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The Development Sportswriter: Covering African Football

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The Development Sportswriter: Covering African Football

Richard J. Peltz

Abstract

Football is Africa's game, but performance in world competition reveals the sport as metaphor for African development is stymied by political corruption, infrastructure deficiency, and neo-colonial exploitation. The media-sport complex has perpetuated this cycle. Development journalism contrarily posits media as a force for good. Where the ideal of objectivity dominates traditional news, development journalism stresses nation-building. However, emphasizing news, development journalism overlooks the powerful role of sport in African life. Through meta-analysis, this article compares the values and practices of development journalism and of sportswriting. The article concludes that sportswriters are well positioned to act as development journalists. As mediator of football, the sportswriter can capitalize on the promise of sport to effect nation-building and development in Africa.

Keywords

Development, development journalism, football, media-sport complex, nation-building, neo-colonialism, soccer, sport, sport journalism, sportswriting

Introduction

Football is Africa's game. Yet despite repeated predictions of an African World Cup victory in 2010 in South Africa by commentators from the legendary Pelé to *Der Kaiser* Franz Beckenbauer (Opio, 2010), the high prize has eluded the continent—most recently with the quarterfinal elimination of Ghana in WC2010. Football has become a metaphor for African development. African despots have adapted football to their political ends, countering democratization and socioeconomic progress with concentrated power and squandered resources. The continent nurtured world-class talent for its adopted passion, but youthful promise was drained away by the globalizing marketplace in a pattern that Pelé and others have recognized for its troubling echo of the slave trade ("'Slave ownership,'" 2000). Undermined by war, malnutrition, and the AIDS crisis, African football has not yet inherited its legacy.

Still, the story of African development is a story of hope, and there too, football and development find common ground. Football inspires. The "beautiful game" enchants youth, and successful African-born footballers model peacefully attained prosperity. Football divides, but also unifies. In the right hands, it democratizes, combating apartheid and socioeconomic stratification. Even subverted by

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authoritarianism, football builds national pride and identity amid cultural heterogeneity, and it fosters security, a precondition to development. Football is about the drive to the goal, and development is about the realization of it.

Burkhard Ziese, once manager of the Ghana Black Stars, blamed media for complicity in the neo-colonial football labor market, but said too that media possess the power to stem abuse and protect African youth (Wongibe, 2001). The notion of journalism as a force for good in the developing world has long been the promise of *development journalism*. Where objectivity is king in the traditional paradigm, development journalism stresses reader empathy and empowerment. However, development journalism emphasizes news reporting and tends to overlook the powerful role of sport in African life, and therefore the potential contribution of the sportswriter.

This article posits that sportswriters are as well positioned as hard-news reporters to cast themselves as development journalists. Parallels between development journalism and sportswriting reveal a natural fit where they diverge from "traditional" news values and practices, even though development journalism emerged as a distinctive model in the developing world, and sportswriting matured as a curious derivative of Western journalism. Ultimately the sportswriter, as mediator of hallowed football, possesses an incomparable capacity to capitalize on the promise of sport to effect nation-building and socioeconomic development, and so, as development advocate Alan Chalkley (1970) entreated four decades ago, to "punch that hole in the vicious cycle" (p. 2).

Development Journalism

A model of journalism has emerged in the developing world that stands apart from the "traditional", or highly industrialized-world model in values and practices. In the developing-world model, the journalist plays an active role as agent of national development. Such injection of self into the narrative is anathema to the traditional model, in which training emphasizes detached observation to ensure objectivity. However, in the developing-world model, objectivity is not king; rather, socioeconomic development is the common and overriding interest that motivates productive society.

 "Development journalism" and "Third World journalism" emerged contemporaneously with the New World Information Order, marking a divergence of Western and contemporary world paradigms. The Western paradigm represented an ethnocentric, economic focus, born of post-WWII Western capital export (Soola, 2003a). The contemporary paradigm, "holistic" and "people-centered," simultaneously recognized social, political, and economic priorities, and incorporated culture as development partner, rather than obstacle (Soola, 2003a, pp. 11-15).

Development journalism may be dated to 1970, when Chalkley's *Manual of Development Journalism* urged reporters to declare themselves "development journalists" with or without the blessings of editors. Chalkley challenged journalists to recognize the "vicious cycle" of the developing world: "NOT ENOUGH income. So NOT ENOUGH savings. So NOT ENOUGH investment in better production. So NOT ENOUGH income" (pp. 1-2). Accordingly, the development journalist bears a responsibility to the reader to go beyond "inform[ing]" and "interpret[ing]" to "Promotion": "You must get your readers to realise how

serious the development problem is, to think about the problem, to open their eyes to the possible solutions—to punch that hole in the vicious cycle" (p. 2). Chalkley thereafter emphasized technique: clear and compelling writing, for example, for variably literate readers. However, portents of a distinctive approach recur: an emphasis on humanizing political and economic news, and on pedestrian perspective in assessing newsworthiness. Chalkley's reader focus and human-interest emphasis require going beyond the official release and into the field to tell the stories of ordinary people.

In his 1987 *Handbook for Third World Journalists*, Hester explained the need to recognize the distinct species of "Third World" journalist. Third World journalists cannot depend on consistent political leadership; cannot know that their "pay check[s] will buy about the same amount of food each week (because of inflation), or that the power will always be on to run the presses" (p. 6); and cannot even assume that readers will have money to buy newspapers or literacy to read them. Hester identified consequent responsibilities born by Third World journalists: educating readers, holding a mirror up to leaders, role modeling for youth, and amplifying the "needs, hopes, and fears" of the ordinary person (pp. 6-9).

Thirty-five years after Chalkley's *Manual*, Bhattacharjea's *Guide to Development Journalism* (2005) again emphasized individuals over events, describing the development journalist's responsibility to societal welfare and duty to relate "the condition in which the majority of our people live and how programmes meant for their welfare are actually functioning on the ground" (pp. 1-2). Localization and rural reach are key; Bhattacharjea rejected "elitis[m]," urban focus, and the distaste for human interest inherent in the "five-W format" (p. 3). Rather, the development journalist "must evoke interest and sympathy" with subjects (p. 8).

The competing values of developing-world journalism have been variously cataloged. Robie (1994, p. 11) contrasted First and Third World journalism with dominant ideals of "Objectivity" and "Nation building," respectively. In the *Handbook*, Lule (1987) derived and detailed these value series:

FIRST WORLD	THIRD WORLD
Timeliness	Development
Proximity	Social Responsibility
Personality	National Integration
Oddity	Education
Human Interest	Other (First World) Values,
Conflict	esp. Timeliness, Proximity,
	Human Interest

In the latter series, "development" is "primary": "News is progress[;] . . . growth[;] . . . new dams, new buildings, new roads . . . " (p. 40). "Social responsibility" "concentrate[s] on the good, the positive, the building, but [also] ignore[s] or downplay[s] the bad, the negative and the failures" (p. 40). That emphasis arguably offends press freedom, but Lule quoted Kenyan editor Hilary Ng'weno on the developing world:

> The challenge to the press in young countries is the challenge of laying down the foundations upon which future freedoms will thrive. . . . Under some of the conditions in which vast numbers of Asians, Africans, Latin Americans live, it would be sacrilegious to talk about press freedom, for freedom loses its meaning when human survival is the only operative principle on which a people lives" (pp. 40-41).

"National integration" is a "logical extension" of development and social responsibility (p. 41). The value fosters "national pride and unity," especially important in Africa, where ethnic groupings and migratory customs do not necessarily coincide with colonial political borders (p. 41). Again, Lule quoted Ng'weno: "'[W]ithout a minimum of national unity all other values in human society become impossible. Freedom and justice become meaningless. Life becomes insecure'" (p. 41). Finally, "education": "News can be used to pass on knowledge of health care, to aid in agricultural work, and to spread cultural works" (p. 41).

The "Third World" model means to describe journalism as it is already practiced in much of the world (Josephi, 2005). For example, surveyed Nepalese journalists identified a "developing world perspective," in which media "advocat[e] development matters," emphasizing education, "the poor, women's issues, and rural areas, being socially responsible and encouraging people" (Ramaprasad & Kelly, 2003, p. 306). Nevertheless, surveyed Bangladeshi and Indonesian journalists tended to show a libertarianism streak that out-prioritized development (Ramaprasad & Rahman 2006; Romano 1998).

Libertarian and development models of journalism vie for influence in Africa. Dixon (1997) and Ebo (1994) studied the tension in Kenya and Nigeria. Dixon found development journalism especially appealing in Africa, because of colonial state-press alliance, incompatible ethnic and political division, and a pan-African value on community over individual. Dixon posited public journalism as a solution, encouraging community-service and educative media functions. Ebo described a conflict between idealistic Western objectivity and real African needs. Ebo reported that the Nigerian government has pressured journalists to embrace nation-building, but Ebo was reluctant to endorse Western journalism in the alternative, for its ignorance of developing-world realities. Examining media policy in southern Africa, Tomaselli (2003) posited opposing libertarian and ethnocentric models, as well as "indigenize[d]" journalism, defined in terms of the individual-community relationship. Ethnocentric and indigenized models would accommodate African values and development priorities, though Tomaselli warned against the pressure of authoritarian manipulation.

Free expression advocates worry about the relationship of government to journalists when their objectives converge on development (Soola, 2003b). Chung (1984) found merit in development journalism, specifically in government-allied goals such as education and inspiration, but concluded that development requires that media exercise surveillance and inspection functions and therefore remain free to criticize government. Lee (1986) compared newspaper history and content across former British colonies including Nigeria and Guyana and unexpectedly identified a "negative correlation between development journalism and economic growth" (p. 261). However, Lee found "no systematic relationship between authoritarianism/totalitarianism and the practice of development journalism," suggesting that

"development journalism is related more to the 'felt need' to practice it than to the political system" (p. 261).

Sportswriting

Sportswriting occupies a peculiar niche in the news business. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, amid the emergence of norms in journalistic practice, sportswriters practically reveled in their status as disfavored stepchildren of the nascent profession. Greats such as Red Smith in the United States defined a sportswriting tradition in 20th-century Western journalism. Sportswriters simultaneously bemoaned their low station and celebrated their love of the job. Editors belittled the sport desk as the "toy department," or "the sandbox of the newsroom" (Oates & Pauly, 2007, p. 336), but the 1920s produced a "golden age" of sportswriting, exemplars of which still today crowd the pages of American and British journalism textbooks (Inabinett, 1994).

Describing this "paradox" in the historical character of sportswriting, Baker (1987, p. 1) observed that this niche discipline, long of critical commercial importance to mass media, has earned a place only recently in the educational canon and critical literature of journalism studies. Steen (2008) suggested a transformation occurring over time: that "as the context of players, games and records becomes even richer," sportswriters evolve from the role legendary U.S. sportswriter Frank DeFord feared was "'one step up from being a hooker,'" to the office of professional, bound "[t]o protect and serve, [and] to help reform and improve, by question, challenge and prod" (p. 11). Steen quoted Barnes: "'If sportswriting is always trivial, then so is humanity, for that is our subject'" (p. 16). Oates and Pauly (2007) recognized that the sportswriter has evolved a professional character in parallel to the news reporter. In fact, sportswriting modeled the incorporation of political and cultural discussion into mainstream Western news reporting in the civil rights-era New Journalism period.

The transformation of sport, whether football, rugby, or baseball, into big business in the industrialized world has triggered much hand-wringing among sportswriting purists over the blurring of news and sporting news, if ever there was a difference, and about the invasion of the sports desk by news values that arguably overemphasize scandal and off-the-pitch personality at the expense of classical athleticism (Boyle, 2006). On the international landscape, sport has transformed into politics—whether expressing Cold War rivalries through Olympic appearances, or the growing pains of federalism through European Football Championship (Boyle, 2006)—adding yet another dimension to the sportswriter's job (Garrison, 1993). As efforts to keep money and politics in the news pages apart from the traditional narratives and box scores of the sports pages have succumbed to shrinking newsgathering resources and readers' indiscriminating demands, the purist conception has given way to the contemporary Renaissance sportswriter, whose skills encompass finance and diplomacy, besides an eye for athletics. The "toy department" label has yielded to more serious station (Boyle, 2006; Garrison, 1993; Steen, 2008).

Still, sportswriting seems to relish its reputedly lowbrow roots. There remains in the pursuit of the sport story an inexorable undercurrent of healthful juvenility. Sport is fun and thrill. Sport is combat, but without *too* much at stake: war without destruction or fatality (Galeano, 1998; Stroeken, 2002). Galtung

(as cited in Maslog & Lee, 2005; Maslog, Lee, & Kim, 2006) observed the similarity of sportswriting and war journalism and proposed as antidote a more constructive model, "peace journalism," modeled on health journalism. However, to limit the extant potential of sportswriting to a win-loss analysis is to sell it short. Like news, sportswriting bears witness to the drama of conflict, but unlike news, sportswriting is flush with the gratifying wonder—what Fink (2001, p. ix) called "romance and adventure"—that has invigorated spectators since the Ancient Greeks (Steen, 2008). Oates and Pauly (2007) described the "narrative quality" of sportswriting to express drama with lyricism in a manner taboo in mainstream news, and they posited that that quality should not diminish sportswriting as a "moral and ethical discourse" (p. 337).

In the Western tradition, the nuts and bolts of sports and news reporting are similar, and football coverage is not exceptional (French, 2003). If within the context of sporting events, sportswriting textbooks instruct on usage and style; leads and pyramids; features and columns; and advances, follow-ups, and investigative reports (Andrews, 2005; Fensch, 1995; Wilstein, 2002). Typologies of sport stories likewise distinguish breaking news, feature, and investigation (Andrews, 2005; Boyle, 2006). "Sports writing is much less about sports than it is about writing" (Wilstein, 2002, p. 3).

Ethics lessons warn of conflict of interest, if with emphasized admonition against freebies and personal relationships with sources (Fink, 2001; Wilstein, 2002). Boyle (2006), for example, warned sportswriters against getting "too close to the circus" (pp. 15, 19). He challenged sportswriters to maintain objectivity amid a partisan readership and criticized sports broadcasters for blurring news and opinion. Anderson (1994) counseled courage to investigative sportswriters. Still, Andrews (2005) indulged some place for partisanship in local media when the home team hosts a challenger, and Wilstein (2002) offered compassionately: "[Y]ou never lose the fan's passion that drew you into sports and keeps you going" (p. 4).

Oates and Pauly (2007) widened the scope of ethical scrutiny and found intractable conflict in the "media-sports complex" (p. 338). Sport media perpetuate sport, which perpetuates sport media, etc. However, this conflict does not warrant the dismissal of sportswriting as a serious and culturally significant endeavor. To the contrary, Oates and Pauly concluded that the obvious "blurring of promotion and reportage" (p. 339) in sportswriting has a ready analog in business and news, where the dynamic is more subtle and therefore more insidious. Sportswriting's comfortable admission of interplay with its subject therefore raises ethical questions about mainstream journalism, rather than the other way around.

Within a "First World," or traditional news-value model, Fink (2001) identified news values in sport as "proximity"; "impact"; "timeliness"; "conflict"; "prominence"; and "off-beat and unusual" (pp. 9-12). Textbook examples of sport-news judgment and writing focus of course on the context of sport— interviewing athletes and coaches, telling stories with statistics, livening up stale scores with fresh analysis—while techniques vary little from traditional news reporting (Fensch, 1995; Fink, 2001).

Still, subtle differences set sportswriting apart as a distinct art. Much of this distinctiveness can be traced to the 1920s "golden age," when sportswriters enjoyed especial latitude, owing to booming socioeconomic conditions and limited (pre-television) public access to sporting events (Inabinett, 1994). Golden age sportswriters were masterful creators of colorful narratives (Inabinett, 1994; Oates & Pauly,

2007), exhibiting "visible playfulness" and "admit[ting] personal voice" (Oates & Pauly, 2007, p. 339). Whether initially for recognition of sportswriting as art, or for marginalization of sportswriting as infantilism, editors have afforded sportswriters "more editorial license and leeway than news reporters" (Inabinett 1994, p. 104). Oates and Pauly (2007) drew a direct connection between sportswriting and New Journalism, the former presaging the latter. While New Journalism was initially scorned for its "hyperbolic approach to popular culture" and "inappropriately personal involvement in the story," the style was ultimately incorporated into the legitimate canon (pp. 340-41). Accordingly, sportswriting produced themes of critical merit, including the creation and debunking of sport-hero mythology, popular identification with teams, and "the dramatization of cultural difference" (pp. 342, 345).

Fink (2001) elaborated on the news values of reporting specially in the context of sport. As to "proximity," he accommodated the broad appetite of the sport consumer, illustrating: A traditional news consumer will be interested in a local school board meeting, but not a school board meeting 200 kilometers away. In contrast, the sport reader might well favor a feature on a promising young footballer at a distant school, just as well as a feature on a home-team player (p. 10). As to "impact," Fink stressed the importance of *future*, more than present, impact. The home team's loss generates impact, but that loss is old news. The more pressing impact question in sport is the bearing of this week's loss on next week's match: what does last week's defensive performance mean for next week's starting line-up?

Timeliness and conflict are similarly warped in sport. Sometimes the sport consumer seeks out scores, or highlights, or play-by-play. More often, consumers know the outcome and likely saw the match themselves. The climactic confrontation of two sides is not, then, the sole measure of timeliness (Koppett, 1994). Rather, what makes reporting timely is what follows the match and precedes the next, mostly off the pitch: the manager's planning, the athlete's exhaustion, or the fan's anxiety (Fink, 2001). Conflict is not limited to team versus team, but broadens in space and time to city versus city, or custom versus custom, or turns in on itself to manager versus team, or team versus tradition (Fink, 2001).

Prominence, in the Fink value series, equates to personality. Naturally, sport lends itself to hero-making, and sportswriting reinforces that predilection. Caution is counseled, though. Drucker (2008) criticized sport media for "shap[ing], fashion[ing], and market[ing]" sport "pseudo-heroes," who are in fact "celebrities" and "as common as Texas cockroaches" (p. 430). In other words, sportswriters ought be wary of co-option by the sport marketing machine. Similarly, Fink warned against "granting god-like status to individuals" for mere athletic accomplishment (p. 12). In the context of team sports, Fink urged sportswriters to remember that the accomplishment of one player is not always as solitary as it appears. A striker might score only because teammates cleared the way, and a goalkeeper might save only for the aid of a fullback's deflection.

As to the off-beat and unusual, Fink (2001) cited the prototypical example of the winning underdog. He furthermore advised: "[F]or goodness sake, if you see a funny story, *lunge* for it. The whole world is desperate for a laugh" (p. 12).

The Fink values in sportswriting, as modified from traditional news values, focus the reporter's attention beyond the main event, away from the bare facts of the match. The same can be said, to a point, of traditional news, where reporters vie for the added value of the fresh angle. But again, the reader more

likely witnessed the match than the average news event. Unlike traditional news, sport is about scheduled events; the "news" is in execution and outcome, which can be reduced to statistics (Koppett, 1994). Thus sportswriting is about added value, compelling a distinction in the educational literature. Where traditional news reporters, now in a wired world, increasingly do their jobs within the confines of the office, sportswriters still are urged to go into the field (Boyle, 2006; Steen, 2008; Wilstein, 2002). Only by being there can the reporter "smell the crowd or taste the mud" (Steen, 2008, p. 18), or see the sweat of the shoot-out or the grimace of the torn tendon. Only by chasing and cultivating sources in person can the sportswriter score the value-adding quote storm of the incensed manager, or the oddly inspiring back-story of the red-and-blue-painted supporter. Indeed, fans are a vital to the story in sport; they form with their clubs deeply personal connections that cannot be captured in polls. By hitting the streets, the sportswriter captures the whole story of the side.

Sport, Sportswriting, and Society

A vast body of literature has examined connections between sport and society, especially the link between sport and identity (Boyle, 2006). Within this body, research has focused on specific sports, media, nations, and cultures, and each vein has been explored specially in the contexts of football and Africa. From the research, themes have emerged, reflecting properties peculiar to sport, all amplified by sport media, namely: conservatism, including escapism and education; conflict and unification; identity; power; and development.

Conservatism

Sport and sportswriting are conservative enterprises. They cannot themselves initiate social change, but they "amplif[y]" the *status quo*, and accordingly enjoy the support of the establishment sector (Koppett, 1994, pp. 168-71). As reflection or amplifier of reality, sport, especially as mediated through broadcast and journalism, facilitates social introspection, offers psychological escape from real-world tumult, such as war, and promotes social welfare through public service and education (Halberstam, 2008b).

The alliance of establishment sector and sport renders sport media a crucial conduit for communication from government to people, especially amid variable literacy and working classes, who are as likely to consume sport media as political news and press releases. Thus even amid brutal civil wars, Liberian presidents and military rulers alike evoked the escapist aspect of sport conservatism to promote "normality" through football (Armstrong 2007, pp. 124-25). Governments have employed football to educate, especially to model healthy behavior for youth. Developing nations such as Nigeria and highly industrialized nations such as Australia and New Zealand alike recognize that a healthy population is essential to national development (Ojem, 1989; Rowe, McKay, & Miller, 1998; Samuel, 1992). Favoring access to the critical youth information market, officials piggyback educational messages such as

AIDS prevention on sport and sport media (Mchombo, 2008). Unfortunately, though not necessarily, sport tends to reinforce injurious stereotypes, especially masculine superiority (Kian, 2008; Rowe, et al., 1998).

Conflict and Unification

Sport and sportswriting have been described as divisive and unifying forces, sometimes alternatively, sometimes coincidentally. At their shared border, sport and cultural identity can spell conflict. Football in particular has been credited, or blamed, with sparking and stalling wars between nations (French, 2003; Stevenson & Alaug, 2008). But mediated sport also has the capacity to unify through cultural construction, especially by fabricating cultural mythology, to create national identity and pride (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007a; Lechner, 2007; Rowe, et al., 1998; Viatori, 2008). Football is credited with a central and constructive role in unifying North and South Yemen in a single national identity (Stevenson & Alaug, 2008). Giulianotti and Robertson (2007a) quoted iconic FIFA President João Havelange—an embellisher, but a powerful and effective advocate for globalization of the game—on his native Brazil: "Football is not just a sport. It is the only universal link there is. It is the most democratic of all sports, we all talk to each other in the football stadium; everyone is equal" (p. 58). In parallel to football elsewhere in the world (French, 2003), baseball has been credited with unifying the United States after its Civil War, as the uniformity and universality of the game surmounted the socioeconomic, political, cultural, and geographic diversities of the nation (Inabinett, 1994; Koppett, 1994). Universally esteemed baseball heroes readily displaced disparate Old World cultural icons to construct a common mythology, and thus a new national identity (Halberstam, 2008a; Koppett, 1994).

When colonial powers abandoned Africa, political leaders seized on sport for both its divisive and unifying properties. For European-drawn political boundaries to prevail over ancestral rivalries, unifying mythologies were required to establish new national identities (Baker, 1987; Dixon, 1997). Football, and to a lesser extent rugby, filled the void with a mythology of athletes, and teams and colors that stimulated national pride. Not coincidentally, the Supreme Council of Sports in Africa was founded in 1966, only three years after the Organisation of African Unity (Baker, 1987). The role of rugby in post-apartheid South Africa has been examined exhaustively in the literature (Baker & Mangan, 1987) and popularized by Hollywood (McCreary, Lorenz, & Neufeld, 2009), if with dramatic exaggeration of its curative impact to date. Significant is that sport in general has been recognized in South Africa as a tool with potential to facilitate racial integration and social reconciliation (Goldblatt, 2006; Samuel, 1992); football might yet contribute importantly (Nauright, 1999). Meanwhile sport continues to be critical to national identity in Africa. Mehler (2008), for example, discovered reflections in football media of political differences in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, and of Ghanaian affection for pan-Africanism.

Mediated sport has the simultaneous power to divide. Emergent new national identity can marginalize cultural identity and stimulate intranational conflict (Andrews & Ritzer, 2007; Rowe, et al., 1998). For example, Ecuador's success in the 2006 World Cup, augmented by media coverage, fomented a national identity, but did so arguably at the expense of African-Ecuadorian culture, and of feminine Ecuadorian identity (Rahier, 2008; Viatori, 2008).

Moreover, at the international level, the correlation between sport and political identity renders the latter strengthened or threatened by wins or losses on the pitch (Stroeken, 2002). In this vein, football sadly has reflected post-colonial political struggles in the aftermath of colonialism, manifesting ethnic and religious conflicts on the pitch. For example, in Kenya, Luo and Luhya ethnic groups, while struggling for political supremacy, each merged teams to maximize their talents on the pitch vis-à-vis their ethnic rivals (Goldblatt, 2006). The Eritrean liberation movement in the 1970s asked Ethiopian authorities to stop football games in Eritrea, then under Ethiopian political control, for fear that Ethiopia was exploiting regional rivalries to thwart Eritrean unity (Goldblatt, 2006). Violence followed football for forty years in Mauritius, where teams openly identified with Hindu, Muslim, Chinese, and Tamil groups, among others (Goldblatt, 2006). Theories of government, too, were asserted through football. Ahmed Sékou Touré, during his twenty-five-year rule of Guinea, nationalized the top club and held out the team in international competition as standard-bearer for Guinean socialism—complete with re-education camps for losing squads and political-prisoner releases upon victories (Goldblatt, 2006). The 1965-born socialist regime in Tanzania also appropriated sport "to create a model patriotic footballing culture"; when the squad disintegrated in a 1975 corruption scandal, socialist authorities blamed foreign infiltration (Goldblatt, 2006, p. 665). In Nigeria, football famously symbolized national unity in the years leading up to independence, and then, upon an infamous 1960 loss to Ghana in a World Cup qualifier, Nigerian "disgrace" in the years between independence and the Biafran civil war (Goldblatt, 2006, p. 505). For Ghana's part, military generals justified a 1972 *coup d'état* with reference to flagging national performance in both football and the economy (Goldblatt, 2006).

Whether the unifying property of sport *necessarily* fuels international conflict is disputed. Andrews and Ritzer (2007, pp. 28-29) described the dichotomy as a "false polarization," and Giulianotti and Robertson (2007a) credited football and, in particular, football journalism with untapped potential for global unification.

Identity

National identity is a powerful force, and sport and sportswriting create and perpetuate it (Andrews, 2005). In "the heroic sphere," football and footballers stand as kin to anthem and flag (Galeano 1998, pp. 110-11). All contribute to the fabric of national mythology (Ben-Porat, 2008). Mediated by the sportswriter, football furthermore fires national identity in "the banal sphere," (Billig, as cited in Ben-Porat, 2008, pp. 107-08) in which national identity is infused through the informal absorption of communication. Sport-founded identity formations are so strong that they survive diaspora, forming supporter "subcultures" abroad (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007a, p. 68). Supporter identity with a side can lead to high-spirited and even violent expression or reenactment of international and intercultural conflict (Andrews, 1994; Stroeken, 2002; Viatori, 2008).

The interplay of football and politics has assured football's indispensability to the fabric of national identity (Goldblatt, 2006). Football has become "Africa's game"; synonymous with modern African "pride and independence," football is "an instrument of political and social struggle" (Goldblatt, 2006, p. 480). In

Liberia, for example, President William Tubman in 1964 successfully initiated an annual national tournament of county sides to build a sense of Liberian national identity and unity (Armstrong, 2007).

Sport and cultural identity are so inextricably intertwined that national styles of play are oft described, and sometimes debunked (Galeano, 1998; Halberstam, 2008c; Lechner, 2007). Stroeken (2002) for example contrasted Latin and Germanic styles of play and credited France's 1998 World Cup victory with a blended style grounded in the side's multiculturalism. A Brazilian style has been analyzed widely (Sergio Leite Lopes, 1999), and sports commentators facilitated the advent of the Argentine *criollo* style (Archetti, 1999; Galeano, 1998). Stroeken furthermore contrasted Dutch technical expertise with a Belgian "sense of humor," positing that Belgians have enjoyed greater success on the pitch because humor better accommodates the irreducible role of chance in football (pp. 12-13).

As elsewhere in the world, ball play was known in, if not central to, pre-colonial Africa, and football was introduced as a colonial, especially British, export (Baker & Mangan, 1987; Blacking, 1987; French, 2003; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007b; Goldblatt, 2006; Paul, 1987). Sport in Africa has been associated with pre-colonial "ceremonial and recreational dancing," and tribal practices have not vanished (Blacking, 1987, pp. 7-8; Goldblatt, 2006). While it remains to be argued how African culture is expressed in style of play, magic and witchcraft play a certain role off, and under, the pitch (French, 2003, p. 49; Goldblatt, 2006, pp. 345, 658-59). The Guinean Baga have mixed their adopted football with indigenous festivity to push back cultural identity against nationality (Sarro, 1999).

Power

All of the properties of conservatism, conflict, unification, and identity imbue sport with power. Political leaders understand that "even the one who only cheers" the national team "becomes a symbol of his nation himself" (Ben-Porat, 2008, p. 106). Cold War Olympics classically exemplified the power property, as East and West vied to demonstrate political and economic superiority through sport (Boyle, 2006; Hazan, 1987; Jordaan, 1992). Meanwhile cultural conflicts behind the Iron Curtain played out on the football pitch (Goldblatt, 2006; Wilson, 2006). Authoritarian regimes, such as the Nazis, and communists have been especially keen to exploit the power of sport to model conformity, play down socioeconomic stratification, and perpetuate a perception of prosperity (Kang, 1988). A Czech communist official described sport as "humane and progressive . . . , leading young people—regardless of their nationality, race, religion and political convictions—to acquire actual knowledge" (Hazan, 1987, p. 250). Cuba has recognized "sports and recreation as instruments of comprehensive development, alongside health and human happiness as basic human rights . . ." (Armenteros, 1992, p. 18).

Sportswriting amplifies this power.

> [In sport]—because its physicality can narrow the gap between rich and poor, and because its mental demands narrow the gap between strong and weak—David regularly beats Goliath. No other journalistic discipline, I would contend, is so concerned with celebrating life's possibilities (Steen, 2008, p. 17).

Television further amplifies the impact of sport through the common experience of live, simultaneous observation (Rowe, et al., 1998).

African leaders, authoritarian and democratic, have recognized the power of mediated sport. As early as the 1930s, football was appropriated as a political campaign tool in Nigeria (Goldblatt, 2006). President Goodluck Jonathan's recent ban on Nigerian international competition—imposed upon a poor World Cup showing and then lifted upon FIFA's strenuous objection—demonstrated the continuing intertwining of politics and football there ("Nigeria lifts ban," 2010). Amin in Uganda, Mobutu in Zaire, and Nkrumah in Ghana all rose to power wielding football as a tool, to domestic and international political ends, and Mobutu famously spurned sport and squad after a painful World Cup defeat (Goldblatt, 2006). In post-apartheid South Africa, one proposal sought to maximize the unifying property of mediated sport by regulating broadcast and "pressur[ing]" print to localize and diversify coverage beyond national football and rugby (Roberts, 1992, pp. 36-37).

Armstrong (2007) described the efforts of political leaders to fortify their power through football in Liberia, where televisions powered by car batteries glow with foreign matches, and footballers return from abroad as heroes. Popular national football tournaments organized by President Tubman in Liberia were held in a stadium named for his wife, Antoinette Tubman (Armstrong, 2007). Building on the success of his predecessor, President William Tolbert supervised construction of a new national stadium (Armstrong, 2007). After executing Tolbert in a 1980 *coup*, military ruler Samuel K. Doe seized on the opportunity to name the stadium after himself (Armstrong, 2007). Doe in turn was overthrown and killed in 1990, and when Charles Taylor came to power, he declared himself "Chief Patron of Sport" and initiated a domestic football program, even while civil war raged on (Armstrong, 2007). Taylor—now on trial for war crimes in The Hague—later dispatched football equipment to rural areas to encourage play (Armstrong, 2007) and spent questionable sums to promote the national side in international competition (Harris, 1999).

Development

The global appeal of football—"the beautiful game" or "simplest game"—especially in the developing world, is often explained by its modest equipment requirements and straightforward "17 laws" (Baker, 1987, p. 279; French, 2003, p. 41; Mchombo, 2008, p. 165; Nauright, 1999, p. 190). In this analysis, football welcomes all comers to ply their talents on a level field, thus providing the developing world entrée to the international stage. A rampant African love for football bolsters this analysis, as football thrives even in countries, such as Kenya and Zaire, with sorely limited resources to support organized competition (Baker, 1987; Godia, 1989; Lema, 1989). Football is credited with creating a labor market, imbuing African youth with administrative skills, and empowering people with self-confidence (Goldblatt, 2006). Football locally is a thread in the fabric of community and impetus for the creation of coordinate social-welfare institutions (Brown, Crabbe, & Mellor, 2009; Sergio Leite Lopes, 1999). Football furthermore is a tool for a developing nation to project its identity favorably to the world; for example,

Senegal sought through football to identify itself as a democratized Islamic nation (Ralph, 2008). Football is regarded as especially crucial to African development because the unifying and identity properties suppress divisive cultural conflict (Mchombo, 2008). U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, a Ghanaian national, specifically recognized football as "'more universal' than the U.N.," and the World Cup for "bring[ing] the 'family of nations and peoples' together 'celebrating our common humanity'" (Smart, 2007, p. 6).

A more skeptical analysis posits that football is cultural imperialism. Football displaces indigenous sport and is powered by an NWIO-hostile media machine and ruse of development aid from the likes of Coca Cola and UNESCO (Kang, 1988; Sosale, 2003). There is support for this analysis in Africa, as in reality, world football is expensive. Developing nations cannot pay well enough to stem the exodus of managers and players to Europe, with attendant social implications. Much literature, rounded up by Darby, Akindes, and Kirwin (2007), has examined this "neocolonial exploitation" (pp. 143-44, 148), a disturbing echo of the slave trade (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2008; Galeano, 1998; Goldblatt, 2006; Kang, 1988; Phillips, 2006; Poli, 2006; Poli, 2008). Repeating a painfully familiar pattern, this labor transfer paralyzes development, or worse, fuels "dependent underdevelopment" (Darby, et al., 2007, p. 144). Political instabilities and sheer poverty reinforce this pattern by undermining the infrastructure for organized sport, from transportation to nutrition (Darby, et al., 2007; Halberstam, 2008c; Kuper & Szymanski, 2009; Stroeken, 2002). Worse is the specter of child exploitation, in reports of would-be footballers who did not make the cut, only modestly offset by reports of successful footballers who reinvest in their homelands (Darby, et al., 2007). Sport media are complicit in the imperialist venture. Eurocentric sponsorships and television coverage put premium value on European football and marginalize African football, even within African markets (Darby, et al., 2007; Kang, 1988; Onwumechili, 2009). Kang (1988) flatly rejected any egalitarian promise in "sports mythology" as illusion, akin to missionary evangelism in Africa, perpetuating imperialism (pp. 438-40).

In fairness, football in Africa reflects the real ups and downs of globalization (Foer 1-6). Accordingly, Goldblatt (2006, pp. 877-907) used football to "trace[] the arc" of African politics: African football and socioeconomic aspirations together ascended, symbolized by Cameroon's renowned performance in the 1990 World Cup, as Cold War support for authoritarianism gave way to democratization. That ascendancy was stifled by corruption and economic insecurity, and by the talent drain to Europe, conditions aggravated by globalization. War extinguished football in some nations, and elsewhere under-development and cultural conflict played out in deaths from stands collapses and stadium confrontations. Still, football projects—such as youth organizations supported by international aid in desperately poor areas—hold out a thin ray of hope for Africa's burgeoning urban youth, for escapism at least, and for peacefully attained social and economic prosperity at best.

The Development Sportswriter

Sportswriters come to their craft with a heritage divergent from that of mainstream Western journalism, but with peculiar commonalities with development journalism. This heritage positions the sportswriter at least as well as the news reporter *to be* a development journalist.

This article does not argue that development journalism is a desirable model, but assumes that it might be. Even insofar as researchers such as Chung, Lee, and Romano cautioned against authoritarian tendencies in development journalism, they found value in the model. Chung recognized desirable social contributions in development journalism to education and national integration, and survey research found that development journalism could function even amid dominant libertarian norms. Development journalism is a tool; intentions lie with the handler.

Humanity, more than the sporting match, is the subject of the sportswriter, just as audience, more than news event, is the focus of the development journalist. Sportswriting infuses the dramatic but repetitive match with romantic vision and lyrical expression, finding the colorful human story behind stale scores. Development journalism infuses the dramatic but mundane cycle of human existence with Chalkley's emphasis on opening readers' eyes, finding creative escape from dogging socioeconomic paralysis.

Sportswriting at its best offers what Chalkley demands of the development journalist. Writing about sport in clear and compelling language serves a readership that traverses and unifies social classes. Similarly, Chalkley urged the development journalist to write plainly, and to explain terms of art to developing-world readers with variable literacy, but whose informed participation is essential to development. Sportswriters build stories around statistics, but communicate their import in plain language, just as Chalkley taught development journalists to build tables and charts that plainly illustrate finance and progress. But in these respects, sportswriting and development journalism both exemplify, simply, good journalism, regardless of the applicable "world" model.

Where sportswriting diverges from "traditional" news values and techniques is where its common ground with development journalism becomes salient. Sportswriting does not share the aversion of mainstream journalism to the writer's personal involvement in the story; editors afford sportswriters more leeway. The development journalist too is personally involved with the story. The development journalist is a member of the community, unable to afford the luxury of detached observation. As Hester explained, when the power fails or the currency collapses for the community, the power fails for the presses and the development journalist does not get paid. Accordingly, Chalkley urged development journalists to seek editorial license, or to take it. The method of the sportswriter focuses on the human-interest story, not on stale scores; the sportswriter is urged to run down interviews with players, managers, and supporters, to bear witness to the human story of sport. Chalkley urged the development journalist to humanize politics and economics, going beyond bare numbers and hackneyed government press releases to tell the human story of development.

Where Fink adapted the traditional news-value series to sportswriting, development-journalism values diverge from the traditional model with comparable steps. On the traditional value of proximity,

Fink's sport reader wants to know about the remarkable young footballer from a distant town because the human story of that athlete is as familiar as that of a neighbor, a metaphor for the universal human condition: of hard work and hard play, of win and loss. The non-local development story—perhaps how a deeper well was dug in a distant township, or how a cattle subsidy program failed amid drought in a distant county—is compelling to the local reader, because the human story of those development initiatives *are* stories of the universal human condition: of work and survival, of hardship and perseverance. The oddity value in Fink's adaptation prizes the ultimate unpredictability of sport and the unexpected underdog victory, a metaphor *par excellence* for the improbability of development and the triumph of human resolve over adversity.

In impact and timeliness, the sportswriter looks ahead to the impact of this week's events on the next match or next season. The sportswriter does not dwell on the goalkeeper's injury, but examines its implications for squad, season, and sport. For the development journalist, the primary value of development is the next move forward: progress and growth; a new dam and road. The development journalist does not dwell on today's failed crop, but regards its impact on community, harvest, and trade. The sport reader knows the score, and the development reader has survived today. The journalist looks to tomorrow.

Prominence in the sports-adapted value series elevates the athlete to hero, and the sporting match to legend. Sportswriting makes myth, even to a fault. Development journalism engages in a different, but analogous endeavor. Where sportswriting amplifies the propensity of sport to unify behind a mythic nationhood and shared cultural framework, development journalism is animated by nation-building as the dominant ideal, manifested principally in the value of national integration.

Sportswriting fosters national identity and pride by celebrating African athletes, teams, and victories. Amplified by the sportswriter, sport fills the post-colonial void of common culture with a new mythology of athletic heroes and legends. Sport inspires with the story of the otherwise ordinary person who achieves extraordinarily as an athlete. Moreover, the sportswriter is admonished to remember the significant synergy of team, even when it appears that only one person scored.

The development journalist fosters national pride and unity by recognizing initiatives of national development. Development journalism cultivates the mythology of national identity, filling the hero void with patriotic political personalities who adorn themselves, like athletes, with the regalia of nationality. Development journalism inspires too with the story of the ordinary made extraordinary: the farmer whose irrigation innovations save crops, or the medical clinic that extinguishes infant mortality in the villages. Where the sportswriter reminds the reader that the accomplishment of the striker is the synergy of the team, the development journalist rallies the readership behind the singular national purpose of socioeconomic progress.

There is a danger in myth-making, and both the sportswriter and the development journalist run the risk. The sportswriter is admonished not to grant "god-like" status to athletes, nor to sponsor commercial celebrity. Sportswriters who fail to heed that warning neglect their responsibility to readers and become co-opted by the self-perpetuating financial interests of the sport-media machine. The "pseudo-hero" is a deception that undermines the sportswriter's credibility, the reader's optimism, and therefore the

mythology of nationality. In development journalism, myth-making slides dangerously easily into service to authoritarianism. The authoritarian political leader uses the purported development mission and nationalism to protect anti-democratic power, as in Mobutu's Zaire, or to perpetuate personal wealth and under-development on the ground, as in Omar Bongo's Gabon. The development journalist who joins in the rhetoric of the national development mission might incline to ignore political corruption, or to suppress news of development failures. Such deception at best undermines the development journalist's credibility, and thus the reader's faith and participation in development, and at worst, threatens the reader's survival.

Combating the lure of the sport-media machine, the ethics of sport writing imply a social responsibility that the development-journalism value series makes explicit. The sportswriter walks the fine line between forbidden fandom and readers' partisanship, on the one hand, and objectivity and permissible passion for sport on the other hand. To cheer for the side, or to accept the team freebie risks a sacrifice of independent judgment akin to myth-making run amuck. But a healthy awe of athletic achievement is what drives the sportswriter and thrills the reader. And in reality, even in the hardest-nosed Western media outlet, objectivity yields to fan fervor at tournament time, when the newspaper may include a paper pennant or commemorative pull-out. The social-responsibility value of development journalism meanwhile means to block the merger of media and government. The development journalist walks a line between nationalism and critical appraisal. Blind allegiance to the development declaration of government goes too far, but a passion for potential is what drives the development journalist to inspire the readership. Yet again, in reality, social responsibility has soft borders in patriotic times, as when a newspaper prints pull-out flags on independence day.

Besides commonalities of mission and values, sport and development journalism have commonality of means. Critically, both emphasize field reporting, despite the ways in which technology minimizes that burden. The sportswriter helps the reader to "smell the crowd or taste the mud," and the sportswriter runs down live sources to capture the fresh and colorful angle, augmenting the televised match and bare statistics. The development journalist similarly probes beyond the government press release and raw numbers to render the human impact of development initiatives on the ground. The athlete who daily rises before dawn for arduous physical therapy to get back in the game is the human inspiration behind the match. The elderly matriarch who ventures out in the pre-dawn cold to collect water in the uncontaminated well of the neighboring village is the human inspiration behind mundanity.

Politicians and journalists both have linked sportswriting and development. Taylor sought to portray himself as sponsor of sport to win credibility in Liberia for his vision, however unsettling, of national development. The post-apartheid South African regime pondered control of sport media to advance racial integration as a means to national development. Indeed, as sport has merged with big business, sportswriters have covered the development beat, producing stories on World Cup economics and neo-colonialism in football.

But sportswriters in the developing world have little heeded Chalkley's call to arms. Sportswriters tell vivid stories of pitch action, player temperament, hooliganism, and overreaching sponsors. These are not development stories. Closer to the mark is a *New York Times* piece on World Cup economics that

contrasted the pricey majesty of South Africa's new stadia with a Nelspruit man's "mud house accessible by a dirt road whose cavities deepen with each rainfall" (Bearak, 2010). Closer still, Inter Press Service Africa featured Global Girl Media, an organization using the occasion of the World Cup to train young women in online sport journalism (Dalek, 2010). The IPS contributor, a New York University undergraduate, recognized the development property of sport in his lead and linked it to his subject:

> For the nearly 50 million people of South Africa, the 2010 World Cup represents an opportunity to show the world its progress through sports. However, for a new nonprofit organisation, soccer's biggest stage also offers an opportunity to publicize young women who tend to go unheard (Dalek, 2010).

The gender peg of the story moreover demonstrates how the conservative, educative property of sport can be mediated to combat rather than reinforce a discriminatory stereotype.

These stories humanized politics and economics, but they both originated from the United States, thus from the libertarian perspective of "First World" news values. Chalkley's call to arms issued to journalists *in* and *of* the developing world. The development sportswriter covers African football from the inimitable perspective of an insider. The development sportswriter is perfectly positioned to "indigenize" fact-gathering with the gains and losses of families and communities, and to emphasize the real impact of the youth and talent drain on community and culture. Localized out of the context of international politics and global economics, and told in clear and compelling terms, the development sportswriter's story resonates with the African audience regardless of socioeconomic attainment: an audience bound together by a contrived but nonetheless real national identity, by a shared value in community over individual, and by a prioritization of security and survival over the luxuries of free markets and sensationalism.

The development sportswriter must cultivate the good in development journalism while guarding against its subversion. As Chalkley challenged developing-world journalists to begin immediate pursuit of the development mission, the fleeting fixation of the world on Africa for the World Cup invites African sportswriters to become development journalists. Coverage of African football, fraught with issues of post-colonial and neo-colonial politics and economics, and of modern African national versus indigenous cultural identity, offers a field ripe for harvest by the development sportswriter, and ripe for consumption by the people of Africa.

The development sportswriter does not perpetuate establishment mindlessly, but uses the innate conservatism of sport to facilitate social introspection, and even escapism, to free the mind for critical reflection, ultimately to conquer cyclical under-development. The development sportswriter does not robotically feed the media machine, but educates, presenting sport to model health and amplifying sport-endorsed messages such as gender equality and sustainable agriculturalism. The development sportswriter does not fuel fervent nationalism, exclude, or marginalize cultural minorities, but facilitates the mythology of sport to fabricate national identity that transcends socioeconomic, political, cultural, and geographic divides. The development sportswriter does not manufacture celebrity, but fills the void of national legend by inspiring readers with the extraordinary feats of otherwise ordinary people. The

development sportswriter does not accentuate political conflict or incite supporters to violent confrontation, but cultivates global consciousness with high-spirited coverage of the pitch, venerating the universality of the simplest game, celebrating cultural diversity expressed through style of play, and reveling in the shared human wonder of sport. The development sportswriter does not tolerate the subordination of sport to authoritarianism, or indulge false polarizations, but values community above all, and fosters local, national, and global identity at once.

Conclusion

There is a danger in equating sport and the sportswriter with development and the development journalist. Sport does, after all, represent leisure and diversion, while development is about the serious business of human survival. But sport itself has survived since ancient times as an integral and universal part of human culture because it represents more than amusement. Sport is a metaphor for the human struggle. The 17 laws of football represent the fundamentals of our human morality, and to persevere on the pitch is to make our way in the world. The sportswriter chronicles our story, recounting our wins and our losses. The development sportswriter furthermore contemplates how we play the game. This should also be true for football in Africa.

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