster knew that he had to implement it on an evolutionary basis, and not on a reactionary basis. This meant that, even though in Afrikaner circles the opinion started to gain momentum that the policy of apartheid was not sustainable in the local and international context of that time, he still had to assure his enlightened supporters that the policy of the NP would not change overnight. He therefore had to play a fine strategic political game. FW de Klerk, former president of South Africa, in retrospect explains this as follows:³⁷

I believe that he (J Vorster) saw the danger signs of growing international isolation beginning to flicker. He realized that Dr Verwoerd had unnecessarily plunged the country into isolation with his rigid attitude and that international pressure would increase. It was for this reason that he initiated what he called his Outward Policy. He accordingly initiated some tentative and ad hoc steps away from the rigid and inflexible approach of his predecessor.

P Botha in his biography written by T Papenfus had the following to say about Vorster and his role in the sport reform of the period under discussion:³⁸

Vorster did his best to reach out to the rest of Africa through his Africa policy ... He played a key role in finding a solution in Rhodesia. Further, he tried to move away from Verwoerd's rigid colour policy in sport. To people looking

37 FW de Klerk, *The last trek – A new beginning* (London, Macmillan, 1998), p. 48.

38 T Papenfus, *Pik Botha and his times* (Pretoria, Litera Publications, 2010), p. 263.

back today it seems ridiculous that such things could have been important. But there were undercurrents in the NP itself after Hertzog broke away. Vorster wanted to move even farther away from the ugly side of apartheid in order to ward off international sanctions. One should also remember that it was under Vorster's premiership that Resolution 435 for the independence of South-West was adopted. Vorster was a person who was prepared to change. But scrapping within the Party prevented him from moving any faster than he did.

Vorster realised that sudden political changes could lead to another split in the NP. He could not afford sudden division because it would restrict the most needed reforms he planned for the future. It was for this reason that he started a strategy of changing his political discourse. This entailed words and phrases such as “never”, “no concessions”, “never give in to pressures”, which were previously the norm, to be replaced with words and phrases such as “multicultural sport”, “rights”, “normaliation of sport relations”, etcetera. With this approach he intended to gradually convince his supporters that reforms in the policy of the NP were necessary and that it would not lead to loss of political power or identity.³⁹

As an extension of the envisaged changes as reflected in his new sport policy of 1967 and the ground work that was laid since then, Vorster announced on the 22 April 1971 his intention to increase his efforts to make sure blacks from South Africa become more involved in international sport and international sport competitions hosted in South Africa if the athletes were affiliated to white sport associations.⁴⁰ In the same year Vorster announced that he would allow visiting international teams to play against Black and Coloured teams in South Africa if they wished to do so.⁴¹ This also applied to visiting teams in tennis, golf and athletics. Vorster argued that this could be done because it was important for inter-state relations and that these events had an international characteristic.⁴² This argument was also used to support the fact that mixed sport participation locally could not be allowed because it would not be conducive for local relations. It is important to note the difference in what Vorster said in 1967 and what he promoted in 1971.

In 1972, Koornhof was appointed as the Minister of Sport. It was during 1972 that suggestions were made by sport analysts and sport administrators

39 G Kotze, *Sport en politiek* (Pretoria, Makro, 1978), p. 103; Republic of South Africa, *Hansard*, 22 April 1971, col. 5053.

40 Republic of South Africa, *Hansard*, 22 April 1971, col. 5053.

41 L Allison (ed.), *The politics of sport...*, p. 134.

42 Republic of South Africa, *Hansard*, 22 April 1971, col. 5053-5056.

to allow the selection of a mixed Springbok team on the basis of merit.⁴³ A request from the South African Rugby Union to the NP government in this regard was denied and it transpired that the government would not allow the selection of teams on the basis of merit.⁴⁴ In May 1973 Koornhof stressed that mixed sport participation would not be allowed on club, provincial and national levels, and that sport integration was not the policy of the NP government.⁴⁵ Koornhof's meeting with Robert Fenton, head of the New Zealand organisation, "War Against Recreational Disruption" (WARD), in March 1974 contradicted Koornhof's statement of 1973. According to Fenton, Koornhof:⁴⁶

... spelt it out to me in his office in parliament that non-whites would take their place in all representative teams on the basis of true merit.

Fenton interpreted his conversation with Koornhof as one in which Koornhof indicated that more reforms were planned and that the pace of these reforms would start to gain momentum. This happened on the 23rd of September 1976 when the NP government announced that mixed or multinational sport participation would be allowed on club level.⁴⁷ Vorster's and Koornhof's explanation for this radical change in NP policy regarding sport participation in South Africa was that the time was right and that it was the logical consequence of the sport policy on which the NP had embarked in 1967.⁴⁸

The sport reform effort initiated by Vorster, assisted by Koornhof, through mixed sport participation internationally and locally, laid a foundation for the ongoing reforming process of South African society, a society which was in dire need of reform during the 1970s, taking into consideration the 1976 uprisings and the international reaction to the way the government acted. This did not only imply mixed sport participation, but also social integration on different levels of the South African society.⁴⁹ In this regard, Koornhof explained in a letter to the International Tennis Federation the government's

43 *Die Transvaler*, 30 August 1972.

44 *Rand Daily Mail*, 30 August 1972.

45 Republic of South Africa, *Hansard*, 5 May 1973, col. 7783-7784.

46 *Sunday Express*, 3 March 1973.

47 Republic of South Africa, *Hansard*, 21 February 1975, col. 3218.

48 *Skietgoed: Sport*. Information services of the National Party of South Africa, September 1976 (Die sportbeleid van Suid-Afrika soos verduidelik deur Sy Edele die Eerste Minister tydens 'n geslote vergadering van afgevaardigdes na die Transvaalse Kongres van die Nasionale Party in die Pretoria Stadsaal op 15 September 1976, pp. 5-8.

49 *Die Transvaler*, 25 September 1976; *Die Burger*, 24 September 1976.

new stance towards integrated sport:⁵⁰

That no permit or other legal permission is needed by any player or any club in South Africa to join any club. As for spectators, the National or Provincial Governing bodies can by arrangement with the Department of Sport, get a clearance annually in advance for their full program of events. That early steps are being taken to modify any restrictions as far as the Liquor Act is concerned by enabling sport clubs to get international status on application so that licenses can provide liquor to all participating sportsmen without application for a permit.

In 1978 Koornhof confirmed the successful implementation of the new sport policy since 1967. He explained that with the new sport policy the NP had started to move away from discrimination and it illustrated the fact that legislation to control race relations and protect identity in South Africa was not necessary. Institutionalised separate identities therefore have proved not to be necessary.⁵¹

Conclusion

Even though Vorster publicly rejected social integration between black and white, his implementation of the sport policy created the idea in some NP circles and among some of its supporters that he was moving away from the underlying principles of apartheid. This impression was strengthened by the fact that an English team played rugby against a South African mixed team (black and coloured) in July and August 1972 in South Africa. In the same year, black and white athletes competed in international events. Multinational sport activities in golf and tennis were also arranged.⁵² Vorster's interpretation of the sport policy also gave the impression that his new policy was the result of the continued and increasing internal and international pressure. The fact that Vorster and Koornhof clearly moved into a new direction with the new sport policy cannot be ignored. It is for this reason that I Wilkens and H Strydom described the initial sport policy of 1967 as a "complete somersault from what it was from 1948 to 1971".⁵³ This implies that changes initiated in

50 ICH, Bloemfontein, PV. 476: Dr P Koornhof collection, File 2/42/1: Letter from Koornhof to the chairperson of the International Tennis Federation, 21 February 1978.

51 G Kotze, *Sport en politiek...*, p.103.

52 Republiek van Suid-Afrika, Department van Internasionale Betrekkinge en Inligting, *Dinamiese veranderinge in Suid-Afrika.*, November 1980, p. 130; Republiek van Suid-Afrika, Departement van Internasionale Betrekkinge, "n Nuwe Suid-Afrika: Sport", *Suid-Afrika Oorsig*, 118, Julie 1980, pp. 2-3.

53 I Wilkens and H Strydom, *The super Afrikaners* (Johannesburg, Jonathan Ball, 1978), p. 239.

1967 changed even further during the 1970s. The internal criticism from NP members such as Dr A Hertzog, J Marais, W Delpont, J Engelbrecht etcetera⁵⁴ that Vorster and Koornhof were deviating from party principles indicated that many NP members did not initially understand the consequences of the new sport policy, and the changes that were made to it since its first inception. For dr. Hertzog, however, there was no doubt with this clear reaction from him:⁵⁵

Kan mens tot enige ander gevolgtrekking kom as dat die sportbeleid van die huidige Eerste Minister die tradisionele apartheidsbeginsels in sport, soos deur dr. Verwoerd duidelikgestel, verwerp?

Even Sir De Villiers Graaff, as leader of the official opposition, made it quite clear in Parliament that it was general knowledge that the NP experienced deep internal divisions because of the sport policy of the NP since its introduction in 1969.⁵⁶

Despite criticism, one thing was certain and that was that ongoing changes within the NP were starting to show. In this regard Koornhof had the following to say:⁵⁷

The policy that was announced by the Federal Council of the NP on 23 September 1976 has indeed brought about radical changes in sport in South Africa. Although it was accepted, inter alia, that with due regard to the provisions of any laws and regulations which may be appropriate, the interest of South Africa and all its sporting people can best be served if sportsmen and sportswoman of the White, Coloured, Indian and Black population groups belong to their own clubs, and control, arrange and manage their own sport matters. Whites and Non-whites are not debarred by legislation from joining and playing for clubs of their own choice”.

Although this came from the Minister himself, increased mixed sport participation was slowly becoming a reality and L Allison agrees with this: “In the 1970s ‘multinational’ sport was the rubric under which the government allowed integration to take place” it was “... one of the first areas of social life to be integrated, sport played a prominent role in the unravelling of apartheid”.⁵⁸

54 BM Schoeman, *My lewe in die politiek...*, p. 326; JHP Serfontein, *Die verkramppte aanslag...*, p. 120.

55 ICH, Bloemfontein, PV 132: Adv. BJ Vorster-versameling, Leër, 35: Bylae A, knipsels.

56 Republic of South Africa, *Hansard*, 11 October 1974, col. 5309. Republic of South Africa, Department of Information, *South African Digest*, 19 August 1977, p. 10.

57 ICH, Bloemfontein, PV 476: Dr P Koornhof collection, File 2/42/1: Letter from Koornhof to Mr Dyer President of the South African Cricket Association, 24 March 1977.

58 A Guelke, “Sport and the end of apartheid”, L Allison (ed.), *The changing politics of sport...*, pp. 158, 168.

In this context Vorster's ever-changing or evolutionary sport policy contributed to setting the stage for increased social integration on the sports field. No wonder Guelke concludes that: "In the 1970s 'multinational' sport was the rubric under which the government allowed integration to take place".⁵⁹ He even goes further by stating that:⁶⁰

During the last five years (1980-1985) there have been far-reaching changes in the organisation of sport in South Africa. In theory, at least, integration has become the new norm to which all but a few sporting bodies are committee... These changes have occurred in the context of the Government's own commitment to open-ended reform, subject to the absolutely crucial proviso that there is no abdication of White political control.

In view of the above discussion in which it was illustrated how the initial sport policy underwent continuous adaptations and changes and the aims outlined in the introduction, it is important to note that Vorster and Koornhof managed to accomplish three basic goals. The first one was to show the international community that the NP was in favour of change regarding certain aspects of its policy of apartheid, of which one was sport participation. In a document of the Department of Sport and Recreation released in 1976 the intentions of the NP in relation to sport was made clear through the following:⁶¹

The development of the sports policy must also be regarded as an evolutionary process of development, a process where South Africa has adapted itself to the new demands of time.

In doing so the Party signalled its intention of gradually moving away from its policy. Secondly, showing that the new sport policy could be used to develop good racial relations and make a start with reforming the South African society. This Koornhof clearly stated in Parliament on the 14th of October 1974 when he referred to the role of sport in improving race relations:⁶²

... eerstens, dat deur middel van sport rasseverhoudings kan verbeter (word), tweedens dat ons dit deur sport wil verbeter. Deur sport kan en wil ons vriende maak... Ek (en) die regering, my departement..., met die grootste simpatie en begrip probeer om presies dit te doen sover as wat dit menslik moontlik is.

59 A Guelke, "Sport and the end of apartheid", L Allison (ed.), *The changing politics of sport...*, p. 158.

60 A Guelke, "The politisation of South African sport", L Allison (ed.), *The politics of sport ...*, p. 118.

61 ICH, Bloemfontein, PV. 59: Dr Albert Hertzog collection, File KN 59/514/1/1: The normalization of sport in the Republic of South Africa, p. 3.

62 Republic of South Africa, *Hansard*, 14 October 1974, col. 5355.

All changes and trends illustrated to the NP supporters that a new direction had to be followed because it became increasingly difficult to implement the policy of apartheid in the context of changing international and local opinion. It also illustrated to the supporters of the NP that by gradually changing, political power and separate identity would not be lost in the near future.

It must also be stressed that the gradual move away from the policy principles were not only the result of the ongoing political pressure from pressure groups internationally and locally. These deviations from policy principles must also be viewed as a reflection of new political thinking in the NP. The fact that Vorster was pragmatic in his leadership and the fact that he showed that he was willing to adjust to new challenges and changes regardless of the risk of a split, illustrate this new approach in political thinking. Even though slow in practice, this new approach must therefore be viewed as a reflection of the ongoing changing political thinking of the NP leadership in the period under discussion and afterwards. The evolutionary sport policy of Vorster also had the desired effect of bringing about changes in sport policy driven by changes in political thinking based on the new international political challenges of the period under discussion.