Goooooooaaaaaallllll!: Using Football Politics to Score off the Field Evidence from Across Africa

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Football is Sport, and Sport is Peace.
--FIFA Code of Conduct

There's an anonymous quote in the football world that sums up the universality of the sport:

> Football's eternal and universal appeal can be largely attributed to the unique balance that it strikes between simplicity and sophistication. It is simple enough that it can be played anywhere with only one necessary object, a ball, and yet so sophisticated in that each country retains its own footballing culture, each match its own flavor, each team its own tactics. This diversity gives football a richness that few sports can match. (Witzig, 2006, p. 13)

The Economist (2011) seconds this notion clearly: "Which sport is the world's favourite? The answer, football, feels so self-evident that it is barely worth a post." Richard Witzig, author of *The Global Art of Soccer*, further confirms its appeal, noting that football is "enjoyed by more than 250 million active players worldwide," and brings joy to players and spectators alike because of its straightforwardness – "the rules are few and concise, and the game itself is a continuous flow of athletic and strategic possibilities" (p. 13). But combined, immense popularity and few rules have proven to be quite a toxic recipe, ripe with opportunity for political manipulation.

With recent charges of corruption being leveled at FIFA by the United States, the crooked nature of the world's most popular game may finally be on the verge of exposure, proving that some of the most important plays are the ones made off the football field. Now, as Switzerland probes the bids for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups and Russia accuses the U.S. of meddling, it is becoming clear that sports do not operate

outside the realm of politics. Indeed, they have much to say about the way countries interact with one another and even the way politics are conducted domestically. Perhaps it is precisely because of its international appeal, football in particular is used for political ends and with political consequences the world over.

A singular focus on FIFA, however, diminishes the increasing politicization of the game in general, especially in Africa, arguably football's greatest stronghold. Conversely, a singular focus on the state, as in the mainstream study of political science, diminishes the impact of civil society, including the role of football. Football does not exist in a separate realm from African politics and African politics do not exist in a separate realm from football. Rather, football and politics coexist together and are consistently used in similar manners and for similar ends. Football is integral to politics in Africa.

This thesis will explore the ways such politicization unfolds through examples and evidence across the continent of Africa to prove the centrality of football to politics. While such a subject may seem misplaced on the surface, perhaps unfit for academic discussion, it would be unfortunate to write off the significance of sports in politics – both internationally and domestically. Succinctly noted by Alegi and Bolsmann (2010):

> Scholars find football (and sports) research superficial and banal. [They] either dismiss it as the embodiment of 'low culture' … [or] denigrate it as an 'opium of the masses,' a distraction from engaging with the truly pressing concerns such as poverty and class struggle, environmental degradation, gender

> inequality, unemployment, homelessness, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, crime, corruption and so on. (p. 4)

Similarly, as Schatzberg (2001) alludes to, the West's study of Africa often confuses the nature of political legitimacy. It is necessary to expand on traditional political academic study in order to comprehend the complex and metaphoric nature of African politics. As this thesis will reveal, those in power do not see football merely as extracurricular sport or recreation as Western tradition would suggest. It is not a detached societal activity, but an integral avenue to understanding politics in Africa. African leaders see the game – and use the game – as a powerful tool of statecraft. Football, indeed, has much to tell us about politics, and politicians are not shy in manipulating the game to do some politicking on their behalf.

This thesis will serve to examine the avenues in which football works to this end and is thus fundamental to the study of Africa's politics. Specifically, it proposes that football is diffused into African politics in four distinct ways – as a smokescreen for human rights abuses, as a means of stifling political opposition, as a form of patronage and political promotion, and in pursuit of business or financial interests. From Equatorial Guinea illegally holding foreign journalists for reporting on issues outside the sporting world to Zimbabwean politicians bankrolling football clubs to win over supporters, the intersection of sport and politics is an underreported, yet very active, phenomenon.

Governments in Africa are the greatest sponsors of national teams and the performance of Africa's national teams is paramount to each team's nation. The game speaks to more than just the country's leader in particular – it is a chance to exert soft

power, an opportunity to be center stage for an international event, and an opening to promote internal nationalism in the face of domestic dissonance. By enhancing the international visibility of a nation and by fueling national unity in an environment of scarcity and division, football plays a central role in African politics. In fact, the symbiotic relationship between state power and football challenges the typical claim of mainstream political science about the separation of state and civil society. Evidence from across Africa of each of these four strategies will be examined, showing that we must move beyond traditional political science and include the cultural phenomena of football for a better understanding of African politics. Finally, the paper will conclude with a brief suggestion of further research and study.

Football as a smokescreen for human rights abuses

There are undoubtedly a number of stories to be told as proof of the humanizing, uniting side of football – for example, the role of sport in Nelson Mandela's rise to power and the end of apartheid in South Africa. Mandela's inaugural festivities even included a football match -- the induction of a black South African as president mirroring the desegregation of national sport and bringing to life Mandela's belief that "sport has the power to change the world" (Edwards, 2013). The power of sporting integration was a storyline so compelling Hollywood took to putting it on the big screen in the 2010 rugby motion picture *Invictus*. Narratives like this follow one of FIFA's golden rules: "Help promote football's good image by publicizing its good deeds" ("Code of," 2002). Such a focus, however, would ignore the opposing and

unfortunate dehumanizing role football can also play because of how intertwined it has become with politics.

More often than not, the connection between human rights and football is made in regards to a country's explicit human rights abuses occurring *outside* the sporting world. For instance, Amnesty International criticized Brazil's hosting of the 2014 World Cup in an attempt to shed light on the country's condoning of police brutality and its crackdown on basic rights, such as the right to a peaceful protest ("Campaign lowdown," 2014). While neither offense lacks gravity, neither offense reflects the role of football in the country. Additionally, both offenses would likely have happened regardless of Brazil hosting the tournament and continue to happen now that the tournament has passed. What needs to be examined then are those rights that are abused and tolerated behind the smokescreen of football, those abuses that occur or are spurred on in the very name of football.

South Africa has a unique history in this respect and is an interesting case study because of its complex relationship with FIFA in regards to human rights. In 1961, the country, under the apartheid government, was banned by FIFA for not following its non-discrimination policy. This came on the heels of South Africa not being permitted to participate in the African Cup of Nations and being kicked out of the Confederation of African Football (Wilding, 2014). The High Commissioner of FIFA's 'Say no to Racism' campaign has since remarked that FIFA "took the strongest stand possible in the fight against racism by expelling apartheid South Africa in 1961 and readmitting them after the release of Nelson Mandela" ("FIFA against," 2011).

FIFA's 1961 banning of South Africa occurred before the idea of human rights was more politically ordered through key treaties like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights or the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. However, the importance of human rights had been formally recognized with the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, so FIFA was more or less forced to take a stand in compliance with the politics of the day. South Africa's political policy of discrimination was not tolerated by the international politics of the time; thus the football world fell in line and excluded the country from sporting federations and competitions.

Now, over twenty years after the end of apartheid in South Africa, a different kind of human rights issue is at hand, one that puts football in the driver's seat rather than at the mercy of international politics. In 2004, South Africa was selected to host the 2010 World Cup. It was a momentous occasion, drawing colorful comments from the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General on Sport for Development and Peace who remarked that it was "a unique occasion to transform the African people's pride and enthusiasm into a positive dynamic of solidarity, tolerance, and development … This is extremely important for the African future" ("South Africa," 2010). Indeed, South Africa's selection to host the event marked the first time an African nation would serve in such a role for the World Cup.

According to a report by Scarlett Cornelissen and Kamilla Swart (2006), South Africa had long been seeking hosting rights for high profile events as part of a return to prominence after its embarrassing dismissal from the sporting world. Football was thus

used, more or less, to disabuse South Africa's past political problems and chart a new course. Cornelissen and Swart claim:

> Underpinning this, at least from the government's perspective, is an attempt to utilize sport mega-events as key social and political instruments: on the one hand events are regarded as one mechanism to support the government's nation-building project, while on the other, they are viewed as economic and development catalysts. (p. 108-109)

Cornelissen and Swart further assert that these events are "used to communicate key messages to the South African populace and the wider international community" (p. 109). South Africa, in particular, had a timely message as talk of an "African Renaissance" swirled and the country was nicely positioned at the core of that political movement. While there is no doubt that securing hosting rights for the 2010 World Cup helped South Africa's political leaders signal to the world that their country was on the rise again, it meant something far different to those South Africans who were part of the reason the country was banned in the first place. The World Cup would prove disastrous for South Africans living in the poor townships that sprung up in the post-apartheid era.

The South African bid for the tournament, used as a "booster campaign" for the country, included a proposal of ten stadia for tournament use. Some of them were simply upgrades on existing facilities (to meet FIFA's list of requirements) and others were to be new construction (Cornelissen and Swart, 2006, p. 110). Alongside facility capacity stipulations, FIFA requires adequate infrastructural development for the increase in tourism and media (e.g. functioning transit lines and technological

capability). Host countries historically prefer to go a step further and launch beautification campaigns as well to impress the flock of football fans and international media expected to descend on the country. Actions like these, however, often mean the forced eviction of those living in regions deemed necessary for the construction of facilities or transportation lines, or more generally in areas considered eyesores that need to be "cleaned up" before revealed to an international audience. This alone would warrant allegations against rights to property, adequate housing, and freedom of movement, but a 2009 report submitted by the UN Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing, Raquel Rolnik, expands on the effects of such events.

Released only months before the 2010 World Cup kicked off, Rolnik concluded that:

> The alleged economic benefits of staging the games are not spread evenly throughout the population. Instead, old disparities appear to be exacerbated as the processes of regeneration and beautification of the city usually focus on areas mostly populated by poor and vulnerable groups. (p. 6)

In Cape Town alone, 20,000 people were evicted from one settlement and relocated to poorer areas so that rental properties could be constructed for World Cup tourists ("UN: Olympic," 2010). Further, Rolnik notes that rather than creating the long-lasting positive infrastructural and economic changes promised during the bidding process, such events actually enact indirect displacement because of the gentrification engendered by World Cup preparations. The improvements made to the areas citizens are evicted from subsequently make those areas financially impossible for displaced citizens to return to should they so desire, causing a disruptive shift in "demographic

composition" (Rolnik, 2009, p. 7). Thus, while South Africa's constitution endows its citizens with the right to adequate housing and protects them from arbitrary eviction, it apparently also "considers that the 'beautification' of cities with an eye to the World Cup justifies the human rights violations of its citizens" (Morel, 2010).

From another angle, the sheer amount of money spent begs the question of how important the right to development really is in a country like South Africa. The 2010 World Cup cost $6.1 billion, $5 billion of which came from the South African government, drawing the attention of sportswriters and economists alike (Meney, 2010). Building football stadiums as a form of investment does not necessarily guarantee the kind of development returns one would hope from their government. On the other hand, the money did also fund upgrades to telecommunications systems for international media outlets and transportation systems for tourists to get to and from matches – things that do serve the public long after the event has ended, or so the argument went. The South African government pushed this positive development narrative and a study conducted by an accounting firm supported the government by predicting that 2010 would see 55 billion Rand added to the GDP, the creation of 415,000 new jobs, and the generation of 19 billion Rand in tax revenue (Ngonyama, 2010, p. 170). Ultimately, however, a report compiled by Stats South Africa in 2014 revealed that the percentage of South Africans living below the poverty line in 2014 was 1.5% *higher* than it was in 2010 ("Poverty, cost," 2015). Such "positive pay-off" arguments, therefore, either require more than four years to begin to see returns from or are more wishful thinking rationalized by the political reputations at stake with a major sporting event than economic reality.

Less prominent (and thus infrequently acknowledged) are narratives like those of Equatorial Guinea. Here, one of the stadiums used to host the 2012 and 2015 African Cup of Nations was actually previously used by former President Francisco Macias Nguema in 1975 to stage a murderous rendezvous in which 150 of his political enemies and opposition figures were hanged (Wilson, 2015). Venue irony aside, current President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo has not been shy about the importance of football to the country, saying quite bluntly that he views it as an opportunity to "sell the country's image" ("Equatorial Guinea," 2012). Such a goal can and has led to conflicts with journalists whose reporting undercuts his ability to do so.

For example, a team of German television journalists visited Equatorial Guinea in 2011 to report on women's soccer as the Equatorial Guinean women's team was about to compete in its very first World Cup. Several state ministries in Equatorial Guinea approved the German journalists' task. However, the day before their scheduled departure back to Germany, the director of Equatorial Guinean state television demanded they turn over their work to be destroyed. After interviewing an opposition leader and a local human rights lawyer, the director all of a sudden claimed the German team did *not* have the proper ministry clearances for their journalistic mission. The team was subsequently interrogated "in a manner," according to the journalists' colleague, "akin to police interrogation" (Otieno, 2011). They were treated like prisoners and told they were not allowed to report on anything beyond football. There was even a fine line as to what was considered permissible regarding football and what was not – pictures of slum children playing football were specifically destroyed as they "cast the country in a bad light by showing poverty" (Otieno, 2011).

This incident was decried by German media outlets as state censorship and a violation of freedom of the press. The German television station tried to appeal to Equatorial Guinea's ambassador in Berlin to no avail. More alarming, however, is perhaps the other violations such an occurrence uncovers and the likelihood with which it suggests such abuses occur. Equatorial Guinea, a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, would seem to be toeing the line in this case in regards to unlawful detainment, freedom of expression, and several other key components of the treaty that they have, by ratifying, agreed to uphold ("International Covenant," 1966). Reporters Without Borders pithily described the situation before the 2015 African Cup of Nations:

> During the tournament you will see the football stadium turf, the players and the excited public and you will hear the cheers, the scores and interviews, but you will not hear anything about the poverty, corruption or political crackdowns because freedom of information is non-existent in Equatorial Guinea. ("Football and," 2014)

The human rights group continued, "We urge the football fans following this tournament, which is supposed to unite nations and promote values, not to forget that, despite its polished façade, Equatorial Guinea is in reality a dictatorship that tramples on its citizens rights."

Both of these cases, South Africa and Equatorial Guinea, expose an unfortunate side effect of football's immense popularity. Football can put a country on the international stage, but in doing so the country risks international embarrassment. With stakes so high, human rights have become disposable to many politicians as they

attempt to take full advantage of any sporting opportunities sent their way. Politics takes precedence, and football is simply used as a crucial means to justify political ends.

Football as a means of controlling political opposition

With an estimated 3.5 billion football fans internationally ("Top 10," n.d.), a chance to influence the game is a chance to influence a population. This comes with great domestic opportunity and has been harnessed for the sake of controlling political opposition since the age of colonization in Africa.

Football was introduced to much of Africa by Christian missionaries in hopes of imposing an environment marked by "obedience, sobriety, and cooperation" (Greenstreet, 2009). In time, organized sport came to be seen as a way to encourage the preservation of European order, a distraction to discourage African uprising. It was, as Fanon proposes, part of an assimilation process that occurred across several European colonies in Africa. "The more the colonized has assimilated the cultural values of the metropolis, the more he will have escaped the bush. The more he rejects his blackness and the bush, the whiter he will become" (Fanon, 2008, p. 2-3). Football was a means by which European cultural values were to be implanted in the colonies.

Not surprisingly then, colonial administrators became apprehensive upon the realization that football could serve as a "gathering point" for working-class Africans with political savvy. They saw the way victories over European teams became symbols of local African power (Darby, 2002, p. 18). The lines that can be exploited to achieve societal control have proved vast in Africa and those in power have not been shy to do

so to their advantage. Thus sport became a tool capable of both calming and exacerbating the Manichaean politics of the time. Colonial Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) offers a useful example here. Paul Darby notes the contrast in the way state administrators in Zimbabwe and neighboring South Africa thought about sport during colonization: South African rulers believed such physical activity "provided a civilized outlet for hostile aggression," while in Zimbabwe, "it was decided that state investment in and promotion of sport represented the most effective means of social control" (Darby, 2002, p. 17). Even in football, the line was drawn between colonized and colonizer and manipulated with moral duality.

The colonizers used football as a form of cultural imperialism in their attempts to quell African resistance and impose their rule. In the colonial world of good and evil, the objective was then Fanon-esque. By implanting Western sporting tradition in their colonies, European powers sought to give African elites a penchant for European culture. Or as Fanon succinctly put it, "people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local cultural originality has been committed to the grave, position themselves in relation to the civilizing language" (Fanon, 2008, p. 2). Fusing football into political strategy eased the complexity of the Manichaean order – with a fading 'evil' African culture, the 'good' European politics could succeed. This fusion of football and politics during the colonial era was, of course, all "tied up with the broader imperialist drive to socialize the African population into accepting colonial rule as the norm, thereby facilitating continued economic penetration" (Darby, 2002, p. 19).

As the playing fields, equipment, and stadia tended to be owned by Europeans, colonial administrators were in a unique position to efficiently control the way the

game was played and used by the African population. Inevitably, however, as the game grew in popularity, independent African teams began to pop up. Football began to undermine the colonial world that Fanon had come to refer to as a "world compartmentalized, Manichaean, and petrified, a world of statues" (2007, p. 15). Colonial administrators, fearing the possible outcomes of such organized activity, initiated targeted methods for appeasing and controlling the sporting population. They implemented strict policies for referee appointments and required referees be "kept exclusively European to help instill a respect for authority amongst subordinate populations" (Greenstreet, 2009). Referees were also typically required to be literate and fluent in English, stipulations that prevented many Africans from advancing into such positions and kept as much of the European elitism of the game as possible in tact. Further, referees were assigned by European-appointed Sporting Councils, an intentional precedent meant to remind players who the rule-makers truly were (Fair, 1997, p. 234).

Similarly, in colonial Zanzibar, senior administrative figures considered "the oversight of leagues and the control of competitions and grounds [to be as] serious as the running of any other part of the colony" (Fair, 1997, p. 232). As African unity strengthened in the mid-1940s, the British developed policies that specifically targeted football and exploited ethnic lines in an attempt to break up this growing unity. Teams that were sponsored by ethnic associations were prohibited from competing in urban football leagues. Soon after, the British Sports Control Board created a new league that only allowed "neighborhood" teams to compete. This policy divided African populated

areas into many different teams, while allowing the European population (coupled with Asian and Arab communities) to all remain on the same team.

Instigated by the British in an attempt to fracture African unity, these moves actually ended up creating community identities that became the foundation for the nationalist and anti-colonization movements that were soon to follow (Fair, 1997, p. 241-244). The resulting identities, created through football, turned the table on the Europeans' attempted demise of uniquely African politics. Because of the apparent tie between football and politics, a win by an African neighborhood team over a European team held cultural, political, and collective significance. It was a win with importance off the field. As Fanon asserts in *Black Skin, White Masks*, "Since the Other was reluctant to recognize me, there was only one answer: to make myself known" (Fanon, 2008, p. 95). What began as a sporting solution to a political problem thus became a political response to a sporting outcome. Where Europeans instituted football regulations with the intention to divide an increasingly restless political opposition in the colonies, Africans drew political inspiration from their on-field successes. As Mandela would go on to declare years later:

> [Sport] has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers. (Edwards, 2013)

Colonial officials hence used football to politically divide and conquer until the successes of African football clubs became political statements of national aspiration and independence capable of challenging European authority.

Today's politicians put a different spin on these techniques, although they keep much the same aim of dispelling or delegitimizing their opposition. Zimbabwe's rival football clubs, the Dynamos and the Highlanders, are organized around the historic ethnic divide between the country's two major groups: the Shona and the Ndebele (Sharuko, 2014). As Baller et al (2013) note:

> At some point in Zimbabwean history, support for Highlanders and Dynamos soccer clubs became tantamount to pledging allegiance to a political party … [and] soccer remained one of the sites where the Zanu-PF regime could rejuvenate and sustain a waning nationalist cause. (p. 118)

Zimbabwe, even after colonization, continued to enact legislation to control the politics of football. They replicated the European Sports Control Board used to enforce European favorability in football by creating a Sports and Recreation Commission run by the Zimbabwean government. The Commission was to oversee all football related matters on behalf of the ruling party (Baller et al, 2013, p. 119). The long-ruling Zanu-PF party also utilized state-controlled media to air football-based propaganda in the form of songs and videos aimed at placing Zanu-PF leadership on a "political pedestal" through its association with the wildly popular sport (Baller et al, 2013, p. 123). It should come as no surprise then that reports surfaced in 2006 that a Zanu-PF government minister and governor were interested in buying the Dynamos team, "bankrolling the club … as part of a broader Zanu-PF strategy to win the hearts and minds of the club's reputed 7 million supporters" (Guma, 2006).

The symbolic importance of football in Zimbabwean politics, however, can be much more overt than behind-the-scenes government maneuvering to dispel the

opposition. Schatzberg (2001) suggests that "careful attention to political language … is able to enlighten us about the cultural components of political legitimacy" (p. 4). Much in line with this suggestion, presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai, leading the opposition MDC party in the 2000 elections, often referenced football in an attempt to delegitimize Zanu-PF incumbent Robert Mugabe in a way that captivated his football-loving audience. At one rally in particular, he stood in the very stadium where Mugabe had declared independence and himself declared:

> The people of Zimbabwe say to Robert Mugabe – we showed you the yellow card at the time of the referendum, and now today, Robert Mugabe, we are showing you the red card. Get off the field, Robert Mugabe – your time is over. Get off the field, Zanu-PF – your time has gone. (Baller et al, 2013, p. 119)

Such a metaphor, at a juncture as critical as a presidential election, certainly intimates the level with which football is integrated into the political landscape. Tsvangirai's selection of a stadium as the venue and football as the dialect speaks to how fundamental the idea of sport is to the concept of politics in Africa.

Zanzibar and Zimbabwe both reveal a side of football that is often overlooked. As an exciting organized activity, it presents citizens with something to rally around while simultaneously presenting politicians with something to mobilize popular support. For as long as there is an "us vs. them," there is an opportunity to draw a line, fight a battle, and do everything possible to ensure you end up on the winning team. Football provides politics a widely relatable way to do so.

Football as a form of patronage

The idea of patronage or clientelism is nothing new to the African political landscape. It is long-noted and well-documented that once in power, some leaders place family members, allies, and avid supporters in positions of significance in order to solidify their hold on power and spread the spoils to those who will keep them there. This concept is not foreign to the football world; in fact, it is simply replicated in a way that ties political power to football power. The African Sports Law Journal echoes this sentiment with the observation that:

> Across Africa, the administration of football has largely not been based on the professional needs of the game: more often than not, it is not the seasoned, qualified administrators that are placed at the helm of the profession, but persons known for their political clout or connections. (Tsabora, 2014, p. 16)

The corruption imbued by political patronage works in and through football and operates in much the same patrimonial nature.

Take, for instance, Cameroon. Issa Hayatou is the former president of the Cameroon Football Association (FECAFOOT), current president of the larger Confederation of African Football (CAF), and current vice president of FIFA. He has had an incredibly successful career and has evaded the recent FIFA resignations and arrests. His name is even being thrown around for the next FIFA president ("Africa's soccer," 2015). As noted by Cameroonian sports watchers, "of all [his] roles, Hayatou is best at being a wily survivor," ("Africa's soccer," 2015) but he certainly is not without his own problems. Hayatou has been accused of taking bribes in doling out media rights for matches and hosting rights for tournaments. So how has he outlasted

nearly everyone in the soccer administration world, including longtime FIFA president, Sepp Blatter? His patronage networks are unmatched by those of his peers.

Hayatou comes from an elite Cameroonian family. His father was a sultan. His brother, Sadou Hayatou, was appointed by President Paul Biya to serve as Prime Minister of Cameroon in 1991 and also served as Minister of Finance before taking his post as National Director of the Bank of Central African States (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 10). Another brother, Alim Hayatou, has served as Secretary of State for Public Health. All in all, the Hayatou family has had a member serving in the Cameroonian government for over 50 years (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 10). Not surprisingly, Issa Hayatou has even been honored by President Biya and given the National Order of Valour. After the ceremony, Hayatou remarked that he is "comforted by [Biya's] constant honour and [is] confident especially during my election for the sixth time to head CAF." He requested that the Cameroonian Sports Minister present give Biya "assurance of my patriotic devotion to the government of Cameroon" (Jisi, n.d.). This customary recognition of the president enforces what Schatzberg would consider a confirmation of the social and political hierarchy, one that reinforces the kind of "big-man" politics central to clientelism. Hayatou's validation of Biya serves both sides: it affirms Biya's role as a respectable patrimonial figure and simultaneously ties Hayatou into the political family. Hayatou's solidification of his relationships within the Cameroonian government are rivaled only by the patronage network he has created at FIFA.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Hayatou was a vocal opponent of FIFA president Sepp Blatter, even running to unseat him in 2002 after filing a criminal

complaint against him ("Africa's soccer," 2015). Proving that football politics are all "about patronage, fear and deep loyalty," (Gibson, 2015) Hayatou quickly did an about-face after his loss and backed Blatter, working his way up to his current position as senior vice president of FIFA ("Africa's soccer," 2015). His political maneuvering and relationship-linking strategy has made him simultaneously "Africa's soccer strongman" and a high-ranking official who has survived FIFA scandals with only slight reprimanding. His confidence in his staying power as a big-man has allowed him to get away with raising the age limit on the CAF presidency (for his own benefit), maintaining a combative style with reporters challenging his actions, and even threatening, beating, and sending those who dare question his authority into hiding (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 10). Issa Hayatou's extended patronage network, spanning state and international football politics, has created a fearless football monarch. And if it may seem that the Hayatous are just a rare occurrence, consider similar circumstances in Zimbabwe. One of Robert Mugabe's nephews was unsurprisingly awarded a lucrative contract from FIFA's hospitality partner (Scott, 2010), while another nephew served in the coveted role of chairman of Zimbabwe's Football Association ("Mugabe nephew," 2005). Although the FIFA non-interference policy aims to protect Federation politics from domestic politics, political patronage and clientele networks often make the line between the two unclear.

What happens when you cannot get what you want through a network of football patronage? We need not look further than the recent FIFA fallout to see. Over the course of Hayatou's tenure, there has been an increase in African teams represented at the World Cup and in 2010 an African country finally hosted the World Cup. If

Hayatou can be (and has been) considered a stalwart of football for Africa, Blatter has also made his mark. Blatter has overseen a 40-fold increase in spending on football development, making him a champion to those countries that rely on FIFA funds for local football clubs – many of which are in Africa (Gibson, 2015). Further, Blatter has gained supporters in Africa and Asia by moving FIFA away from its origins in Europe where, as a popular sportswriter puts it, "it was little more than a private club for rich European nations where those from Africa, Asia and the Americas were shabbily treated and had no say in how it was run" (Chaudhary, 2015). Blatter's Goal Development Programme has funded pitches, youth academies, and over 700 facilities for FIFA member associations – to the tune of $794 million or 70% of its money raised between 2006-2010 (Farquhar, 2011). Such actions have certainly created an incentive to keep Blatter in office and established a patronage network that relies on his continued funding and attention in order to function. It has allowed him to present himself in a patrimonial way common among Africa's political leaders. "In that sense he's got a fixed vote: everyone thinks when the next guy comes there'll be no Goal project anymore," notes a former president of Zambia's football association (Smith, 2015). This is, of course, a strategy similarly enacted by African political figures who have spent decades in office because of their ability to create an elite core that relies on them remaining in power. In this way, the Blatter-Hayatou circle that has delivered funding and hosting rights to countries historically overlooked by FIFA is much the same as Robert Mugabe supplying his supporters with farmland seized from white farmers. In order to continue enjoying the spoils, the "little guy" has to rely on the "big man." In both football and politics, it is job security at its finest.

Blatter's reign turned the tide on the Western, historically rich countries. They appeared at the mercy of a patronage network bent on banding together to move the center of the football world to Asia and Africa – a network large enough to consistently secure the votes necessary to keep Blatter in office. Even though African teams have not fared well in World Cup competitions during Blatter's tenure, hosting duties began being rewarded to countries like South Africa, Russia, and Qatar while bids by the United States and several other European countries were discarded. Unable to build a rival network capable of unseating Blatter (his opposition in the 2015 election, Prince Ali bin al-Hussein, backed by many in the West, garnered only 73 votes to Blatter's 133) (Phipps et al, 2015), Blatter may have a point in his accusation that the arrests were suspiciously timed by European and American sources to disrupt his election campaign. A patronage network as vast as the one Blatter has built through gaining favor with previously overlooked countries is tough to bring down by means other than drastic legal action.

Football as a means of pursuing business and financial interests

It goes without saying: there is a lot of money to be made in the football world. Stories of players and coaches going unpaid (for example, Malawi's national coach and his deputy went over five months without being paid by the Malawian government and the Ghanaian team had to threaten to strike over unpaid bonuses during the 2014 World Cup in order to be paid) are certainly common, but not because of a lack of funding available. Instead, they tend to be due to issues such as government misuse or officials

simply pocketing the money meant for players, coaches, development, and other football-related expenses.

The manner in which the money is spent, however, leaves a suspicious and concerning paper trail of evidence and narratives across the continent of Africa, consistently linking football to politics. Cameroon's former Minister of Communication pocketed player allowances (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 9). The former CEO of the Zimbabwe Football Association used $50,000 worth of FIFA donations to support her campaign for political office (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 24). Jacob Zuma, the South African President and highest-paid politician in the world, makes some of his fortune through his ownership of the Nkandla Angels football team ("South Africa's," 2015). Kenyan politicians Peter Kenneth and Sam Nyamweya became part owners of the Kenyan Football Federation and ran it into ground until the Kenya Revenue Authority had to freeze its accounts (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 21). Funds have even flat out disappeared as evidenced by a $24.1 million grant purposed to renovate football infrastructure and prepare high-level players in Cameroon that ended up never being accounted for. No renovations were made and no players were paid, but the money was still spent somehow (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 9).

This is no different than the "quiet corruption" international institutions often report on and claim is "pervasive in Africa" (The World Bank, 2010, p. vii). Whereas the World Bank views quiet corruption in terms of public officials failing to deliver on the goods and services promised to the public and paid for by the government, the aforementioned examples would suggest that the football world operates in much the same pattern (The World Bank, 2010, p. vii). Just as the World Bank attributes the

staggering number of malaria-related child fatalities in rural Tanzania to the corrupt practices of a health care system modern enough that it should be significantly reducing this number, football fans across Africa wonder how their teams consistently fare so poorly at the World Cup when so much money is reportedly pumped into football development initiatives and player training facilities across the continent (The World Bank, 2010, p. 2). The funding is there in both cases – the results, however, are missing.

Narratives like that of the Cameroonian government official pocketing football money reveal the common and inseparable nature of football and politics. The significance of football to African politics has meant that corruption in one is innate to corruption in the other. In this manner, the "politics of the belly," as detailed by Schatzberg, know no boundaries between state and civil society. If patronage networks can spill across government lines to football officials (for example, the relationship between Hayatou and Biya), the spoils necessary to maintain such "belly politics" become a larger and larger burden to attain. But the potential fruit stemming from such spoils also becomes more valuable as it now spans both state and cultural realms. With higher stakes, officials in both politics and football have found new ways to make a profit and continue feeding both themselves and their network.

This search for unending spoils has led leading civil and political figures to find more creative and cunning ways to profit from the game. In Cote d'Ivoire, for example, the national team has at times boasted a "conglomeration of stars" – ten of the world's best players, including Kolo Toure and Didier Drogba (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 12). With such talent, the demand to see matches in person is high – so high that the

country's football federation used to oversell tickets, packing over-capacity crowds into dated stadiums to make an extra profit. That is, until March 2009. Felix Houphouet-Boigny Stadium reaches capacity at 35,000 people ("Ivorians rejoice," 2015). A World Cup qualifying match held at the stadium on March 29 saw somewhere between 36,000 to 60,000 people packed into the stadium. A wall collapsed as fans tried to find a place to watch, killing 22 people and injuring over 130 (Swains, 2009). All in the name of financial gain from extra ticket sales. Sports journalist Eric Mwamba refers to football in Cote d'Ivoire as simply "a money circus that bleeds the country dry" (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 11). Similar events have occurred in oversold, over-capacity football stadiums in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia (Swains, 2009).

Player transfers are also an often-used, atypical means by which to achieve personal financial gains for football officials. The administrators of Cameroon's football association, FECAFOOT, provide a prime example of this. Several top officials for FECAFOOT are lawyers who oversee player transfers to the top European clubs. Reports have shown that they are fast to sign transfer contracts for a quick buck, have changed player's birthdays in order to garner more money, and have distorted club origins in order to profit more from transfer fees (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 3). These top officials also use their position more generally to realize personal financial gains. FECAFOOT's vice president, for instance, took regular payments from Puma into his personal bank account in exchange for a sponsorship opportunity. Sports investigators with FAIR have aptly remarked that businessmen "fight to get access to the rich spoils that have turned at least nine of the federations' officials extremely wealthy" (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 3).

At a more global level, countries and politicians also tend to drag international corporations into their football business schemes in an attempt to line their belly. With the growing international football audience and exponential spread of technology, football in Africa has gone from a recreational pastime to an "unprecedented opportunity for cashing in on the game" (Alegi, 2010, p. 112). Football officials can now sell broadcasting rights, sponsorship deals, and naming rights in exchange for lucrative contracts with big-name corporations. Companies such as Coca-Cola and Nokia have sponsored tournaments in South Africa, Burkina Faso, and various other countries across the continent (Alegi, 2010, p. 112).

The sheer amount of money involved in such deals has left room for some of Africa's officials to profit from on the side, either with the knowledge of the company or completely unbeknownst to the company. The aforementioned Puma deal that channeled side payments into FECAFOOT Vice President David Mayebi's personal bank account were likely bribes Puma was aware of as Adidas (who put in a bid for the same sponsorship opportunity but did *not* offer a side payment) lost the contract (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 3). Further, even after this detail came out to the public through a 2010 investigative report, Puma renewed and extended its contract with FECAFOOT later that same year ("Puma extends," 2010). Ironically, Puma terminated its sponsorship deal with the South African Football Association because of match fixing allegations, citing its "inflexible code of ethics in all areas of its business operations" and expectation that "its partners adhere to the same values" (Ewing, 2014).

It also is not a stretch to imagine what would happen if investigations prove that either the 2018 or 2022 World Cup bids were tainted by bribery and corruption in order for Russia and Qatar to end up with hosting rights. While rare, it is not unheard of for a World Cup to be relocated after hosting rights have been announced: the 1986 World Cup was moved to Mexico after Colombia, the original host country, could not financially meet FIFA's obligations and requirements (Harress, 2015). Should Russia or Qatar be stripped of their hosting duties, many have suggested that Western countries are those that would win out, especially the United States. Spain and Portugal came in second to Russia for the 2018 bid, but financial complications would now stand in the way of the two countries being able to pull off hosting a World Cup with only two years notice. The United States is thus one of the only countries standing completely ready, with adequate stadiums, infrastructure and experience, capable of pulling off hosting a World Cup on short-notice. Coincidentally enough, the United States was also the country that came in second to Qatar for the 2022 World Cup bid, placing the U.S. again "in a prime position to host" should Qatar's hosting rights be rescinded (Harress, 2015). It is thus not hard to imagine political motivations being behind the United States' FIFA investigations and arrests. The potential revenue involved for the U.S. were the tournament to be relocated, especially considering how many of the long-time FIFA corporate sponsors are U.S.-based companies (such as Coca-Cola), is a prized incentive that would be hard to pass up or ignore. Western countries like the United States certainly stand to gain financially from a change in venue should the accusations of bribery turn out to be true and provable.

Suspicious business patterns similarly exist between foreign firms and African governments. As is often observed, international businesses operate on their own foreign policy terms as opposed to those policies practiced by their home governments. In this vein, stories of stadium building in countries like Ghana especially muddy the waters as they specifically tie football into the mix. Referred to as "stadium diplomacy," the Chinese were quick to jump on former Ghanaian President John Kufuor's aspiration to have a stadium in each of Ghana's ten regional capitals. When Ghana was selected to host the 2008 African Cup of Nations, the Chinese funded the construction of two stadiums to be used for tournament play. Predictably, a Chinese firm was chosen by the Ghanaian government to complete the project and a Chinese loan helped to make the whole thing possible (Thompson, 2012, p. 45). Similar circumstances have occurred in Angola, where China has built several stadia for football, basketball, and handball, leading to speculation that the funding of important cultural projects – such as football stadiums – by Chinese firms is a strategic business move meant to ingratiate China with the Angolan government (Thompson, 2012, p. 77). "Stadium diplomacy" like this exhibits the strong link between international business, African politics, and football. Chinese firms have quite literally cashed in on the significance of football to African politics.

Whether or not Ghana or Angola will be able to completely repay the construction loans is another story and suggests one side is perhaps unfairly profiting from the realization that football is integral to politics in Africa. As Thompson points out, "In a country where the majority of the population lives in extreme poverty, these types of stadium projects seem excessive. There are projects and buildings that are

more needed in Angola than this stadium" (2012, p. 77). Were football not central to politics, it would seem quite random that a president would announce his desire to build ten stadiums as Ghanaian President Kufuor did or for China to specifically offer financial and business support just so Ghanaians have somewhere to play a recreational game. More likely, therefore, is the common recognition that such projects hold political meaning domestically and thus affect political relationships internationally. In addition, as previously shown, this also calls into question several human rights issues surrounding housing, movement, and development as each project likely entails significant construction.

Foreign governments aside, accusations surrounding corruption in African football are nothing new and have been widely acknowledged for years. When a company like Puma backs out of a sponsorship opportunity, they lose out when a competitor comes in and takes their place – much as Nike did after Puma left in South Africa (Ewing, 2014). With estimates coming in around $100 million for sponsorship rights, football sponsors are historically loath to walk away from such large investments and instead opt only to issue comments such as Coca-Cola did in 2014, claiming "we are confident that FIFA is taking these allegations very seriously" (Ewing, 2014). Coca-Cola has had a large advertising campaign with every World Cup dating back to 1950; Adidas has supplied match balls for all World Cup events since 1970; Budweiser has been a World Cup beverage sponsor since 1986 (Wilson, 2015). None of these major sponsors have walked away yet despite decades of suspicions, suggesting that through their inaction, they are complicit in the corruption for the sake of making a profit. Whether or not this recent wave of accusations turns out much the same is yet to be

determined. But if history repeats itself, the money to be made is just too much to walk away from. Corporate sponsorships and business deals present just one more avenue for football executives (and likewise, international business executives and government officials) to make large financial gains off the politics behind the world's favorite game.

The range of ways football officials go about making personal profits – from side payments and bribes to selling fake tickets, either individually or through their business ventures -- prove that there is certainly money to be made in football, just not exclusively in the legitimate, legal ways most would expect. As sports economist Richard Sheehan (1996) has put it, "It sometimes is hard to tell where sport ends and business begins" (p. 1).

Conclusion

On May 10, 2015, Somalia and Rwanda played to a 1-1 draw in an Olympic qualifying game in Djibouti. A few days before, Kenya declined to play host to the match. Excusing the country from hosting the game, the Football Kenya Federation (FKF) claimed the major problem was in Somalia's failure to obtain the correct federal clearances for their players ("Somalia move," 2015). The match was relocated to Djibouti shortly after as Djibouti and Somalia have had previous agreements in place that allow Somali home games to be played in Djibouti because of the frequency with which Mogadishu deals with political unrest. But other reasons for the refusal began to surface. The FKF was apparently concerned that the Somali players would not go home

after the match and that it would heighten existing security fears about al-Shabaab attacks in Kenya.

On the surface, this game did not make many headlines. To sports watchers, this match meant that Rwanda would be advancing to the next round of qualifiers in their bid to compete in the 2016 Olympics. To politics watchers, the game would likely be discarded as irrelevant to traditional political science and would be overlooked in favor of overtly Western ideals of what does constitute politics. However, as this paper has shown, a narrow interpretation such as this would be a grave mistake. African politics are intricately involved in the narrative of the game.

Taking a second look, the reality is that we witnessed much more than an entertaining match-up between two Olympic hopefuls. The intermingling of politics and sport becomes evident. The political world influenced the actions of Kenya's football association – fears of terrorism based on the recent history between Kenya and Somalia added a dose of skepticism to the hosting request that ultimately led the FKF to back peddle. Likewise, the football world influenced the actions of the countries involved – the rerouting to Djibouti reportedly threw a wrench in the already complicated political relationship between Kenya and Somalia. The spokesman for Somalia's football association announced that Kenya's decision had "damaged relations between the neighbors" ("Kenya won't," 2015).

Further, domestic politics were at play as the FKF works to solidify its reputation as Kenya's main football governing body led by Sam Nyamweya, a well-known political activist. Association infighting had previously led to two parallel leagues being formed in Kenya -- one was aligned with the Orange Democratic

Movement, the other had been aligned with the Party of National Unity (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 21). The dissolution of the two leagues and subsequent recognition of the FKF as the new official FIFA governing body in Kenya presented an opportunity for several former league administrators to cash in on their key positions in football. They used their football positions as so-called "stepping stones to politics," becoming ministers and political party officials within the Kenyan government (Rukuni and Groenink, 2010, p. 21). With such a relationship and history between the Kenyan state and its football association, the FKF's firm stance on this unsuspecting qualifying match between Rwanda and Somalia surely had more political calculation and intentionality behind it than would appear at first glance.

Taking a step back from the traditional view of political science and allowing room for culture to speak into state politics is thus necessary to come to a complete understanding of African politics, such as in the recent case of Kenya and Somalia. It is similarly necessary in order to better comprehend the unique and multifaceted politics of Africa overall. The line between state and civil society has become so blurred that interpreting one without the other does a disservice to both. Football and politics are best interpreted together for football is an integral and deeply engrained part of African politics.

Football is therefore more than a game of athletic skill. It is a game of political scheming and opportunistic networking, one that perhaps has proved just as entertaining and active off the field as it is on the field. The winners and losers might not always be as clear-cut as the scoreboard would have us believe. Sometimes the losers are those who have quite literally lost their homes in order to have a stadium to

play at or those who have been silenced by a country's need to appear well managed during mega-events. Sometimes the winners are determined more by the amount of money a match allows them to pocket or the clientele networks they have worked themselves into for job security than the number of goals their team scored on the field.

The evidence presented here details the myriad ways local, state, international, and even personal politics enter into and interact with the football world. It put forth four components central to the claim that football is integral to and often indistinguishable from African politics. First, football serves as a smokescreen for human rights abuses as evidenced in cases like South Africa and Equatorial Guinea where various human rights have been disregarded in order to gain political favor through the football world. Second, football can be a means of controlling political opposition as depicted through the examples of Zanzibar and Zimbabwe. Football flipped a Manichaean society on its head, reversing colonial attempts to use sport as cultural imperialism by turning on-field wins for African teams into rallying cries for a collective national identity and independence from European rule. It similarly functions today in the form of party politics – football clubs still find themselves divided down familiar ethnic and ideological lines, ripe for political manipulation. Third, football is a form of extended patronage and clientelism as seen through individuals such as Issa Hayatou and Sepp Blatter. Tying together their success with the success of those who can keep them in power has allowed both individuals to maintain their position as the "big men" of football -- a concept quite common to Africa's politicians, including the long-reigning Robert Mugabe. Finally, football can serve as a method of pursuing business and financial interests. Profiting from the game has become a reality for

individuals in football and politics alike, as well as multinational businesses. International corporations like Coca-Cola and Adidas pursue lucrative football deals much the same way that countries like China pursue business deals and "stadium diplomacy" in Africa. The popularity of football has meant large profits for both companies seeking sponsorship rights and countries seeking a way to profit from a need for stadiums. Altogether, the narratives explored throughout confirm the blending of political and football power, both across different time periods and across the different countries that make up the vast continent of Africa.

With an eye to the future, the unprecedented FIFA arrests of 2015 and current scandal invite much more study. The behavior of major corporate sponsors like Coca-Cola and Adidas in response to leadership shake-ups will need to be closely watched to see if they bring about a shift in football politics or if the status quo patronage networks are so entrenched that they can ride out the waves without much budging. Additionally, this invites further research and questioning as to the performance of national teams in relation to national politics. It is widely acknowledged that there is room for improvement as far as the performance of African teams in major tournaments, but less is known about systematic consequences of certain domestic politics – for example, what hurts a country's performance more: national federation presidents with close links to state government (such as Issa Hayatou during his tenure as FECAFOOT's leader) or an association president who is more removed from state politics and can operate with less national interference? Or how does the performance of a nation's team reflect the country's leader? Does a successful showing at a big tournament such as the World Cup or African Cup of Nations lead to an increase in public support for the

nation's leader? Does a poor showing stretch the patronage network towards a possible breaking point or decrease the effectiveness of existing "belly politics" and political spoils?

In the meantime, we are left to unravel the existing FIFA scandal as the fallout continues, investigations rage on, and accusations continue to fly. Through it all, however, one thing can be certain: were there no football, politics would be a different game and were there no politics, football would be a different game. Politics does not wear one color jersey and stand opposite football in another color jersey. Instead, politicians score goals using football tactics and football officials score goals using political plays. The line between the two has blurred to the extent that, if examined separately, we lose one of the most important facets of what makes African politics uniquely African. As it seems all the key players – the football officials, the politicians, the international corporations – have already come to this realization, it is time mainstream political science does as well in order to avoid a major off-the-field loss.

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