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

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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 Football¹ 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’²³ 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 matrilineal and patrilineal 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 Chichewa⁸ 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 matrilineal/lineal spaces have different strains of patriarchy as compared to patrilineal/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)unahood*. 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 contemporary¹¹ 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 across 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)! *Adzɔwanso! Adzɔwe 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 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 Ogunidipe 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 than *ku sevela*? 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 citizens¹⁴ 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 mbye*. *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 mbye* 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 to 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 *mutsoholeli* 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' Achievements¹⁶

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 - <i>Did not enter</i> 1978 to 1990 - <i>Did not qualify</i> 1994 - <i>Withdrew from qualifying</i>
African Nations Cup Record	1957 to 1974 - <i>Did not enter</i> 1976 - <i>Did not qualify</i> 1978 - <i>Did not qualify</i> 1980 - <i>Did not enter</i> 1982 - <i>Did not qualify</i> 1984 - Round 1 1986 - <i>Did not qualify</i> 1988 - <i>Did not enter</i> 1990 to 2008 - <i>Did not qualify</i> 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 Friendly Malawi	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 qualify 2007: 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 | 9. South Africa | 16. Sri Lanka |
| 2. New Zealand | 10. Cook Islands | 17. Scotland |
| 3. England | 11. Barbados | 18. Canada |
| 4. Jamaica | 12. St Vincent &
The Grenadines | 19. Botswana |
| 5. Malawi | 13. Wales | 20. Malaysia |
| 6. Samoa | 14. Papua New Guinea | 21. Northern Ireland |
| 7. Trinidad & Tobago | 15. Singapore | 22. India |
| 8. Fiji | | |

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 *ndizya 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 *nkibondo*, 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 warm 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 nkasako 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 metaphorized 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 surprised 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 Catalonia, 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 televised 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 patrilineal Northern region of Malawi contributes to the exploitation of women. In the other regions, which are matrilineal, 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 matrilineal 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. Jubilee 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 temporariness 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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