

Representation in the first African World Cup: ‘world-class’, Pan-Africanism, and exclusion

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The first African World Cup kicked off in the context of skepticism and uncertainty in the ability of the hosts to successfully stage the tournament. Within days of the start of the tournament, the local South African organisers, FIFA, the South African government, the mainstream South African press and commentators projected a very specific manufactured image of the country, one of being ‘world class’. As the tournament progressed, a broad Pan Africanism emerged driven on the one hand by corporate interests and on the other by football fans. This article explores the representation of the first African World Cup in the British and South African press. Drawing on a variety of media outlets between 2000 through to the culmination of the tournament in July 2010, this article contends that a range of representations of Africa have been forwarded by the British and South African media in a context of a tournament that was also marked by exclusion.¹

Introduction

In the closing ceremony of the first African World Cup at Soccer City in Johannesburg, Colombian pop singer Shakira sang the official song of the tournament ‘Waka-Waka (This time for Africa)’. Originally written by Cameroonian band Golden Sounds in the 1980s, Shakira added English and Spanish lyrics and exclaimed ‘This is Africa [and] We are all Africans [and] We are all Africa’.² The closing ceremony brought the end to a month long spectacle in which South Africa in particular and the African continent in general was projected by mainstream commentators, analysts and the media.

This article explores the representation of Africa and South Africa in sections of the print press before and during the month long spectacle. By considering the representation of Africa and South Africa, a distinct imagery is projected which initially, particularly abroad, was relatively negative but became positive during the course of the tournament. The article contributes to the understanding of visuality by showing how a specific and well crafted imagery of the first African World Cup is developed and projected. The data generated in this article is drawn from a cross section of British and South African print newspapers and a selection of transnational corporations’ advertising campaigns between 2000 and 2010.

The article briefly traces the role South African football authorities played in bidding to host the World Cup after decades of isolation because of apartheid, before examining the representation of Africa in the bid books submissions to world football governing body

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Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). The article discusses certain press coverage with specific reference to two events in the lead up to the World Cup in 2010. The article then considers the forms of representation during the event. In particular, the notion of 'world-class' became the prominent message during the tournament while the theme of Pan-Africanism developed, particularly in relation to events on the football pitch. Finally, the article looks at the notion of exclusion in relation to access to stadiums and matches during the tournament.

South Africa as sporting outcasts to World Cup hosts

South African sports organisations returned to the international fold in the early 1990s after decades of isolation. The South African Football Association (SAFA) was inaugurated in 1991 and unified a range of football associations.³ SAFA was readmitted into FIFA in July 1992 (after expulsion in 1976). In late 1992, FIFA president João Havelange suggested South Africa could host a World Cup.⁴ Members of the SAFA executive attended the 1994 World Cup finals in the USA. In September of that year, SAFA notified FIFA of their interest in hosting the 2006 World Cup. SAFA wrote to FIFA and stated:

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.⁵

FIFA informed SAFA that bidding for 2006 had not commenced. The South African 2006 World Cup bid was officially launched at the Confédération Africaine de Football (CAF) congress in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso in February 1998. Brazil, England, Germany, Morocco and South Africa submitted bids for the 2006 World Cup. Morocco was Africa's first representative to bid to host the World Cup in 1994 and subsequently bid to host the 1998, 2006 and 2010 events. The 2006 World Cup host decision made in July 2000 was controversial. South Africa lost the final vote 12 to 11 after Charles Dempsey, president of the Oceania Football Association, abstained from voting. His association had instructed him to vote for South Africa if England were eliminated. This would have tied the vote at 12 all and FIFA president, Sepp Blatter would have cast the deciding vote for his preferred candidate, South Africa. 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. Egypt, Libya, Morocco, South Africa and Tunisia bid for the 2010 World Cup. 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'.⁶ 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'.⁷ In 2004, the *Sowetan*, a leading mass daily newspaper in South Africa, declared that winning the 2010 bid would mean 'endorsing the South African miracle created in 1994' and that 'ours comes tantalisingly close to a true African bid...the benefits will not only spill over into the poorest parts of our country...our neighbours will also reap the benefits'.⁸ In addition, it wrote that FIFA 'has an opportunity to restore the faith of the world's poor in the principles of global governance and human solidarity'. 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.⁹ In the aftermath of the decision, FIFA president Sepp Blatter said that 'being a multi-cultural and multi-racial country, it is a dignified representative of Africa for the organisation of the World Cup'.¹⁰ The *Sowetan's* editorial wrote that the decision was a 'vote of confidence in the ability of South Africans in particular, and Africans in general'.¹¹

Representing Africa in the bid book submissions

Members of FIFA interested in hosting a World Cup tournament submit comprehensive bid books outlining a range of plans and hosting agreements in an attempt to secure the right to host the event. In addition, Governments of the respective member states provide guarantees to FIFA that include stadium construction and infrastructural development amongst others. The bid books are important in that they set the stage for the form and content of the potential tournament and provide significant financial guarantees. When considering South Africa's 2006 and 2010 bid books submitted to FIFA, a Pan-Africanist rhetoric and imagery is clearly evident. The theme of 'Africa's Call' runs throughout the 2006 submission. In Nelson Mandela's letter in the 2006 bid book, it states 'Africa's time has come'. The 2010 bid book uses a fluttering South African flag to box the four parts of the bid. Each of the separate bid documents are graced with an attractive young black woman 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.¹² The official emblem and poster of the 2010 tournament are distinctly Pan-Africanist. The emblem depicts a figure resembling a rock art painting against a brightly coloured African continent

and the poster a man's head at the top of the African continent heading a ball. Moreover, the catch phrase for the 2010 World Cup is 'ke nako [it's time in Sesotho]. Celebrate Africa's humanity'.

The organising committees for the 2006 and 2010 campaigns emphasized the following 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.¹³ Alegi notes that the objectives for the 2006 bid were to increase the international exposure of the country, have a positive impact on the domestic tourist industry and evoke national unity.¹⁴ The 2010 tournament represented a project at the national level and globally market 'Brand South Africa'.¹⁵ Cornelissen argues that in the Moroccan and South African bids of 2006 and 2010 both countries cast themselves as 'the gateway to Africa' and 'as true African representatives'.¹⁶ Finally, Cornelissen and Swart note the predominant features in South Africa's bids for sports mega-events are broad developmental goals closely linked to an African revival.¹⁷ This was in the context of Thabo Mbeki's 'African Renaissance' in which an image of a modern and confident Africa would be projected to the world. Despite these bold claims, from the outset a range of press outlets focussed on concerns in potentially hosting the World Cup in South Africa.

Figure 1: 2010 Bid book

Figure 2: 2010 Bid book

Critique, concern and sensationalism in press reports

In January 2000, South African Minister of Sports and Recreation Ngconde Balfour, accused Bobby Charlton, member of the England's 2006 bid team, of colonialism and patronising the African bid. In an interview, Charlton had responded to a question on crime in South Africa by saying '...a World Cup given to a country at the wrong time, and I don't just mean South Africa, would be a disaster'.¹⁸ In April 2000, South African high commissioner to Britain Cheryl Carolus, wrote to the British Government and complained about 'vitriolic' attacks and 'negative campaigning' by supporters of the English bid.¹⁹ Matt Dickinson writing in the British daily *The Times* owned by Rupert Murdoch's News International, accused the England

2006 bid team of ‘smearing one of its rivals’²⁰. The negative reports on South Africa continued after FIFA’s 2010 host decision. In September 2006, Franz Beckenbauer, chair of the organizing committee of the 2006 World Cup held in Germany, remarked that ‘the organisation for the World Cup in South Africa is beset by big problems...But these are not South African problems – these are African problems’.²¹ As a response to Beckenbauer’s comments and critique more generally, Jabulani Moleketi, South African deputy finance minister and chairperson of government’s 2010 technical committee said ‘2010 will give us an opportunity to say there’s this other Africa which can hold the biggest sporting competition in the world efficiently and like any other European country. We have an opportunity to change the attitude towards Africa and show what Africans can do’.²² Beckenbauer’s comments were not isolated remarks but part of a broader concern particularly in the foreign press who questioned the ability of South Africa to host the event. Philip Pank also writing in *The Times* reported on delays in the completion of infrastructure and the potential of crime.²³

In May 2008, 62 African migrants and refugees were killed in xenophobic violence that spread across South Africa.²⁴ These were not the first xenophobic attacks in post-apartheid South Africa however they were the most widespread and intense to date. The South African government and local organisers insisted the xenophobic violence would not derail preparations for the event. Danny Jordaan even claimed international visitors would not be deterred from visiting the country as ‘they understood the context in which the attacks were happening’.²⁵ In early 2010 seasoned football journalist, Brian Glanville noted that ‘we can only hope and pray... [a] country where criminality runs riot, murders are commonplace, robbery endemic. ...[f]ans have been warned not to travel by train or bus for fear of molestation’.²⁶ This emerging criticism was not limited to the foreign press and personalities but prominent South Africans raised concerns too. Renowned novelist André Brink stated ‘I have serious doubts that our rulers can even guarantee a safe and successful Soccer World Cup in 2010’.²⁷ Despite this overtly negative exposure, Gabby Logan of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), writing in *The Times* in the build up to the 2009 Confederations Cup in South Africa remarked that:

as usual we have approached the 2010 World Cup with arrogance and ignorance we carry for most sporting events outside Western Europe or the US...South Africa has to rebut everything from apathy, violence and a potential lack of power...let’s embrace the horns, the sandy pitches, the crowds mingling and occasional power cuts because it’s Africa [sic], and staging a World Cup there is actually a brilliant idea.²⁸

During the course of 2010, two separate and unrelated incidents were highlighted in the British press in particular who questioned the ability of the South African organizers to host the tournament. The first incident took place during the African Cup of Nations in Cabinda, Angola in January 2010, when a bus carrying the Togolese national team was attacked by gunmen of the Front for the Liberation of the Enclave of Cabinda (FLEC) killing three.²⁹ The British tabloid the *Daily Mail* posed the question ‘if Angola can’t keep players safe from terrorists, can South Africa protect the world’s biggest stars in the summer?’³⁰ Darren Lewis writing in the tabloid *Daily Mirror* noted that the incident was ‘bad for the Nations Cup and a disaster for the forthcoming first-ever World Cup in Africa’.³¹ While David Smith, writing for the broadsheet the *Guardian* noted that the ‘Angola attack raises awareness of the World Cup terror threat’.³² In addition, the broadsheet *Telegraph* exclaimed: ‘Africa’s dream is in tatters’.³³ Parallels can be drawn with the first co-hosted African Cup of Nations in Ghana and Nigeria in 2000 in which crowd trouble occurred. South Africa 2006 bid organisers had to refute suggestions that their bid would be harmed in light of the events during the 2000 tournament.³⁴ The second incident occurred in South Africa when extreme right wing leader of the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) Eugène Terre’Blanche was killed in April 2010. The British tabloid the *Daily Star* exclaimed that ‘World Cup fans face bloodbath: race war declared in South Africa’ and Steve Hughes writing in the same newspaper declared that there was a ‘World Cup machete threat’.³⁵ In the context of the British press, tabloids and broadsheets raised similar concerns in relation to the events in Angola and South Africa as they unfolded in the first half of 2010. This form of reporting was not restricted to the British press, for German examples particularly from the tabloid *Bild* see Schäfer³⁶ and Feldhaus.³⁷

In the lead up to the start of the tournament on 11 June 2010 *Time* magazine exclaimed that football in South Africa has been a ‘...political statement [and] a successful World Cup would be another one’.³⁸ While *The Economist* reported that South African president Jacob Zuma said 2010 was the most important year since the first democratic elections held in the country in 1994.³⁹ Days prior to the kick-off, English comedian and columnist for *The Times* Frank Skinner wrote of ‘updating his will’ and asking readers to ‘pray’ for him.⁴⁰ Jonathan Clayton writing in *The Times* noted before the opening match between South Africa and Mexico that ‘the country hopes that the World Cup will signal the arrival of modern South Africa – a brash, young, developing nation’.⁴¹ Patrick Barclay also noted in *The Times* that ‘so much is riding on this World Cup. If it goes well, chorus business leaders, the potential of a continent might start to be unlocked...The potential for further problems is massive’.⁴² While an editorial in the same newspaper stated that ‘the football World Cup is the new South

Africa's coming of age...a successful World Cup will make it a beacon for the entire continent'.⁴³ The press in South Africa reported on the build-up to the event in a very different way to their European counterparts.

Figure 3: Fan during 2010 World Cup in South Africa

'World-class', Pan-Africanism, and exclusion

Within South African newspapers, the World Cup received significant press coverage. This coverage was not restricted to the events on the football fields of South Africa but included reports on the perceptions the hosts were creating for their world-wide audience. From the outset, mainstream newspaper editors, journalist and commentators projected a range of images. FIFA's control of all television broadcasts of matches and images of fans within stadiums added to this. Moreover, for the South African government, the World Cup meant the country would receive significant media attention for the duration of the event and beyond. An interlocking theme across a broad spectrum of South African newspapers was the capacity to rebrand and project a specific desired image of the country. This image was that South Africa was seen as 'world-class'. This was an attempt to dispel the negative press coverage the country had received in the build up to the tournament on the one hand, and on the other was to prove critics wrong in light of decades of negative reporting on the continent as a whole. Moreover, it was also an attempt dismiss more cynical commentaries that had been seen as Afro-pessimistic.

In the opening game of the 2010 tournament, South Africa recorded a credible draw against Mexico in front of 84,490 spectators. Siphiwe Tshabalala's 55th minute effort was 'a special goal, a special moment: plainly beautiful'.⁴⁴ The editorial of Johannesburg's *Saturday Star* noted that 'we invited the world...[the World Cup] is finally here, and we have finally arrived – as a world-class nation'.⁴⁵ Similarly, *The Sunday Independent* exclaimed that it was 'the day we won respect' and it represented 'one giant leap for Africa'.⁴⁶ While South African finance minister Pravin Gordham suggested the tournament was 'the best advertisement for SA [and] a milestone to a more developed, cohesive South Africa'.⁴⁷ Midway through the month long event, local organizing committee chief executive Danny Jordaan suggested that South Africa had 'continued to prove detractors wrong [and] changing the perception that Africa and Africans cannot succeed where our global peers have succeeded' was occurring.⁴⁸ Indeed, Boris Johnson, London mayor noted after a visit to Cape Town that the World Cup has given South Africans 'a deep sense of pride that it has taken on something difficult and

done it well [while] FIFA took an inspired decision to give the World Cup to South Africa, and South Africa has responded brilliantly'.⁴⁹ In the build-up to the Olympic Games in London in 2012, Johnson had to defend the costs and address the concerns of the British public.⁵⁰

Despite teething issues around transport problems and stadiums that were not filled to capacity, especially corporate seats and suites, the hosts projected a particular image. Richard Pithouse argues that the World Cup 'cast our country in a new light...changed the representation of Africa in Western Europe...[and] largely appears as competent, [and] modern'.⁵¹ The successful hosting of the event according to weekend newspaper *City Press* meant 'the greatest legacy is the kissing goodbye of the theory of inevitable failure'.⁵² In reference to the hospitality shown by the hosts, an editorial in the *Saturday Star* suggested South Africans had welcomed visitors with 'the quintessential African generosity of spirit and hospitality'.⁵³ Moreover, the positive spinoffs of hosting the event in marketing terms were seen as incalculable.⁵⁴

Makhundu Sefara writing in the *Sunday Independent* exclaimed that the tournament had been 'Africa's proudest moment'.⁵⁵ After the culmination of the tournament, Kevin McCallum writing in the Johannesburg daily *The Star* exclaimed that the event represented a 'coming of age for South Africa, 16 years old and now the darling of the planet. It was Africa shouting out for a chance. They delivered and then some.... It was a grand World Cup, a fantastic tournament – it was Africa's coming of age'.⁵⁶ Jordaan suggested South Africa had 'crossed a huge psychological barrier'.⁵⁷ South African president Jacob Zuma, who had attended a number of matches during the tournament including the opening and closing ceremonies, remarked that 'we have been able to show the world that we have what it takes to compete with the best'.⁵⁸ Finally, FIFA president Sepp Blatter claimed 'Africa has proven that it can organize a World Cup [and] the perception that people outside of this continent had about Africa has changed'.⁵⁹ In contrast to earlier reports in the build-up to the tournament, *The Times* noted in an editorial that 'the World Cup has been a triumph for South Africa...has soared beyond its problems to deliver one of the slickest tournaments on record. More importantly, Africa's first World Cup has generated a wave of national confidence'.⁶⁰ While the *Financial Times* suggested 'The World Cup has essentially given South Africa a chance to reintroduce itself to the rest of the world'.⁶¹ Sections of the mainstream press in South Africa enthused at the efficiency and competency of the organization of the event while simultaneously arguing that the tournament was 'world-class'.⁶² In addition to the discourse of 'world-class', a broad popular Pan-Africanism emerged during the tournament.

Six African countries represented the continent in South Africa during the tournament. Despite generally indifferent performances, these teams received vocal and passionate support. Ghana was the only African representative to qualify for the second round. After the hosts South Africa, more popularly known as Bafana Bafana, failed to qualify for the second round, the Ghanaian team was affectionately referred to as 'BaGhana BaGhana' in the South African press. Prior to Ghana's quarterfinal encounter with Uruguay, the *Sowetan* exclaimed 'Africa Unite: Black Stars carry continent's dream'.⁶³ Despite losing to Uruguay in a penalty shoot-out, the Ghanaian national team received significant support from South Africans more generally, and in Soccer City during the match in particular. In relation to the Pan-Africanism evident in the World Cup, the *Mail & Guardian* succinctly reminded its readers that 'we talk up our own exceptionalism a good deal without realizing the extent to which we rode in on the back of a continent-wide narrative...we have nothing to celebrate unless we can celebrate it with the African diaspora. However this ends, we are all Black Stars'.⁶⁴ Zimbabwean writer Everjoice Win remarked that 'South Africa publicly embracing its own Africanness' while noting 'I shall enjoy this mirage of a rainbow continent for as long as it lasts'.⁶⁵ Win's comments need to be understood in the context of the xenophobia that emerged in South Africa in May 2008.

Figure 4: Fans during 2010 World Cup in South Africa

The South African bids of 2006 and 2010 to host the first African World Cup leaned heavily on the discourse and imagery of continental linkages. The local organising committee for the tournament in particular, FIFA more generally and South African politicians emphasized an African World Cup. In addition, official corporate sponsors and companies linked into the Pan-Africanist rhetoric in the build-up and during the event to enhance and promote their commercial interests. In reference to the constant television campaigns run on South African television emphasizing this phenomenon during the World Cup, football journalist Gabriele Marcotti, noted that the message sent out was 'pushing the warm and fuzzy message of a united Africa at the World Cup, with every African supporting every team from the continent'.⁶⁶ The technical sponsor of 12 participating teams including four African teams was German sports equipment manufacturer Puma.⁶⁷ As part of their build up for the event, the company launched the 'Africa Unity' kit prior to the African Cup of Nations tournament held in Angola in January 2010. Four African competing sides in South Africa used the equipment as their 3rd kit. Samuel Eto, Cameroonian national captain and Puma endorsed

athlete, remarked that the kit ‘inspired me and my teammates...helps bring the continent of Africa together...sends out a positive message for Africa – we are uniting as a continent to help life and the planet’.⁶⁸ Moreover, Puma noted the kit was the first ‘continental football kit’. Jochen Zeitz, Puma chief executive, acknowledged sales of Puma merchandise in Africa more generally was low but was ‘hoping Puma’s close association with African football will help sales of its high-end apparel in Europe’.⁶⁹ Similarly, Ivory Coast national team captain Didier Drogba and Nike endorsed athlete, campaigned on behalf of the company. In Nike’s ‘Lace Up Save Lives’ campaign, profits generated from sales of red football boot laces would be donated to AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria related projects in Africa.⁷⁰ Official corporate sponsor of the tournament, Adidas unveiled the football to be used during the event called ‘Jabulani’, isiZulu for ‘celebrate’.⁷¹ In addition, the company released a range of shoes and clothes with embossed images of traditional Zulu warriors titled *Laduma*, isiZulu for ‘it thunders’ more commonly used in South African football to refer to goal. The use of stereotypical African imagery was also evident in Pepsi’s football related campaigns with Lionel Messi, Frank Lampard and Thierry Henry painted in ‘tribal’ or ‘ethnic’ colours.

In March 2010, South African mobile telecommunications company MTN providing services in 15 African countries and an official FIFA sponsor, launched their ‘Africa United’ campaign. According to the company, the ‘campaign is a political statement which MTN has been advocating in the market for a long time...[part of] ongoing efforts to contribute to Africa’s development’.⁷² The African cellular communications market represents a lucrative market especially in Nigeria with over 70 million users in an industry that generates US\$12 billion.⁷³ Despite African teams receiving significant support during the World Cup much of this rhetoric was driven by corporate interests. Indeed, Marcotti suggests the Pan-Africanism on display was ‘little more than a convenient feel-good corporate message’ and the ‘‘Africa united’ [reference to MTN in particular] storyline seems like a myth, pushed by sponsors to move more products and Europeans to make us feel better’.⁷⁴ One can only speculate when the World Cup will be hosted on the African continent in the future but if potential hosts may emerge, rival non-African bids may remind FIFA that Africa has already had its ‘turn’ in 2010. Members of CAF were not permitted to bid for the 2018 tournament.

Figure 5: Banners in Soccer City Stadium during 2010 World Cup in South Africa

Figure 6: Advertisement during 2010 World Cup in South Africa

In addition to notions of ‘world-class’ and Pan-Africanism permeating through the discourse around the World Cup, it was evident in the stadiums hosting the 64 matches, that in addition to the international visitors, a different group of South Africans spectators were watching the spectacle (for a discussion of ‘race’ and South African fandom see Fletcher, 2010).⁷⁵ This reinforced the notion of exclusion in which ticket prices for South Africans were set at approximately US\$20, well beyond the reach of the average South African. Cash register operators, security guards and stadium hospitality workers were paid approximately US\$2 per hour during the month long event.⁷⁶ Despite the overwhelmingly positive press reports in the mainstream South African press during the tournament, some social commentators, analysts and journalists were able to pose more critical and pressing questions in relation to the hype and euphoria generated (see Cottle, 2011 in particular for a critical post-World Cup analysis).⁷⁷ This is significant, as in the case of Craig Tanner’s documentary *Fahrenheit 2010*, that critiqued the use of state resources in preparation for the World Cup was not aired on public or commercial television in South Africa. The three broadcasters in South Africa refused to air the documentary. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) stated ‘our job is obviously to promote the World Cup and fighting anything that can be perceived as negative is not in our interest’ while e.tv suggested it was ‘not suitable for a South African audience’.⁷⁸ Palesa Morudu argues ‘black and white coexist in our country, separated still; and, for a long time, Africans will suffer...indignity...while white people enjoy nice football at Green Point [Cape Town] stadium and then drive home safely on roads in good condition’.⁷⁹ Moreover, referring to ‘race’, class and exclusion during the World Cup, journalist Niren Tolsi argues a ‘mainlining of euphoria’ occurred during the event with the ‘middle classes [being] vociferously optimistic [and] feeling part of a country they are otherwise completely dislocated from with their gated communities, private healthcare and exorbitantly priced schools’.⁸⁰

Mainstream South African newspapers constantly referred to the ‘world-class’ nature of the event and the rebranding of the image of the country in which the middle classes were able to enjoy the sanitised spectacle and ‘Disneyfication’ of the first African World Cup while using public transport and walking through city centres, for many for the first time. Therefore during the first African World Cup, the traditional football supporting public watched games in fan parks and on television and in more remote areas of the country and listened on radio sets due to being priced out of the event. However, a significant corollary of this according to Richard Calland was that ‘middle-class football fans in this country represented a small minority before June 11...looked down on ‘soccer’, seeing it as, if not a ‘black’ sport, then

certainly a lower class of game. That elitist worldview has been shaken, if not shattered...Now they understand that this is *the* global game...Rugby, they now understand, is a minority sport – when compared to football’.⁸¹ Indeed, an immediate ironic legacy of the World Cup, is that the second international sports event after the final of 11 June 2010 [South Africa beat Ghana 1:0 in a friendly football match on 11 August 2010] was the rugby union match between South Africa and New Zealand played on the 22 August 2010 watched by 88,791 spectators. This represented the largest rugby union attendance at an international match in South Africa since 1955. A major source of critique in the build up to the World Cup were the costs involved in building stadiums and infrastructure estimated at US\$5,5 billion at the expense of more pressing issues within South Africa⁸². For FIFA, the first African World Cup represented a shrewd business decision as television and broadcasting rights had been sold for US\$3.2 billion, 30% up from the 2006 event.⁸³ Moreover, according to Jordaan, ‘Blatter is very happy. This has been the most successful [tournament] in their history’.⁸⁴ Throughout the duration of the tournament South African retailers and supermarkets in particular experienced an increase in sales particularly related to football merchandise ‘capitalising on the surge in national pride and soccer fever’.⁸⁵ Towards the end of the tournament Pravin Gordham suggested US\$5.2 billion had been added to the economy, while close to 500 000 foreigners had visited the country during the event.⁸⁶ For Jordaan ‘the World Cup had rebranded and repositioned South Africa in the global economy’.⁸⁷ Despite initial positive sales for street vendors, the elimination of the hosts saw such sales significantly decrease.⁸⁸ In contrast traditional South African brands such as Sun International, City Lodge, Shoprite, Pick n Pay, Mr Price and Woolworths all reported upsurges in sales figures.⁸⁹ The first African World Cup generated significant profits for FIFA, corporate partners and certain South African retailers more generally. However, Tolsoi succinctly notes that a world class event was delivered but this was ‘focused in and around stadiums, for television audiences and the elite who have visited our shores, from fans to players’.⁹⁰ More soberly, Richard Calland provides an assessment of the tournament as a ‘First World show superimposed upon a putrid, demeaning Third World squalor’.⁹¹

Conclusion

This article has highlighted the manner in which the first African World Cup was portrayed in a cross-section of British and South African newspapers in the build up and during the first African World Cup. In the context of scepticism and uncertainty of hosting the first World Cup in Africa, the local South African organisers, FIFA more generally, the South African

government and the mainstream South African press and commentators projected a specific image of the country to the world. This image was primarily focussed on the ‘world-class’ nature of the spectacle and in turn the country. By hosting a successful World Cup, commentators proclaimed that South Africa had ‘arrived’ on the global stage and was ‘world-class’. In addition to the notion of ‘world-class’, a popular Pan-Africanism emerged driven to an extent by corporate interests and marketing campaigns but also because the host nation had failed to qualify for the second round. Ghana was the only African representative to progress through the group qualifying stages and as a result received significant South African support. Despite the overly positive image that was projected during the tournament, the event was also one of exclusion. In this context, the traditional football supporting public in South Africa was in many cases, absent from the stadiums of the tournament.

Notes

- ¹ Many thanks to Peter Alegi and Susann Baller for constructive comments on earlier drafts of this paper.
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- ³ Alegi and Bolsmann, ‘From Apartheid to Unity’.
- ⁴ Alegi, ‘Feel the Pull’.
- ⁵ Letter SAFA to FIFA. ‘Bid for World Cup 2006’. September 16, 1994. South Africa Correspondence, FIFA Archives, Zurich, Switzerland.
- ⁶ FIFA. ‘Inspection Group Report for the 2010 FIFA World Cup’. Zurich: FIFA, 2004: 8.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ ‘Why we Deserve the 2010 Games’. *Sowetan*, May 14, 2004.
- ⁹ ‘Congratulations to Ourselves’. *Sowetan*, May 14, 2004.
- ¹⁰ ‘SA’s History Tipped Scale’. *Sowetan*, May 14, 2004.
- ¹¹ ‘Congratulations to Ourselves’. *Sowetan*, May 14, 2004.
- ¹² See *Africa’s Stage South Africa 2010 Bid Book* and *Africa’s Call SA 2006 World Cup*
- ¹³ Bolsmann and Brewster, ‘Mexico 1968 and South Africa 2010’ and Bolsmann ‘Mexico 1968 and South Africa 2010’.
- ¹⁴ Alegi, ‘Feel the Pull’.
- ¹⁵ Alegi, ‘A Nation to Be Reckoned With’, 399.
- ¹⁶ Cornelissen, ‘It’s Africa’s Turn!’, 1295.
- ¹⁷ Cornelissen and Swart. ‘The 2010 Football World Cup’.
- ¹⁸ The Observer. ‘“Colonial” Charlton under fire’. *The Observer*, January 23, 2000. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/2000/jan/23/newsstory.sport>.
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