Africa and Sport mega-events:

The experience of the 2010 FIFA World Cup

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In studying the position of Africa in the international system, scholars have been concerned with questions surrounding the particularity of concepts such as State and sovereignty or the impact of Africa's neo-patrimonial politics on the continent's international relations. The increasing interest in other areas of international relations, including culture and religion, has suggested new research avenues.

Among these areas, sport has emerged as an interesting arena of international relations both as a basis for a country's soft power and as a valuable diplomatic resource. Of particular interest, developing countries are increasingly competing for hosting sport mega-events realizing the opportunities these events present in terms of marketing the country as a destination of tourism and investments and promoting its cultural heritage. Few African countries have engaged in this competition culminating in hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, the first on African soil.

Hosting this world class event in South Africa for the first time raises a number of questions about the benefits that the African continent and the hosting African country gain from this experience. To what extent did Africa and South Africa make use of this event to change the stereotypical image of Africa as a continent of poverty and bad governance? What did this event mean for African countries and nations? Was using an African discourse in marketing the event an attempt to make the World Cup relevant to the continent as a whole, or a South African appropriation of Africa to its own advantage? And to what extent can this event and its likes contribute to changing Africa's position in international relations theory and debates? In other words, if economy and politics are areas where Africa still holds subordinate position, can sport provide a more promising arena?

The paper discusses these questions. It argues that in the African context although hosting sport mega- events may have undeniable economic and social benefits, it also raises doubts about the externalization of accountability and the power of international bodies (the FIFA in this case) vis-à-vis the hosting country, the paybacks of luxurious government spending on

such events to ordinary Africans, and the discrepancies in power bases and benefits between the hosting country and other African countries.

The paper is divided into three sections. The first section introduces a theoretical background on the study of sport in international relations. It is concluded by underlining the basic premises of the approach adopted in this paper. The second section examines the development in Africa's position in the international sport system and presents the different scholarly accounts on this position. The last section focuses on the 2010 FIFA World Cup experience, evaluating the policies pursued by South Africa, Africa and the international community in the run up and organization of this event.

I. Sport in International Relations

Until recently sport has been a neglected field of research in international relations. Even within the liberal paradigm that focused on international interdependence and supranational organizations, little attention was given to sport. International relations scholars have explained the limited interest in sport in their field by referring to the field's focus on inter-state relations and its overwhelming concern with a materialist concept of power (Taylor 1986, 28-9; Houlihan 1994, 31; Levemore and Budd 2004, 6). It was only in the 1980s that a body of literature on politics and sport started to emerge. This reflected not only a late attention to the growing importance of sport in international relations, but also a rising interest in the study of the non-materialist aspects including culture, religion and arts, or what has been known as 'soft power' (Allison 1993, 4-5; Boniface 1998, 87).

In this emerging literature on sport and international relations, scholars have generally noted how the premise of sport as a pacific force has declined given the use of sport as a reflection of tensions and crises, or as a tool for pressuring other governments to change their policies. They have also pointed out that the myth of autonomy of sport from politics and society has faded away given sport's link to nationalism and its use and abuse by politicians as an ideological, mobilizing or diversionary tool (Allison 1986, 17-21; Allison 1993, 5-6; Houlihan 1994, 12-6; Jackson and Haigh 2008, 349).

In this literature, however, developing countries in general, and African countries in particular, were generally overlooked. This, I would argue, owes a lot to the western domination not only over international sport, but also over shaping the scholarly debate around sport and politics. Reviewing literature reveals that research queries have developed

to include new issues over the last three decades, but remained largely Eurocentric. The first wave of writings gave special attention to the use of sport in the interwar and cold war period by liberal and illiberal European states for showing national pride. It examined how the communist, fascist and Nazi regimes used sport in the 1920s and 1930s as a means of propaganda, (Arnaud 1998, 6; Holt 1998, 210; Riordan 1999, 48-66; Kruger 1999, 67-89; Langley 1989, 8-10) and how sport reflected the competition and antagonism between the two blocs in the cold war period (Langley 1989, 20; Macfarlane and Herd 1986, 219-36).

With the increasing pace of globalisation in the 1990s, some of the aforementioned research queries continued and new ones emerged. New areas of research included the impact of the intensified global commercialization on sport, the influence of business on the rules of different games and, thus, on the development of these games, and the connection between multinational sport business and American cultural imperialism (Houlihan 1994, 23-4; Allison 2005, 2-3; Markovits and Rensmann 2010). Focusing on this research agenda has meant that third world countries in general, and African countries in particular, remained marginalized in international sport literature.

At the same time, when referring to third world countries' position in international sport, and their hosting of sport mega-events, scholars have generally adopted one of two different approaches. For the first approach sport is a useful vehicle for meeting emerging powers' international aspirations. As Jackson and Haigh (2008, 350) noted, sport 'has quickly become a major industry as well as a branding/marketing vehicle for both cities and nations aspiring for a "world class" status'. Black (2008, 468) went even further, arguing that the increasing ability of developing countries to compete for hosting these events signifies the shifts in the global political and economic power.

In this sense, sport is used by middle and small powers to project a certain image of the state and the nation, and thus for establishing international leadership and pre-eminence. It is also a low-cost tool at the state's disposal to penalize a certain country and pressurise it to change its policies, something which makes it particularly relevant to developing countries (Allison and Monnington 2005, 5-6). This relates to the fact that compared to international financial institutions and political and military alliances, international sporting bodies are avenues of easier access and of more influence on decision making for small and middle countries. In other words, sport is truly universal and cross-boundary compared to systems of economic

and political governance (i.e: democracy and free market). It is a field where developing countries have more space and influence (Boniface 1998, 88-9). In this sense, sport can be seen through the prism of interdependence and co-operation through international organizations (Houlihan 1994, 12-3, 21, 44-5).

According to the second approach, however, sport, like politics and economy, reflects the dependency of developing countries in international relations. For Redeker (2008, 496-8), for instance, sport is a mythical arena in which small and middle states project themselves as more powerful and influential actors in international politics. It is, thus, used to increase what he calls 'the imaginary power' of the state. In reality, however, it is not third world countries that benefit from sport and its mega-events. Rather, it is the international sporting bodies, and sport in general, that emerge victorious, augment their power and prove to be 'above nations'. A related argument refers to the power of international capital vis-a-vis the state in the sport arena or to the dominance of politically powerful states in world sport system.

Particularly important to this approach, the increasing commercialization of sport raises questions on the ability of the state to use sport as a foreign policy tool, on the nature of values that business spreads through sport, and on the relationship between the international sporting bodies and business. Related to the role of business is also the significance of sport coverage of media corporations, in which third world countries and their athletes hold no ownership and gain limited attention (Houlihan 1994, 152-6, Levemore 2009, 38-45). To show the position of third world countries in the international sport business and media it is suffice to mention that the US and Europe controls 42% and 36% of the world sport industry respectively (Lee 2004, 114). In this sense, sport fits in the dependency theory analysis. It reflects a dependent relationship that ties the developing to the developed world, its MNCS and international bodies (Houlihan 1994, 48-9,).

This dependency of third world countries in the structure of international sport is aggravated by the fact that resources of these countries, in this case talented athletes, are exploited by the developed north. Moreover, sport may reflect a form of cultural imperialism of poor countries by rich countries. At the end of the day sport, according to this approach, is a cultural product that is presented by media and marketed by business, both dominated by the countries of the centre, not the periphery (Houlihan 1994, 15, 51-2).

For this approach no aspect of sport can manifest the disparities between the developed and developing countries than hosting sport mega-events. Given the advanced infrastructure required for such events, hosting them, and even bidding for this hosting, was for a long time an exclusive preserve of the developed North. This has also meant, as Cornelissen (2009, 88-90) noted, that these events are used to showcase development rather than contribute to it. The ability to host these events is, thus, an indicator in its own right on the ability of the country and the hosting cities to compete internationally (Hall 2006, 64). In this sense, hosting these events is an indicator of the continuing global inequalities between the North and the South, but also within the countries of the South. Evidently, leading countries of the South have increasingly bid for hosting these events. The mass popular appeal, intense media coverage and significant, though controversial, economic and social consequences of these events make hosting them an aspiration for regional powers of the South. Thus, what Nauright (2004) calls the 'sports-media-tourism' complex is, from this approach's viewpoint, generally working in favour of the developed and leading developing countries.

One of the major reasons why leading countries of the South compete to host mega-events is the importance of these events for branding the host states or cities. Yet, the exact benefits and pay offs of hosting these events are hard to estimate. Interestingly, the fact that the exact benefits of hosting these events remain unknown, and are often exaggerated, may be one of the reasons that developing countries compete to host them. As one scholar put it, the benefits of hosting mega events may just be a construct with which the governments and publics of these countries are convinced rather than real deliverables on the ground (Horne 2007, 86). This is particularly important taking into consideration that developing countries are likely to spend more than developed countries on the bid process and the event itself to overcome the scepticism about their capacity to host such events (Black and Van der Westhuizen 2004, 1208-9).

To sum up, while the first approach focuses on the opportunities provided by sport and its mega-events to developing countries, the second approach cast doubt on the benefits of the current sport system and the hosting of mega-events to these countries. This study takes a middle ground that 1) does not neglect the agency of developing countries in general, and African countries in particular, in international sport, but admits their disadvantaged position; 2) does not only focus on international factors that hinder the enhancement of Africa's position in the international sporting system, but takes into account the domestic variables

related to the capacities and policies of the African states; 3) does not overemphasise the particularity of Africa, but stresses the relevance of the context to the analysis of opportunities and challenges facing African countries in international sport. In other words, there may be nothing specifically 'African' about the declining power of the state vis-a-vis sporting capital or international bodies and the change in the role of the state in organizing sport. Forms and ways of state intervention are debated in different contexts (Lee 2004, 120-1; Hargreaves 1986, 182-93), but they may hold a special significance in the African context given the nature and capacity of the African state; 4) does not separates the domestic impacts of sport in general, and sport mega-events in particular, on ordinary Africans from using these events to enhance Africa's image internationally. While the focus of this study is on the contribution of sport to Africa's position in the international system, one cannot isolate this contribution from the domestic impacts of sport, especially their developmental impacts.

II. Africa, Sport and Sport mega- events

In the post-independence period, African states used sport to serve different ends. They used it to develop a sense of national unity and pride, legitimize new regimes, and improve their international status and regional image (Monnington 1986, 154-9; Allison and Monnington 2005, 18-20; Dejonghe 2001, 95-8). Furthermore, sport had been a central element in the imagination of post-independence African leaders for African unity. Pan-africanist thinkers, such as the Ghanaian leader Kwame Nkrumah, used sport, especially football, as vehicle for mobilizing the African youth around a common identity and nurturing a sense of pride and self-respect (Darby 36-7; Dejonghe 2001, 99). Sport was also used as a tool of pressure. African countries' collective decision to boycott the 1976 Olympic Games in New Zealand to protest the New Zealand's rugby team tour in South Africa is a case in point (Langley 1989, 33).

Internationally, the number of African countries in the international Federation of Football Association (FIFA) increased in the post-independence period; however their political weight was at first limited. In the 1970s the influence of Africa within the FIFA started to increase. By acting collectively and co-ordinating with other third world countries African countries enhanced their power within FIFA. They had a say in the election of the new FIFA president in 1974, succeeded to maintain the suspension of the apartheid government from the FIFA

membership, and waged a successful campaign to secure more places for the continent in the World Cup finals (Darby 2002, 50-107). But it is also true that during this period African countries were trapped in superpower competition, even in sport. The division among African countries over the participation in the Moscow Olympics in 1980 is a case in point (Monnington 1986, 168-9).

However, some scholars argue that the role of Africa in international sports has declined. They refer to the general economic failure that led to poor financing of sport activities, the high centralization in administrative structures of sports, and the migration of African talented athletes to the US and Europe as reasons for this decline (Monnington 1986, 162-3; Allison 2005, 1; Akindes and Kirwin 2009, 236-40). These scholars' discourse on Africa and international sport in general, and hosting international sport events in particular, is one that focuses on disorganization and bad governance, violence, poor social and economic infrastructure, the inferior political and economic power of the African states vis-a-vis sport MNCs and international bodies, and their limited ability to provide the cost of hosting such events. Allison and Monnington went even further, claiming that sport is no longer relevant as a domestic and international tool in the African continent. For them (Allison and Monnington 2005, 23-4)

> 'Sport is simply not a priority for people fighting to survive. Education and employment inevitably and rightly rank higher. From a political perspective, sporting victory is increasingly less valuable in a failing society...in short, there is a period following independence when African politicians could develop and identify with sporting success in the interest of national unity and morale and in furtherance of their own careers, the potential for doing so declined. Power has moved from states to international organizations and the African athletes and footballers themselves have moved from Africa to Europe and America'.

It is true that the African continent is disadvantaged in many ways as far as sport is concerned. By 2004, it was estimated that 1000 african players play in European clubs (Black and van der Westhuizen 2004, 1201). Defining the role of the state in supporting sport and its relationship with other actors in the field are other important challenges. Evidently, the state has withdrawn from supporting sport, as it has done in other fields under the pressures of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), but remained in control of national sport

federations in which appointments are overwhelmingly political rather than based on competence (Akindes and Kirwin 2009, 236-7).

However, the African agency in introducing changes to sport international organizations, especially the FIFA, and influencing the balance of power in the world sports cannot be ignored. While acknowledging that international sporting bodies were used in the post-colonial exploitation of third world countries, Darby (2002) has demonstrated in a detailed study how post-independence African countries struggled to achieve global equity within world football and its representative organizations. On the surface of it, Europe and South America seem to be the world core in international football, while Africa can be considered a periphery. However, according to Darby (2002, 161-8, 173-8), analyzing the influence that African countries were able to exercise and the intercourse between third world countries and European powers in international sporting bodies reveals that the position of Africa in international sport cannot simply be seen in the terms of a periphery. This led him to conclude that 'in the absence of an opportunity to seriously challenge the first world in, for example, the political, economic or military sphere, football and its associated institutional and competition structures represents one of the few institutions in which Africa can realistically hope to resist Western hegemony' (Darby 2002. 168-9). In fact, hosting the 2010 World Cup in Africa is seen as a culmination of the African efforts to mitigate the western domination over world football (Lee 2004, 117).

The question however remains as to whether the African states have shown the capacity to develop and implement, individually and collectively, policies that maximize the contribution of this event to African development and to changing the image of the African continent. Moreover, as far as hosting mega- events is concerned, one wonders whether African countries have the capacities to match the hosting bids of the continent's political and economic giants. The next section sheds light on opportunities and challenges provided by hosting the first FIFA World Cup on African soil.

III.   The 2010 FIFA World Cup: What did it mean for South Africa and Africa?

As mentioned in the last section, the award of hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup to South Africa was seen by some scholars and commentators as an incarnation for Africa's struggle to end European hegemony over the game. This section examines the extent to which hosting the event contributed to this objective, the gains that Africa and South Africa achieved from

this hosting and the factors that affected the level of these gains. Evidently, hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup finals provided a test for the capacity of South Africa, and the African continent as a whole to use such an event to promote its domestic and foreign policy goals. The tournament was also a test for the commitment of the international community to developing the game and its contribution to African development. But did South Africa, the African continent and the international sport community succeed in this test?

As far as South Africa is concerned, the importance of the event can only be understood in the light of the country's historical context. The history of black marginalization in sports under apartheid is well documented and is beyond the focus of this study. Several studies demonstrated how the black participation in several sports was influenced by apartheid policies at least until the beginning of the 1980s. They also demonstrated how sport was used as a tool of pressuring the apartheid government to change its policies by isolating South Africa from international sporting arena (Guelke 1986, 118-48; Jarvie and Reid 1999, 234-44).

In post-apartheid South Africa, the state has focused on the contribution of sports to nation-state building or to marketing what Mandela termed the 'rainbow nation'. Sport has constituted a central element for reconciliation, addressing historical inequalities, and development. It was also regarded as a tool for promoting South Africa's foreign policy objectives represented in its promotion of the African renaissance and African integration regionally, and enhancing its image internationally (Cornelissen and Swart 2006, 108-9).

It is against this background that hosting the 2010 FIFA world cup in South Africa has opened a debate among politicians, intellectuals, and civil society activists on the benefits that South Africa would gain from such an experience, a debate that continued after the tournament. In this debate, two major groups emerged. The first group has had a generally celebratory approach toward the experience. For government officials and a number of observers South Africa came out as a big winner from this tournament. The South African government, as admitted by FIFA officials, lived up to all guarantees and muted all sceptics who raised concerns about the country's ability to organise such event. Moreover, the domestic implications of this success were paramount. The event invited all South African to rally around the flag showing unique moments of national unity regardless of race, class, gender and ethnicity. Accordingly, the event was worth spending millions of rands as it

secured a huge exposure and improved the image of the country. It is also a long-term investment in the country's hard and soft power bases; in health, infrastructure, transportation and tourism as well as in the pride and national unity of South Africa and all Africans. It was also a very good exercise for the hosting cities and municipalities that will benefit the economy in the future in areas of project management and developing infrastructure (Pahad 2010, 3; Ndungane 2010, 44; Khoza 2010, 8-10).

On the other end is a group that focuses on the negative impacts the World Cup has left in terms of the huge financial resources directed towards the organization of the event, the temporary workers who were employed in World Cup construction projects and lost their jobs just after the tournament, and the marginalized groups that were targeted by the police to improve the country's image. These criticisms are raised by a number of NGOs' activists and academics who campaigned against government policies before, during and after the tournament. For these critics the World Cup has not really benefited the South African poor. Government luxurious spending on the world cup reflected a confused vision based on dubious priorities.[1] The amount of money spent on white elephant stadiums could have been, these critics argue, spent on building new houses or providing other services for marginalized communities.[2] The same argument applies to a number of infrastructural and transportation projects which do not actually benefit the poorest sections of the populations. And while the South African government increased its debts, FIFA and its commercial partners made huge profits. Also critical, the government has failed to deliver on its trickling-down promises as informal traders and the marginalized got badly affected by the government's displacement and restrictive tactics (van Der Westhuizen 2007, 333-5; Desay and Vahed 2010; Bond 2010b; the World Class Cities for All statements).

Economic evaluations broadly supported these criticisms. A group of economic experts concluded their evaluation of the South African benefits from the World Cup by noting that 'in aggregate, the preparations for the World Cup helped offset some of the weakness in the South African economy and provided an infrastructure boost that will remain in place long

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[1] According to governmental estimations, R28 billion were spent on World Cup-related projects, including R9.8 billion on developing stadia. See the South African government, the legacy of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, http://www.sa2010.gov.za/node/2926

[2] To give one example, it is estimated that the budget directed towards building and refurbishing stadiums between 2006-2010 could have built 900,000 low cost houses a year. See Ngonyama 2010, 173.

after the event. However, as with many such events, the economic benefit is relatively limited' (Roubini, Cherian and Ziemba 2010).

Other criticisms relate to South Africa's approach in publicizing and popularizing this event. Evidently, South Africa's approach was focused on the event's contribution to reducing afro-pessimist voices. Starting from the bidding phase, South Africa tried to sell the idea that this was an 'African' World Cup. For some observers, this reflected a South African appropriation of Africa to its own advantage. Apparently, South Africa was able to host the tournament because it is the only African country that has the infrastructural base that allows it to host this event. This means that, as an editorial of the South African newspaper the *Mail and Guardian* put it, while South Africa 'provided the infrastructure, the rest of the continent provided the political imperative' (June 25, 2010). Comments on this editorial indicated that for some South Africans using an African narrative means that the government's discourse is more focused on the event's relevance to the continent than to its importance to its domestic constituencies. In short, using an African narrative was criticised either because it claimed to represent the African continent just to gain leverage in the bidding process, or because it focused on the continental rather than the domestic paybacks of the tournament.

The preceding discussion raises a number of questions about the policies pursued by the South African government in the bidding and hosting phases of this event. To start with the economic and developmental impacts: to what extent did the South African government link the event to its developmental plans? What could have been done to demonstrate this link and make the event relevant to ordinary South Africans? And if South Africa sold this event as an 'African' one, what did that mean in practice? Were other African countries involved in the preparation phase? And what did they get in return?

As far as selling the event to ordinary South Africans is concerned, the official discourse claimed that the tournament will contribute to improving the life of all South Africans (Mbeki 2006a). It claimed that the tournament created 20, 000 job opportunities in the construction sector, provided workers in this sector with skills that can be used in future projects, provided an opportunity to develop the infrastructure of South Africa's cities and large towns, gave a boost to the tourism sector, and supported the government's Black Economic Empowerment policies by granting contracts to BEE companies. But there was little demonstration of how the tournament would address the broad challenges of the South African economy; namely

creating sustainable jobs, addressing inequalities, achieving social justice, and increasing foreign investments. More importantly, it is uncertain whether the poor had really felt an improvement in their lives especially that, as demonstrated earlier, billions of rands were spent on the tournament that could have been directed to other services.

One ways of dealing with this challenge would have been, as a number of scholars and observers argued, to broadly define the legacy of the event in terms of addressing the economic challenges highlighted above. As Pillay put it, the South African government should have opened a debate to reach a consensus on what legacy is expected in order to manage expectations in the planning phase and thus avoid debates on the costs and benefits of every facility developed for the World Cup (Pillay 2006; and see also Ngonyama 2010, 177).

Part of the challenge of selling the event to the poor domestic constituencies lies, as demonstrated earlier, in the high degree of uncertainty and unpredictability of the outcomes of these events and their contribution to development (Cornelissen 2007, 253). However, I would also argue that as the day of the event became closer, the debate and scepticism about South Africa's readiness to the event made the South African government more concerned with addressing the international media and foreign audiences. The South African discourse focused on pushing away the expectation of underperformance and changing the perception of South Africa as an unsafe country with record levels of crime. There was a repeated emphasis that South Africa will 'spare no effort to ensure that everything necessary for a truly successful 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup is done on time.., meeting all the specifications set by FIFA and all the things expected by the billions of football fans across the world'. There was also an emphasis on increasing the confidence in Africa and making sure that Africa surprises sceptics about its 'capacity to successfully provide an outstanding home for a global tournament of universal joy and celebration' (Mbeki 2006c and see also 2006a, 2007).

In other words, there was more emphasis on showing South Africa's (and Africa's) capacity to deliver rather than on demonstrating how the event will contribute to South African (and African) development. This may support the argument that sport mega-events are often taken as an opportunity to showcase rather than contribute to development. It may also indicate that in organizing such events the hosting government feels more accountable to the international

sporting bodies rather than to its domestic populace. This may not be confined to Africa, but holds a special significance in the African context given the increasing emphasis on the capacity to meet the international organisations requirements and the football fans expectation to push away accusations of disorganization, and the huge spending on these events in African countries that face challenging economic conditions.

Questions of accountability and the state's developmental capacity have proved important as examples existed when FIFA interfered to decide the number of cities to host the event and the specific stadia to be developed in contradiction with choices made by the South African government (Cornelissen 2007, 25-1). This suggested that FIFA, in contradiction with its declared goals, was more interested in the attractive 'televisual image' of the event, rather its contribution to the local development of poor and disadvantaged communities. It also meant that financial resources were sometimes directed not to areas that need to be developed, but to these that were already wealthy (Alegi 2007, 320-1).

This raises a broader question on whether the rules governing the international sport system and the 'sport-tourism-media' complex are conducive to a positive developmental impact of mega-events on the developing countries in general, and the African continent in particular. It also invites a question as to whether Africa, and South Africa as a regional power, should use such events to open a discussion on reforming, or even transforming, this international system and its dominant rules. Evidently, South Africa did not show interest in using this event for that purpose. Rather, its discourse has been patronizing; praising FIFA for taking 'a clear and correct stand against racism' and for 'leading the world in its public stance against racism, anti-corruption, anti-doping and drug abuse', and showing readiness to 'be [FIFA's] foot soldiers in its struggle' against these values (Mbeki 2006b).

The discussion above may not necessarily mean that the South African government did not put much effort in studying the impacts of the event on different aspects of its development. There are examples of projects sponsored by South African think tanks and studies presented by South African scholars to examine these impacts. However, it is evident that as in other experiences of hosting the event, there was either no adequate domestic marketing of these impacts or no sufficient authority to determine where and how this event could contribute to local development given FIFA's interventions. This is in addition to the deficiencies of management for which the South African government is responsible. Cases of corruption in

contracts and tenders of the huge projects involved in the preparation of the tournament reflected the limited capacity of the state in preventing the conflict of interests (Herzenberg 2010, 7).

At the African level, the African Union tried to make use of this event by boosting the importance of sports in the continent. It declared 2007 as the international year of African football in an attempt to promote the contribution of sport to peace and reconciliation in the continent. It also developed a framework for sport policy in African countries defining specific implementation and evaluation mechanisms with the overall objective of building the capacity and promoting the ethics of sports in Africa (African Union 2008).

At the sub-regional level, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) developed plans to boost tourism and brand the Southern African region as a 'global tourist destination' (RETOSA 2008). In this framework, a number of regional co-operation projects in sport and tourism were developed by South African provinces and neighbouring countries including Mozambique and Swaziland (Govender 2011). The tournament has thus provided an opportunity for promoting regional integration in areas of sport and tourism.

At the same time, some Southern African countries developed their stadia and infrastructure, sometimes at a high cost, to attract the participating teams and football spectators before and after the tournament. As in the case with South Africa, there are no reliable estimations of the benefits that these countries gained back from the tournament. This led to debates about the paybacks of the costs of developing infrastructure in these countries similar to those that prevailed in South Africa.[1]

On its part, FIFA has launched programmes to reinforce the legacy of the 2010 World Cup in Africa by co-operating with African governments, clubs and universities to develop the teaching and training aspects of sport in Africa (Cornelissen 2009, 91). To change the impression that the event's benefits last for only the few weeks of the tournament, FIFA set a number of programmes in South Africa including a legacy trust that offers aid to South Africa to support football development, health and educational activities (FIFA 2010). In the framework of its 'Football for Hope' programme FIFA created 20 football centres to promote public health, education and football in disadvantaged communities across Africa (FIFA

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[1] For examples of these debates see Mudzuiti (2010); MP seeks inquiry into World Cup failure, the Botswana Gazette, July 7, 2010.

2007). The social and economic benefits of these initiatives are yet to be seen and analyzed. So far, however, the initiatives that have been taken at the continental and international level have been, as Cornelissen noted (2009, 92), uncoordinated, unsystematic, not focused on the event itself, and lack the sufficient financial backing. In other words, there is no evidence that there was a division of labour between the South African government, other African governments and national, regional and international actors in the planning and organization of the event.

So, if economic benefits are uncertain and hard to estimate, what about the non-materialist benefits of the continent? Of particular interest, was South Africa able to present a different image of South Africa and Africa in the 2010 World Cup?

South Africa tried to use this event to market its image as a miracle of peaceful transition and a voice for the African continent and the blacks around the world. The official discourse also stressed the importance of sport in general and football in particular in isolating the apartheid regime (Mbeki 2006b). In this sense hosting the event was portrayed as having a clear symbolic value not only in nation-building, but also in indicating the 'change in the historical racial order of the South African society' given that soccer is the popular game of the black majority (Black 2007, 267-8).

In relation to Africa, the event was portrayed as providing 'a powerful, irresistible momentum to [the] African renaissance' and indicating that 'Africa's time has come' (Mbeki quoted in Black 2007, 268). The successful organization of the event was hailed by many commentators and observers across the continent and beyond as a successful experience that muted afro-pessimists and showed that Africa can deliver. But this argument about the symbolic value of the event for South Africans and for the image of South Africa and Africa is problematic for five reasons. Firstly, it is hard to estimate how sustainable this symbolic value is and whether it makes up for the unfelt economic impact. Based on the experience of hosting the Rugby World Cup in 1995, Habib (2010, 18-9) has rightly argued that the sense of pride and social cohesion would never be sustained with the challenges facing the South African poor.

Secondly, experts have noted that there was no coherent and co-ordinated effort by African countries collectively to 'deliver one representative brand-building strategy'. Thus, although

the world cup provided a good platform for Africa to brand its identity, African countries delivered different messages about Africa (Khumalo 2010).

Thirdly, while attempting to change the prejudicial stereotypes of the host African country, it is important not to try to replace it with a colourful, touristic, ahistorical image of that country or to present an 'imagined vision of local culture' for international consumption. With the increasing commercialization of sport observers noted that there has been a tendency to portray South Africa as 'an exotic sports-tourism destination' in a way that is easily digested by international spectators (Nauright 2004,1328). Several restrictions were put on street vendors' activities outside stadia in a way that, for these observers, stripped the event of the 'African' flavour (Desai and Vahed 2010; Bond 2010a).

Fourthly, constructing and changing images is not a process that is relevant to the hosting country or continent only. As Black suggested, international sporting bodies, in this case FIFA, also use the image that the host country draws for itself to legitimise their mission as sponsors for the universality of sports. In the case of South Africa, Black suggests that FIFA figures benefited from linking themselves to iconic South African figures like Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, something that was hoped to polish the organisation's image and its corrupt practices (Black 2007, 263).

Finally, it is also doubtful that the successful South African organisation of the event increases the confidence in the capacity of the African continent as a whole given the huge gap in infrastructural resources between South Africa and other countries of the continent. Suffice it to mention that no African country was awarded any of FIFA's eight international competitions between 2012 and 2015 (FIFA 2011), either because they withdrew from early stages of the bidding process or failed at later stages against other countries. This suggests that such events contribute to more differentiation between the countries that are able to host them and other countries in the continent (Black 2007, 274).

Conclusion

No doubt that the hosting and successful organization of the 2010 World Cup have provided opportunities for South Africa and other African countries to develop their economies, especially in terms of boosting the tourism sector and developing the infrastructure. They may have also muted some sceptics who casted doubt on the ability of an African country to

deliver a successful World Cup. However, the policies pursued by the African, including South African, governments, and the international actors, especially FIFA, have raised several questions on the relevance of the event to ordinary Africans, the returns of the massive government spending on the event, the authority of the hosting government in determining the ways in which the event contributes to national and local development, and the ways in which other African countries engage in, and benefit from, hosting such an event in an African country.

The analysis in this paper suggests that making use of sport mega-events necessitates a framework for a division of labour that ensures the engagement of different African countries in a systematic way in the preparation and organization of the event. Since many African countries cannot individually host mega events, the joint hosting by more than one African country could provide a good opportunity to share responsibilities and benefits. It also seems that projects designed at the sub-regional level are easier to develop and more likely to deliver compared to those that are continental wide. Finally, studies for comparing ex ante with post-event effects are needed to identify the lessons learned in a way that enlighten the future bidding decisions and processes for other events by other African countries.

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