Gender, Sport and Development in Africa

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Cross-cultural Perspectives on Patterns of Representations and Marginalization

Edited by
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Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa

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Introduction

Jimoh Shehu

Play is as old as humanity, but sport as a standardized system of competition between athletes is a modern phenomenon, originating in the West and diffusing to non-Western cultures by various routes and processes, including colonialism, cultural imperialism globalization and adaptation (Guttmann 1994; Hargreaves 1994; Maguire 1999). As a product of modernity – fashioned through the grand narratives of continuous progress, hierarchies of subjectivities and division of spaces, attributes, labour, and power (Lyotard 1984; Gidden 1990) – sport is socio-historically associated with specific bodies, places and identities and not with others. In other words, socially constructed categories of difference and hierarchies have historically worked as organizing determinants in the production, reproduction, circulation and consumption of various sports in modern world. Over the years, considerable evidence has been accumulated showing that prevailing notions and certainties about social relations that shape economic and political processes in modern societies are reflected and reproduced in sport domains as well (Coakley & Dunning 2000). Even as sport appears to be global, men, women, different classes and cultures do not experience its norms and practices the same way; thus to regard sport as a neutral and socially inclusive cultural institution is a misapprehension. Traditionally, sport is regarded as the cultural space for performing masculinity and rationality as opposed to femininity and irrationality - qualities that are culturally associated with women (McKay, Messner & Sabo 2000). For example, the fact that sport has a large male following worldwide has been linked to the patriarchal ideology which divides the social world into dualistic gendered spaces, positions, traits and dispositions that are presumably clear and natural (Flintoff & Scraton 2002). This dominant ideology defines men in opposition to women and therefore declares certain domains such as the home as female and others such as sport and public spaces as male. It

goes without saying that this naturalization of sport as male territory for nurturing hegemonic masculine qualities tends to exclude from the sport arena other bodies that are marked, gendered, sexed or classed as female or feminine.

Despite its implicit androcentric ethos, however, there is a growing consensus that sport may have a significant role to play in social development, mobilizing creative energies and symbolic resources for re-imagining and transforming the social order. If sport has developmental implications, then it follows that it is a key site to deepen and broaden reflection about how sport structures enable and disable empowerment and emancipation in diverse locales. In this context, the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) Symposium on Gender, Sport and Development held in Cairo in November 2009 provided a focal point for participants to:

> …consider the various dimensions to the landscape of gender and the multifaceted sports arena …with a view to reflecting on the possibilities that have emerged alongside the old obstacles that have persisted in the search for and processes towards a gender-inclusive African development project.

The chapters in this book were first presented as papers at that symposium. Although much work remains to be done to illuminate the gender, sport and development problematic in the context of Africa, this preliminary volume provides a fascinating contribution to the understanding of how the discursive and structural elements of sport are overlaid with gender inequities, while offering potential spaces for challenging unequal power relations.

This volume is divided into ten chapters. Chapters 1-4 show that despite the pressures created by feminists and other social movements to open up the sport arena to women and other previously excluded groups, the age-old patriarchal principles embedded in sport, reinforced at every turn by the mass media and gendered socialisation, remain a major obstacle to personal fulfillment and advancement in sport for many African women. These chapters variously illustrate how women, perceived as a threat to the male system of power relations in sport, become targets of toxic myths, stigmas, and harassment in sport spaces to perpetuate the domination of these spaces by heterosexual, masculine males. Specifically, Chapter One brings into sharp focus the opposition and hostility underlying both the relationship between rival soccer teams and their fans in Zimbabwe and between men and women in soccer situations – and the attendant oppression and subordination of the feminized others in football settings. Because the soccer matches inevitably produce winners and losers, the frustration of defeat and the distress of derision from rivals frequently lead to fracas. Even though hegemonic masculinity makes it acceptable for men to unleash their an-

ger, aggression and domination within and outside the stadium in the form of physical assault and vandalism, the prevailing notions of femininity expects women to shun loutishness. As such, women are often the more vulnerable targets of soccer violence. This chapter illustrates how Zimbabwean women spectators are subjected to sexual harassment, derogatory remarks and derision without public outrage so as to make the women feel that they 'ask for it' by going to the stadium. The use of *juju* in soccer, discriminatory sponsorship of Zimbabwean women soccer and under-representation of women in soccer leadership teams are also highlighted in the chapter, showing the relationship between *juju* economy, soccer sponsorship, soccer management and sexism. In the same vein, Chapter Two reveals how modern sport in Zimbabwe is premised on the ideology of exclusionary and andocentric mutuality and, therefore, has become a tool for women's repression. Although both men and women can be equally passionate about sport, the dominant notion of femininity as passive, submissive and domesticated reinforces the idea that women are vulnerable, need male protection and should keep out of public spheres, including soccer spaces, for their own safety. The chapter argues that the power structures and strategies of sport development in the country mis-identify women as the subordinated other and thus support myriad forms of gender-based discrimination and sexual molestation against girls and women in sport.

How do the images, metaphors, epithets, jargon and songs used to represent players, opponents, winning and losing reinforce gender oppression, discrimination and alienation in sporting sites? This is the question variously explored in Chapters 3 and 4. These chapters inter-discursively provide a detailed account of the ironies and dilemmas faced by women in Malawi and Nigeria who seek to partake of the growth of popular sports as players, sport managers, spectators and mass media consumers, yet are enclosed within oppressive textual practices and discourses that define women in terms of domesticity and feminine values, and the female sporting bodies as deviant sex objects. This chapter is an important reading if one is to understand how the social construction and representation of exemplary womanhood constrain women's participation in sport and its political, social and economic processes. Chapter 3 provides graphic narratives of sexualization of players, opposition, and sport performance in Malawi, whereby local terms for marking, tackling, kicking and scoring, for examples, are bywords for coupling, penetration, ejaculation, and brutalization of women and feminized males. The male-defined views of sport performance and the inequitable and capricious coverage of women sport in a Nigerian newspaper are explored in Chapter 4, alerting us to how distorted, biased and arbitrary representation of women athletes engender differential access to the material and symbolic benefits of sport - in short, short-changing women athletes.

Chapter 5 draws on the author's research and other work on the sporting bodies and identity management in sport to demonstrate how soccer players in South Africa are sorted not only along gender and racial lines, but also along sexual orientation. According to the hetero-normative soccer 'culture' in South Africa, players have to present personas that conform to traditional stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. In this context, South African women soccer players always have to make sure they don't appear too masculine, unsexy, or openly lesbian in order to attract fans and sponsors and protect themselves against homophobic attack. The chapter underscores some of the changes taking place in South African sport landscape – the promotion of multi-racial female sport squads, the homophobic fears and prejudices that women's participation in sport inspires and the dilemma of women soccer players regarding how to secure access to sponsorship without repudiating their sexuality and embodiment. Chapter 6 aptly illustrates the link between hetero-normative masculinity and 'appropriate feminine norm' - tough, active men to complement and complete soft, sexy women. Both are manifestations of patriarchy – ideology that divide society into macho blokes and yielding, emotional babes. Far from encouraging women to take active part in sport, patriarchy encourages them to become supporting casts to male actors. It also entrenches restrictive, normative and oppressive representations of women in sport.

Drawing on the literature, interviews and anecdotal evidence, Chapter 6 expounds on the ways fandom is used in Nigeria to affirm ethnic identity, collective efficacy and civic pride. The chapter considers how the growth of football fandom in Nigeria has been facilitated by home videos, African Magic and especially the television. The christening of Thierry Henry as *Igwe* (Chief or Monarch) in Nigeria and *Atcheya* (Chairman or leader) in Malawi shows that men football fandom is a social movement with potential to unite nationalities and subjectivities. At the same time, however, it can exacerbate gender inequalities and the internalization of the social view that men athletes are more entertaining and more important than women athletes.

Chapter 7 on the one hand explores the space that men and women occupy or do not occupy in the Mauritius sport landscape in order to highlight how gender intersects with physical activity and competitiveness. As depicted in the previous chapters, the old assumptions about gender role, socialization and occupation of separate spheres by men and women are also at play in Mauritius. The low participation of Mauritian women in sport and their under-representation in sport management not only short-changes society due to underutilization of available potentials, but also promotes social injustice by excluding a major segment of society from the public sport and recreational spaces. Chapter 8 on the other hand, provides examples of women who use their interests and involvement in

sport to contest their subordination to men. The narratives of three women soccer players show, however, the difficulty of pursuing a career as women in a male dominated sport in the absence of system-wide attention to sponsorship and employment equity issues. The chapter reiterates the need for systematic support of talented female athletes and the transformation of gender relations in the sport and recreational arenas.

Chapter 9 focuses on the issues of sponsorship – an area that calls for greater egalitarianism across Africa. The chapter historicizes the development of women soccer in South Africa, calling attention to both the repressive and transformative power of corporate sponsors in relation to sport development at grassroots and elite levels. Citing the example of Sasol and women football in South Africa as a prima facie example of transformative sponsorship, the chapter argues that micro, meso and macro levels of support over a long period is the life-blood of any sport programme or sector. The chapter suggests the need to transform sport sponsorship by infusing its processes with gender-equality and other feminist concerns.

Although the questions around the economic and symbolic impact of the 2010 FIFA World Cup have received considerable attention in media and academic circles, the issue of Football for Hope Centres to be built in 20 disadvantaged communities across Africa has not been adequately explored. This is the issue addressed in Chapter 10. Using a number of discursive lenses, the chapter scrutinizes the intentions, assumptions and regime of gender relations implicit in the '20 Centres for 2010' project. The chapter demonstrates how the project's discourses rest on romanticized notions of football as a tool for social development and control, and modernist ideologies concerning space, power, prowess and social difference that enable different sport and development economies. The '20 Centres for 2010' reveals both the potential of sport event legacy to benefit the community and its capacity to exclude by institutionalizing inequality and privilege based on gender, age, class and location.

On the whole, this volume raises issues of importance that need to be investigated further to enable a deeper and nuanced understanding of the complexities of gender and sport in Africa's development. The questions raised by this chapter for further research include:

1. How have women demonstrated agency, collective efficacy and resistance against their violation in African sport settings? What policy lessons may be learnt from the tactics or strategies of resistance employed by girls and women subjected to sexual harassment in sport?

2. How do women experience and contest violation and brutalisation in sport arenas?

3. What is the nexus between sport and spatial politics?
4. What are the implications of the *juju* economies for engendering inclusive sport development?
5. What are the ironic effects of hegemonic masculinity on male athletes in Africa?
6. What identity politics are played out on women on sport fields and stands? How do the language and songs of female sport fans embody and disembody sexuality, patriarchy, and agency?
7. What are the opportunities arising from mega sport events like the 2010 FIFA World Cup to contest gender subordination and democratize sport spaces and symbols in Africa?
8. What forms do subversive and repressive representations of women athletes take? Which forms of feminine sporting practices are accorded greater cultural and symbolic power? Which of the representations in the mass media can be or have been applied advantageously and innovatively by the women athletes?
9. What are intersections between gender, religion, ethnicity, race, age, sexuality, (dis)ability, socio-economic status and the political economy of sport-based development projects?

Greater attention to these and other issues by African scholars will strengthen the case for reducing inequalities in sport opportunities and thinking critically about the limits and potentials of modern sport in Africa's development.

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1

The most Beautiful Game or the most Gender Violent Sport? Exploring the Interface between Soccer, Gender and Violence in Zimbabwe

Anusa Daimon

Introduction

The Brazilian legend, Pele, reportedly dubbed soccer/football the world's 'most beautiful game'. This phrase creates the impression that soccer is an unproblematic game, representing only gallantry, artistry and goodness. To be sure, soccer has its aesthetic dimensions, but an appreciation of these dimensions must be balanced by sensitivity to the game's ideological, structural and material effects on different segments of society. As elsewhere in the global North and South, soccer has a huge following in Africa. However, its relations of production and consumption in the continent intertwine with cultural and socio-economic factors which reproduce social inequities, gender discrimination and exclusion. As a form of sport, soccer is socially constructed as a masculine activity in which women are grudgingly accommodated as supporters (Kuyel 1999). As Parpart (2008) observes, the dominant patriarchal ideology locates women's roles in the domestic sphere; thus their participation in sports is viewed as a challenge to the male control of the public domain – a challenge that often elicit violence against those women perceived as transgressors. According to West (2002), 'in most sporting activities, women are abused physically and verbally as a means of humiliation'. Issues in this chapter are the various forms of violence within the context of soccer production and consumption in Zimbabwe. The premise of the chapter is that to engender Africa's development, it is necessary to understand and tackle gender-based violence and vandalism in sport.

Zimbabwean Stadia: Theatres of Machismo

Zimbabwean stadia have become arenas for the display of machismo. Consequently, most Zimbabwean women prefer not to attend these stadia because they perceive these structures as very androcentric. There are particular seating areas or grand stands where the most volatile and vocal males are found during matches. For example, in Harare's Rufaro Stadium, which is the home of Dynamos FC, Zimbabwe's most popular team but arguably with the most violent supporters, there is an area popularly known as the 'Vietnam' stand. The name 'Vietnam' is a metaphor for the brutality of the Vietnam War of the 1960s. So this section of Rufaro Stadium represents a war zone, solely preserved for Dynamos fans. Paradoxically, the name 'Rufaro' denotes happiness or joy. Most hooligans who include rouges and criminals are found in this area. Any non-Dynamos fans, including males, who trespass into this territory, are violently mobbed and ejected. Likewise, women who venture into this war-zone are subjected to violation by male supporters. According to Lenskyj (1986), 'women who venture into these areas are described as 'having balls' since soccer is seen as celebrating masculinity and male bonding'.

It is the same situation at the Bulawayo's Barbourfields stadium whose 'Soweto' grand stand is a domain of the volatile Highlanders 'Bosso' FC supporters. The name 'Soweto' is associated with bloodshed reminiscent of the killings in Soweto township during the apartheid era in South Africa. In an interview, Madhlozi Moyo, a staunch Highlanders FC supporter, points out that 'a woman by nature is supposed to be sexually molested in a stadium and no woman is allowed to sit in 'Soweto', unless she is a well known regular member of the 'Bosso' supporters who can withstand the pressure of being in the midst of the vociferous fans in the Soweto area.' (Interview with Madhlozi Moyo dated 8 October 2009). Therefore, for a woman to be accepted into the androcentric sections of the stadia, she has to embody masculine behaviour.

Likewise, Zimbabwean stadium humour is usually obscene. It is a theatre of vulgar language, insults and repugnant songs that are usually traded by male supporters and hurled at match officials and team coaches for bad refereeing decisions or poor team performance. Obscene songs that usually degrade the female sexual anatomy are very popular during these occasions. The presence of women in stadia often evokes ribald jokes and comments. For example, during goal celebrations, men usually use the term '*hurray*' in jubilation. In Zimbabwe, this word is unfortunately abused and translated to the vernacular term of '*hure*' meaning prostitute. In this case, the ball entering the net is symbolic of a prostitute being penetrated during sexual intercourse. It is also common in Zimbabwe to associate defeated teams with women. For instance, Dynamos FC supporters always make a caricature of their rival Highlanders FC as '*Umfazi weDembare*'

implying Dynamos' woman or bitch. In addition, male fans believe that most women who attend soccer matches on their own are people of loose morals and are thus labelled as prostitutes, bitches and witches. Unfortunately, this stigmatization is also perpetrated by housewives who often accuse women in soccer stadia as whores and husband poachers.

Such male chauvinism against women soccer fans also extends to real sexual violence within the stadia. Women who attend matches are seen as fair game for verbal and physical abuse as well as sexual harassment (Lenskyj 1986:113). Men sometimes strip naked to humiliate the women present. Some women are sexually molested in the stadia's dark alleys, toilets and even on the grand stands. For example, during a match between Dynamos FC and Lengthens FC at Rufaro Stadium on 27 September 2009, video footage from one of the pitch cameras caught glimpse of a man who was molesting a female fan's right breast as she was busy celebrating a goal by Dynamos FC (ZBC TV, 27 September 2009). In response, she slapped the man in the face and shrieked to attract the attention of other fans. However, no one came to her rescue; instead most of the predominantly male spectators turned against her, accusing her of being a prostitute. In some instances, women have been forcefully stripped by hooligans. African television cameramen also have a tendency of zooming in on beautiful lady spectators in the grand stands, which greatly violates their privacy. Despite this, not all men are brutes and some do respect or cherish the presence of females during matches. They thrive to make such occasions family friendly to an extent that they bring their wives and children to the stadia. Some men are also not immune to stadia brutalisation and violation. Male trespassers are also beaten up and ejected. They are also explicitly scolded and sometimes stoned and stabbed during soccer disturbances.

In the face of these violations, both men and women have engaged multiple responses. To avoid becoming targets of such violations, most women in Zimbabwean either totally desist from attending soccer matches or prefer to sit in the VIP sections of the stadium. In this sense, Zimbabwean soccer arenas are gendered and oppressive. Apart from avoidance and cooperative tactics, Zimbabwean women have demonstrated agency, collective efficacy and resistance against their oppression and violation in soccer settings. Some have taken the bull by the horns by continuing to attend these soccer matches. They have attended in droves and sat amongst the volatile fans in the stands. Despite the bullying, most women resist being ejected arguing that they have paid their hard-earned monies to be there. Others even scold back. Some have become registered members of the supporters club as well as taken influential positions within the fans club. Others have joined the supporters' band as singers, drummers and dancers. Women are also trying to conscientize society by taking the campaign against soccer violence

to the media, producing articles, pamphlets and documentaries in the print and electronic media. Male victims have also taken after the initiative. When bullied or ejected, some fight back and mark their territory.

Hooliganism, Police Teargas and Women's Vulnerability

Hooliganism is one of the banes of soccer. Every year, multitudes of soccer fans are killed or injured in stampedes triggered by hooliganism, poor crowd control and underdeveloped football infrastructure. According to Tulloh (1994), 'a recurrent dimension of football hooliganism is the occurrence of physical violence, either in the form of assaults on referees, players or clashes among soccer fans'. In the process, hooliganism exposes the vulnerable to physical and psychological violence. The disturbances are usually triggered by male hooligans who are disgruntled over poor results and bad decisions by the coaches and referees. Hooligans demonstrate their displeasure by hurling stones, plastic bottles, orange or banana peels and sometimes seats and steel rails into the football pitch; often vandalizing the stadium. Some even invade the field during and after the game in show of displeasure (Martin 1995:68). Such actions always culminate in panic, chaos and stampedes among the spectators.

In the context of Zimbabwe, the situation is habitually worsened by the presence and use of the infamous anti-riot police to manage rowdy crowds in stadia. Many soccer tragedies are caused by poor crowd control, especially when the anti-riot police fire teargas canisters into the crowds. According to Gleeson (2001), 'the indiscriminate firing of teargas by anti-riot police is commonplace in African soccer, where stewarding and other security measures are non-existent'. Such was the case on 9 July 2000 when about thirteen soccer fans, comprising 6 women, 4 men and 3 boys, perished in a stampede after police deliberately fired teargas at the exits of the National Sports Stadium in Harare during a World Cup qualifier between Zimbabwe and South Africa. The police wanted to quell growing discontent and unruliness when Delron Buckley of South Africa had gestured a silencing finger to the incensed 60,000 strong home crowd, after scoring South Africa's second goal. (*The Herald* 10 July 2000). The match had to be abandoned as players from both sides felt the effects of the teargas and had to receive medical treatment. The police were condemned for firing teargas, with authorities calling it a total over-reaction. Almost a year later, on 11 April 2001, crowd trouble also reared its ugly head in Johannesburg, South Africa, when 43 people were killed as about 75,000 fans attempted to force their way into an overcrowded 60,000 capacity Ellis Park Stadium to watch a top of the table league clash between the country's two most popular clubs, Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates (Alegi 2004; Darby 2005). Seven more people died in a stampede two weeks later on 29 April 2001 in Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo after the police again fired tear gas into the crowd (http://www.wikipedia.org).

Such soccer violence can be contextualised in the field of cultural analysis where it acts as a political statement about police brutality, social inequities, ethnic nationalism, social identity, soccer maladministration among others. In the case of the Zimbabwean stampede, fans used the violence to contest dictatorial rule and political oppression by the state and its agents, in particular the police and the army. In some cases, the soccer violence is used as a platform of ethnic nationalism. Such is the case in Zimbabwe where hegemonic Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups identify with Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC, respectively, along ethnic lines. Thus, any games pitting these two teams are always ethnically charged and so volatile that most women and men do not attend them.

The worst soccer disaster in African history occurred almost a week later on 9 May 2001 in Accra, Ghana, when at least 130 people, including women and children, died when over-zealous policing involving the arbitrary firing of teargas canisters into the crowd led to a stampede for the locked gates at a match pitting local rivals, Hearts of Oak and Asante Kotoko (Darby 2005). According to Fridy (2009:20), 'the Hearts/Kotoko rivalry is usually inflamed by the inherent nexus between football and politics in lieu of the relationship between Ghana's two dominant soccer clubs, Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko and Ghana's two dominant parties, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP), respectively'. In this context, soccer violence is being used to reflect or contest political dichotomies and affiliations in society. More deaths also occurred in Lusaka, Zambia on 3 June 2007 when 12 fans were crushed to death as crowds rushed from the stadium after Zambia's victory in an African Cup of Nations qualifier against the Democratic Republic of Congo. Also, on March 29 2009, in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, thousands of fans pushing to get into a stadium to watch a game between Ivory Coast and Malawi set off a stampede that killed 19 people and injured hundreds more (http://www.wikipedia.org). Despite all these tragedies, there have been no moves by African football leaders to ban police from firing teargas or set up guidelines for better stadium safety. It is because of these incidences that many African women and men do not attend soccer matches and prefer staying within the comfort of their homes.

Soccer 'Apartheid' and Zero Sponsorship

Many Zimbabwean women also encounter 'apartheid' in soccer participation. Men own, control, compete, coach and organize the game largely excluding women. (Bogopa 2007). Women basically play a supportive role of courtesans, jiggling and cheering on the sidelines. This 'apartheid' starts at grassroots level where local communities and schools socially construct sport along the lines of gender. Soccer is constructed as a boy/male sport at an early age. Girls are taught feminine sports particularly the popular sport of netball.

Likewise, provision of sport infrastructure is heavily biased towards soccer, with football stadia sprouting virtually everywhere across Zimbabwe. In contrast, very few netball and volleyball courts or hockey fields are constructed for females to showcase their talents. Marianne (2005) demonstrates that inconvenient schedules of soccer activities greatly affect women' and girls' participation in the game. There is a general lack of enthusiasm for female soccer even among women themselves. Very few women attend female soccer games, even the ones involving the national team. This under-representation is further exacerbated by the inherent lack of sponsorship for female soccer in Zimbabwe. The corporate world's sponsorship packages are geared towards male soccer, rugby, basketball and cricket teams. Much more money is also poured into soccer development for boys than for girls from the junior levels upwards. Hence, just like the famous Abidjan Soccer Academy in Ivory Coast, various soccer academies exist in Zimbabwe where budding boys are taught the skills of the 'beautiful game' at the expense of the girl child. This gender discrimination is also evident at the national level where professional women soccer leagues are non-existent and the Zimbabwean Women National Soccer Team, nicknamed the 'Mighty Warriors' always struggle to raise funds during such tournaments as the COSAFA female championships and World Cup qualifiers.

Despite these sponsorship barriers, women have sustained their participation in many ways. Individual female personalities have struggled and toiled around, using their own funds to run female soccer. One of these is Susan Chibizhe who was a former chairlady of the Zimbabwean Women Soccer League. She has shown resiliency and creativity typical of Bogopa's (2007) 'Standpoint Theory' which places the experiences and perspectives of the oppressed people at the centre of analysis. The theory assumes that the experiences of those who enjoy and control differ significantly from those who are marginalised in sport (Bogopa 2007). While Susan Chibizhe and female soccer players are struggling, their male counterparts have many sponsors to choose from. Women's initiatives are central to the survival of their profession against all odds. They have not sat on their laurels but have gone around looking for sponsorship packages from as far as the head of the state. They have also lobbied to administer the FIFA funds allocated to women soccer since most of the funds are misused within Zimbabwe Football Assocation (ZIFA).

Sexual Subjugation and Discrimination

In 2008, a major sex scandal was exposed in the Zimbabwe 'Mighty Warriors' team involving a member of the coaching staff. One of the players accused one of the team officials of infecting her with the deadly HIV/AIDS virus (http://www.newzimbabwe.com, 12 January 2008). Apparently, the officials used team selection as a bait to lure the susceptible players into sexual relations. Allegations

of drug abuse among players was reported with some players becoming pregnant after drug-induced sex romps during training camps. In response, there was a public outcry over such scandals which made ZIFA to investigate and punish the offenders who were putting the association and the game into disrepute. Sportswomen in Zimbabwe are also stigmatised as pseudo-masculine creatures that wish to behave like real men. Despite what Bodey (2008) calls 'international sport reforms that are being undertaken to challenge the status of women in sport like what is being currently done in Morocco', most Zimbabwean sports women continue to be caricatured as tomboys or even as lesbians. People always tend to associate any success in soccer and other sports with masculinity and any sportswoman who is exceptionally successful has her sexuality questioned. Such has been the case of Nomsa Moyo, the best Zimbabwe 'Mighty Warriors' soccer player since independence. She has been nicknamed Nomsa 'Boys' Moyo, which is reflective of a society that does not appreciate her talents as a woman and thus associates her football prowess with that of boys or men. Similarly, Caster Semenya of South Africa, the current Women's 800m World Champion, has dominated world headlines with questions over her sexuality simply because she exceeded the expectations that society expects of 'real' women in sports. In addition, female referees are rare in Zimbabwean soccer. The existing few only act in a supportive role as peripheral match commissioners who are not really involved in the actual refereeing of the match. It is because of these gendered prejudices that male attendance at female sporting activities in Zimbabwe, especially soccer, is extremely low.

The few Zimbabwean female soccer administrators are also not spared from physical and verbal violence. In early May 2008, Henrietta Rushwaya, the only female Chief Executive Officer of ZIFA since independence, was attacked by angry football fans who were demonstrating against a sudden hike in entry charges at a premier league match between Kiglon FC and Dynamos FC in Harare. Her only crime was trying to mediate between the parties, but she was herself caught up in the mayhem, with her car being stoned in the attack. A visibly angry Rushwaya confirmed that rioting fans attacked her car at the stadium, saying that 'all I wanted to do was to see if I could convince Kiglon officials to lower their entry charges, but I ended up being caught up in the violence' (http://www.thezimbabwetimes.com). The credibility of her appointment is also being questioned, with some arguing that she underwent a 'carpet interview' or exchanged sexual favours to acquire that CEO position. Many also make reference to her well-known political connections with ZANU PF, a political party that many urban Zimbabweans hate with passion. They refuse to give her credit and the benefit of doubt over her rise to power in Zimbabwean football administration. Currently, she is labelled as prostitute and the Jezebel of Zimbabwean football by those who are jealous of her position.

Female Sexuality and the Curse of *Juju* in Soccer

African soccer teams are renowned for deploying *juju* or magic to win matches. *Juju* men with their paraphernalia are often seen during soccer matches, conducting their rituals purported to weaken, confuse and ultimately vanquish the opposing team. Straker (2007) observes that most footballers believe that superior talent is not natural, and excessive skill by individual players can only be explained through the intervention of supernatural forces, which gives them this 'force' or 'dexterity'. So individual players, local teams and even national teams consult what are popularly known as *marabouts* in West Africa*, sangomas/n'angas* in Southern Africa or *'féticheur' magicians/fortune-tellers* in Central Africa. In Zimbabwe, many myths and legends exist of teams that camp at graveyards in preparation for a match. Some employ illusionary and intimidatory tactics, like unleashing a swarm of bees against their opponents. Goalkeepers might be given charms to improve their leaping abilities, or strikers' shoes might be adorned with fetishes so that they can score more goals. Skilled magicians usually 'turn the opponent's ball into stone or make the ball invisible until it is in the back of the net' (Straker 2007). Captains and team members are also given talisman and amulets to wear, or special preparations to rub into their skin and a favourite tactic is to bury a talisman in the centre of the playing field the night before a big match, while watching out for spies from the other side (Martin 1995). In response, other teams carry and blow handfuls of salt or simply urinate onto the turf before kick-off to weaken the *juju*. All this is meant to give a team an edge over its opponents.

Be that as it may, the use of *juju* comes at a price for African women. Generally, *juju* users greatly believe that women should be avoided at all costs. Female sexuality is deemed detrimental and retrogressive in the *juju* world. Hence, women are caricatured as evil or wicked elements that bring bad luck to soccer. So they are shunned by both the team officials and players especially on the eve of and during a match. This is the reason why many teams that sternly believe in *juju* emphasize camping before matches and also desist from engaging any female officials in their technical setups. In Zimbabwe for instance, the ZIFA CEO, Henrietta Rushwaya, has been castigated and portrayed as a symbol of bad omens or misfortunes in Zimbabwean soccer on a number of occasions. In August 2008, she was once barred from watching an African Champions League match between Dynamos FC and Zamalek of Egypt after Dynamos had lost the previous two home matches in her presence (Interview with Anslotte Mangena, 13 October 2009). Coincidentally, Dynamos went on to win by a single goal against Zamalek and progressed into the semi-finals which thereby consolidated the belief that she had much to do with the team's misfortunes.

Woman employed as team officials often experience denigration. This has been the case of Abigail Mnikwa, the former physiotherapist of Dynamos FC who was kicked out of her job by the club's leadership and fans representatives on 6 October 2009, after they had resolved that she was to blame for the team's poor performance. (*The Herald*, 10 October 2009). Soon after her dismissal, the team went on to win its next league by three goals to nil. Dynamos have always been a club built on a foundation of superstition and a section of their fans believe Mnikwa's presence on the bench was affecting the club's gender-insensitive magical powers. Despite this, some unidentified Dynamos players pointed that it was not her fault since all players were not playing well, hence the team's dismal performance. In response, Mnikwa took her case to the High Court which ordered her reinstatement with damages and Dynamos FC complied with the court ruling. Such resilience showed that many Zimbabwean women do not believe in the myth that they are *juju* neutralizers. Despite this, the *juju* phenomenon has been detrimental to the engendering of sport and social development in Africa since women are categorised and constructed as evil to the game of soccer.

Soccer and Gender Socialization

Feminist scholars have asserted that gender violence occurs both in private and public spheres and manifests in various forms: physical, psychological, emotional and sexual (Epprecht 2001; Green 2001; Tichagwa 1998). Gendered soccer violence also spills into the private sphere where women interested in the game grapple with patriarchal ideologies that tend to socialise men to be competitive and women cooperative (Bogopa 2007). Accordingly, the majority of females are discouraged to engage or be interested in sports that challenge the traditional norms and values of society. Lenskyj (1986) observes that a woman who invades male turf in sport is seen as rejecting the privileged and protected status of those who conform to the traditional feminine roles. Digressing from such patriarchal norms leads to hostilities against women.

Hence, female soccer personalities are usually treated as deviant who cannot be married to sane men. Because of pride and chauvinistic mindsets, men avoid marrying such women whom they deem masculine in character. For example, Lucia Goreng of Ghana revealed that she decided to abandon her football career after facing mounting criticism from many people who viewed her as a man and that she would not be married (www.violenceinsports.org). Consequently, soccer players tend to court and marry one another. For example, the Zimbabwean male national soccer team defensive midfielder, Esrom Nyandoro married Ruth Banda, a 'Mighty Warriors' player (*The Herald*, 7 March 2007). Female players also have to fulfil their domestic and conjugal duties within the home with no excuses of tiredness. They are also discouraged from the game by the patriarchal notions that vigorous activities affect their sexuality and fertility.

Most Zimbabwean women are compelled to support their husbands' teams, especially the popular Dynamos, Caps United and Highlanders football clubs. Failure to comply frequently leads to rebuke and domestic violence, especially when the husband's team loses a match. Women are thus hindered from watching their own favourite teams and support their spouses' teams out of fear. According to Albert Mvurume, men sometimes vent their anger on their spouses and children when their team loses (Interview, 13 October 2009). Similarly, supporting a team is safer for a married woman than having a favourite male soccer player. Most husbands accuse their wives of insubordination and prostitution for praising another man. This leaves the accused wives with little option but to dance to the tune of their husbands. Ultimately, they lose interest in the game.

Conclusion

The chapter has used the Zimbabwean soccer scenario as a window into how Zimbabwean women are exposed to various forms of violence that affects their physical, psychological and sexual well-being. The sport poses threats to women through hooliganism, sexual molestation; discrimination, lack of sponsorship, *juju* stigmatizations, and gender socialization problems within the home. Therefore, there is need to act and develop policies to eliminate soccer violence and transform the game's regime of gender relations in ways that promote equitable sport development. For instance, women soccer should be promoted and nurtured from the grassroots level, especially at school. The government and the corporate world should allocate specific funds for women sport development so that they do not struggle for sponsorship. Zimbabwean soccer authorities also need to promote conducive sporting environments within their stadia, including ensuring professional crowd control, discouraging police brutality, improving the infrastructure as well as engendering soccer as an inclusive sport.

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2

From 'Safety' Zones to Public Spaces: Women's Participation in Sport in Zimbabwe

Molly Manyonganise

Introduction

This chapter focuses on gender inequalities in sport and argues that the majority of women are restrained from full participation in sporting activities due to the social construction of spaces earmarked for women and men. The focus on women emanates from the fact that in spite of achievements made by Zimbabwe in affording equal access for both men and women in the areas of education, employment, health, business, etc, the reality is that strong cultural and traditional practices restrict the progress of women in sport. The assumption of this chapter is that women are disadvantaged by the space which they culturally occupy, hence the need to interrogate the existence of these spaces in order to establish how women are restrained in their participation in sporting activities both as spectators and as sportspersons. In this chapter, safe spaces will mainly refer to the private domain of the home though references will be made to other similar spaces which restrict the participation of women in public activities such as sports.

In order to explore how the notion of spaces control women's participation in sport, interviews and discussions were conducted, involving a convenient sample of fifteen women, ten teenage girls and five men. The interviewer targeted both employed (generally those in the Central Business District of Harare) and unemployed women (house wives and single women) in Harare's high density suburb of Mabvuku in order to ascertain their involvement in sport. These interviews were conducted between September and December 2009. While interviews provide insightful analysis, newspaper reports were also analyzed for information about the treatment of women in sports and what women in Zimbabwe are doing in order to challenge the status quo. The research used a qualitative research design. Data was analysed using the discourse as well as con-

tent analysis. Content analysis was chosen for its strength in allowing the researcher to gain an understanding of reality in a subjective but scientific way. It also emphasizes an integrated examination of speech and texts and their specific contexts. On the other hand, discourse analysis was chosen for its usefulness in the study of social identities since identity reproduces and sustains power relationships between social groups. In this case, it enabled the researcher to explore how language use and behaviour construct and replicate masculine and feminine spaces as far as sport is concerned. The following are some of the research questions that were asked research participants during data collection:

1. What is the role of the family in gender socialization?
2. What challenges do women face in their attempts to participate in sporting activities either as spectators or as sportspersons?
3. What could be the source of the gender inequalities that seem to be manifesting in the sporting arena in Zimbabwe?
4. How do you view women who go to sports venues to watch sports?
5. Do you think the sporting fields are safe places for women and girls in Zimbabwe and why do you think so?
6. How does society react towards women who challenge the status quo in sporting matters?
7. What could be the role of sport in women's socio-economic development?

The research is informed by African Womanism which uses gender theory as an intellectual tool for critically analyzing discriminatory social, religious and political organizational structures (Mwale 2002). However, it should be noted that while the research is intended to be representative of all women in Zimbabwe, it is limited in that it was conducted among the Shona which is the dominant ethnic group in the country. The researcher recognizes that Zimbabwe has a heterogeneous population and that some of the findings may not be applicable to women in other ethnic groups. Future research may need to sample other ethnic groups not covered in this study.

Cultural Taboos, Gender, Sport and the Family

The family plays a pivotal role in the socialization of any child. It is within the family that children learn about gender roles. Doob (1988) states that socialization is a process by which a person becomes a member of a social group or society, learning the necessary cultural content and modes of behaviour and as a consequence, internalizing the culture of the society to which the person belongs. During primary socialization (that is, socialization that takes place in one's childhood) the family is the principal agent, that is, the child is mostly influenced by his/her parents, siblings, guardians and relatives. It is within the family that a child learns

how to behave and to relate. Waters and Crook (1990) point out that within the family of orientation, parental role models, linguistic training, cultural participation and experiences provide each member of society with cultural baggage which serves as tools for participation in later life. Hagedorn (1990) concurs with Waters and Crook when he posits that during primary socialization the child develops language and individual identity, learns cognitive skills and self-control, internalizes moral standards and appropriate attitudes and motivations, and gains some understanding of societal roles. This, therefore, implies that what children learn through their primary socialization stays with them for life. The issue that quickly comes to mind is that of gender.

Defene (2006) defines gender as 'a social category that determines one's life options, participation in the economy and the society'(http://www.uneca.org/aec/documents/yeshiareg%20Defene.pdf). Geeta Rao Gupta (quoted in Dube 2003:86) depicts gender as 'a culture-specific construct' determining the different kinds of work which can be done by men and women. Dube (2003:86) describes it as 'a social construct of men and women.' She contends that gender is not natural neither is it divine; it has to do with social relationships of women and men; gender can be reconstructed, and transformed by the society, for since it is culturally constructed, it can be socially deconstructed. Geeta Rao Gupta (quoted in Dube 2003:86) What we get from these definitions is that gender regulates how people relate and operate in their day-to-day lives. Consequently, it influences one's thinking, emotions, and mobility, among other things. Culture plays a central role in the construction as well as the maintenance of gender. Nock (1992) says family members give the child his/her first notion of roles in the larger society, for example, images of what it means to be male or female. Generally, society expects boys to emulate their fathers, while girls are to follow carefully in the footsteps of their mothers (Nock 1992). This is reinforced by the kinds of work assigned to boys and girls, the kinds of toys bought for them and also by the language used.

In Zimbabwe, girls do most of the domestic chores while boys have little or nothing to do. As a result, boys have a lot more time for outdoor activities as compared to girls. From an early age, boys are given all the time to explore their interests and abilities as far as sport is concerned. As they play with their plastic balls, run along the roads, jump over gullies, climb trees, etc., boys are able to identify their sporting talents. Girls, on the other hand, are discouraged from taking part in sports like soccer and such activities which demand that they exert themselves. They then concentrate on what they see their mothers do, that is, cook, wash clothes and dishes, just to mention a few, thereby replicating skills that have kept their mothers and grandmothers subjugated for generations. Even in child plays, girls often concentrate on playing their mother's roles. Socialization

makes them believe that it is their duty to make sure that when the boys come back from their recreational activities they find food on the table, warm water for their bath, clean clothes to put on – the list is endless.

From the types of toys that girls and boys are encouraged to play with, different sets of aptitudes and attitudes are developed. Girls have their aspirations affected through playing with dolls and other toys which reinforce the stereotype of women as carers as well as inculcate and reinforce the notion of female fragility. On the other hand, boys are given challenging toys such as bicycles, small cars, pistols and soccer balls. With these toys the boy child is always on his feet because the toys demand activity while the girl's toys confine her to the homestead and cool shades where they learn to associate themselves with 'safe' zones as opposed to the more daring and activity-stimulating spaces which boys venture into. Because of the confinement at home, the girls end up concentrating on the traditional sporting activities such as *nhodo, dunhu*,[1] which are not commercialised and therefore are not professions. As a result, boys learn to flex their muscles at an early stage in their lives as compared to their female counterparts. This helps them develop sporting skills, thus, putting them at a competitive edge over girls. This is reflected later in life especially in the professional sporting topography. Due to this early socialization, men find it easier to venture into professional sport, thus making a living out of it more than women do.

Language also plays a critical role in expressing the relationship between boys and girls and later men and women in the family and society at large. Mhuru (1996) says 'through language, the exploitative relations between girls and boys are most obviously expressed'. Among the Shona, statements like *mukadzi anofanira kuva nemwoyo nemusha* (a woman should have a passion for the home) or *mukadzi akanaka ndeanogara pamba (*a good woman is the one who stays at home) are often uttered. These statements construct the female child into an individual whose sole responsibility is the home. Yet, most sporting activities take place outside of the domestic sphere. This means that from an early age, the majority of girls are shut out of the sporting landscape due to societal expectations of the space they should occupy.

The patriarchal nature of Zimbabwean society fosters gender-stereotyping. These patriarchal norms and values mostly affect and are mainly felt by women and girls in their families. However, the family is just a microcosm of society at large. Patriarchy itself is and has always been associated with hierarchy where men are considered more important than their female counterparts. There is a general belief that men are better than women in terms of strength, competence, responsibility - the list is endless. Mhuru (1996) says women are socialized to dependency in male-dominated spheres as a result of this social construction Macfadden (cited in Mhuru 1996:8) As mentioned earlier, when young girls

grow up, they are socialised by mothers and women guardians who have internalized patriarchal ideals which look at women as subordinates. They are made to believe that sport is for the stronger and competent, thus making it a male enterprise.

Furthermore, in Zimbabwe like in most African cultural traditions, patriarchal notions of femininity stress that at marriage, a girl should be a virgin, a requirement not enforced for the boy. There is a general belief that engagement in sport can cause a girl to lose her virginity. The loss of one's virginity is a source of disgrace for the family, humiliation for the girl and can even lead to divorce. Despite the fact that this has not been proved scientifically, a lot of girls desist from participation in sport out of fear of the consequences later in life if it so happens that they lose their virginity.

In Zimbabwe, the majority of women do not have a formal voice in family affairs. They do not contribute to decisions made in the family. In fact, they are encouraged to learn in silence, making them receivers of information and not initiators. Men make themselves spokespersons for women (Nasimiyu-Wasike 2006:111). In Zimbabwe, this absurd scenario has found its way into most sport organisations which apparently are led by men who make decisions on behalf of women. The implication is that women do not know what is good for them; that they are not able to chart the course which their lives should take in as far as sport is concerned and therefore men can do that on their behalf. In instances where women make it to the top of sport organizations, they are often stigmatized and the general belief is that they would have done it 'riding' on men's backs or would have engaged in sexual activities with powerful men in society. A good example is that of Henrietta Rushwaya, the current Zimbabwe Football Association Chief Executive Officer. Both men and women in their office corridors discuss how unusual it is for a woman to lead an organisation which deals with men's sport. The major point is she should have engaged herself in sexual activities with powerful men in sport administration and politics for her to be where she is. Nothing of this sort is said if it is a man who has a similar job. On Wednesday 7 October, 2009, the *Zimbabwe Herald* reported that Abigail Munikwa who was working as a physiotherapist for Dynamos Football Club had been fired (p14). She was being blamed for the poor performance of the team because of her being a woman. The same report revealed that Henrietta Rushwaya was denied entry into the field of play at Rufaro Stadium when Dynamos was playing Zamalek of Egypt in 2008. For the male journalists who wrote the story, this was just a question of superstition. The report did not pay particular attention to the ill-treatment and humiliation of Munikwa irrespective of the fact that she was told about the decision to fire her when she was about to check into a hotel for official duty for the club. When asked to comment, this is what Munikwa said:

> …what really hurt me was the way I was treated…being told just before I checked into the hotel that I had to go back home, that is very humilia-ting. Abigail Munikwa (in the *Zimbabwe Herald*, 7 October 2009, p14)

Unfortunately, it is this humiliation, psychological and at times physical and sexual abuse, that women encounter in sporting arenas and sporting organisations that cause them to stay within the confines of the socially constructed spaces for women.

'Safe' Spaces, Public Spaces and Women Participation in Sport

The concept of spaces is not new when one is dealing with African societies. It is incontestable that in African societies, women have their physical mobility controlled by men. The view of certain places as decadent and mortifying still persists, particularly in the Zimbabwean society. Hence, society continues to create moral spaces which are usually described as safe for women. Sport arenas, 'regrettably' for women, fall within the category of those public places which are viewed as unsafe and immoral. These restrictions on mobility and a perceived lack of security for women signify that women and girls in Zimbabwe have fewer opportunities to learn, play, socialize or participate in sporting activities.

Furthermore, in Zimbabwean Shona culture, it is a taboo for women to publicly show their excitement. An ideal woman is supposed to control her emotions. Women who show that they are excited in public places are ridiculed, resented and even isolated. In Shona society such women are often referred to as *nzenza* meaning loose women. The issue of excitement is what characterizes sport, whether one is a participant or a spectator. Sport participants become hilarious when they are successful in events while spectators become very excited if their favourite teams or sportspersons win. The imposition of these norms regarding women's emotional expression makes women lose interest in sporting activities, either as participants or spectators.

Sport in Zimbabwe is sometimes characterized by violence; violence which can be caused by animosity between fans of different teams as well as ethnic tension. Chitando (2008:10) notes that, 'events like soccer matches between the Harare-based Dynamos and Bulawayo-based Highlanders are sometimes used to fan ethnic loyalties' (Chitando 2008:10). Zimbabwe has witnessed deaths which are a result of the violence which erupts at sports venues and in most cases women become the victims. Cultural perceptions are that if anything goes wrong in the sporting arena, for example, if violence erupts and the woman gets hurt; or even in any way the woman is abused; the woman is to blame. Many questions are asked like: Why did you go there? Is that a place for a woman to go? Don't you see you have yourself to blame because you had gone into men's territory?

Such intimidating and accusatory questions and statements discourage women from participating in sport.

The reference to sports arenas as men's domain terrifies women who resultantly coil and confine themselves to the socially constructed 'women's' domains. It is therefore not surprising that even women who are economically empowered subscribe to the notion of safe spaces. These notions have been entrenched by socialization to the extent that older women monitor the movements of young girls and often discourage them from entering those places that are culturally designated as men's territory. In this regard, the internalization of notions of femininity leads Zimbabwean women to perpetuate the oppression of their kind. After asking Marcia Madondo (15 years) the reasons why she had not gone to watch professional sport in her lifetime, she replied;

> Because I am a girl I am not released into those places easily. My mother always tells me that if I stay at home I am able to protect my girlhood rather than go out and expose myself to male predators (Interview with Marcia Madondo in Harare, 29 September 2009).

Interestingly, Marcia's father takes her brother with him to soccer matches. Olajubu (2003:10) says 'the private domain, i.e. domesticity and motherhood, seems to be the space of women in most cultures'. There is some privacy that is associated with the home which women are expected to espouse. The centre of the home in Zimbabwean society is the epitome of respect and protection; it is conceived as the place where women are 'safeguarded'. The home has always been and continues to be seen as the women's domain. This is even expressed in some of the Shona sayings like '*musha mukadzi*' (for a home to be called a home there should be a woman). The home, culturally, is synonymous with morality, dignity, respect, etc. These are also seen as the tenets of an ideal woman. Thus, the home and the woman become compatible. Most respondents in this research highlighted that if women want to participate in sport they should be accompanied by men who are close to them for guaranteed protection; yet others suggested that the presence of men should be seen as a moral check and balance since women are 'known' to lose control when they are in public. In other words, once in public, women are regarded as being capable of behaving irresponsibly. It should, however be noted that the cultural portrayal of the home as safe for women is not always true. While it is acknowledged that women at times encounter violence in public spaces, much of the violence against women in Zimbabwe takes place in the home which led Women's Organisations to lobby for the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act which came into effect in October 2007. This, however, is beyond the scope of this research.

Gender inequality is entrenched in socio-religious institutions. Religious institutions reinforce societal attitudes towards women by emphasizing issues of masculinity and femininity. These attitudes are blind to the fact that:

- Gender equality and women's empowerment are essential for poverty elimination and sustainable development at personal, national and continental level.

- The perpetuation of discriminatory cultural beliefs in Zimbabwe deters women and girls from participating in the socio-economic development of the country.

Religious institutions tend to be insensitive, thus exacerbating the plight of women in as far as sport is concerned. Commenting on women and sport in (Islamic) Yemen, the Yemen Observer Staff in an article entitled: New Report Exposes Obstacles to Women's Sport reports that 'women's involvement in sports has faced several obstacles ranging from social, physical, personal and religious hindrances' (http://www. yobserver.com/reports/10014527.html [webpage]). The participation of women in sport is thought to be against certain religious norms. For example, Christianity which commands a large following in Zimbabwe actually reinforces African Indigenous Religion(s) expectations on women to stay at home. The Bible in Ephesians 5:22 and 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 reiterates that women should submit to their husbands and that they should not be involved in public discourses. Paul in 1 Corinthians actually underscores the home as the only place where women are supposed to ask questions pertaining to issues they do not understand even if these issues have to do with what is happening outside of the home (the public sphere). What is implied in Paul's letter to the Corinthians is that men have all the answers to that which women do not understand, thus ruling out any possibility of equality between men and women. Whenever relations between men and women are discussed in churches, these scriptures are emphasized. For example, after an address by the Zimbabwe Women Lawyers' Association on the need to treat women as equals with men, male members of the Johanne Marange Apostolic sect rejected these claims of equality. (*The Zimbabwean*, 14 January 2010, p5) One of the male members put it thus, 'As community and church leaders from the *mapositori* sect, we do not accept that at all. How can we (men) be equal with women? It is there in the Bible that women will always be under men'. (*The Zimbabwean*, 14 January 2010, p5) A professor from the University of Zimbabwe said 95% of the men who are violent against women especially in the home confess that they find justification in the Bible (Interview with a University of Zimbabwe Professor who preferred to remain anonymous, 9 December 2009).

Apart from the home; the church is another socially constructed 'safe' space for women in Zimbabwe. The church as an institution prescribes what women should wear. Sport clothing has been a constant area of controversy and resistance to women's participation in sport.(*The Zimbabwean*, 14 January 2010, p5) More often, sports attire is criticised for exposing women's bodies something that is deemed provocative to the sexual feelings of men. This is true of mainline churches and African initiated churches in Zimbabwe. This perception discourages potential and talented women and girls from getting into the sports field and participate. Tariro Mawoyo, one of the female interviewees for this research cited sports uniforms that make her look like a man as a major restriction to her participation in sport as a sportsperson because it is at variance with her church's doctrine on women's clothing (Interview with Tariro Mawoyo in Harare, 5 October 2009). In most cases, when men are going to watch sport or participate as sportspersons on Saturdays and Sundays, women find themselves either at home or in church buildings.

A lot of women who have dared challenge the status quo have been accused of prostitution or of negligence of their primary role as mothers and housewives. After asking one of my interviewees how she viewed women who go and watch sports, she said, 'I don't think women who go and watch sports are married. My instincts just tell me that these are single women who are after other people's husbands' (Interview with a female interviewee in Harare, 7 October 2007). This view was supported by yet another male interviewee who retorted:

> I would never allow my wife to go to a stadium. Why would she desire to frequent men's places if she doesn't have ulterior motives? *Anenge achida kuonekwa nani?* (Whose attention does she want to attract?). If we all go to watch sports, who is going to look after the children and make sure they are well fed? Interview with a male (Interview with a male interviewee in Harare, 7 October 2009).

These attitudes are reflective of how women who break out into public spaces such as sporting arenas are viewed. They are always thought to have clandestine intentions. For instance, they are thought to be seeking men's attention. Most men give this as a justification for the verbal as well as the sexual abuses encountered by women at sport venues, whether they are participants or spectators. As a result, most married men feel that their wives and daughters are more protected from other men when they stay at home than being in public places, sporting arenas included. It should be noted however, that public spaces are not always dangerous to women. Public spaces such as stadia only become dangerous when some men use violence to impose and enforce women's place, that is, both the physical space women inhabit and the psychological and social space by which women are culturally defined.

It is therefore not surprising that there are some men and parents who have not positively encouraged the participation of women in sport. Men whose daughters and wives attend sports events either as sportspersons or spectators have complained of being stigmatized in their various communities. They are often labeled as living under a 'petticoat government' implying that women are in total control of their households.

Furthermore, a lot of negative attributes have been attached to sport. Sport is thought to have adverse effects on women's reproductive health and it has been blamed for giving women masculine characteristics. One of my respondents put it thus; '*Masports anondipa mhasuru dzinenge dzevarume. Zvinonetsa kana ndave kuda kuita mwana'* (Sport causes me to develop muscles like those of men. It will cause me problems when I want to have a child) (Interview with a female interviewee in Harare, 9 October 2009). Therefore, issues of the politics of the female body come into play. Staying away from sporting activities becomes very important for African women who may suffer from social exclusion if their bodies are viewed as masculine. However, while sport is viewed as a threat to women's health, it does exactly the opposite to men - it builds their bodies. Men who go to watch sport get the opportunity to relax; for a moment they are able to forget the pressures of work and family commitments; a chance which women are not afforded.

Women, Sport and Development

In 2004, the third IOC World Conference on Women and Sport was held in Morrocco under the theme 'Sport as a Vehicle for Social Change'. This was after the recognition that women's participation in sport is a fundamental condition for achieving sustainable development. In November 2003, Resolution 58/5 of the United Nations challenged governments to make use of sport as a means to promote education, health, development and peace. (United Nations Report 2003) However, in Zimbabwe, processes of policy formulation and policy implementation continue to hinder the full participation of women in sport. Most policies remain on paper, but they do not make any positive impression on the social realities on the ground. Lilian Mhuru (on-going research) notes that policies and actions that do not address gender disparities miss critical development opportunities (Mhuru 1996). She also highlights the fact that discriminatory practices and public attitudes towards the advancement of women and gender equality have not changed at the same pace as policy; legal and institutional frameworks (ibid).

The public space continues to be the preserve of men in Zimbabwe. As mentioned earlier, sport falls within the public space and it has presented a lot of opportunities for men. For example, Peter Ndhlovu (Soccer) was the first Zimbabwean to play in a British soccer club; Andy Flower (Cricket) was once voted

the best batsmen in the world and currently the technical director of the British cricket team; Nick Price (Golf) was at one point the world number one golfer; Tendai Chimusasa (Marathon), etc. On the other hand, women who have made it in sport have been confined to marathon (Samukeliso Moyo and Faith Kamangila) and swimming (Kirsty Coventry). While a student at Kuwadzana 1 High School in Harare, Faith represented Zimbabwe at a number of international athletics competitions. Currently, she is studying in the United States of America after receiving sponsorship due to her sporting talent. Women who have risen to the top in sport are very few in Zimbabwe compared to their male counterparts. A lot of Zimbabwean sportsmen are owners of beautiful properties in affluent suburbs, have fleets of cars, among others. Because of the networks established as they meet in the sports meetings, they easily establish their own businesses. Development for these men is taking place at a personal level. The nation benefits from this development because these men not only helped in flying high the national flag, but also create employment and business opportunities.

The same cannot be said of the majority of women in Zimbabwe. They have continued to be spectators as men thrive in the sporting arena. The development of sport, in the country has not paid particular notice to women's participation in sport, both as sportspersons and as spectators. Sport administrators appear not to be bothered by the fewer women who are actively involved in sport. In Zimbabwe, women constitute 52 per cent of the population against men's 48 per cent (UNESCO Report 2000). This therefore means that there is a lot of untapped sporting talent among the female population in the country. As a result, the nation loses out on potential revenue which is important for development. An interview with a sports administrator revealed that if the sporting talents of women are carefully tapped, the nation is bound to develop in so many ways than ever imagined (Intrview with a sports administrator in Harare, 12 October 2009).

Zimbabwe as a nation currently faces a number of challenges, namely economic decline, political conflict, high levels of poverty, and HIV and AIDS. The impact that these challenges have on women is greater than they have on men because the former have limited access to the means of the economy as well as to decision-making bodies. Gupta (cited in Dube 2003) notes very well that women have restricted access to productive resources outside the home as well as decision-making power; and that women have less control over resources than men. Therefore, the participation of women in sport becomes paramount in that it opens those doors which society has traditionally shut on women. Women's increased involvement in sport can promote positive development by providing alternative norms, values, attitudes, knowledge, capabilities and experiences (United Nations Report, op cit). Women as sportspersons can manage to generate their

own incomes which means they cease to continue being economically dependent on men. Consequently, sport for women becomes a vehicle for poverty eradication.

In addition, sport can bring women the physical, psychological, and social well-being that they have lacked for generations (http://www.sportdevelopment.org/docs/uploads/gender%20Equity%20in20sport%20lessons%20learned.pdf [webpage]). As audiences and sportspersons, sport creates for women in Zimbabwe platforms for social networking (United Nations Report, op cit).Women are afforded the opportunity to discuss issues that directly affect them; issues that have to do with domestic violence and HIV and AIDS. This was the view of one of my interviewees who said, 'I think if I am allowed to go and watch sport I will be able to find friends who will then help me solve my life's problems' (Interview with Zvikomborero Mwaruta in Harare, 9 October 2009). The Zimbabwe Demographic and Health Survey reveal that women constitute 54 per cent of people living with HIV and AIDS in Zimbabwe and HIV prevalence is higher among females aged 15-49 years at 21.1 per cent as compared to the 14.5 per cent of males. The BBC once carried a report on 16 women's teams in Harare that were taking part in competitions for players who had declared that they were HIV positive. (Vickers, 2009 (no exact date was given on this web article). One of the teams, ARV Swallows' goalkeeper, Thandiwe Richard told the BBC reporter that she wanted the whole world to know about her HIV status so that others could be helped (op cit). In terms of how she had benefited from being involved in sport, she said, '…football has helped my fitness, I can't say I'm ill now, but I wasn't well when I joined'(op cit). Sport in this case is seen as opening the channels of communication with other women outside of one's household thereby learning from their experiences. Women can discuss how they are affected by HIV and AIDS and give each other ideas on how they can best protect themselves. Sport in this instance becomes a tool for spreading the much needed awareness on HIV and AIDS issues. Women cannot receive this information if they continue to be confined to the home.

By offering sports activities to girls and women, they get a chance to develop and increase their self-confidence (http://www.sportdevelopment.org/docs/uploads/gender%20Equity%20in20sport%20lessons%20learned.pdf [webpage]).

Most female respondents expressed their desire to become sport celebrities and have their sporting talents celebrated across the globe. From their perspective, this would greatly boost their social standing as women and greatly reduce incidences of sexual as well as physical abuse against women and girls. Self-confidence would encourage them to stand up and defend themselves against physical assault and sexual harassment in the home as well as in public spaces. Sport in this case can be used to challenge gender-based violence.

The post-election violence that occurred in Zimbabwe during the period from March to June 2008 saw members of the same community turn against one another. Quite a number of women and girls were raped and some even died due to politically motivated causes. Some women perpetrated this violence against their female counter-parts. If sport can be introduced to women in these communities and women fully participate, both as players and spectators, sport can then contribute its part in the process of national healing and 'can help bridge the divide and promote the core values necessary for lasting peace' (8/9 http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/worldwideprograms/news/newsid=94202.html [webpage]). As they play in the sports field, political agendas are suspended and this can create a safe environment that enables women and girls to express their feelings and where traumatized women learn to integrate their experience of pain and fear (op cit). Where sport can teach people in affected communities that though they belong to different teams (political parties) they are not necessarily enemies but simply competitors. People would learn to accept defeat with dignity. Thus, sport becomes an important tool in the fulfillment of the national peace agenda.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the notion of safe spaces continues to obstruct women participation in sport in Zimbabwe. It also shows that other factors such as gender roles, sports attire, and notions of femininity impacts negatively on women's active participation in sport either as sportspersons or spectators. Majority of women who participated in this study felt that despite socio-cultural hindrances to their participation in sport, sport has the potential of uplifting them socio-economically. Sport can create platforms for women to make friends and share information on topical issues such as HIV and AIDS as well as domestic violence. The physical benefits from sports equip women and girls with skills to defend themselves against physical and sexual violence which will contribute towards the reduction of the spread of HIV and AIDS infections. Sport can also be a very important component in the national healing process currently under way in Zimbabwe. Thus, there is need to demystify the domestic space as a woman's sphere of influence. Such demystification would help women who break out of their socially constructed 'safe spaces' into the public sphere deal without feelings of guilt and shame or fear of stigmatization. There is also a need for paradigm shift in the way families socialize their children. Children need to be accorded equal sporting opportunities, regardless of their sex.

Notes

1. *Nhodo* is a game usually played by young Zimbabwean girls especially in the rural areas using pebbles and *dunhu* is a ball game that is also common with young Zimbabwean girls either in the rural areas or in towns

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3

2010 FIFA World Cup and the Patriarchy of Football Spectatorship in Malawi

Jessie Kabwila Kapasula

Language is a central feature of human identity. When we hear someone speak, we immediately make guesses about gender, education level, age, profession, and place of origin. Beyond this individual matter, a language is a powerful symbol of national and ethnic identity (Spolsky 1999:181).

Introduction

Leading Malawi media houses like *The Daily Times, Malawi Nation* and *Nyasa Times* have questioned whether and how the 2010 Federation International of Football[1] Association (FIFA) World Cup in South Africa will financially impact on Malawi. But finance does not operate in a vacuum. The opening up, distribution and trickling down of financial opportunities and gains must be read in the context of the prevailing gender and sex historiographies. Given that football 'is a resolutely male affair, from policymakers, financiers, advertisers, referees, coaches as well as athletes' (Sesane 2009:17) to viewership and spectatorship, it is important to critically scrutinize the patriarchal climate underlying the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Accordingly, this chapter argues that the patriarchal production, consumption and representation of the 2010 FIFA World Cup will entrench and perpetuate the 'superman', hegemonic male notions of agency, power and identity in Malawi. Eric Richardson of Wits University buttresses this stand when he asserts that:

> The world cup as a predominantly male event involving male players – is likely to perpetuate sportocracy and gendered hierarchies of power and privilege, [….] the dominant understanding and practices of masculinity are likely to be produced/reproduced in relation to, and superior to, femininities and other masculinities (Richardson 1988:2).[2]

In this context, the chapter critically engages the gender content of the language used in the spectatorship of football in Malawi. Taking off from a comparison of the naming of sporting codes defined as male and female in Malawi: Football and Netball, it analyzes the naming of the national teams of these sporting codes. Focusing on football spectatorship, the chapter examines the language used to describe mobility and play techniques, linking that to the language used to denote success and failure in the spectatorship of football in Malawi. The chapter draws on my personal experiences as an ardent football 'supporter'[3] in Malawi, experiences that convince me that feminist horizontal and vertical (Duffy 1995) violence is embedded in the language and space of football spectatorship in Malawi. This chapter argues that the language of the spectatorship of football in Malawi illustrates prevalent patriarchal gender relations and practice that will be perpetuated in the spectatorship of the 2010 FIFA world cup. It is imperative to first define the use of the term patriarchy in this chapter, given its centrality to the argument being advanced, and also because it is a contested concept in African feminist discourse.

Umuna

Scholars like Signe Arnfred (qtd. in McFadden 2001) have queried the applicability of patriarchy as a concept in African research because it does not take into consideration the kinship and age hierarchies of African communities. According to Arnfred, patriarchy is largely a Western concept, one that explains the character of the female oppression of Euro-Western societies as illustrated by Carole Pateman in *The Disorder of Women* (1989). This stand is echoed by Nzegwu (2006) and Oyewumi (1997). Patricia McFadden (2001) disagrees with the Arnfred position, describing it as a narrow way to define patriarchy. She cites Gerner Lerner to buttress her stand:

> People using the term in that way [Arnfred's way] imply a limited historicity for it. …. in the 19th century male dominance in the family takes new forms and is not ended. Thus, the narrow definition of the term 'patriarchy' tends to foreclose accurate definition and analysis of its continued presence in today's world (qtd. in McFadden 2002:67).

In other words, patriarchy is a global concept that takes different forms, it is not fixed or limited to the model of white Euro-Western communities. Omofolabo Ajayi Soyinka (1996) theory of double patriarchy illustrates the applicability of the concept of patriarchy in African research, given the interface between indigenous African patriarchy and the colonial one. In other words, Africa has its own forms of patriarchy that work in concert with those that came with colonialism. This chapter contends that even though Malawi is made up of matrilocal and patrilocal communities, it is largely a patriarchal nation state because the gender

relations in either system define man as superior to woman even though there are differences in the forms and degrees of the definitions (see GTZ GBV Research 1998:14).[4] One of leading researchers in the field of sociology in Malawi, Jubilee Tizifa, identifies patriarchy as the underlying factor for the oppression of women in Malawi:

> The Malawian society is organized along the patriarchal ideology, an ideology which values men more than women, where men dominate women, and what is masculine more than what is considered feminine.[5]

Tizifa's stand confirms the status of women stated in the Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy (MPRS) and concurs with the background and case studies of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) research on Gender Based Violence (GBV), as substantiated by Phiri who asserts that women of Malawi have been socialized to believe they are inferior to men.[6] Chirwa quotes Moser (1989) to reiterate that the principle of male supremacy is present and contributes to the inferior status of Malawian women.[7]

In this chapter, patriarchy is defined as the male supremacy principle that is anchored in and propelled by the polarization of sex, denial of transgendered and homosexual identities and defining man as more powerful, successful and braver than woman. Man, ideologically and ontologically, is the definition of power, person and selfhood. Man, (*m(w)amuna)* in Chichewa[8] is defined as the universal breadwinner and hunter whilst woman (m(u)kazi is the national nurturer, caregiver, recipient and homemaker. These categories are however not monolithic. They are fluid and they change when one compares different Malawian spaces such as the urban, peri-urban, rural and peri-rural. As explained before, although matriloca/lineal spaces have different strains of patriarchy as compared to patrilocal/lineal ones, one thing that stand out in terms of how they define gender relations is a competitive ultra male category that is superior to woman.[9] The language that denotes power, mobility and success is associated with man'/ *m(w)amuna* the one who wins these contests of power, achievement and privilege is the 'superman', the real *man/(m(w)anumana muna/mwamuna weni weni*).

I do not use the term *ubambo* because the language of football, as will be seen below, often uses *m(w)amuna* rather than *bambo* as the latter is more respectful and connotes an elderly father. My choice of the term is also informed by terms that are coming up in burgeoning debates on traditional or indigenous patriarchies in the SADC region, particularly those of the Shona people of Zimbabwe, a people whose language I speak and understand fluently, having stayed in the country for twenty years. Generically, *Bambo* would correspond to the term *Hubaba.*[10] *Baba* refers to a man and/or father. *Bambo* is the Chichewa equivalent of father. But the term that is in prevalent use in the spectatorship of football is

m(w)amuna and that refers to man and that includes fathers and those that are not fathers. It is used to 'testosteronize' the 'superman', the 'ultramale' who is at the crest of other manhoods. It is used to connote power rather than coronate the social and biological role of fatherhood, although the term can be used to indicate a man's ability and prowess to be a father. In this context, it is the manhood that is emphasized - the *um(w)una*hood. If I had to place a Shona equivalent, I would use '*Hurume*', rather than '*Hubaba*'. The term essentializes the strength of being a man, one who is leader of the pack and king of the jungle, so to speak; more than *Hubaba*, the latter is more respectable, age and social responsibility loaded. It does not connote the ultimate warrior, hunter, conqueror and powerful like *Hurume* does.

Chichewa, the national language of Malawi has several dialects. Some have letter w in middle of the 'm' and 'a' but others do not. I am recognizing both. One could query why the chapter focuses on Chichewa when Malawi has many languages. Given the volatile character of the language debate in contemporary[11] Africa and Malawi, the chapter has to define and contextualize the credibility of using Chichewa as a language of analysis.

Why the Oral Chichewa Language?

The chapter acknowledges and appreciates that Malawi, like many African countries is a land of many languages. According to the 'Open Language Archives', Chichewa is spoken by 57.2 per cent, Chinyanja 12.8 per cent, Chiyao 10.1 per cent, Chitumbuka 9.5 per cent, Chisena 2.7 per cent, Chilomwe 2.4 per cent, Chitonga 1.7 per cent, others 3.6 per cent.[12] Whilst some research cites English, Chitumbuka and Chiyao as official languages, Chichewa is predominantly cited as an indigenous official language, the one mostly used by the public media houses, for example Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (the main radio station) and Television Malawi (the main television station). It is the language that is spoken mostly in the three regions of Malawi: North, Center and South.

This chapter engages the oral form of Chichewa. The oral form of language, rather than the written, better cuts across class, educational, religious and space lines in 'postcolonial'[13] countries like Malawi. In *Decolonising the Mind* (1986) Ngugi wa Thiong'o emphasizes the importance of orality to African people and argues that one cannot study Africans without engaging their oral forms of communication. The oral form of African languages is an apt tool for such an investigation because it carries the culture of the people. Ngugi makes this point very clear:

> Language (African Oral language) as communication and as culture are then products of each other. . . . Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we perceive ourselves and our place in the world. Language is thus insepara-

> ble from ourselves as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world (1986: 15-16).

Its main strength is its ability to be accessible to people of all walks of life, cutting accross different forms of class, race, gender, sexuality, religion, sex, ethnic group, space and even time. The oral form of Chichewa is the most used form of language in the spectatorship of football.

Speaking Marriage in Malawi's Football Spectatorship

When I get into a minibus from Zomba to Chichiri stadium or walk to the stadium from Chichiri secondary school, it is very common to hear someone ask, *Akumenya ndani lelo?* meaning 'who is playing today?' It is important to take note that the phrase *ku menya*, also means to hit. The hitting being referred to here is not necessarily the one denoting violence, although sometimes the intensity of football playing does degenerate to the use of physical force, it is hit which means making contact with something, in this case the ball. What is interesting is that when people are inquiring about who is playing netball, they will often use the term *ku sewela* which means play, and not *ku menya*.

When one is in the stadium, watching football and a player (who is predominantly a man, as football is a male sport) is dribbling toward the goal mouth, about to score - it is common to hear a group of supporters chant in unison: *Thira* (Pour)! Sometimes, the player needs to dribble past another player or two, so as to score and this action can be accompanied by someone shouting: *Mukwatire ameneyo (*Marry that player)! *Adziwanso*! *Adziwe kuti m(w)amuna ndani!* Meaning, mark him closely, marry that one, let him know who is the husband/man. When that player scores, you can hear the supporters say with relief – *Wathira*!!! This means, 'he has poured'. Evidently, the language used not only sexualizes men and women, an issue I will expand on later, it brings up the an institution that is not only patriarchal in most cases in contemporary Malawi, but defines women as inferior to men and is responsible for a lot of oppression of women – marriage.

There are many forms of marriage in Malawi. For purposes of this discussion, marriage will be defined as the institution of man and wife, the heterosexual union of a man and woman. The problem is the power relations that are defined by such a union. When people say *mukwatire ameneyo*, they are definitely not saying 'partner that person' as we see the term being applied in the football pitch where players are contesting for the ball. *Mukwatire* means overpower, conquer and subdue, triumph over the other person and make him a 'wife'. It is the 'wifization' of the player. When dribbled past, that person becomes inferiorized and silenced. The problem is that that opponent's position is embodied in the terms and labeled woman and wife, the victor is man and husband. The language used by the

spectators defines marriage as a patriarchal institution in contemporary Malawi. It is an institution where women are seen as the weak, the dribbled past, the defeated. This is an institution that Ogundipe Leslie emphatically emphasizes, robs many women around the world of their rights due to the double patriarchy it peddles. I agree with her that it is the institution where the self determination of African women suffers most:

> She [the African woman-wife] becomes a possession, voiceless and often rightless in her husband's family, except for what accrues to her through her children. She also loses much of her personal freedom, which she can only regain at prices expensive to herself: the admittance of other wives or publicly acknowledged girlfriends of her husband. She has to admit to the dominance by her husband or face blame from the total society . . . There is also peer-group pressure on the husband – pressure which encourages even would-be gentle and just husbands in the direction of male supremacy (qtd. in Verba 2006:4).

When one reads the 'wifization' of the dribbled player along these lines of marriage, lots of red flags come up.

Another common phrase one hears when a team is playing well is *Akumenya bwino bwanji* whereby success is being linked to an act of force and violence. Why is *ku menya* more frequently used then *ku sewela*? This term not only communicates that the player is playing well; it adds a degree of triumph that defines the male player as victor. When he 'hits' the other player and scores for the team, he ends up 'hitting' the other team and consequently their supporters too. It is important to emphasize that the language used not only feminizes other men, it constructs women as weak and men as superior. Man is a category that one attains through a process of purification and after going through a merit test. In order to appreciate the way language constructs and perpetuates this patriarchy in the spectatorship of football in Malawi, it is necessary to trace the language in the naming of the netball and football sporting codes, especially at national level.

The Language of Male/Mainstreaming Football

The way a nation names its national teams goes a long way to indicate how it reads its identity in relationship to the national team concerned. It shows how the citizens[14] of the nation value the team in question and what they want to communicate to their opponents through the name of that team. National names are important to read critically because language expresses more than the sum of its words. It indicates how 'individuals situate themselves in relationship to others, the way they group themselves, the powers they claim for themselves and the powers they stipulate to others' (Brown and Gilman 1960). Let us compare how

Malawi names the sporting code for men and women, before we examine the naming of the national teams of those gendered sporting codes.

In Malawi, netball is called *nchembere mbaye*. *Nchembere* is a word that denotes a woman who is no longer a virgin, one who has given birth and is a caregiver. So, naming netball *nchembere mbaye* defines the sport in a way that links it intimately to women's bodies, to motherhood as an institution and practice and to marriage by extension if one considers the colonial, Euro-western organized patriarchal policing of women's bodies, that locates approved and normativized motherhood in marriage (see Nzegwu 2006, Oyewumi 2005). This marks the sport as a space for women who have given birth and have the task of taking care of children and family.

Football on the other hand is called *mpira wa miyendo or Chikopa*. The latter refers to the leather form of the ball. The former describes how it is played. It calls it a sport that is played by feet. Both ways of naming are functional. They emphasize and legitimize it as a sport and career. Notice how the naming is not linked to the part of their bodies that denotes child rearing. One could argue that *m(w)amuna* connotes fatherhood but it does not define one as one who is of age, whose primary mark on the body and duty in society is having children, taking care of the family as *nchembere* does. And, *m(w)amuna* is not in the name of the sport as *nchembere* is.

An analysis of the naming of the sporting codes described above, illustrates the way women's bodies are closely associated with what they do in sports. Playing the two sporting codes has different meanings for 'sportsmanship' (already a gendered word).[15] In netball, it suggests a part-time player, one who is infantilized by being nationally reminded that she has other duties to perform, the duty of motherhood. For football, the men are seen as full time sports men, thereby underlining their professionalism as sportsmen. It is not surprising that when one says *ndikukawonela mpil(r)a*, (I am going to watch a (ball) game) it is often assumed that one is going to watch football. If one is going to watch netball or other games, one frequently has to qualify them; otherwise, it is assumed one is talking about football. In other words, the notion of football as a male sport is so entrenched and mainstreamed in Malawi that when one talks of going to play ball, it is assumed one is going to watch a game of eleven men versus eleven men, referred by a man, watched by men. This is despite the fact that Malawi has women's football teams. Malawi has women's teams in all the three regions but they are only active at club level, not at national. An interview with the administration manager of Football Association of Malawi (FAM) Sugzo Nyirenda, confirmed that football is largely a male sport even though there are women football teams in Malawi. He explained that when people go to watch women's football, they speak of going to while away time (*kukatha nthawi*), to be entertained and

see if the girls know the techniques of football, judge how much they measure up to the Flames in techniques (Phone Interview, March 18, 2010, 8-8.30am ET USA). He went on to add that companies in Malawi are reluctant to fund women's football team and this has largely contributed to the sports marginal presence in the country. In other words, in Malawi, football is a male sport. When one considers the predominance of football as a sport, one could argue that sport in general is defined as male in Malawi. The very fact that we talk of women's football, defines that football is male, just like when one talks of the NBA, National Basketball Association in North America, it refers to the men, that is why the women's is called NWBA, National Women's Basketball Association. The marginal inclusion of women in the sport is very clear. It is clear that there is a gender imbalance in the sports. The same gender imbalance is evident in the names of the two national teams of netball and football in Malawi.

Queens Versus Flames

We have already seen that names of national teams go a long way to register the nation's allegiance, that is, the people's membership in and ownership of that team. In turn, the naming allows language to create and maintain a bond, a relationship between citizens of a country and the team. The Malawi national football team is 'The Flames' and the netball one is called 'Malawi Queens'.

The name 'Flames', comes from the meaning of the name 'Malawi' which means the flames that one sees on the rising or setting sun, as illustrated on our flag. It is also taken to symbolize the agency and strength, the growth and success of Malawians as an independent, anti-colonial and black African people. The name 'Flames' therefore intimately links the national football team with the flag and in turn the nation, consequently inscribing the team as national flag carriers. This makes them an entity that has agency, they are defined as a team that can burn and destroy their threat. If one compares the symbolism of 'queen' as compared to that of 'flames', many problems arise. To start with, the word 'flames' tends to suggest more activity, power, agency and visibility than 'queen'.

The initial problem with the word queen is the colonial connotation of the term. One wonders why a national team should be so intimately linked to a symbol of colonialism and imperialism. Of course, it can be argued that the word 'queen' suggests power because the Queen of England is a powerful figure. I disagree with this argument because, to start with, the history of the Queen of England's coming to power is premised on the absence of a son in her line of birth. In other words, she got into power due to the absence of a man in her family to assume her father's position of leadership.

Another problem connected to the word 'queen' and its use in many contemporary African countries, including Malawi, is that many African languages including Chichewa, do not gender leadership and words that denote leaders (see Oyewumi 2002, 2005). For example, the *mutsogoleli* or leader is not a gendered term. A man or woman can be a leader. The English word queen is a gendered entity, once you have a queen, you suggest a woman leader and king means the male version of leadership. A king is regarded to be more powerful than the queen. In other words, Malawi Queens suggests that there are kings whom they are subservient to. I raise similar issues with the use of the word queen and king in many African and Malawian popular songs. In Lucius Banda's Song '*Zakukhosi kwanga*' (2007) which I analysed in detail in another discussion, the persona in the song serenades his beloved, saying 'you are my queen'. If she is his queen, this means the persona is her king. Although king and queen are gendered terms and the king is superior in status. If one remembers that language does not only reflect existing politics of gender and sex, it participates in their storage and perpetuation, one can see that such use of the word queen reflects, entrenches and peddles gender inequality, specifically, the superiority of man and men. One can see how language becomes a factory of gender stereotypes and female oppression. This is what Oyewumi calls the patriarchalization of contemporary Africa. While I do not agree with her that all the patriarchy is coming from adoption of western patriarchy onto African concepts like what we see happening to usage of term 'king' here, I think our own local patriarchy also participates in this conversation of patriarchies; I do agree that the usage of such terms in this way entrenches and normativizes patriarchy in contemporary African societies. The name Malawi Queens is then seen to portray the netball team as a colonial entity that is subordinate to some king. This not only inferiorizes the netball team, it also entrenches heteronormativity.

Flames Versus Queens

The fact that football is the national sport of Malawi is an evidence of the patriarchal nature of Malawi. When one compares the achievements of the Flames and the Queens, the sport that should be the national sporting code is netball. An analysis of the results needs to take into consideration the fact that the Flames are more funded than the Queens. Here is the record of the Flames:

Malawi Flames' Achievements[16]

Type of Competition	Result
COSAFA Cup	2 Times Runners-up
CECAFA Cup	3 Times Champion (1978, 1979, 1988)
	3 Times Runners-up
All Africa Games	1 Third Place (1987)
World Cup record	1930 to 1974 - *Did not enter* 1978 to 1990 - *Did not qualify* 1994 - *Withdrew from qualifying*
African Nations Cup Record	1957 to 1974 - *Did not enter* 1976 - *Did not qualify* 1978 - *Did not qualify* 1980 - *Did not enter* 1982 - *Did not qualify* 1984 - Round 1 1986 - *Did not qualify* 1988 - *Did not enter* 1990 to 2008 - *Did not qualify* *2010* – Qualified. Beat Algeria, lost to Mali and Angola. Got out at round 1

Fixtures and Recent Results (12 Months)

Date	Opposition	Result	Venue	Competition	Notes
Feb. 11, 2009	Mozambique	Lost 0-2		International Friendly	
Mar. 21, 2009	Uganda	Lost 1-2	Kampala, Uganda	International Friendly	
Mar. 29, 2009	Côte d'Ivoire	Lost 0-5	Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire	2010 FIFA World Cup Qualifier	
May 30, 2009	Rwanda	Won 2-0	Blantyre,	International Friendly	First win in 4 Games
Jun. 06, 2009	Burkina Faso Malawi	Lost 0-1	Blantyre,	2010 FIFA World Cup Qualifier	First Home loss in 2 Years
Jun. 21, 2009	Guinea	Lost 1-2	Conakry, Guinea		
Jul. 6, 2009	Swaziland	Won 3-1	Blantyre,	International FriendlyMalawi	Malawi Independence Day
Sep. 05,	Guinea	Won 2-1	Blantyre, Malawi	2010 FIFA World Cup Qualifier	
Oct. 10, 2009	Côte d'Ivoire	Drew 1-1	Blantyre, Malawi	2010 FIFA World Cup Qualifier	
Oct. 25, 2009	Mozambique		Harare, Zimbabwe	2009 COSAFA Cup	
Nov 11, 2009	Burkina Faso		Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	2010 FIFA World Cup Qualifier	

Malawi national football team. From http://www.oleole.com/malawi/nationalteam/nlzh.html, Retrieved October 18, 2009, 6.40pm

Malawi Queens' Achievements

Type of Competition	Results
Netball World Championship record	1995: Eighth (debut) 1999: did not qualify 2003: did not qualify2007: Fifth
Commonwealth Games	2006: Sixth

'Malawi Queens 5th in Netball Rankings'. Africa News. Retrieved October 18, 2009. 7.00pm. http://www.africanews.com/site/list_messages/16273

The Queens have been to the world cup twice and came sixth in the commonwealth games. Their world ranking is very impressive:

World Rankings

1. Australia
2. New Zealand
3. England
4. Jamaica
5. Malawi
6. Samoa
7. Trinidad & Tobago
8. Fiji
9. South Africa
10. Cook Islands
11. Barbados
12. St Vincent & The Grenadines
13. Wales
14. Papua New Guinea
15. Singapore
16. Sri Lanka
17. Scotland
18. Canada
19. Botswana
20. Malaysia
21. Northern Ireland
22. India

As shown above, the Queens are fifth in the world, beating teams in Europe, South America and many other places with better resources than Malawi. Yet, they only got to be nationally funded about five years ago! Local football stars are popular and held in high esteem. They are more popular than netball players even though the record of netball is more successful than that of football as illustrated above.

ATcheya Henry: The Transnational Spectatorship of Football

Much as the football players are the better known than the netball ones, it is poignant to note that most football-conscious people in Malawi follow the British premier league and its stars more than the local ones. Players of big teams in the British Premier League are so well known and popular in Malawi; some of them even influence the language of politics in Malawi. For example, when Thierry Henry was still with Arsenal and playing a pivotal role there, Arsenal supporters called him 'ATcheya.' This was in reference to the position of Chairman that former president Bakili Muluzi occupied in his party, United Democratic Front (UDF). This was said to indicate his professional experience in politics and the mentoring role he was playing in his party. This term was used nationally to refer to Henry, denoting the spinal role he played in the Arsenal team. When one mentioned it during Arsenal matches, everyone knew whom it referred to. Of course there have been instances of local footballers being given names of local politicians. But, the ATcheya title illustrated the transnational nature of the power of football in Malawi. When Muluzi fell out of popular favour, it was interesting to see how that name was delinked from Henry and when he (Henry) left Arsenal, the name died a natural death. The ATcheya coinage of Thierry Henry of Arsenal football club in Malawi, is a good example of the transnational power of football in Malawi.

Kusewela Versus *Kumenya*

Since football is the national sport, the language that is used when people meet in the various open spaces is very telling of the prevailing gender attitudes. As stated

earlier, the words *ku menya* and *ku sewela* say and connote different things. When *ku menya* is used in the football pitch, given the context given above, the pitch becomes a field of combat, constructing it as a place where men are the fighters and active agents while the players of netball are viewed as participants in a playful exercise. It is as if they are going to play *masanje*, which is an indigenous version of playing 'house', a place where boys and girls pretend to be mothers and fathers, constructing houses of twigs and making figures of children from rags, learning the patriarchal gender roles that define men as superior and women as subservient caregivers. The men, on the other hand, are constructed as very active, serious workers. Expressions like *ndiza ntchito tsopano*, used by supporters to characterize a highly contested football match, used to denote times when the game is getting heated and it is time for the players to work hard, concentrate and put in every ounce of their skill and energy so as to win – masculinize football, making it look like the career sport rather than the playful women's sport of netball. Consequently, a supporter in a football pitch feels one who is part of a hard working group of people, a witness to a fierce and purposeful battle of wills. In that football environment, playing means fighting to prevail, dominate and succeed. It is not uncommon to hear people call a football field a battle field and the game *nkhondo*, which means a war zone. This does not necessarily mean they are advocating violence, although at times it does. What it does insinuate is the combative nature of the sport and football. Notice that this image eloquently links and speaks to the definition of the football player as the fighter, warrior and conqueror. Those who are conquered and vanquished are feminized as women. In order to illustrate how the language of football is patriarchal, I will cite a personal experience.

Chichiri Stadium

One warm Saturday in June 1992, Bata Bullets and Might Limbe Leaf Wanderers were playing in Blantyre; and anyone who knows Malawi's football world knows that that is as big a local derby as it gets. I was teaching at Mitundu Secondary school but had come to Zomba, Malosa, to be with my mother so she could help me through the first days of motherhood. I knew that my mother would vehemently reject my plea to go and watch this game, especially because my daughter was only weeks old. But having such a game played so close to Malosa without being able to watch it was unbearable to me. I decided that I was going to do it behind her back. I strapped my child on my back; took warn clothes for her; packed her food and off I went, telling my mother and family I was visiting a friend in the nearby town of Zomba. As a secondary school teacher, I could not afford to go to the covered stands. So I went to the Biafra open stands, named after the Nigerian Biafra war due to the havoc and rowdy nature that characterizes the crowd that usually occupies these stands. These are stands

for poor people, they are the cheapest. The stands are characteristically noisy and crowded. As I sat in the stands watching the game, breastfeeding my daughter whenever I needed to, I was repeatedly reminded that this is a male sport and its spectatorship includes witnessing and performing various forms of patriarchy that are vertically and horizontally oppressive to women in many ways. Spectators would often call out: *Mukwatile ameneyo, asakuthawe, Akhale nkazako ameneyo,*meaning: 'Marry that one [opponent player], let him be your wife (my translation).'

This was said frequently and it became clear that the act of marking was being metophorized by heterosexual courtship and those who failed to mark tightly or get away from their opponent markers, were feminized. When their team member lost the ball or made a mistake, he was told not to behave like a woman. Once again, the fact that the football pitch is a tough space for men, was reinforced. When a player had done well, it was not unusual to hear a supporter shout 'I will give you my sister to marry'. Of course they were not serious but the fact that the institution of marriage was being used to denote power and the inferiorization of women, construct men as powerful victors, was very clear. In space, women and womanhood were being commodified, used as a currency to demonstrate one man's gratitude and approval with and of the other. This day ended and I returned safely home. Years later, when I was a lecturer at Chancellor College and went to our Senior Common Room to watch football, I remember an incident that echoes my experience at the Chichiri stadium; it has relevance to the arguments this chapter makes about the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

The 'Chanco' Senior Common Room

Chancellor College is a constituent college of University of Malawi. Its academics have a space where they meet and socialize. It is called the Senior Common Room. The group that watches the games in the Senior Common Room, fondly called SCRA, is composed mostly of junior academics. We would gather to watch football together, not really because we did not have television sets at home, even though some of us did not, but much more because watching it together enables us to socialize and catch up on college, national and global political debates. At this particular time, we were watching the British premier league, and like in many parts of Africa, Malawi has very loyal British premier league fans/supporters, as stated earlier. Those who identify themselves as Chelsea, Arsenal or Manchester United, Liverpool and so on, form bonds and frequently share views on how 'their'/*yathu* team is doing. They use terms like 'we'/*ife* are doing this and that, referring to supporters of the other team as 'you'/*inu*. These labels transcend gender and sex. In other words, even though I am female, when I meet a fellow Arsenal supporter, we chat on equal basis and refer to each other as members of one football team/family.

Every time a player scored, it was common for people to say *'wa chinya'*/he has scored. What is important to note is that just like in the English words, the same words are used when a boy convinces a girl he has been courting to become his girlfriend. Once again, the metaphor of courtship enters the spectatorship of football the word for scoring of a game is the same as the word for getting a girlfriend. This similarity, given the patriarchal climate of gender relations in social context there are being used, makes the word commodify the category 'woman' when used in football, especially given the patriarchal sexualization that happens in football spectatorship in Malawi, as will be illustrated by my experience one day.

On this particular day, when 'my' team (Arsenal) was beating Manchester United 'our' arch rivals, I was surprized to hear a few people use the term *thira* which means 'pour'. This term is used in a sexualized form. It refers to ejaculation that happens during heterosexual sex. In other words, the man is said to 'pour' semen into the woman. We have already seen how patriarchal the player is made to be. So at that moment, the football pitch is a battle zone, the net becomes the vagina and the player becomes a phallic symbol. The team he is playing against is feminized and the victor becomes the penis that ejaculates on the opposite team that has been scored against. There have been moments when players who have scored have celebrated by imitating heterosexual sex and I have seen this in South African football too. It is important to remember at this point that the player is also constructed as the ultra male, ultra husband who is making wives of the opposite team; in other words, the football field is a family where the triumphant player is the husband and the loser is the wife. The goal mouth is the symbol of womanhood, the vagina that is humbled, defeated, impregnated, made *nchembere* – by the penis who is the player. So when Arsenal had scored, as an arsenal supporter, I jumped up on my chair, in full gusto to celebrate 'our' team's success only to realize that I was participating in the feminization and subordination of myself, in the name of 'our' opponents, by belittling women and womanhood. What was going on was that success was being labeled male and failure female.

Mass Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity

Scholars from several disciplines have interrogated ways in which sport mobilizes certain constructions of gender identities. Good examples are MacClancy 1996, Duke and Crolley 1996 and Gaffney 2008. In 'Football and the Politics of the Place: Football Club Barcelona and Catalona, 1975-2005', Shobe Hunter illustrates how narratives on Barcelona Football club reflect the social relations of Catalan identity and that includes their gender relations (2008:87). Hunter illustrates that the football team is not just a reflection of identity politics, it is 'implicated in how identities are socially constructed' (2008:88).

For one month, 11 June to 11 July 2010, the FIFA World Cup will be televized to millions of people around the world. During that time, people will be glued to television sets in their houses, pubs and around radios, following a game of eleven men against eleven men. In Chichewa, the question that will pass on many mouths during that time will be, *Tione kuti mwamuna weni weni ndani*/ (Let's see who is the real man). Such discussions open spaces for construction identity and personhood not only as male but a competition of masculinities. Fitzclarence and Hickey (2001) have this to say about what we must expect when world cups of male sporting codes come around:

> In front of massive television audiences, players will be expected to give very last ounce of effort for their teams. In the process, these players will be seen in triumph and in tragedy. Some … will emerge as heroes. Others will be vilified and ridiculed for their mistakes, their hesitancy, and worst of all their 'weakness" under fire… Within the discourse of "sporting achievement," a massive television audience will have an opportunity to pass judgment on individual team players in terms of courage, work ethic, and loyalty. At the personal level, players will be acutely aware that their performance will be scrutinized with respect to a cluster of "football" values that find expression in a particular (dominant) form of masculinity (2001:119).

Thus, the 2010 FIFA World Cup will intensify the focus on men, feminizing underperforming players and people who are not interested in football and its stars (Kenway and Fitzclarence 1997; Flintoff 1993).

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to illustrate the patriarchy in the language used in football spectatorship in Malawi, arguing that the 2010 FIFA world cup will be a larger platform of the construction, performance, entrenchment and perpetuation of patriarchy in Malawi. It has traced the naming of the two gendered sporting codes of netball and football, their national teams and the language used in the spectatorship of football in Malawi. The chapter has drawn from personal experiences of the author to reiterate that language is a vehicle and factory of gender attitudes. The chapter has attempted to illustrate how the popularity and public nature of the consumption of football in Malawi construct competitive and stratified masculinities that oppress both men and women, but women more than men.

The problem of football being patriarchal is not a problem of football per se. This is largely a reflection of the society in which the football is played. We cannot fight patriarchy in football if we are not fighting it in our parenting, communal and national constitutions. However, Malawi's media houses and educational institutions can help deconstruct the patriarchy by interrogating the intersec-

tion of gender, class and power. Critically interrogating homosexual and transgender identities from Malawian research perspectives will help question the construction of football as a game of 'real' men because the definition of 'real and man' will be problematized. Exploring such questions will illustrate why sport in general and football in particular, invests and benefits financially so much from the construction of man as superior and woman as inferior. That will go a long way in explaining why male sports codes globally, generally make more money than those of women, why sports defines success as male and failure as female. If the media and education institutions do not interrogate these issues with a sense of urgency, asking hard questions that speak to the construction and performance of gender, the 2010 FIFA World cup will just be another event that crowns man as the representative of the human race and woman as his appendage or as Richardson (1999) argues, another moment for football, to 'influence the formation of gender identities and unequal power relations', and to coronate men as active transnational agents at the expense of women.

Notes

1. The world football is referring to the British definition of the sporting code of football, what Americans call soccer. Football is the most prevalent term used for the sport concerned and it is the term used to refer to the sporting code concerned in Malawi. So football refers to soccer in this chapter.
2. Eric Richardson. 'Soccer World Cup 2010: the trouble with sportocracy and education'. http://www.fotim.ac.za/fotim_conferences/genderconf/papers/richardson_paper.pdf. Retrieved October 17, 2009. 8.48pm.
3. Supporter is someone who is a fan of a certain team. In North America this would be the equivalent of a fan but the term fan, because of being used in the Euro-western spaces tends to define someone who invests a lot financially in the team, belongs to a fan club that attends meetings and has a say in what goes on in the team. Such a person usually participates in online discussions about the team, buys the team wears and season tickets. Of course the fandom differs. So 'supporter' would be a fan but a different one in the degree of visibility to the team and fellow supporters. I am a supporter of Arsenal but do not contribute money to the team, and have no say in what goes on in the team. So supporter, given the distance from England tends to connote someone who really loves, enjoys, supports that team in spirit, wishing them well. The team does become an extension of one's identity in different degrees but the financial investment makes the supporter different from the fan. In my opinion.
4. The GTZ GBV researchers emphatically assert that the patriarchal structure of the patrilocal Northern region of Malawi contributes to the exploitation of women. In the other regions, which are matrilocal, the research makes it clear that just like in the north, real power resides in men. The uncle of the woman is the ultimate decision maker and the husband is still superior to the wife in family decisions, as evidenced by the following remarks that were agreed to by men and women in the matrilocal societies:

- The fact that you are living in your wife's village does not take away your authority as a man – you still have power.
- The head of the family is still the man even though one is living under *chikamwini* system. This is a system when the husband moves into the home village of the wife, does not pay 'lobola' and is called 'Nkamwini'. Upon divorce, the children belong to the wife. This system is generally practised in the Centre and some parts of the South of Malawi.
- The man is like a driver; he should determine how the family resources are to be used.
- Wealth is best preserved with rules and those rules come from a man.
- Women are like the trailers while the man is the truck driver so we have to control the resources.

For an extensive discussion of this, see Kapasula Kabwila Jessie, 'Addressing the Patriarchies of Africa: The Case of Malawi's opposition to Violence Against Women' CODESRIA Gender Series 2009.

5. Jubillee Tizifa, 'Women and Socio-Economic Freedom: What Impedes Women?' The Nation. March 1, 2003. Malawi on line. http://www.nationmw.net/. Retrieved January 10 2006, 10 pm.
6. Frank Phiri, Culture-Malawi: Young Women Leaders Rise Up To Challenges. July 9, 2003. Afro News.
7. Ephraim Chirwa's working paper on 'Gender and Performance of Micro and Small Enterprises in Malawi', May 2005. University of Malawi, Department of Economics.
8. The paper recognizes and appreciates the presence of many languages in Malawi. Its focus on Chichewa is legitimized on page
9. Woman is also a stratified category.
10. Interview with Tsitsi Dangarembga. CODESRIA 2008 General Assembly, Yaounde forthcoming.
11. Defining Malawi as a 'postcolonial' state tends to suggest that it is free of colonialism and its legacies. Post Independent suggests that Malawi is independent yet it is battling all sorts of neo-colonial and imperial problems. The paper settles on contemporary, to register the flag independence it has attained but focus more on its temporarity than its being over traumatic experiences like colonialism, globalization and imperialism.
12. Open Languages Archive Community. http://www.language-archives.org/country/MW. Retrieved January 29, 2010. 9.22pm.
13. The term is reluctantly used to denote end of formal colonialism, attainment of independence even be it mostly flag independence. The term is put in quotation marks to mark the presence of neo-colonialism as indicated in the argument for oral indigenous languages.
14. A term that is very contestable in post-neo contemporary Africa, given how the construction of the term is very complicated by the colonial historiography, see Achille Mbembe's *On the Postcolony* (2001), the section of the Commandement.
15. This term illustrates the patriarchy of the English language, substituting it communicates differently, making it very difficult to construct a feminist argument in written English discourse.

16. The Flames qualified for 2010 Cup of African Nations in Angola where they beat Algeria 3-0 and lost to Angola and Mali.

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4

Media, Sport and Male Dominance: Analysis of Sport Presentations in a Nigerian Newspaper

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Introduction

Colonialism brought the European Judeo-Christian notions of the dominant male versus dominated female (Mengara 2001). This was done by giving education and power to men and excluding women from public, political, economic and social life, and taking away the traditional powers the women once held. As Larking (2008:24), citing Scott (1999) puts it:

> Colonialism did not 'preserve' or maintain native societies in a state of alterity; it 'disable(d) old forms of life by systematically breaking down their conditions' and 'constructing in their place new conditions so as to enable…new forms of life to come into being'.

Educational institutions established by the missionaries and later adopted after colonialism ended also aided in reflecting the image of the woman as weak and dependent. Lewis (2004) considered this in relation to the role of anthropology in making the western image of the African come to life in the minds of both the Western world and amongst the African. Scholarly research of African culture as it relates to women and gender has created conservative traditions and these traditions have affected and influenced not only African gender studies but also the societies studied. The ideology of male domination is reflected in the mass media to re-emphasise male control and socio-political power over their female counterparts (Newell 1996). Women who defied male authority are negatively depicted as against the ideal woman who tolerates maltreatment from their male counterparts, is dedicated to her family, honest and patient despite maltreatment from male members of society (Larkin 2008; Nelson 1996).

African Women in Sports

Many pre-colonial African societies had no clear cut gender stratifications (Oyewumi 2004); and in relation to sports, a number of activities which today seem to be the preserve of men were also practised by women. Among some pre-colonial groups such as the Igbo and Nubian (Craig 2002; Basden 1966) there are accounts of female wrestlers who not only attracted public attention but also leadership positions and suitors for marriage. Older women were the coaches of younger women, thus ensuring continuity and professionalism in the culture. There are also accounts of both male and female participants in a sporting activity as was the case with Masai ox-slaughtering feast to honour retiring warriors about to marry. This activity included the active participation of warriors, women and girls who fought for pieces of meat.

Today, sport is played based on gender separation and this culture was developed not from the traditional cultures but rather from the colonial experience. A major sport that has caught the passion of many African media houses is football. Its introduction was as a result of colonialism, with the aim of constructing new definitions of ethnicity, class and gender (Akeampong 2002). Colonial powers through the introduction of various sports such as football, field hockey and rugby hoped to redefine the African perception of leisure which they believed was unorganised and barbaric. Introducing 'organization' through sports was a way in which they wanted to create the notion of organized leisure and in the process redefine space. According to Akeampong (2002), the colonial government believed that 'structured play with rules and in a time framework inculcated time consciousness, discipline, courage and endurance'. Through such organized sports, collective identities were formed as well as social networks, all of which were supervized and controlled by the colonial governments. The colonial government was more interested in developing the male members of the society who, it was believed, should be public figures while the women were to be content with being housewives who looked after their children and husbands. Akeampong (2002:11) notes that the colonial urban woman was more reserved and confined than her rural counterparts. Women who did not conform to this image were seen as morally loose and sexually available. This notion was supported by mass media (film and radio) programmes which over-emphasized the men as against the women. Men were recognized as the active public figures that needed to display certain characteristics such as strength, speed, muscles and ability to defend. The women on the other hand had to be more careful and displayed characteristics of reservations to achieve respect from the male counterpart. They had to be presented in public as beautiful, innocent, fragile and quietly sexual. Their bodies were meant to entice, imply and attract sexuality as well as compliments rather than to compete with physically exerting activities like the

organized sports introduced by the colonial powers. These traits were meant to be displayed discreetly in public in reflection of the stereotype image of the woman so depicted by the colonialists. Urban women who displayed the traits the colonial powers reserved for the male gender were often disrespected and termed 'uncivilized' by both the male and female members of the society.

The Mass Media, Sports and Capitalism

Akeampong (2002), in his analysis of football in Africa, noted the introduction of a fee to watch a sport. Sports evolved to be a means of acquiring wealth for the few who managed the sport, the sportsmen and the crowd. This was unlike the traditional games which were usually connected to a festival, ritual or some other event which naturally attracted a crowd. The organizers and coordinators of traditional sporting events aimed at not only fulfilling cultural and social expectations, but were also expected to be a part of the preparations by contributing material or human support. This is unlike the western form of event coordination which entails specialization in various areas to ensure maximum profit by all parties concerned. Through the years, all parties realized the important role the mass media could play in this profit seeking venture.

The mass media in itself not only aids in the promotion of events but also in the promotion of the people behind the event. The government, corporate organizations as well as pressure groups all seek to make their voices heard through the mass media (McQuail 2000; Cottle 2003). They all vie and contend for media influence, representation and participation. This provokes questions as to who secures media access, why and how; who is delegated to comment or make pronouncements on public or social affairs or sports events? Cottle (2003) contends that the mass media has the power to empower a few by making them credible sources of information and, by so doing, deliberately marginalize other members in society. This is a major strategy deployed by African political elites who need their voices to be constantly heard as a way of legitimising their claims to power (Ake 2003; Nyamnjoh 2005)). Members of the society who do not conform to their ways and methods of rule are labeled as 'others'. Continuous presentations of such 'others' to the society as dangerous, deviants, or terrorists empowers the government of the day to design policies that will adequately keep such members of the society at bay without much protest from the larger society.

The process of labeling members in a society as 'others' and defining how those members should be related to have been referred to as symbolic interactionism (Blumer 1969, 1971). This concept seeks to understand how labels, symbols and meanings inform human interaction and understanding. It considers the concept of social power which is invested on a group or groups while those that do not fit into such social groups are defined as 'outsiders', labeled as 'others' and stig-

matized. Those who are considered powerful social groups are seen as high on the hierarchical categorization of credibility. This is especially evident in the moral panic theory which was elaborated by Cohen (1972). The moral panic theory explores how public anxieties are generated by the media through amplification involving sensationalism, exaggeration and distortion, leading to societal reaction which ultimately results in the creation of laws by the government. This seems to explain how dominant social groups through the media can control the society in which they operate. Hall (1974) maintains that the news media reproduces the voices of the powerful who become the primary definers of events. The voices of the powerful are translated into the public views through the mass media and this ultimately serves as the foundation of a set agenda for public discussion and public opinion formation (West and Turner 2004; Baran 2002; Wilson and Wilson 2001; Rogers and Dearing 1987).

Airing these voices demands an expertise which has been referred to as 'narrativity of news' by Jacob (1996). This concept is an extension of the story telling tradition formed by humans to tell and re-tell basic ideologies of the society to the living and the unborn. News therefore becomes a symbolic system in which the informational content of particular stories becomes less important than the rehearsal of mythic truths embodied within the story form itself. It is based on this that many scholars have argued that news stories like myths do not tell it like it is but rather tell it like it means. Journalists, in creating news presentations, develop mental catalogues of news themes (who the key actors will be, what the plot should be like, etc.) Thus journalists, in presenting a news item, must do so to fit into the culturally determined definitions. They must fit new situations into old definitions by placing people and events into existing categories of hero, villain, good and bad.

In relation to sports, events that can attract a crowd are the events that are over-emphasized as against sports that do not. This attraction of a crowd is not necessarily determined by the crowd but by the voices behind the sport. An over-emphasis of a sport legitimizes the actions of the voices behind the event to design policies that will encourage such a sport to continuously be in the forefront. This strategy does not only demand that the sport be continuously featured through the mass media but also the players. Thus, an agenda is set through these 'credible voices' behind the sports with the help of the mass media. The mass media on their part feature these sporting activities not only to attract viewers but also to sustain their interest. The aim of attracting a large and diverse audience is not to solely satisfy the public and policymaker's needs but to use them as a bait to attract advertisers who will pay the media houses to ensure that their views are constantly aired and their opinions become the foundation of a predetermined set agenda (Baran 2002). The ways which these agenda are promoted in society, have significant consequence for the overall development of sports. Sporting

events or players that do not fit into the criteria developed by the media but empowered by socially powerul 'voices' are given media prominence while those that do not fit into this category are labelled as 'others' and their stories are hardly told. This labeling helps to justify policies that favour the sports approved by the prominent voices behind the sporting event.

The agenda set for the promotion of certain sporting activities as against others cannot be discussed outside the gender divisions. Modern form of many African sports has been dominated by male events and this may be a reflection of the gender divisions encouraged by westernization. The stereotyped image of a woman's body being mainly to attract and satisfy the male members of a society may make it difficult for a journalist to tell the story of a muscled sports woman because she does not conform to the theory of the fabled woman. Unfortunately, because many women were socially trained under this modified western form of gender division, being seen in such events is likened to being seen at a cinema show during the colonial era. With such limited representation by women in sports, how does the mass media ensure balance in reportage?

Method

The focus of this study is to analyse how newspapers in Nigeria report sports events that occur in and outside the country, with special attention to gender differences. In selecting a newspaper for the study, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select *The Guardian* out of twenty-three other newspapers that are daily produced in the country. They comprise both government and privately-owned media outfit and *The Guardian* newspaper that was selected belongs to the latter category. Other news magazines and soft-selling magazines were excluded from the selection process because they do not regularly feature sports events in their reportage unlike the newspapers that devote at least the last three pages to sports and sporting events. Weekly published papers were also excluded from the selection process because the data that would be generated from such papers might not be sufficient for the purpose of the study.

The month of January in the year 2009 was selected as the timeframe for the study for two reasons: first, a review of sports news from the previous year is usually done in January and secondly an indepth analysis of the previous year's reporting may no longer reflect the true picture of gender presentations of sports men and women in the print media. Analysis of the materials was based on categorization of pictures and captions; headlines and their contents; and contents of the texts. This was achieved by reading through all sports pages of *The Guardian* for the month of January, 2009. After the classification, all the materials were assigned labels and were subsequently merged according to their themes in line with the objectives of the study. Simple percentages were used to present the categories after manual counting of the materials was made. In analyzing the

photographs, attention was drawn to the size of the pictures, the position of the personality taken and the captions explaining the photograph, among other considerations.

Data Analysis and Findings

Pictures

Borchers (2005) believes that images are powerful tools and often can be used to take the place of words because they suggest messages to audiences. Visual images are used today with more force than even words due to the rapid development of digital cameras, high technology of colour separation and its effect on the final product, which is capable of creating emotions among the readers. Consequently, they serve to attract the reader's attention and suggest what meaning the reader should assign to their images. It is tempting to believe that photographs are the actual representation of reality; but they are not. They are subjective interpretations of reality. Photographs as a rule cannot capture everything and so they include some details and leave out others while over-emphasizing some. Certain variables guide the mass media in deciding the photograph to attach to a story. These variables fall within the needed agenda to be set. Interestingly, the pattern that was observed in the pictures of the sports pages showed a remarkable graphic representation of Nigerian sports men and women in action but with a significant number of the pictures (71%) displaying more men than women (Table 1).

Table 1: Photo Presentation of Sports Men and Women

Variables	Men	Women	Male Team	Female Team	Total
Action/strength/skill	28	9	2	1	40
Weakness/lack of skill	2	2	0	1	5
Total	**30**	**11**	**2**	**2**	**45**

These presentations depict, in various forms, personalities as they relate to the sport in focus. The pictures were analyzed into three major categories namely: a positive representation which displays strength and mastery of the sport/victory depicted in the photo; a negative representation reflecting defeat, limitation or lack of skill/action. These are the themes represented in the table above and a total of 45 photos of such categorization were analyzed. The third category (which is not represented in the above table due to the complexity of the variables analyzed, namely policy makers or physical structures) represents neutral

photographs and these photos do not reflect the personalities in relation to a sport but rather personalities behind the sport. In all, nine of such neutral photos were identified, making 54 photographs in all.

1. Positive Representation: Under this category, 40 photographs were classified as a positive representation of the sports men and women. Out of this total, 28 were of men actively engaged in the sport while 2 of the photographs depicted male team-mates. Out of this 28 male dominated photo representation, 21 focused on individual male footballers, 3 athletes, 2 tennis players and 2 golfers. There were 2 group photographs of male football teams as they pose with an active field in the background, in front of a trophy won after a match. In relation to the female gender, 10 positive photographs were identified out of which 9 of them were focused on individual female athletes as they actively displayed skills or showed signs of victory while the remaining one is of the female football (the Falcon) team members as they pose in front of a trophy with a vague field in the background. From this analysis, it can be deduced that individual male footballers are the major focus of positive sport photo representation in *The Guardian*.

2. Negative Photo Representation: A negative representation in this analysis refers to photos reflecting defeat, limitation or lack of skill/action. Negative presentation of sports men and women was limited when compared to the more positive representations (Table 1). Under this section, 5 photo representations depicting a negative image of either the sports man/woman or the team were identified. Out of this number, two negative photographs of the male gender were identified. One of these was a male footballer who almost tripped over his opponent and the second is of a male team backing the camera while the main focus is an on-looking crowd. This photograph is so classified because the photographer attempted to reduce the players while over-emphasising the crowd. In relation to the female gender, three negative photographs were identified. Out of these three, two were of individual female players who were either tripping over their opponents or looking dejected in the field. The third photo is of the female team as they sit and stare in a football field which is active with the activities of their opponents.

3. Neutral Photo Representation: This category depicts not the sports man or woman but rather the officials/decision-makers or physical structures used in the sport. Under this category, 9 photographs were identified. Out of these nine, 6 are of men with their positions in the society ranging from the Vice-President of Nigeria, governors, commissioners and promoters of sports. These men are either inspecting facilities or making a statement concerning the sport under focus or receiving awards. Under the neutral category, two photos of the physical structures of a football stadium and a high school athletics field were also noted which may be a subtle reminder by the media house of the importance of not

just the players and the officials behind the game but also the need to take into account the facilities that make the game.

Borchers (2005) has noted that three factors are critical in how photographs can affect and influence people's judgment of what they watch and these are: the centering of the object or subject, thereby communicating a sense of balance while placing images in a corner creates a sense of imbalance; the angle from which the photograph is taken, whether from an upward looking camera angle which communicates power to the subject and downward looking angle connotes weakness, while a straight-on shot indicates that the subject is trustworthy; and thirdly, when a subject is conscious that he/she is to be photographed the photographer or the mass media house can manipulate the photograph to communicate a preconceived message. In all the pictures analyzed, these features were taken into consideration and they reflect the bias that characterizes how sports men and women are individually and collectively portrayed in the newspaper.

Selecting the photograph that will accompany a story is a major element that many journalists use in misleading readers and thus creating a preconceived message. Photographs are also taken in line with cultural norms and assumptions which are symbolic. A story that is focused on a sports star that was rejected in his club may be accompanied by a central close up of the personality about to score a goal. Men are depicted with rippling muscles, sweating and usually in active form/posture. Women, on the other hand, are depicted as feminine and are not shown with the same symbolic qualities as their male sport counterpart. The sport women are usually depicted as attempting to carry out a sporting activity, strolling on the field or smiling for a pose.

This kind of representation displays the typical stereotype that pervades sports news reportage in *The Guardian* and by extension a reflection of how the society views female sports. While individual men are most of the time identified and given prominence on the pages of the newspaper, the same cannot be said of women, partly because of society's categorization of gender divisions. The portrayal of men as energetic, skilful and full of vitality in the pictures has positive resonance, not only on the public but it goes beyond sustaining a stereotype to creating an enabling platform for sports policies to 'naturally' favour men more than women. Although more and more women are becoming active in sports, they are still not given the necessary attention in the newspapers like their male counterparts.

Visual representation of personalities in the Nigerian sports industry is not limited to sports and women. Photos of government officials are also shown. These photographs are purely male dominated. This implies that the Nigerian sporting industry is not only dominated by positively represented sports men, but also by male sport policy makers and administrators. These personalities form the 'credible voices' behind the sporting event.

Another major way in which photographs are given meaning by journalists and, by extension, the media house is through the caption attached to them. This study considered these captions in relation to the photographs they represented. The captions were categorized into positive, negative and neutral. It was observed that the words chosen by the journalist in describing the photographs differed based on gender lines. For instance, words like 'hot cake', 'winner', 'celebrates', 'star', 'beats'/unbeaten', 'victory', 'highest', 'outwits' 'battles' (20 positive) were classified as positive captions that accompanied photographs of sportsmen. Positive captions that accompanied female centered sport stories have words such as 'led team', 'winning gold', 'Queen honours', 'doing what she knows best' and 'pose with trophy' (six captions in all). The more negative captions for male centered sports photographs include the use of words such as 'was refused', 'tries to outwit/control', 'being challenged', 'attempts', 'hopes to', 'may join' (7 in all). For the female centered sports photographs, negative words used by the journalist include 'rejected', 'crashed out', 'dejected', 'exit' (4 in all). There were some neutral words used in captions attached to male centered photographs and they include the use of words such as: 'sharing a point', 'putting heads together', 'explains rationale', 'lose to claim' (4 in all) while for the female words such as 'in her active days', 'maiden edition', 'one of those/the' (3 in all). From this analysis, it is apparent that the words chosen to describe moments of failure on the part of sports men give the reader the hope of a comeback. This is not so for the sportswoman whose hope of redeeming defeat seems hopeless.

Headlines and News Contents: The Representation of Sports Men and Women

Here, I have attempted to classify the headlines and the contents of the news item into positive reality, which depicts a positive image of the sport personality; negative categorization, which reflects a poor presentation of the sport personality; and neutral headlines and content that do not have any value judgment in the presentation of the news item and about the sport personality being reported.

Positive representation

In classifying the headlines and contents of the materials, I categorized the data into various forms and functions. Table 2 below shows the positive portrayal of sports men and women. Like the pictures, the headlines reflect the stereotype that is created in the society based on a number of factors including political, social, and economic factors. In analyzing the headlines, the following patterns were identified: professionalism, success, financial independence, hard work, and self fulfillment.

Table 2: Positive Reality Created through Headlines

Variables	Men	Women	Male Team	Female Team	institution Government	Total
Professionalism/ skills	14	2	4	0	3	23
Achievements/ success/pride	11	0	14	2	14	41
Financial independence/awards	0	0	8	0	0	8
Total	**25**	**2**	**26**	**2**	**17**	**72**

A significant number of sports men (92%) constituted the bulk of sports persons that were positively portrayed in the newspaper. Common headlines in this category include:

1. **Obikwelu finally retires from atheletics:** Nigerian-born Portuguese sprinter Francis Obiora Obikwelu has declared that he would no longer compete in the sports that gave him fame after failing to make the finals at Beijing.
2. **Toriola remains Africa's best, as Nigerian women slump further**: This is complemented with a photo with the caption: 'African and Commonwealth champion, Segun Toriola on duty at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games in China'. This is an action photo of Toriola about to hit a table tennis ball with concentration. It is a close up shot of this action. The story states that with his feat at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games in China coupled with his scintillating performance at the Men's World Cup and the German Open, Segun Toriola remains Africa's number one table tennis player. He was given a standing ovation for his achievements. The story continues by stating: 'Ageing and five time Olympian, Bose Kaffo, follows Ten in Africa after slipping from 289th in December 2008 to 294th this month. Cross River born Offiong Edem and Cecilia Out are third and fourth and are also 339th and 346th respectively in the ITTF rankings. Six-time Asoju-Oba Cup champion, Ganiat Ogundele, is rated sixth in Africa'. The chapter goes on to advocate that 'for Nigeria to remain relevant, junior players should be given attention and specifically, the Ondo State player, Ojo Onaolapo based on his performance at an international competition'.
3. **We worked hard for victory, says ILCC Captain**: The captain of Ibeju Lekki, Olayemi Amusa states that the victory the team had was due to hard work. This is accompanied by an interview with the captain by the media house.
4. **Obasi rated the best young striker in Bundesliga**: This is featuring the success of Chinebu Ogbuke Obasi in the German League. This is accompanied by two major photos. The larger of the two shows Obasi as

he kneels in thankfulness after scoring a goal while his team-mates gather around him with the caption 'Chinedu Obasi celebrates with Demba Ba, Vedad Ibisevic and Andreas Beck after scoring a goal against Hamburg in Bundesliga'. The second is a personal photo of him with the caption 'Eyes on top..Obasi celebrates yet another goal' as Obasi is shown rejoicing with hand movements (Page 62)

5. **Tunisian League: Eneramo's goals catapult Esperance to comfortable lead**: former Lobi Stars' striker, Michael Eneramo, has taken the Tunisian league by storm this season with his goals, accounting for Esperance's dominion over other teams in the competition. This story is accompanied by a photo with the caption: 'Eneramo outwits two Etoile du Sahel players in one of the matches of the Tunisian league'. The photo is an action one showing the personality dribbling two players

Negative representation

In grouping and analyzing the data under this sub-heading, I took into account the continued dismal performance of Nigerian sportsmen and women both on the African continent and at global events, where Nigeria has once made its mark in track and field events, long jump, boxing, and football. Although, Table 3 indicates that more men were negatively represented in the newspaper, this is not significant because of the number of cases that are associated with both genders.

Table 3: Negative Headlines Representation of Sportspersons

Variables	Men	Women	Male Team	Female Team	Government institution	Total
Lack of professionalism	1	1	4	1	0	7
Weakness and failure	3	2	1	1	5	12
Financial dependence	0	0	0	1	1	2
Total	**4**	**3**	**5**	**3**	**6**	**21**

What this means therefore, is that more women were negatively represented than their male counterpart in highlighting their shortcomings and inability to perform to expectation. One would have thought that with the interest of the media on sportsmen, the media would have been very critical of men's poor performances but this is not so, rather there seem to be ready excuses for any dismal performance by sportsmen. Some of such headlines include the following excerpts:

1. **Gallant Pioneers bows to Dubai selected**: Howzat Pioneers Cricket Club's quest for exposure began to yield dividends yesterday when the touring Nigerian side succumbed to the technical superiority of Sharja Cricket Club in the first of their two meetings in Cricket Stadium in Sharja, the United Arab Emirates. The loss was attributed to lack of exposure to the playing conditions in the stadium.
2. **We have lost our best boxers to US, Australia, says Nwankpa**: This story states fresh facts as to why Nigerian boxers put up a bad performance during the Beijing Olympic Games. The head coach of the Nigeria Boxing Federation (NBF), Obisia Nwankpa, stated that the country performed badly because Nigerian boxers left for other countries a few months to the games and also because of bad administration by the Nigerian sports officials. This story is accompanied by a photo of two boxers fighting in the ring with the caption: 'Nigeria's Olufemi Ajayi on duty at the 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games in Australia'.
3. **Lack of equipment, bane of Nigerian weightlifting, says Coach Bassey:** the coach of Lagos State Weight lifting team, Enofiok Bassey cited lack of equipment as a bane in the sport.

Neutral Reportage of Sports Activities

Table 4 shows the distribution of neutral reportage in the newspaper. By its limited number, it indicates that the sports news reporting is heavily value laden as most often the media house must decide on what to report and how to report it. The neutrality of the reportage does not really hurt anyone and, in some instances, it actually consoles sports personalities who might have fallen short of expectation. Most of the news items under this classification are based on a team's failure, the uncertainty of the competition, a forthcoming event, or the conveyance of a proposed decision reached by the government through its sports ministry or agency.

Table 4: Neutral Reportage of Sports Activities

Variables	Men	Women	Male Team	Female Team	Government institution	Total
Failure with encouragement/excuses	1	0	7	0	0	8
Uncertainty of actions/Outcome	1	0	3	0	1	5
Proposal for action	0	0	4	0	9	13
Total	**2**	**0**	**14**	**0**	**10**	**26**

Some examples of neutral reporting are given below:

1. **Heartland returns to Owerri for final preparations**: speaking with the newspaper house, Heartland's Chairman, Ignatius Okeahialam, said the team was focused on ensuring that it gave Nigeria a befitting representation at the competition, adding that all stakeholders in the club were united in working for the success of the club. He stated that the club members were in high spirit and praised the Imo State Government for its unflinching support, stating that the Governor has been a solid rock behind them, ensuring that they lacked nothing.
2. **UAE Cricket Team to Visit Nigeria**: the UAE team wishes to visit Nigeria to play some exhibition matches.
3. **Flying Eagles battle Heartland in Abuja**: The National U-20 team, the Flying Eagles and the Premier League club, Heartland of Owerri, will meet in a friendly, while Eagles coach, Isah Ladan, Bosso is to name his 18 players for the championship.

Discussion

The data presented in the preceding section is important in an attempt to understand how reality is constructed in the society using the lenses of the media, in this case, the newspaper. From these data, some fundamental points can be noted. The overwhelming positive representation of the male gender in sports in general, but football in particular, does not only display an unbalanced reportage, but a deep reflection of how gender-biased the society could be. The reportage of the male gender, whether as an individual or as a team, suggests professional skills and achievements. Words like: confident, hot cake, win, best, pleased, thumbs up, victory, unbeaten, to mention a few, have been variously employed in discussing male sporting events and about sports men. For the female, success is mentioned with failure and unreserved surprise and feeble praise is given when success is recorded. Thus, the words 'win' and 'lose' are found in the same headline describing female success while the word 'pose' is used in another caption. The use of such words in the representation of female sport participants suggests success that is either waning or underdeveloped. Failure for the male gender in sports is often associated with either excuses or encouragement with phrases such as: 'set to redeem image', 'hopes to consolidate', and 'hoping to get it right'. Female failure on the other hand is described with harsh words such as 'crash', 'defeat', 'disappointment' 'amateur' 'dejected' and with phrases such as, 'could not rescue'.

The continuous positive representation of the male gender in sports does not only aid the reader to attach success to a specific name or team, but it also facilitates and simultaneously creates a platform for financial gains both for the sport personality and the media house. The dominating male voices behind the sport continuously encourage male teams even in the face of failure. Monetary rewards

and in some cases, excuses are given by the sponsor of the action as was the case with the headline story *Eguma explains personal funding of Dolphins*. The result of this positive media coverage within an agenda designed by dominant male members of the society creates a formidable platform upon which Federal and State Governments can plan lines of actions to further improve and encourage various male teams and individuals. On the other hand, the voices of female sports professionals are hardly heard. Only once was there a feature article focusing on a female sports professional who candidly advised the government and sporting bodies to discourage 'elite' sports men and women from participating in the upcoming National Sports Festival in Kaduna. The story, which was captioned: *Ahead of 2009 National Sports Festival* presents Amata's argument and suggestion that the organizers should make the tourney a breeding ground for upcoming athletes rather than allow elite athletes to feature and dominate the event. This news item was reported on Thursday, January 8th, 2009 on page 74. By Sunday, January 18 on pages 94-95, a feature report was done with the headline: *Sports Festival: Time to rethink ban on elite athletes*.

The feature article focuses on the debate of allowing professional athletes to join in the upcoming competition or allow fresh ones to have a chance. Going into history, the story points out that in 1973 when Nigeria hosted the 2nd All Africa Games in Lagos and also introduced the National Sports Festival as a way of cushioning the effects of the civil war in areas ravaged, great athletes were discovered and they went on to hit big headlines at various continental and international events. The story goes on to add that: 'But sad enough, those good days are gone, no thanks to the rule which now bar elite athletes or those who have taken part more than three times from competing in the fiesta. The result is a situation whereby athletes stroll into national camps for rehabilitation since they are no longer eligible to compete in the sports festival which is the only viable competition in Nigeria today'. This view is contrary to those of Amata and, though her name is not mentioned neither does her photograph appear under the photo that accompanied the story, it is nevertheless evident that her position as a professional was being undermined. One of the female personalities featured in the photograph presentation was Mary Onyali who is shown in a race with two other opponents. The picture suggests an equal standing with her opponents, with Mary not at a central position, but at the left hand side of the photo with the caption: 'Mary Onyali-Omagbemi doing what she knows best in an international athletics meet. She is one of those who made the National Sports Festival thick in her active days'.

The observed gender imbalance of sports men and women in the newspaper is by no means an isolated case of gender stereotype in Nigeria; it is only a reflection of the type of social relations that characterize the society today.

Conclusion

Communication is not just a social process in which individuals employ symbols to establish and interpret meaning in their environment, but also a process through which members in the society are acculturated (West and Turner 2004). The creation of symbols is also crucial in the communication process, which individuals use in their daily interactions. For this reason, the mass media, through various public figures, empowered by the mass media as credible voices, control the debate over public issues. By so doing they engineer how the public defines and relates to issues; thus creating an enabling platform for such powerful members of the society as well as the government to strengthen their own position and policies while undermining the positions of their opponents.

The mass media has been able to use sports reportage as a product to attract readership and thus attract funds through advertisers. This attraction of readership is not only essential for the economic development of the mass media but also for the empowerment of the personalities projected. The manipulations of the mass media to develop an agenda which ensures that sport policies and infrastructures favour male athletes, though positive in a sense, is significantly antithetical to the overall development of sports in Nigeria. By giving equal media opportunities to every member of the society, man or woman, a platform can be created to catalyze equitable sports growth and development. Thus, equal gender representation in the media must be seen as a necessity in the development of both sport and society.

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5

Football, Empowerment and Gender Equality: An Exploration of Elite-Level Women's Football in South Africa

Mari Haugaa Engh

Seeking to empower females through sport is somewhat paradoxical given that the world of sport can be a bastion for male privilege and power (Saavedra 2009:124)

Introduction

Women's role in sport, and the role of sport in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, has increasingly become a key concern within the development 'industry' since the mid-1990s. Starting with the emergence of the Women in Sport movement in the 1990s (Saavedra 2005) and the Brighton Conference of 1994, women and girls have increasingly entered the policy frameworks of international sport and development. The Brighton declaration succinctly points out that 'while women and girls account for more than half of the world's population and although the percentage of their participation in sport varies between countries, in every case it is less than that of men and boys' (International Working Group on Women and Sport 1994:1). Apart from the potential of sport to foster gender equality and women's empowerment, it is also seen as 'an extremely powerful means of promoting physical and mental health' (Sport for Development and Peace, International Working Group 2008:8). The International Working Group for Sport for Development and Peace, for example, notes that 'sport participation leads to increased self-esteem, self-confidence, and enhanced sense of control over one's body' (Sport for Development and Peace, International Working Group 2008:10).

Drawing on the claims made by literature supporting sport-in-development discourse and thinking, this chapter provides a critical examination of the role of women's football in bringing about women's empowerment and gender equality, and raises some key questions concerning women's participation in elite-level sport. Constructions of heteronormative femininity impact on women's sporting potentials, and continue to shape the female body as distinctly different from the male, athletic body, thus upholding inequitable beliefs about sportswomen, female bodies and sexuality. In this sense, the physical body of sporting women, despite the recent acceptance of female athleticism and muscularity, continues to be 'a work in progress'; a body that must be shaped, regulated and controlled in order to be acceptable and 'readable'.

This chapter is based on the findings of my Masters thesis, and presents material gathered in my interviews with women in elite-level women football in South Africa. The discussion is based on qualitative, informal interviews with 18 elite-level women footballers in South Africa, 12 of whom are currently members of the senior women's national football team, Banyana Banyana. The remaining 6 participants are members of one of Cape Town's oldest and most successful women's football teams. The interviews took place at a national team camp in Pretoria in October 2008, and in Cape Town between August and November 2008. The material presented in this chapter is informed by feminist post-modern theories and perspectives, and aims to challenge the gendered bias inherent in most African sports sociology through taking women's experiences seriously.

My positioning as a white, Norwegian woman has undoubtedly shaped the material presented in this chapter. As a football player, however, I have often had my sexual orientation, 'female-ness' and skill as a player questioned, and I am well acquainted with what it means to be 'a woman who plays football'. Moreover, I have lived, worked, studied and researched in South Africa over the past six years. Thus, I have been able to situate my analysis within the context of the observations I have made and the intimate conversations, discussions and formal interviews I have had with South African women footballers. Nonetheless, I remain firm that knowledge is essentially partial and situated, and this chapter is grounded as much in a hope to understand and make sense of what I have experienced in my time on the football field, as it is in a hope to contribute to continental knowledge production within this under- researched field.

Sport, Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality

Sport and physical activity has come to be seen as 'an extremely powerful means of promoting physical and mental health' (Sport for Development and Peace, International Working Group 2008:8). The Sport for Development and Peace International Working Group (SDP-IWG), for example, has suggested that 'Sport participation leads to increased self-esteem, self-confidence, and enhanced sense

of control over one's body' (Sport for Development and Peace, International Working Group 2008:10). Moreover, sport and physical activity has been argued to hold very specific advantages for girls and women, and the SDP-IWG argues that:

> Sport programs can enhance the empowerment process by challenging gender norms, reducing restrictions and offering girls and women greater mobility, access to public spaces, and more opportunities for their physical, intellectual and social development (SDP-IWG 2008:131).

McDermott (2000) supports this argument and argues that one of the most striking ways in which physical activity can 'empower' women physically is through providing opportunities for women to experience their bodies physically, through physical work. Clearly, learning and developing new skills carries with it a sense of achievement and empowerment (Garrett 2004), but physical activity can also offer a space where experiences of the physical body 'at work' can liberate women from the feminine body aesthetics and discourses attached to hegemonic femininity (McDermott 2002). McDermott suggests that the 'potentially empowering consequence of physical activity 'is to broaden their [women's] understanding of the multiple ways, beyond appearance, in which they can physically experience themselves' (McDermott 2000:356).

With passing of Title IV in the United States, the emergence of an international Women in Sports (WIS) movement and increased feminist sport scholarship, the past decades has seen an increased focus on gender 'work' particularly within sport-in-development organizations, institutions, donor agencies and national governments (Saavedra 2005). This has enabled better attention to be paid to the ways in which sports are gendered and lend support to unequal gendered power relations in wider society. These discourses argue for the use of 'sport for gender equity' (Meier 2005) and suggest that sport, as a social institution, can effectively empower women and contribute to gender equality in wider society.

The Context: Women's Football in South Africa

Organized sports in South Africa are deeply classed, raced and gendered. Legacies of colonialism and apartheid continue to shape access to participation, sporting facilities and resources at all levels of organized sports. Although South Africans are generally sports enthusiasts, mass participation is limited and highly contested (Pelak 2009) while sports leadership, administration and participation, are still dominated by men (Burnett 2002). According to Cora Burnett (2002) only 21 per cent (2.5 million) of South African women participate in sports, as a multitude of difficulties such as domestic and reproductive responsibilities cause sports participation to receive low priority, and also lead to high dropout rates (Roberts 1992; Pelak 2009). One of the major constraints on women's (and men's) effective participation is caused by the vast racial and geographical inequalities con-

cerning access to facilities and resources; most quality sporting facilities are located in white, urban areas, making transport a major problem for many South Africans (Pelak 2009).

While the situation has improved somewhat for the national team and some of the elite-level teams, the fact is that much of women's football remains underfunded and under-resourced. Most teams still struggle to find resources to cover costs in relation to league affiliation, transportation and equipment; and players, coaches and administrators in women's clubs still do not get paid for their hard work (Clark, Mills and Haugaa 2009). Research from Cape Town suggests that many women's football teams cannot afford to register their teams with their Local Football Association (LFA), nor do they have money to cover transport costs (Clark, Mills and Haugaa 2009). As a result many township teams, despite having enough women and girls that are willing and wanting to play football, do not get opportunities to compete in formal leagues and competitions, and are left to organize matches against other club- and school teams on an ad-hoc basis (Clark, Mills and Haugaa 2009). In addition, many teams struggle to find adequate facilities for training and matches and many players cannot afford to buy football boots and shin-guards for themselves. As a result, many teams are effectively run on contributions made by the coaches themselves, many of which are under- or unemployed (Clark, Mills and Haugaa 2009).

Material constraints are undoubtedly tied to class and race positions and do not have the same impact on all sporting women in South Africa, and Pelak (2005) has argued that in the Western Cape, white and coloured women enjoy better access to sporting facilities and resources than black women. Keim and Qhuma (1996) support this claim and outline how sporting facilities was a major problem in the establishment of the 'Winnie's Ladies Soccer team', a black team based in the township of Gugulethu in Cape Town. They explain that the 'Winnies' struggled to access training grounds on which to hold practice sessions and games, because men's clubs prevented the team from using the few football fields and facilities available in Gugulethu (Keim and Qhuma 1996). Black sporting women also experience ideological constraints differently from their white counterparts, and while many black women participate in football, the fact remains that there is an immense lack of female black sporting role models in South Africa; South African sports stars are mainly white (for example Penny Heyns, Elana Meyer, Amanda Coetzer and Zola Budd) (Burnett 2002). Although footballers like Desiree Ellis, Portia Modise and most recently Noko Alice Matlou, have received a fair amount of publicity and recognition, it is doubtful that these women can be considered mainstream (malestream) sports stars.

In addition to the material constraints, there are also important ideological impediments to the development of women's football in South Africa. Pelak argues that 'the strict boundaries between so-called 'male sports' and 'female

sports' in South Africa are classic examples of how dominant groups constructs social, physical and cultural boundaries to build collective identities and naturalize their privilege' (Pelak 2005:58). Women football players are faced with being marked as outsiders, and their game and their skills are devalued to constitute simply a less valuable alternative to male football (Pelak 2005). Whereas men are playing football, women are seen to only be 'kicking' the ball around, and are thus not taken seriously as football players (Pelak 2005). However, what it means to be a woman footballer in South Africa is also undoubtedly tied to racial and class positions. Drawing on research performed in Cape Town, Pelak (2010) suggests that because football is predominantly seen as a black sport in South Africa, black women are seen to possess 'natural' football abilities that coloured and white women do not. Through valuing black women as 'natural' footballers and situating coloured women as playing 'with heart', women footballers themselves are reiterating essentialist notions of race that maintain football as a black sport (Pelak 2010:69).

Football and Femininity

Sport and physical activity function as a masculinity training-ground (Griffin 1998), they uphold an arena where boys learn to be men, and where men 'can continue to have ideological dominance and power' (Sisjord 1997:433). Because men tend to outperform women in competitions involving tests of strength and endurance 'men can maintain the illusion of athletic superiority by naming these attributes as bona fide requirements of the ideal athlete' (Lenskyj 1990:237). Associating physical strength, aggression, activity and muscularity with hegemonic masculinity creates a situation where men come to be seen as 'natural' athletes, whereas notions of hegemonic femininity associate women with 'passivity, relative weakness, gentleness and grace' (Theberge 1987:388). According to Kolnes (1995:64), 'to be a woman and to do hard physical training is often perceived to be a contradiction in terms'.

For women footballers, there is a clear sense of having to prove legitimacy as women, because playing football is seen as a signal of non-compliance with the heterosexual paradigm. South African women footballers are constantly faced with challenges to their capability, skill, appearance and sexuality; and negative stereotypes of women footballers as 'butch lesbians' are widespread. Even national-level administrators in South Africa have criticized women footballers for not being feminine enough, and demanded that the Banyana Banyana players attend etiquette classes, wear tighter-fitting shirts while playing and start wearing skirts rather than trousers when travelling to and from camp and matches (Saavedra 2005). Moreover, in 2005 Ria Ledwaba, the then Chairperson of the Women's Committee of SAFA was quoted as saying:

> We don't want our girls to look, act and dress like men just because they play soccer… They need to learn how to be ladies… At the moment you sometimes can't tell if they're men or women… (City Press, 12/03/2005).

These outbursts from top-level administrators clearly show the extent to which women footballers' femininities are being controlled and disciplined to fall in line with heteronormative discourses of femininity.

Like in other parts of the world, women footballers in South Africa draw on the notion of tomboyism to explain their interest and love for football, and they represent themselves as being different and less 'girly' than other girls while growing up (Haugaa 2007). Upon reaching puberty however, some experience pressures to take up a more feminine-appropriate sport, like netball or hockey, to signal that they have grown out of the 'tomboy phase' (Haugaa 2007). A refusal to 'grow out of' tomboyism through taking on more feminine appropriate activities is considered a signal of transgressing heterosexual norms, and is thought to be an indication of homosexuality (Haugaa 2007). This leads to many feeling the need to mark their bodies as feminine, through the use of clothing, make-up and accessories. However, because the 'butch, lesbian' stereotype is so present in South African women's football, some players also feel that by appearing too feminine they are devalued as footballers (Haugaa Engh 2007). Women who play football are expected to 'play like men' but 'look like women' when entering this male domain, creating a system in which football remains understood in masculine terms, even when women are playing the game.

In the last decade, however, there has been an increasing acceptance of women and sport. Emerging images of athletic femininity have affirmed and given legitimacy to sporting women and athletic femininities, and as such, provided opportunities for young women to construct athletic and physically active subjectivities without running the risk of being labeled as 'pseudo-men' (Heywood and Dworkin 2003). While western beauty-ideals previously demanded a woman's body to be slender, thin and passive; we are currently facing a situation where discourses of femininity expect women to present bodies that are not only slender, sexy and feminine, but also toned and fit (George 2005).

However, there is a fine line between being fit, beautiful and feminine and being too big and muscular. Several of the women I interviewed claimed that football and training de-feminizes their body, and that due to a strict training regiment, their thighs become so muscular that it is no longer possible for them to 'walk like women' or wear stilettos. Karabo, for example, said that:

> Even if I wear stilettos now, you will see that I struggle.

Weight-lifting, in particular, can pose a real problem to maintaining a feminine physique. Winnie argued that although her club team coach provides her with a weight- lifting programme, she avoids doing certain kinds of exercises and is

careful with how much weight she lifts in order to avoid building too much muscle. She said that many of her team-mates do this because:

> We actually try to make sure you know that we maintain our normal muscles, we don't want to like…become big just like boys you know, too much muscle.

Winnie's statement clearly indicates that although some muscle tone is acceptable for women, muscle bulk is fundamentally associated with masculinity, and that it is important for female athletes to present bodies that are distinctly different (and smaller) than male athletic bodies. Because conventional femininity only allows a certain degree of muscularity, many players stress the need for having a feminine 'shape'. While a six-pack[1] can be attractive, it is only so if it is coupled with noticeable breasts and round hips. These regimes lend support to the idea that feminine athleticism is acceptable only so long as women appear heterosexy; 'a seemingly contradictory 'identity that [is] simultaneously tough, fit, feminine and heterosexual' (Ezzel 2009:112). As such, South African women footballers are under pressure to train hard for their sport, but also to appear feminine and sexy on and off the field. In this, the empowering potential of physical exercise and training is negated through the policing of heteronormative femininity.

Football and Homophobia

Hetero-normativity functions as an organizing principle in sport, and homophobia is utilized to police the appearances and appropriateness of women's bodies (Kolnes 1995 and Griffin 1998). Because sports have been constructed as a masculinity training-ground, where boys learn to be men, women's presence in sport (and especially male dominated sports) threaten the seemingly 'natural' association of aggression, competitiveness and athleticism with men, and as a result, women athletes are stigmatized and labelled deviant so as not to threaten the 'natural' gender order (Griffin 1998). Most of the women footballers I have encountered during my research have experienced, on at least one occasion, being labelled as 'deviant', 'lesbian' or 'butch'. For some, this took the form of people referring to them as 'boytjie'[2] or trying to 'be like a man'. Most however, are so used to such utterances that they simply shrug them off, or refuse to take such comments seriously. As was the case with Pumla;

> They are still saying that. That all the women that are playing soccer are lesbians. Me, it is like it gets in here [points to one ear] and out here [points to other ear]…I know myself I am a woman.

Although simply being a footballer is enough for accuzations and suspicions of homosexuality to surface (often from people on the outside, both men and women), the labelling is also 'read' from a woman's style of dress, hairstyle and physical appearance. Because of this many of the players, when I asked them

how they respond to the popular stereotype that 'football makes you lesbian', quickly turned to commenting on the way in which some women footballers choose to dress. Desiree for example, argued that women who dress 'like men' are behaving disrespectfully:

> Most of the girls actually dress up like men and they want to be seen like a man and hang the pants just like the men so that's, I would say that's no discipline.

This statement from Desiree is significant in several ways. Firstly, her reference to style of dress indicates that her 'reading' of homosexuality is based on a specific masculine performance; she does not interpret accuzations of lesbianism as being directed at all women footballers, but a specific 'other' type of footballer – the short-haired butch lesbian. Secondly, Desiree's statement shows clearly how heteronormative expectations of feminine performances are intimately tied to notions of respectability. If a woman fails to wear a tracksuit the way it is 'supposed' to be worn by a woman, for example by wearing a cap sideways or rolling up one of the pant legs, she is regarded as being disrespectful. The normalization of hegemonic, heterosexual femininity goes so far as to not only regulate what a sporting woman can wear, but also how she is to wear her clothes.

Homophobia not only serves to keep many women away from sport, it also puts women who are labelled as 'deviant' (read: not heterosexual) at risk of homophobic prejudice and violence. Women who do not adequately mark or construct their bodies as toned, fit and 'heterosexy', often face social consequences such as devaluation, stigmatization and sometimes also violence and harassment (George 2005). Although women footballers in general face homophobic attitudes and harassment, those players identified as homosexual are particularly at risk, and as a result, many lesbian women footballers will keep their sexuality secret and proceed to 'pass' as being heterosexual in order to avoid harassment (Cox and Thompson 2001; Griffin 1998). Due to this, homosexuality within sport remains an almost invisible issue, and very little research and writing has given this issue the attention it deserves. In South Africa, discourses about homosexuality as un-African are widespread and broadly supported, and gay and lesbian Africans are said to be 'mimicking Western or white culture' (Muholi 2004:117). Many openly homosexual South Africans become victims of hate crimes although the South African Constitution (1996) protects against any form of discrimination, and the Equality Act of 2000 specifically outlaws hate crimes (Martin, Kelly, Turquet and Ross 2009). Zanele Muholi argues that black lesbian women are at particular risk of hate crimes and corrective rape as they occupy identities at the intersection of racist and sexist discourses concerning Black women's sexuali-

ties; 'the rape of black lesbians reconsolidates and reinforces African women's identity as heterosexuals, as mothers, and as women' (Muholi 2004:122).

Fears of violent attacks and rape are thus a very real part of lesbian women's lives in South Africa, and women footballers are not exempt from this. On the 28th of April 2008, former Banyana Banyana player Eudy Simelane was found dead not far from her parents' house in Kwa Thema, a township outside Johannesburg. She had been raped and subsequently stabbed 25 times. Simelane was one of very few women who lived openly as a lesbian in Kwa Thema (Martin, Kelly, Turquet and Ross 2009:10). The rape and murder of Eudy was well-known among most of the women I interviewed, and several expressed fears that they too might become victims of violence if they fail to appear heterosexual 'enough'. As evidenced in this exchange between two national team players:

> Mbali: They are killing…they are raping and then they kill…
>
> Nandipha: It becomes scary
>
> Mbali: Very scary. I mean that ja(yes) you think that you look feminine because,
>
> well, you just got your hair done or something like that, but you don't.

What is most striking in the above quote is the acknowledgement that while players themselves may feel that they are presenting acceptable, feminine bodies; others may not. Due to the high levels of violence against women and hate crimes in South Africa, these concerns feature strongly in the narratives of women footballers.

Football, Discipline and Surveillance

While sport participation may allow women a sense of physical embodiment and power, an experience that has not previously been open to women, there are also growing concerns over the impact of elite/professional sport activity on physical embodiment. Johns and Johns (2000) claim that an 'ethic of excess exists in elite sport. These excesses may include compulsive, excessive weight training, the consumption of ergogenic aids and a high incidence of aberrant eating habits' (2000:222). Although women's football in South Africa has not yet reached the stage of being fully a professional sport (there is no national league, and women footballers still cannot make a living from their sport) players at the top level nonetheless experience intense pressures to train daily and watch their weight in order to achieve an acceptable athletic body. Many women players have indicated to me that their coaches and management keep a close watch on their weight, and that they are punished if they were seen to carry too much weight.

The following quote from Linda, a senior player with the national team, provides a useful insight into weight-related concerns:

> Coach told me 'you are FAT!' and I was like 'hmm…maybe I am…' and then he just put me under pressure to lose it…you think 'cause you are training so much you can eat whatever you want, but it doesn't work that way…

Linda's statement above is illuminating for several reasons; it clearly shows the external regulation and control that footballers experience in relation to their weight. As professional athletes, elite-level women footballers are under close scrutiny when it comes to their weight and body shape, and the immense power a coach holds in determining what is appropriate renders individual experiences of, and control over, the body almost impossible. Linda's surprise at her coach calling her fat illuminates the disempowerment associated with external weight control.

Over-training and under-eating can easily overshadow the emancipatory and empowering potentials of sport participation for women. As a result of this, I would argue that elite-level participation does not necessarily afford women the opportunities for positive physical embodiment, but that it enforces a new level of bodily control, management and distress that is specific to professional sports. In this, training and sports participation forms part of a regulated regime, constructed through discourses of fitness, fatness and athleticism, and players are constantly putting themselves under pressure to live up to these standards and expectations.

For all professional footballers, injuries remain a core concern, and they add to the burden of policing weight in accordance with feminine and athletic ideals. Injuries can lead to weight issues and bad eating patterns especially for those who do not belong to resourceful structures and clubs. Janine, a former national team player, has had vast experience with injuries, and she presented a disturbingly long narrative; starting with a broken ankle at the age of 9 and culminating in a complicated knee injury that led to her retirement from international football at the age of 27. Thinking back on how her many injuries impacted on her psyche, she stated:

> I had an operation and after that I had crutches and it took me over a year to get back again, and I picked up this weight and I struggled a lot, I didn't know what to do. Sometimes I don't even want to eat, I eat like fruits and nothing else, I drink coffee and I have my cigarettes'.

For Janine, an injury did not only mean that she lost her spot in the national team as well as her club team, she also had to fight long and hard to have her medical bills covered by the South African Football Association. Although she sustained her injuries while representing her country, she had to postpone the required surgery several times because she did not have funds available to cover the asso-

ciated costs. In addition, her injuries left her feeling depressed and caused her to gain a lot of weight due to not being able to train regularly anymore.

The fear of sustaining serious and debilitating injuries paradoxically leads many women footballers to ignore various aches and pains they may feel while playing. Nandipha, for example, confessed in our interview that she was ignoring an injury because she was afraid that paying attention to it would either end her career or leave her facing several months of recovery. She stated that:

> I am running away from injuries…I don't want operation. My injuries are pushing me to do operations …I can't not now…now it is quiet, but it will come one day.

Although she was aware that ignoring an injury might lead it to become worse, she insisted on playing, despite feeling pain and discomfort. Dealing with pain becomes an integral part of coping mechanisms when participating in elite-level football. Mbali stated clearly in our conversation that she is accustomed to dealing with pain:

> 'It is all in the mind...the power of the mind is very powerful'.

Mbali thus clearly suggests that it is possible to ignore an injury through refusing to acknowledge it. This represents a mechanical view of the physical body, a view that in no way enhances physical confidence or empowerment. Rather than listening to their bodies and reading the signs that they are sending, Mbali and Nandipha continue to push their bodies beyond the pain threshold in order to fulfill the short-term goal of playing another game for the national team. Thus, the pressures of elite and professional sports create a situation whereby 'coping' with pain and injury is an integral part of participation, as it is seen as inevitable to achieving success (Theberge 2008). Through disciplining the body in line with discourses of elite sport and athleticism, many athletes come to treat, and perhaps experience, their bodies as machines for success (Zakus 1995).

Conclusion

Women's football does hold some empowerment potentials for women. Through football women can come to know and experience their bodies as their own rather than simply experiencing their bodies as a vehicle for communicating sexual availability and attractiveness (Brace-Govan 2002). However, the expectations placed on sporting women to appear heterosexy, fit and toned complicates the experiences of ownership and bodily control, and seem to lead many women to experience their bodies in contradictory ways (George 2005; Cox and Thompson 2000; Cahn 1993; Griffin 1998; Lenskyj 1990). Although feminine athleticism has become an acceptable part of a new commoditized beauty ideal, women ath-

letes still feel as though they are failing to present bodies that are feminine enough – and many are still engaging in processes of 'feminizing' their bodies.

Hetero-normative ideologies are a key in regulating athletic femininities, and posit a situation where femininity is possible only if it is coupled with heterosexuality. As a result heterosexuality, in sport, becomes a code for femininity (Kolnes 1995). Women's appearances are regulated in response to a male gaze, and the feminine athlete is acceptable so long as she is considered sexually attractive to men. This reinforces the objectification of women's (sporting) bodies, and represents women's achievements as secondary to their appearances, thus lending support to notions of male superiority. The insistence on marking the female athletic body as an ultimately feminine body, reinforces a patriarchal ideology of gendered bodies, through the continued maintenance of a feminine body-beautiful regime (Maguire and Mansfield 1998). It reinforces the tendency of valuing women for what they look like, rather than what they achieve, and, as Craig (2006:162) notes 'the feelings of inadequacy produced by the presence of beauty standards in women's lives are, arguably, among the most personal manifestations of gender inequality in our lives'.

Because of the visibility that comes with being a professional athlete, elite-level South African women footballers experience (feminine) surveillance more intimately than those who play football on a recreational basis. The national women's football team members are faced with the responsibility of 'disproving' crude stereotypes, and are expected to appear as feminine role models and football representatives. Moreover, professional level coaches are afforded intimate control and decision-making power over their athletes, and have the opportunity to regulate not only dietary and training regiments, but also off-the-field appearances and behaviours. In a South African context, professional sports are viewed as an avenue for personal improvement and upward mobility, due to a lack of generalized educational and employment opportunities. Although women's football in South Africa is not yet fully professional, this means that for many women, football is a door-opener than can facilitate improved living standards for an extended family. Vast pressure is placed on young women to be disciplined and dedicated, creating a situation where pain, injuries and abuse can become a natural part of their existence. In this context, surveillance is omnipresent, and empowerment is constructed in monetary terms.

Shari Dworkin (2001) suggests that 'while certain women disproportionately benefit from being physically powerful and healthy, an individualized fit body politic may be criticized as being removed from collective forms of empowerment that can challenge oppressive institutions and practices' (Dworkin 2001:334). Echoing this, this article has shown that although football does play an important part in individual women's lives, through offering opportunities for socioeco-

nomic mobility and physical freedom of expression, this participation alone does very little to challenge hegemonic and patriarchal notions of feminine subordination and compulsory heterosexuality. Rather than challenging the underlying structures and beliefs that posit femininity as foreign to and incompatible with, professional athleticism, professional sports participation can further subjugate women through an intensification of feminine expectations. Women in male domains and occupations, such as football, are threatening the 'naturalness' of the current gender order, and as a result face heightened pressures to prove their womanhood and heterosexuality. In this way, the ideologies and discourses that limit women's access to sport remain unchanged.

Notes

1. 'Six pack' refers to well-developed and clearly noticeable abdominal muscles.
2. 'Boytjie' is Afrikaans slang for boy- like.

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6

Thiery Henry as *Igwe*: Soccer Fandom, Christening and Cultural Passage in Nollywood

Senayon Olaoluwa & Adewole Adejayan

Historicizing Sports and Fandom in Africa

Prior to the advent of colonialism and western sport, Africa was alive with traditional games and other forms of physical activities. Various types of games were enacted for recreation, celebrations, community mobilization and other functions. Even where these games privileged a particular gender, there was no exclusion of the other gender, as every game had the capacity to mobilize fandom. And it is through fandom that celebrity status was conferred on contestants. Perhaps one of the earliest attempts to inscribe the phenomenon of fandom in traditional Africa is found in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. It is on account of fandom that Amalinze, for instance, gets the sobriquet 'the Cat' during his wrestling competition with Okonkwo (Achebe 1958:3). In the sixth chapter, there is a restaging of another wrestling match many years after Okonkwo's historic win (Achebe 1958:33-36). In this particular case, an elaborate attention is given to fandom in the way the novelist describes the participation of the whole community of Umofia as spectators, a scene that brings together not only men and women but children as well. Their cheers, excitement and reactions to the performance of the various wrestling teams testify not only to the presence of an active fandom but also speak to the place of fandom in the making of celebrities. Civic pride is evident in the 'honour' Okonkwo brought to his village 'by throwing Amalinze the Cat' (Achebe 1958:3). A similar representation is made in Nollywood's *Naked Wrestlers* in which holding the wresting championship is a source of pride to the Umokene community.

Just as fandom is crucial to the popularity of wrestling in the Umofia village, it is equally central to the development of soccer across space and time. In his

autobiographical reflections, Farred (2002) uses the concept of Long Distance Love (LDL) to represent the passion exhibited by a Liverpool FC fan in a far away apartheid South Africa in the 1970s and the extent to which this speaks at the same time to the contradictions inherent in the articulations of postcolonialism, knowing that Liverpool FC is based in imperial Britain. Farred recounts how in a country where television was not part of the patronized communication inventions on account of the repressive system of apartheid, he could still exhibit so much attachment to a football club based in Britain, and identify with players, strikers and midfielders in the main, that would be his idols and celebrities. His reliance then was on soccer commentaries on radio and the dailies. But his development as a die-hard fan of Liverpool FC along the line of the geographical transcendence could perhaps best be explained in terms of the crucial enlisting of the imagination in compensating for the images and performances he could not see: 'Because I could not 'see'- I had to re-create in my head, to substitute for an absence that my circumstances could not overcome' (Farred (2002:9). This then is the logic of LDL.

Soccer fandom in Africa has since been enhanced by the development of communication media, especially the television. Television as a media form has developed from a local/national reach stage to that of digitalization and paid subscription that makes it possible to experience a far better instantiation of geographical transcendence of viewership and fandom. As Whannel (2009:625) puts it:

> In the last two decades, deregulation and digitalization have expanded the number of channels but this fragmentation, combined with the growth of the internet has meant that the era in which shared domestic leisure was dominated by viewing of the major channels was closing. Yet, sport provides an exception, an instance when around the world millions share a live and unpredictable viewing experience.

Nevertheless, the study of culture remains crucial to the study of the new media and sports fandom. Yet, paradoxically, culture among scholars has become a particularly fraught and contested terrain especially in the last two decades on account of the media (Poster 2006:134). Yet, it is impossible to dwell on the intersection between new media and culture without examining the extent to which globalization impacts them. In other words, the constituent time-space compression reputation of globalization possesses the capacity to foster and destroy cultural affiliations at the same time. This again, returns us to the notion of geographical transcendence with respect to the question of fandom which at this junction is better located within the broad-based matrix of consumerism and the borderlessness that it conjures. The discussion also impacts the question of identity formation which naturally is built on the understanding of culture. Identity

formation, just like cultural affiliation, has become complex and this formation, inscription and re-inscription can no longer be determined only by spaces of birth and location. This much can be affirmed once a critical reflection on patterns of consumerism is taken into account in the unfolding of the 21st century, as from inception there was an encouragement of 'various forms of consumption in which commodified pleasure of the body provided a proliferation of identities defined by consumption, lifestyle and, or fandom' (Langman 2003:223).

With respect to the experience of soccer fandom in Nigeria, as far as the British Premier League clubs and players are concerned, what is at display is not just the arbitrariness of fandom; it is also what we have termed the 'audacity of fandom'. Beyond the passion – that is sometimes pathological – with which fans celebrate their clubs and players, a whole lot of other forms of affinity and identity formations are springing up daily. For instance, there is the story of a prominent chief in Ibadan who did not only travel to Rome, Italy to watch his club Manchester United FC play their final match against Real Madrid in 2009, but also employed marabouts at home to pray for many days and slaughter bulls and rams so that Manchester could win the cup.

Idolizing Thiery Henry in Nigeria and the Place of Nollywood

This chapter is about the celebration and idolization of Thiery Henry as *Igwe* in South West of Nigeria. As a predominantly Yoruba-speaking region, and home to one of the three dominant cultural and ethnic groups in the country, one would think that ordinarily, especially in the face of the increasing wave of subnationalism, the jealous guarding of individual cultural terrain would not permit such a cultural diffusion, knowing that the title of *Igwe* is ordinarily exclusive to the Igbo.

In examining the place of Nollywood in mediating this trans-regional cultural passage, perhaps a convenient starting point should be a refection on the peculiarity of the evolution of Nollywood. With the economic downturn that started in the late 1970s in Nigeria, it became increasingly difficult to produce the usually capital intensive cinema for the patronage of the people. Worse still, the previously safe theatre halls, town and village squares for live performances were no longer considered safe. The situation was further complicated by the dwindling enthusiasm for live performances. The few cinema outfits that could still weather the socio-economic storm presented people with foreign films especially Hollywood and Bollywood productions. Fortunately, by the early 1990s, electronic technology consumption of video machines had begun to approach a popular level. Starting with the recording of proceedings of ceremonies for the purpose of watching them all over again, to sending copies to relations who had contributed financially to the success of these ceremonies (Ukata 2009:5), economically adventurous and creative producers from the Eastern/Igbo part of the country

began the launch of what is today known as Nollywood. Creatively detouring the huge and overwhelming financial demands of celluloid productions, the producers were able to make videos that could be afforded by ordinary people and be watched from the convenience of their sitting rooms and other similar spaces, using the video machines.

Domesticating the video machine and inventing for it another value other than the one for which it was originally designed speaks to the revolutionary dimension of new media, especially with respect to the involvement of new entrants and their capacity to gain popularity through mass cultural production and circulation. Going by its take-off time, Nollywood producers could be said to fit into the categorization of the 'heretical newcomers' (Hesmondhalgh 2006: 216) who, in spite of Bourdieu's clearly defined fields, redraw the boundaries of artistic and cultural production. This assertion is appropriate in view of the way Nollywood has caused a re-definition of Nigerian and African viewership of Hollywood and Bollywood films. It is in fact apt to also add that the geographical transcendence that Nollywood has engendered ramifies African Diasporas in Europe and the Americas (Ukata 2009:18). Needless to say, since the video machines of the early 1990s, Nollywood films have been through different stages of production in a way that is consistent with the times and advancement in information and communication technology central to which is digitalization. Besides the DVDs, satellite television can be said to have also played a major role in the prosecution of this revolution. For instance, through the Multichoice Africa Magic and Africa Magic Plus channels, Nollywood productions are transmitted on a daily basis to viewers in most parts of Africa. While the internet sales can still be said to be negligible, there is a huge export business that is thriving in the country today against the background of Nollywood productions.

It is thus not surprising that as Nollywood centralizes Igbo nationalism, the centrality of this nationalism rubs off on other cultures within and outside the country. One area of this production that has been freighted undeniably into other cultures is the representation of Igbo monarchy, which usually revolves around the figure of the *Igwe*, the traditional ruler. In this chapter, it is important to state that much as we are aware of the debates around monarchy as a contested terrain in Igbo land, as the society is essentially and primordially republican, this debate will be reserved for other research. Therefore our concern is with the representation of the *Igwe*. The *Igwe* in these productions epitomizes many values and provokes multiple interpretations, as his roles are crucial and diverse. However, in this chapter, we view the *Igwe* from the perspective of the superior citizen and performer among his subjects and fellow citizens. It is this working understanding that is in tandem with the christening of Thiery Henry as *Igwe*.

The superiority of the *Igwe* is best considered from the angle of his relationship with his subjects. Usually in many of the Nollywood films/videos, the mon-

arch whose majesty is foregrounded through the response of '*Igweee*!!!!!!!!' by his subjects and or council of elders is at the top of the communal hierarchy. This we know when nobody dare contradict his instructions and commands. This for instance is demonstrated in *Strange Wind* (2007) when the king summons the elders and chiefs to deliberate on the abnormal and mysterious happenings in Amaku community. Before the council can finally decide on a mission for the consultation of an oracle to determine the cause or causes of their predicament, they have to wait patiently for the *Igwe* to be seated. Of course, upon deliberation and the unanimous decision reached, no action is taken until the *Igwe* instructs that those who have volunteered to go on the mission are approved for the journey. It is only at this point that they feel empowered to go on this mission. Again, when it becomes clear that *Amuku* community may need to seek a greater power than that of the oracle in a fashion that signals a radical social change, the fears and hesitation of the people are allayed when the *Igwe* throws his weight behind this seemingly untraditional prospect of radicalism. It is no surprise then that the whole of the community gathers at *Amuku* Square for the inauguration of this social change only because the *Igwe* is at the centre of its prosecution. After all, his concern is the protection of his people from the plagues. A similar response to social emergencies is represented in *The Gods Are Wise* (2007) when *Amafor* community finds itself embroiled in the recurrence of strange plagues on account of the abominable love act of Odinaka and Adugo. The process of communal cleanzing for the restoration of social normalcy is one in which the *Igwe* is centrally located, even when the priest must be consulted. It is the Igwe who initiates the various stages of response to these emergencies until Amafor is purged of the plagues.

The *Igwe*'s superiority is also foregrounded when he wades into matters of dispute and controversy. On many occasions, his council and the people trust his judgment and his intervention results in the resolution of crises. Again, much panic and disaster can be recorded when a community loses its *Igwe* and circumstances and intrigues are preventing a new one from being installed. Even during moments of confrontation with external aggression, the presence of the *Igwe* is a boost to the morale of the soldiers, as they go to the warfront, confident that it is at the instruction of their monarch. The subtext of the foregoing is that while the *Igwe* is also a citizen of the land, he is a special and superior one on account of the powers invested with him. His performance of power and the majesty of his reign are however a function of the confidence his subjects repose in him. What is more, under normal circumstances, it is the people through the endorsement and or guidance of the oracle that pronounce an individual *Igwe*. Once installed, the *Igwe* is adored and feted by his people. He is not only their monarch but also their celebrity whom they discuss from time to time. At yet another level, the choice of an *Igwe* is also informed by an individual's track record, particularly in

the area of his contribution to the development of his land. This for us is very crucial, as it keys in centrally with the coronation of Henry by Nigerian soccer fans as the *Igwe* of soccer. Even where the *Igwe* is young without much personal achievement, his people endorse his ascension to the throne on account of his ancestry which must have recorded much in the aspect of commitment to the protection and prosperity of the land. Therefore, whichever way the *Igwe* is considered in these videos, his ascension to the throne and the attendant honour are a function of outstanding precedent and credentials. Standing out among his peers earns him this title, and his subjects subsequently stand by him all the way for as long as he maintains and consolidates his achievements.

Henry in the Estimation of Nigerian Fans

The above leads us to the credentials of Thiery Henry. Known to have hit stardom at Arsenal FC, the black Frenchman actually started his professional career in 1994, and earned international status upon improvement and good form in 1998 when he signed up for Serie A Juventus. His reputation as an outstanding soccer star with fans all over the world was due primarily to his exploits at Arsenal. For instance, it is often said that while in Arsenal from1999 to 2007, Henry did not only win two league titles and three FA Cups, analysts and fans in particular contend that Arsenal's victory in most of these championships was on account of Henry as a superlative striker. For instance, he remains to date Arsenal's all-time leading scorer with 226 goals in all competitions (Wikipedia). Henry's record while in Arsenal was also impressive: 'he was twice nominated for the FIFA World Player of the Year, was named the PFA Players' Player of the Year twice, and the Football Writers' Association Footballer of the Year three times' (Wikipedia). Having distinguished himself among his peers and to that extent qualified to be called a rallying point, his fans in Nigeria see him as a player whose values are comparable to those of the *Igwe* among his subjects. Of course, the christening of Henry as *Igwe* was done in the South East among the Igbo. According to Uche, one of our respondents in the city of Ibadan in Oyo State:

> Arsenal FC has the largest number of fans among the Igbo. The reason is not far-fetched: this was the first Premier League team in which Kanu reached the zenith of his career. By an act of coincidence, this was also the team in which Henry at the time had become a phenomenon, towering above all his team mates and players in other teams (personal communication, July 30, 2009).

The Igbo, following the fandom that Arsenal had during the period of Kanu's superlative performance in the club, must be seen as speaking to the cultural understanding about the formation of sports fandom. According to Hughson and Free (2006:72) even in the context of resistance, we must not forget 'the nature of sport as a cultural commodity in which fandom and following are

invested'. The first attraction for the Igbo was the participation of their kinsman Kanu in the English professional team. To that extent, the motivation was the need to identify with Kanu and muster an impressive fandom for the team for as long as this continued to serve as a psychological boost to the Igbo nationalism. Nevertheless, Igbo's identification with Arsenal because of Kanu needs to be qualified. This is why it is significant that the Igbo did not coronate Kanu, their kinsman, as *Igwe* but chose Henry. This in a way foregrounds the non-sentimentality of fans when it comes to pitching their tent with soccer clubs and stars. There was no doubt that Kanu was great in his days at Arsenal but it was clear to everybody that even at his very best, his credentials at Arsenal pale behind those of Henry. For the Igbo fans, this then should explain why Henry got the sobriquet of *Igwe*. As a cultural signification they could identify with, the reception of the conferment of the title of *Igwe* on Henry among the Igbo should not come as a surprise.

If the above explains the christening of Henry in Igbo land as *Igwe*, the question that comes naturally to mind is how and why this christening was endorsed in the South West, especially among another major ethnic group whose cultural consciousness is well known? The question is the more pertinent because unlike the Igbo whose appropriation of monarchy into their cultural repertoire is a relatively recent development, the Yoruba have always had monarchy as an integral part of their socio-cultural and political life. Being a tradition that is so well entrenched, going by the sophisticated expression of panegyrics inscribed in the ceremonial rituals of court and popular praise of kings among the Yoruba, one would have expected Yoruba Arsenal fans and indeed fans of Henry in particular to find a Yoruba title appropriate to his superior performance on the pitch. What then could be responsible for this overwhelming reception?

The respondents in various ways agree that Henry deserves to be king within the context of soccer, especially going by his exceptional exploits during his days in Arsenal, and the idea of Igwe is for them in the South West not exceptionable at all. According to Abel:

> A lot of things (qualified Henry for this title)…actually when he was in Arsenal he made some marks with the club…there was a certain level which the club got to during his time in Arsenal…the 49 unbeaten record matches. He was part of the team; he captained the team; he scored goals that brought the team to the level they are now…Yes, *Igwe* means a monarchical head, a supreme head… yes he (Henry) was a supreme head in England then because he topped the chart when it came to goal scoring…he was the king; he headed them all… beautiful goals, fantastic goals and highest goal records (personal communication, July 17, 2009).

For this fan at the Osun State University, it was on account of Henry's instrumentality in the overall success of Arsenal while his contract lasted that qualified him for this title. It is also interesting to know that the metaphor of the king is so strong in the justification of Abel. Not only did he paint Henry as the king within the context of soccer, we also see that this fan practically appropriated the whole of England for Henry when he said 'he was a supreme head in England'. This respondent's impression is significant in the way it validates what Surin (2006:429-433) says are three possible levels at which we may conceptualize fandom. Going by his model, rarely does a player catalyze all the three levels in fans. There is however a sense in which these levels of fandom which are idealization, ethics and involuntary memory are instantiated in Abel's response to Henry as soccer super star.

Therefore, in feting this king from a distant location in Nigeria, an appropriation of a proportionate title was needful; when the Igbo did the crowning in the East, the endorsement in the West was just as well. According to a female respondent, Afolakemi, at Osun State University, 'an *Igwe* means the master in one aspect…and one way or the other in football, I think he is a guru' (personal communication July 17, 2009). The seemingly uncritical endorsement of the Igbo title by Yoruba fans as conferred on Henry in the East should also be seen as speaking to sports', especially global sports' capacity to de/reconstruct structures of the national (Cho 2009:320).

To another fan from Ibadan, Oyo State, however, the process of coronation and christening of Henry as *Igwe* should relate to specific deeds of the player at Arsenal: 'The guy (Henry) had an injury…and he was not around, and when he just came around, he just had three hat tricks…three goals, three goals, three goals!!!' (personal communication, July 30, 2009. Indeed, three consecutive hat tricks are uncommon and for people like Kolapo, this must be factored in each time we look back at how Henry came to be crowned as *Igwe*. Still on the process of his emergence as *Igwe* among Nigerian fans, an Ibadan female respondent like Mosunmayo believed it was also about his leadership role as captain and the way he stood out in the field of play in his days in Arsenal. Interestingly, Henry also spent his last two seasons in Arsenal as captain of the club.

The mediatory role of new media in the transfer and passage of culture then deserves further careful examination in order to ascertain the way it is foregrounded in this particular case of soccer fandom and the christening of Henry as *Igwe* in the South East Igbo land and the endorsement of this christening in South West. The first explanation for this ramifies globalization and its reputation for time-space compression. The digitalization of communication devices also means their liberalization as a result of which millions of people all over the world can in the case of satellite television, for instance, watch a particular programme simultane-

ously. On account of this, it is possible to watch premier league matches played in Europe in any part of Nigeria. In Oyo and Osun States, like other states in Nigeria, even where fans cannot afford subscription to DSTV, they have developed various ways of getting around this challenge. One common way of tackling this challenge is to go to commercial viewing centres where they pay per match to watch their clubs and stars play. This response to the challenge of spectatorship and fandom via pay-television by Nigerians is significant in at least two ways. First we construe this as being the fans' way of responding to what Brown (2007:415) terms the shrinking of geographical and financial worlds as a global phenomenon, and which provokes in sports fandom a strategy or strategies of 'persistence' in the face of this capital-spawn 'adversity', seeing that in Nigeria only a negligible percentage of fandom can afford pay-television services. On a second level, the patronage of commercial viewing centres draws a parallel between the responses that are expressed in the patronage of the pub by fans in England. In this instance, the commercial viewing centres must be seen in the light of the pub in England, which, according to Weed (2009:399), serves as a 'virtual football fandom venue' and an alternative to 'being there'. Interestingly, most of these viewing centres are also Nollywood video club houses where people come to rent particular films, recent, latest and old, for relaxation. What is implied here is that there is a sense in which we can talk about the coincidence of soccer and Nollywood viewing. This is possible at one level of patronizing video clubs which also double as premier league matches viewing centres. At another level, the coincidence is evident where the matches and the videos are watched from the comfort zone of family sitting rooms and other similar spaces at home, as DSTV subscription provides Africa Magic channels as well as other channels like Super Sport to subscribers.

In this coincidence thus lies the simultaneous viewing of both the superior performance of the *Igwe* in Nollywood films and the superlative performance of Henry in the field of play. For those living outside the Igbo cultural and geographic milieu, like those interviewed in Oyo and Osun States, there is both a conscious and unconscious internalization of the representation and performance of the *Igwe* as seen in Nollywood films. This for us is very vital in this study as respondents in the two different sites of research betrayed both forms of internalization. Specifically, those in Osun State, Ikire Campus of Osun State University, who were undergraduates and young men and women, betrayed their conscious internalization of the representation of *Igwe* in Nollywood productions. For this reason, it was possible for more than 90 per cent of them to see the link between their endorsement of the *Igwe* title as sobriquet for Henry and the mediatory role of Nollywood in this endorsement. According to Adeniran:

> Through Nollywood Igbo people have projected their cultural heritage beyond their immediate environment and to that extent the designation of Henry as *Igwe* can be said to have been influenced by Nollywood (personal communication, July 17, 2009).

In view of the foregoing, the consumption trait which Wenner argues is central to sports spectatorship and fandon (Bairner 2009:307), is not only in terms of the meaning that emanate directly from the performance of sporting, but should also be seen as ramifying the new meanings and understanding which obtains from the cultural inflections and consciousness of spectators and fans. It is in this assumption that the passage of Igbo cultural heritage via new media makes sense and highlights the merits of Nollywood in this direction.

If Adeniran's admittance of the place of Nollywood is clear, there is a sense in which one finds a particularly radical response in Akeem's, as he enthusiastically said 'calling him Oba (a Yoruba word for king) or any other name doesn't really flow…but *Igwe* is more like it…just like it is represented in Nollywood' (personal communication, July 17, 2009). As said earlier, other respondents on this campus admitted that their identification with that title was essentially informed by the representation and performance of power and superiority which they had encountered in Nollywood productions.

However, the question of identification with and endorsement of the title of *Igwe* by soccer fans and enthusiasts in a predominantly Yoruba-speaking Ibadan has a complex dimension to it. According to Gboyega, it is about the mobility of Igbo people and the uniqueness of their cultural assertion in Diaspora and a better sense of humour which made Yoruba people in Ibadan at the initial stage to buy into the idea of calling Henry *Igwe*:

> The Igbo people are more outspoken when they are in the public and want to speak their language…'Oh *Igwe*!!!' Where we watch football there, you know there are some Igbo guys there…just two, three, four, five of them…the way they will be talking this and that …I think they have a sense of humour much more than we do…those Igbo people; when they are watching matches they will say '*Igwe*!!!' And every other person will pick it up…Yes, the *Igwe* thing came from the Igbo people and we all accepted it (personal communication, July 30, 2009).

If in the past popular geopolitics was dominated by themed discussions on geopolitical representation and discourse which include the domain of sports fandom, there is however a way this pattern is changing fast to reflect 'audience interpretation, consumption and attachment' (Dittmer and Dodds (2008:437). It is in this audience reflection that we find the transgression of cultural and ethnic lines. In this case, what is important to Henry's fans in the South West is not the origination of the *Igwe* title, but their interpretation, consumption and attachment which coa-

lesce with the cultural articulation of fans in Eastern Nigeria. As well, the endorsement of the *Igwe* title by fans in the South West is of significance when viewed from another angle. The import of another angle to the way we may interpret the unity of fandom across geographical and cultural lines makes a lot of sense when we admit that considered in isolation, the Igbo-inflected title is ordinarily exclusive and space-bound and should attract abjection or indifference from the cultural space of the South West. But it is with respect to its reinvention within the context of soccer fandom that the immanently exclusionary understanding of the title is defused, creating instead a new mode of understating which does not only upend the original meaning, but extends the frontiers of inter-ethnic unity. A level of social capital is thus built around this formation and performance of fandom across spaces. In other words, the way soccer has informed the formation of fandom across spaces justifies the assertion that social capital possesses the capacity to create a connectivity which in turn may 'translate into different acts such as reciprocity, the building of relationships, the development of social and emotional skills and social participation' (Burnett 2006:283).

Yet, in discussing the formation and passage of Igbo nationalism among other ethnic groups in Nigeria and other parts of Africa since the late 1950s, it is perhaps important to note the vital role that Igbo literature and media have played over the decades. To return to Achebe, we must admit that much of what other people first knew about Igbo culture in modern times came through interaction with Achebe's trilogy: *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease* and *Arrow of God*. According to Anyidoho, there is a sense in which Achebe launched the globalization of Igbo nationalism through his trilogy, so much so that even when the setting of *No Longer at Ease* is Lagos, the characters are exclusively Igbo, and we begin to wonder whether other ethnic groups do not live in Lagos. But as Anyidoho argues further, this is where lies the artistic finesse of Achebe through which he engages a postcolonial challenge that touches us all in Africa and yet able to make a statement on the primacy of Igbo nationalism in his art.

Once we begin to consider the foregoing from the angle of cultural assertion and Igbo nationalism and the role of literature and the arts generally, then we may begin to understand the nuances that are at play in the unconscious internalization by other ethnic groups of the representation of Igwe in Nollywood productions. In our interaction and interview with the soccer fans in Ibadan, this was what we found out: the fact that beyond the reputation of Igbo people to be assertive about their cultural heritage in the diaspora, a number of other artistic media contribute to the reception of Igbo cultural indices by other ethnic groups. Just as Igbo literature as led by Achebe does this, so also has Nollywood advanced this reception going by the sheer volume of Igbo productions that people buy on a daily basis in South West Nigeria, to say nothing of the almost 24 hour transmission of these productions on Africa Magic. To that extent, and as

we found out, the respondents' identification with the title did not exclusively emanate from the interaction with Igbo people at video clubs and match viewing centres, but evolved also through their unconscious internalization of the Nollywood productions which through new media have become a phenomenon that other ethnic groups cannot ignore. In the specific case of the reception of Henry in Ibadan and the South West in general, it was also about the coincidence of Nollywood cultural films and the superlative performance of Henry at Arsenal at the point in time. As another respondent, Tayosi, put it:

> The period of Henry's outstanding performance as striker and unequalled goal scorer also interestingly coincided with Nollywood's consistent production of cultural films in which the representation of the *Igwe*, his splendour and superiority were in vogue. As a result of this popularity of the *Igwe* in the movies at the time, it was so easy for all of us in the West to accept the coronation of Henry in the East as *Igwe*. Indeed, the coincidence played a major role for us (personal communication, July 30, 2009).

Truly, Nollywood has undergone different thematic stages in its evolution, and it is particularly significant to note that in this evolution, the period of decisive concentration on cultural movies yielded its own dividends of development through the mediation of cultural passage beyond the eastern region of the country. The centrality of monarchy in these productions was obvious, and it was easy for other non-Igbo viewers to identify with it. Thus, the identification with Henry as *Igwe* by other ethnic groups underscores how the sustenance of national unity through the formation of soccer fandom is enhanced by Nollywood's representation of Igbo monarchy. In this case, soccer's capacity for fostering national unity and patriotism is evident not only during the moments of superlative performance by a people's national team (Liubov' Borusiak 2010:72), but also through the conceptual developments predicated upon the agency of new media in the formation of new modes of the popular in the context of a national space.

Another respondent, Godwin, was more direct in his affirmation of the influence of Nollywood on the christening and the reception:

> The same viewers of premier league matches are also mostly the viewers and audience of Nollywood videos. It is therefore just natural to link the christening of Henry as *Igwe* to the popular representation of the *Igwe* in Nollywood productions (personal communication, July 30, 2009).

Yet, another respondent, Folorunsho, was more unequivocal in Ibadan in his affirmation of the place of Nollywood productions: 'Where else in this part of the country did we come in stark contact with *Igwe* but in Nollywood home videos? To that extent, the influence of the videos on the christening of Henry as *Igwe* is clearly beyond contention' (personal communication, July 30, 2009). Yet, in spite of this direct link between Nollywood viewership and soccer spectatorship

and fandom, the forms of relationships the coincidence of both viewership and fandom produces cannot be said to be simple. Indeed, there is a complexity to the socio-cultural relationships that result, as they speak to what Falcous and Maguire observe to be 'the complexity of the local consumption of global sports contoured by local identities and affiliations, yet operating within wider political, economic and cultural dynamics' (Wiliams 2007:128).

It then stands to reason that some other respondents like Tochie would interrogate the ethos of 'crowning' Henry as *Igwe*. We observed however that in his interrogation and abjection of the christening, Tochie ironically underscored the place of Nollywood in the making of Henry as *Igwe*. To question the appropriateness of the sobriquet for a player like Henry, Tochie invoked the memory of classical soccer:

> When fellow soccer fans call Henry *Igwe*, I disagree with them. But from another angle I discover that these are people with a limited and recent sense of soccer history. I mean if they call Henry *Igwe*, what then do they think of legends like Pele of Brazil and Maradona of Argentina? (personal communication July 30, 2009).

The ironic affirmation of the place of Nollywood in the christening lies in the very fact of soccer history which Tochie invoked in his contention. Both Pele and Maradona reigned as soccer maestros long before Nollywood came into existence. Ordinarily, one would have expected that the Igbo cultural title would have made the rounds in popularity among other Nigerians during their time. But this was not to be because of the limited knowledge of the performance of the *Igwe* among other Nigerians. Even among the Igbo, the consciousness of this performance was very low until Nollywood became popularized through the various new media revolution. Therefore, we argue that even when Henry may not be comparable to Pele or Maradona, his christening as *Igwe* by Nigerian soccer fans was substantially a function of the influence of Nollywood on the popularity of the *Igwe* title. It is also significant to note that by another act of coincidence, Henry began his soccer career in the 1994, the mostly cited year of the beginning of Nollywood.

In the end, the discussion returns us to the question of cultural diversity in the face of increasing waves of subnationalism. The formation and redefinition of identity and solidarity will continue to be a complex issue, as they can no longer be exclusively construed along ethnic and regional lines. On account of new media and soccer, new forms of identity and solidarity are being formed in Nigeria. There are various dimensions to this experience of identity formation. One of such has been the cosmopolitanism of Igbo cultural ideas and the enthusiastic reception they enjoy in the Diaspora. In the particular instance of our research, the place of Nollywood in fostering unity among Nigerians cannot be denied.

This is specifically in the enthusiastic reception of the idea of the christening of Thiery Henry as *Igwe* among the Igbo, and the reception of this idea by soccer fans in the predominantly Yoruba-speaking South West, precisely because there is a sense in which Yoruba people can identify with the representation of *Igwe* in Nollywood productions. This is why they can easily relate it to the performance of Henry as the king of soccer, especially in his days at Arsenal FC. As Henry, another respondent from Osun State said, 'the Nollywood industry has really gone so far… they are doing much in bringing Nigerians together'. If this is true of Nollywood, it is no less true of soccer, especially the English Premier League matches, on account of which new trans-ethnic solidarities are being formed precisely in the mobilization and performance of fandom. The social capital appropriated in this instance no doubt enhances unity in a nation that once trod the path of civil war, essentially because of sentiments of ethnicity. In view of all this, the angle of development to our discussion in this chapter rests essentially on the trans-ethnic social capital that is mustered through soccer fandom among Nigerians and its implications for fostering national unity. Nevertheless, the role of Nollywood as a direct consequence of new media is crucial to this development in trans-ethnic social capital formation. To that extent, our findings corroborate Levermore's (2008:183) contention that though experts in mainstream development studies are reluctant to admit the place of sports in matters of development; it has become unthinkable to deny the impact of sports in political, social and economic development.

Poor Female Fandom and Its Challenges

However, much as soccer enthusiasm and fandom are on the rise in Nigeria, our findings revealed that there is still a huge gap between the number of men and women who patronize soccer viewing as sport. For instance, out of the 24 students that were interviewed at the Osun State University, only 4 were ladies; and out of the 51 in Ibadan only 4 were women. In our reflection on this, what came to mind was the initial conception of soccer as a masculine game. After all, it was only recently that African women began to play professional soccer. The history of soccer in the other parts of the world reveals a similar pattern. What is more, in most communities and cultures, status hierarchy, Borer (2009:1) observes, is employed based, among other things, on gender, as a result of which women tend to be excluded from the class of serious fandom. With respect to soccer fandom in Nigeria, we also observe that the situation also produces the irony that Borer remarks upon, which is the overt involvement of women in the interactions of fan communities and how they play a significant role in the negotiation of status symbols. Therefore for Nigerian women, one thing that may be helpful is a necessary replacement of their timid sense of fan involvement with a confident, if not audacious fan participation, knowing that, among other things, 'team

identification and social psychological health … produce social connections, which, in turn, facilitate well-being' (Daniel Wann Stephen Weaver 2009:219). Nevertheless, considering that soccer viewership also implies relaxation, it is important to still encourage women to have more time for pleasure, although this is not to discount other choices of relaxation which women engage in, and which serve them functionally.

Conclusion

Lastly on Henry and his *Igweship*, we may wonder why he is still addressed as *Igwe* by Nigerian fans when in actual fact not only has he transferred from Arsenal to Barcelona FC, but at the moment can no longer be said to be in his elements of excellence as in those days? In Ibadan, as Deji informed us, Henry earned his title of *Igwe* from Nigerian soccer fans in his days in Arsenal and it did not matter where one's affiliation lay, as he was addressed as *Igwe* by all Chelsea, Manchester United, Liverpool and other clubs' fans, and till now he continues to be known and addressed as *Igwe* by them all. If Deji's explanation on the continuity of the *Igweship* of Henry is from the angle of fandom, ours draws expectedly on Nollywood. As an Amaeke community chief puts it in *The Gods Are Wise*, 'An *Igwe* is an *Igwe*; even when he is gone, he is still an *Igwe*'. And if in a sense the revolution of new media as discussed in this chapter can be said to have given cogency to Bolter's and Grusin's view about 'the rapid development of new digital media and the nearly as rapid response by traditional media' (Terry Flew 2005:4), by the same token, there is a sense in which it can be argued that there has been an equally rapid response from Nigerian audience at the level of viewership of Nollywood videos and premier league matches. The result is the mobilization of a unique form of fandom, which is foregrounded in the christening of Henry as *Igwe*.

Filmography

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The Gods Are Wise, 2007.
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7

The Gendered Dimension of Competitive Sports in a Multicultural Context: The Mauritian Scenario

Ramola Ramtohul

Introduction: Sport as a Masculine Endeavour

Sport has been a historically male dominated preserve that epitomized masculinity and barred women from participating. When the Olympic Games were revived in Athens in 1896, activities were reserved for men only and according to the founder, Baron Pierre de Courbertin, 'women have but one task, that of crowning the winner with garlands' (Howe 1978).[1] The feminist and radical critiques of sport both emphasize the essentially masculine and patriarchal nature that it shares with society (Hoch 1972; Theberge 1981). Indeed, qualities associated with sport such as competitiveness, aggression and instrumentality are qualities that are associated with contemporary notions of the 'masculine' (Sabo and Runfola 1980; Theberge 1981). It was only very gradually that women's presence in sporting events and competitions became accepted. Yet, despite the space for women to participate in sports, globally, women's participation in competitive sports is much lower than that of men. Cortis (2009) attributes this discrepancy to the fact that women perform more domestic work and care throughout their life course and as such, have less time and money for sport and leisure than men. In the Australian context, Cortis (2009) notes that smaller proportions of women than men participate in sport and recreation overall, and women choose activities that provide flexible timings which would minimize clashes with household schedules – for instance as walking or attending fitness classes rather than organized team sport. Women are also under-represented in decision-making bodies of sporting institutions (Sever 2005). Consequently, sport policies are often constructed without awareness of structural gender inequalities (Hall 1996; Hargreaves 1994).

The view of sport as a male endeavour is largely fostered through the educational system, governing bodies of sport, government agencies, sports promoters and most significantly, the media (Graydon 1983:8). Graydon (1983:8) also notes that 90 per cent of sport reporting in the media consists of men's sports; and even when women's sporting successes are reported, it is done in a superficially positive manner, highlighting the women's physical desirability. Other media reports of women's sporting success have placed the women in their domestic roles, viewing them in the family context, surrounded by their spouse and children (Scott & Derry 2005; Koivula 1999; Myers 1978).[2] Hence, such views either focus on women's sexuality or on their domestic roles, expecting them to conform to male-defined societal values. The dominant view here is that sport is a masculine activity which emphasizes male values and is therefore no place for a 'real' woman. Media reports of the Caster Senmeya saga highlight this issue very pertinently, as attempts were made to prove that a strong and powerful woman athlete was not a 'real' woman. Throughout history, women's entrance into the masculine domain of sports has been counteracted by claims that the athletic female body is a gender-deviant body (Cahn 1994). In this context, Hall (1988:333) critiques the work of Western sport researchers exploring the conflicting relationship between femininity (but never masculinity) and sport, to 'prove' that female athletic involvement has positive psychological benefits without producing a loss of femininity.

In recent years, sports and physical education have begun to appear on the development agenda of many countries and international bodies and the focus on women and sport has consequently been enhanced. The First World Conference on Women and Sport was held in Brighton, UK, in 1994, leading to the Brighton Declaration and the establishment of the International Working Group on Women and Sport. In 1995, sport was included in the Beijing Platform for Action (paragraphs 83, 107, 290) and subsequently in the Beijing+5 resolution five years later (Sever 2005). The Second World Conference on Women and Sport took place in Windhoek, Namibia in 1998 and the Windhoek Call for Action goes beyond lobbying for women's participation in sport to promoting sport as a means of realizing broader goals in health, education and women's human rights (Sever 2005). These issues were further promoted at the Third World Conference on Women and Sport in Montreal, Canada in 2002. Sport is now incorporated as part of development by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UNDP 2003). The UN General Assembly recognized sport as an important tool to promote education, health, development and peace[3] and the United Nations proclaimed the year 2005 as the International Year for Sport and Physical Education.

Women's practice of sport and participation in sporting competitions hold major importance for the empowerment of women. Scientific literature has already documented the physical and mental health benefits of sport, especially the relationship between sport and physical fitness, its contribution to the reduction of chronic disease and its links to enhancing mental health by reducing symptoms of disease. Indeed, sports carries major personal significance for its participants, especially since it is an institution which has social and political impacts which extend far beyond the lives and interests of the individuals concerned (Graydon 1983). In fact, sporting heroes and heroines often become national celebrities and role models to the younger generation. Studies conducted in Western contexts have shown that girls' practice of sports in high schools has led to a decrease in alcohol and drug use, a decline in teenage pregnancy, higher grades and increased self-confidence.[4] The practice of sport among women and girls therefore needs to be encouraged at all levels.

Most sport activities occur in areas that have come to be known as 'public spaces'. These are designated places where citizens go for recreation, education, entertainment as well as participation in political life – such as stadia, swimming pools, gymnasiums and training grounds. Brady (2005:39) observes that the kinds of public spaces that are considered to be legitimate venues for women most commonly are markets, health clinics or tailors – all of which are areas that confine women to fulfilling their domestic roles as homemakers and mothers. However, women have much less access to, and are sometimes completely excluded from public spaces where sports are practized and that men are able to visit freely. These include town halls, parks and sports stadia among others. Often, women are only able to enter these spaces if they are accompanied by a male family member despite the fact that these spaces may have been intended for general public use (Brady 2005). Girls and women often feel intimidated to use these spaces for fear of physical or psychological harassment by men and consequently, 'public space' becomes 'men's space' (Brady 2005:40).

Due to parental concerns and social norms governing respectable femininity, girls face greater restrictions on their mobility, which eventually lower their participation in sports activities. In the context of multicultural societies, women's access to public sporting grounds is even more complicated. A study carried out on women from different cultural backgrounds who were living in Australia (Cortis 2009) revealed that women from minority, especially Asian and Muslim, backgrounds experienced greater difficulties of access to sports largely because of cultural restrictions. Issues pertaining to dress and female physicality, as well as self-consciousness and body image came out strongly in Cortis' (2009) study. The women highlighted the importance of culturally appropriate sporting spaces, greater consideration to privacy as well as a culturally appropriate dress code that

did not conflict with their religious beliefs and cultural values. Muslim and conservative women from Hindu and Christian faiths emphasized the importance of modesty and flexible dress requirements for women's participation in sports (Cortis 2009). In order to encourage more women and girls to practise sport, it becomes imperative to set up safe spaces and a supportive environment for them to participate in sports activities while giving adequate consideration to cultural and religious beliefs in multicultural contexts.

Following on from the introductory section on gender and sport, the chapter goes on to analyze the gender dimension of sports in the multicultural Mauritian context. The next section briefly discusses the pertinence of gender issues in Mauritius, before moving on to analyze the gendered aspect of sport in the country. There is a dearth of research and a lack of data on gender and sport in Mauritius. This chapter is in fact one of the first attempts made to analyze gender and sport in Mauritius from a social science perspective. As a result, it is largely an exploratory study which highlights the gendered inequalities in sports and calls for more extensive research in the area.

Gender Issues in Mauritius: A Brief Overview

Mauritius is a small island of 720 square miles, located in the south western Indian Ocean with a population of approximately 1.2 million inhabitants. It is one of the three small islands collectively called the Mascarene Islands. Mauritius lies on longitude 57 east of the Greenwich Meridian and its latitude ranges from 19 58` to 20 32` in the Southern Hemisphere, just north of the Tropic of Capricorn. The Island of Mauritius has experienced successive waves of colonizers from the Dutch to the French and finally the British. The French played a highly significant role in the history and development of Mauritius, initially as colonizers and then as a local dominating group. Mauritian society is a plural one with the population presently made up of different groups.[5] Class and ethnic divisions in the population of Mauritius are very pertinent.

Mauritius gained political independence in 1968 and became a Republic within the Commonwealth in 1992. Compared with most SADC countries, Mauritius combines a long tradition of democratic governance since independence, with a relatively high ranking on the gender development index. From the perspective of a small developing country endowed with limited resources, Mauritius has made commendable progress. Mauritius ranked 65th in the 2008 Human Development Report, with a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.802,[6] at 'high human development' level (UNDP 2008). However, the figure for the Gender Empowerment Measure[7] for Mauritius is relatively lower, at 0.509 in 2006,[8] indicating that Mauritian women still experience difficulties in acceding to positions of economic and political power.

The post-independence government introduced a comprehensive welfare package that included free education and health services, and a subsidized food scheme. The country also resisted pressures from the IMF and World Bank to scale down welfare benefits, in order to maintain social cohesion in its plural society. The maintenance of the welfare state led to a rise in literacy rates for girls and the country has almost eradicated illiteracy.[9] Mauritius is known for its sustained political stability and its ability to preserve basic democratic rights for every citizen in a society consisting of different religions, ethnic backgrounds and languages. There has also been reference to the 'Mauritian Miracle' with Mauritius being considered as a model of development.[10] Mauritius has maintained a democratic system of government and is now a Republic within the Commonwealth.

The Mauritian state was modelled on the British colonial system, which is characterized by male hegemony at all levels of its structures. At independence, Mauritius thus inherited a structure whose ideology was designed to systematically promote male privilege and power while consolidating women's subordination. The gendered quality of the state becomes clearly visible within its key institutions, such as cabinet, parliament, the judiciary and the police force, which remain male dominated. Moreover, gender-based subordination has been and, still is deeply ingrained in the consciousness of men and women in Mauritian society, and tends to be viewed as a natural corollary of the biological differences between them. Gender-based subordination is reinforced through religious beliefs, cultural practices, and educational systems that assign to women a lower status and less power. The spheres of politics, sports and religion are yet dominated and controlled by men. Moreover, the sexual division of labour remains strong in the country, with domestic and reproductive work still largely considered to be 'women's work'. For many Mauritian men, performing such work is considered demeaning to them and their manhood.

Women's accession to citizenship at the civic, political and social levels was a gradual process, often hindered by religious and cultural patriarchal norms and beliefs. Women's full civil citizenship was held back by religious and communal lobbies which delayed the process (Ramtohul 2008a). Women's organizations had to group together to form a strong voice to be able to counter the religious and communal lobbies that had denied them equal rights. Global factors, especially the UN and the international women's movement in the 1970s, provided critical support to the Mauritian women's movement. This was when the state became more receptive to the plight of women in Mauritius. The response of Mauritian postcolonial leadership to cumulative gender inequalities that were historically embedded in the stratified and pluralistic society was primarily a policy of breaking down formal barriers to women's access to legal, political, educational and economic institutions, assuming that this would bring about significant changes in women's participatory roles. Wide-ranging opportunities became avail-

able to women. This included improved access to health services and reproductive health facilities, state provision of free education at all levels, employment opportunities and legal amendments to eliminate sex discrimination.

The Constitution of Mauritius, which is the supreme law of the country, currently enshrines a philosophy of equality such that all citizens irrespective of sex, ethnic background, religion and creed are equal before the law. Discriminatory clauses have been amended such that men and women are now legally entitled to equal enjoyment of rights and freedoms, including opportunities and responsibilities on the social, economic, cultural and political spheres (Patten 2001). Mauritius is also a signatory of a number of international conventions on women including CEDAW, the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development. These international conventions act as a guide to NGOs and women's organizations on issues pertaining to women's rights and entitlements and in the process, indirectly safeguard women's rights in the country.

The Gender Dimension of Sports in Mauritius

The practice of sports in Mauritius takes place in a variety of settings ranging from the public designated sports grounds to private spaces such as sports clubs and homes. Competitive sports nevertheless mainly take place in public spaces. The Government of Mauritius has adopted a policy of encouraging the population to practise sport through its Ministry of Youth and Sports. The Sports Division of this Ministry aims to create awareness about the practice of sports by providing adequate means to all citizens across the country and it believes that sports can act as a catalyst to consolidate national unity in the country. It provides means and support to athletes and sports clubs, free public access to sports infrastructure and assists sports federations to promote and develop their disciplines. The Ministry currently works with 34 recognized federations, but the management boards of these federations remain very masculine. In 2003 for instance, there were only 3 women presidents of sports federations and 2 women vice presidents. In an article on the top 16 sports federations in the country, the December 2009 press features only one sports federation which is presided over by a woman, namely the Mauritian Federation of Swimming presided over by Doreen Tiborcz (*Weekend* 27.12.09). This state of affairs clearly highlights the male domination of decision-making instances of Mauritian sports federations which, according to Hall (1996) and Hargreaves (1994), would affect Mauritian women's opportunities in sport as sport policies may be constructed without awareness of structural gender inequalities.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports unfortunately does not compile any gender disaggregated statistics on participation in competitive sport. As such, it becomes difficult to carry out a gender analysis of access to and the practice of competi-

tive sport in Mauritius. To undertake this task, I wrote to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, requesting information on men's and women's participation in sports and gender disaggregated statistics on participation in different sports disciplines. My request was forwarded to the office of Mr Ram Lollchand, who is a senior officer at the Ministry. I then contacted Mr Lollchand and was given a date for an interview –12th October 2009. I enquired on the state of affairs concerning men's and women's participation in the different competitive sports disciplines, statistics on men's and women's participation in competitive sports, the presence of the different ethnic groups in competitive sports and the leadership of sports federations. Given the absence of any published data on these issues, the interview was a major source of information on these important issues.

Another source of data on this pertinent topic was a 2003 report of the Ministry of Youth and Sports on women's participation in sports. Although this report was not very detailed, it nonetheless provided an overall picture of women's participation in sport in Mauritius. More recent reports with similar focus were not available. The press was also a source of data, but I was aware of the fact that media reports of sports are highly male biased, with the primary focus being on male athletes. Although the names and pictures of some women athletes and champions do appear occasionally, such occurrences are rather rare when compared to the coverage given to male athletes. Women's participation in the male dominated sport, football, is rarely covered by the media. As a feminist researcher, I have always found the sports sections of the Mauritius newspapers very alienating and disempowering.

In terms of women's participation in competitive sports, Mauritius does not differ from the rest of the world as women's presence in sport is still at minority level. The Ministry of Youth and Sports provided the following data on the number of male and female licensed practitioners in a few key sports disciplines in Mauritius.

Number of Licensed Sport Practitioners in Different Disciplines[11]

Discipline	Male	Female
Football	11,000	325
Volleyball	360	96
Basketball	240	84
Athletics	800	175
Badminton	**300**	**150**

The above data highlights women's marginal presence as competitive sports participants at national level. This area remains highly male dominated till date. In terms of the promotion of sports among women and girls, this task is undertaken by the following official bodies: the Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin (which is a department in the Ministry of Youth and Sports), the Ministry of Women's Rights, Family and Children and the Women's Commission of the Mauritian National Olympic Committee. These organizations provide support and services to women in the domain of sport at different levels. The Women's Commission of the Mauritian National Olympic Committee for instance, provides support to women athletes, especially in terms of motivating workshops for these women. In 2003, it organized a residential seminar for women sports practitioners on the following theme – 'Girls' and Women's Empowerment in Sports'. It organises leisure activities and fun days for these women as well. The Ministry of Women's Rights, Family and Children on the other hand, carries out sensitization campaigns on the importance and benefits of sports and exercise for women and sponsors aerobic and Yoga sessions in its Women's Centres. The target group is women who participate in the activities organized by the Women's Centres of the Ministry of Women's Rights, who are primarily housewives. The emphasis here is mainly on women's health and not so much on the practice of competitive sports.

At the level of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin (CNSF) which was set up in October 1992, seeks to promote sports among women by encouraging women to practise sports to maintain good health. The Commission also focuses on developing specific physical training programmes and policies based on the needs of women. Another focal objective of the CNSF is to design structures aimed at increasing women and girls' participation in sport, leisure as well as recreational physical activities. At first glance, the CNSF appears to be the main organization with the mission and objective to encourage women's participation in sport at all levels, which could eventually undo some of the male bias in Mauritian sport. Yet, the main activities of this Commission so far has been the organization of aerobic, yoga, swimming and aqua gym classes for women, and according to Mr Lollchand, housewives have been the main beneficiaries of these activities, given the timings at which activities were organized. He states, with regard to the CNSF 'I do not believe that this Commission has attained its set objectives.'[12] The CNSF can direct young women who are interested in practising competitive sports to the relevant sports federations, but the organization in itself has no programme, plan or strategy to recruit and train young women in different disciplines. Apart from activities such as swimming classes in the government facilities and aerobic courses, the rest of the activities of the CNSF take place on an ad *hoc* basis. For instance, it

organizes recreational and sports days, but there is no long term regular activity in this respect.[13] A key problem in this context that Mr Lollchand highlighted is the fact that members of the CNSF are nominated by the government of the day and as such, it is largely a political body. This issue is discussed in the press as well, which states that the positions in this sports body have been created for political agents to be remunerated (*Weekend* 03.01.10). Moreover, when government changes following elections, the board members are also changed by the new regime. The CNSF therefore does not have any real sport affinity or affiliation since its members very rarely come from sports backgrounds who could have served as role models to younger women.[14] Most often they have very little interest in competitive sports themselves. In an article on the output of sports bodies at the end of the year 2009, the press questions the work of the Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin (*Weekend* 03.01.10). In fact, the article reports that for more than two years, this organization and its president, Maryanne Joyjob, have not produced any results or outcome in the sports domain. The Commission Nationale du Sport Féminin is actually described as the least active state sponsored sports organization in the country and the press questions the allocation of government funds to this body especially since it is not functioning efficiently and has not produced any concrete results. I tried to contact the CNSF for clarifications on these issues, but without success as most of the time, nobody answered the phone at the office of the organization.

The Ministry of Youth and Sports has been working towards getting more women sports trainers. Over the past 10 years, this Ministry has been providing training courses to individuals wishing to work as trainers in sporting disciplines. This is a one-year training course, following which a person becomes a qualified trainer or sports instructor. At this level, according to Mr Lollchand, the Ministry tries to ensure that at least 10 per cent of the trainees are women. It thus has an unofficial quota system geared towards making space for more women to become sports trainers. Many of these trainers work in schools as physical education teachers, others train the young athletes in sports federations and a few are employed by the Ministry as coaches. Even at the level of training of leaders of sports groups, the Ministry tries to ensure a minimum of 10 percent female presence. The operation of this quota remains unofficial and in principle as the Sports Act does not provide for quotas or reserved seats for women as directors of sports federations. Hence, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, through its unofficial quota system, has been trying to increase the visibility and presence of women in the domain of sports.

Another pertinent factor affecting women's participation in sport in Mauritius is the conservative culture which forges dominant notions of respective femininity and women's and girls' restricted access to public spaces where sports activities

most often take place. At the level of secondary schools for instance, among students from the lower classes of ages 12 to 15, there is a relatively good participation of girls in sport.[15] However, among the higher classes aged 15 to 18, the Mauritius Schools Sports Association[16] observes a significant decline in teenage girls' participation in sports, when compared to that of teenage boys.[17] Reports of the Ministry of Youth and Sports on the promotion of women's participation in youth and sports activities (Ernest 2003; Cadressen 2003) highlight gendered obstacles to women and girls' participation in sports. These include conservative norms of respective femininity which limit women's and girls' freedom and access to public spaces as well as strict parental control on girls' extra-curricular activities. Moreover, girls also reported feeling uncomfortable in male dominated public spaces such as sports grounds and youth camps. Girls' time is also taken up by domestic tasks in the home, for instance taking care of younger siblings and general household chores. Boys' time however, is not taken up by these tasks and as such, the gender division of labour in Mauritius limits the time girls can attribute to sport. At this level therefore, there is a need to sensitize parents on the importance of girls' practice of sport. It is also important for special consideration to be given to the conditions of access to public sports grounds and if necessary, to set up female public spaces, where girls could feel more comfortable and parents reassured of their safety.

In the multicultural Mauritian society, the practice of competitive sports also has an ethnic bias where the majority of national athletes, both male and female, come from the Creole[18] section of the population. There is a concentration of Creole female athletes in high level sports.[19] Very few Hindu and Muslim teenage girls would practise sports in public spaces. This is an issue that warrants further research. The issue of dress code in sports and need for consideration of cultural norms and specificities with regard to boys' and girls' access to public sports facilities are issues that become pertinent in the Mauritian context. Apart from the ethnic, there is also a class bias regarding participation of competitive sports. In general, those who excel in sports are those young people who have not done well in their academic studies[20] and spend more time practising sports. There are some young people from upper class privileged backgrounds who train and excel in selective sports disciplines such as tennis, swimming, horse-riding and table-tennis. At this level, there is also an ethnic bias as most of these athletes from upper class backgrounds belong to Chinese and Franco-Mauritian ethnic groups. Hence, in Mauritian sports, gender and class interact with ethnicity in determining who participates in competitive sports as well as in which disciplines.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted some of the major gender dimensions of competitive sports in the Mauritian multicultural context, where women's presence has remained marginal. Although the country offers facilities for both boys and girls to practize sports and organizations that specifically focus on the promotion of women's and girls' participation in competitive as well as non-competitive sports, there is a strong gender bias at this level. Women and girls are still minority participants in sports, and the institutional mechanisms instituted to promote women's and girls' presence in sports are not functioning to optimal capacity. There is therefore a need for greater consideration of cultural norms and values when addressing the problem of girls' minimal participation in competitive sports. But most important is the need for in-depth research on the gender dimensions of sport in multicultural Mauritius before any concrete policy can be formulated. Research on women and girls' participation and interest in competitive as well as non competitive sports, which also considers cultural sensitivities and differences becomes necessary. An equitable participation of men and women in sports is important for Mauritius, to keep the population healthy and to promote the sporting careers of young men and women.

Notes

1. Howe, E., 1978, 'A Little too strenuous for Women', *Report of the 1st International Conference on Women and Sport.* (cited in Graydon, 1983).
2. Myers, C., 1978, 'Sport and Media Workshop: Report', *Report of the 1st International Conference on Women and Sport.* (cited in Graydon, 1983).
3. UN Resolution 58/5 adopted in November 2003.
4. Cahn, 1993, Krane, 2001 and Veri, 1999, – cited in Adams *et al.*, 2005.
5. Mauritian society is composed of four ethnic groups and four major religious groups, namely, the Franco-Mauritians and Creoles who are Catholic; the Indian community, Muslim and Hindu; and the small Chinese community, either Buddhist or Catholic.
6. http://hdrstats.undp.org/2008/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_MUS.html (accessed 13.03.09). The UNDP classifies countries having a HDI score of 0.800 and above as being at 'high human development' level whereas those having scores ranging from 0.500 to 0.799 are at 'medium human development' level.
7. The gender empowerment measure (GEM) reveals whether women take an active part in economic and political life. It tracks the share of seats in parliament held by women; of female legislators, senior officials and managers; and of female professional and technical workers- and the gender disparity in earned income, reflecting economic independence. (UNDP, 2008).
8. http://hdrstats.undp.org/2008/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_MUS.html (accessed 13.03.09).
9. According to the 2000 census, the literacy rate of the population aged 12 and above was 88.7% for men and 81.5% for women (EISA: http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/mau2.htm - accessed in July 2006).

10. Brautigam, 1999a, 1999b; Alladin., 1993.
11. Source: Ministry of Youth and Sports – 2009 figures. These are not published statistics, but were taken from the registers and files at the ministry.
12. Interview with Mr Ram Lollchand, senior officer, Ministry of Youth and Sports (12.10.09).
13. Interview with Mr Ram Lollchand, senior officer, Ministry of Youth and Sports (12.10.09).
14. Interview with Mr Ram Lollchand, senior officer, Ministry of Youth and Sports (12.10.09).
15. Interview with Mr Ram Lollchand, senior officer, Ministry of Youth and Sports (12.10.09).
16. The Mauritius School Sports Association is a department of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. It organises inter-school sports competitions among students.
17. Interview with Mr Ram Lollchand, senior officer, Ministry of Youth and Sports (12.10.09).
18. Creoles are descendants of the former slaves of African origin.
19. Interview with Mr Ram Lollchand, senior officer, Ministry of Youth and Sports (12.10.09).
20. Interview with Mr Ram Lollchand, senior officer, Ministry of Youth and Sports (12.10.09).

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8

Challenging Gender Stereotypes: A Case Study of Three South African Soccer Players

Sharon Groenmeyer

Introduction

In the period leading to the first democratic elections in 1994, a progressively redistributionist developmental framework, the *R*econstruction and Development Programme (RDP), was adopted. This framework set out the basic principles and policies that the new democratic government was to pursue in addressing the multiple legacies of apartheid. In the words of former President Nelson Mandela, the RDP represented 'a programme of government and developmental framework that is coherent, viable and has widespread support. It is a product of consultation, debate and reflection on what we need and what is possible' (RDP cited in McKinley 2009). As applied to Sport and Recreation, the RDP set out, in clear terms, both the apartheid inheritance as well as what needed to be done to ensure transformation and redress:

> One of the cruellest legacies of apartheid is its distortion of sport and recreation in our society, the enforced segregation of these activities and the gross neglect of providing facilities for the majority of South Africa's people. This has denied millions of people and particularly our youth the right to a normal and healthy life. It is important to ensure that sporting and recreational facilities are available to all South African communities…This cannot be left entirely in the hands of individual sporting codes or local communities…Sport and recreation should cut across all developmental programmes and be accessible and affordable for all South Africans…Particular attention must be paid to the provision of facilities at schools and in communities where there are large concentrations of unemployed youth. In developing such policies it should be recognized that sport is played at different levels of competence and that there are different specific needs at different levels (RDP cited in McKinley 2009).

In the post-apartheid period, any discussion of sport and national identity and who benefits has to contend with the way the state has attempted to redress past inequalities, especially how it has approached racial redress (Desai 2009:290). First, the participation of women in male-dominated sport is a consequence of progressive legislation which creates a context for inclusionary citizenship when both sexes are able to learn skills and techniques from each other. In reality, national sport leaders prioritized racial integration of big-time men's sports, such as rugby and cricket and the hosting of mega global sports events over mainstreaming gender equity in sport (Pelak 2009:112). Second, soccer (always popular), became the people's game and *de facto* national sport with women's participation being pivotal to pushing at the boundaries to create this space at community level. Racial redress also gave substance to the Decent Work Agenda[1] for women entering sporting codes as a form of employment similar to those of their male counterparts. Therefore, the mainstreaming of gender equality of sport into the Decent Work Agenda has the potential to bring about attitudinal changes that contribute towards the socio-economic development of entire communities. When certain contact sports like soccer has both a male and female league, it is important to encourage the community to value the team spirit it generates and to view women as equally skilled to play the sport. Moreover, if there is a monetary reward for the team who wins the league, then women should earn wages equal to their male counterparts. Development therefore, will take place at an individual as well as at community level.

Sport offers alternative avenues for women and girls to participate in their communities by promoting freedom of expression, interpersonal networks and the expansion of opportunities for education as well as the development of a range of essential life skills including community communication, leadership, teamwork and negotiation (Women 2000 and Beyond 2007:3). Soccer, hockey, netball and softball are the popular sporting codes in working class communities and children can often be seen playing on fields or in the neighbourhood streets. Studies conducted by the United Nations support the benefits of physical activity for women in the light of its capacity to prevent a myriad of non-communicable diseases which account for over 60 per cent of global deaths, 66 per cent of which occur in developing countries (Women 2000 and Beyond 2007:2). Participation in sporting activities for older women[2] reduces cardiovascular diseases which account for 1/3 of deaths among women globally and half the number of deaths of women older than 50 in developing countries (Women 2000 and Beyond 2007:2). Participation in sport facilitates good mental health for women of all ages, because it promotes psychological well-being by building self esteem, confidence and social integration as well as facilitating the reduction of stress, anxiety and loneliness.

Participation in sport is defined as a human right by the United Nations and has the potential to contribute towards achieving certain of the Millennium Development Goals in South Africa, among which the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger by creating work opportunities (Goal 1) and the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women (Goal 3) are of utmost importance when addressing issues of development. This is because the participation of women and girls in sport challenges gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices and is often used as a method to promote equality and empowerment in society. A review of the literature demonstrates that women's participation provides opportunities and benefits for women and girls to create a critical mass who are able to shape societal attitudes towards women as leaders and decision-makers (Women 2000 and Beyond 2007:3; ILO, 2003). Women's increasing participation in certain sporting codes creates alternative norms, values, knowledge, capabilities and experiences for those of their male counterparts. Often women's participation diversifies skills, expanding the talent base in areas such as management, coaching and sport journalism (Women 2000 and Beyond 2007:3). Moreover, through their participation in sport, women and girls are granted access to public spaces and a sense of ownership over their bodies. This overt shifting of boundaries into the public sphere increases the self-esteem of women and girls who in turn make better choices about their lives. Sport becomes a channel for informing girls and women about their reproductive and other health issues that may conventionally have remained confined to the private sphere.

Sport is now recognized by the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force and the International Labour Organization as a tool for fostering social inclusion and for the development of peace (Report of the First ILO Workshop on Sport for Development 2003). The 2010 World Cup in South Africa is one such large event and it is considered an appropriate vehicle with which to enhance the transformation in sport as a fundamental concept for promoting equality and the rights of citizenship (Desai 2008:292). South Africa is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women which binds 'state(s) parties on the elimination of discrimination against women and girls in the area of sports and physical education' (Women 2000 and Beyond 2007:6). Articles 10 and 13 respectively call on states to take appropriate measures to ensure that women have equal rights to men in the field of education and other areas of economic and social life (Women 2000 and Beyond 2007:6). The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development Protocol proposes a 50 per cent representation of women, especially in decision-making positions, by 2015 within the region and this campaign for the mainstreaming of gender in all institutions is actively promoted in South Africa. The concept of equality is reinforced in the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights. In President Mandela's inauguration speech, he spelt out his govern-

ment's commitment to non-racism, non-sexism and equality for all in our country in a clear and unambiguous manner when he stated that:

> 'Freedom cannot be achieved unless the women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression which forms part of our proud history' (President Nelson Mandela 1994).

Legislation such as The Employment Equity Act; The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (PEPUDA) and The Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act were promulgated to support gender equality. Consequently, gender and development (GAD) approaches promote gender mainstreaming in all facets of society by prioritizing women's empowerment in order to address the imbalances of the past, especially for black women and the disabled. This approach formed part of the broadly and progressively redistributionist developmental framework of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) that set out the basic principles and policies that the new democratic government was to pursue in addressing the multiple legacies of apartheid.

The political will to build a society free of racial and gender discrimination informed the formulation of the National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (2000) which is the policy framework which outlines South Africa's vision for gender equality and how it intends to realise this ideal (National Gender Policy Framework (http://www.doh.gov.za/docs/policy/gender.pdf/ – accessed 20 December 2009). The National Gender Policy Framework adopts a development approach that prioritizes the meeting of basic needs because of the high levels of inequality of women in South Africa, especially black women. Basic needs are complementary to women's striving to meet practical needs through empowerment. Whereas, the gender and development approach focuses on strategic needs which ultimately translate into gender equality. (National Gender Policy Framework (http://www.doh.gov.za/docs/policy/gender.pdf/ accessed 20 December 2009).

Methodology

The chapter draws on interviews with three women soccer players who have had four decades of experience between them to explore the opportunities and challenges women confront when embarking on a career path in a male dominated sport and how women soccer players in amateur leagues challenge gender stereotypes. These interviews took place between August and September 2009.[3]

Because of my unfamiliarity with the amateur league system, I approached a soccer coach who suggested I interviewed Lebo who is a member of the 'Chosen Few' soccer team. This interview provided insights into the challenges facing gay women wishing to play in the Gauteng league. Lebo recommended that I

interview members of the amateur leagues in Gauteng. She introduced me to a soccer player who suggested that I should meet Liezl whom I interviewed to understand the league system and her role as an amateur soccer player. In Cape Town, a family friend introduced me to Bianca who continues to play for Banyana Banyana.

The interview schedule included the following open-ended questions:

- Why do women play amateur soccer?
- Do talented women soccer players choose to play amateur soccer?
- Are women soccer players able to participate in professional soccer?
- What are the training opportunities?
- What are the administrators (both male and female) perceptions of women soccer players?
- Are there adequate funding sources and career opportunities?
- What are societal perceptions of women's participation in male dominated sports?
- What are the respondent's family perceptions of their role in male dominated sports?
- Do respondents' families support their participation in soccer?

Responses to the questions were analyzed and disaggregated into themes. To complete the process, the responses were compartmentalized to establish similarities and dissimilarities of opinions.

The Historical Role of Women in Soccer in South Africa

As noted earlier, soccer has arguably been the 'people's sport' and the *de facto* national game for the black population in South Africa. South African soccer teams have had women supporters, many of whom were famous for their fierce loyalty and inspirational singing and cheerleading at matches. Soccer is the most popular sport within the working class communities in South Africa. According to Alegi (2004:148), playing and watching soccer in cities, towns and mining compounds engendered prolonged popular struggles largely because African sport was bound up with the pursuit of urban racial segregation in the twentieth century. One of the outstanding features of the supporters' clubs was the active participation of increasing numbers of women. Female organizers and actors filled simultaneously progressive and conservative roles. Fan groups represented a social space where black women excluded from sporting activities could exercise informal power in a deeply patriarchal society. In l961, the Berea Soccer executive had a female-dominated executive board and, together with about 30 Indian women supporters, they travelled with the team to Johannesburg. Support was not confined to Indian women. African women were also directly

involved in soccer. Young female fans of Orlando Pirates FC, dressed in black and white uniforms, were popular figures at the matches. Betty Nkosi and Edith Moipone Moorosi influenced the internal affairs of Pirates FC to such a considerable extent by the late l960s that men in the club referred to them disparagingly as an 'apron government' implying that these women were able to subvert the collective decisions made by the club executive committee (Maguire l991 cited in Alegi 2004:l28). As the apartheid regime spread its tentacles, sport became an alternative form for community involvement in open defiance of legislation banning large meetings. In 1982, the first South African Council on Sport festival was held in Cape Town in order to demonstrate that different sporting codes were able to break the oppressive apartheid mindset by encouraging black[4] women, men and children to utilize their leisure time in an expression of freedom of association using the slogan 'no normal sport in an abnormal society'. These were some of the sporting events that attempted to forge unity amongst oppressed people under apartheid, referred to earlier by former President Nelson in the preface of the Reconstruction and Development Document.

Since l994, opportunities have opened up for career development and the profiling of men's soccer in South Africa. The symbolic use of sport to dismantle apartheid and the discourse of non-racialism to unify the nation ignored the need for gender transformation. Initially it was white women who formed soccer teams, but as the teams progressively became more non-racial, the white women preferred to play in-door 'Social corporate six a side' and black women played outdoor soccer (Pelak 2009). The newly formed and unified mother body of South African soccer gained membership to both the continental (Confederation of African Football — CAF) and global (Federation of International Football Associations — FIFA) governing bodies of soccer (McKinley 2009). Over the next several years, South Africa's various national teams (from the senior men's side – Bafana Bafana – and senior women's side – Banyana Banyana, down to the under-17 boys' team) hosted a number of international games and participated in the various CAF and FIFA competitions (McKinley 2009). The country's first-ever, fully fledged soccer business corporation for professional clubs (led by South Africa's biggest and most popular clubs at the time, Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs), the Premier Soccer League (PSL), was formed. Men who recognized lucrative business prospects by gaining a foothold in the soccer industry, seized control by setting up most of the first women's teams (Hilton-Smith[5] cited in Naidoo 2007:63). According to Hilton-Smith, there was an absence of a professional women's league, and many men who failed in men's soccer turned to the women's game 'to try their luck', but the men lacked the skills and experience necessary to coach and manage women players. More often than not, they were prone to sexist practices (Naidoo 2007:63). Those responsible for developing women's soccer had no intrinsic interest in doing so and did not appear commit-

ted to the players' wellbeing. Irrespective of their talent, women soccer players struggled against systematic exclusion from a sport which is considered a male preserve. In order to compete, they had to negotiate a host of prejudices that define gender roles in society and the soccer world. Pelak confirms this viewpoint when she states that in spite of these legislative intentions towards building a soccer community, sexism in sport continues to be conceptualized by male national sport administrators as of secondary importance to racial integration (Pelak 2009:112).

This process coincided with the switch in government development policy to the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macroeconomic framework, and following the neoliberal economic advice of the various international financial institutions and developed country governments, national grants and subsidies to local municipalities and city councils were drastically decreased (McKinley 2009). What this meant in practical terms was that public resources (both human and material) available at the local level for sports such as school and community soccer were virtually wiped off the map. In other words, the people's sport was being effectively privatized. (McKinley 2009). Consequently, women's soccer remained 'an afterthought', complains Hilton Smith (cited in Naidoo 2007:64). Research indicates that although women have exposure to male-dominated sport, women administrators' ability to make decisions is often confined to local levels rather than international levels. This has negative outcomes for women's participation which may be confined to amateur rankings and/or the consequent gender segregation of particular sporting codes. This may explain why the current function of women in soccer still continues to be largely one of a supportive role. In a recent newspaper interview, four women described their jobs in the world of soccer. These jobs ranged from events and marketing, communications and reception for three professional soccer teams. In these supportive roles, the women place soccer coaches at certain schools and shelters to train under-privileged children. Two of the women have diplomas in Information Technology and Public Relations and a large part of their tasks involve 'booking flights, hotels and match venues; handling calls from fans, handling communication with the media and ensuring that the team sheets are in order on match day' (Ndibi K and Bam B: August 2009). According to Naidoo (2007:62) reports on women's soccer are relegated to fillers on sports' pages of newspapers and magazines.

Sport as a Catalyst for Challenging Gender Stereotypes

Liezl Windvogel,[6] a slim-built woman passionate about the game of soccer she has been playing for different amateur league teams since she was 16 years old. For the past 15 years, she has played recreational soccer for the 'Social Corporate 6 a Side' and amateur league soccer. Some of the teams include Mamelodi

Sundowns FC and Panorama Ladies[7] team based in Johannesburg. As she informed me 'I don't have to act like a boy because I play with style and skill'.[8] Her family is very supportive of her and her mother watches her games. As a young girl, she played in the street with her male playmates. Her family continues to encourage her to play by asking how her team has fared in the league. In response to my question of whether soccer is her choice of career she stated 'not in South Africa because women players must fight for recognition. Often one's potential is ignored and ladies lose interest'.[9]

Bianca Zeeman[10] is a member of the Banyana Banyana national team. She grew up with three brothers and was considered a 'tomboy'. She started playing soccer at high school. As a mother of a 15-month old daughter, her husband and family encourage her to excel at sport. She has a good support system for her daughter at her disposal when she participates in training camps. In 2000, she toured with the national team and plans to return after an injury layoff. Before playing professional soccer, she played for Spurs Women's Soccer Club, a local Cape Town team. At the time, Sasol Company[11] sponsored the league but women soccer players received no prize money. As part of the national team, she considered herself privileged to represent her country in regional and international soccer tournaments. She considers the Banyana Banyana team to be a catalyst for challenging gender stereotypes. As a woman soccer player, she challenges and dispels misconceptions about women's capabilities and perceives herself to be a positive role model for younger women. As a member of the Banyana Banyana team, she has the advantage of playing many international friendly games to improve her soccer techniques and to extend her social networks with women facing similar discriminatory practices. For her, gender-based discrimination in sport mirrors the traditional gender inequalities within society. Liezl concurs because 'the lack of development opportunities for women is experienced as discriminatory and soccer officials make us feel as if we are there on sufferance'.[12] Yet, Liezl and her team mates play with passion and pride of place in this male-dominated sport, whereas she believes the men play for financial rewards.

Unlike the male professional leagues, women soccer teams play interprovincial tournaments and 'play offs' where talent scouts and the Banyana Banyana coach and selectors are present to choose a squad from the top clubs in South Africa. When women are chosen for the national team, the camp takes place one week before the tour. Because there is a small stipend[13] as a training allowance, women find they have to weigh up their options and, invariably, they choose to remain in regularly paid employment. Soccer trials do not necessarily guarantee a place in the national team and rather than risk their paid employment, women opt out of the training camps. Bianca agrees with Liezl that women soccer players cannot earn a living from the games because unlike the men's professional soccer league, sponsors do not offer women similar prize money.[14] The female

squad of 50 players receive a daily allowance while in training camp. As a government employee, Bianca is able to take sporting leave in addition to annual leave. Within one week, a player has to prove her physical and psychological well-being at the training camp. Bianca considered one week sufficient time to become part of a team because 'these are star players' who are physically fit. While these women soccer players train rigorously they do not consider the game as a form of employment. The 'Banyana Banyana players receive a daily allowance of R500 per match and receive R5000 each if they win a match, R2 500 if they draw and nothing if they lose' (Pelak 2005; Naidoo 2007; Zeeman 2009).[15] In contrast, Bafana Bafana players receive R40 000 for a win and R20 000 for a draw. Therefore, stereotypical attitudes towards the value of women's sport also fuel inequality in wages, conditions of employment and career development. Many women players are unemployed between matches because participation in the Banyana Banyana team places huge demands on their time and only those who are self-employed or have alternative forms of employment are able to sustain themselves between match call-ups.

Talent scouts observe women players at the different league games as potential players for the national soccer trials. These events have limited media exposure. Teams get exposure for selection when they go for 'play-offs' and the sport features as part-time or recreation for the majority of women because the lack of support infrastructure makes it impossible to consider it a career. Television coverage of the 'play-offs' is provided on certain satellite television channels. Lebo, a tall slim woman who has played soccer since she was 12 years old does not consider soccer a career because she 'feels women are not given similar opportunities as their male players'.[16] Lebo's mother never gets to watch her daughter's games on television because she does not have access to satellite television. Lebo informed me that 'popular television soap operas are rescheduled when Kaiser Chiefs FC play an important match'. Women soccer teams do not enjoy similar privileges'.[17] Lebo plays social soccer for 'The Chosen Few', a soccer club for lesbian women. In 2007, she was chosen to play in the Gay Games held in London in the United Kingdom. Lebo established a team for gay women, encouraging diversity and alternative approaches to sexuality. In her opinion, the lack of media coverage fuels negative images for women's participation and reinforces gender segregation of particular sporting codes.

Unintended Consequences for Equality in Soccer

Lebo also plays left wing position for the Titan Ladies Soccer Club in Rustenburg (her home town), in the North West Province. Coaching sessions are held every afternoon of the week. During soccer season, the team meets every Friday evening to discuss the next day's match. According to Lebo, it's an opportunity for the coach to advise, guide and strategise on how to win the next match'.[18] She is keen

to coach young school girls and feels that learning that skill would expand her talent base in areas such as management, coaching and sport journalism (Women 2000 and Beyond 2007:3; Lebo Zulu 2009). Lebo feels that her participation is labelled as 'being manly or unfeminine' and the prevailing code of silence results in fears of homophobia. It is evident that women who challenge the masculine construction of soccer face formidable challenges to dominant gender structures and exclusionary practises (Pelak 2009:99). Hilton-Smith recalled events when the establishment of the early teams, led by men, resulted in sexual harassment and abuse of players by many male coaches and managers (Hilton-Smith cited in Naidoo 2007:63). Hilton-Smith and a colleague tabled the issue at the Pickard Commission set up by the Minister of Sport in l996 'to look into the problems facing the administration of soccer' (Hilton-Smith cited in Naidoo 2007:63). The Pickard Commission recommended interventions in order to address the problems of sexual harassment, but the soccer players who had personally encountered harassment were not counselled.[19] After intense public negotiations, it was decided to change the relationship between women's soccer and SAFA. Women's soccer became a sub-committee of SAFA which allowed the male-led administrators total control over and the fiscal responsibility of women's soccer (Pelak 2009:115)

Women players who dared to speak out risked their soccer careers and in the case of two popular players the consequences were manifested in a swift end to their careers. In addition, the open and public sexual orientation of the women posed further obstacles to the independent advancement of their careers (Naidoo 2007:64). Some of the women believed that their sexual orientation prevented them from gaining contracts to coach professionally. Thus, playing a male sport involves a constant negotiation of women's identities due to societal perceptions of them as women. Soccer for Lebo is the pride of demonstrating the skill and tactics of the game. This feeds her commitment as a positive role model for young girls and boys eager to learn team sports. This is not an opinion shared by the executive of the South African Football Association (SAFA). In 2005, Ria Ledwaba[20] publicly declared that the Banyana Banyana team needed to act like ladies to secure more sponsorship. She recommended that the team take part in workshops which teach ladies' etiquette, as well as offered less shapely soccer kit to wear (Naidoo 2007:64). Eudy Simelane, a former Banyana Banyana soccer player and lesbian activist was robbed, gang-raped and murdered as a symbol of corrective rape.[21] (http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8270417.stm accessed 8 October 2009). According to Liezl and Lebo, societal perceptions of how feminine or masculine roles are constructed must be transformed. Legislation encourages women to be equal to their male counterparts but patriarchal institutions such as SAFA oppose this process of democratization. Moreover, the sexual orientation and appearance of the team became a 'scapegoat' for SAFA's poor management

and leadership of the team and their inability to secure sponsorships. According to Bianca, hockey and softball have a larger number of lesbians in the teams, yet they do not suffer the same discriminatory practices as their female counterparts in soccer.[22] The interviewees whose views are expressed in this chapter have different sexual preferences and believe that they have the democratic right to choose their sexual identities. SAFA's patriarchal attitudes and preferential treatment to the men's team, Bafana Bafana, reinforces stereotypes and obfuscates their poor leadership, management and discrimination suffered by women players.

Conclusion

While these young women break stereotypes and challenge their male counterparts and officials to equal opportunity, Lebo and Liezl are not optimistic that women soccer teams will feature as curtain raisers at the 2010 World Cup matches because they were completely ignored at the recent Confederation Cup of Nations hosted in Johannesburg. Bianca is of a different viewpoint. She opines that these are male competitions that do not feature women soccer teams. According to her, women soccer players have qualified for the Women's World Cup in 2011 where there will be live media coverage similar to the Men's Professional Soccer League. Bianca believes SAFA needs to promote women's soccer by ensuring adequate financial resources and leadership. Kylie-Ann Louw, the Banyana Banyana midfielder now plays for Stephen F Austin State University (SFS) Texas, United States of America. The college soccer league has 320 women's teams representing universities in the First Division (*Star,* August 2009). More senior women players will leave South Africa to join international women's soccer teams for lucrative financial rewards. Moreover, the lack of local opportunities encourages players to make individualist choices to further their own careers and sell their soccer skills to the highest bidder because women have limited access and experience of soccer and are dependent on male coaches' expertise and resources. Despite, men's rhetoric about dismantling male dominance in women's soccer, the lack of women leadership roles marginalizes women within the institutional structures.

According to Hilton-Smith, women's soccer has, for the first time, gained financial support from two sponsors, namely Absa Bank and Sasol (*Hilton,* 14 August 2009). This is the first sponsorship after five years of struggling to play competitive international games. Positing a different viewpoint, Hilton-Smith believes that 'those selected were often not in top form because of a lack of game time.' (*Hilton,* 14 August 2009). Moreover, the national technical team did not travel around the country in search of talent because there were no tournaments (*Hilton,* 14 August 2009). Bianca confirms that greater sponsorship will assist to professionalize the game because players will be able to participate in

clinics, receive professional coaching and play competitively. For her, these are indicators that women's soccer is being taken seriously and that women are being considered on an equal footing to their male counterparts. Bianca who is waiting for a call-up for a soccer clinic believes that the Banyana Banyana team is receiving recognition for their soccer skill and technique. Another positive indicator is the Woman Player of the Year Award at the Confederation of African Football (CAF) scooped by Noko Alice Matlou, held in Lagos-Nigeria in February 2009 .(http://gsport.co.za accessed 7 October 2009). Matlou's success is a result of SAFA embarking on programmes that accelerated the development of women's football in the country. The team had opportunities to set up camps in Germany and Holland and they played competitive teams from Sweden and the African continent, hence the positive results in team performance', says Raymond Hack, the President of SAFA (http://www.gsport.co.za/noko-crowned-no-1-in-africa.html. accessed 7 October 2009). Hilton-Smith is equally enthusiastic about Banyana Banyana's success and the prospect of having greater sponsorship opens doors to build the sport. She believes there is a need for a school league for girls because this is an important stage where girls can be groomed from a young age (*Hilton* 14 August 2009).

Sponsorship and skilled players is one of the many missing pieces of the puzzle. There is also a need for political will to facilitate women's soccer in terms of equity, representivity and redress. Moreover, the political will to promote community level soccer rather than relying on private corporations to bankroll the game lies squarely at the door of government. Clearly, effective interventions require that policies and mechanisms be put in place to address the challenges facing women soccer players in the national team. Moreover, there is a need to recognize that women soccer players require career opportunities which includes the development of a career path. These interventions must be consistent through internal policy coherence and aligned with medium- and long-term objectives to those of their male counterparts. These challenges should be part of an ongoing debate in fora where male and female professional players, their representatives and government decision makers meet to discuss and negotiate the strengthening of both human and infrastructural aspects of the soccer sporting code.

Notes

1. Decent work constitutes four key pillars: employment opportunities, rights, protection and voice. Decent work is captured in four strategic objectives: fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards; employment and income opportunities; social protection and social security; and social dialogue and tripartism. These objectives hold for all workers, women and men, in both formal and informal economies; in wage employment or working on their own account; in the fields, factories and offices; in their home or in the community. http://www.ilo.org/global/

About_the_ILO/Mainpillars/WhatisDecentWork/lang—en/index.htm accessed 10 October 2009.

2. Physical activity reduces the effects of osteoporosis which women have a higher risk of developing than men. Participation in physical activity aids in the prevention and/or treatment of other chronic and degenerative diseases associated with aging, such as type-2 diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, osteoporosis and cardiovascular abnormalities (Women 2007 and Beyond 2007:2).
3. Interviews with L. Zulu a gay woman interviewed on 5 August 2009 in Johannesburg; L.Windvogel a heterosexual woman on 13 August 2009 in Johannesburg and B Zeeman a heterosexual mother interviewed on 28 September 2009 in Cape Town.
4. Black connotes people who were classified as Coloured, Indian and African under the Apartheid regime.
5. Francis Hilton Smith is the manager of the Banyana Banyana team and the coach is male.
6. Liezl Windvogel is one of three women players interviewed. She holds fulltime employment at a call centre. She established a women's soccer club at high school. Interview conducted on 13 August 2009 in Johannesburg.
7. Women's soccer teams are organised into amateur leagues in each province. Each league has approximately 14 teams who play competitively.
8. Liezl Windvogel interviewed on 13 August 2009 in Johannesburg.
9. Liezl Windvogel interviewed on 13 August 2009 in Johannesburg.
10. Bianca Zeeman interviewed on 28 September 2009 in Cape Town.
11. Sasol Company is one of three sponsors. Supersport 14 (the TV channel) and Absa Bank are the other two sponsors.
12. Liezl Windvogel interviewed on 13 August 2009 in Johannesburg.
13 The stipend is R600 per day as per interview with Bianca Zeeman.
14. Bianca Zeeman interviewed on 28 September 2009 in Cape Town.
15. The author was unable to access the 2009 rates for stipends and prize money.
16. Lebo Zulu interviewed on 5 August 2009 in Johannesburg.
17. Lebo Zulu interviewed on 5 August 2009 in Johannesburg.
18. Lebo Zulu interviewed on 5 August 2009 in Johannesburg.
19. Pickard Commission recommended structures to counter sexual harassment, in addition to interventions such as the training of female coaches, and the partnering of female coaches with male managers and vice versa (Naidoo 2007:64).
20. Ria Ledwaba the then chairperson of SAFA 's Women 's Committee cited in Naidoo 2007.
21. Corrective rape is a form of gender based violence perpetrated by men who believe that sexual relations between a lesbian woman and heterosexual man will reverse the woman's sexual preference.
22. Bianca Zeeman interviewed on 28 September2009 in Cape Town.

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Ms Lebo Zulu interviewed on 5 August 2009 in Johannesburg.
Ms Liezl Windvogel interviewed on 13 August 2009 in Johannesburg.
Ms Bianca Zeeman interviewed on 28 September 2009 in Cape Town.

9

The Corporatization of Women's Football in South Africa: A Case Study of the Sasol Sponsorship and its Transformative Potential

Lucy Mills

> *One of the things that I strongly feel should be looked at is the reason why there is not so much sponsorship going into women's football and sport. And one of the areas that I would like explored is to look at the relationship between non-sponsorship of women's sport and African culture being male dominated and male solidarity… There might be a relation[ship] between male dominance and the lack of sponsorship. And if you start looking at it from that perspective, to look at a women's sports sponsorship… as far as I can remember, and I know most of the people in this industry, there are hardly any women that are sponsorship managers or marketing, or group corporate affairs managers, because that's where the decisions come from, so because of that, it might have an impact on when a decision is being made on sponsorship, who is making that decision* (SASOL Sponsorship Specialist, August 2009).

This chapter suggests the possibility of creating both a market niche for women's sport and gender equality through corporate and media involvement in women's sport. Corporate and media institutions have the potential to create a profitable market and fan-base by publicizing female teams and athletes, thereby encouraging wider female participation and spectatorship. Using Sasol's sponsorship of women's football in South Africa, I argue that women's sport has the potential to benefit greatly from the sport-business-media model. This model encompasses the integration of sports with global market forces such as corporate businesses and the media, an arrangement which is now intrinsic to the successes found in men's sport. With genuine corporate and media buy in, these institutions have the capacity to generate a niche market and popularity for women's football within the global economy. Oil company Sasol's sponsorship of South African women's football provides a unique example on the continent, as it indicates genuine

corporate buy-in that has been guided by what is needed to boost the sport, as specified by key stakeholders within women's football in South Africa. Increasing the visibility of female footballers has the potential to change perceptions, strengthen existing women's football, and encourage more girls to participate in sport and become part of an expanding fan base. A process of 'normalizing' women playing male sport would greatly contribute to neutralizing gender inequalities and lend to women realizing their full potential.

This chapter draws on my observations and experiences over the past two years as a football player and administrator for the University of Cape Town (UCT) women's team participating in three leagues: a local football association (LFA), a South African Football Association (SAFA) regional league, and the University Sport South Africa (USSA) league, both regionally and nationally. As well as playing, I am an avid spectator of women's football, following local league games, the SASOL National Championships and international women's football. My arguments and suggestions also derive from extensive research I have undertaken on football, development and gender issues in South Africa over the past year. My Masters research for the Development Studies programme within the Sociology Department of UCT focused on the impact of the World Cup and legacy initiatives on football development at grassroots level. Furthermore, two colleagues and I combined our areas of expertise to form a Research Collective, specialising in gender, sport and development. Our most recent research explored the daily challenges and barriers that female administrators, referees and coaches in Cape Town face while participating in and promoting football.

Women's Football in South Africa

The impacts of the apartheid legacy on the dynamics of sport are well documented. The absence of sports facilities in African schools, combined with poverty, transportation problems and patriarchal controls meant that girls and women were not significantly involved in sport during apartheid (Hargreaves 2000). Moreover the ending of apartheid saw an increase in the 'feminization of poverty' (Hargreaves 2000:26). Certainly 'gender inequalities and sexism have produced an overriding structure of control throughout South African society, which is exaggerated in sport' (Hargreaves 2000:28). Gender inequalities can be located in the way that sponsorship is heavily weighted in favour of men's sports, which in turn perpetuates discrimination (Hargreaves 2000). Research findings from a study conducted in Cape Town show that the main barriers to women participating in sport today are lack of finances to pay for transport, equipment and fields; lack of support from male-dominated institutions such as the South African Football Association (SAFA); and a widespread negative stereotype that females who play football are 'masculine' (Clark et al, n.d).

Despite the legacies of oppression, women's football in South Africa is undoubtedly gaining visibility. That growing numbers of women are now entering the historically male domain of football is increasingly being recognized as a challenge to historical colonial, apartheid and patriarchal relations (Pelak 2009). Women and girls in football can be considered agents of change and democratization in the way that they are 'escaping the trappings of daily domestic labour and dominant gender ideology and showing up at the soccer fields' (Pelak 2009: 116). In this light then, although there is a long way to go, women's football in South Africa has progressed enormously in the 16 years since political democracy and is contributing to a more gender equitable society.

Organized women's football in South Africa has existed over the past 40 years with white women comprising the majority of teams during the apartheid era. Since 1994, an unprecedented number of coloured and black women joined existing teams and by mid-1990s South African women's football had grown exponentially (Pelak 2006). Although there are no official statistics, Martha Saveedra estimates that there were around 50,000 female participants in 2003. Women's football first acquired sponsorship in 2001 when the South African banking and insurance company Sanlam partnered with the SAFA to fund the SAFA Sanlam National Women's League, comprising over 300 teams from all the SAFA regions at that time. Champions from each of the 9 provinces competed for the national title in the Sanlam Halala Cup tournament (Saavedra 2003). Sanlam's corporate investment of 15 million Rand over 3 years has paved the way for further corporate involvement in women's football as companies such as Vodacom, Nike and Cadbury began to sponsor various regional tournaments (Saavedra 2003). Nationally-based corporations also assisted with equipment and transportation costs and ABSA bank has invested in amateur women's football by funding leagues and apparel (Clark et al, n.d; Pelak 2006).

It has also been acknowledged that over the past decade, media involvement has played an important role – albeit negligible in comparison to men's football coverage – in engendering new football opportunities among South African women. For example, Ghana and Nigeria's performance at the women's World Cup events prompted black South African women to 'more easily dream about travelling and making money by playing the sport' (Pelak 2006). It is clear that global capital and the 'global-sport media nexus' have helped develop new opportunities and interests in women's football (Pelak 2006). Given the vast advancements in the post-apartheid era as a result of relatively small investments, if corporate and media institutions now commit seriously to women's football in South Africa, it could become one of the strongest sports on the continent. The following case study of the South African oil company Sasol's recent 4-year sponsorship deal, between 2009 and 2012, of the women's national team Banyana

Banyana and the national provincial premier league shows how this is the beginning of a genuine commitment to realizing this dream.

Corporate and Media Investment in Women's Football: Creating a Market Niche and Gender Equality

Male sport has significantly developed via its increasingly intrinsic relationship with corporate and media bodies, which has been conceptualized as the 'sport-media-business alliance' involving the 'tripartite model of sponsorship rights, exclusive broadcasting rights and merchandizing' (Horne and Manzenreiter 2006). Women's football has consistently struggled to gain as much attention, investment and exposure as the men's game, despite the increasing number of female players worldwide. To boost women's football, there have been efforts internationally to train up and build the capacity and skills of women in administrative, coaching and refereeing roles. The significance and the successes of this campaign are widely recognized. In 2007, there were 52 female International Referees in Africa as a result of FIFA's infrastructure and capacity building programmes (Saavedra 2007). One such referee is South African Deidre Mitchell who has refereed in various women's international competitions and is the first female to referee a South African men's premier league game (BBC 2007). According to South African national women's team manager, Fran Hilton-Smith, 'FIFA has a massive development project to develop women's football, especially coaches… there are about six of us who are FIFA instructors and… we go to countries that are not developed in women's football and coach coaches to be instructors to coach other coaches' (Interview, August 2009). Although this recruitment process must continue if we are to have women managing and envisaging the future of the women's game, it is simply not enough to have these women within football working in isolation from wider processes. With increasing female participation levels within the sport, women's football is carving out an expanding future at amateur level. This however would remain 'unthreatening to football authorities' and would do little to 'alter the essentially amateur nature of the female game' (Williams 2003). For women's football to project itself to another level, integration with globalizing forces is essential. There are a number of women's sports which have benefited from being incorporated into processes of globalization, such as tennis, athletics and golf. Although the gains and exposure experienced by women in these sports are rarely equal to those experienced by men, the developments have been enormous. Fans of these women's sports have been given opportunities to follow their favourite female athlete, access constant updates on their sporting progress via various media channels, and be consumers of merchandise and sports events. Where corporations and sponsors have envisaged economic opportunities in the backing of these sports played by women, there has been a

dramatic shift in the awareness and perceptions in society of women as athletes, and has accelerated developments within the sport.

Corporate and media institutions in the sports industry have sophisticated ways of creating global icons and images in diverse local settings as they are 'adept at shaping and using glocal sport practices, symbols and celebrities as conduits for realizing their global ambitions; ensuring their corporate footprints transcend the boundaries of nation-states… and… that serving a profitable global presence necessitates operating in the languages of the local' (Andrews and Ritzer 2007:34). This indicates that global market forces have the potential to create a profitable market from women's football through the establishment of local iconic teams and players. As sponsors use the emotional impact of sport to build and connect with consumers, there is the opportunity for them to target sophisticated marketing of female sport to women and girls and indeed male followers of women's sport (Santomier 2008). With genuine corporate and media buy in, these institutions have the capacity to generate a niche market and popularity for women's football within the global economy. There are already an escalating number of female football participants across the globe which constitutes an untapped fan-base market. Global actors thus have the potential to transform the male-dominated activities of watching and buying into sport.

Donna De Verona, Chairman of the 1999 USA Women's World Cup Local Organising Committee argues that 'it can never again be doubted that women soccer players can attract interest, fill stadiums or earn high television ratings' (De Verona 2003). One of the main reasons for the unprecedented success of the 1999 Women's World Cup, whereby 650,000 tickets in total were sold, was the marketing strategy employed. Verona recalls that the Organising Committee 'appreciated early that our core fan base was different from that of the men's World Cup and from professional soccer', hence, they marketed women's football to a mostly new audience (De Verona 2003). Another reason for its success globally was the commitment by ABC television network and Cable partners ESPN 1 and 2 to broadcast all 32 matches in over 70 countries, prompting further sponsorship by corporate investors such as *Sports Illustrated* magazine which helped generate even more interest in the tournament (De Verona 2003). Here is an evidence of the kind of untapped market out there that has the potential to be appealing to corporate and media investors. It also proves that the mainstream sports crowd do not only have to be the audience being targeted.

Sponsorship of women's football may indeed have to start as a corporate social responsibility component rather than a commercial investment, but as the Sasol sponsorship of women's football in South Africa will show, investment returns are anticipated as improvements, successes and exposure of the game materialize. Businesses can therefore contribute to normalizing women's involve-

ment in football in society which in turn is likely to encourage wider female involvement. Women's football may provide an indication of the ability of women to realize their potential (Hoffmann et al 2006).

Sasol's Corporate Social Responsibility

Sports sponsorship has become pivotal within the global marketing campaigns of many brands and is considered to be as important as traditional marketing strategies as it creates and develops brand equity (Santomier 2008). That Sasol is committed long-term to women's empowerment is likely to influence the perceptions of Sasol's brand and company image positively. Sasol acknowledges that their sponsorship of women's football in South Africa is different as it is a corporate social responsibility investment, therefore 'you have to create your own value out of the sponsorship… if we have an event… and we market it well, we are able to get media to cover it and we are able to get awareness from the people of our sponsorship and also our association with sponsorship awareness' (Sasol Sponsorship Specialist, Interview, August 2009). Sasol views the sponsorship as buying into development and as a contribution to nation-building, rather than as a straightforward commercial investment. However, returns are predicted in the long-term as indicated by the Sasol Sponsorship Specialist: 'let's give the team what they need, let's give them equipment and in due course we will start deriving the benefits when everyone can be aware of the team, when they start winning. Because everyone follows a winner'.

Similarly, corporate and media institutions have the capacity to create personalities in sport and 'once you've created personalities in the sport, then the sport quickly catches on… once you've got personalities, people want to follow, people worship, people idolize; also with women's football, Marta and those girls from the US, they now play at an international level, everybody knows them' (Sasol Sponsorship Specialist, Interview, August 2009). It is clear then that Sasol's aims are to establish Banyana Banyana as one of the world's best and well-known teams. Achieving this would activate heightened involvement of the media and widespread support.

Sasol sponsors both the national women's team and a provincial premier league comprising 144 teams in the 9 provinces. All teams in the Sasol League receive a comprehensive 'starter pack' at the beginning of the season filled with training equipment such as water bottles, cooler box, first aid kit, bibs, cones, full match kit and so on. Additionally, Sasol provides travel grants and provincial club coaches have attended coaching workshops (SuperSport 2009). In February this year, Sasol toured the 9 provinces to host 'Road Shows' with objectives to raise awareness of women's football and to enable provincial team players to try out for the national team in front of Coach Augustine Makalakalane. Quoting

Makalakalane, 'the Sasol League Road Shows have given me more choice and a bigger pool of players to select from for the national team […] talent we have discovered this year alone' (Gsport 2009). Winners from each of the Sasol Provincial premier leagues compete in the week-long Sasol National Championship.

The Sasol sponsorship of Banyana Banyana provides the team and players with all the resources and infrastructure to compete internationally, such as training equipment, domestic and overseas travel, accommodation and food expenditures and female-fitted apparel as well as formal and casual suits to enhance the professional image and morale of the players. In a recent interview, Banyana Banyana Manager, Fran Hilton-Smith, exclaimed that the Sasol sponsorship is 'the best thing that ever happened to women's football' (Interview, August 2009). With Sasol sponsoring both the national team and the provincial SAFA leagues it means that 'the national team have a pool of players who are active throughout almost the entire year, so when they are called up for national team duty they are fit and they are ready to play' (Sasol Sponsorship Specialist, Interview, August 2009). Indicative of the success of the Sasol sponsorship is the frequency with which Banyana Banyana is now able to play international games overseas. Saavedra (2003) cites the cost of airfares and lack of support from domestic football federations as hindrances to teams playing internationally or within Africa. Without frequent scheduling of inter-African matches and competitions, the level of play and visibility of women's football will not easily progress (Saavedra 2003). This is all set to change for South African women footballers. In the build-up to the African Women Championships taking place in October 2010, Banyana Banyana was invited to compete in the Cyprus Cup in February 2010. The team gave outstanding performances, narrowly losing to England's women 1-0, a substantial improvement from the previous year's 5-1 defeat. The team took part in this competition in 2009 and were invited back 'because the players are playing so well' (Hilton-Smith, Interview, August 2009). Banyana Banyana is also planning fixtures against Switzerland, New Zealand and Australia as well as a possible tournament in Chile. The team has also confirmed a 3-week pre-camp in Germany prior to the African Women Championships where they will play against Holland and Germany. Such preparations and travel were not possible prior to the Sasol sponsorship.

South Africa is hosting the African Women's Championships in Gauteng in October 2010 and the top two teams will qualify for the World Cup 2011 in Germany. There is widespread belief that Banyana Banyana has never been in a better position to qualify than now. Sasol are doing all they can to ensure Banyana Banyana win the African Women Championships: 'I sincerely believe in our team, that if the team can really start doing well, I mean if next year they can win the African Cup of Nations, that, on it's own, can get this team to be recognized

once and for all' (Sasol Sponsorship Specialist, Interview, August 2009). The reciprocal returns on Sasol's investments if Banyana Banyana qualify for the World Cup are voiced by the team manager: 'that is going to be massive publicity for SASOL […] we have a huge crowd support for Banyana and especially at a tournament of that magnitude' (Hilton-Smith, Interview, August 2009).

There is a strong possibility therefore that Banyana Banyana will generate popularity by winning international sporting events. The sport-business-media concept is likely to be developed through the commodification of team support, such as team merchandise and ticket sales, as well as the marketing of female football icons. Targeting new audiences is a viable option which inherently comes with the appeal of constituting a new market niche. Today's advanced technology and communication channels also provide the means for South African women's football to be transmitted worldwide, and therefore, achieve connectivity via interactions with global market forces.

Concluding Remarks

In South Africa, Sasol is providing a platform to make the aspirations of female footballers a reality. Corporate and media involvement in women's football can develop a fan base once the exposure of talent occurs, the potential for a market is created. Female footballers could serve as much needed icons and role models in society. Every day images change perceptions and could strengthen existing women's football and encourage more girls to participate in sport and become part of an expanding fan base. There could be enormous positive impacts on inclusive participation of girls in physical activity due to increased visibility of female sporting role models, and as a result of the process of 'normalizing' women playing sport. This would greatly contribute to neutralising gender inequalities and lend to women realising their full potential.

Women have made vast strides in gaining representation on decision-making bodies and committees within sport. However the biggest challenge facing the corporatization of female sport is the lack of female representatives in corporate and media structures. Corporate and media institutions are key agents of change and the advancement of women's sport can be attributable to such. Presently, Gsport is the only reliable source that provides accurate and timely reports on women's sport and women in sport in South Africa (Gsport 2009). Fran Hilton-Smith recalls how journalists 'tell me it's very hard to get their editors to write on women's football because they're not interested'(Interview, August 2009). This is also applicable to women in the corporate world too, which is reiterated by the Sasol Sponsorship Specialist who recalls that, 'as far as I can remember, and I know most of the people in this industry, there are hardly any women that are sponsorship managers or marketing, or group corporate affairs managers, be-

cause that's where the decisions come from, so because of that, it might have an impact on when a decision is being made on sponsorship, who is making that decision' (Sasol Sponsorship Specialist, Interview, August 2009).

Corporate and media institutions have become inextricably linked to the promotion of sport within the context of globalization (Andrews and Ritzer, 2007; Giulianotti and Robertson 2007). It is important to note that there could be potential negative consequences for women's football as a result of adopting a capitalist model, which we have seen in men's football. Despite the unprecedented opportunities, wealth and popularity that globalization has enabled, it has also triggered inequalities and disparities, and men's football is now driven by capitalist multinational corporations with questionable practices (Darby 2000; Alegi 2007). Although the sport-business-media triad has boosted international football competitions, leagues and teams to exceptional levels, at the same time there are countries and populations that have been marginalized or exploited, typically at grassroots level or across the third world (see Darby 2005; Alegi 2007). Sport, therefore, cannot be seen as separate from other commercial, transnational operations. Such issues must be interrogated further and understood within the framework of gender equality debates.

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10

Football for Hope Centres in Africa: Intentions, Assumptions and Gendered Implications

Jimoh Shehu

Introduction

The 2010 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup Campaign launched on November 25, 2007 in Durban, South Africa was discursively constructed around the slogan '20 Centres for 2010'. The intent behind this spatio-temporal slogan is the construction of 20 Football for Hope Centres (5 in South Africa and 15 in other locations across Africa) to be used by local football organisations (Centre Hosts) for running their social development programmes within the framework of Football for Hope Movement (FFHM). According to FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter:

> This campaign emphasizes the power of football far beyond the boundaries of the pitch. With the help of football fans, celebrities and sponsors, we want to build 20 Football for Hope centres to deliver our promise to give back to Africa something substantial and leave a lasting legacy well after 11 July 2010 (FIFA, 2007a)

A similar view was expressed by Danny Jordaan, CEO of the 2010 FIFA World Cup Organizing Committee during the launch when he said:

> It is about leaving a meaningful legacy for the African continent for many years to come. 20 Centres for 2010 truly reflects our goal to make a real difference for all of Africa. This campaign is a very concrete step towards giving thousands of African youngsters the chance of a better future (FIFA, 2007a).

As the above quotations make clear, the '20 Centres for 2010' project is not just about leaving a post-event legacy, it is also about demonstrating FIFA's political

economic power to determine, assure and bestow homogeneous projects to homogenized recipients – projects whose impacts are presumed to be self-evident and unproblematic. Philosophically, the '20 Centres for 2010' project is emblematic of what can be termed 'footballism' - the unquestioned belief in the problem-solving power of football. Indeed, the project derives from the unwarranted pre-supposition (wrapped in the mantle of 'development') that:

> Due to its values, its popularity, its universal nature and its appeal, football (in all of its forms) can be seen as the ideal instrument for achieving social and human development targets and tackling many of the major problems faced by society today (italics added) (FIFA, 2007f).

This grand narrative of the inherent power of football rhetorically reduces society's problems to football reproduction, distribution and consumption, and divorces social development from the wider contextual factors, including gender and power relations. Footballism is a myth that creates false, unfulfillable promises, seductively highlighting society's aspiration for social transformation and the need for concomitant tools of social mobilization, while concealing complexities, hegemonic self-interests and the fact that football alone cannot foster social development. To be sure, football sells; and it has created a global market for manifold goods and services. But it is not a transcendental instrument of social change. Accordingly, the gospel or ideology that football, in all its manifestations, is *the* ideal 'technological fix' for contemporary social problems calls for deconstruction, along with the discourses that structure a footballist project like the '20 Centres for 2010'. Historical experience in Africa and elsewhere has shown that debate and critical analysis cannot come at the end of a social development project, but must be undertaken at the very beginning of such venture in order to highlight exclusive and repressive norms – and organise against them. Given that the '20 Centres for 2010' project is in its infancy, it is proper at this juncture to subject its embodied values, outcomes and ideologies to in-depth interrogations. Accordingly, this chapter is a preliminary attempt to critically analyze the issues foregrounded and silenced in FIFA's discursive constructions of the '20 Centres for 2010' project.

Methodologically, Critical Discourse Analysis (Weedon 1996; Fairclough & Wodak 1997) was used to examine the language used by FIFA on its website to create and support the '20 Centres for 2010' project. In other words, official statements and documents regarding the '20 Centres for 2010' were scrutinized for the kinds of social structures, relations and processes they promote or suppress. Certainly, the meanings of the texts analyzed in this may be constructed differently by other researchers. Consequently, the views expressed in this chapter cannot be regarded as definitive or conclusive. Nevertheless, they offer insights valuable for further studies and open up discussions about one instance of how FIFA

intended to give material weight to its rhetoric 'to harness the power of the beautiful game for positive social change across Africa' (FIFA 2007a).

Football for Hope Centres: The Political-economic Context

The '20 Centres for 2010' project cannot be judiciously appreciated without an exploration of its political economic construction and embeddedness. Issues of who owns, controls, and organizes an enterprise for efficiency and profit-making in relation to contexts, subjects and axis of oppression are central to political economic analysis (Barker 2008). Thus, consideration of the production, representation and reproduction of Football for Hope Centres (as sites of social development) inevitably leads to an analysis of power relations and their implications for equity, social justice and public good.

In 2005, FIFA added a third element to its mission. In addition to seeking to 'develop the game' and 'touch the world', the Federation also aspires to 'build a better future'. The third dimension to FIFA's mission is touted as representing a decisive break from 'charitable giving' to a post-humanitarian order characterised by 'development cooperation'. Politically, FIFA's aspiration to 'build a better future' is designed to capture the popular imagination and situate the Federation among organizations seeking to invest in solutions to social problems. According to Blatter (2005):

> FIFA has a long humanitarian tradition and has been supporting social and human development initiatives for decades. But in 2005, following the decision of the FIFA Congress to add a new pillar to our mission ('build a better future'), our organization was prompted to take its social responsibility even more seriously. Since then, FIFA's approach has seen a critical evolution: a change from 'charitable giving' to meaningful 'socially responsible, involved, and committed' development cooperation. We are convinced that the driving force of our social engagement can be – and must be – football itself and that is why the Football for Hope Movement is considered a topic of strategic importance at FIFA (http://www.fifa.com/mm/51/56/34/footballforhope_e_47827.pdf).

In this discourse of legitimation, FIFA's new approach is linked to the concepts of 'socially responsible, involved, and committed development cooperation'. This requires the corollary framing of 'charitable giving' as socially irresponsible, uninvolved, and uncommitted in both commercial and developmental terms. Following FIFA's avowed ideological break from 'charitable giving', the 2006 FIFA World Cup fund-raising campaign raised over USD 30 million for the construction and running costs of six SOS villages in Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa, Ukraine and Vietnam. Relatively, the 2010 FIFA World Cup Campaign is expected to raise USD 10 million for the construction of 20 Football for Hope Centres across Africa (FIFA 2007b). Ironically, 'charitable giving' is as much in

evidence in the former as it is in the latter project, considering that the core strategy of these projects is to not foster community self-sufficiency.

Embedded in the third pillar of FIFA's mission is the assertion that the 'driving force' of FIFA's 'social engagement can be – and must be – football itself' (http://www.fifa.com/mm/51/56/34/footballforhope_e_47827.pdf). This ideology begs a number of questions. For example, what are the broader developmental benefits that have been realized from the previous or extant FIFA's social engagements like the '6 villages for 2006' relative to the pre-engagement baseline? Is FIFA's development cooperation only sustainable to the extent that the operatives are able to deliver long-term football marketing and other efficiency benefits envisaged by FIFA and its corporate allies? To be sure, FIFA cannot successfully pursue its mission to 'build a better future' without paying due attention to sustainable football production, reproduction and consumption processes. It is vital however to ensure the externalities of football-driven projects and processes do not lead to market failure in social developmental terms due to opportunity costs, irrelevance, rent-seeking, social distraction, paternalism, inefficiencies, and inequities.

A crucial theme in the discourse of '20 Centres for 2010' is that of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This is how FIFA frames its CSR:

> In 2005 world football's governing body was one of the first sports federations to create an internal corporate social responsibility (CSR) department to manage the organization's duties towards people, society and the planet, and to conduct programmes in the field of Development through Football (as distinct from its football development tasks). Following the United Nations' appeal to industrialized countries for development financing, FIFA agreed to assign at least 0.7 per cent of its total revenues to its CSR initiatives, which as of 2005 are grouped under the umbrella of Football for Hope.

Clearly, FIFA's notion of CSR foregrounds image construction (sensitivity, sense of duty, altruism), football economy (less than one percent of revenues), neoliberal discourse (development financing), a new sovereignty (FIFA as a supra-national organ of the industrialized countries), and suppresses CSR as an obligation (FIFA agreed to assign a fraction of its revenue following an appeal). Moreover, it offers targets of FIFA's CRS initiatives a sense of identity as members of Football for Hope Movement, conceptually packed as:

> The key element of the strategic alliance between FIFA and streetfootballworld, created to enhance dialogue and collaboration among football associations, committed clubs and players, professional leagues and commercial partners

> as well as local organizations advancing social development (http://www.fifa.com/mm/51/56/34/footballforhope_e_47827.pdf).

According to FIFA:

> The objective of the Football for Hope Movement is to establish a quality seal for sustainable social and human development programmes focusing on football as the central tool in the areas of Health Promotion, Peace Building, Children's Rights & Education, Anti-Discrimination & Social Integration and the Environment, thus supporting best practice in the field. The programmes must be aimed at children and young people and use football as an instrument to promote participation and dialogue. The movement aims to fully utilize the power of football in society to contribute to the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (http://www.fifa.com/mm/51/56/34/footballforhope_e_47827.pdf).

Ostensibly, the goal of Football for Hope Movement is to cater to children and young people in predetermined programmatic areas – areas that depends on a specialized knowledge base – the discipline of football. Thus, the objective is to scoop up potential football players before they turn to other sports. Not only does this focal strategy obscure issues of gender, race, class, nation, disability, and other social factors; it homogenizes children and youth by ignoring that these social groups vary widely in their sporting interests and material conditions. Although FIFA's programmatic areas are purportedly aimed at children and young people, it is questionable that this population has been excluded from the 'strategic alliance' that constitutes the Football for Hope Movement. It cannot be presumed that children and young people are subsumed under the unexamined and idealized categories of 'committed clubs and players'. The notion of Football for Hope Movement as currently articulated in FIFA's development rhetoric elides the distinction between football development and social development, and thereby also between broad developmental needs of children and youth and the vested interests of those privileged to participate and excel in football. Given that 'representation is policy' as much in development arena as elsewhere, the apparent exclusion of children and youth (as distinct from clubs, players and leagues) from the composition of Football for Hope Movement implies that germane developmental interests of specific groups of young people are unlikely to be represented in the policy decision-making processes that feed into FIFA's programme design aimed at them.

The Khayelitsha Development Forum reportedly spearheaded a request on behalf of the community to host the first of Africa's 20 centres. During the official ground-breaking ceremony held in Khayelitsha in Cape Town on May 25, 2009. Dan Plato, the Executive Mayor of Cape Town is reported on the FIFA's website to have said:

> The City of Cape Town is delighted that the Football for Hope Centre will form part of Cape Town's regeneration programme for Khayelitsha, which includes the 'Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading' programme. 'Through these initiatives, we will make the Khayelitsha community a safer environment for young people to learn and play.'

Here, the language of the Football for Hope Movement was co-opted by the Mayor to further the neoliberal economic agenda which favors, amongst other things, free market and re-branding approaches to developing urban spaces of consumption and leisure (Sze 2009). The 'we' in the quotation and the explicit reference to making the 'Khayelitsha community a safer environment for young people to learn and play' discursively elide and tactically co-opt the needs, interests and difficulties of the various social groups and identities within the community. The Centre in Khayelitsha will be, according to FIFA (2009), managed by Grassroot Soccer, a South African-based non-profit organization that uses football to educate young people about HIV and AIDS and empower them with the knowledge to live HIV-free. Apparently, this particular Centre Host is experienced in a limited area of social development strategy.

Given the extremely thin literature on the social decision-making processes that informed the '20 Centres for 2010', it is not clear whether the proposed initiatives are a substitute for, or a supplement to, government provision of social services and infrastructure in the concerned disadvantaged areas. In this sense, to what extent might the '20 Centres for 2010' project crowd-out government support or discourage redistribution to the people of these areas? In line with the neoliberal ideology that emphasizes a diminished role for the public sector on account of mismanagement and corruption, FIFA assumes that the local football organizations are more efficient, influential, self-motivated and altruistic than the public providers of the envisaged services (Besley 1997). Recent studies however point to counter-narratives, showing that many NGOs in developing countries are opportunistic rent seekers, far more incline to securing their own vested interests than modifying the political economic landscape of the disadvantaged areas to aid the particular groups in whose names funds are being raised and projects are being supplied to donor institutions that demand them (Verhelst 1990; Nelson 1995; van de Walle & Nead 1996). Instead of pre-defining local football organizations as the necessary and sufficient project actors or Centre Hosts, FIFA should have used public dialogue to determine community problems requiring actions, and thus arrive at a more participatory approach to managing the Centres.

Notions of development have been linked to the kinds of activities or projects that are given strategic importance by governments, NGOs and donor institutions. For example, development may be approached through (i) wealth creation

to bring about redistribution through economic growth; (ii) simultaneous focus on social and economic development to realize both growth and redistribution; and (iii) a focus on personal, social, political and environmentally sustainable services that maximize people's welfare and developmental needs (growth through distribution) (Amin 1990; Burkey 1993; Daly 1996; Mkandawire 1999; Dollar & Kraay 2000). FIFA, in its CSR rhetoric, seems to have adopted the third approach to development. Although other dimensions of social investments and services like water supplies, energy, transport system, communication, food security, and sustainable livelihood (Thirlwall 2006; Mizhirai 2009) seem to have been excluded from the Federation's development strategy, the selected areas of Health Promotion, Peace Building, Children's Rights & Education, Anti-Discrimination & Social Integration and the Environment are significantly correlated and can make some contribution to development. This is because anti-discrimination and recognition of rights can enhance equitable access to education and health services, create social harmony and integration, and thus generate positive externalities within the framework of environmental reforms and ecological economics (Daly & Cobb 1994). However, the personal and social development approach adopted by FIFA requires broadened resource bases for the sustainability of concomitant services. Without investments to boost economic activities in the community and generate the necessary capital to support social critical services, this approach can exacerbate social inequities; perpetuate dependency and the kind of limitless 'charitable giving' that FIFA seeks to abandon.

FIFA intends, as we have seen, to directly aim its programmes at children and youth. This is a valid approach so long as the developmental needs of the youngsters and the social-economic factors enabling or disabling their holistic development, are fully understood (Pezzullo 1994). It is vital however, to remember that any approach that minimizes the spread of public goods could contribute to negative externalities. Whenever the social-economic factors affecting the well-being of adults are not simultaneously addressed alongside developmental needs of children and youth, these youngsters become vulnerable to the spread of public 'bads' like diseases, ignorance, poverty, rights violations and social polarization. The challenge is to take into account the institutional context of, and constraints on development policies aimed at children and youth without discounting the need to substantially strengthen collective efficacy at family and community levels.

Clearly, the political-economic basis of the '20 Centres for 2010' opens up inter-discursive spaces (Gramsci 1971) for the civil society in Africa to inter-discursively reread the ideological framing of the '20 Centres for 2010' and to re-imagine alternative arrangements that recognize the subjectivities effaced by the FIFA's homogenising discourse of social development. The negotiation of these

spaces requires an awareness of the complex interests, needs, expectations and social relations in the target communities.

Football for Hope Centres as Texts

Following Jencks (1991 and the postmodernist stress on textuality, the proposed Football for Hope Centres can be read as texts with embodied signs and cultural codes that enable the construction of certain values (Baudrillard 1981; Lash 1994). In other words, the discursive construction of the '20 Centres for 2010' entails an interpretive imposition of what is valuable and the production of certain subjectivities, desires, perceptions and collective identity in political economic terms (Grewal & Kaplan 1994; Shapiro 1993; Peterson 2002). It is the deconstruction of this interpretive imposition that follows.

According to FIFA (2007c), each Football for Hope Centre:

> …will consist of a building with rooms to provide public health services and informal education, office space, common space for community gatherings, and a small-size artificial turf pitch (40x20m). The construction will be supervised by FIFA and streetfootballworld and implemented by Architecture for Humanity, a charitable organization that services communities in need, and Greenfields, a leader in the construction and development of synthetic turf systems.

Contrary to the increasing recognition within the discourses of globalization that space is fragmented and differentiated (Kayatekin & Ruccio 1998), the spatiality of the Football for Hope Centres has been conceived as homogeneous and uniform. Paradoxically, the Centre Hosts will receive the same kind of infrastructure irrespective of their resource and client bases, types of development issues being tackled, and the extent to which they further or lessen inefficiencies and inequities. Thus, the structural contexts differentiating localities and local football organizations are ignored. Although the Centres are touted as having rooms for various functions, the 'legitimate' purposes have been hierarchically specified. The modernist assumption in the FIFA's definition of the Centres is that 'form follows function', or 'space follows action' since the actions or events to be enacted in every segment of the Centres have been pre-determined. In other words, these Centres have not been conceptualized as both forms and functions in which the functions can be deconstructed by ways of juxtaposition, superimposition, alteration, accommodation, *ad hoc* programming and gendered relations to space (Tschumi 1996). Apparently, the 'communities in need' have been defined as fixed and stable rather than hybridized groupings with heterogeneous cultures and needs – hence it is assumed that the same space or form would be, in its substance, the appropriate one for all of them. The concerned communities in need' in this context should have been empowered through respectful negotiations to choose between using their portions of the earmarked $10 million for a football centre

or for needs-based projects like upgrading schools and hospitals, improving irrigation, making boreholes, establishing micro-credit schemes, agribusinesses or inclusive ventures.

A major justification for the '20 Centres for 2010' is the assertion (without substantiation) that the project will provide local football organizations (Centre Hosts) with 'vital infrastructure' to pursue their social development objectives. What positive effects have these Centre Hosts had on their communities over the years? With which institutions have they been bench-marked? Would aiding local football organizations help produce better developmental outcomes at lower costs than funding the public sector? Currently, FIFA has no accessible database comparing the developmental activities of football and non-football NGOs to allow us estimate whether local football organizations are more efficient and effective than other NGOs or the public sectors in the areas of Health Promotion, Peace Building, Children's Rights & Education, Anti-Discrimination & Social Integration and the Environment, controlling for social factors like gender, age, class, race, location, ethnicity, disability, sexuality and religion. This lack of effort to generate counterfactuals is curious in light of the claim by Danny Jordaan (FIFA 2007a) that the Centres will 'make a real difference for all of Africa…, giving thousands of African youngsters the chance of a better future'.

FIFA (2007d) attempts to manage the centrality of the politics of the built environment by deploying the discourses of community empowerment and environmental protection:

> Community involvement and ownership are crucial for the success and sustainability of the centres. The local community will be involved in the entire process from the very first step, including the architectural design for the centre, construction and, whenever possible, the involvement of the local workforce and skill-building programmes. Architectural design and setup will also meet national environmental standards and make use of environmental innovations.

This quotation should give us pause, considering the fact that:

> The construction will be supervised by FIFA and streetfootballworld and implemented by Architecture for Humanity, a charitable organization that services communities in need, and Greenfields, a leader in the construction and development of synthetic turf systems.

The supervisors/implementers seem to have conducted an instrumental, means-end analysis of how to help the 'communities in need' and paternalistically decided on an ethnocentric '20 Centres for 2010' based on assumptions that ignore how material conditions shaping men and women's lives vary dramatically across space and time. Moreover, the Center Hosts and building contractors have been

problematically depoliticized – as raceless, genderless, disinterested and benevolent parties. But these are constellations of special interests seeking access to $10million dollars in design, procurement, construction and management fees!

In the currently circulating texts of the Football for Hope Centres as designed/produced by FIFA, there are no competing narratives concerning the size of public space required, ownership of the deed of title, impact on surrounding neighborhood in terms of displacement and gentrification; and who constitutes the 'local work force' or community representatives – all of which have implications for understanding how gender operates within the sphere of the 20 Centres for 2010. Here, again, it is essential to stress the importance of community agency and alternative discourses to reshape and transform the way the Centres are enacted at specific sites. Indeed, the counter-discourses of the civil society and disadvantaged communities are constitutive of how the proposed project is eventually organized and implemented.

Interpellation: Hailing 'Football for Hope Centres'

Names matter. As such, what the '20 Centres for 2010' are called require ideological unpacking. The naming of the '20 Centres for 2010' as Football for Hope Centres is a thoroughly paternalistic political act, made the more powerful by being couched in the historical symbolism of the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the moral rhetoric of hope (as social development). According to Haraway (1988), the practice of naming is body politics; the politics of controlling the named bodies. In his work on ideological subject formation Althusser (1989) gave an example of a policeman, hailing 'Hey You', and thus creating a 'You' to which, the passer-by answers, accepting the identity imposed by the policeman. The act of hailing or interpellation in the Althusserian logic is designed to subordinate others and prescribe what they should think, believe and practise. In this sense, FIFA has interpelleted not only the users of the 20 Centres (as football consumers/practitioners and members of a global football alliance), but also the Centres themselves. The politics of representing and interpellating both the 20 Centres and the recipient communities have implications for relations of production (the determination, legitimation, provision and evaluation of social services at the Centres) and the broader social relations in the project sites. In line with FIFA's favorite metaphors, the extant name of the Centres invokes football (as the driving force), with power far beyond the boundaries of the pitch, to catalyze social development (acknowledged as hope) in disadvantaged areas across Africa. These mechanical, chemical, and geopolitical metaphors implicitly cast football as a totalizing, limitless force capable of eliminating any adverse reaction or spatial barriers to linear development processes.

The trope of 'Football for Hope' feeds on the suboptimal material conditions in underprivileged areas and objectifies people of these areas as players in a

development game, perhaps, by the equation of children and youth with 'everybody'. It precludes the social change wrought by the disadvantaged areas with means other than football and suppresses the complexities and discontinuities that mark sources of hope. To be sure, the current name can mean that football could pave the way for a better or more tolerable life, offering real chances and new possibilities, enhancing mass realization of potentials and providing a wand to ward off personal and social miseries. However, viewed in its relation to soccer production, distribution and consumption, 'Football for Hope' also means 'Hope for Football'. In this sense the current name of the Centres has the effect of raising expectations that cannot be realistically accomplished, trapping the youngsters in disadvantaged areas in a perpetual game of catch-up – held in bond by the logic of transnational football capital and assigned subject statuses.

Part of the challenges of re-envisioning and re-connecting the Football for Hope Centres with the disadvantaged communities therefore is to have a series of public dialogues on how the Centres should be named, along with how their functions should be scripted, sustained and evaluated (Mathews 1999). The aim is to call attention to the mutability of any sign, code, imagery or text and their political economy – and thereby problematize and de-center dominant emblems and labels. Arguably, the Football for Hope Centres themselves are a form of what Althusser (1989) referred to as Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs), and permitting the disadvantaged communities to exercise their agency by giving the buildings alternative or oppositional names is an act of 'hailing' or ideological 'interpellation' that may be resisted by FIFA. As Rosemblum & Travis (2000: 6) noted:

> Because naming may involve a redefinition of self, an assertion of power, and a rejection of other's ability to impose an identity, social change movements often lay claim to a new name, and opponents to the movement may signal their opposition by continuing to use the old name.

Needless to say, self-determined names would be empowering, inspiring the communities to socially reconstruct the discourses of the Centres according to specific cultural needs and aspirations, and to mobilize the identities and practices constituted around the projects towards germane developmental outcomes.

Footballization of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

A number of international agencies like FIFA and the UN increasingly regard sport as a self-evidently effective technology of engendering social development and peace, using cliché-ridden tropes such as 'driving force' 'central tool' and 'powerful instrument' to make the relationship between sport and development

appear linear, natural and eternal. Regarding the praises often heaped on sport for promoting a multitude of developmental outcomes, Coatler (2008:48) argues that sport does not automatically engender the many social outcomes that are often associated with it, and that any 'decontextualized, romanticized, and communitarian generalizations about the value of sport for development' calls for wariness and scrutiny.

Currently, there are sport-based initiatives in various countries such as Kosovo, Palestine, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Malawi, Uganda, Kenya, Colombia and Brazil (Ogi 2005; Sugden & Wallis 2007) designed to help children and youth play together, learn athletic and psycho-social skills, keep fit and have fun. The prevailing accounts rarely use interpretive, reflexive and longitudinal methodologies to enable us to appreciate the material and non-material impact of these initiatives across space and time. In other words, the use-values of these sport projects are asserted without any verifiable empirical demonstration. The barely concealed assumption in the current conceptualization of these projects is that if the children and youth in the zones of trouble and privation could play together, all would be well in political, economic and humanitarian terms. This romantic conception of the use-values of football or any other sport is not coincidental; rather it is emblematic of the political power of supra- or trans-national organizations to impose their own construction of what count as legitimate knowledge (Bourdieu 1977) in the social control and regulation of young people (Hartmann & Depro 2006; Spaaij 2009). Moreover, it is clearly in the interests of those organizations to ensure the domination of these reductionistic and anecdotal accounts, as they enhance the essentialism, inevitability and legitimacy of their pet projects.

Lexically, the Football for Hope Movement appropriates terms from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Environmentally, it embraces ecological responsibility. Socially, it envisions a healthy, vibrant, peaceful and integrated society. Ethically, it endorses gender equality, anti-discrimination, and children's rights and education. Proactively, it supports the optimization of health promotion for disease awareness/prevention. Intrinsically, it seeks to develop a global alliance for football development and development through football. However, the forthcoming Football Hope Festival 2010, meant to showcase the achievement of the movement to the world, valorises competition at the expense of social development outcomes. According to FIFA (2007e):

> The Football for Hope Festival 2010 will showcase and promote best practice in the field of Social Development through Football. The teams, made up of boys and girls aged between 15 and 18 will represent local organizations that use football for positive social change in the areas of Health Promotion, Peace Building, Children's Rights & Education, Anti-Discrimination & Social

> Integration and the Environment. Participants will be selected in recognition of their personal commitment to the work of their home organizations. These organizations are implementing partners in the Football for Hope Movement, the key element of the strategic alliance between FIFA and streetfootballworld.
>
> The participating mixed-gender teams will demonstrate their silky skills in a fast-paced, high-intensity tournament to decide the 2nd Streetfootballworld Champion. A street football stadium will be constructed in the heart of Alexandra, providing spectators an up-close view of the five-a-side action. And there won't be a referee in sight - fair play rules mean that any disagreements between the teams are resolved through dialogue.

The use of tournaments to 'showcase and promote' best practice in the field of social development is symbolic of how the MDGs have been appropriated for footballist ends. The festival rests on the assumption that both football and development are competitive and 'a fast-paced, high-intensity tournament' to produce Streetfootballworld Champions will bring the fantasy of development to life. This is a fallacy of developmentalism - embedded in a globalist discourse - which measures social change in terms of universalization of production and consumption of certain material and symbolic commodities and tied to neoliberal theories of development which view performance as central to national competitiveness in the global marketplace (Palan 2000; Carrington & McDonald 2009). In effect, the Football Hope Festival 2010 would put the local football organizations under pressure to focus on producing winning teams in order to secure access to global circuits of money. To be sure, local football organizations will participate in the tournament festival while spouting social development fervour, but it does not follow that they care about the attainment of the UN Millennium Development Goals, which are to:

1. Halve extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Empower women and promote gender equality
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases like malaria
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

Leaving open the possibility that future impact assessments of the Football for Hope projects in the areas of Health Promotion, Peace Building, Children's Rights & Education, Anti-Discrimination & Social Integration and the Environment will

be aligned with the achievement of the MDGs, it is unfortunately the case that the current manner of showcasing the best practice in the field of social development by FIFA promotes the footballization of the Millennium Development Goals through the strategy of high-stake competition, spectacular consumption and place marketing. Instead of a grand football tournament, evaluation of best practices might include a scrutiny of how gender, race, class and other subjectivities are mobilized, restricted or excluded in the local football organizations' conceptions and practice of social development. The civil society is in the unique position to call attention to the transgression and transformation needed in this sphere, armed with research evidence about the norms, practices, incentives, capabilities, achievements, constraints, and special interests surrounding the '20 Centres for 2010' in different locales.

Power of Legacies and Legacies of Power

As alluded to earlier in this chapter, the '20 Centres for 2010' have been represented by FIFA as post-event legacies for catalyzing development across Africa. Without doubt, event legacies have symbolic and material benefits, including the ones alluded to on the FIFA's website, such as providing facilities for recreation, community gathering, informal education and health services. Indeed, research evidence has demonstrated that post-event legacies like the Football for Hope Centres and stadiums can help promote sport growth, social order, tourism, social interaction, income generation, place attachment, community identity, urban regeneration, 'normalization' of at-risk youth, cultural celebration, place marketing, generation of social capital, shared architectural heritage and sponsors' public image. Nonetheless, these legacies could negatively impact the community in terms of opportunity costs, displacements, expropriation, essentialization/naturalization of one sport, gentrification, privatization of public space, environmental racism, gendered co-optation and exploitation; place–based class conflict and exclusion (Matheson & Baade 2004; Freeman 2006; Sze 2009; Tranter & Lowes 2009). What this research evidence implies is that event legacies carry symbolic and material power. The challenge is to make this power count for equitable and sustainable development.

As a globalization-driven project (characterized by strategic alliance of transnational networks, development financing, and restructuring of selected local football organizations) the '20 Centres for 2010' provide opportunities for Centre Hosts to benefit technically, financially and infrastructurally. But attempts to strengthen local football organizations may not necessarily transform the disadvantaged communities in palpable ways. Disadvantaged areas are so-called due to demographic and economic characteristics that increase poverty rates (Massey & Denton 1993; Fox & Porca 2001; Pezzini 2001; Guinness 2002; Peters 2009), such as:

- Economic dislocation
- Unemployment/underemployment
- Housing problem
- Infrastructural decay
- Increased crime rate
- Dysfunctional families
- Environmental degradation
- Less diversified industrial base
- Low levels of educational attainment
- Subordinated, poorly educated and unskilled women
- Higher number of minorities and immigrants
- Inadequate social services
- High percentages of abused, neglected, poorly educated and abandoned children
- Overpopulation
- Segregation/racial isolation

In this context, disadvantaged areas not only need strategic infrastructure, enhanced public services, and bureaucratic structures to create jobs, but also in-ward investments to sustain endogenous development in a synergistic manner.

The challenge for post-event legacy developers and their partners therefore is to select programmes and processes that can prudently and strategically promote equity and improve the well-being of the community as a whole. In this context, the Football for Hope projects can help (en)gender development in the disadvantaged communities to the extent that their discourses are deconstructed and reconstructed to promote agency, empowerment, and self-determination; and to the extent that provision of infrastructure for local football organizations and youth-focused programmes are strategically complemented with mutually-reinforcing mechanisms aimed at achieving enterprise and institution building outcomes.

Gendered Implications of the Football for Hope Centres

Rhetorical tropes of 'change', 'hope', 'legacy' and 'development' have been invoked by FIFA to 'naturalise' the '20 Centres for 2010' and infuse them with social desirability and neutrality. But institutionally, these Centres are products of FIFA's hegemonic prescription and thus constitute potential sites of domination and subordination. Viewed from the perspectives of Foucault's (1991) concept of 'govermentality', that the state and transnational organizations are constituted by discourses and paradigms that allow, sustain, promote, reproduce or on the contrary repress, hinder and marginalize certain forms of identities, strategies,

goals and gender regimes, the proposed '20 Centres for 2010' cannot be regarded as an innocent and neutral community improvement project. Accordingly, the '20 Centres for 2010' project needs be scrutinized for the kind of gender regime it promotes and what that means in terms of social justice.

How does the '20 Centres for 2010' project reinforce relations of power and hierarchy between the sexes? The texts found on the FIFA's website do not give gender issues the extended consideration they deserve. Discussions about the status of women in the proposed project is extremely rare and references to the girl-child are sketchy when they occur, like the Centres will 'improve gender equality', 'football for education … focusing on the female gender', and 'teams, made up of boys and girls aged between 15 and 18 will represent local organizations that use football for positive social change' (FIFA 2007e & 2007g). However, a number of implicit gendered assumptions could be discerned from the current articulations of the project, including:

1. The local football organizations (Centre Hosts) are versed in gender issues and have integrated gender concerns into their policies and procedures;
2. Mere mention of boys and girls as project beneficiaries implies that their situated perspectives and voices have been acknowledged;
3. Children and youth have the same needs regardless of gender, class, religion, (dis)ability, ethnicity and geographical location; therefore pre-determined policy areas will meet their developmental needs equally;
4. Documented experiences of men/women, boys/girls regarding FIFA's previous humanitarian initiatives are not necessary to foreground new projects;
5. Gender experiences and expectations do not impinge on narratives and discourses of sport-based development projects;
6. Children/youth/women/men view and encounter sport-based project the same way.

An indication that the Football for Hope project and its management is highly gendered is the fact that all the spokespersons for the project have been male-bodied, for there is not a female among those touting the 20 Centres' means and ends. In other words, the widely circulating discourses and narratives of the Football for Hope Centers have been dominated by men, very elite ones at that, while women's voices and standpoints on the project have been muted. Clearly, the '20 Centres for 2010' project is female co-optative, leaving untouched the unequal gender relations and matrix of domination masked within local football organizations and the Football for Hope Movement. By implication, the '20 Centres for 2010' project, designed as an institutional solution to 'disadvantage' is gendered in just the same way the political and socio-economic processes that result in social disadvantage are gendered. Thus, in-depth explorations of gender in the Centres

are necessary to reveal and counter hegemonic, disciplinary, structural, and interpersonal matrix of oppression (Foucault 1977; Crenshaw 1991; Collin 2009).

Conclusion: Football for Hope Centres and Africa's Development

This chapter has explored a range of discourses structuring the '20 Centres for 2010', highlighting their implicit gendered assumptions. The chapter argues that the grand narratives of continuous community betterment through football overlook or ignore discontinuities and dissonances that belie the disciplinary strategies and functions of sport as a modernization project. As a developmental model, the '20 Centres for 2010' provides a framework for tackling social problems in selected disadvantaged African communities and evaluating cross-sectional changes in the dimensions that the model prescribed as socially desirable. The framework of this developmental model causally links football to improvements in Health Promotion, Peace Building, Children's Rights & Education, Anti-Discrimination & Social Integration and the Environment. Although the model implicitly assumes that '20 Centres for 2010' project will benefit everyone, its underlying structures and relations suggest otherwise. As currently conceived, the Centres may maximize private goods at the expense of public ones (i.e. increase inequities) due to several reasons, including paternalism, rent-seeking by local football organizations; a narrow focus on one sport, and dominance of masculine perspectives. Thus, appropriate mechanisms are needed to ensure a level playing field that will yield equitable developmental outcomes. In this context, the local governments are needed to prevent failure of the Centres by means of policies to increase incentives to sustainability and gender equity. The role of the civil society is also critical in providing research-based evidence as to what football-based interventions and alternative developmental frameworks lead to what kinds of effects. As mentioned at the outset, the '20 Centres for 2010' project is work in progress. Only holistic and sustained gender analysis will help bring into clear relief the ways the Centres's strategies, goals and activities enhance public good or reproduce domination and subordination.

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