

## **Mexico 1968 and South Africa 2010: Development, Leadership and Legacies**

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This comparative study analyses the domestic and international contexts which lay behind unprecedented decisions by international governing bodies. The decision to award the Olympic Games to Mexico City in 1968 and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup to South Africa in 2010 represented a step into the unknown for their respective governing bodies. Prior to these decisions, hosting the events had followed practices established over time. The mainly white, aristocratic individuals who comprised the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had never awarded the Games to a ‘developing’ country. A mixture of altruism and paternalism surrounded its determination to foster popular participation in sport within the Third World but this did not extend to entrusting the Games to a host from within such regions. The foundation and early development of football established a different, but equally rigid, model. The popularity of football in Western Europe and its early adoption by Latin American nations meant that the FIFA World Cup quickly established a pattern of alternating hosts between the two continents. Set within this context, it is easier to understand why, when Mexico City was awarded the 1968 Olympic Games, it caused much more of an international stir than the decision to host the FIFA World Cup in Mexico two years later. Where the South African bid to host the World Cup becomes relevant, however, is that just as the IOC had to create precedent by heading to Mexico, so too, FIFA would have to break a similarly established pattern to award the World Cup to a country on the African continent. In both cases, the awarding of the events inspired a multi-layered discourse in which the host nations tried to re-define themselves and their people. By analysing these processes in the case of ‘Mexico 68’, new light can be cast on the ongoing debates surrounding ‘South Africa 2010’.

What becomes apparent from a comparison of the two events is the discourse that developed around the need to overcome international hurdles relating to Third World hosts. This discourse had two distinct, if overlapping perspectives: international and national. The former was conducted at the level of broad brushstroke rhetoric; a

continuation of the idealistic visions offered at the bidding stage but transformed and re-defined as the organisational process developed. In this respect, three common themes emerged: an emphasis on modernity and development; a portrayal of the nation state as a young, stable democracy; and the hosts' adoption of the role of continental leaders. The second perspective took place at a more local level and was concerned with the task of turning the vision into a reality. As will be seen later, it was at this stage that competing visions of the nation and its people were most keenly witnessed, and where the strains within sectors of society become more apparent.

One might interpret the decisions to host major sports events in Mexico in 1968 and South Africa in 2010 as reflections of modernising processes within the IOC and FIFA respectively that made them more likely to recognise global trends towards greater inclusion. Yet the degree of international concern and criticism that accompanied such decisions suggests something more fundamental; influences that provoked normally conservative bodies into pushing the boundaries of international expectations. An important argument of our paper is that, in the case of 'Mexico 68', a range of factors that had little to do with the strength of Mexico City's bid determined that it should host the Games. These factors, we argue, account for the depth of scepticism over Mexico's preparations and the consequent actions taken by the Organising Committee to allay such concerns. Much of the rhetoric emanating from the South African organisers bears a remarkable similarity to that offered forty years earlier by their Mexican counterparts.

## **Mexico 1968**

Briefly, then, it makes sense to review the broader context within which the successful bids took place. The decision to award the 1968 Olympic Games to Mexico City was taken at the IOC meeting at Baden Baden in 1963; the four competing cities being Mexico City, Lyon, Buenos Aires, and the seemingly perpetual candidate, Detroit. It is true that personal and professional connections between Mexican sports officials and IOC president Avery Brundage played a part in swaying votes towards Mexico. Yet such connections had already been established when Mexico City lost bids for the 1956 and 1960 Games so other factors must have been at play. A reflection on contemporary global events is revealing. The Cuban Revolution, the

Missile Crisis, and the construction of the 'Iron Curtain' underlined the depth of Cold War animosities. Within such an environment, members from the Soviet bloc were extremely unlikely to support any bid from a city in a NATO country. The other significant development in global sports was the rising voice of the Third World. Indonesia's President Sukarno announced a plan to host the world's first 'Games of the New Emerging Forces' (GANEFO). With the financial and moral backing of the People's Republic of China, the Games were projected as an act of solidarity by the Third World against imperialist oppressors. Crucially as far as the bid for the 1968 Olympic Games went, the first GANEFO games were held in Jakarta between 10-22 November 1963 (Gutmann, 1984: 227-9). While there may not have been any overt link between the two events, the looming spectre of a Third World rival to the Olympic Games may have swayed some IOC members to pre-empt a possibly damaging split within the organisation by demonstrating their willingness to break the developed world's monopoly on hosting the Games.

Of the two Third World bids for the 1968 Games, ongoing political instability in Argentina had near enough discounted Buenos Aires from being taken seriously by an organisation that already harboured suspicions of a Latin American penchant for violence and military coups. So rather than a ringing endorsement of the winning city's portrayal as a modern, developed metropolis, the vote to give Mexico City the Games could be seen as the best of a bad bunch. Within such a context, it is little wonder that when the announcement was made, the city's selection provoked an avalanche of dissenting voices.

### **South Africa 2010**

After decades of international isolation South Africa was readmitted into the international fold in the early 1990s. Sporting bodies in particular, were quick to regain access to international organisations and competitions. The South African Football Association (SAFA) was inaugurated in March 1991 and the unification process that brought together a range of football associations completed in December 1991. The new unified non-racial controlling body brought together all football administrators and players under one governing umbrella organisation. At the 20th Ordinary General Assembly of the Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF) held in

Dakar in January 1992, the body granted membership to SAFA and recommended it be readmitted as a member of the FIFA.<sup>1</sup> SAFA formally applied for readmission to FIFA with the endorsement of the National Olympic Committee of South Africa (NOCSA) and the African National Congress (ANC). A FIFA delegation visited South Africa in April 1992 and in correspondence with the general secretary of SAFA, Solomon Morewa, João Havelange, FIFA president noted 'I was pleasantly surprised by the excellent sports facilities, the administrative installations and by the work you have achieved for the benefit of football in your country...As soon as the decision to re-admit you to the great FIFA family has been taken, we will contact you...thus enabling you to strengthen your position as one of the leading Football Associations in the African continent'.<sup>2</sup> SAFA was readmitted to FIFA in July 1992.

Members of the SAFA executive attended the World Cup Finals held in the USA in 1994, and in September of the same year corresponded with FIFA and bid for the 2006 World Cup. SAFA stated that

we hereby formally lodge our bid with your honourable selves to host the 2006 games in South Africa...we feel very excited to lodge this application and would like to assure you that we have the capability, competence, and skills to manage this great event. We also rightly believe that we are the best qualified country in Africa to host the World Cup for the first time on this great continent of Africa.<sup>3</sup>

FIFA's general secretary, Joseph Blatter thanked SAFA for their bid but informed the Association that the 'bid procedure for 2006 had not yet been opened'.<sup>4</sup> In September 1995, Ian Riley, Tournament Director for the 1996 African Cup of Nations competition requested information on the 'bidding procedure for the World Cup'.<sup>5</sup> In 1997 Molefi Oliphant became president of SAFA and Irvin Khoza SAFA executive member pushed the idea of hosting the World Cup. Danny Jordaan, as an ANC member of parliament referred to a bid in parliament to stage the World Cup. Khoza became the vice-president of SAFA and Jordaan the chief executive officer (Griffiths, 2000). The 2006 bid was launched at the CAF congress in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in February 1998. Brazil, England, Germany, Morocco and South Africa bid for the 2006 World Cup. The vote held in July 2000 was controversial as South Africa

lost the final vote by 12 to 11. Edward Griffiths former newspaper journalist and consultant on the 2006 and 2010 bids noted in a recent interview that ‘the manner in which South Africa lost the 2006 bid certainly strengthened the government’s resolve to bid for 2010 and of course the playing field was made more attractive because of the rotation principle’.<sup>6</sup> Griffiths suggests ‘it was the key focus preying on the guilt of the membership or the executive committee saying it is a hundred years and you haven’t even looked at Africa yet Africa has contributed tremendously to world football, so really it was the sympathetic vote’.<sup>7</sup>

The 2006 FIFA Evaluation Team had noted that South Africa’s sports infrastructure was ready to host the event. In 2000 FIFA announced the rotation principle for future World Cup tournaments and as a result Africa would host 2010 and South America 2014. However, in 2007 FIFA rescinded this decision and for the 2018 tournament any member can bid to host the Finals. Egypt, Libya, Morocco, South Africa and Tunisia bid for the 2010 tournament. FIFA’s Inspection Group team ranked South Africa ahead of the other candidates and noted the country ‘has the **potential** for an **excellent** World Cup (FIFA, 2004: 8). The report also stated that a South African World Cup would ‘generate significant unity amongst ethnic groups [and] the legacy compared to the investment needed will be a great contribution to the country’ (ibid). In the vote in May 2004, South Africa beat Morocco by 14 votes to 10 in which it is alleged the four CAF members from Botswana, Cameroon, Mali and Tunisia voted for Morocco.

### **Rationales at the level of the international**

While there is no shortage of literature on events surrounding Mexico’s staging of the 1968 Olympic Games, the focus tends to be quite narrow. Some literature deals with accounts of the 1968 Olympics considering the performances of athletes competing in the rarefied atmosphere of Mexico City (see Brasher 1968 and Cootes, 1968).

Likewise, the podium protest of Black-American athletes at Mexico has produced recent studies looking at the broader significance of the protest within Civil Rights movement in the late 1960s (Bass, 2002 and Hartmann, 2003). The traumatic culmination a Student Movement which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of students in Mexico City days before the Olympics began has created a genre of studies.

Predominantly, although by no means exclusively, Mexican, the imperative in these studies is to understand the political antecedents and consequences of the movement. Only in recent times has a more balanced approach begun to emerge (see Gilabert, 1993 and Scherer García and Monsivaís, 1994). Ariel Rodríguez Kuri (1998 and 2003) has extended his long-term interest in the historical development of Mexico City to incorporate the ways in which the hosting of the Olympics impinged upon the city's politics, society and landscape. Joseph Arbena's (2002) treatment of the Olympics, to a large extent places the Games within the context of a country on the threshold of first-world status and anxious to display its credentials on the global stage. Most recently, work by Eric Zolov (1999, 2004 and 2005) questions this portrayal of a nation's confident march towards the first world and the 1968 Games as a crowning glory of such an achievement. He suggests that the student movement was a reflection of a greater disquiet within Mexican society that was merely brought into sharp focus in 1968. Aspects of the present paper, represent part of a larger initiative to extend Zolov's argument both in time and theme so as to gain a richer understanding of the many facets of Mexico's hosting of the Olympic Games (Brewster and Brewster, 2006).

International concerns over the IOC decision to award Mexico City the Games were as vociferous as they were diverse: the altitude, poverty, instability, lack of infrastructure, and innate inefficiency combined to predict the certain failure of holding the Olympics in the 'land of mañana'. The ways in which the Mexican Organising Committee reacted to such accusations are revealing: they suggest members of an elite sector of Mexican society who were simultaneously affronted by the slur on their national character and yet deeply worried about the veracity of derogatory stereotypes emanating from the 'developed' world which they aspired to join.

With regards to the one thing that Mexico City could not alter, its altitude, one gets some idea of the level of foreign hostility that the IOC's decision provoked. A critical media, fuelled by concerns expressed by national governing bodies and international sports federations, predicted dire consequences if athletes were forced to perform at 6,500 feet. Despite various pre-Olympic trials and a reassuring report for an international scientific study, such concerns did not abate until the Games were over.

IOC president, Avery Brundage, was forced to point out that ‘the Olympic Games belong to the world – North and South, East and West, hot and cold, dry and humid, high and low [...]’.<sup>8</sup> The important point to take from his response is that he felt it necessary to utter such words. The recent controversy over FIFA’s temporary ban on international matches being played at altitude suggest that the inclusive spirit of Brundage’s message continues to fall on deaf ears.

What is clear is that the Mexican Organising Committee wanted to move the agenda onto those topics that might dispel negative national stereotypes and convince international opinion that Mexico City was not only high in altitude, but also in development and culture. Chairman of the Organising Committee, Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, suggested that his team’s task was to reconcile ‘sovereignty with non intervention’, ‘nationalism with universality’, ‘international coexistence with peace’, ‘economic development with social justice’, ‘material well-being with education and culture’, ‘modernity with tradition’ (cited in Rodríguez Kuri, 1998). If it could achieve this task, surely the world would have to reappraise its perceptions of Mexico and its people.

Addressing Latin America’s reputation for political instability, the Organising Committee issued press releases emphasising a U.S. style political constitution that had guaranteed uninterrupted civilian government for over three decades. With such stability came economic prosperity and the Organising Committee were keen to link their successful bid to international recognition of the fact that Mexico had enjoyed dynamic economic growth for over two decades. Gross domestic produce was growing at an annual rate of six to seven per-cent, and the expansion of social and welfare programs contributed towards convincing ordinary Mexicans that they were indeed living through what was often referred to as the ‘Miracle Years’. In Mexico City itself, citizens could reflect on the recent completion of the national university campus, new housing complexes, and the beginnings of a new underground railway network as signs of such investment.<sup>9</sup>

Despite such aspirations, as international doubts over Mexico’s rhetoric of modernity and development continued, it appeared to alter the ways in which the nation used the Olympics to position itself on the world stage. While still sustaining its rhetoric of

suitability for first world admittance, it perceptibly moved onto the safer ground of defender of the weak. To a large extent, its portrayal as a channel for world peace was an easy hit: it fed directly into the apolitical rhetoric of the Olympic charter, but also spoke to Mexico's developing reputation as an honest broker in regional conflicts. With Cold War confrontation affecting all corners of the world, the so-called 'Peaceful Games' were portrayed as an oasis of fraternity and joy. Far from the Latin American stereotype of impulsiveness and irrational violence, the white dove of Peace that adorned all official Olympic literature was a constant reminder of the calm, conciliatory nature of the host's diplomatic stance.

A measure of protection from the barrage of foreign doubters also came from the Organising Committee's emphasis on Mexico's regional importance. As one of Latin America's more significant economic and political powers, the Olympic Games offered a chance for the country to reconfirm its traditional role as a regional leader and voice of Latin America to the outside world. The Committee's aspirations were made clear in June 1968, when it launched the first of a series of radio 'chats':

Mexico's commitment is, in reality, a commitment by all countries who speak Spanish, especially those in Latin America. That's why the committee wants as many Americans as possible to give a demonstration of what they can do through Mexico. Hence, the Olympic committee wants American radio stations to take a few minutes to inform their listeners of what's happening in Mexico and thus to show the organising efficiency and capacity of Latin Americans.<sup>10</sup>

A dominant theme of the series was the fraternity among Latin American countries, a fraternity that the Mexican Ministry of Sport reinforced by offering training facilities and financial support to the less wealthy nations of Central America to help them prepare and compete in the Games.<sup>11</sup>

While neither of these postures required active engagement on the part of hostile international opinion, Mexico found itself in the middle of a much more contentious problem surrounding the question of South Africa's participation in the Games. Following a wave of de-colonisation, the Mexico City Games were the first to which



many newly-formed African nations were invited to compete. With a widespread boycott by other African nations likely if South Africa's invitation was not rescinded, president Díaz Ordaz made it clear to the Organising Committee 'that those South African bastards should not come to the Games'.<sup>12</sup> In demanding South Africa's exclusion, the host was engaging in a high-risk strategy as many Western countries were adamant that the Olympic Charter demanded South Africa's right to participate. Why did Mexico risk so much? Its unwavering stance lent much credence to its image as a defender of the dignity of Third World countries. Yet was this sufficient reward for the Mexicans to gamble so much in defence of the young African nations? Pragmatically, if up to thirty-two African nations had boycotted their first Olympic Games, it would have been a considerable blow to Mexico City's reputation as host.<sup>13</sup> Yet it could also have been that, as nations of the IOC marshalled their forces on either side of the apartheid issue, the Organising Committee was determined not to let their Games be hijacked by international heavy-weights.<sup>14</sup>

Taken together, then, we have a multiple, often contradictory, self portrayal of Mexico on the world stage. Eager to counter erroneous stereotypes of its country and people, the Organising Committee wanted to emphasise a modern, forward-looking country; a country of the developed world, but also one that sought to retain its leadership role within the region and the developing world; a country that in the midst of global conflict, could offer an oasis of peace. In large measure, South Africa's hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup presented similar hurdles to those confronted by Mexico forty years earlier.

A burgeoning literature considers South Africa and sports mega-events (Alegi, 2001; Black and Van der Westhuizen, 2004; Cornelissen, S. 2004a, 2004b, 2007, 2008; Hiller, 2000 and Swart and Bob, 2004 amongst others). In his assessment of the 2006 World Cup bid, Alegi (2001) suggested the following underlying objectives to host the Finals. Firstly, to increase the international exposure of the country and that would have a positive impact on the domestic tourist industry in particular. The second objective was to evoke national unity and pride and finally the World Cup offered 'local powerbrokers an opportunity to renegotiate or consolidate their positions with the power structures of South African sport and society' (Alegi, 2001: 4). Cornelissen (2004) offers an interpretation of the narratives and legitimations in the Moroccan and

South African bids of 2006 and 2010. She observed that both countries cast themselves as ‘the gateway to Africa’ and ‘as true African representatives’ (Cornelissen, 2004: 1302). Cornelissen and Swart (2006) noted the predominant features in South Africa’s bids for sports mega-events. These are broad developmental goals closely linked to an African revival as envisaged by Mbeki’s African Renaissance. In more recent work, Cornelissen (2007) referred to factors that make the hosting of the tournament important. These are ‘politico-economic processes’, ‘capital expenditure’, ‘sport’s development’ and South Africa’s role as “Africa’s representative” (Cornelissen, 2007: 244).

It is useful to consider the 2006 and 2010 bid books in detail as overlapping themes emerge and certain projections are made. The organising committees of both campaigns emphasised the following broad themes: a Pan-Africanist rhetoric and imagery; a discourse of development and modernity; the country as a young and stable democracy; possessing infrastructural and human capacities; low risk in terms of insurance due to having hosted previous tournaments and a financially secure option; and finally South Africa had ‘world-class’ stadiums, with ‘excellent’ transport, ‘advanced accommodation structure’; information technology and a ‘mature’ media with South Africa ranked first in Africa in terms of the Press Freedom Index.

In his discussion of the 2006 bid Alegi (2001: 7) noted the ‘pan-Africanist slogan...reminiscent of the international struggle against apartheid...[and that] [e]conomic arguments buttressed ideological ones’. This pan-Africanist appeal is evident in the 2006 and 2010 bids in terms of imagery and text. On the cover of South Africa’s 2006 bid book, a small African mask is painted in the colours of the South African flag and on the first page ‘Africa’s Call’ is superimposed on a fluttering South African flag. At the start of each new section a wild animal and its strengths are depicted. The theme of ‘Africa’s Call’ runs throughout the 2006 submission. In Nelson Mandela’s letter in the 2006 bid book, he states ‘Africa’s time has come’. In the introduction to the 2006 bid book the authors argue that:

awarding the 2006 FIFA World Cup to South Africa will advance football’s globalization and enhance FIFA’s position as the preeminent sports organization in the world. A South Africa World Cup can further

the FIFA Executive's global statesmanship, as supporters of South Africa's peaceful transition to democracy and as important architects of Africa's 21st century. (SAFA 2006 bid book: 2).

The ongoing discussion refers to the exploits of African players particularly in Europe and the successes of African clubs and national teams. The document alludes to a pan-Africanism where:

all of Africa cheers the success of African teams. There is continental pride in Africa's success, and in celebrating what Africans can achieve. When Nigeria captured the 1996 Olympic gold medal, the entire continent was uplifted. A FIFA World Cup hosted by South Africa can again uplift all of Africa, and guarantee its ascendance in world football in the new millennium (ibid).

Roger Milla, the Cameroonian star of the 1990 Finals, declared that 'I am supporting this bid...because it is an African bid, and we have waited long enough to host a World Cup in Africa' (quoted in Griffiths, 2000: 116).

The 2010 bid book<sup>15</sup> substantially longer and more detailed than the 2006 version, also used a fluttering South African flag to box the four parts of the bid. Each of the separate bid documents were graced with an attractive young black women dressed in a football related motif with a header strap that referred to 'Africa's Stage'. Rather than employing the African motifs of wild animals and their attributes as was the case in the 2006. The 2010 bid book employed images of young attractive people from a cross section of ethnic groups.<sup>16</sup> Griffiths remarked that '2006 was a global campaign and 2010 was an African campaign, so the animal thing wasn't going to work or be so striking'.<sup>17</sup> In the 2010 bid book a letter from Mandela, now a Patron of the South Africa 2010 bid stated that 'this confidence was borne out by the historic decision [...] the 2010 World Cup finals would be staged in Africa. By this one gesture, by this unequivocal recognition that Africa had waited long enough to stage the showpiece of football, FIFA proves itself to be a great body able to make great decisions' (SAFA 2010 bid book: 10). The official emblem and poster of the 2010 Finals are distinctly pan-Africanist. The emblem depicts a figure resembling a rock art

painting against a brightly coloured African continent. The poster depicts a man's head at the top of the African continent heading a ball. Jordaan noted that

the official poster symbolises the important role of football in the history, tradition and culture of the African continent. It's also a recognition that football has always been an inspiration for a better future and a generator of hope in Africa. It recognises that Africa has a football face and a football heart. (quoted on [www.fifa.com](http://www.fifa.com)).<sup>18</sup>

Linked to the pan-Africanist rhetoric and imagery is a discourse of development not only limited to South Africa. This developmental discourse is evident in the 2006 and 2010 bid books were '...a South African FIFA World Cup can help bridge the gap that exists between Africa and the rest of the world, both in human and sporting term [and] ...as South Africa will represent all of Africa in hosting this event, South Africa pledges to support further soccer development on the continent' (SAFA 2006 bid book: 2). The authors continue and suggest that 'the FIFA World Cup in South Africa will contribute to the realization of the Social Miracle and Economic Miracle to complete reconciliation and bring a brighter future not just for South Africa, but all of Africa' (SAFA 2006 bid book: 3). Finally, the 2006 bid book combines the developmental and symbolic logics of hosting the tournament in South Africa by stating that '...the 2006 FIFA World Cup will provide a strong foundation to substantially enhance African football, particularly at grass roots level, and will strengthen bonds between South Africa's people and the game. It provides a symbolic focus for President Mbeki's vision of an African Renaissance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century' (ibid).

In the 2006 bid book president Thabo Mbeki linked the development of African football to a broader 'African developmental focus'. He noted in his covering letter that

'as we enter the next millennium, as Africans, together with FIFA, I believe we have a responsibility to assist the millions of young African footballers to achieve their dream of making this continent the mecca of

soccer...together with FIFA we hope to add to the momentum of making Africa the developmental focus of the next millennium’.

In his covering letter in the 2010 bid book, Mbeki focussed on the potential strengths of South Africa in which

our mission is to demonstrate our modern stadiums, world-class infrastructure, advanced technology, mature business systems and proven organisational capacity; and to offer our nation for your consideration as a dependable, secure, enthusiastic and vibrant host for world sport’s greatest...the foundation of the bid lies in our resolve to ensure that the 21<sup>st</sup> century unfolds as a century of growth and development in Africa (SAFA 2010 bid book: 3).

Moreover, Mbeki clearly linked the 2010 World Cup bid to the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) whereby ‘the successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup in Africa will provide a powerful, irresistible momentum to this African Renaissance...We want, on behalf of the continent, to stage an event that will send ripples of confidence from Cape to Cairo – an event that will create social and economic opportunities throughout Africa’ (SAFA 2010 bid book: 3). Ian Riley, consultant on the 2006 and 2010 bids suggested in a recent interview that ‘it has to benefit the whole of Africa and if South Africa delivers a first world World Cup then they are doing Africa proud, they are representing a continent’.<sup>19</sup> In addition, Riley noted that ‘2010 became a catch phrase for the initiation for government projects’ such as the taxi recapitalisation, and infrastructure and transport related initiatives.

In the 2010 bid book references are made to the legacies of newly built and upgraded stadiums that ‘forms a crucial part of the overall strategy to leave a lasting legacy...when the tournament is over, continue to have a positive, relevant impact on local communities for decades to come...not only spreads delight for a month, but substantially and visibly improves the lives of millions of South Africans’ (SAFA 2010 bid book: 10/16). In the case of the stadium in Port Elizabeth, ‘SAFA is determined that the new stadiums be built both to meet the requirements of hosting a FIFA World Cup and thereafter serve local people in a practical, relevant manner’

(SAFA 2010 bid book: 20). In Polokwane, ‘...to create world-class facilities in historically deprived areas and to build stadiums in an economically viable manner that offers enduring benefit to the community for many decades to come’ and finally in Tshwane ‘...to address the longer-terms needs and desires of an historically deprived local community’ (SAFA 2010 bid book: 20).

It is evident in the 2006 and 2010 bid books that a distinct South African identity is portrayed. Molefi Oliphant noted that ‘we intend to show the world the miracle that our young, but mature, democracy has produced by doing our utmost to host the most successful tournament ever... We await the opportunity to illustrate how we can use our capacity to host this event for the good of African football and the good of the game!’ (SAFA 2006 bid book: 7). In the 2006 bid it was argued that South Africa possessed a ‘culturally diverse democracy; world-class telecommunications infrastructure; state-of-the-art stadia ready to host the World Cup; most accessible country in Africa; sophisticated tourist and accommodations industry; first class road and rail network; corporate centre for Africa and successful host of major international events’ (SAFA 2006 bid book: 1). Indeed in the 2010 bid book it was exclaimed that ‘since 1994, optimism has become a national trait. Where the popular mood in many other countries around the globe often leans towards apathy and cynicism, South Africans remain excited and enthused. Some might suggest we are naïve and innocent, but this is a country that asks “Why not?” rather than “Why?”; a country that is quick to rally behind the standard of a noble cause’ (SAFA 2010 bid book: 2). Moreover, ‘South Africans have risen to the task. South Africa has a track record in meeting major challenges as a nation. We have overcome the challenges of the apartheid in sport and society. As a united democracy, we have hosted many major international events successfully’ (SAFA 2010 bid book: 1/4).

In the 2010 bid book the country was portrayed as a viable candidate to host the tournament in which ‘the essence of our proposal is simply that South Africa is best equipped to host a successful, administratively seamless, financially strong, and emotionally joyful festival of football’ (SAFA 2010 bid book: 1/4). However, the 2010 bid book notes that

‘maybe the strongest dimension of this bid, the compelling reason why South Africa is ready, is to be found in our commercial maturity, physical infrastructure and human skills...our banking sector is advanced, our economic status is clear and stable, and our prospects are excellent – so, many FIFA sponsors continue to invest heavily in South Africa...South Africa can compare with any country in Africa, indeed, any in the world...This is no accident, because since 1994, South Africa has progressed carefully and deliberately through a process of education in the art of staging major international sports events’ (SAFA 2010 bid book: 1/6-7).

The strengths depicted by the organising committee in terms of infrastructure and human capacities are buttressed with a clear financial message.

In the 2006 bid it was stated that the tournament ‘will allow the continent greater participation in this dynamic economy’ (SAFA 2006 bid book: 4). The 2010 bid suggested ‘South Africa is deemed by the global insurance market to represent such a relatively low risk [and] commercialisation will be the main revenue engine for the 2010 FIFA World Cup’ (SAFA 2010 bid book: 6). Moreover, in the 2010 bid noted that ‘...it is widely recognised that consistent growth, a stabilising local currency and developed financial, legal, communications, energy, and transportation sectors make South Africa the economic centre of the African continent’ (ibid). In terms of infrastructure in South Africa, the 2010 bid noted that it ‘supports the most sophisticated free-market economy on the African continent’ (SAFA 2010 bid book: 12). A distinct shift from broadly developmental rhetoric to a very specific South African centred rationale is evident.

The South African government stated that ‘we undertake to ensure that all guarantees are issued are binding for any and all relevant national state and local authorities at all times, including any an all succeeding governments and/or national, state and local government authorities’ (SAFA 2010 bid book: 3/2). In this regard, Ian Riley noted ‘FIFA requires government to make some pretty wide ranging guarantees...I think South Africa has understood what is required and it is a significant investment...FIFA want the guarantee as they have requested...the wording of the guarantees is given to

you. This is a guarantee they require it is not really a debate'.<sup>20</sup> Griffiths suggested the 'bid book are a lot of promises [and] FIFA are well schooled in making sure that you sign your guarantees'.<sup>21</sup> In their cover letter for the 2010 bid book Irvin Khoza, chairman and Danny Jordaan, CEO of the 2010 bid refer to the infrastructure already in place in South Africa and significantly, to the financial imperatives of hosting the tournament in the country. They suggest 'our bid is based on internationally established business principles and is substantially funded by leading multinational companies. The FIFA family and partners will find a secure commercial environment for their investments in the event. Our financial planning and business structure offers comfort and confidence' (SAFA 2010 bid book: 8). In addition, they referred to the size of the South African economy and tourist market in relation to the rest of Africa and that 'almost 80% of total sponsorship revenue of the African continent is generated within the borders of South Africa. We have developed a plan to present FIFA with a risk-free opportunity on African soil' (ibid). Finally, Khoza and Jordaan maintained that the award of the tournament to South Africa would 'be the greatest gift to the people of our country and our continent' and that 'we offer FIFA passion, profitability, precision (in administration) and the spirit of the African people for Africa's first World Cup' (SAFA 2010 bid book: 11). The 2010 bid book states that 'this is the essence of our bid. In one sentence, South Africa offers FIFA security through its commercial strength and advanced infrastructure, and the prospect of a joyful, happy, emotional first FIFA World Cup in Africa' (SAFA 2010 bid book: 1/7). The bid committee emphasized the financial imperatives in relation to the World Cup Finals.

### **Rationales at the level of the national**

Much of international scepticism about Mexico and South Africa's ability to host the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cup Finals respectively stems from perceptions of conditions within the host countries; whether this be poverty, crime, political instability, corruption and inefficiency. Tactics for dispelling such concerns could not merely take place within the area of international posturing. Indeed, in recognising that some of the concerns may also be shared by sectors of the host nation's own population, those responsible for bringing any mega-event are charged with the



equally important task of convincing their own people of the need to invest in the project's dream.

Set within the context of the ongoing racial and social turmoil tormenting its northern neighbour, the organisers of 'Mexico 68' sought to underline the cultural and ethnic integration within Mexican society that had long been a central theme of government rhetoric. The problem the Organising Committee faced, however, was how best to portray this sense of inclusion and mutual appreciation. As had happened in previous decades of the twentieth century, the image of the indigenous in Mexico was idealised and civilised. A fundamental aspect of Mexico's portrayal of their indigenous past was the resurrected myth of a 'Golden Age'. For a Mexican elite, long brought up on a diet of the Classics, the rather tenuous link between the Ancient Greeks and the Aztecs was too good an opportunity to miss. Poems, odes, and newspaper articles made knowing references to how the Hellenic spirits of the past would be rekindled among the temples of the Aztec gods.<sup>22</sup> The concentric lines of the 'Mexico 68' logo spoke directly to indigenous designs on pre-Hispanic ceramics displayed in the newly opened National Anthropology Museum. In this way, the indigenous past was being used to offer a cultured, acceptable visual image of the country. The Olympic Games gave an opportunity to develop a form of tourism that would appreciate Mexican cultural values and lend legitimacy to the elites' aspirations for their country to be seen in terms of modernity and sophistication. This was in great contrast to the image used two years later to celebrate Mexico's hosting of the FIFA World Cup. The diminutive figure with a drooping moustache, cheesy grin, and wide sombrero played into a stereotype that Ramírez Vázquez scorned as being a crude commercial decision made 'by entirely different people for an entirely different audience.'<sup>23</sup>

In terms of what it revealed about social dynamics, perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of Mexico's preparations were the campaigns of beautification and public education that preceded the arrival of competitors and visitors. Part of the criticism against renovating areas of the capital city and constructing new sporting facilities fed into the more general concern regarding the redirecting of scarce funds away from social and welfare schemes. As one politician stated, '[these actions] are concerned less for the poor conditions in which people live and more by what such a sight says about Mexico to foreign visitors.'<sup>24</sup> Yet a significant alternative strand of

criticism, voiced both at the time and afterwards, claimed that the whole nature of the campaign was in danger of removing the essential elements of the Mexican character from the Games and converting Mexico City in the cultural mode of the sophisticated West.<sup>25</sup>

Criticisms of this sort directly addressed the question of national image that was being created by the Organising Committee. The tenor of the debate suggests that there were many in Mexico City who believed that the city authorities and the Organising Committee were being more than a little disingenuous. They were trying to mould their countrymen and their country to suit their own aspirations, rather than having the confidence to reveal Mexicans for what they were. As if to confirm the lack of confidence the Organising Committee held for their own countrymen, the Committee launched a huge media campaign designed ‘to establish a sense of national responsibility’ and ‘to awaken the natural hospitality of Mexicans towards foreign athletes and visitors’.<sup>26</sup> In the final year of the preparations, 200,000 leaflets were distributed to offer advice on various aspects of being good hosts; 700 radio broadcasts; and 144 television broadcasts were made to push the message home.<sup>27</sup> These included a series of humorous ‘shorts’, two-minute commercials that were broadcast on television.<sup>28</sup> In each case, the message was clear: Mexicans needed to modify their behaviour to create a good impression, to present Mexico in the best possible light, and to lend dignity to the Mexican nation. Most revealing, however, are the aspects of Mexican life that the Committee chose to highlight: dishonesty, untidiness, violence, drunkenness, and police corruption. All were elements that the Organising Committee either wanted to eradicate, or at least keep out of sight until the Games were over. In this respect, the Organising Committee’s efforts at public education were completely in line with those being undertaken by the Mexico City authorities who had launched huge campaigns designed to keep the city clear of litter, and to ensure that all taxi drivers and bus drivers were registered and aware of their patriotic duty to create a good impression.<sup>29</sup>

South Africa was engulfed in a state of euphoria in May 2004 when the FIFA executive voted in favour of the country hosting the tournament in 2010. Mandela remarked that ‘I feel like a young man of 15’ and Jordaan noted that ‘it was a moment I will never forget for the rest of my life, along with the release from prison of Nelson

Mandela...it was a release of emotions, joy and pain, of years of sitting at airports, on the road, on taxis and trains, going to houses and knocking on the doors of members of the FIFA executive committee' (Sindane, 2008: 70). An important consideration is the legacy that the 2010 World Cup leaves. The government maintains the tournament will leave better sporting facilities, transport system and telecommunications infrastructure. In addition, 2010 will promote 'a healthy lifestyle', foster 'pride in our country and continent' and 'an opportunity to build African solidarity' (South Africa 2010, 2007: 2). In a short publication available in South Africa's 11 official languages hosted on a government website <http://www.sa2010.gov.za>, a handful of suggestions are made in terms of small business opportunities and how to get private accommodation graded appear. A call is made for volunteers who will 'help South Africa host the best FIFA World Cup ever' and 'tell the world why we are proud to be South African' (South Africa 2010, 2007: 2-3). It also notes that not everyone can become a volunteer 'but everyone can be an ambassador in South Africa. With thousands of visitors coming to our country and media attention focussed on us, 2010 is a time to show the world our wonderful nation and continent' (South Africa 2010, 2007: 13).

What essentially started as a bid of SAFA to host the FIFA World Cup has become a major developmental focus of the South African government. Cornelissen (2007: 251) argued that the government 'has started to fashion macro-economic policies around the 2010 event'. A range of projects directly and indirectly linked to the World Cup need to be considered such as the Green Point Stadium in Cape Town (see Alegi, 2007) and the Gautrain Rapid Train Link in Gauteng (see van der Westhuizen, 2007). The South African government maintains that the 2010 tournament is an 'African World Cup' and there is a 'commitment to the African continent' as envisaged in the African Legacy Programme in which to 'ensure maximum and effective African participation in the 2010 World Cup' amongst others (Africa's time has come!: 2). The 2010 World Cup is also seen as a major impetus for growth and development such as the government's Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA) in which unemployment and poverty is to be halved by 2014.

## **Concluding Remarks**

This paper has analysed the experiences of two countries going through a similar experience. The comparison the Mexico City Olympic Games offers unique insight into South Africa's preparations for the FIFA 2010 World Cup. Rather than relying on conjecture or speculation, the ways in which the Organising Committee responded to the changing discourse regarding 'Mexico 68' offers a firm basis for analysing the ongoing process in South Africa. Through comparative analysis the evidence clearly points towards salient themes that link both countries' experiences.

Perhaps the most common characteristic of preparations is the salience of developmental rhetoric. While all bidding candidates tend to be bullish regarding their own attributes, more than with many other hosts of mega-sports events, Mexico and South Africa needed constantly to reiterate reassurances of financial stability and organisational ability in the face of unrelenting foreign criticism. In this respect, the hosts were viewing their winning of the bid from different perspectives. Mexico saw the awarding of the 1968 Games as international recognition for two decades of unprecedented political and economic stability which had allowed them a point of entry into first world status. The Games were confirmation of Mexico's economic and political development. In the case of South Africa, the bid made great play of the competitive edge that its economic and political stability gave it over other bidders, yet it viewed the World Cup as a catalyst for future growth and development. The one country reflecting back at its achievements; the other towards its bright future: both viewed their relatively advanced stages of development as right of passage towards hosting mega-sports events.

The second salient feature of the hosts' international rhetoric was the extent to which they pushed their position as continental leaders. That a successful bid would mean bringing these mega-sports events to a new continent played heavily within the bids of Mexico City and South Africa. Particularly in the case of South Africa, the notion that it was 'Africa's turn' and 'Africa's stage' to host the FIFA World Cup converged with a broader message of South Africa being the gateway to the African continent. No doubt in both Mexico in the 1960s and South Africa in the 2000s, this portrayal as a continental leader gained considerable legitimacy due to their economic and political strengths when compared to their neighbours. Yet as the preparations unfolded, the symbolism that wove through the rhetoric took on greater poignancy. In

the case of Mexico, its self-adopted role as defender of the Third World saw its increasing portrayal as the conduit through which Latin Americans might disprove all the negative stereotypes: prejudices that were maligning its own efforts to convince the world of its ability to put on a great spectacle. So behind the bullish rhetoric of development and regional importance, Mexico's stance may have represented a degree of retreat from attempting to hold its own with countries of the developed world: a case of remaining a larger fish in a smaller pool. South Africa, on the other hand, appears to be sustaining this rhetoric from a position of self-confidence. The 'why not?' attitude that sustained the bid and subsequent preparation may well have sprung from the fact that, given that FIFA had committed 2010 to the African continent, it was indeed the strongest, perhaps only, viable option. The degree, then, to which South Africa emphasises its continental leadership role may reveal a greater degree of magnanimity towards its neighbours than Mexico, where similar rhetoric obscured a search for reassurance about its place on the international stage.

A third feature particularly in the case of Mexico and possibly in South Africa, is the need to focus more than usual, on the preparation of the respective populations for the influx of visitors. Improvements to the physical landscape are not unique to Third World hosts, although the extent to which this needs to be done would understandably be more in such countries. It is true that, at certain times, the organisers of both events displayed a degree of confidence in suggesting that their preparations would be limited to that which their limited economic circumstances could reasonably expect. At the same time, however, the Mexican programme of public education showed a distinct class tension; that 'ordinary' Mexicans might shatter the veneer of sophistication and development and become an embarrassing confirmation of the country's Third World status. Most significantly, in the context of South Africa's hosting of the World Cup, this process in Mexico only really began to reveal itself in the final stages, when the generic rhetoric of communal responsibility began to focus more sharply on those social ills perceived as being associated with the Third World. If one is searching for indications of how public discourse might develop in South Africa in the months leading up to the World Cup, Mexico's experiences of public instruction might point the way. The vital difference between the two processes might be the degree to which race combines with class to fuel such fears.

Finally, an important corollary to the developmental rhetoric was the absolute imperative, in both Mexico and South Africa to guarantee a demonstrable legacy. Regarding the material legacy, the suspicion that scarce resources were being moved away from welfare towards sports construction meant that neither country could pay mere lip service to this aspect of their bid. 'Mexico 68' may well have proved to be one of the most successful in terms of legacy, long before the term became common currency. Although many of the Olympic sites across the city now appear dilapidated this is due to overuse rather than being abandoned. Generations of the capital's youths have benefited from the decision to locate the sports facilities within existing densely populated areas. In the South African case, local organisers are faced with escalating costs and growing speculation on the capacity of the country to stage the finals.<sup>30</sup> Ten stadiums will play host to the tournament. Five world-class stadiums are being built and three rugby and two football stadiums are being upgraded. These stadiums will leave a material legacy as in the case of Mexico. It is however unclear, particularly in the case of the Green Point Stadium, what future use the venue might have. A number of training facilities are earmarked for 2010 and this is encouraging. A range of infrastructural developments from transportation to accommodation are being undertaken. Whether 2010 will generate the projected revenues is also an area of debate, and Griffiths remarked that 'you obviously hope there will be a windfall...you certainly do not want to make a loss the country. It's not exactly a bottom line driven project, you don't want to waste money, but the success or failure will be the legacy it leaves in the country, it is not that we say we have made a profit'.<sup>31</sup>

The aspect of legacy concerning whether the mega-events achieved the objectives of the organisers projecting a certain image of their country is less certain and more arbitrary. In the case of Mexico, the relative success of the Olympic Games did do much to confirm the nation's capacity to stage mega-sports events. Indeed, the success of 'Mexico 68' provided the Mexican nation with more confidence that it could stage a successful World Cup only two years later. Yet the lasting reputation of 'Mexico 68' will be marred by something beyond the control of those organising the Games: the massacre of protesting students days before the opening ceremony. This one event managed to undo much of the good work that Mexico had achieved in convincing the world that it did not conform to the Latin American stereotype of military repression and human rights abuses. South Africa has a tradition of

successfully hosting mega-events and the World Cup in 2010 has the potential to add to this legacy. However, the finals will be the largest mega-event ever undertaken in South Africa, and the material and in particular intangible legacies are uncertain.

‘Mexico 68’ offers a chance to observe a nation that not only wanted to project a specific image to an international audience, but that conducted very real debates concerning what such an image should show, how it should be presented, and who had the right to decide such matters. Some of these debates still concern South Africans as they prepare for the 2010 World Cup.

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<sup>1</sup> The South African Football Association became a member of FIFA in 1909 but terminated its membership in 1925. SAFA was readmitted to FIFA in 1952, in 1961 FIFA suspended the now renamed Football Association of South Africa (FASA). The suspension was lifted in 1963, reinstated in 1964 and FASA was finally expelled from FIFA in 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Letter João Havelange to Solomon Morewa, 14 April 1992. South Africa Correspondence, FIFA Archives, Zurich, Switzerland.

<sup>3</sup> Letter SAFA to FIFA 'Bid for World Cup 2006' 16 September 1994. South Africa Correspondence, FIFA Archives, Zurich, Switzerland.

<sup>4</sup> Letter FIFA to SAFA 'Bid for the FIFA World Cup – 2006' 19 September 2004. South Africa Correspondence, FIFA Archives, Zurich, Switzerland.

<sup>5</sup> Letter SAFA to FIFA 'Bidding procedure for the World Cup'. South Africa Correspondence, FIFA Archives, Zurich, Switzerland.

<sup>6</sup> Chris Bolsmann interview with Edward Griffiths, London, 11 March 2008.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*

<sup>8</sup> Frederick J. Ruesegger Papers, 1928-1978, Folder 22: Sept-Dec. 1967. See drafts of speech by made by Brundage at his birthday party.

<sup>9</sup> After being awarded the Olympic Games, the Mexican president, Adolfo López Mateos, said it was due to international recognition of Mexico's "economic and political stability." See *El Nacional*, 19 Oct. 1963.

<sup>10</sup> AGN, COJO, caja 403, Charlas Radiofónicas, Nos 1-104.

<sup>11</sup> AGN, COJO, Caja 142, 39-200. See details of interview between Ramírez Vázquez and Julio A. Millan of *La Prensa Gráfica* of El Salvador.

<sup>12</sup> Keith Brewster interview with Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, Mexico City, 26 April 2001.

<sup>13</sup> *Excelsior*, 27 Feb. 1968, *El Nacional*, 29 Feb. 1968, editorial, covering the vote on 26 February 1968, by the African Supreme Sports Council to boycott the Games. For details of the IOC correspondence and debate concerning the South Africa issue see: IOC archive, file no. 0101561 Comites nationaux olympiques (Afrique du Sud 1968). Also see various correspondence relating to South Africa in the IOC archive, Brundage Collection Reel 103, Box 179.

<sup>14</sup> In this important matter, Latin American countries showed their fraternity by rallying to Mexico's position. Interview with Ramírez Vázquez.

<sup>15</sup> The 2010 Bid Book was designed by Abold, Munich the same company that was commissioned for the Germany 2006 Bid.

<sup>16</sup> Adidas an official sponsor of FIFA appears prominently throughout the 2010 Bid Book.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Griffiths.

<sup>18</sup> Accessed 1 June 2008 at <http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/organisation/media/newsid=643756.html>

<sup>19</sup> Chris Bolsmann interview with Ian Riley, Johannesburg, 26 March 2008.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Griffiths.

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<sup>22</sup> For examples in newspapers see: “Foro de Excélsior”, *Excélsior*, 22 December 1966, “Principio unificador”, *Excélsior*, 25 February 1968. President Díaz Ordaz’s inaugural speech to the Assembly of the IOC in *El Sol de México*, 8 October 1968.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Ramírez Vázquez.

<sup>24</sup> *Diario de los Debates*, 8 Oct. 1965, pp. 5-6.

<sup>25</sup> “La Brocha Olímpica” *Excélsior*, 29 Jan. 1968. “Vestir a la Ciudad” *Novedades*, 22 Nov. 1967 urges more effort to clean up the city. See also “Los Males de la Olimpiada” *El Universal*, 22 July 1968.

<sup>26</sup> *Excélsior*, 29 Aug. 1965.

<sup>27</sup> Memoria del depto. Del DF (1967-68).

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Ramírez Vázquez. See also, an interview with Cantinflas in *El Nacional*, 10 Feb. 1965, 4d.

<sup>29</sup> Memoria del depto. Del DF (1966-67); Memoria del depto. Del DF (1967-68).

<sup>30</sup> See for example in the British press Scott, M. (2008) ‘Fifa sets aside £400m for World Cup collapse’ *The Guardian*, Wednesday April 2; Sekar, S. (2008) ‘South Africa foresees successful 2010 World Cup’ *The Guardian*, Wednesday March 5; Kuper, J. (2008) ‘Cry the beloved country’ *The Guardian*, Friday May 30; Kelso, P. (2007) ‘Friend of Beckenbauer shot dead’ *The Guardian*, November 26; Rice, X. (2007) ‘Ready or not’ *Observer*, Sunday June 3; Harding, L. (2006) ‘Doubt over South Africa 2010’ *The Guardian*, Wednesday July 12 and Cambell, D. (2006) ‘South Africa struggling to live up to German standards’ *The Observer*, Sunday July 9.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Griffiths.