

# African Soccerscapes

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How a Continent Changed the World's Game

Peter Alegi

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## The Privatization of Football, 1980s to Recent Times

AS THE accelerating movement of leading African players to Europe illustrates, world football became increasingly commercialized, and globalized, during the 1990s. The advent of professional football in Britain in the 1880s and in continental Europe between the wars underscored the game's economic implications from its earliest days. But even in the consumer society of postwar Europe, commercialization of football remained quite limited. Only in the 1980s did Western European clubs move decisively toward maximizing revenues and turning themselves into brands.<sup>1</sup> Stadium advertising expanded, corporate logos adorned team uniforms, and ticket prices rose dramatically. Rising costs, partly due to players' wages, kept profits down until the epochal changes of the 1990s, when "football was transformed into a booming post-industrial service sector awash with money and hubris."<sup>2</sup> Television deregulation and the rise of new global communication technologies triggered this revolution.

The development of digital signals and compression technology, which allowed the transmission of multiple channels without costly bandwidth expansion, powered the rise of cable television and direct broadcast satellite (DBS) via small "dish" receivers in Europe and North America. The global reach and astounding profit potential of subscription-based TV, as historian Walter LaFeber notes, "blew apart governmental regulations and geographical boundaries."<sup>3</sup> Almost overnight, hugely lucrative broadcasting deals became the norm for European football. The newly formed English

Premier League (EPL) spearheaded this process in 1992, when it sold rights to live matches to Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB television for 304 billion pounds over five years. As the value of the EPL escalated and competition for TV rights intensified, Murdoch's company (later renamed Sky) renewed its contracts for 670 billion pounds in 1996 and a breathtaking 1.1 billion pounds in 2003. The EPL/Sky agreement became a model for leagues in Italy, Spain, France, and Germany, all of which experienced exponential growth in revenues. FIFA too filled its coffers with television money as it transformed itself from a nonprofit sports body to a multinational corporation with increasingly financial goals. Sale of World Cup broadcasting rights skyrocketed from 84 million pounds in 1998 to 1.16 billion pounds for both the 2002 and 2006 tournaments. Though on a much smaller scale, African soccer scenes underwent a comparable transformation.

### Commercialism and CAF Competitions

As shown in previous chapters, the goals of organizers, players, and coaches had not been exclusively sporting and social, but in the 1990s individuals, clubs, national associations, and CAF increasingly prioritized financial profits. Changes in the African Nations Cup, the continent's most venerable competition, clearly illustrate this shift. The final tournament had expanded to eight teams in 1968 (when it adopted a biennial schedule), twelve in 1992, and then sixteen in 1996. At the time of writing, the African Nations Cup had been staged twenty-six times and produced thirteen different winners: Egypt led the way with six titles (including the last two); Ghana four; Cameroon three; Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo two; and Tunisia, South Africa, Ivory Coast, Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia one each. The competition also recorded the largest crowd ever to watch a football match in Africa: more than one hundred thousand fans filled the International Stadium in Cairo in 1986 to witness Egypt's dramatic penalty shoot-out victory over Cameroon in the final. No other soccer tournament in Africa could match the Nations Cup popularity.

Between 1980 and 1988 the quasi-amateur form and ethos of the Nations Cup gave way to the forces of commercialism. In 1982, CAF rescinded the two-player limit on foreign-based professionals on each national team, and in 1984, private sponsors and commercial advertisements were allowed for the first time. The influx of overseas-based players improved the play of national teams, but it obscured the declining quality and health of African leagues. Also, European clubs routinely expressed dissatisfaction with the

departure of players for Nations Cup qualifying matches and finals staged every two years in January and February, critical months in the European football calendar. Africans in Europe continue to struggle with the difficult decision of whether to take care of their patriotic duties or stay at the club that pays their wages.

After Yidnecatchew Tessema's death in 1987, the new CAF president, Cameroonian Issa Hayatou, adopted a far more sympathetic approach to commercialism. Adidas and Coca-Cola, FIFA's main corporate partners, jumped at the chance to conquer new markets and turn millions of African fans into consumers of soft drinks, sports shoes, and sports clothing. Alcohol and tobacco companies, previously excluded under Tessema's regime, began advertising at the Nations Cup to turn more football fans into consumers of cigarettes, beer, and spirits. As a result of the influx of corporate sponsorships, CAF's premier competition began to look more and more like sporting megaevents in North America and Europe. But the enduring popularity and prestige of national football teams preserved the importance of the Nations Cup as a cultural vehicle for representing the "nation" and expressing patriotic pride.

As in Europe, television in Africa propelled the commercial development of football. Deregulation and technological improvements set off an explosion in the size of TV audiences in the 1990s.<sup>4</sup> While Nigeria had launched the first station on the continent in 1959, an example followed by the establishment of state TV services in many independent countries in subsequent decades (in some cases only in the 1980s), television in Africa had a history of being a medium for urban elites. As late as 1987 in Ivory Coast, for example, 82 percent of Abidjan residents had access to TV, compared with 22 percent in the rural areas. Access to TV in Africa was much more limited than in the industrialized world. By the mid- to late 1980s, there were just 160 transmitters on the entire continent and only one television set per hundred people. Europe, by comparison, had 21,800 transmitters, and Oceania's twenty-three million people had nearly seven million TV sets!

The new technologies brought DBS to Africa. The launch of new satellites (e.g., PanAmSat's PAS-4 in 1995 and PAS-7 in 1999, and Eutelsat's W<sub>4</sub> in 2000) provided coverage to sub-Saharan Africa, thus giving viewers potential access to dozens of new television channels. These technological innovations, coupled with "external pressures for economic restructuring and democratization, and increasing commercial interest in Africa as a television market,"<sup>5</sup> broke down government media monopolies.

Multichoice, a South African company owned by Naspers, the media conglomerate of the Afrikaner National Party during apartheid, rapidly emerged as the dominant satellite provider in Africa. Its DSTV business in South Africa alone grew at an astonishing rate: from forty-four thousand subscribers in 1998 to 1.7 million in 2008.<sup>6</sup> DSTV Africa is now available in nearly fifty countries. As part of its business strategy, Multichoice went to the extent of purchasing Pretoria City FC in 1994 and renamed it Supersport United. “The future of decoder purchases lies with the emerging market,” stated the company’s Web site, “and soccer is beyond doubt the most popular sport in South Africa. [We intend] to use the team as a marketing tool for the Supersport Television Channel that broadcasts sport into Africa.”<sup>7</sup> The arrival of privately owned satellite television in Africa boosted entertainment and sports programming at the expense of news and educational programming—the pillars of state-owned free-to-air TV broadcasting. Given that a hefty proportion of the new content was imported, critics contended that television acted as a force for Western cultural domination and neocolonialism.

There was, in fact, a huge increase in the number of hours of European football available on television as satellite providers relied on the game’s massive popularity on the continent to sell subscriptions.<sup>8</sup> Transnational channels like Supersport (in English) and Tv5 and Canal Horizon (in French) inundated Africa with continuous coverage of European games and highlight shows. The presence of African players and aggressive marketing enticed African viewers to watch the English Premier League and the European Champions League, as well as France’s Ligue 1, Italy’s Serie A, and Spain’s La Liga. These factors, combined with the “gap between African football and European football in terms of performance, [TV] production level, equipment and facilities,” resulted in European football (especially English) quickly replacing local football in the hearts and minds of millions of African fans. “The trouble started back in the early 1990s,” commented a Nigerian sportswriter. “When you look at the stadiums you’ll find that the stands are virtually empty, while the bars and the joints that have satellite TV are full. People will pay to watch the Premier League on TV but not to watch Nigerian football live.”<sup>9</sup> Glamorous, revenue-generating leagues and clubs are marginalizing various forms of nonelite football around the world, but the game in Africa is so acutely affected that sport scholar Gerard Akindele labeled it a form of “electronic colonialism.”<sup>10</sup>

Due to widespread poverty in Africa and the market dominance of European football, African spectators are being transformed into consumers

of imported football commodities. In South Africa, the continent's largest economy, local commodification of fandom is visible in the sale of Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates merchandise, ranging from replica jerseys, scarves, and caps to cell phones and life insurance. But many African football fans with disposable income express their status and identity as consumers of football by wearing European, not African, team jerseys, both the expensive branded originals and inexpensive knockoffs. Minibuses are highly public symbols of increasingly Eurocentric fandom in African cities. These private forms of public transport are often adorned with slogans, flags, pennants, scarves, photographs, and team colors of Manchester United, Liverpool, Arsenal, and the like. While fans in Europe are also being exposed and even exploited by capitalist football, in Africa the neo-colonial undertones of this process are distinctive: "It is the final triumph of a system of domination when the dominated start singing its virtues," writes the influential Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o.<sup>11</sup>

CAF's response to such tumultuous cultural and economic change was to transform the Nations Cup and the Champions League into commodified "sport products." To begin with, CAF sold both competitions' TV broadcasting rights to the highest bidder, whereas previously it had made them available for a nominal sum to African public broadcasters. In doing so, CAF followed in the footsteps of European football leagues and other sport cartels such as the National Football League and Major League Baseball in the United States. The first sale took place soon after Cameroon's outstanding performance at the 1990 World Cup. CAF signed a multiyear contract with MediaFoot, a subsidiary of the Darmon group (a major French sports marketing company) to manage the sale of TV rights for the African Nations Cup. A key player in the commercialization of French football in the 1970s and 1980s, Jean-Claude Darmon used market opportunities in Africa to "globalize" his company before taking it public in 1996 on the Paris stock exchange.<sup>12</sup>

CAF and the Darmon group reinvigorated their mutually profitable business relationship by striking a deal to manage the sale of broadcasting and marketing rights for the African Champions League (successor to the Champions Cup). "It was an act of faith by the Confederation of African Football and Jean-Claude Darmon's French-based marketing group Media Foot that launched the new-look tournament in 1997," reported *African Soccer* magazine, published in London from 1992 to 2004, "with guaranteed prize money of \$2.1m for the first time bringing serious money to the African club scene."<sup>13</sup>

To keep these figures in perspective, others have noted that the African Champions League “received TV rights income of less than 1 percent of its European equivalent and less than a quarter of the Arab Champions League.”<sup>14</sup> Modeled after the European Champions League, an expanded version of the Champions Cup, the CAF version sought to professionalize elite clubs and provide incentives for top footballers to stay in Africa. The competition opened with preliminary qualifying matches for clubs based in countries with low CAF rankings, which were followed by two knockout rounds played on a home-and-away basis, from which eight teams were divided into two mini-leagues, the winners of which contested the two-leg final.

Commodification was most obvious in the Champions League’s introduction of unprecedented sums of prize money. For the first time, sporting success was given a hard cash value. For example, qualification to the mini-league stage was worth \$150,000, with clubs standing to gain \$11,500 for each point earned (one for a draw, three for a win). Obuasi Goldfields (Ghana) and Raja Casablanca (Morocco) each received \$225,000 for reaching the inaugural final. Raja won on penalties and received the \$450,000 winners’ bonus. Prize money increased to \$3 million in 1998. In 2001, the Champions League was expanded to sixty-four teams. Twelve countries entered two teams (the league champion and runner-up) based on results from CAF club competitions in the previous five years. Semi-final matches were introduced after the group stage, and the winners’ share reached \$1 million.<sup>15</sup>

By 2000, CAF and Darmon were sufficiently pleased with their business relationship that they signed a new \$50 million contract, thereby extending the French company’s marketing and media rights to the African Nations Cup through 2008. Fortified by its African football operations, the Darmon group then merged in 2001 with Vivendi-owned Canal Plus and Bertelsmann-owned RTL to form Sportfive, a sports media and marketing giant that “would manage the rights of 320 clubs around the world, more than 40 national football associations and leagues.”<sup>16</sup> Sportfive and CAF recently prolonged their agreement until the 2016 African Nations Cup.<sup>17</sup>

The leadership of CAF was not the only African interest group shaping the partial privatization of football. For example, Christian Laginde, a former footballer and founder of La Cellule 2 (LC2), a private TV station in Benin, acquired the rights from Sportfive to show the African Nations Cup in Africa. In 2006, the perils of privatization became clear when state broadcasters in Guinea Bissau, Malawi, Republic of Congo, and several



other countries were unable (or unwilling) to pay high provider fees to LC2. As a result, millions of viewers in those countries who had previously had access to the matches on free-to-air TV could not watch the tournament. This episode illustrates how provider fees are far more important in sub-Saharan Africa, a region where, unlike Europe, there are few middle-class consumers who can pay for home subscriptions and thus generate advertising revenues for the media companies. The changing mediascape also reveals the extent to which African sport and media organizations are willing participants in a global business that aims to sell its product to smaller but far more profitable pay-TV audiences.

The television revolution established the dominance, if not the legitimacy, of commercial football in Africa. In addition to selling broadcasting rights to its competitions, CAF also signed lucrative sponsorship deals with transnational corporations. Coca-Cola, for instance, was named official sponsor of the finals in South Africa in 1996 and in Burkina Faso in 1998. Cellular phone manufacturer Nokia took over the role in 2004. South African companies also entered the market. Most notably, between 2002 and 2004 MTN, Africa's leading cell-phone provider in terms of revenue (owned by Naspers like Multichoice/DSTV), acquired naming rights to both the Champions League and the Nations Cup. The latter deal was reportedly worth \$12 million through 2008. MTN's corporate branding of Africa's premier football competitions calls attention to South Africa's increasingly subimperial role on the continent. In 2001, South Africa's export-import ratio with countries of the Southern African Development Community was 9:1, and it continues to grow. "South African corporations have moved with speed into Uganda, Swaziland, Lesotho, Tanzania, and Rwanda," scholars Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed note, "where they are running railroads, managing airports, providing cell phone services, or controlling banks, breweries, supermarkets and hotels."<sup>18</sup>

### African Football as a Global Business: Impact and Aftermath

The commercial imperatives of mass media and corporate sponsors, assisted by football administrators at various levels, have integrated Africa more fully into the networks of global capitalist sport. In the words of Lucas Radebe, former captain of South Africa and Leeds United: "Football is not a pastime for us. It's big business."<sup>19</sup> But is this a "good thing"?

Privatization exacerbated the problem of competitive imbalance at both national team and club level. The list of champions is illustrative. Since

the Nations Cup's initial opening to commercial influences in 1984, Egypt and Cameroon have each won it four times (61 percent), while five nations (Algeria, Tunisia, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, and South Africa) have won it once. The hegemony of a few wealthy and popular teams extended to club football. During the Champions Cup era (1964–96), eleven nations produced twenty-three different winners. West and Central Africa produced the most champions in the 1960s and 1970s, while North African sides won fourteen times (out of sixteen) in 1981–96, including a streak of eleven consecutive titles (1984–94). In the Champions League era, however, just three clubs claimed eight of eleven titles (73 percent): Al Ahly (2001, 2005, 2006, 2008), Raja Casablanca (1997, 1999), and Enyimba (2003–4).

Satellite TV coverage of the African Nations Cup and Champions League exposes talent to a vast global audience, links Africans abroad, and further accelerates migration overseas.<sup>20</sup> In recent years, the biennial Nations Cup has attracted large numbers of foreign coaches, talent scouts, and sports agents who are eager to recruit the next Michael Essien or Emmanuel Adebayor. Unsurprisingly, many Africa-based players have come to view the tournament mainly as a platform to launch overseas careers. In response, CAF launched the new biennial African Nations Championship, reserved for home-based players. DR Congo won the first eight-team competition in 2009 in Ivory Coast, and Sudan is scheduled to host an expanded sixteen-team edition in 2011. It remains to be seen whether the Nations Championship will help to curtail the exodus of players overseas or whether it will become another platform to showcase African talent for export. In the end, the rapid commercialization of elite football signals the paradox of incorporation into world capitalist sport for African fans, athletes, and organizers, whereby their “economic and political dependence on industrialized nations is both their best hope for the future and a leading cause of their underdevelopment.”<sup>21</sup>

The growing influence of business interests in the African game has widened inequalities in wealth and worsened the long-running problem of competitive imbalance in African leagues. In South Africa, for instance, where the Premier Soccer League in 2007–8 secured multiyear TV and marketing deals worth 1.6 billion rand (approximately \$200 million), Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates and, to a lesser extent, Mamelodi Sundowns and Supersport United are dominant clubs. “These are drawn principally from Gauteng [Johannesburg/Pretoria area], by far the richest province,” comments sociologist Merryman Kunene, “which reaps the largest crowds and

most lucrative sponsorships, leaving teams from the other metropolises—and particularly from the more rural areas of the country—in their wake.”<sup>22</sup>

The effect of commercialization on football administration cannot be overlooked. As national football bureaucracies lost their quasi-absolute grip on power and revenues, corruption and graft hardly diminished. “Football clubs and associations are places of clientelist pervasion, and of criminal acts. Scandals about embezzled money are very common,” observes political scientist Andreas Mehler.<sup>23</sup> As in the past, individuals enter football administration to create and maintain patronage networks and launch political careers. What is markedly different in contemporary Africa is how privatization offers unprecedented opportunities for cashing in on the game. In South Africa, the executive committee of the Premier Soccer League awarded itself a 50-million-rand “fee” for securing a huge new sponsorship deal worth ten times that amount. In many countries, it is widely believed that club patrons bribe referees to gain favorable treatment for their side. Elsewhere, coaches are known to expect payment from players in exchange for a place in a top club or the national team. With so much money at stake, it is no wonder that political meddling in football administration has intensified and even led to suspension from FIFA in the case of Kenya, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Madagascar, and Chad. Greed, shoddy organization, and callous indifference toward spectator safety were major causal factors in a series of stadium disasters that cost the lives of more than two hundred fans in Accra, Johannesburg, and Lubumbashi in 2001, and in Abidjan in 2009.<sup>24</sup>

The entrance of local business tycoons and the greater involvement of domestic and foreign companies at the elite level in some cases did challenge old hierarchies and encourage the professionalization of sport management. Increasingly, top clubs in Africa today are owned by private interests, although government ownership, in full or in part, remains common. In South Africa, billionaire Patrice Motsepe bought Pretoria-based Sun-downs FC in 2003, gaining total control of the club in 2004. A lawyer by training, Motsepe became astronomically rich after the end of apartheid as chairman of African Rainbow Minerals, the country’s first black-owned mining company. The involvement of “big men” in soccer was not a new phenomenon in South Africa. In the turbulent 1980s, for example, Kaizer Motaung, owner of Kaizer Chiefs, and Jomo Sono, owner of Jomo Cosmos, were football entrepreneurs who symbolized growing black power in sport and society.<sup>25</sup> But unlike Motaung and Sono, Motsepe was not a famous

former footballer building a sport business empire. Motsepe's acquisition of Sundowns was a personal extravagance that symbolized the rise of a new black capitalist class in postapartheid South Africa.

In Cameroon, the arrival of private capital in football coincided with the rise of Coton Sport, a club founded in 1986 in Garoua, a city of three hundred thousand inhabitants. Backed by the financial muscle of a large agricultural corporation in North Province, Coton Sport gained a reputation for being a well-managed, professional club. In 1993, it won promotion into the top tier of Cameroonian football. It paid decent wages and boasted good stadium and training facilities, which made it an attractive club for top Cameroonian players. A mere four years later, Coton Sport was national champion, a feat it repeated in 1998 and seven more times after that, including a run of five consecutive titles (2004–8). Coton Sport ended the decades-long dominance of clubs from Yaoundé and Douala and returned Cameroonian clubs to international respectability when it the final of the 2003 Confederation Cup and the 2008 Champions League.

A revealing case from Nigeria draws attention to the impact and aftermath of privatizing government-owned clubs. Orji Uzor Kalu, an ambitious local businessman elected governor of Abia State in 1999, transformed Enyimba International FC into a hugely successful club with a demonstrably entrepreneurial ethos. Founded in 1976 in the southeastern city of Aba (population 867,000), Enyimba was taken over by the Abia State government in 1991. After a decade of unremarkable achievements, between 2001 and 2007 the club suddenly won five Nigerian league championships, consecutive CAF Champions League titles (2003, 2004) and CAF Super Cups (2004, 2005). Kalu backed the construction of a floodlit twenty-five-thousand-seat stadium with covered grandstands. The governor then turned the former government-owned club into a commercial vehicle. "Enyimba has become a brand, well equipped to become part of the broader entertainment industry," states the club's official Web site. "Any advertising partnership with one of Africa's best known and most popular soccer brands will enable you [a potential sponsor] to achieve significant economic results, increase profitability and maximize shareholders value."<sup>26</sup> Enyimba's astounding sporting success powered Kalu's "big man" politics.<sup>27</sup> He expanded his network of patron-client relationships and made a bold but ultimately unsuccessful run for the country's presidency in the flawed elections of 2007. The connections between football and his political career ended abruptly with Kalu's arrest on money-laundering charges.

By the time private business interests came to dominate twenty-first-century African football, the game at the grassroots level had suffered a dramatic decline. Governments disengaged from “social sport” in the 1980s, a time of acute economic crisis and political change in Africa. The proximate causes could be traced back to the global oil shocks of the 1970s, which ushered in anemic economic growth, spiraling foreign debt, huge budget deficits, and political instability. In exchange for desperately needed loans to fund basic functions of government, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund imposed strict conditions on African countries under the rubric of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). These programs required African governments to make drastic cuts in social spending (military spending was exempt) and to open their markets to competition from foreign private corporations. For African nation-states, “by the end of the 1980s, the freedom of action which seemed to come with independence had narrowed to the point of becoming a virtual fiction.”<sup>28</sup> Massive cuts in government spending for health care and education mandated by the SAPs had dire social consequences. Most Africans experienced a tangible deterioration in their standard of living, and many struggled to get by. Many state-funded sport programs at school, youth, and amateur levels simply disappeared.

### Football Academies

The vacuum created by the sudden withdrawal of the public sector from social sport was a critical factor in the establishment of football academies.<sup>29</sup> As we saw in the previous chapter, Africa had a long history of clubs, coaches, and programs operating locally such as the Portuguese feeder teams in Angola and Mozambique, and of exporting football labor to Europe. Darby, Akindes, and Kirwin describe four types of academies in Africa: those founded and operated by African clubs and football associations; Afro-European joint ventures; privately sponsored academies; and ad hoc academies.<sup>30</sup>

The most successful African club academy is MimoSifcom of ASEC Mimosas (*Académie Sportive des Employés de Commerce*, established 1948) Abidjan. Founded in 1994 by Roger Ouégnin, President of ASEC, and French coach Jean-Marc Guillou, the academy was conceived as a joint venture between ASEC Mimosas and AS Monaco (the latter eventually pulled out). The original arrangement showed, among other things, how privatization in the 1990s sparked the creation of transnational networks of

coaches, scouts, and administrators.<sup>31</sup> The academy provides both specialized football training and an education for select teenagers from the ages of thirteen to seventeen. Guillou, a former coach of AS Monaco, offered this explanation for moving to Ivory Coast: "I wanted to work with talented youngsters rather than in France with calculating and unmotivated young Frenchmen. Football is about passion and that is what makes Africa so special."<sup>32</sup> The goal of MimoSifcom, whose Sol Béni campus is in M'pouto near Abidjan, was to produce elite players for Mimosas' professional team and the Ivoirian national team (the Elephants). Financing for the project came from the sale of top players to European clubs and from annual private sponsorships of four hundred thousand dollars. The academy has yielded tremendous results. Since its launch, ASEC Mimosas has won eleven national titles (seven in a row in 2000–2006), seven Ivoirian Cups, the African Champions League (1998), and the African Super Cup (1999). This last triumph came with a team comprising eleven teenagers who defeated an experienced Espérance of Tunis in the final.

The academy has earned ASEC an international reputation as a major exporter of players to Europe. Among the most notable are brothers Kolo and Yaya Touré of Arsenal and Barcelona, respectively. "We learned football well, and I think there's a lot of proof of that," said Kolo Touré, the older brother. "It formed me a lot as a player, and as an adult. After I was spotted playing in my home town I was picked up by the academy, where I stayed for five years, attending five days a week. It wasn't just football, we went to school there as well. Everything was given to us, we didn't have to pay for anything, which was fantastic."<sup>33</sup> The Touré brothers went to KSK Beveren, ASEC's Belgian partner, before moving on to England and Spain. Other high-profile "academicians" (as ASEC alumni are called in Ivory Coast) currently in Europe include Emmanuel Eboué of Arsenal (again via Beveren), Salomon Kalou of Chelsea (via Feyenoord Rotterdam in the Netherlands), and Aruna Dindane of Lens (via Anderlecht in Belgium).

Ghana's youth development, which has depended on underresourced under-seventeen "Colts" leagues since the 1970s, relies on local clubs as well as academies. In 1996–97, businessman El Hadj Sly Tetteh founded Liberty Professionals in Accra, which competes in the Premier Division. Tetteh's main goal was to produce players for Ghana's junior and senior national teams and for export. Today, former Liberty players compete at the highest level in England (e.g., Michael Essien), France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Greece.

Ghana also hosts the second type of academy in Africa: the Afro-European partnership. Feyenoord Fetteh Football Academy outside Accra opened its doors in 1999. With the approval of the Ghanaian government and local chiefs in Fetteh, the Dutch club “Feyenoord adopted a classic neo-colonial industrial strategy . . . that would provide a steady stream of raw talent.”<sup>34</sup> Feyenoord Fetteh borrowed from the ASEC model to provide aspiring professional footballers with schooling.<sup>35</sup> “The boys are up by 5:30am. They train between 6:00 and 7:30am and by 9am they are in classes for serious academic work,” said Technical Director Sam Arday. “They return for lunch and siesta. Between 3:00 and 5:00pm they are back on the field training. Then they take a shower, have dinner, do their homework, watch TV and by 9:00pm—it is bedtime.”<sup>36</sup> But ultimately the academy is geared towards exporting players, a strategy that keeps costs down for European clubs and helps create a transnational identity for them. In the words of business writer Gideon Rachman, “A good geographical spread of players helps to build a global brand.”<sup>37</sup>

The first West African academy set up in cooperation with a European side was the Centre Aldo Gentina in Senegal, named after an elderly Italian pastry shop owner, football fan, and Dakar resident since the 1930s who convinced AS Monaco to fund the project with annual grants of one hundred thousand pounds. El Hadj Malick Sy, president of the Senegalese Football Federation, formally established the Gentina academy in 1992–93 as a joint venture between venerable Dakar club Jeanne D’Arc and AS Monaco. “I decided something ought to be done to develop football,” said Malick Sy. “Kids just played in the street, like in Brazil, and when you watch them you can see how much potential there is.” “The academy has changed my life,” said AS Monaco and Senegal goalkeeper Tony Sylva. “You can’t imagine how difficult life can be—going to train when you are hungry, walking home without a penny in your pocket. Being in the academy, you immediately felt you were privileged.”<sup>38</sup> Over the years, the Gentina academy has become a key source of talent for clubs in the Senegalese first division, the national team (Lions), and French clubs as well. Five members of the 2002 World Cup Senegal side that famously defeated France, its former colonial master, came from Gentina. Ironically, every Senegalese starter in that match was employed by a French club.

Ajax Cape Town in South Africa stands out as another kind of Afro-European partnership. Founded in 1999 after the merger of two Cape Town clubs, Seven Stars and Cape Town Spurs, this club is jointly owned and



operated by Ajax Amsterdam and a South African group led by businessman John Comitis. It has been moderately successful in domestic competitions, winning the 2007 ABSA Cup and 2000 Rothmans Cup and finishing second twice in the Premier Soccer League. So far, only Steven Pienaar has made the move from Cape Town to Amsterdam (later joining Everton in England). So despite its efforts to function as a feeder team for the metropolitan club, Ajax Cape Town has not been as successful as some of its West African counterparts.

In West Africa, privately run academies are significant. Among the former professional players who have opened academies, the most successful has probably been Salif Keita (see chapter 5), who returned to Mali in 1985 after a great career overseas and took up a coaching director position with the national football federation. Exasperated by the lack of cooperation from federation officials, Keita resigned and set out on his own. In 1993, he launched the Salif Keita Football Center (SKFC). Like Guillou at ASEC, Keita built working relationships with French clubs (Auxerre and Angers). But he continued to directly control the academy himself. In 1995, SKFC entered a team in Mali's top league as part of its strategy to nurture the growth and development of local football and groom players for the national team. Another West African academy organized by former professionals is the Diambars Institute in Senegal. Bernard Lama and Jimmy Adjovi Boco (later joined by Patrick Vieira and Saer Seck) used a grant of about thirty-seven acres of land from Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade to create a football school. It opened in 2004 and now receives funding from public and private sources, including UNESCO, the governments of Norway and France, Cadbury, and Adidas. The impact of educational programs at academies awaits future research.

Private individuals without a past as professional footballers have also opened academies. For example, French entrepreneur Philippe Ezri developed Planète Champion Internationale in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. When Paris Saint-Germain FC, the original partner, ended its participation in the mid-1990s, Ezri funded it personally with the assistance of Burkinabé president Blaise Compaoré, a self-declared football aficionado. The focus of Planète Champion, others have noted, "is very much on nurturing the recruits' football abilities and selling them to the highest overseas bidder. As a result, the schooling that the students at the academy receive is often far from rigorous."<sup>39</sup>

Corporate-sponsored centers are another group of privately run football academies. In a suburb of Lagos, Nigeria, Kashimawo Laloko founded a



football school in 1992 with state government funding. Two years later, the school obtained corporate sponsorship and became the Pepsi Football Academy. Today, the Pepsi Football Academy today comprises a national network of fourteen centers with fifty-four coaches training more than three thousand boys from the ages of six to eighteen. Graduates of the Pepsi Academy system currently play in a dozen European countries, as well as in Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Tunisia. In 2006, Laloko launched the Football College in Orile Imo in western Nigeria, which combines secondary school education with football development. A similar model has existed in South Africa since 1994 at the Transnet/SAFA School of Excellence, a social responsibility initiative by the government-owned transport giant. Another example of a prominent company-sponsored academy is the Brasseries Academy in Cameroon, funded by the national brewery.

Ad hoc academies are the largest, most problematic, and least documented group of Africa's football cottage industry. These have been aptly described as "private, nonaffiliated academies [that] expose young Africans to the greed of noncertified agents who are able to acquire recruits cheaply and convince them to sign exploitative contracts if they are successful during their trials."<sup>40</sup> There are hundreds of these informal academies across the continent: 150 in Senegal alone! A group of them from seven African countries recently came together to form an unofficial Confederation of African Football Academies, which organizes tournaments to showcase young talents to coaches, scouts, and agents. Clearly, the ad hoc academies are the most dangerous for young players because they are unregulated, underresourced, and highly susceptible to abuse.

Despite some ambivalence, African governments have generally welcomed the rise of the football academy industry. Political leaders and parties appreciate how academies partially offset government cuts in social services as they train top players who often end up strengthening national teams. By doing so, the academies can enhance the prestige of nation-states and keep alive the construct of the proud and unified "nation." However, the social costs of academies deserve scrutiny.

The football academy has been criticized as a modern-day plantation. It is "a form of neo-colonial exploitation in that it involves the sourcing, refinement, and export of raw materials, in this case African football talent, for consumption and wealth generation in the European core. The process results in the impoverishment of the African periphery."<sup>41</sup> For the thousands of young boys not good enough for admission to the academies or unable to

reach the professional ranks, the future looks bleak. The exclusionary process inherent in the football business has serious consequences for football and society. “For every Aruna Dindane who makes the leap from ASEC to Anderlecht in the Belgian top division,” writes Chadian football journalist Emmanuel Maradas, “there are thousands of others investing millions of hours of practice—time that could be spent on school work or learning another trade—without even reaching the first hurdle. Only a handful out of each year’s intake to the top schools will ever make a living from football. The rest are destined to be turned loose at 18 to fend for themselves.”<sup>42</sup>

## Women’s Football

Although football has always been dominated by men, this has become even more true as the sport in Africa has commercialized. The hypermasculine nature of today’s football has curtailed opportunities for girls and women to play, coach, referee, and administer the game. Until the 1990s, governments, businesses, and football associations dominated by men did not support women’s football in Africa. This marginalization stood in dramatic contrast to the situation in track and field, netball, basketball, team handball, and other sports where women became very active and their participation very popular.

Scholarly analysis of the history and culture of the female game on the continent is greatly complicated by a lack of documentary sources and publications.<sup>43</sup> Even the FIFA-sponsored 383-page *Le Football en Afrique* (published in December 2008) devotes just one paragraph to the women’s game! Scarcity of data notwithstanding, social scientists Martha Saavedra and Cynthia Pelak have produced groundbreaking studies that allow us to chart a basic chronology and to identify key issues and themes in selected African countries. “Women’s football has been met with skepticism, neglect and sometimes outright hostility. Yet women’s football has nonetheless emerged,” Saavedra shows.<sup>44</sup>

Pelak’s periodization of African women’s football is helpful: emergence and development (1970s–1980s), growth and transition (1990s), and institutionalization (2000–present). This chronology does not mean that informal matches did not take place prior to the 1970s. Women in Nigeria were playing as early as 1943, according to a report published in the *Nigerian Spokesman* newspaper on October 20, 1943:

In response to the demand of the people of Onitsha, the Sierra Leonean friendly Society has started to make arrangements for

the replay of the ladies' football match which so thrilled the township recently. Good news for football enthusiasts. . . . It was the first of its kind to be staged in Onitsha." Fine show but not up to the standard of boys soccer. "It seemed odd to some to see our women in shorts kicking a football about the field, or clashing with one another after the manner of men . . . but the game itself, when it came to be played, exploded all the fantastic theories some malevolent individuals had concocted about it, and it was a colossal success both in the fun that it provided and on the financial side of it.

By 1960 and Nigeria's independence, there were women's teams in Jos, Lagos, Calabar, Onitsha, Kanu, Enugu, and other towns.<sup>45</sup> In South Africa in 1962, a group of high school girls in Soweto, led by Jessie Maseko, made an unsuccessful attempt to run an Orlando Pirates Women's Football Club. A similar short-lived effort took place in Cape Town, where Mother City Girls played before men's matches and competed successfully against boys' teams. It was not until the 1970s, at the same time that the women's game in the West expanded considerably, that some women in Senegal and South Africa began regularly playing football, and that in Nigeria official leagues got underway. In general, countries with larger populations and economies were more likely to have women playing football. As in Europe, the male-dominated football establishment in Africa showed little, if any, interest in the women's game, so it was left up to the perseverance and passion of male and female fans to organize the first teams.<sup>46</sup>

The case of the Dakar Gazelles illustrates this trend. According to Saavedra, Eliot Khouma, a football coach at the Sacre Coeur (Sacred Heart) school, organized a girls' team in 1974. With the help of an Italian friend, Khouma brought a women's side from Milan to Dakar that year. The Gazelles practiced for one month and lost 2–5 to the Italians, but gained a degree of respect for the female game in Senegal. As a result, the Gazelles received funding from the Dakar municipality (as well as a symbolic sum from the Senegal Football Federation) that enabled them to play a series of matches around the country against boys' teams. This tour popularized women's football and led to the founding of new teams. In 1979, the Gazelles defeated visiting Guinea 3–1 in what may have been the first international women's match between Africans. A decade later the Senegalese team traveled to tournaments in Italy and Ivory Coast.

Organized women's football in Nigeria developed along similar lines. Individual initiatives led to the rise of teams and competitions with little, if any, assistance from the Nigerian Football Association. As in the case of Khouma's Gazelles, a male coach, Christopher Akintunde Abisuga, founded a pioneering club called the Sugar Babes Ladies FC in Lagos in 1978. Lacking local female opposition, the Sugar Babes played against boys' teams in Lagos and elsewhere in the country. These games spawned many new women's teams across southern Nigeria. Despite passionate and enthusiastic players, as well as sponsorship from Abisuga's employer, Nigeria Hotels Limited, the Sugar Babes lasted only a few years. According to their coach, "Nigeria was not ready for women's football and FIFA was not supportive."<sup>47</sup>

By 1989, however, there were twenty-eight women's clubs active in Nigeria, including Jegede Babes, founded and operated by Princess Bola Jegede, as well as a Nigerian Female Football Organizers Association. Princess Jegede, a wealthy entrepreneur, financed the first major women's tournament in 1990 in Lagos with the seal of approval of the Nigerian FA. This historic tournament led to the selection of the first national team, nicknamed the Super Falcons, which was Africa's representative at the first Women's World Cup in 1991.

Developments in the women's game in South Africa in the late 1960s and 1970s differed from those in West Africa in that apartheid afforded affluent young white women opportunities to play football while denying all but a few "black" (which is to say, African, Coloured, and Indian) women the chance to do so.<sup>48</sup> Within the privileged context of white society, football reconfigured notions of femininity and led to new forms of female empowerment. "Like their counterparts in North America and Europe, during the 1970s," Pelak points out, "South African women of European ancestry challenged gender expectations and forged new opportunities and identities in soccer." These developments inspired the formation of the South African Women's Football Association (SAWFA). With an initial membership of about six hundred players, SAWFA was more than 80 percent white, with some African and Coloured players distributed among the white-run teams. The apartheid government permitted this limited racial mixing for two reasons: the small number of participants involved and South Africa's desire to reenter international sport. In 1975, SAWFA launched a national interprovince women's tournament variously staged in Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town. Natal won twelve of sixteen national titles through 1990.

The women's game in Africa and around the world grew by leaps and bounds in the 1990s as it transitioned from its takeoff stage toward institutionalization.

In Nigeria, women's football flourished.<sup>49</sup> Commercial sponsorships were unusually plentiful, including such corporate brands as Pepsi-Cola and 7Up, and many players signed professional contracts. Such a vibrant national female football culture stemmed from the involvement of women at all levels of the sport, as players, referees, administrators, fans, club owners, and sponsors. The only region of the country where the game was held back was in two deeply conservative areas of the predominantly Muslim north, where official bans were imposed on women playing football. Interestingly, Islamic identity brought no similar restrictions in Senegal, which is 90 percent Muslim. In fact, Dakar, St. Louis, Theis, Mbacke, and Kaolack and other towns in Senegal saw women's clubs, tournaments, and leagues develop in spite of very limited material and moral support from the Senegal Football Federation. In 1994, the Gazelles won the first national tournament. In Kenya, where a dozen teams had come to life in the 1980s, two local women, Fridah Shiroya and Rebecca Olela, established the Kenya Women's Football Federation in 1993. It sponsored a national team that competed in various international tournaments until 1996, when the male-controlled Kenya Football Federation, in accordance with FIFA demands, created a subcommittee for women's football and forced the KWFF to cease operations.

In South Africa, where apartheid finally gave way to democracy, more women were playing the game than ever before: about 67,000 in 1997. The demographics of the sport also underwent a seismic shift. Black African women became the majority of players, as "their new sense of freedom encouraged them to challenge male dominance in sports in their own local communities."<sup>50</sup> The democratization of women's soccer in South Africa sparked a mass exodus of white women out of the game. By 1998, no whites played for Banyana Banyana, the women's national team (although some have returned recently). As in the Kenyan case, the male-run South Africa Football Association (SAFA) absorbed the women's game into its structures in the mid-1990s and relegated it to second-class status. For feminist practitioners and scholars, this move reflected how the "growth of women's soccer poses a significant challenge to the gender status quo and men's collective sense of entitlement to control the sport."<sup>51</sup>

The boom in women's soccer around the world in the 1990s and 2000s fueled the creation of women's leagues and clubs and the further strengthening of the game in Africa. In Senegal, the SFF finally changed its approach. It charged Françoise Seck, a tireless advocate for women's football, with the

task of setting up a national women's league. Thanks to the belated support of the SFF, the league expanded from ten teams in 2001 to twenty in 2003. In Kenya, too, there were positive developments as ten-team women's leagues began play in Nairobi in 2002 and two years later in Mombasa, where the sponsor was the auto dealership Lota Motors. In Nigeria and South Africa, corporate sponsorships have increased substantially. In 2008, the telecom firm Etisalat reportedly paid the Nigerian Football Federation \$3.3 million to sponsor the National Women's League. In 2009 in South Africa, the ABSA Women's League was launched thanks to the sponsorship of a financial services giant actively involved in men's football. It remains to be seen whether these sponsorships will lead to women's leagues long-term sustainability.

At the continental level, CAF organized the first official African Women's Championship in Nigeria in 1998 with strong encouragement from FIFA and corporate sponsors. Having won unofficial tournaments in 1991 and 1995, the host nation took the first of what would become five consecutive continental crowns, a streak interrupted in 2008 by Equatorial Guinea. Nigeria also participated in five FIFA Women's World Cup finals, with its best result a quarterfinal finish in 1999. Striker Mercy Akide symbolized Nigeria's success. FIFA rated her "the most famous name in African women's football, and one of the most dangerous attacking players of the past decade."<sup>52</sup> Born in Port Harcourt in 1975, Akide learned to play the game with neighborhood boys. Her parents, she told *African Soccer*, "rather than scold me, . . . gave me all their support and encouragement. In fact, my dad bought me my first pair of boots."<sup>53</sup> Akide joined a local team and subsequently moved to Lagos to play for Jegede Babes. Her performances in the 1999 World Cup in the United States earned Akide a four-year scholarship to Milligan College in Tennessee along with Super Falcon teammate Florence Omagbemi. In 2003, Akide joined the San Diego Spirit of the WUSA professional league. In 2004, she was invited to play on a FIFA Women's All-Star Team against Germany as part of the world body's centenary celebrations. Akide put African women on the global football map.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, CAF's commitment to the women's game has deepened. In 2002, it organized the first Under-20 Women's Championship, and in 2008 it launched the Under-17 Women's Championship, two competitions that Nigeria has dominated so far. The creation of the CAF Female Player of the Year award was another milestone. In 2008, the honor went to nineteen-year-old South African striker Noko Alice Matlou.

While the private sector contributed to the growth of women's football at the elite level in several countries, the game's future development requires moral support and financial assistance from governments and the football establishment. "Most African women have overwhelming and intensive household reproductive obligations that leave little time to regularly play and develop skills in football," Saavedra notes, a problem compounded by "the lack of minimal resources [that] also prohibits participation in and organization of football."<sup>54</sup> Attitudes are changing, albeit very slowly. "On the executive level there is recognition that women's football has to be treated a whole lot more seriously than it had been in the past," a male official of the South African Football Association told Cynthia Pelak. "But, how to translate that into real action is another matter. Because, you know, we are not quite sure if everyone is as committed to that as they say they are on paper."<sup>55</sup> This political commitment to gender equity is crucial to put the women's game on firm institutional footing: "Organizing sport needs strong, well-managed institutions run by committed and skilled people who want a fair system that gives all young players the chance to represent their country and play at the highest level."<sup>56</sup>

The rollback of government assistance in sport in the 1990s paved the way for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations, as well as corporate social responsibility initiatives, to step in as providers of basic needs and services, including sport and physical education. One of the most prominent NGOs active in sport and development projects is the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), based in a huge slum of Nairobi, Kenya.<sup>57</sup> In 2006, it organized 250 girls' teams with over thirty-five hundred players.<sup>58</sup> Football affords some girls in the slum an opportunity to enliven their dull daily routines and also gain "access to the dynamic, action-oriented world typically reserved for boys."<sup>59</sup> This pioneering program, founded in 1992 by Bob Munro, a Canadian, is currently funded by local and international sources. It also fields professional teams in both the men's and women's national leagues. In the absence of a national football development agenda, MYSA also acts as a feeder program for Nairobi's other female teams, as well as the national team. This sport development program enjoys the support of most Mathare parents. As one mother put it:

"I saw there was no need to stop her, since she thought it was good for her and it was a new thing, this sports. Who knows





FIGURE 4 Author coaching in Khayelitsha, South Africa, 1993

maybe this sport may help her in [the] future.” She continued by highlighting the integration of sport with health and environmental programs: “What I like is the way take these young children and not only train them in football but they are also taught about many things. For example, Lydia told me that there are usually programs where they are taught about AIDS, how they can take care of themselves as young girls . . . [They also] participate in clean-up activities and picking up rubbish.”<sup>60</sup>

Another NGO in Kenya that works with girls’ football is Moving the Goalposts (MTG), based in Kilifi, Coast Province. Founded in 2000 by Sarah Forde, a former reporter and soccer coach from England, MTG currently has three thousand girls playing, coaching, refereeing, and administering football clubs, tournaments, and leagues. Like MYSA, it espouses a sport for social uplift mission, with a special focus on issues related to reproductive health.

MYSA, MTG, and other NGOs in Africa are demonstrating how the future of African women’s football hinges less on commercial leagues or supposed cultural barriers and more on the need to develop infrastructure, expand funding and access, and struggle for greater gender equality. As Sarah Forde argues, without this kind of “significant change” the women’s



game faces an insecure future at best. Even a top player, writes Forde, may well “end up living in one of the slums in Mombasa or Nairobi, scraping together a living, playing football at weekends, maybe playing for the national team, squabbling over allowances and feeling demoralized by the game she loves so passionately.”

IN THE era of commodified sport and diminishing opportunities for voluntary leisure, as opposed to the “forced” leisure caused by long-term unemployment, neighborhood games and school sport are important vehicles for young people’s socialization and recreation. In contemporary urban Senegal, for example, *nawetaan* youth clubs operate area soccer teams and championships outside government control. Through *nawetaan* football, Senegalese “young people foster a sense of social commitment, public spirit, and democratic process, but also participate in riots and violent acts. . . . They are citizens and anti-citizens.”<sup>61</sup> While commercial and civic football exist side by side, the sustainability of both high performance and grassroots football in Africa requires government funds and political support. “Only in recent times have private companies begun to show an interest in football because they have twigged that there is a lot of reflected success in football,” said Michael Chiti, the former chairman of the Zambian Football Association. “There will, however, never be a situation in which the involvement of the government is superfluous. After all, football is a matter of national pride. And when national pride is at stake then the involvement of the government is necessary.”<sup>62</sup> Nowhere is this more evident than in South Africa’s hosting of the 2010 World Cup.

## South Africa 2010

*The World Cup Comes to Africa*

THE END of apartheid and the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994 seemed to infuse soccer with the spirit of what Nobel Peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu called “rainbow nationalism”—the idea that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white,” to borrow from the Freedom Charter, the blueprint for the liberation struggle adopted in 1955. This inclusive vision of South African citizenship and identity was a founding principle of the National Soccer League in 1985, a league that desegregated the professional game in the midst of a tumultuous decade many feared would lead to racial bloodshed and civil war. Then formerly antagonistic football associations from across the color line came together in a lengthy “unity process” that culminated in the formation of a nonracial South African Football Association (SAFA) on December 8, 1991, a few days before the Convention for a Democratic South Africa held its first session to write the country’s new constitution.

As the “negotiated revolution” progressed, the sport boycott ended and South Africa re-entered international sport. In January 1992 in Dakar, the Confédération africaine de football (CAF) welcomed South Africa back into the fold, thus paving the way for readmission to FIFA. To celebrate the occasion, on July 7, 1992, at Durban’s King’s Park stadium, South Africa’s first integrated national team, nicknamed Bafana Bafana (Zulu for “the Boys”) defeated visiting Cameroon 1–0. Later that month, in Barcelona, Spain, South African athletes participated in the Olympics for the first time in thirty-two years. On April 27–28, 1994, millions of black South Africans

voted in a national election for the first time, and the African National Congress (ANC) won a resounding victory as Mandela became the country's first black president.

Like Kwame Nkrumah and others before him, Mandela and the government of national unity turned to sport to build a new and inclusive sense of "South African-ness" in a sports-obsessed country with eleven national languages and deep racial and economic divisions. From a symbolic standpoint, football received close government attention. For instance, the official festivities for Mandela's presidential inauguration on May 10, 1994, featured a football match at a sold-out Ellis Park in Johannesburg between South Africa and Zambia, where the ANC-in-exile had its headquarters for two decades. Rainbow nationalism received a tremendous lift in February 1996 when Bafana Bafana triumphed in the African Nations Cup in front of a delirious home crowd of ninety thousand people at FNB Stadium, outside Soweto. Africans and Coloureds made up most of the team, but there were whites too, including the coach, the captain, and a burly midfielder whom black fans nicknamed "Mandela" in the spirit of national unity and racial reconciliation. After the final against Tunisia, South Africans poured into the streets of cities and townships across the country in a collective explosion of peaceful sportive nationalism.

Bafana Bafana's victory came just a few months after the South African Springboks' memorable victory in the 1995 rugby World Cup (also on home soil), a cathartic moment that persuaded rugby-obsessed conservative white men to accept, if not embrace, democracy and a "new South Africa."<sup>1</sup> The social and political significance of the rugby and soccer triumphs entrenched a desire among increasingly self-confident South African leaders to host sporting megaevents for the purpose of bolstering the quest for national unity and triggering faster economic growth.<sup>2</sup> Over the next few years, South Africa successfully staged the 1999 All-Africa Games, the 2003 Cricket World Cup, and several other international sporting competitions. It also narrowly failed in bids to host the 2004 Olympics (in Cape Town) and the 2006 FIFA World Cup.<sup>3</sup> The new South African president, Thabo Mbeki, who succeeded Mandela in 1999, responded to FIFA's controversial decision to award the 2006 finals to Germany by giving a prime-time speech on television in which he stated in a determined tone that "next time we will win." Four years later, his prediction came true.

Under Mbeki's stewardship, the 2010 World Cup became a massive national project designed to enhance the status of the nation-state and globally market

“Brand South Africa”—an image of a country as a modern, technologically advanced, democratic, business-friendly, and exotic tourist destination. That only a few countries possess the infrastructural and economic capacity to stage the World Cup meant that emerging powers, like Mexico (in 1970 and 1986) and South Korea (2002), could acquire quasi-Great Power status. Another critical factor behind the national government’s firm commitment to the World Cup was the influence of the philosophy of the “African Renaissance”—the belief that modernity and globalization, combined with African cultural heritage, can be harnessed to reinvigorate the continent economically and politically. “This is an African journey of hope,” Mbeki emphasized in his speech at FIFA House the night before the decision about 2010 hosting rights. “Nothing could ever serve to energize our people to work for their and Africa’s upliftment more than to integrate among the tasks of our Second Decade of Democracy and the African Renaissance our successful hosting of the 2010 Soccer World Cup.”<sup>4</sup> In a 2003 letter to FIFA president Joseph “Sepp” Blatter, Mbeki had underscored the “African” nature of South Africa’s enterprise: “We want, on behalf of our continent, to stage an event that will send ripples of confidence from the Cape to Cairo—an event that will create social and economic opportunities throughout Africa. We want to ensure that one day, historians will reflect upon the 2010 World Cup as a moment when Africa stood tall and resolutely turned the tide on centuries of poverty and conflict. We want to show that Africa’s time has come.”<sup>5</sup> As in previous decades, football was being used to advance a pan-Africanist cause.

Blatter never wavered in his plan to bring the World Cup to Africa. As FIFA general secretary in 1998, he had won the presidential election thanks to the votes of African delegates, who represented nearly one-quarter of the votes in the FIFA Congress. Blatter’s campaign promised Africans a larger slice of football’s expanding economic pie and the opportunity to stage the World Cup finals on African soil for the first time. A few months before the 1998 FIFA presidential election, South Africa officially launched its bid for the 2006 World Cup with Blatter’s blessing. After Germany edged out South Africa, Blatter orchestrated a maneuver to rotate the World Cup finals—source of about 90 percent of FIFA’s revenue through sale of broadcasting and marketing rights—on a continental basis, beginning with Africa in 2010. The rule was approved in 2002, and South Africa found itself in the pole position. Compared to Morocco and Egypt, the other serious contenders from Africa, South Africa boasted better infrastructure and

had experience hosting major sporting events. It also had a trump card: the ability to bring FIFA officials in personal contact with Nelson Mandela, probably the most popular and respected person on the planet.

The 2010 World Cup finals will be staged from June 11 to July 11 in nine cities in eight of South Africa's nine provinces. The Local Organizing Committee claims that the tournament's economic impact will create 129,000 jobs, attract 500,000 tourists, and contribute the equivalent of 2 percent of the gross domestic product. The government is spending substantial public funds on stadiums, media facilities, transport and communications infrastructure, and security arrangements. Five new taxpayer-subsidized stadiums are under construction: two 70,000-seat arenas in Cape Town and Durban, and three 40,000-seat facilities in Nelspruit, Polokwane, and Port Elizabeth. Five existing stadiums are under renovation, including a complete overhaul of Soccer City outside Johannesburg—the venue for the opening match and the final—to expand its capacity to 94,000 and encase the facility with an eye-catching gourd-shaped shell. The costs for building stadiums and related infrastructure doubled from 14.9 billion rand in 2006 to 30 billion rand in mid-2009.

Some football commentators questioned the utility of huge, expensive stadiums that will probably depend on rugby for their long-term sustainability: "It would have been more sensible to have built smaller stadiums nearer the football-loving heartlands," argued former PSL chief Trevor Phillips, "and used the surplus funds to have constructed training facilities in the townships."<sup>6</sup> But because South Africa is parading on a "global catwalk" to increase tourist revenues and foreign direct investment,<sup>7</sup> the government willingly pays for stadiums that stand as architectural symbols of a technologically sophisticated, proud, modern African nation. The new stadiums are among the most powerful and effective means to achieve an Eiffel Tower-like branding effect. The new sports arenas can help debunk stereotyped images of Africa as a primitive, tribal, wild, sick, conflict-ridden, chaotic place populated by kleptocratic tyrants and faceless victims in need of Western help.

I believe South Africa will host a successful World Cup. Preparations are at an advanced stage, and the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup was held in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, and Rustenburg without major problems. Blatter applauded South Africa's handling of the eight-team tournament by giving the host nation a 7.5 rating (out of 10). While the 2010 World Cup is richly funded and professionally organized, its long-

term legacy must be discussed. From an economic perspective, the megaevent is extremely unlikely to turn a financial profit due to spiraling costs, overly optimistic economic projections, and the fallout from a brutal global recession. Even so, some large construction companies involved in 2010 projects privatized profits while South African taxpayers assumed most of the financial risks as well as long-term responsibility for eventual losses.<sup>8</sup> For ordinary workers, the long-term economic benefits are uncertain at best, partly due to organizers' reliance on volunteers for many tournament-related services and partly due to the short-term nature of newly created jobs in an economy where 80 percent of companies employ temporary workers and about half use contract labor. The effects of World Cup spending on government funding of social programs are another serious concern, especially at the local level, given that half of South Africans are poor, almost that many are unemployed, millions lack adequate housing and schooling, and three hundred and fifty thousand people die of AIDS every year. Finally, some analysts warn that 2010 could reinforce South Africa's lopsided economic relationship with the rest of Africa.<sup>9</sup>

From a cultural standpoint, many ordinary South Africans (and their African neighbors generally) cannot afford World Cup tickets and thus may be reduced to adding "African" flavor to this corporate event by dancing in the streets, singing, making music, and showcasing "traditional" clothing and jewelry for foreign visitors and television audiences. That 2010 has yet to produce a coherent development plan for the youth, school, and amateur game, male and female, also points to how global capitalist sport "is a growing threat to the development of sport in underprivileged and economically poor communities," according to Yusuf Ebrahim, former president of the antiapartheid South African Council on Sport.<sup>10</sup> In the end, the most likely positive outcomes from 2010 World Cup's will be emotional ones, and thus intangible and unquantifiable. These include enjoyable memories for a soccer-obsessed nation, short-term feelings of pride and unity, greater confidence among some foreign investors, and an improved image of Africa and Africans.

This last point returns us to the themes I have interwoven throughout this book. For the 2010 World Cup in South Africa is very much about the changing relationship between sport, race, nationhood, and big business. Within an international framework dominated by FIFA and transnational corporations accountable mainly to themselves, South Africa's hosting of the World Cup represents the latest and most ambitious attempt by an

African country to use football to showcase its political achievements, accelerate economic growth, and assert the continent's global citizenship. In the words of Danny Jordaan, CEO of the 2010 Local Organizing Committee: "This is an African World Cup, this is a world-class event. There is no contradiction between being African and being world class."<sup>11</sup> The 2010 World Cup signals that the continent is likely to continue shaping the culture and history of the global game for many years to come.

67. Goldblatt, *Ball Is Round*, 768.

68. The main sources for these data are Raffaele Poli, *Les migrations internationales des footballeurs: Trajectoires de joueurs camerounais en Suisse* (Neuchâtel: CIES, 2004), 61, and “Africans’ Status in the European Football Players’ Labour Market,” *Soccer and Society* 7, nos. 2–3 (2006): 291. On this topic, see also John Bale, “Three Geographies of African Footballer Migration: Patterns, Problems and Postcoloniality,” in Armstrong and Giulianotti, *Football in Africa*, 229–46.

69. Tshimanga Bakadiababu, *Le commerce et la traite*.

70. UN report cited in Bale, “Three Geographies of African Footballer Migration,” 240.

71. A major reason for the relatively low number of Africans in Britain is a strict work permit rule that requires players from outside of the European Union to have played in 75 percent of their country’s national team matches in the two years immediately preceding the application.

72. Former Ghana coach Petre Gavrila from Romania seems to be the source of the Ghanaian migration to Romania; see Poli, “Africans’ Status,” 289.

73. Raffaele Poli, “Football Players’ Migration in Europe: A Geo-economic Approach to Africans’ Mobility,” in *The Bountiful Game? Football Identities and Finances*, ed. Jonathan Magee, Alan Bairner, and Alan Tomlinson (Oxford: Meyer and Meyer Sport, 2005), 218.

74. Lanfranchi and Taylor, *Moving with the Ball*, 235.

75. Castles and Miller, *Age of Migration*, 179.

76. Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004), 141–66. All quotes in this paragraph are from this source (153, 164).

77. M. Gleeson, “The Professionals: Africans in Europe,” *African Soccer* (September/October 1995): 28.

78. For more details, see Poli, “Africans’ Status,” 287–89.

79. Raffaele Poli and Paul Dietschy, “Le football africain entre immobilisme et extraversion,” *Politique Africaine* 102 (2006): 173–87.

80. From Darby, “New Scramble for Africa,” and Filippo M. Ricci, *African Football Yearbook* (Rome: Filippo Maria Ricci Editore 2000). The Indomitable Lions’ twenty-three-man squad in the 2008 African Cup of Nations featured only one player from a Cameroonian club.

81. Poli, “Migrations and Trade of African Football Players,” 404; Poli and Dietschy, “Le football africain,” 180.

82. Broere and Drift, *Football Africa!* 93–94.

83. Hayatou, quoted in Darby, “African Football Migration to Portugal,” 503.

84. James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 41.

## CHAPTER SIX      The Privatization of Football, 1980s to Recent Times

1. For an overview, see Richard Giulianotti, “Playing an Aerial Game: The New Political Economy of Soccer,” in *The Political Economy of Sport*, edited by



John Nauright and Kimberly S. Schimmel (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 19–37.

2. David Goldblatt, *The Ball Is Round: A Global History of Soccer* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008), 688.

3. Walter LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2002), 70–71.

4. This discussion on African media draws mainly on Louise M. Bourgault, *Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), chaps. 4–5; and Chris A. Paterson, “Reform or Re-colonisation? The Overhaul of African Television,” *Review of African Political Economy* 78 (1998): 571–83.

5. Paterson, “Reform or Re-colonisation?” 575.

6. Data are from September 2008, <http://www.multichoice.co.za/multichoice/view/multichoice/en/page235> (accessed May 19, 2009). Note that Multichoice pioneered subscription-based TV in South Africa when it launched M-Net in 1986, a service similar to Canal Plus in France.

7. <http://www.sufc.co.za/default.aspx?Id=2136&des=content> (accessed May 21, 2009).

8. Gerard Akindes, “Football in Sub-Saharan Africa, New Technologies and Broadcasting Deregulation: Football Development or Electronic Colonialism?” (paper presented at the African Studies Association annual meeting, Chicago, 2008). I am indebted to Gerard Akindes for giving me a copy of his paper.

9. Quoted in *ibid.*, 2.

10. *Ibid.*, 3.

11. Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann; London: James Currey, 1986), 20.

12. Born in Algeria, Darmon introduced the practice of placing corporate logos on team shirts with Nantes FC in 1970. In the 1980s, Darmon’s company developed lucrative relationships with the French Football Federation and the National Football League (now Ligue 1). He then capitalized on the privatization of French television by helping his clients sell broadcasting rights to pay-TV station Canal Plus and, later, other satellite channels, thus generating unprecedented revenue streams for French football.

13. Jalala Bouzrara, “Game, Set and Match,” *African Soccer*, no. 30 (January 1998): 12.

14. Goldblatt, *Ball Is Round*, 882.

15. CAF also imposed a 5 percent “tax” on prize money to be paid to the eight clubs’ national associations, allegedly for “development” purposes. It should also be noted that in 2004 the eight teams eliminated in the Champions League’s round of sixteen dropped into the new Confederation Cup, thus giving them a second opportunity to earn valuable prize money.

16. Geoff Hare, *Football in France: A Cultural History* (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 149.

17. Akindes, “Football in Sub-Saharan Africa,” 18. The new contract also covered CAF club competitions and youth tournaments. In part due to the global recession, the 2010–16 marketing package, valued at \$115 million, had not been sold as of August 2009.

18. Ashwin Desai and Goolam H. Vahed, “World Cup 2010: Africa’s Turn or the Turn on Africa?” in *South Africa and the Global Game: Football, Apartheid, and Beyond*, ed. Peter Alegi and Chris Bolsmann (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

19. Radebe, quoted in Osasu Obayiuwana and Anver Versi, “The Economics of Football,” *African Business* (June 1998): 10.

20. In this respect, Africa resembles Latin America; see Gideon Rachman, “Beautiful Game, Lousy Business: The Problems of Latin American Football,” in *Football in the Americas: Fútbol, Futebol, Soccer*, ed. Rory Miller and Liz Crolley (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2007), 161–73; and J. Luiz Martins do Melo, “Brazilian Football: Technical Success and Economic Failure,” in Miller and Crolley, *Football in the Americas*, 193–208.

21. Alan M. Klein, *Sugarball: The American Game, the Dominican Dream* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 60.

22. Merryman Kunene, “Winning the Cup but Losing the Plot? The Troubled State of South African Soccer,” in *State of the Nation: South Africa, 2005–2006*, ed. S. Buhlungu et al. (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2006), 376.

23. Andreas Mehler, “Football in Africa: Are the ‘Democratic’ Lions about to Take Over?” <http://www.nai.uu.se/publications/news/archives/023mehler/> (accessed May 31, 2009).

24. See Peter Alegi, “Like Cows Driven to a Dip: The 2001 Ellis Park Stadium Disaster, Johannesburg, South Africa,” in *Soccer and Disaster: International Perspectives*, ed. Paul Darby, Martin Johnes, and Gavin Mellor (London: Routledge, 2005), 109–23.

25. See Peter Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004); and Alegi and Bolsmann, *South Africa and the Global Game*.

26. <http://www.enyimbafc.net/sponsors/> (accessed May 20, 2009).

27. Goran Hyden, *African Politics in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 98.

28. Paul Nugent, *Africa since Independence: A Comparative History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 327.

29. This section relies on Paul Darby, Gerard Akindes, and Matthew Kirwin, “Football Academies and the Migration of African Football Labor to Europe,” *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 31, no. 2 (2007): 143–61; and Emmanuel Maradas et al., “Special Report: Football Academies,” *African Soccer* 66 (2001): 6–15.

30. As the work of Darby, Akindes, and Kirwin indicates, these categories are somewhat permeable given that academies can change their structure and format over time.

31. Romanian coach Petre Gavrila capitalized on his experience coaching in Africa Ghana’s Black Stars by acting as an intermediary in the sale of numerous Ghanaians to Romanian clubs. See Raffaele Poli, “Africans’ Status in the European Football Players’ Labour Market,” *Soccer and Society* 7, nos. 2–3 (2006): 289.

32. Maradas et al., “Special Report,” 8.

33. “Kolo Touré on his African Nations adventure,” *Worldsoccer.com*, January 17, 2008, [http://www.worldsoccer.com/interviews/kolo\\_toure\\_on\\_his\\_african\\_nations\\_adventure\\_interview\\_174537.html](http://www.worldsoccer.com/interviews/kolo_toure_on_his_african_nations_adventure_interview_174537.html) (accessed May 22, 2009).
34. Darby, Akindes, and Kirwin, “Football Academies,” 150.
35. Only one player from the Feyenoord Fetteh academy ever signed with the parent club in Rotterdam (as of June 2009): Mohammed Abubakari. He now plays in the Greek second division.
36. Maradas et al., “Special Report,” 17.
37. Rachman, “Beautiful Game, Lousy Business,” 166.
38. Brian Oliver, “Roaring Success,” *Observer Sport Monthly*, May 19, 2002.
39. Darby, Akindes, and Kirwin, “Football Academies,” 153.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*, 144.
42. “Special Report: Football Academies,” 8.
43. This section is based mainly on these sources: Cynthia F. Pelak, “Women and South African Soccer: A Brief History,” in Alegi and Bolsmann, *South Africa and the Global Game*; and “Negotiating Gender/Race/Class Constraints in the New South Africa: A Case Study of Women’s Soccer,” *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 40, no. 1 (2005): 53–70, and Martha Saavedra, “Football Feminine—Development of the African Game: Senegal, Nigeria, and South Africa,” *Soccer and Society* 4, nos. 2–3 (2003): 225–53, and “Regional Outliers: Female Football in Kenya” (paper presented at the African Studies Association annual meeting, New York, October 2007).
44. Saavedra, “Football Feminine,” 225.
45. Wiebe Boer, “Nation-Building Exercise: Sporting Culture and the Rise of Football in Colonial Nigeria” (PhD diss., Yale University, 2003), 410–12.
46. See Jean Williams, *A Beautiful Game: International Perspectives on Women’s Football* (Oxford: Berg, 2007).
47. Saavedra, “Football Feminine,” 239.
48. Pelak, “Women and South African Soccer.” All subsequent quotes in this paragraph are from this source.
49. Saavedra, “Football Feminine,” 240.
50. Pelak, “Women and South African Soccer.”
51. *Ibid.*
52. <http://www.fifa.com/newscentre/news/newsid=91235.html> (accessed May 27, 2009).
53. R. Ammoh, “The Goal Queen,” *African Soccer* 63 (January/February 2001): 26–29.
54. Saavedra, “Football Feminine,” 232.
55. Quoted in Pelak, “Women and South African Soccer.”
56. Sarah Forde, *Playing by Their Rules: Coastal Teenage Girls in Kenya on Life, Love and Football* (Kilifi: Moving the Goalposts, 2008), 185.
57. For more details on MYSA, see Martha Brady and Arjmand Banu Khan, *Letting Girls Play: The Mathare Youth Sports Association’s Football Program for Girls*

(New York: Population Council, 2002); and Hans Hognestad and Arvid Tollisen, “Playing against Deprivation: Football and Development in Nairobi, Kenya,” in *Football in Africa: Conflict, Conciliation and Community*, ed. Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 210–26.

58. Saavedra, “Regional Outliers,” 8.

59. Brady and Khan, *Letting Girls Play*, 19.

60. *Ibid.*, 16.

61. Susann Baller, “Creating the Postcolonial City: Urban Youth Clubs in Senegal,” in *Urbanization and African Cultures*, ed. Toyin Falola and Steven J. Salm (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2005), 150.

62. Marc Broere and Roy van der Drift, *Football Africa!* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1997), 77.

## EPILOGUE

### South Africa 2010: The World Cup Comes to Africa

1. On the political and cultural significance of the 1995 Rugby World Cup, see David Ross Black and John Nauright, *Rugby and the South African Nation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998); and John Carlin, *Playing the Enemy: Nelson Mandela and the Game That Made a Nation* (New York: Penguin, 2008).

2. International sporting events have also served to legitimize authoritarian regimes; see, for example, David Clay Large, *The Nazi Games: The Olympics of 1936* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007); and Bill L. Smith, “The Argentinian Junta and the Press in the Run-up to the 1978 World Cup,” *Soccer and Society* 3, no. 1 (2002): 69–78. For an excellent introduction, see Barrie Houlihan, *Sport and International Politics* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994).

3. As early as November 1992, then FIFA president João Havelange had publicly stated that Japan and South Africa were the “most promising candidates for the finals of 2002 and 2006 respectively.” See Peter Alegi, “Feel the Pull in Your Soul’: Local Agency and Global Trends in South Africa’s 2006 World Cup Bid,” *Soccer and Society* 2, no. 3 (2001): 1–21.

4. Quoted in Scarlett Cornelissen, “It’s Africa’s Turn! The Narratives and Legitimations Surrounding the Moroccan and South African bids for the 2006 and 2010 FIFA finals,” *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 7 (2004): 1303.

5. Letter from Thabo Mbeki to Joseph Blatter (2003), quoted in “South Africa 2010: African Legacy,” <http://www.sa2010.gov.za/en/node/515> (accessed July 31, 2009).

6. Phillips, quoted in the *Observer Monthly*, June 3, 2007. For a local case study, see Peter Alegi, “The Political Economy of Mega-Stadiums and the Underdevelopment of Grassroots Football in South Africa,” *Politikon* 34, no. 3 (2007): 315–31.

7. Monica Degen, “Fighting for the Global Catwalk: Formalizing Public Life in Castlefield (Manchester) and Diluting Public Life in el Raval (Barcelona),” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27, no. 4 (2003): 867–80.

8. Stadium construction is a striking example of this trend, which is not uniquely South African, as the evidence from North America demonstrates; see Ronald

Trumpbour, *The New Cathedrals: Politics and Media in the History of Stadium Construction* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007).

9. See, for example, Ashwin Desai and Goolam H. Vahed, "World Cup 2010: Africa's Turn or the Turn on Africa?" in *South Africa and the Global Game*, ed. Peter Alegi and Chris Bolsmann (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

10. Quoted in Alegi, "Political Economy of Mega-Stadiums," 315.

11. *Brisbane Times*, November 30, 2007.