

## Comparing South Africa's hosting of the Rugby and Cricket World Cups: Lessons for the 2010 Football World Cup and Beyond<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

*This paper compares South Africa's hosting of the two largest mega-events hosted by it up to date, the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 2003 Cricket World Cup. By comparing these two mega-events, it is hoped to learn lessons for South Africa's hosting of the 2010 Football World Cup, but also for developing nations hosting of mega-events in general. Although nations habitually put forward the 'hard', tangible benefits that such events are likely to bring as justification for hosting them, not many analyses have sought to explore the processes through which the more elusive benefits are said to accrue, namely, the identity formation and signalling aspects on the one hand, and the democracy and human rights enhancing aspects on the other. Through this analysis it is demonstrated how South Africa has traditionally drawn from the realm of politics as its moral authority for hosting such events, yet the folding of the overtly political into the sporting arena has sometimes led to unintended consequences. South Africa has also become much more business-like in its approach to mega-events. Whereas the Rugby and Cricket World Cups were steeped in the symbolic importance of an 'imagined community', these sentiments are likely to become diluted in the face of a more consumerist global football milieu and the powerful role of FIFA in deciding who gets what, when and where.*

### Introduction

As developing nations are increasingly gaining access to opportunities and resources within the mega-events circuit, research probing the claims and mechanisms through which the more elusive, easily overstated benefits are said to accrue is becoming imperative. Associated with this is the need to develop a comprehensive account of developing nations hosting of such events in the hope to bring about a proper understanding of the pitfalls and benefits, upon which an informed strategy for attracting them can be formulated.

Within the developing world, South Africa has emerged as a prime example of a nation which has actively sought out the hosting of such events in the belief that it will bring with it a range of beneficial elements. With South Africa having hosted the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the 1996 African Cup of Nations, the 1998 All Africa Games, the 2003 Cricket World Cup, and having won the rights to host the 2010 Football World Cup, sports mega-events are increasingly being pursued by the South African government, not only for their developmental and financial gains, but also for their more elusive identity building and signalling benefits, and their democracy and human rights enhancing qualities. These aspects are generally much harder to predict, and subsequently measure, but play an equally important role in the overall success of the event – particularly in post-colonial, ethnically diverse, emergent democratic societies such as South Africa.

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Accordingly, this paper will compare South Africa's hosting of the Rugby and Cricket World Cups with regards to issues of identity building and signalling on the one hand, and democracy and human rights on the other, and project these lessons onto South Africa's hosting of the 2010 Football World Cup. However, this will be prefaced with a brief outline of the importance of sports mega-events for developing nations, the histories of rugby, cricket and football in South Africa, and a brief description of South Africa's involvement in the mega-events franchise thus far.

### **Mega-events in the developing world**

Mega-events hosted in developing nations are often seen as being a mixed blessing. Whilst they promise numerous opportunities to boost the nation in a variety of ways, they are often seen as being the source of much controversy and if not carefully planned can result in heavy financial losses. Yet, it is not only the financial losses that belie the necessity for a carefully considered cost-benefit analysis, but also the various unintended consequences such events can elicit in terms of the more nuanced areas.

In terms of vying for mega-events within the developing world, Africa remains far behind South America and Asia. South America has hosted the Olympic Games at least once, and the Football World Cup a total of six times. Similarly, Asia has hosted the Olympics twice and the Football World Cup at least once. Besides pointing to the fact that sport is not a highly lucrative venture in Africa, Africa's peripheral status within the mega-events circuit is largely attributed to the broader trajectories of inequality and power as played out through country's international relations, and is ultimately reflective of Africa's marginality globally. Africa remains the most impoverished continent in the world with sub-Saharan Africa being seen as the poorest region in the world ravaged by AIDS, poverty and human rights abuses.

Yet, with the ascend of technology and the pervasiveness of globalization permeating most corners of the globe, it is no surprise that an increasing slice of the mega-events pie internationally, is being sought out by African nations, who have seemingly belatedly realized the potential of hosting such events as a fairly easy means of overcoming their marginality globally, as well as sparking a whole range of beneficial spin-offs domestically.

Black and van der Westhuizen (2004) have used Philip Cerny's (1997) conception of the 'competitor state' competing in what has been dubbed by Stephen Gill (1992) as the 'global beauty contest' in reaction to the 'ideology of competitiveness' – to explain the frenzy of bidding activity around such events by developing nations. The hosting of such events is seen to provide a critical interface between the challenges and rewards that globalization poses as nations seek to maximize the benefits and mitigate the shocks involved. Pursuing such events is therefore perceived as an attempt to strategically enhance the 'marketing power' on the one hand, and the legitimation and celebration of conceptions of national identity and political orders, on the other. Black and van der Westhuizen assert that the hosting of such events is wrapped up in global configurations of power, inequality and identity. They utilizing Pierre de Coubertain's, the founder of the Olympic Movement multi-dimensional conception of 'capital' – which is akin to different forms of power – to explain how these issues are embedded within the hosting of such events. They put forward the idea that nations do not simply reap 'economic capital' from hosting such events, but also 'cultural' and 'social capital'.

Within the community of African states, South Africa has emerged as the leading exponent of the mega-events franchise. Having attained democracy in the last decade of the twentieth century, up to four decades later than most of its African

counterparts, South Africa is often viewed as the 'new kid on the block' with an array of novel and exciting ideas. The belated re-emergence of South Africa within the international community, coupled with various strategic interests within a post-Cold War era, have seemingly driven South African state elites twice as hard to impress internationally by pursuing a whole range of boosting strategies, one of which has been the hosting of a string of mega-events.

The justification for South Africa as the ideal host for Africa, however incorrect this may be geographically, culturally, socially and politically, has traditionally been based not only on the prowess of its economy, but also the more symbolic power it exudes through a complex and interrelated process of branding and marketing strategies – perhaps most poignantly captured through the iconic marketing status of Mandela. Domestically, the South African state elites have rather ingeniously, although sometimes with unintended consequences, looked to sport and sports mega-events to unite a divided society and provide a focus for national identity, and in particular, to pursue the much vaunted national agenda of racial reconciliation – a related goal being the consolidation of South Africa's young democracy and the realization of human rights for all its citizens.

However, before we are able to discuss the marrying of South Africa's broader national objectives with its hosting of mega-events it will be necessary to briefly discuss the politics of South Africa's three main sports of which the World Cups are directly in question here.

#### **The politics of rugby, cricket and football in South Africa**

The common themes of domination, accommodation and resistance are scattered throughout the histories of British sports in the colonies. A prime example of this is in South Africa, where rugby, cricket and football became synonymous with the so-called 'civilizing mission' of the British empire and were seen as a means to socialize the locals into a British way of life. The primary sources of socialization into sport - as elsewhere in the British empire – were the missionary schools, formal and informal sporting associations linked to various economic patterns – such as in the mines – and the various amateur sporting clubs which were popping up in the fledgling urban areas assimilating the locals into an urban way of life. Those that demonstrated an appreciation for British customs and traditions excelled in society and sport was seen as a means to elevate your social status.

Sports formed part of the broader social fabric of everyday life and was influenced by the prevailing power relations within society. It therefore played a prominent role in the formation and reinforcement of racially and ethnically plural communities which were mushrooming throughout the newly established colonies. Overtime each sport was to find a major support base within a particular segment of the community whereby allegiance was often reinforced through ethnicity or race.

Cricket, because of its elitist image and purportedly gentleman status, was seen as the embodiment of British identity, whilst rugby was to gain ascendancy as the chosen sport of the fledgling Afrikaans community. Thus, cricket and rugby were often seen as a means of creating unity amongst the whites and to maintain social distance from the rest of the population, as South Africa often showed what was described as "common frontier behaviour insisting upon 'religious, moral and cultural barriers between itself and its neighbours'" (Merrit and Nauright, 1998: 57).

With the formal realization of apartheid in 1948, the status quo prevailed and it was not too long before structural forms of racism in the form of legislation

were to take root. This ultimately led to South Africa's sporting isolation from the 1970's to 1990's.

Because of football's working class image in England, it was said to have been transplanted and slotted into the structure of African society in similar manner, and thereby over time manifesting itself as the chosen sport of the black, working class masses. However, when football was first introduced to the Cape, it too formed part of the broader subjugation within society and it was only at the end of the colonial era that football was really to gain momentum as the chosen sport of the black majority. Yet, throughout independence, African football has continued to be plagued by problems carried over from the colonial era which has often seen it competing on an uneven basis in terms of resources and opportunities (Stuart, 1995: 24).

What is particularly important to our analysis is the different manner in which these sports manifest themselves in contemporary South Africa. Through a brief analysis of the histories of these sports, light is cast on how the 2010 Football World Cup will be different from the previous two World Cups.

Football, unlike cricket and rugby, has traditionally experienced a strong following within the black population, and is therefore unique in the sense that it is the first World Cup hosted by South Africa of which the sport involved enjoys a stronghold within the historically disadvantaged black population, and by implication the African continent. Whilst the game has undergone fundamental changes within South Africa since its introduction, there is not so much a struggle between black and white nationalism within football, but rather, it tends to raise issues of class, globalization, consumerism, cosmopolitanism, a coherent popular culture, intra- and inter-continental economic and talent migration, and a host of related issues. The game is commonly referred to as 'The Peoples Game' in the manner in which relates to a diverse audience and can provide a fairly effective vehicle for ethnically plural, emergent democratic societies through its multicultural aspirations. Based on these assumptions the event will be expected to permeate some of the more impoverished sectors of South African society, more so than the Rugby and Cricket World Cups were able to do given their frequently elite, 'white' support base.

Having briefly outlined the politics of the three main sports in question, it will be necessary to discuss South Africa's experience in general with hosting such events.

### **A Sporting Safari:**

#### **South Africa's brush with the mega-events franchise**

The fact that the Rugby and Cricket World Cups were amongst the first major international sporting events hosted by South Africa after re-entry could in part be considered a consequence of their relative worth under apartheid. The same argument would suggest that securing the right to host the Football World Cup is representative of a more inclusive political system typified by multi-racial democracy and the Football World Cup's symbolism as a multicultural and truly global sporting event. In this regard the Football World Cup symbolizes the development of a new relationship between South Africa, Africa, and the international community.

Upon re-entry into the sporting world in the early 1990's, South Africa was faced with an awkward predicament. On the one hand, the new government quickly realized the potential for sports and sporting events as an opportunity to engage in some much needed nation-building and developmental feats. Given South Africa's

historical competitiveness in rugby and cricket, these appeared to be the most likely sports from which early international success could be achieved. On the other hand, rugby and cricket required significant changes in order to foster greater participation of non-white South Africans.

The limited status afforded to sports during political negotiations effectively ensured the perpetuation of existing inequalities and power structures to prevail after isolation by firstly adapting to globalization pressures and returning to international competition rather hastily, and secondly, by not effectively putting in place robust measures to deal with the depth of inequalities within sport. Whilst placing the cosmetics of transformation in place with a fairly robust discourse on racial redress – yet not all that much to underlie it – the negotiations around sport did not effectively yield well defined parameters for sport in a democratic South Africa, and internationally, politicians and administrators were caught between wanting to act expediently, yet cognizant that real transformation would only be achieved through long-term grass-roots reform.

The new domestically evolving society had to project a similar face to the international community and South Africa participated in the Barcelona Olympics and the Cricket World Cup in 1992 whilst on the brink of political transition. South Africa's proclivity to both participate in and host sports mega-events was on the rise, and through a rekindling of old 'imperial' ties South Africa secured the rights to host the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 2003 Cricket World Cup before its first democratic elections. This was largely due to an accepting international community and the marketing prowess of Mandela's iconic appeal that often overrode various practical constraints to South Africa's actual capacity to host major international events. Buoyed by a festive mood after the first democratic elections, South Africa therefore – somewhat ironically – drew upon the two sports which were considered bastions of Afrikanerdom and British Imperialism – rugby and cricket – to announce the arrival of a new democratic state.

The 1995 Rugby World Cup proved cathartic for South Africa at a time when the nation was galvanized through the 'one team, one nation' slogan. The slogan – which was to extend into the identity building of the 'Rainbow Nation' – was to become a cornerstone of the Mandela Presidency. At the time, journalists waxed lyrically and indulged in all manner of hyperbole which sparked an avalanche of nation-building rhetoric. By all accounts the event was indeed a success and appeared to capture the imagination of the nation and provide a poignant focal point for the country's multi-racial aspirations. The Rugby World Cup was one of those classic textbook cases suggestive of the liberating nature of sports events with a powerful symbolic appeal. Something which made political elites to sit up and realize the significance of such events for strengthening national unity and manufacturing legitimacy for a newly created, yet still fragile political order. However, closer inspection suggests that the lustre of the event was quick to dissipate, largely in light of ongoing transformation squabbles within the sport (see Booth 1996; Black and Nauright, 1998; Grundlingh, 1998).

After the successful hosting of the Rugby World Cup, South African political and corporate elites were to strategically seize the opportunity of hosting various Pan-African events, such as the African Cup of Nations and the All African Games, to recreate some of its mega-event glory for which the Rugby World Cup had set high standards. These events were also supposed to flag and consolidate South Africa's emergent African identity, following years of minority white rule under apartheid.

South Africa won and successfully hosted the 1996 African Cup of Nations with the kind of euphoria which marked the Rugby World Cup, particularly because of football's popular black support. However, setbacks were also to follow: South Africa lost both the bid for the 2000 Olympics and the 2006 Football World Cup. However, with hindsight these setbacks were learning curves for the country, and should they have been awarded at that stage, could have proved logistically problematic (see Griffiths, 2000; Cornelissen, 2004).

South Africa's decision to co-host the 2003 Cricket World with Zimbabwe and Kenya went one step further in affirming South Africa's African identity, whilst also being consistent with a pattern of foreign policy initiatives by President Mandela's successor, Thabo Mbeki. The event was tied into President Mbeki's vision to rejuvenate the African continent socially and economically through the African Renaissance. The overall 'African Safari' motif of the tournament, which seems to have become the strategic marketing approach of choice, sought to stamp a uniquely 'Africanized' version of a game bequeathed on former colonies by British Imperialism and sought to broaden the cultural base of the game. What made the Cricket World Cup all the more interesting was the implicit attempt to undo a sport which had decidedly associated itself with the 'civilizing' mission of the British Empire. By 'Africanizing' the Cricket World Cup, South Africa was implicitly trying to reconfigure not only the hegemonic order of international cricket, but also the broader inequalities between the Anglo-Saxon world and Africa (see Van der Merwe, 2004).

Although South Africa's choice of Zimbabwe as co-host produced unnecessary political tensions – as it contradicted the overarching theme of the African Renaissance, sought to exacerbate tensions between the Afro-Asian and Anglo-Saxon contours within the cricket playing Commonwealth, and highlighted the weaknesses of South Africa's overall foreign policy towards Zimbabwe – South Africa, on a technical level, was quite successful in dispelling the 'myth' that Africa was not suited to hosting such events. South Africa's appropriation of the event, coupled with the manner in which the event was punted by state, business elites and the media, revealed South Africa's continental and international aspirations (see Van der Merwe, 2004).

These aspirations were well capped through South Africa's successful bid for the 2010 Football World Cup, where the bid was largely motivated as an African bid and tied into the 'Ten years of Democracy' celebrations. After narrowly losing the bid for the 2006 Football World Cup, South Africa rejuvenated its quest to host 'The Beautiful Game' by appealing fervently through the well-publicized slogan, 'Its Africa's Turn'. The optimism paid off and South Africa was awarded the 2010 Football World Cup amidst great jubilation.

Hosting the 2010 Football World Cup promises to be the crowning achievement of South Africa's re-entry into the international community and its journey from pariah state to global intermediary. Due to the Football World Cup's sheer size, the Rugby and Cricket World Cups will come to be seen as 'dress rehearsals' and it has the potential to become a powerful vehicle for a host of broader national objectives.

In light of the above, South Africa emerges as a strong case study of a developing nation which seeks to utilize sports mega-events for generating a range of positive by-products – whilst grappling with the intricacies and paradoxes that the more subtle

play-offs can evoke. The above discussion further illustrates the explicit political overtones that have come to be associated with South Africa's experiments with mega-events thus far and the centrality given to the 'softer' benefits. The assumption is that the Football World Cup will also play into these notions, only its impact will be twofold because of its greater size. Although this paper emphasizes how nations utilize such events to their benefit, other than the 'hard', quantifiable benefits, the economic and developmental windfall that the event is likely to bring South Africa can by no means be downplayed. Only that in combination with the 'softer' benefits a more holistic picture of the potential benefits will emerge.

Yet, before we can put forward tentative suggestions on 2010, it will be necessary to compare the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 2003 Cricket World Cup in greater detail with regards to issues of identity building and signalling on the one hand, and democracy and human rights on the other.

### **Identity formation and signaling: From Rainbow to African**

Many have written about the 1995 Rugby World Cup's potential and relative success at reconciling blacks and whites in South Africa. It gave the white population of South Africa a historic opportunity to 'embrace the symbols, leaders, and idea of a new, multiracial, democratic country,' essentially, 'to complete the symbolic journey from the old to the new South Africa' (Black and Nauright, 1998: 131).

The fact that it was a Rugby World Cup was also important. Historically rugby was predominately the game most favoured by Afrikaans white males, which in effect added to the chances that the white population of South Africa would identify with this reconciliation project. But also because it was rugby, there was a risk that whites might be resistant to change by holding onto the symbols and anthems which had long been synonymous with the sport (see Booth, 1998).

The timing of the event was also particularly important, that of 1995. South Africa had just had its first democratic election and needed something more than going to the polling booths to unite the nation. However, perhaps the most crucial ingredient to this project of reconciliation was the fact that Mandela himself harnessed the opportunity 'to advance his own priority of national reconciliation' (Black and Nauright, 1998: 131).

The symbolic power of the Cricket World Cup had similar reconciliatory dynamics to that of the Rugby World Cup. However, the Cricket World Cup, because of its more regional focus, was operating on a larger scale between Africa and the Anglo-Saxon world. The Cricket World Cup presented an opportunity to engage in public diplomacy between Africa and the Anglo-Saxon cricket playing Commonwealth countries (England, Australia, New Zealand). The Cricket World Cup was therefore more about Africa on the international stage forging reconciliatory links, than about domestic racial reconciliation, like that of the 1995 Rugby World Cup.

However, as an opportunity in positive public diplomacy between Africa and the Anglo-Saxon world the Cricket World Cup proved problematic as two factors were working against it: firstly, South Africa's choice of Zimbabwe as co-host and, secondly, president Mbeki's tenor has revealed a shift away from a focus on the 'Rainbow Nation' to that of 'Africanism.'

South Africa, who bestowed Zimbabwe the right to co-host the event with them, should have considered its choice of co-host more carefully. The fact that it was a 'cricket' World Cup, laden with the inevitable symbolism of British imperialism,

meant that Zimbabwe could not resist the opportunity to frame debates about its suitability as co-hosts through the prism of colonialism and served as a base from which race could be politicized. This indirectly served to reinforce the colonialist, white image of cricket which had pervaded the game for so long, and therefore undermined the broader attempts at transforming the sport.

Both the Rugby World Cup and the Cricket World Cup had the potential to reinscribe differences between races or provide resistance to change between races because of the historical links of the sport in question. However, in the case of the Rugby World Cup, Mandela was seemingly able to disguise the sport most closely associated with white Afrikaans males in a way that was mostly appealing to all races. Coupled with the personage of the man and his focus on nation-building, blacks and whites to a large extent were able to identify with the sport of rugby operating in a new disguise. What was seemingly lacking in the case of the Cricket World Cup was indeed such a figure as Mandela to serve as the focal point for identity formation and to harness the games for reconciliatory purposes in a manner that all races could identify with.

Therefore, in contrast, the Rugby World Cup quite clearly marked the rise of the 'Rainbow Nation' with Mandela at the helm, a president whose focus on multi-racialism transcended the previous barriers between races. What the Cricket World Cup sought to project was a distinctly more African identity, with Thabo Mbeki at the helm, a president whose legislative programmes and policy initiatives have quite clearly indicated a movement away from the 'Rainbow Nation' to that of 'Africanism'. The shift from 'Rainbow' to 'African' was demonstrated through the World Cup, firstly, by the willingness to take the games to Zimbabwe and Kenya under the banner of the African Renaissance, and secondly, through the visuals and symbols celebrated at the opening ceremony.

Although this shift from 'Rainbow' to 'African' is the natural conclusion to the evolution of South Africa's national identity, on the platform of a mega-event, and depending on the sport in question, it may pose challenges both transnationally and domestically. The Cricket World Cup demonstrated that domestically this focus on 'Africanism' could lead to being construed as minority exclusion. For example, the official song of the Cricket World Cup was apparently rejected by the white musicians of the Cricket World Cup music committee as being 'too African.' The row over writing the song 'had divided the committee into two racial camps – one white, which says the music is too African, and the other group consisting of Blacks, who say the music is suitable for the occasion' (Sapa and Matshube, 2002). Subtextually this evoked the question of: is there such a thing as a White African? Perhaps, the worrying factor implicit in this drive towards 'Africanism' is the 'revived awareness of race,' as Merrit (2003: 52) notes:

'The popular idea that sport and Nelson Mandela can unite South Africa and provide a foundation for the nation is now far less compelling than it was in the mid 1990's. South Africans have shown divisiveness even in victory and in particular in defeat; and as Nelson Mandela's successor as president, Thabo Mbeki, is a man whose legislative programmes and attitudes have encouraged a revived awareness of race.'

However, in President Mbeki's defence it must be said that he inherited the nuts-and-bolts of transformation - the nitty-gritty of social and economic transformation. By contrast Mandela was president during the honeymoon phases of the transition period. His gregarious nature played into the hands of the immediate domestic reconciliation



projects. Mbeki's natural inclination is also to focus more on international politics and economics. In line with these shifts, it appears, ten years down the road of democracy, South Africa's primary focus has moved from reconciling blacks and whites in South Africa, to a much broader focus on integrating Africa into the international realm, under Mbeki.

Transnationally, the shift of South Africa's national identity to that of 'Africanism' can have interesting results - depending upon the sport in question. For example, the overt 'Africanization' of a sport bequeathed on former colonies by British imperialism, implicitly was an attempt to subvert the 'moral authority' of the colonizer, by essentially using their own rules against them by celebrating an African identity through cricket. This subversion through the sport of cricket emerges with an 'indigenized brand of nationalism' and is reminiscent of what was experienced in Asia through cricket by providing some form of resistance to the colonizer (see Guha, 2002).

Having discussed the salient issues around identity building and signalling during the two World Cups, the next section focuses on the related democracy and human rights questions associated with these two events.

### **Democracy and human rights: Sport - only in an abnormal society**

Whilst the ability of sports mega-events to promote democracy and human rights seems fairly negligible, the aspirations and goodwill that nations wish to project during the hosting of such events often ties in closely with broader issues on the national agenda. State elites within the developing world therefore consciously try to capture the euphoria and feelings of intense joy produced by such events as strategic 'moments' through which to tie in and accomplish broader national objectives.

In this regard, the Rugby World Cup was rather successful in heralding South Africa's re-entry into the world and demonstrated its acceptability to the international community after years of being dubbed a pariah state. Essentially, it was an affirmation of the 'new' South Africa. Mirroring these measures domestically were the broader power shifts taking place not only within South African rugby, but throughout society at large soon after its political transition (see Black and Nauright, 1998). Although this was essentially a fairly superficial projection given the depth of socio-economic problems facing South Africa at the time, the message and symbolism of the event were clear and politically significant.

During the Cricket World Cup, contrary to the advances made in human rights, South Africa was seen as gesturing towards a more expedient foreign policy by insisting on maintaining Zimbabwe's co-host status. Many saw a great irony in the manner in which the ANC moved from a stance of 'no sport in an abnormal society' when campaigning against apartheid, but when in power and defending a fellow African state's right to co-host, suddenly 'sport and politics don't mix'.

In addition to the more general associations with democracy and human rights, there is an emergent body of literature which makes a more explicit link between sports mega-events and their ability to promote human rights and democracy. The link is generally made in two ways. Firstly, through the enhancement and building of 'social capital' and civil society ('social capital' being defined as the usefulness of connections and relationships) and secondly, through a complex set of incentives and pressures brought to bear by hosting such events (Black and Van der Westhuizen, 2004: 1209).

The most pronounced example of the latter is the Olympics hosted by South Korea in 1988, whereby in order to avoid embarrassment, the government was said to concede to pressures exerted on it by student demonstrations, the media and threats of boycotts in the lead up to the event, and thereby a general liberalization of the political system was said to occur (see Mannheim, 1992; Larson and Park, 1993; Black and Bezanson, 2004). The debate surrounding the democratizing effects of mega-events was also very lively in the recent 2008 Olympic Beijing bid and often drew on the South Korean analogy to lend further credence to the positive effects the games will have for China (see Tyson, 2001; Gilley, 2001; Ting Li, 2005).

Similar to the South Korean and Chinese examples, although on a smaller scale, some speculated that Zimbabwe's co-hosting of the Cricket World Cup would have a positive effect on the broader political landscape, and hopefully induce positive consequences for democracy and human rights within the country. However, the Cricket World Cup, whilst indeed providing potential as a pressure point for change in the end was utilized as a pressure point to maintain the status quo. The processes and forces galvanized through Zimbabwe's co-hosting were of a fairly small and manageable nature, thereby enabling the government to manipulate the event largely to its advantage (see Van der Merwe, 2004).

Besides the wider societal implications sport can have for society, issues of team performance are notoriously overlooked or pushed aside as being irrelevant to wider societal implications. However, in the case of the Rugby World Cup the victory of the South African rugby team on home soil was pivotal to enhancing the broader 'public mood' within South Africa shortly after a successful political transition to democracy. Grundlingh (1998: 75) comments on the performance of the South African rugby team at the 1995 Rugby World Cup and ties it in with a 'public mood'. He states that: 'The fact that the Springboks won all their matches ensures that public interest was kept alive,' adding that, 'if the results were different there would not have been much cause for nationwide celebrations.'

The fact that the South African rugby team was able to take first prize during the Rugby World Cup in 1995 on home soil, added immensely to the signaling of a new era of champions over adversity and a certain 'coming of age' of South Africa on the domestic and international stage, both politically and within the sporting arena. By contrast, the poor performance of the South African cricket team during the Cricket World Cup, having lost to all the established cricketing nations in the first round and then subsequently dropping out in that round, underlines a growing problem in South African sport and politics in general.

After readmission, South Africa was initially riding high on the wave of democratization. It was carried by 'Mandelomania' and inspired by feats of triumph against all odds, having returned from a possible civil war to a democracy. The sky was the limit both politically and within the sporting arena. However, now that the honeymoon period of democratization is over, it appears as if South Africa somehow overestimated its ability to perform both within the sporting arena and the political arena. For example, the pace of transformation within cricket and rugby is still rather slow, while the South African Rugby team did not even make it to the quarter finals in the 2003 Rugby World Cup in Australia.

Even the motivational speeches by Mandela during the 1995 Rugby World Cup, which were said to inspire the Amabokoboko and help them win the trophy, did not help the Proteas eight years later. Mandela had tried to conjure up the so-called 'Madiba Magic' which was synonymous with the whole 1995 campaign, by giving

the South African Cricket team a final motivational boost before their opening match against the West Indies; however they lost that game. And failure was to become a trend throughout their short stint in the tournament. Symbolically, it might be argued, that the fact that Mandela's motivational speeches during the Cricket World Cup were not able to translate into that type of winning performances serves to highlight the decline of the 'Rainbow Nation' and the galvanizing power of 'Mandelomania'.

The broader significance is that South Africa is no longer the 'darling of the world' and cannot always rely on 'emotional credits' to gain preference within the hearts and minds of the international community and its domestic people. For all its romanticized imaginings, the Rugby World Cup was indeed a unique event and no matter how hard South African state elites try to emulate the magical moments of 1995 campaign, the right ingredients will probably never fall into place in such momentous fashion again. South Africa has also become much more slick and business-like in its approach to mega-events and the art of sensitized statecraft through such events is taking a backseat to the financial incentives.

Based on the above discussion one can put forward tentative suggestions as to what 2010 might mean for South Africa. The trend set by the Cricket World Cup in terms of promoting a regional African identity can be expected to be strengthened through the Football World Cup – not least because of the overwhelming popularity of the sport in Africa. Building upon these foundations, 2010 will provide one of the most spectacular platforms for the affirmation of the African Renaissance. The Football World Cup will also bestow further ascendancy to South Africa's development as an emergent middle power and reinforce South Africa's role as a regional power.

A successful hosting of the Football World Cup will help foster an overall greater sense of security in the Southern African region. It could provide a focal point for creating new and revived liberalizing pressures on South Africa's neighbour to the north and serve to rejuvenate human rights advocacy networks. However, South Africa should be careful that a recurrence of what happened with Zimbabwe's co-hosting of the Cricket World Cup does not occur. Zimbabwe should therefore not be formally invited to co-host or lend support in any way.

The event could also take place at a critical juncture in South African domestic politics shortly after the 2009 elections when South Africa, according to the constitution, will have to usher in a new president perhaps raising the question of how South Africa's appropriation of the event will be reflective of, or imitate a fresh style of presidency. State elites will want to 'capitalize' on the symbolic power of 'Mandelomania' yet again, however given his age Mandela will not be able to play a very active role whilst the highly populist, consumer driven sport will probably have enough suitably African socio-cultural icons to draw from. The new political icon elevated to a platform akin to the pedestal that Mandela occupies would probably be president Mbeki himself, who over time would most likely succeed Mandela as the new mega-events mascot.

Given South Africa's historical marginality within football and the broader pool of competition, realistically South Africa is not going to win the event. A certainty becoming all too apparent as South Africa did not even qualify for the 2006 Football World Cup in Germany. South Africa has never been a powerhouse within international football circles, never mind just within the community of African states, and football was not afforded the time to catch-up in terms of structural inequalities within South Africa's short lived democracy. The nation should therefore reconcile

itself with the fact that, unlike the Rugby World Cup, in all likelihood, it is not going to win the 2010 event – but will score in other areas.

### Conclusion

What emerges from this review is that politicians and administrators have commonly drawn from the country's experience in the realm of politics, and in particular the 'miraculous' or 'extraordinary' nature of its transition, as its moral authority for hosting such events. Whilst this approach has proved fairly effective; the folding of the overtly political into the sporting arena can backfire or have unintended consequences.

South Africa has also become rather business-like in its approach to mega-events. Whereas the discourse around the Rugby and Cricket World Cups were steeped in the symbolic importance of an 'imagined community', these sentiments are likely to be diluted in the face of a more consumerist global football milieu and the powerful role of FIFA in deciding who gets what, where and when.

It is for this reason that public discourse needs to be more critically directed towards the question of who benefits and the extent to which major games of this nature succeed in extending such benefits beyond the obvious big business and state-connected beneficiaries.

Although this phenomenon is by no means only an issue in the developing world, the establishment of a South-South dialogue and the adoption of a more holistic comparative analysis is necessary for a more complete understanding of this phenomenon within the global South.

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