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Sports and the Modernity of Leisure in Nigeria: Stadium Space and the Symbolisms of Expressions, 1930-1980

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Sports and the Modernity of Leisure in Nigeria: Stadium Space and the Symbolisms of Expressions, 1930-1980

by

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Dedication

To my parents, Joseph and Felicia Obasa; and to my daughter and friend, Oluwanifemi Obasa.

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Abstract

Sports and the Modernity of Leisure in Nigeria: Stadium Space and the Symbolisms of Expressions, 1930-1980

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It is well-documented that sports appropriation is universal, though the degree varies from place to place.[1] The emergence of sports in Nigeria provides insights into evolving construction of ethnicity, class, and gender, while simultaneously speaking to local ideas about identity and modernity. For many in Africa, sports clearly represent a passion and pleasure.[2] Two overarching questions guide this dissertation: why were Western sports introduced to Nigeria by the colonial government and missionaries? What role did sports play in processes of identity creation, urban development and modernization in Nigeria? These questions establish the human agency involved within the creation of sporting activities and allow room for the motivations of actors.

[1] John Nauright, "Global Games: Culture, Political Economy and Sport in the Globalized World of the 21st Century," *Third World Quarterly*, 25(2004):1325-1336.

[2] Suleyol Mngerem, "Football as a metaphor for Nigeria's unity," *The Guardian*, February 5, 2000, 57.

I answer these questions by examining the broad significance of sports in Nigeria through the stadium. The debates over stadium construction in advance of Nigeria's independence revealed the ways in which sports critically shaped the conceptions of urban planning and national health in the nation. Although fifty years will be covered here, I focus more on the 1960 to 1980 period in accordance with this dissertation's emphasis on stadium space and the modernity of leisure. This work shows how spectators used the stadium to construct patronage networks and alliances, and how the government used the stadium as a mobilizing force to legitimize their activities at the grassroots and national levels.

In this dissertation, I read the stadium as a representation of power, authority and discipline—the work of architects, politicians, bureaucrats, journalists, and sports officials—and as a venue of lived experiences of spectators, who redefined the stadium in terms that, while not always their own choosing, demonstrated the incorporation of the stadium into everyday life and processes of identity formation in Nigeria. I argue that sports, and the spaces in which they unfolded, dramatically shaped society, politics and culture in Nigeria. I argue that through sport competitions, Nigeria became fixed in the national consciousness as modern.

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INTRODUCTION

"The important thing in sport is not so much about being victorious as taking part. The important thing in life is not the triumph, but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered, but to have fought well." That is the inscription on the commemorative plaque unveiled by the Premier of the Western Region, Chief the Honourable Obafemi Awolowo at the official opening of the Liberty Stadium on Friday, September 30, 1960. The idea of building this stadium was conceived in January 1958 as part of Nigeria's march towards independence.[3] The stadium featured a 545-meter track, and was surrounded by grandstands that could (in theory, at least) accommodate 45,000 people—35,000 seated and 10,000 standing.[4] The opening ceremony of the stadium reinforced the perception that the Liberty Stadium was a "spectacular" stadium. During the festivities, student-athletes, mostly from the Western Region, paraded on the track and assembled in front of the grandstand, where official dignitaries such as Governor-General Nnamdi Azikiwe (he later became the first President of Nigeria when Nigeria became a republic in 1963), Chief Obafemi Awolowo the former Premier, and Chief S.L. Akintola the new Premier of the Western Region.[5] Not only did the proponents of the Liberty Stadium suggest that the young nation of Nigeria needed the stadium to symbolically demonstrate its modernity, they also claimed that a stadium was the first step towards a coherent policy of building sports facilities for

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[3] *Daily Service*, "Liberty Stadium: Sport Centre of Western Nigeria," March 11, 1959, 10.

[4] This was a vague estimate, as the sports press and even the builders of the stadium had little concrete idea of how many people it would actually accommodate. Estimates ranged in the press from 25,000 to 45,000.

[5] *Nigerian Tribune* "Liberty Stadium Opens with Pomp and Fanfare," October 1, 1960, 12.

the youth of Nigeria. Finally, they argued that spectators in attendance would be inspired to take up sport themselves after having witnessed great athletes in competition. The Stadium Manager maintained that the Liberty Stadium was necessary to "bring the masses to sports."[6]

The effort of the Western Region Government to intervene in the urban landscape to create spaces for leisure or physical fitness and the building of the stadium shows the profound influence and visibility of sports and its spaces in the newly-independent country. While Nigeria, for instance, may have lacked the monumental stadiums built in Europe and America in the 1960s, the debates over stadium construction in advance of Nigeria's independence revealed the ways in which sports critically shaped the conceptions of urban planning and national health in the the nation. Although fifty years will be covered here, I focus more on the 1960 to 1980 period in accordance with this dissertation's emphasis on stadium space and the modernity of leisure. Stadiums in Nigeria fostered a spectacular brand of mass politics that paralleled yet diverged from stadium-based political spectacle in some parts of Europe. Spectator sports, for their part, became privileged terrain for the incorporation of the Nigerian working class into the nation at large. That is, spectator sports inside the stadium, and beyond its confines, facilitated the creation of overlapping and collective identities, from local to national affiliations.

The construction of the Liberty Stadium by the Western Region Government, envisioned both a participatory space and a venue for sporting spectacle, foreshadowed future stadium debates elsewhere in the Western Region. The stadium, however, was not a full-fledged measurement of the contested relationship between the stadium and regional urban planning,

[6] *Daily Sketch* "It's Hockey Week: Nigeria v Ghana," October 6, 1961, 10.

because it functioned as a space imposed upon the city of Ibadan, rather than one that the latter solicited. The opposition party in Ibadan felt they had no control over the manner in which the stadium was built, its location, or the form of the stadium itself. In the debate over whether the stadium should host the Commonwealth Games later, however, troublesome questions bypassed during the stadium's construction—the role that governmental politics should play in stadium construction, the function of stadiums in relation to grandiose sporting events like the Commonwealth Games, and the connection between the stadium, sports spectatorship, and national health—could no longer be ignored.

It is important to point out that centralized rule helped to spark urbanization in the Western Region, which had no equal in the whole of Nigeria. In 1953, Ibadan the largest city in the Western Region, had three times the population of Kano, the most populous city in the Northern Region. Owing in large part to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade that flourished on the west coast of Africa, the Yoruba maintained the longest and most sustained contact with Europe.[7] The missionary influence was profound, particularly when comparing literacy level among the Yoruba with the other ethnic groups in Nigeria.[8] While only eighteen percent of the population of

[7] Toyin Falola and Ann Genova, eds., *The Yoruba in Transition: History, Values, and Modernity* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2006), 101-110.

[8] For more on the missionary influence in western Nigeria, see J.F. Ade Ajayi, *Christian Missionaries in Nigeria, 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965); E.A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Modern Nigeria, 1842-1914: A Political and Social Analysis* (London: Longman, 1966); Jean H. Kopytoff, *A Preface to Modern Nigeria: The "Sierra Leonians" in Yoruba, 1830-1890* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965); and Obaro Ikime, ed., *Groundwork of Nigerian History* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books, 1999).

Western Nigeria could read English in the 1950s, only a paltry two percent could read in the North.[9]

While still a small percentage of the total population, the discrepancy between the two regions was what mattered, especially since the educated classes in the southern half of the colony provided the base for anti-colonial nationalism in Nigeria before and after the Second World War.[10] Unlike the West, eastern society and political structures were much decentralized with authority usually coming from consensus among chiefs or group of elders. With small-scale societies that tended to be no bigger than a village or town, no kings comparable to the western kings ruled over the Eastern Region; no empires that defined the Western Region stretched over the densely populated East. The lack of centralization also explains why urbanization did not develop in the East as it did in the West. Onitsha, the largest city in the Eastern Region, would have been the eight largest in the Western Region.[11]

Sports appropriation is universal, though the degree varies from place to place.[12] In Nigeria, as is elsewhere, sport has emerged as a multidimensional window on the colonial experience. The emergence of sports in Africa provides insights into evolving construction of ethnicity, class, and gender, while simultaneously speaking to local ideas about identity and modernity. For many in Africa, sports clearly represent a

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[9] Falola and Genova, *The Yoruba in Transition: History, Values, and Modernity,* 103-110.

[10] See especially, G. O. Olukoya, *The Second World War and Politics in Nigeria, 1939-1953* (Ibadan: Nigeria, Evans Brothers Ltd., 1973); Wole Soyinka, *Ibadan: The Penkelemesi Years: A Memoir, 1946-1965* (London: Methuen, 1994); and Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004).

[11] S.O. Okafor, "Ideal and Reality in British Administrative Policy in Eastern Nigeria," *African Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 293 (1974): 459-71.

[12] John Nauright, "Global Games: Culture, Political Economy and Sport in the Globalized World of the 21st Century," *Third World Quarterly*, 25(2004):1325-1336.

passion and pleasure.[13] As scholars such as Peter Alegi, Phyllis Martin, and Paul Tiyambe Zeleza have shown, reconstructing the explosion of leisure activities offers an opportunity to capture the historical importance of everyday life.[14] These scholars have also analyzed the rise and key features of an emerging commercial popular culture at the turn of the twentieth century, one in which an ethic of indulgence, a desire for fun for its own sake, replaced older, more puritanical views on leisure.

This dissertation, in addition to concurring with the aforementioned scholars, argues that sports, and the spaces in which they unfolded, dramatically shaped society, politics and culture in Nigeria. I explore the broad significance of sports in Nigeria through an analysis of Nigerian stadiums, from the emergence of the earliest sporting grounds in Nigeria in the 1930s, to the construction and opening of the Liberty Stadium in 1960, to the hosting of the All-Africa Games at the National Stadium in Lagos in 1973, and the hosting of the Africa Cup of Nations in 1980. My work poses central questions about the relationship between urban landscapes, spectator sports, and mass society in modern Nigeria. What role did stadiums, for instance, play in processes of urban development and modernization in Nigeria, from 1930 to 1980? How did stadiums, in a parliamentary democracy and military regimes, foster a spectacular style of mass

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[13] Suleyol Mngerem, "Football as a metaphor for Nigeria's unity*," The Guardian*, February 5, 2000, 57.

[14] Some examples include T.O. Ranger, *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa, 1890-1970: The Beni Ngoma* (Berkeley, 1975); Paul La Hausse, *Brewers, Beerhalls and Boycotts: A history of Liquor in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1988); Jonathan Crush and Charles H. Ambler*, Liquor and Labor in Southern Africa* (Athens, Ohio, 1992); E.J. Collins, *West African Pop Roots* (Philadelphia, 1992); Emmanuel Akyeampong, *Drink and Cultural Change: A Social History of Alcohol in Ghana, c. 1800 to Recent Times* (Portsmouth, NH: 1996); Hildi Hendrickson, ed., *Clothing and Difference: Embodied Identities in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa* (Durham, NC: 1996).

politics? What influence did stadiums, which usually attracted over 50,000 people inside their confines for major soccer and boxing matches, exercise on the development of mass leisure culture in Nigeria? How did debates about appropriate spectatorship within the stadium reflect anxieties about working-class culture and gender roles? How did the spectacle outside of the stadium help to generate different kinds of collective identifications and narratives about local and national belonging? How and why were Western sports introduced to Nigeria by the colonial government and missionaries?

These questions establish the human agency involved within the creation of sporting activities and allow room for the motivations of actors. It will involve looking at how social networks operated in Nigeria, and how they connected with one another. Second, how were these sports affected by bigger international influences? When discussing these sports, it is of utmost importance to look at the context of time that shaped their development. In particular, I will be looking at how the process of cultural imperialism enabled the growth and proliferation of sports. This dissertation will show how the mere Britishness of a game like soccer, for example, endowed it with a civilizational aura. Third, what impact did sports have on the internal politics of Nigeria? It is clear that while the impact of sport was widespread in most parts of Nigeria, its effect was not uniform.

In analyzing the Nigerian society, culture and politics through the lens of the stadium, this work grapples with the polyvalence of a specific kind of space. At the conceptual level, I follow Phyllis Martin in arguing that spatial organization of society is

integral to the production of social relations, not merely its result.[15] This understanding of space mirrors that of historians like Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Cassandra R. Veney, who have pointed to the importance of space in shaping the political language and behavior of Africans. In this dissertation, I apply that analytical framework to the stadium; the space of the stadium certainly reflected the workings of power and existing social structures, but also created Nigerian social, cultural and political realities.

The space of the stadium has to this point, attracted serious scholarly attention only as a "disciplinary" space for sports, and not as a site for overlapping social, political and cultural processes. John Bale, in writing about twentieth-century British stadiums, adopts the work of Michael Foucault to argue that the stadium, like the nineteenth-century prison or hospital, developed into a closely monitored space of surveillance.[16] In part, this analysis convincingly captures the dynamics of the relationship between crowds and stadium space. At times, I also adopt a Focauldian reading of spatial discipline here in order to trace the narrative and discursive attempts to regulate the spectator behavior inside the stadium, for both sporting events and political purposes.

Yet this interpretation of the stadium as a regulated space of surveillance does not provide an adequate explanation for the wide range of spectator practices in Nigeria, the association of the stadium with a festive, democratic kind of mass politics, or the kinds of collective identity generated with the stadium and beyond its confines. To better capture

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[15] Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 6.

[16] John Bale, *Sport, Space, and the City* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 11; see also Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 26.

this dynamic, I also adopt Heidi Gengenbach's idea of identity in a community, which locates relationships between people in land and identity formation.[17] I will use sport as a platform, upon which identifications of a regional and ethnic nature are displayed and expressed through the reinforcement of social ties of kinship and experience, which inevitably involves questions of representation and nostalgia.[18] Henri Lefebvre, a renowned French sociologist, distinguishes between multiple registers of space. Lefebvre argues that the "representations" of space propounded by architects, politicians, and others in power are in some ways subverted and undermined by "representational" space, or those same spaces as lived through their associated images and symbols.[19] In the following pages, I simultaneously read the stadium as a representation of power, authority and discipline—the work of architects, politicians, bureaucrats, journalists, and sports officials—and as a venue of lived experiences of spectators, who redefined the stadium in terms that, while not always their own choosing, demonstrated the incorporation of the stadium into everyday life and processes of identity formation in Nigeria.

This dissertation breaks new ground by analyzing the complexities of stadium space, and the relationship of the stadium to ethnic politics, society, and culture in Nigeria. It also focuses on spectatorship in ways that depart from existing historiography, which usually pays little attention to Nigerian sports spectatorship on the grounds that

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[17] Heidi Gengenbach, "Naming the Past in a Scattered Land: Memory and Powers of Women's Naming Practices in Southern Mozambique," *International Journal of African Studies*, 33 (2000): 523-545.
[18] Alan Bairner, *Sport and the Irish: Histories, Identities, and Issues* (*Dublin*: University of Dublin Press, 2005), 73.
[19] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991), 38-39.

stadiums and stadium crowds in Nigeria were smaller than their counterparts in Europe, where the stadium was certainly a more prevalent and larger urban landmark. This work shows how spectators used the stadium to construct patronage networks and alliances, and how the government used the stadium as a mobilizing force to legitimize their activities at the grassroots and national levels.

This dissertation thus traces the history of the sports and the modernity of leisure in Nigeria from 1930 to 1960 when the first stadium in Nigeria was constructed, before concluding with the hosting of the Africa Cup of Nations by Nigeria in 1980. For practical reasons, I have limited my analysis of sports and the modernity of leisure in Nigeria to western Nigeria, and to the Liberty Stadium in Ibadan and the National Stadium in Lagos in particular. This is because the two cities have the two biggest stadiums in Nigeria. The Liberty Stadium, in itself, was a platform upon which identifications of a regional and ethnic nature were displayed and expressed through the reinforcement of social ties of kinship and experience, which inevitably involved questions of representation and nostalgia. Representation and the idea of a shared identity are very relevant to sports and other leisure activities. Team games, for example, bring people together in an approved and structured manner. They also allow for symbolic expressions in various ways.[20] For instance, a soccer club or team symbolically represents thousands or millions of people within a society. Thus, sports and the modernity of leisure, between 1930 and 1950, offered the people of Nigeria a useful stage to exhibit

[20] Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 219.

local and cultural sentiment, and they also provided symbolic actions to represent these sentiments and identities.

The first section of this dissertation analyzes leisure and the colonial encounter in Nigeria, and then the role the stadium played in the evolution of local and national political practices. Chapter one tells the story of how British ideals and practices of sports came to Nigeria and Nigerians' responses to these sports. The object of this chapter is to describe how these varied traditions randomly bunched together by historical circumstance became tied together by some sense of a unified culture created in the milieu of at least a century of colonial interaction and cultural dissemination. By 1920, for example, soccer had become fully embraced in all sectors of Nigerian society.

In chapter two, I analyze the anxieties generated by the popularity of spectator sport in the years immediately after independence in Nigeria. The government attempted to make spectators appreciate sport in a controlled manner. Yet these efforts to physically and rhetorically shape spectatorship were met with indifference and resistance from the public, as spectator culture emerged with its own patterns and resistance that eluded regulations. I argue that the government built the stadium because of its willingness to intervene dramatically in the urban landscape, and because of its own desire to win over the indigenes of Ibadan, who favored the opposition political party—the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (N.C.N.C.). At the same time, however, the Action Group-led government built the stadium as a way to assert a communal singularity, promote health and fitness, and appeal to local constituents. My goal in this chapter is to offer a

longitudinal overview of the subject in order to better understand why building the stadium was a priority for the Western Region Government and the residents of Ibadan. At Nigeria's independence in 1960, which incidentally was also the year the first modern stadium in Nigeria was opened in Ibadan, the city of Ibadan was the largest and the most populous city in Nigeria and the third in Africa after Cairo and Johannesburg respectively.[21] Political imperatives, the desire to win the support of Ibadan indigenes, and perceived urban status were all forces that compelled the regional government to build the stadium. The building of the stadium was seen by the Government as a way to advertise Ibadan as the bellwether African city to both Nigerians and foreigners. The stadium not only framed debates about public behavior, but also generated a new set of collective identities that I examine in chapter three.

My second section looks at the politics of a new nation. In chapter three, I analyze the anxieties generated by the rise in popularity of spectator sport, particularly soccer. Sports officials attempted to render an increasingly working-class public more respectable by imposing constraints within the stadium, and by propagating a narrative about ideal behavior that encouraged spectators to appreciate sport in a controlled, gentlemanly manner. Yet these efforts to physically and rhetorically shape spectatorship as the domain of middle-class men met with indifference and resistance from the public, as spectator culture emerged with its own patterns and rituals that eluded regulation. The stadium not only framed these debates about public behavior, but also generated a new

[21]Michael Crowder, ed., *The Cambridge History of Africa, from c. 1940 to c. 1975*, vol. 8 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 145-153.

set of collective identities that I examine in chapter four. Chapter four looks at the experience of spectatorship, and sports spectacle, in regards to the most popular soccer competition in Nigeria, the Challenge Cup. While the competition has usually been interpreted as the antithesis of stadium culture because of some of the things that happened outside of the stadium, I maintain that the competition not only remained grounded in the urban network of stadiums and sports promotion, but also extended narratives and practices surrounding stadium spectatorship to the nation at large, turning Nigeria itself into an arena.

The final section of my dissertation, chapter five and the conclusion, analyzes how Nigerians imagined their nation's position in the world through sports. At the same time, however, the government hosted sporting events in the stadium to assert national singularity and solidarity, promote health and fitness, and to appeal to local constituents. I examine popular sporting events held in the stadiums, from the All-Africa Games of 1973 to the Africa Cup of Nations hosted by Nigeria in 1980. I contend that the stadium was a suggestive space for mass politics, framing and shaping political style for a wide variety of actors, from the civilians to the military; both democratic and authoritarian politics in Nigeria were on display inside the stadium. Sport was essential to constructing a Nigerian identity and fashioning a specifically Nigerian modernity. The successes recorded by Nigerian athletes allowed the athletes to become important components of a Nigerian culture that was simultaneously cosmopolitan.

In Nigeria, sport created bonds of solidarity that inspired collective action among its residents. It also shaped the nation's urban identities. For men in Nigeria, participating in and watching sport activities were often central social experiences. In turn, sporting events connected personal identity to collective identity, larger groups which enjoyed a shared passion and sense of loyalty to a team or club, a city or even to a larger ethnic entity. The stadium offered the people a useful stage to exhibit local and cultural sentiment, and symbolic action to represent these sentiments and identities. This discourse will argue that from the early stages of its introduction in Nigeria, sports created bonds of solidarity that inspired collective action among its residents. Playing and attending sporting activities helped migrants to urban areas to become acculturated in places as diverse as Lagos and Ibadan. Sports became a route to patronage and a network among the working class people of these cities. It also helped to define social and political identities. For the purposes of this discourse, I will treat identity as a bond that serves to integrate and mobilize those whose sense of inclusion depends on locality or cultural ties. It is based on a common activity, stemming from a more historically formed identity— ethnicity, which is manifested through affiliation with, and support for a given team or club.

Also, using Heidi Gengenbach's idea of identity in a community, which locates relationships between people in land and identity formation,[22] I will use sports as a platform, upon which identifications of a regional and ethnic nature are displayed and

[22] Heidi Gengenbach, "Naming the Past in a Scattered Land: Memory and Powers of Women's Naming Practices in Southern Mozambique," *International Journal of African Studies*, 33 (2000): 523-545.

expressed through the reinforcement of social ties of kinship and experience, which inevitably involves questions of representation and nostalgia.[23]

[23] Alan Bairner, *Sport and the Irish: Histories, Identities, and Issues* (Dublin: University of Dublin Press, 2005), 73.

CHAPTER 1: Leisure and the Colonial Encounter

Leisure is a phenomenon as old as human society.[24] It provides a platform for people to rest, affirm what they consider socially valuable, and create and nurture identities. Although all the peoples of the world engage in leisure activities, the meanings and forms of leisure vary from one geographic location to another. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how sports became a vital element of colonial education in Nigeria, the growth of sports competition in schools, as well as different ways through which these sports were spread to Nigerians. In addition, this chapter highlights what sporting life was like for both the Europeans and the indigenous people in colonial Nigeria. While they interacted and socialized in segregated spaces,[25] evidence suggests that Nigerians watched and sometimes participated in and appropriated sports from the early stages of colonial rule.[26] Thus, this interaction between the British and the people of Nigeria can be said to be the beginning of the cultural transmission that culminated in the national obsession of one of these sports, soccer.

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[24] Tiyambe Zeleza and Cassandra R. Veney, eds., *Leisure in Urban Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), VII.

[25] *West Africa*, "Prince of Wales Day was Chosen," August 4, 1934, 54. Leisure spaces were segregated in early colonial Nigeria. Often distancing themselves from the local people, the Europeans in Nigeria only socialized with themselves. For the first thirty years of colonial rule, particularly in the South, social interaction between Europeans and Nigerians was almost non-existent. See, for example, Ayo Olukoju, "The Segregation of Europeans and Africans in Colonial Nigeria," *in Security, Segregation and Social Networks in West African Cities in the 19th and 20th Centuries,* ed.; Laurent Fourchard and Isaac Olawale Albert (Paris: Karthala, 2003); James Hubbard, *Education Under Colonial Rule: A History of Katsina College, 1921-1942* (New York: University Press of America, 2000), 101; Patrick Dele Cole, *Modern and Traditional Elites in the Politics of Lagos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 43-46; and Michael Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos: Aspects of Nineteenth Century Lagos Life* (New York: Africana Publishing Company), 30.

[26] Lagos 1/1 no. 06511/121 "Assistance to Games Clubs" from Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, January 26, 1931, Ibadan National Archives.

An important debate on the "invention" of leisure in early modern Europe between Joan-Luis Marfany and Peter Burke equated leisure with "fun," and argued that though the definition of fun may have changed across time and space, people have always had fun.[27] Burke insists on the importance of leisure as a "conceptual package" and not as a list of recreational activities. In Burke's opinion this conceptualization of leisure is rooted in the commercial revolution of the eighteen century, while other scholars like E.P. Thompson see the industrial age as and the emergence of work ethic as the crucial phase for the development of the concept of leisure, and he wonders if leisure can be conceptualized outside its relationship to work.[28] It is the conceptualization, Burke argues, that reflects the way people "perceived and gave meaning to their lives."[29]

Sports developed as a socializing mechanism of the elite for leadership in imperial Britain beginning in the middle of the 1800s, as J.A. Mangan shows in his famous book on the origins of modern sports.[30] Through involvement in sports at public school, particularly Oxford and Cambridge, the government believed that young men (there were few women in school around this time) would imbibe the ideals of leadership and team

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[27] Loan Luis-Marfany, "The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe," *Past and Present, 156* (Aug., 1997): 174-191 and Peter Burke, "The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe," *Past and Present, 146* (Feb., 1995): 136-150.

[28] E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," *Past and Present 38* (December 1967), pp. 56-97.

[29] Marfany and Burke, "Debate: The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe," 175.

[30] J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London: Frank Cass, 1988), 43. On how colonial officials were recruited into the service of the Empire, see William Baker and J.A. Mangan, eds., *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1987), 27 and Allen Guttmann, *Games and Empires*: *Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 41-70.

play that would prepare them for leadership positions in the Empire[31]. Based on this notion, British colonial officers were mostly recruited from Britain's elite schools where many of them had participated in different sports. Anthony Kirk-Green described the practice of Empire recruiting from public schools as the "athletic imperative."[32] Based on this evidence, it is apparent that colonial officials thought highly of public school education in Britain. It was especially a mark of honor for a colonial officer to have attended and represented Cambridge or Oxford University in sports.[33] It was with this notion in mind that they sought to spread education to Africa with the ultimate aim of molding loyal subjects to colonial rule, and one of the mechanisms used to achieve this aim in Nigeria was sport.

For many of the Europeans stationed in Nigeria, leisure was a very important part of their daily routine to fight the lonesomeness associated with living abroad. For some of them, sports and exercise were a matter of life and death, a means to stay healthy and alive in an environment that had claimed the lives of some of their colleagues.[34] *The Nigerian Daily Times*, one of the leading newspapers in Nigeria affirmed this notion in an advertisement in 1930. The paper said,

"One must keep fit in the tropics, and the best way to do this is to indulge in one or other

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[31] J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), XXV.

[32] A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, "Imperial Administration and the Athletic Imperative: The Case of the District Officers in Nigeria," in W.J. Baker and J.A. Mangan, eds., *Sports in Africa: Essays in Social History* (London: Holmes and Meier, 1987), 81-113.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Sir Allen Burns, *History of Nigeria* (Peterborough, England: East Midland Allied Press Limited, 1958), 298.

of such favourite sports as tennis, golf, cricket, football, hockey, crocket."[35] Exercise, they reasoned, kept them fit for the cumbersome nature of their work, such as walking long distance through the bush when on tour to the hinterland of Nigeria. Furthermore, exercise and fitness was another way for European officers to show their masculinity to their African subjects. Sport, in this sense, was part of the psychological mechanisms used by the colonial officials to affirm their masculinity and invincibility to Africans. Paul Connerton in his book says "control of a society's memory largely conditions the hierarchy of power,"[36] so by disciplining the body, colonial officials put in place bodily acts to control the minds of the colonized. Sport thus became part of the architecture of social and political life in Nigeria. In other words, the indigenous population was being unconsciously groomed to accept its "place" within the colony. This is in line with what Michel Foucault calls "the witting or unwitting supervision of some humans by others"[37] in order to control their minds. Simultaneously, keeping fit and the ability to excel in sports increased the confidence of colonial officials in places where, often more than not, they were usually the minority.

To have a better understanding of power relations between the colonizers and the colonized in Nigeria, it is essential to look at the seminal work of the famous French theoretician, Michel Foucault. The primary reason his work continues to shape the way scholars of Empire and sports write is because of the way he reinterprets and revises

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35 *Nigerian Daily Times,* "United African Company," December 15, 1930, 8.
36 Paul Connerton*, How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1-2.
37 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 25-75.

Marxist approach to power and domination. Marxist scholars argue that the state uses the mechanisms it has such in order to ensure class oppression on one hand, and as a strategy for maintaining the political and economic interest of the dominant class (bourgeoisie) on the other hand. Foucault takes this argument farther by showing that power is much more complicated and operates in other forms. Instead of looking at power in terms of the relationship between different classes in a society, he talks about capillary power and "the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning process and everyday lives."[38]

What informed the British concern about character building through sports among their subjects in Nigeria? C.L.R. James, in *Beyond a Boundary*, suggests that sports can be read as allegories on life in the British colonial empire.[39] The men they were training in most of the learning institutions they created were men who would one day take over leadership positions in the Native Administrations, become teachers in colonial schools, or take up clerical positions in the British colonial service, the first two being the common on northern Nigeria. In India, the early colonial education system was deemed a failure by the second decade of the 1900s because it had not been able to positively influence the quality of character of the newly educated elite who were thought to have become undisciplined and disrespectful toward of authority. The solution was to remodel

[38] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York: Random House Publishers, 1980), 39; David Arnold, "The Colonial Prison: Power, Knowledge and Penology in 19th century India," in A Subaltern Studies Reader, 1986-1995, ed.; and Ranajit Guha (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 141-143.
[39] C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 21.

these schools along the lines of the British Public School which included, "the establishment of hostels and boarding-houses, the appointment of British headmasters and monitors, the recognition of field sports as a part of the school training"[40]

In order not to make the Indian "mistake" in another colony, particularly in its biggest colony in Africa, the education policy developed for Nigeria in 1915 and approved in 1916 described that "the formation of character and habits of discipline" should be the primary objective of education, and not the "mere acquisition of a certain amount book-learning or technical skills"[41] Among the list of the six agencies best suited to effectively accomplish the task of character building was "encouragement of field sports."[42] Lugard took this further, in his advice on the subject of his successors in the colonial government of Nigeria, Lugard recommended that,

"For the purpose of field sports, so wisely recommended by the Indian resolution, it is of course, essential that playgrounds and gymnasia should be provided. In Nigeria we have found that polo was a specially good game for the sons of chiefs and others who could afford it, while for other boys cricket, football, and 'athletics' bring the staff and pupils into close touch, and have the best effect in training character."[43]

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[40] F.J.D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1965), 427. The Blue-book discussing the crisis on Indian education, the proposed solution, and the positive results was published as *Disciplines and Moral Training In the Schools and Colleges in India*, a book Lugard recommended the colonial office should place in the hands of every colonial Director of Education, Ibid., 427-428,

[41] Ibid, 431.

[42] Ibid, 432.

[43] Ibid, 435.

Apart from the emphasis on sports in schools, other aspects of the British public school tradition was brought to the major schools in Nigeria as well, such as boarding facilities for students so their environment could be better controlled, dividing the school into different houses for the sake of intra-school competitions, intense discipline, having student prefects, and so on. It is important at this juncture to point out that there was a big gap between the North and South in terms of the perception and purpose of education. Formal education was through the religious programs run in different areas of Nigeria by Christian missions and Islamic clerics. In Lagos, the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Baptist Mission[44] and the Wesleyan Church provided Bible-based education and held services on Sundays for people interested in learning. The Roman Catholic Church also performed the same duty.

Education in the North was very different from the South because of the restriction of mission activities in the North. The Christian missionaries, as in most places in the Empire, were the agents of education. Lugard, however, decided against allowing Christian missions in the North because he did not want to incur the wrath of the Muslim elite and clerics.[45] In an interesting study, Sa'ad Abubakar noted that Lugard defended policies that supported "traditional rulers, their councils, their courts, their customs and

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[44] The Baptist Mission founded one of the oldest schools in Nigeria, Baptist Academy. The School was founded on October 28, 1855 by Rev. J.M. Harden, an African-American missionary in the service of the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States, who came to Nigeria in 1854 and settled in Lagos. The piece of land on Broad Street on which the School used to be located was given to the Mission by King Dosunmu of Lagos on July 28, 1855, and on it was erected a Mission House of bamboo, the plaza of which was used as a school. The Secondary Department under the principalship of Rev. J. M. Harden was added in 1886, and the name "Baptist Academy" began to be used in earnest.

[45] G.O. Olusanya, *The Second World War and Politics in Nigeria, 1939-1953* (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 1973) 17.

traditions in so far as these were not repugnant to the British ideals of humanity and justice."[46] The South was the converse of the North in terms of the development education. Education in the South was modeled after the British system of education, and was specifically designed to produce clerks and technicians to help in the administration of the colony.[47]

The policies of Lugard informed the imposition of segregation in Nigerian communities. Nigerians from Southern Nigeria or from abroad who went to work in Northern cities were settled in each town's *Sabon Gari*, Hausa for "new town." The *Sabon Gari* was a means of separating conservative Islamic Northerners from their more educated, Westernized, and Christian Southern counterparts. The *Sabon Garis* also included the most Westernized institutions in each town including the mission schools, churches, railway stations, shops, and banks.[48] Not under the indirect rule authority of the local Native Administration, as part of the confusing and divisive system of colonial administration, the *Sabon Gari* was under the charge of a District Officer, later known as the Local Authority.[49]

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[46] Sa'ad Abubakar, *The Northern Provinces Under Colonial Rule: 1900-1959*, in *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, Obaro Ikime, ed., (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980), 450. Governor-General Clifford later called for the relaxation of laws and policies in Northern Nigeria in a bid to encourage commercial development and western education.

[47] T.M. Aluko, ed., *Government College, Ibadan* (Lagos, Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1979), 2.

[48] Margery Perham, *West African Passage: A Journey Through Nigeria, Chad, and the Cameroons, 1931-1932* (London: Peter Owen, 1983), 72-73.

[49] A.H.M. Greene, "Notes," Margery Perham, *West African Passage: A Journey Through Nigeria, Chad, and the Cameroons, 1931-1932* (London: Peter Owen, 1983), 226.

This forced separation in the colonial days had a remarkably negative impact on the future of regional ethnic, religious relations in Nigeria. The only way that Northerners and Southerners who lived in the same towns would often interact then, was in the confined working environment of the Native Administration secretariat or at major sporting events like race meetings, and later, soccer matches. The *Sabon Garis* still exist in Northern cities and are pockets where Southerners and Christianity dominate. The exclusive GRAs also still exist, now inhabited by expatriates, wealthy Lebanese, and elite Nigerians.

What Lugard wanted was education of control. He was troubled by the emergence of the educated elite in the South who often expressed divergent opinions, and who were beginning to ask for the relaxation or repeal of certain colonial laws.[50] Donald Cameron was appointed as the Governor of Nigeria in June 1931. Unlike his predecessor Lugard, Cameron was highly knowledgeable on political affairs in British African colonies. His experience in colonial service commenced in Nigeria when he served as a junior officer in Northern Nigeria in 1908. He later served as the first Secretary of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria and then as Chief adviser to Lugard and Clifford. In 1924 Cameron left Nigeria to take up the post of the Governor of Tangayika.[51] Unlike Lugard, Cameron treated the educated elite in Nigeria, particularly those in Southern

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[50] G.O. Olusanya, *The Second World War and Politics in Nigeria, 1939-1953*, 10-17.

[51] *The Nigerian Daily Times*, "Welcome to Sir Donald and Lady Cameron: A Thousand Times, Welcome," June 17, 1931.

Nigeria, with a high degree of respect.[52] It was for this reason that there was immense development in the standard of education and in the diffusion of sports in Nigerian schools during the tenure of Cameron. The British emphasis on the importance of sports in education would have a major impact on the development of sports in general in colonial Nigeria.

II

Although sports was were a part of life in Nigeria from the early period of colonial rule, it was not until after the introduction of the revised education policy of 1916 that it became a central part of education.[53] The British in Nigeria at this time, as elsewhere in the Empire—merchants, colonial officials, soldiers and missionaries—felt they had the cardinal responsibility of improving the indigenous people.[54] Education, they believed, was one of the ways that they could improve the people of Nigeria. Improvement had many layers, but it was basically ethical. They wanted to use education as a medium to improve the morality of Nigerians, and these moral values could be substantially shaped on the playing field.[55]

For colonial officials and their European entrepreneurial sympathizers in Nigeria, organized leisure was an important dimension of colonial economics and hegemony.

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[52] *Nigerian Council: Address by Governor Sir Hugh Clifford to the Nigerian Council*, 29 December 1920 (Lagos: Government Printer, 1925), 2.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Phillip Mason, "Cold Baths, Prudery and Empire," *New Society*, February 4(1971): 201.
[55] Baker and Mangan, *Sport in Africa*, 138.

They believed that structured "play" with rules and in a time framework inculcated time consciousness, discipline, courage, and endurance in Africans.[56] More importantly, they saw sports as an integral part of urban-working class modernization.[57] Sports, they reasoned, fit into capitalist and Protestant notions of "purposeful leisure," and redirected Africans from "corrupting" leisure activities such as dancing and idle gossip.[58] Martin Carnoy, in *Education As Cultural Imperialism*, argues that the European powers used education to effect change, but only those changes that solidified their influence.[59] He says the intended function of education in Africa was to help, transform the local economic and social structure in ways that strengthened European commercial and political control.[60]

Sport, thus, became s staple of existence in existing mission schools and the newly-founded government schools. Athletics became a symbol of excellence in these schools, and the pupils were imbibed with the character-shaping attributes of athleticism.[61] The British felt it was through the means of education that they could inculcate the values of time, character and loyalty into their Nigerian subjects. To this end they made sports a paramount agenda in colonial schools. They organized annual sporting competitions between schools, with the ultimate aim of increasing the prospects

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[56] Emmanuel Akyeampong and Charles Ambler, "Leisure in African History: An Introduction," *International Journal of Historical Studies*, 35 (2002):11-13

[57] Lisa A. Lindsay, "No Need to think of Home? Masculinity and Domestic Life on the Nigerian Railway, c. 1940- 1961". *The Journal of African History*, 39 (1988): 439-466.

[58] Akyeampong and Ambler, "Leisure in African History: An Introduction," 11-13.

[59] Martin Carnoy, Education As Cultural Imperialism (New York: McKay, 1974), 82.

[60] Ibid.

[61] J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 23-57.

of interaction among Nigerian youths who ordinarily might not have met. The Nigerian students, on their part, took advantage of the opportunity the annual sports events presented. These events became a platform through which Nigerian students communicated across the polarizing divides of ethnicity, religion and background.

King's College, Nigeria's version of England's Eton College in terms of prestige, was established as an elite government secondary school in Lagos on September 20, 1909,[62] and to this day remains among the most preeminent schools in Nigeria. Baron Mulford, a European based in Nigeria, took it upon himself in 1914 to organize weekly soccer matches between an assemblage of Europeans and King's College students.[63] Mulford who was to become legendary in school sports in Nigeria, was at various times Games Master at CMS Grammar School, King's College, St. Gregory's College and Igbobi College, all of Lagos. The Lieutenant Governor of the Southern Provinces and his wife attended the 10th anniversary of the founding of King's College in 1919, and a series of sporting events were arranged in his honor.[64] To further highlight the importance of sports in schools in colonial Nigeria, the editor of the *Nigerian Daily Times* published a story of how a social gathering at King George V Stadium in Lagos was rounded off

[62] Babatunde Aliu Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (London: George Allen Unwin Ltd., 1974), 92-95.
[63] Samuel Akpabot, *Football in Nigeria* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1984), 1-2.
[64] *The Nigerian Pioneer*, "His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor Southern Provinces," September 19, 1919, 6.

with a soccer match between senior students and staff members of King's College, Lagos.[65]

King's College, the bellwether school in Nigeria, was one of the schools that started the tradition of holding annual athletic sports event. Other school were to later use King's College's model in organizing athletic competitions for students. The school held its first Annual Athletic Sports in 1918. Although CMS Grammar School held their First Annual Sports Day two days earlier, [66]it was that of King's College that gained the most publicity. The Governor-General of Nigeria, F. D. R. Lugard, was in attendance, and the event was celebrated with pomp and fanfare.[67] The next year, the event was still a significant occasion with over 5,000 spectators including members of high society.[68] For the 1920 King's College Sports Day, the Governor-General was again in attendance serving as patron, while Justice Pennington, the Acting Chief Justice of Nigeria, served as the judge.[69]

As indicated earlier, the sporting events pioneered by King's College Annual Sports Days set the standards for sports development in colonial Nigeria. Not only did the school become synonymous with excellence in sports, it also emerged as a major facet of school social life in Nigeria. Thus, other schools in Nigeria, especially schools in the

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[65] *Nigerian Daily Times*, "Third Anniversary of Wasimi African Church League: Social Gathering at King George V Road," Wednesday, January 2, 1946, 12.
[66] *Nigerian Daily Times*, "Annual Sports' Meeting," October 14, 1930, 14.
[67] *The Nigerian Pioneer*, "Annual Sports' Meeting" June 7, 1918, 11.
[68] *The Nigerian Pioneer,* "King's College Sports," "Annual Sports' Meeting" October 31, 1919, 6.
[69] *The Nigerian Pioneer*, "Wesleyan Boys' High School: First Annual Sports Meeting," February 25, 1921, 6.

South, started vying for prominence with King's College in order not to be left behind in the scheme of school sports. In 1921 the Wesleyan Boys' High School finally organized their First Annual Sports Meeting. Chief Justice Pennington presented the awards and a young man named Benjamin Azikiwe won the high jump in "an event which it is hoped will year by year be one of the red letter days in Lagos."[70] In 1933 St. Gregory's College, the fourth of the major secondary schools in Lagos, began holding annual sports days as well, spectators gathering long before the event even started.[71] Located in Obalende, Lagos, next door to the police training college and far from the Public Works Department playing ground, King George V ground, and King's College, St. Gregory's students always had competition close by.[72]It was therefore not surprising that St. Gregory's College would become a powerhouse in soccer and other sports.

Lugard retired from colonial service on November 5, 1918. Hugh Clifford, former Governor of the Gold Coast, was appointed as the new Governor General of Nigeria. Clifford inherited not only the seat of power but also all of the problems left unresolved by his unpopular predecessor.[73] According to Nicholson, the new Governor

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[70] "Wesleyan Boys' High School: First Annual Sports Meeting," *The Nigerian Pioneer*, February 25, 1921, 6.

[71] "First Annual Sports of St. Gregory's College, Lagos," *The Nigerian Pioneer*, August 4, 1933, 9.

[72] Rev. Fr. Denis J. Slattery, *My Life Story* (Lagos: West African Publishers, 1996), 58.

[73] The Times, "New Governor of Nigeria: Appointment of Sir Hugh Clifford," April 30, 1919. S.J. S Cookey has shown in his study that Clifford was considered for the post of Secretary for Southern Nigeria in 1900 but was transferred to Trinidad and Tobago. In 1906 he was considered to replace Frederick Lugard as Governor of Nigeria, but was eventually transferred to serve as colonial Secretary in Ceylon. It was not until in 1912 that he entered West Africa when he was appointed to serve as the Governor of the Gold Coast. S.J.S Cookey, "Sir Hugh Clifford as Governor of Nigeria: An Evaluation," *African Affairs* 79 (1980): 531-547.

was "faced with a desperate case of sick administration."[74] After arriving in Nigeria in mid-August 1919, Clifford embarked on a tour of inspection of twenty out of the twenty-two provinces of Nigeria with the intent "to make a close study of the Nigerian question."[75] During the tour, he formed his opinion on a number of issues which affected the general well-being of the country and its peoples.

In 1920, Governor Clifford, the successor to Frederick Lugard, added a further element to the annual King's College Sports Day, providing an Inter-School Challenge Cup for other schools that came to participate in the open events. Expectedly, the other schools were CMS Grammar School, Wesleyan Boys' High School, and St. Gregory's College. This was the origin of a great tradition of inter-school sports that developed all over Nigeria. By 1921, the event that had started as merely as an appendage to King's College's Annual Sports Day became its own affair under the name of the Governor's Inter-School Athletic Festival. The competition involved ten schools including King's College, Wesleyan Grammar School, CMS Grammar School (the winners), St. Gregory's and Abeokuta Grammar School. With the inclusion of schools from outside Lagos, the competition also established a tradition of inter-provincial sports that further aided the scope of what Nigeria meant for young Africans.[76]

In 1922, the Second Annual Inter-Schools Athletic Festival in which the Governor's Challenge Shield was competed for was open to all secondary schools in

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[74] I. F Nicholson, *The Administration of Nigeria, 1900-1960: Men, Methods and Myths* (London: Clarendon Press, 1969), 218.
[75] *Nigerian Council: Address by Governor Sir Hugh Clifford to the Nigerian Council*, 29 December 1920 (Lagos: Government Printer, 1925), 2.
[76] *The Nigerian Pioneer*, "The First Annual Inter-School Athletic Festival," Friday, March 25, 1921, p.6.

Nigeria. CMS Grammar School won, and predictably, the Governor gave out the prizes while the Police Band played, courtesy of the Inspector General of Police. As with the year before, ten schools competed—King's College Grammar School, Wesleyan Boys' High School, St. Gregory's College, Abeokuta Grammar School, St. Andrew's College, Oyo, Hope Waddell Training Institution, and Eko High School. In 1923, CMS Grammar School completed a hat-trick of victories in their third straight triumph.[77]

As early as 1922, the import of sport in schools could be observed at Bauchi Provincial School where "Watching the games is just like watching the playing fields of any private school in England with perhaps an added interest.[78] Further emphasizing the belief of Lugard's successors in the significance of sports as part of the educational process, in 1930 the Assistant Director of Education for the Northern Province wrote, "Great importance is attached to games for the purpose of health and character training."[79] Also, the students participating on sports in schools were expected to exhibit a formal sense of decorum because they were seen as ambassadors for the benevolent aspects of colonial rule.[80]

In the 1930s, trophies and shields were introduced in Nigerian schools for sporting events. The competition for excellence became keener since winning these trophies and shields became markers of honor, and because it also gave the victorious

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77 *The Nigerian Pioneer* "Report: CMS Grammar School," December 28, 1923, 11.
78 James Hubbard, *Education Under Colonial Rule: A History of Katsina College, 1921-1942* (New York: University Press of America, 2000), 101-127.
79 Ibid.
80 Alan Hawkey, *Feet of the Chameleon: The Story of African Football* (London: Portico Books, 2009), 54-56.

schools bragging rights in their respective localities.[81] Thus, the popularity and prestige of a school were measured by its accomplishments in sports, and many parents and guardians wanted their children and wards to go to schools reputed for sporting and academic excellence.[82] Nigeria had three categories of school in this period of her colonial history, and the three were involved in athletic competitions. There were government-owned schools, schools owned by private citizens or organizations and mission schools.[83] The government schools had the best facilities and equipment for sports. Their facilities and equipment could not compare with the facilities in European schools, though. The government schools could afford to buy sport equipment because they were directly funded by the colonial government, and the government was trying to mold colonial subjects into loyal subjects of Empire through sports. The mission schools and the ones owned by private citizens and organizations were often crowded because of the high number of students that they admitted.[84]

What the meant was that they could not provide adequate sport facilities for their students. In spite of the dichotomy between government schools and the other schools, however, the majority of these schools still took part in sports competitions from time to time. Some pupils from these schools were to represent Nigeria in various international competitions. For example, R.A. Wilson of King's College was the first schoolboy to

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[81] Nduka Otonti, *Western Education and the Nigerian Cultural Background* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Oxford University Press, 1965), 1-9.
[82] Godwin Anani, "Sports Desk," *Nigerian Daily Times*, March 3, 1979, p. 19.
[83] V.B.V. Powell, "Athletics in Nigeria: Past, Present and Future," *The Nigerian Teacher* 37 (June, 1958): 9.
[84] Ibid.

represent Nigeria in 1938 at the Inter-Colonial soccer match between Nigeria and the Gold Coast.[85] It is a truism that the founding of more schools in Nigeria contributed immensely to the development and popularity of sports in colonial Nigeria. Students who participated in sporting activities in these schools, especially in the sporting activities on Empire Day, made sports part of life in colonial Nigeria.

III

The examination of the various uses of European recreation in colonial Nigeria to increase and sustain colonial power continues with a discussion of Empire Day celebrations. The rationale behind the Empire Day celebrations for school children around colonial Nigeria appeared to be two fold. First, it was an attempt to create loyal young subjects, part of the project of molding a buoyant, loyal and cohesive empire through a process David Cannadine has described as "ornamentalism" in an interesting study.[86] The idea was to remind children that they were the spine of the British Empire, and that the Empire depended on them. Secondly, the displays on Empire Day were meant to show loyalty and honor to the Empire through sports. The image of the British monarch would be displayed by an empire covering almost a quarter of the entire globe.[87]

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[85] Akpabot, *Football In Nigeria*, 7.
[86] David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001),17.
[87] Allen Guttmann, *Games and Empires*: *Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 41-70.

The idea of celebrating Empire Day had been considered in 1897 during the reign of Queen Victoria of England and Empress of India.[88] It was not until after Queen Victoria's death on January 22, 1901, that Empire Day became a celebration throughout the vast British Empire.[89] The first Empire Day celebration was on May 24, 1902, Queen Victoria's birthday.[90]The introduction of the Empire Day sports celebration was the beginning of another era in the sporting life of Nigeria.[91] Initially, the Empire Day was a meeting point to listen to messages of goodwill from the Crown of England. School children were mainly to honor the occasion by parading on the streets to the location of the meeting and then around the sport grounds of their schools. Grown-ups who did not go to school also celebrated the day by dancing, doing acrobatic displays, and cycle races. Feasting was also done in the schools and foods were provided for school children. Later, the celebration was replaced with organized track and field events.[92] According to Saburi Biobaku, who participated in Empire Day celebrations while a schoolboy in Abeokuta in the 1920s, the birthday of Queen Victoria, "was celebrated with pomp and pageantry throughout the then British Empire to which our own country, the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, belonged."[93] In the view of Saburi Biobaku, "It was indeed a

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[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] John Ademola Adedeji, *The Role of Physical Education in the Nation Building of Nigeria* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1972), 65.
[92] Joseph Adegboyega Abioye, *The Establishment and Achievements of the National Sports Commission of Nigeria* (PhD Dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1980), 74-77.
[93] Saburi Biobaku, *When We Were Young* (Ibadan, Nigeria: University of Ibadan Press, 1992), 31.

great day for us the school children,"[94] In addition, he commented, "It was usually a most enjoyable day to which we all looked forward eagerly each year"[95]

Empire Day always provided an opportunity in mission and public schools to demonstrate their implicit obedience to the British Government.[96] The pupils selected from mission and government schools were carefully selected, and they were expected to politely serve as ambassadors for the benevolent aspects of the colonial regime in their respective locations.[97]The Empire Day messages were sent by the Queen or King of England through the Governor-General of Nigeria. The Governor-General, in turn, sent copies of the messages to the Regional Governors who would send copies to the District Officers.[98] These messages were read to the children and the audience. Such messages stressed the importance of the British Empire and the role Nigerians have to play in the Empire. After the messages had been read to the audience, the arena was cleared for the track and field events among school children who had practiced for barely two weeks to Empire Day. The winners were presented with valuable but inexpensive prizes.[99]

The above shows what transpired in Nigeria since the inception of the Empire Day till the year 1957 when Nigeria became a self-governing country, and the Youth Day replaced Empire Day. The Youth Day celebration came up in the month of April every

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[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid, 32.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Alan Hawkey, *Feet of the Chameleon: The Story of African Football* (London: Portico Books, 2009), 54.
[98] Joseph Adegboyega Abioye, *The Establishment and Achievements of the National Sports Commission of Nigeria,* 75-77.
[99] Ibid.

year.[100] Prior to the day, school children always practiced such events as athletics, high jump, long jump, threading the needles, and bottle race. These school children participated in these events for fun, and there was no long-term goal of taking part in the events in the future. It should be stressed that Empire Day and Youth Day gave Nigerian children a window of opportunity to participate in modern sports. Both celebrations also enhanced the spirit of togetherness among the various ethnicities in Nigeria. The times the events were held were times when people forgot about their differences and competed in good spirits. The sites used for the Empire Day celebration were later developed for better participation by clubs and sport associations which were formed later. On such developed spaces, some famous Nigerian athletes of the 1950s had their basic training in track and field events.[101]

Although the celebrations in different parts of the country took on various forms, an example from Saburi Biobaku provides the general pattern that occurred. In Biobaku's recollection, the event in Abeokuta would begin with a rally held at the Race Course followed by children marching with their schools in procession in front of senior local officials such as the Provincial Resident, as well as traditional rulers, such as the Alake of Abeokuta. After the march past, the Resident would read the Governor's message. This would indicate the conclusion of the formal ceremony, and subsequently the school

[100] Ibid.

[101] One of such athletes is Emmanuel Ifeajuna. He was a champion high jumper and one of the majors who participated in the first coup d'état in Nigeria. He was the first Black African to win a gold medal at an international sports event when he won the 1954 British Empire and Commonwealth Games. His winning mark and personal best of 6 ft. 8 in (2.03 m) was a games record and a record at a British Empire record at the time. He learned his high jump skills at Dennis Memorial Grammar School in Onitsha, Eastern Nigeria.

sports meeting would follow. The winning school would at the end of the day be presented with a trophy by a senior colonial or traditional personality. In the case of Abeokuta, the Alake himself made the presentation.[102]

Also at this time, large crowds of spectators consisting of parents, guardians, education officers, and sports enthusiasts started witnessing sports activities, particularly on Empire Day.[103] The 1918 event in Lagos was held on the Race Course, presided over by Governor-General Frederick Lugard. Lugard submits that "civilized nations have at least recognized that while on the one hand the abounding wealth of the tropical regions of the earth must be developed and used for the benefit of mankind, on the other hand an obligation rests on the controlling power not only to safeguard the material rights of the natives, but to promote their moral and educational progress."[104] He addressed the gathered youngsters representing the major religious denominations of Lagos "whose number could not have been less than fifteen thousand at the lowest computation."[105]

Empire Day was also a big event in much smaller administrative sense than Lagos. In the 1923 Empire Day celebration in Ijebu Ode, Ijebu Province, for example, an Empire Day Sports competition was held between all the local schools on the town's golf course. The event was attended by chiefs and thirteen Europeans from the local mission,

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[102] Biobaku, *When We Were Young*, 31-32.
[103] *The Nigerian Daily Times*, "Empire Day Sports in Lagos and Ebute Metta," May 26, 1941, XV.
[104] F.J.D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books, 1965), 18.
[105] *The Nigerian Pioneer*, "Government House Lagos," May 31, 1918, 10.

merchant, and colonial administrative communities.[106] Sir Donald Cameron, one of Lugard's successors in Nigeria as Governor-General, stated that he regards the indirect system as the best way to fulfill colonial task, the training of the people in the art of administration so that they ultimately stand by themselves.[107] Unlike Lugard, Cameron was highly knowledgeable on political affairs in British African colonies. His experience in colonial service commenced in Nigeria when he served as a junior officer in Northern Nigeria in 1908.[108]

A general enthusiasm greeted Cameron's re-appointment–the educated elites considered his appointment as a much welcomed development.[109] All the administrators after Lugard created laws that affected the leisure activities and general well-being of colonial subjects in Nigeria. In addition, some of these administrators made policy decisions which directly influenced the nature of leisure that Nigerians embraced. For example, economics dictated that cricket as a sport would be less able to compete for higher acclaim due to the high cost of the equipment. The cost of cricket equipment was too high to allow anyone but the ambitious and creative proponents of the game to play within the colony. Thus, while numerous Africans may have learned the rudiments of the game through close observation, very few of them would have been able to introduce cricket to compatriots beyond vague explanations of the activity.

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106 *The Nigerian Pioneer*, "Ijebu Ode Notes and News," June 6, 1924.
107 Margery Perham, "A Re-Statement of Indirect Rule," *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (July 1934): 333.
108 *The Nigerian Daily Times*, "Welcome to Sir Donald and Lady Cameron: A Thousand Times, Welcome," June 17, 1931.
109 *The Nigerian Daily Times*, "Sir Donald and Nigeria: The Man of the Hour," July 23, 1932.

Also, because of the importance of maintaining the empire and keeping feet in line with the athletic tradition of Empire, the Nigeria regiment also held ceremonies on Empire Day. In Ibadan, in 1927, members of 4th Battalion conducted the annual parade in honor of Empire Day on the Ibadan polo ground in a ceremony that "included a march past, and an address by the Commanding Officer."[110] For the 1929 event in Ibadan, the members 4th Battalion "assisted the school children to salute the flag."[111] According to the Regimental participants, "Judging from the apparently unending stream of Yoruba youth we are of the opinion that Ibadan will remain the largest city in Nigeria for some time."[112]

Indicating the importance of not only ceremony, but also proper protocol for colonial celebrations, the Assistant District Officer (ADO) for Agbani, Onitsha Province, A. Bridges, was reprimanded for personally awarding a trophy to the winners of the 1928 local Empire Day Sports competition between local schools. In his memoirs, Bridges writes, "It was, it seemed, presumptuous of a mere ADO to do such a thing, being one of the prerogatives of Lieutenant Governors and Heads of Departments…In the meanwhile the Agbani Cup was being competed for annually and as far as I know, it still is."[113]

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[110] "4th Battalion Notes," *The Regimental Journal of the Nigerian Regiment*, Vol. II, No. 2 (December 1927): 65-66.
[111] "4th Battalion Notes," *The Regimental Journal of the Nigerian Regiment*, Vol. III, No. 2 (December 1929), p. 71.
[112] "4th Battalion Notes," *The Regimental Journal of the Nigerian Regiment*, Vol. III, No. 2 (December 1927), p. 71.
[113] Andrew Apter, "On Imperial Spectacle: The Dialectics of Seeing in Colonial Nigeria," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 44, Issue 03 (July 2002): 564-596.

In 1929, the pro-government *Nigerian Pioneer*, founded in 1914 by Kitoyi Ajasa, a lawyer who had lived in Britain for twelve years and was a member of the Legislative Council representing Lagos Colony,[114] outlined clearly the meanings and purpose of events such as Empire day celebrations. The article, printed a week before that year's Empire Day, stated that "Year in, year out this journal has always advocated that the full significance of Empire Day be brought home to the minds of the young ones in Nigeria. We are a loyal people in Nigeria and the young ones and the men of tomorrow, can be made intensely patriotic."[115] Indicating the growing importance of the event around the territory, the 1929 Empire Day Celebration in Aba included sports competition for 3,000 school children, who for several weeks before the event, "…were everywhere observed going about busily engaged and anxious in many cases persistently worrying their parents and guardians to get the necessary uniforms and other equipments for this memorable day."[116]

Do these responses from African participants indicate that children in colonial Nigeria did in fact feel a sense of loyalty to the British Empire, and thus enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate that emotional attachment on Empire Day? It is, of course, hard to determine, but Biobaku suggested other reasons why children might have enjoyed the event for motives that had nothing to do with the actual celebration of the Empire. According to Biobaku, "it was also an opportunity of gorging oneself with

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[114] Margery Perham, *West African Passage: A Journey Through Nigeria, Chad, and the Cameroons, 1931-1932* (London: Peter Owen, 1983), p. 223.
[115] *The Nigerian Pioneer,* "Empire Day," May 17, 1929, 7.
[116] *The Nigerian Pioneer,* "Aba Notes & News," June 21, 1929, 3.

refreshments—oranges, mangoes, and so on at the sideline during sports."[117] For the African school children that participated, then, the official meaning of the day was likely lost. For them, as the examples of these two astute participants indicate, it was an enjoyable event because of the special treats they earned, rather than because they had any special love for the Empire or Queen Victoria. It was not unusual for the intended lessons of the pomp and spectacle of major sporting events to be lost on the African audience who had their own agendas. This was similar to the case found in colonial Zanzibar where fans at the annual Zanzibar Cup finals were generally more interested in the acrobatics than the parade of dignitaries, and more excited by the music of their own bands than those of the official bands that they found boring.[118]

Although Empire Day celebrations certainly became a central part of the annual calendar throughout colonial Nigeria, it was not the only such event held to honor important personalities. For example, sports days and children's rallies were held annually in Abeokuta on September 27 to commemorate the coronation of the Alake, Oba Ademola II. On that day, the Egba Royal Anthem was sung to the tune of 'God Save the Queen,' and the glories of the Egba Yoruba were celebrated.[119] In 1930, the centennial of the founding of Abeokuta, the event was celebrated in an even more elaborate manner than usual. According to Biobaku, "We paraded, sang, danced and were even more

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[117] Ibid.
[118] Laura Fair, "'Kickin' It: Leisure, Politics and Football in Colonial Zanzibar, 1900s-1950s," *Africa* 67, 2 (1997): 233-234.
[119] Biobaku, *When We Were Young*, 33.

joyous every day for at least a week."[120] The centenary was celebrated with a Children's day Parade from Ake Church Square to the Ake Palace Square and a sports competition for both Muslim and Christian School Children. Unusually, however, the sports competition was only for schoolgirls. In the evening there was a soiree and dance.[121]

Not to be outdone by their famous empire-building predecessor, sports days and other celebrations were also held to honor the sitting monarch in England. In 1931, for example, members of the Ibadan based 4th Battalion of the Nigerian Regiment joined the parade to celebrate the King's birthday in Lagos. The 1931 parade was described as 'noteworthy' because, "of the enormous interest taken in the inhabitants of Lagos, of whom a huge number watched the parade."[122] In addition to the parade, polo was played, a gymkhana was held, as was a paper chase, rounded out by a game of rugby won by Lagos.[123] At the 1933 celebration of the King's birthday in Lagos, Sultan Hassan of Sokoto accompanied Governor Cameron to the event and was afforded almost equal status.[124] The 1935 celebrations held in Calabar to honor the King's silver jubilee were conducted in such a manner as to, "…ensure that the people of Calabar remembered the day."[125]

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120 Ibid.
121 "Centenary Items," *Nigerian Daily Times*, Thursday, October 30, 1930, p. 7.
122 "4th Battalion Notes," *The Regimental Journal of the Nigerian Regiment*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (December 1931): 60.
123 "4th Battalion Notes," *The Regimental Journal of the Nigerian Regiment*, Vol. IV, No. 2 (December 1927): 60.
124 *The Nigerian Pioneer,* "The King's Birthday,"Friday, June 9th, 1933, p. 7.
125 "3rd Battalion Notes," *The Regimental Journal of the Nigerian Regiment*, Vol. VI, No. 1 (June 1935): 15.

Empire Day Sports remained important events throughout the colonial period. At the competition for the Empire Day Shield in Lagos in 1949, the Ahmadiyya School won in front of 20,000 spectators. Following the decade-long pattern, the British anthem was played, and the Acting Commissioner of the Lagos Colony read the Governor's speech to the crowd.[126] Elsewhere, in 1950, for example, the events in Keffi, Onitsha, Aba, and Zaria were all reported on in the Nigerian press.[127] It is difficult to ascertain whether or not the official significance of the event was actually grasped by the participants. For the colonial state, however, the Empire Day celebration served as an important colonial mechanism to symbolically ally the young members of the vast and diverse Empire into a common bond of allegiance and patriotism.

The celebration of Empire Day is one of the many aspects of the colonial state that has persisted, largely unchanged, into the practice of the post-colonial African state.[128] Now known as Children's Day, May 24th is celebrated every year with school children marching past political and traditional leaders on local sports grounds in a display of loyalty to the post-colonial Nigerian state. Little do these children know that the event is simply a holdover from colonial times in which post-colonial leaders attempt to redefine displays of allegiance to the Empire as displays of the same to themselves.

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[126] *West African Pilot,* "Ahmadiyya School Wins Empire Day Shield Before 20, 000," May 26, 1949, 4.
[127] *The Nigerian Citizen*, June 2, 1950, 16.
[128] As in Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

As there was so little industry in Africa the range of commercial and other facilities which the economy could carry in the first couple of decades of the 20th century was limited and concentrated in urban areas. Manufacturing industries needed to find places where these facilities are provided and, in a snowball effect, much of the growth of service industries took place in towns.[129] Towns have good communication and commercial facilities, and all the advantages of an urban layout. Consequently, workers who left agriculture for industry usually had to migrate to towns. Therefore, the growth of towns may be regarded as evidence of the progress of an economy towards a higher standard of living. As many African towns began to experience significant growth in population and infrastructural development in the early 1920s, the nature of leisure became transformed, leading to a reconception of time and space.[130]

Migration was also encouraged by the diversification of the economy, because of the construction of new roads, railways and public works, the opening of mines, the development of cash crops, and petty trade all offer opportunities of employment. Urbanization and economic development in Africa from the turn of the twentieth century opened up new employment opportunities and encouraged rural-urban migration among young men.[131] The urban areas not only had a host of occupations and ways of getting a living not offered by the traditional system, but they also made labor, enterprise and skill marketable in their own right anywhere on the continent. All this suggests that for many

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[129] J. Meads, "Urbanisation in Nigeria," *West African Review*, February, 1960, 72-73.
[130] Zeleza Tiyambe and Cassandra R. Veney, eds., *Leisure in Urban Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 117-122.
[131] Emmanuel Akyeampong, *Drink and Cultural Change: A Social History of Alcohol in Ghana, c. 1800 to Recent Times* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996),21-27.

younger men migration was virtually a rite of initiation. The newly-introduced wage-economy gave new shape to time by imposing stricter divisions of the day between "work time," and "free time" and of the week between work days and weekends. Time became commercialized,[132] thus transforming the lives of residents in the new urban setting. As Lisa Lindsay remarked, men were expected to show immersion in an urban environment, and a youth could not win a girl's favors unless he showed the brand of the city upon him.[133] As urban areas became magnets for people of different ethnicities in Nigeria, it also entailed that people of different origins would begin competing in these indigenous activities.

Colonial economies were male-oriented and women were supposed to remain in rural areas, but the depression of the 1930s weakened rural and urban economies, and increased the movement of men and women between villages and towns in search of economic opportunities.[134] Also, African housing and other infrastructure was provided only for single African men, who were expected to reside only temporarily in the town.[135] As far as colonial officials and European capitalists were concerned, women had no formal place in urban areas.[136] As a result, in most parts of colonial Africa, governments

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[132] Ibid.
[133] Lisa A. Lindsay, "No Need to think of Home? Masculinity and Domestic Life on the Nigerian Railway, c. 1940- 1961". *The Journal of African History* 39 (1988): 439-66.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Bodil Falker Frederiksen, "African Women and their Colonisation of Nairobi: Representations and Realities," *Azania, Archaeological Research of Nigeria,* Vol. 36-37, 1 (2001): 37-59.
[136] Ibid.

strongly discouraged the migration of women into towns, especially urban areas that sprang up as a result of colonial activity. [137]

It is important to stress here, that of all colonial infrastructure, the railways facilitated rural-urban migration the most, and also strengthened the social interaction between rural and urban areas. The Railway was an important social institution which joined Nigeria together. Railways became distinguishing marks of British colonial development policy. The railway in Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, embodied ideas about modernization. A basic assumption of British colonial officials concerned with development was that rapid, efficient, and inexpensive transportation was necessary if economic progress was to be made in Nigeria. [138] Owing to the strategic importance of the workforce, the Nigerian Railway became one of the few enterprises in Nigeria where labor stabilization was pursued with earnestness.

The initial idea of a railway in Nigeria was germinated in 1893, although the first line from Lagos via Abeokuta was not completed until 1901. At the time, it was known as the Lagos Government Railway and plans were afoot for the northern extension of the railway to Ilorin through Oshogbo, Oyo, and Ogbomosho.[139] Armed with the conviction that Northern Nigeria cotton could be a solution to Britain's dependency on American

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[137] Emmanuel Akyeampong, "What's in a Drink? Class Struggle, Popular Culture and the Politics of Akpeteshie (Local Gin) in Ghana, 1930-67," The Journal of African History, Vol. 37, No. 2 (1996): 215-236

[138] John M. Carland, *The Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1985), 135-142.

[139] *The Lagos Standard*, "Opening of the Lagos Government Railway," March 13, 1901.

cotton, Winston Churchill convinced the British Parliament to build a railway to Kano.[140] In 1907, Sir Percy Girouard, A French Canadian railway engineer with railway experience in Canada, Sudan, Egypt, and South Africa replaced Lugard as High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria and began the extension of the railway. The railway reached Kano in 1911, but the agricultural export boom that began the following year was for groundnuts, rather than cotton.[141] The railway was, however, already in place to link the North and the South furthering the inevitability of the eventual amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates.

In 1909, following the discovery of coal at Udi in the northern part of Southeastern Nigeria, colonial officials began the construction of an eastern railway line.[142] This railway was to serve as a link between Southern and Northern Nigeria as the primary conveyor of coal from Udi to Lagos and other countries including Sierra Leone, Ghana and Britain,[143] and as the primary channel for transporting other goods located in southeastern Nigeria such as Tin and Palm produce. In 1913 work commenced fully on the eastern rail line. The commencement of this project coincided with the period when the government opened up the coal mine for exploration. Initially able bodied men from indigenous communities such as Agbaja and Nkanu supplied labor on the coal mine but in 1914 these local workers began to desert work and demand for higher wages. This

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140 Jan Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnuts Exports: Origins and Early Development* (Zaria, Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1978), 6-17.
141 Ibid.
142 Carolyn Brown, "The Dialetics of Colonial Labour Control: Class Struggles in the Nigerian Coal Industry, 1914-1949, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 23, 1-2 (1988): 42.
143 Olufemi Ekundare, *An Economic History of Nigeria, 1860-1960* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1973), 183.

development negatively affected coal production and railway construction in Eastern Nigeria.[144]

Within the first decades of the emergence of colonialism in Nigeria, the expansion of the railway had contributed immensely towards tying Nigeria together, even before Nigeria became the amalgamation of 1914.[145] To travel from Lagos to the East of Nigeria on the railway entailed a journey through the North. Although designed for purely executive economic reasons, this contributed to bringing people in contact that might otherwise not have such opportunities. Railway towns along the way became centers of colonial cultural transmission earlier than might otherwise have been the case.[146] Considering the geographic spread of the railway, the company served as an important mechanism for the spread of British sporting culture to places outside of the reach of most colonial institutions.

Still on the impact of the railway in Nigeria, the extension of the railway from Lagos to the far north to connect with the Kano-Baro line made Lagos a prominent transit point between the coastal region and the areas of the north. Not only did this make Lagos the archetype of the twentieth-century African city,[147] it also transformed the city into a major center for trade in cassava, cocoa, cotton, timber, rubber and palm oil. Lagos was the strongest magnet in Nigeria for migrants at that time, and between 1931 and 1950 its

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144 CO 879/119/8, "Report by Sir F.D Lugard on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, and Administration, 1912-1919; Carolyn Brown, "*We were all Slaves: African Miners, Culture and Resistance at the Enugu Government Colliery* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann Publishers, 2003), 82-84.
145 Olufemi Ekundare, *An Economic History of Nigeria, 1860-1960* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1973), 183.
146 Ibid.
147 Correspondent, "Lagos," *West African Review* XXXII, 1961, 12-15.

population almost doubled.[148] This growth brought all sorts of people from the wider Nigerian community to Lagos, creating a multi-ethnic mix—although the indigenous Yoruba ethnic group remained dominant. People from neighboring communities began to imagine Lagos as a city offering great opportunities and benefits. Unfortunately, it was mostly Europeans, educated elites and members of the immigrant community that reaped the economic benefits that Lagos had to offer. The remainder of the population had to either work really hard to survive. People who migrated from the Yoruba hinterland and other neighboring communities soon realized that living in Lagos had its own challenges.

By 1917, the Railway headquarters compound had cricket and soccer grounds.[149] Indicating that soccer, a sport which Railway teams would dominate in Lagos in the 1940s and 1950s with their famous "Urion Line," was already being played by employees, there were also West Indians working for the Railway in sufficient numbers that they could organize their own Railway West Indian Cricket Team for competition against clubs in Ebute Metta and Lagos.[150] Just as soccer had sufficiently been indigenized by West Africans in the 1920s for them to form teams while in London for studies, so too had West Indians indigenized their beloved cricket, taking the game with

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148 Pauline H. Baker, *Urbanization and Political Change: The Politics of Lagos, 1917-1967* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 33.
149 *The Lagos Standard*, November 21, 1917.
150 *The Nigerian Pioneer*, "Cricket: Railway West Indian Team Versus Unity Club Lagos," *The Nigerian* March 24, 1922, 8.

them to colonial Nigeria.[151] However, cricket was never a popular sport in Nigeria and it did not survive for long in the country.

Why did cricket not survive as a popular sport in Nigeria as it did elsewhere in the Empire? One reason could be that the game never found a promoter on the grassroots level—or even an influential indigenous advocate. There was never "the indigenization of patronage" as happened in places like India[152]or the growth in influence and wealth, as the Trinidadian scholar C.L.R. James describes it, of a colored cricket-playing middle class as in the West Indies. Soccer had Nnamdi Azikiwe, polo had the royal family of the Kaduna Emirate, and Fives had Sardauna Ahmadu Bello. Cricket had no significant indigenous patron to make a lasting impact. As described above, during the Depression years, even elite institutions found it difficult to purchase cricket equipment. Thus while soccer was gaining popularity, economics dictated that cricket as a sport would be less able to compete for higher acclaim due to the high cost of the equipment.

The Depression led to a substantial decrease in imported goods and a lesser demand for raw materials. Many southerners, whose livelihood derived from selling and buying imported and exported goods, struggled to make ends meet. The depression came with attendant social problems. Crime flourished in different parts of Southern Nigeria, particularly in urban centers like Lagos and Ibadan. Pickpockets lurked around mercantile centers and railway stations and operated in groups, stealing and transferring goods from

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151 For cricket's importance in the West Indies, see, for example, Hilary Beckles and Brian Stoddarts, eds., Liberation Cricket Culture, New York: Manchester University Press, 1995.

152 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 110. Even today, as attempts are being made to revive cricket in Nigeria, the British High Commission is playing a significant role. Josephine Lohor, Kaduna Cricket Season Begins," *ThisDay,* November 30, 2001, 62.

one locality to another.[153] The most notorious pickpockets, as Simon Heap, described in his study, were the Jaguda Boys.[154] They operated in gangs and hid on farmlands from where they crept out to operate at night. [155] Urban youths who could not find employment joined the underworld and engaged other forms of crime such as prostitution, illicit distillation of alcoholic drinks, coin counterfeiting[156], theft, assault and burglary.[157]

In Lagos, The physical planning and development process gradually appropriated all available open spaces either for private or public development increasingly limiting the space within which ordinary people could play, exercise, or just merely sit, stand and stare. Where free space was not forcibly taken, it was allowed to decay through lack of maintenance, or was taken over by different elements such as destitute, beggars, lunatics, etc. In other cases, the breakdown of law and order and the presence of criminal gangs turned some of these places into no-go areas. Thus space for recreation and entertainment became a contested terrain from which ordinary people were removed or barred, or to which they staked claims through many guises, one of which was through religious

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153 *The Nigerian Daily Times*, "Developing a Career of Crime," February 19, 1930; NAI Comcol 1/1257, Crime in Lagos and Its Districts. NAI, Comcol 1/894 Vol. 1, Unemployment in Lagos."

154 Simon Heap, "Their days are Spent in Gambling and Loafing, Pimping for Prostitutes and Picking Pockets: Male Juvenile Delinquents on Lagos Island, 1920-1960, Journal of Family History 35 (2010): 48-70. *The Nigerian Daily Times*, "A Daring Daylight Robbery: Jaguda Boy Chased by Car," May 6, 1936. *The West African Pilot*, "The Jaguda Boys," October 19, 1937. The Nigerian Daily Times, "A Point Worth Considering," February 22, 1930. The West African Pilot, "The Jaguda Menace," April 24, 1942.

155 *The Nigerian Daily Times*, "The Mystery on the Road," April 9, 1932. The Nigerian Daily Times, "The Jaguda Boys," October 19, 1937.

156 *The West African Pilot*, "Boy Counterfeiters," October 28, 1938. The West African Pilot, "This Counterfeiting Menace," October 23, 1937. Counterfeiters convicted and charged were often given a life sentence.

157 *The Nigerian Daily Times*, "Burglary in Ibadan: Sensational Cases Every Night," July 12, 1938. The West African Pilot, "Burglary in the Provinces," July 1, 1942.

groups or sects that often squatted on any available land either on waterfronts, swampy lowlands, or other such places.[158]

The late 1920s brought the reluctance of the colonial authorities to provide for the social welfare of the locals to the fore, particularly in the area of provision of recreational facilities. This trend was especially pronounced at the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929, ironically the year John Blair, the Assistant District Officer, wrote a memorandum to the District Officer for Lagos seeking permission to organize inter-colonial cricket match between British officials in Lagos and British officials in the Gold Coast.[159] Not only was his request granted by the Administrator of the Colony, the Administrator also said that members of the cricket team in Government Service selected to visit Accra "may be considered to be on local leave from the day they leave their stations until they return."[160] This statement by the Administrator is testament to how the British encouraged participation in sports among their own people in Lagos, while exhibiting lukewarmness at the promotion of sports among the local population.

The Depression had thrown hundreds out of work in Lagos and, as far as the British administrators were concerned, the unemployed had the potential to foment trouble if allowed to converge at soccer grounds without supervision, which could have a spillover effect on the rest of the city. They feared the growing army of unemployed youth could be used for secret nationalist activities. The youth, who were supposed to be

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[158] Zeleza and Veney, *Leisure in Urban Africa*, pp. 186-188.
[159] Lagos 1/1 no. 748/1929 "Memorandum to the District Officer, Colony" from Mr. John Blair, Assistant District Officer, Lagos, February 26, 1929, Ibadan National Archives.
[160] C.S.O. 1, no. 16380/174, "Letter to the Honourable Administrator of the Colony" from the Acting Chief Secretary to the Government, February 28, 1929, Ibadan National Archives.

the harbinger of new cultures, loafed around in search of better conditions of living, sagging the division between work and leisure. To the British authorities in Lagos, the demand for provision of jobs by the "locals" smacked of nationalist influence. The British felt it was incumbent upon them to intervene in African leisure time when the health and efficiency of the workforce seemed to be at stake, or when African activities impinged on the insulated life of the white community.

Thus, they reasoned that the best way forestall a breakdown of law and order was through Europeans overseeing the playing and administration of leisure spaces in Lagos. For example, in a memorandum to the Administrator of the Colony, Lagos, on March 28, 1929, the Director of Education complained about crowd troubles and unpleasantness caused by the disorderly behavior of spectators at soccer matches played on the King's College ground, and asking for authority to erect fences and gates on the ground.[161] That there was crowd trouble at King's College, Nigeria's version of Britain's Eton College in terms of prestige shows how restless soccer spectators had grown over a short space of time.

This event did not happen in isolation. From the middle of the 1920s, colonial officials across the continent of Africa had begun to make efforts to assert European control over the form, content, and structure of team sports in the hope that they might squash the emergence of nationalist sentiments and reinforce respect for European authority. Several events had already begun to dislodge the British from their traditional

[161] Comcol 1, no. 23/542, "Spectators at Football Matches at King's College" from "Director of Education, Southern Province" March 28 , 1929, Ibadan National Archives.

spheres of influence in Africa at this period. Adu Boahen, the distinguished African historian, classified the period of colonial rule in Africa from 1900 to 1935 as a time when many colonial powers began the pacification process of indigenous groups after the Scramble for Africa.[162] As a part of the pacification process, colonial governments began to build necessary infrastructure, railroads, roads, buildings, etc., to maintain political power and extract resources.

It is important to note here that dissenting voices had begun to rise against colonial rule in Nigeria around this time, especially from the educated elite in the South. The educated elites raised their voices against policy decisions made by the colonial government in Nigeria, especially those that concerned key issues such as the extension of the system of taxation into southern Nigeria, increased water rate in Lagos, denial of right to legal representation in Native and Provincial courts, irrational suspension of traditional leaders, maintenance of white prestige, placing of the judiciary under the control of the executive arm of government and press censorship. This the colonial government felt compelled to pacify the people of Nigeria. Promoting and improving sports was considered part of this pacification process. The first step in this direction was for the Administrator of the Colony to write a letter titled "Assistance to Games Clubs" to the Chief Secretary to the Government on January 17, 1931, in which he asked for the government to look into the promotion of sports in the Colony of Lagos. In his words, "the Colony sport stations are some of the most unattractive in Nigeria and I certainly

[162] Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1987), 62-68.

think something should be done for next year."[163] The Chief Secretary to the Government, in his reply, approved the sum of 40 pounds for the assistance of Games Clubs in the Colony.[164]

Also at this time, The Lagos Council on social service began an event to meet the needs of school children, who, during their long Christmas holidays were apt to get bored and fall into mischief. This event illustrated that spirit of happy cooperation between Government and voluntary workers, which is such a feature in welfare work in Lagos. For two weeks, a program of educational films, hikes, football matches, boxing, picnics, netball, needlework were arranged.[165] A series of camps for boys were arranged at Kuramoh Beach, and a camp fire to end the program was arranged by the scouts.

Leisure in Nigeria at this time reflected the systematically enforced cultural and economic dependency of African under Europeans. In Lagos, profits from the township beer parlors were diverted into the construction of recreational facilities. Such projects redoubled the material, social and cultural divisions between white elites and African township residents. They were effectively self-financed by the local communities, absolving Europeans of major financial burdens regarding Lagos's development. Meanwhile, equipped with these facilities, the local population remained categorically excluded from the kind of exposure the Europeans enjoyed. In Lagos at least, one

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163 Lagos 1/1 no. 1152/1931 "Letter to the Honourable, the Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos" from Mr. C. Lawrence, Administrator of the Colony, Lagos, January 17, 1931, Ibadan National Archives.
164 Lagos 1/1 no. 06511/121 "Assistance to Games Clubs" from Chief Secretary to the Government, Lagos, January 26, 1931, Ibadan National Archives.
165 *Nigerian Daily Times* "Lagos Council of Social Service*,"* February 28, 1931, 4.

consequence of this was that Africans broadly preferred, from the European viewpoint, more hedonistic and less hygienic recreation, notably in drinking and dancing.

Colonial social hierarchy reflected more in the spatial arrangement of the territory of Lagos than in other parts of Nigeria. Patrick Dele Cole has shown in his study that Lagos was physically divided into four quarters. Europeans settled along Marina, a site which was formerly home to slave barracoons overlooking the sea.[166] Immigrants from Sierra Leone secured land grants and settled at Olowogbowo, west of the Europeans. Afro Brazillians and Afro Cubans settled behind European quarters at Popo Aguda or Popo Maro (an area now referred to as Portuguese quarters).[167] The people of Lagos were confined to Isale Eko, and clustered around the original pre-colonial settlement at the Western end of the Island. This pattern of colonial segregation negatively affected the local population. [168] Kristin Mann has shown in a study that a large number of indigenous people were dispossessed off their land as Lagosians, especially the Europeans and educated elites were refashioning the colony's spatial space. Europeans and immigrant settlers secured land grants that gave them access to control of labor. The process of

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166 Michael Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos: Aspects of Nineteenth Century Lagos Life* (New York: Africana Publishing Company), 30.
167 P.D Cole, "Lagos Society in the Nineteenth Century," in *Lagos: The Development of an African City* ed. A.B Aderibigbe and Ade Ajayi (Nigeria: Longman, 1973), 43-46.
168 Ayo Olukoju, "The Segregation of Europeans and Africans in Colonial Nigeria," *in Security, Segregation and Social Networks in West African Cities in the 19th and 20th Centuries* ed. Laurent Fourchard and Isaac Olawale Albert (Paris: Karthala, 2003).

privatizing and commercializing urban land invariably led to the alienation of the local populace.[169]

Between the 1910s and 1920s in Lagos, Nigeria, the *caretta* or Fancy Dance, became rooted in the urban social life of the residents. The *caretta* was a fusion of West African ring dance and European country dance patterns which involved participants gesturing with handkerchiefs in their hand.[170] The *caretta* was eventually adopted by all the groups in Lagos, and became a mode of competition between the various quarters of the city. For Christopher Waterman, the music historian, the principles of organization and competition of the dance aligned with the forms of recreation that were already popular around this time in Lagos.[171] Competitive *caretta* was held on a regular basis, and this urban pastime served as a vital vehicle for showing and vying for honors in the different neighborhoods in Lagos. The popularity of the *caretta* in Lagos is evidence of the capacities of African societies, like all societies, to shape and reshape leisure activities. The sociability associated with the *caretta* and the ways in which men could expand their social networks and friendships through the Fancy Dance were key draws to

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[169] Kristin Mann, "Women, Landed Property and the Accumulation of Wealth in Early Colonial Lagos," *Signs* 6 (1991): 689.

[170] The old Brazilian district of Lagos (Popo Aguda) has contributed immensely to the social and cultural life of the island. Named after the first batch of Yoruba ex-slaves who by 1838, had bought their freedom in Brazil, and had paid their passages to Lagos. It was here that the popular masquerade known as *caretta* was introduced to commemorate the Easter and Christmas seasons. Other popular Christian outdoor ceremonies like *Bunba* and *Meu Boi* were celebrated more with parades, masquerade figures, colorful dances and fancy dress.

[171] Christopher Alan Waterman, *Juju: A social history and ethnography of an African Popular Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 31-35.

this form of leisure.[172] For these men, choice, autonomy, and pleasure were central to the notion of leisure.[173] For the women, the *caretta* enhanced their sense of autonomy, respect worthiness, and belonging within the urban citizenry. Overall, it was popular in Lagos in terms of access.

As for content, it absorbed and recreated many elements of the indigenous forms which included praise-singing and adulation, satire and social criticism of deviant practices and even of political authorities. Of course, the performance was unscripted[174] and so, what was said might be described as what occurred to the performers spontaneously. During performances, the call and response form was often used as the leader recited some lines of loosely-fitted poetic texts, strung together to make a meaningful whole, and which were punctuated by intermittent refrains by both leader and chorus.[175] A member of the audience was invited to the dance floor by one of the boys of the group by placing his cap on his or her lap.[176] It was a clear indication of an open invitation and as such no other person was expected to jump into the circle for a free-for-

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172 The role of dance and dance groups and their transformation in colonial Lagos was one of the subjects of Afolabi Alaja-Browne's book, *Juju Music: A Study of its Social History and Style* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1985). Stephen Blum, Philip Vilas Bohlman and Daniel M. Neuman explored the same issues in much broader and more historical terms in *Ethnomusicology and Modern Music History* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

173 Karin Barber, ed., *Readings in African Popular Culture* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1997), 2-7. Also, see her *The Generation of Plays: Yoruba Popular Life in Theater* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), 12-17.

174 Correspondent, "Life and The People," *West African Review*, December, 1961, 27.

175 Afolabi Alaja-Browne, "A Diachronic Study of Change in Juju Music," *Popular Music*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Oct., 1989): 231-242.

176 The idea of musicians using caps to cover their faces was a common practice because, from the viewpoint of parents and guardians of those days, the perception of music as a "respectable" profession did not exist in traditional Yoruba society, hence they discouraged their children and wards from becoming musicians.

all dance. Sometimes, some of the men would tell jokes and do a caricature of a woman singing the feminine way to amuse the audience. Their faces were painted with a jet-black substance on top of it the outline of their features had been exaggerated in white, so that when their faces took on an expression, it was greatly exaggerated— every so often they would hold a single expression like a mask, so that they looked exactly like figures returned from some unearthly region,[177] exactly like Yoruba *egungun* (masquerade). This dance also afforded dancers, poets, and drummers an avenue to publicly display their skills, or drummers, and in the process earn respect for themselves and their abilities.

In a paper by David W. Ames on the patterns of work among the musicians of Zazzau in Northern Nigeria, he argues that music performed by professionals was considered a craft, and a kind of "product" requiring payment like the goods sold by a leatherworker or a blacksmith. However, music sung by a nonprofessional, for example, *shantu* songs sung by married women after the evening meal for the enjoyment of the household was regarded as a pleasurable leisure-time activity.[178] Geoffrey Gorer, an early observer of dance traditions in West Africa believed that the introduction of formal Western sporting activities was an unfortunate substitute for dancing.[179] In addition, similar to the Islamic distaste for wrestling and other forms of indigenous recreational activities, Christian missionaries often disapproved of dancing because of its suggestive forms. As Albert Hessler wrote on his work among the Bura of

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177 C.W. Newbury, "The Lagos Century," *West African Review*, December, 1961, 13.
178 David W. Ames, *Glossary of Hausa Music and its Social Context* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971), 12-39.
179 Geoffrey Gorer, *Africa Dances* (London: John Lehmann, 1949), 176.

Adamawa Province, "When the young men and women alternate the round dance it furnishes the most immoral thing I have ever witnessed…The Children play some beautiful games. These we encourage in order to teach lessons in character that come from fair play, and in order to discourage the immoral dances."[180] As participation in European cultural activities increasingly became evidence of education and exposure for Africans, many began rejecting their traditional dancing for European ball room dancing and the like, as Sylvia Leith-Ross discovered on her study of Igbo in 1939.[181]

Very late in the colonial period, African dances were still viewed with awe by European observers. During the 1957 Christmas celebration for the HQ Company of the 3rd Battalion, Queen's Own Regiment in Enugu, "Great interest surrounded the different forms of dances and guests were soon drawn to the vigorous enthusiasm of the Banana tribe and the stately glide of the Hausa dance. Everywhere there were haunting and violent rhythms and wonderful colors, and it was undoubtedly a most spirited occasion and one which all present will remember."[182]

What does not emerge from the encounter between Nigerian wage workers and the European colonialists is the sense of what expectations Africans had for leisure. Indeed, few scholarly works have sought to examine African leisure in terms of its intrinsic value. This marginalization of leisure is an aspect of the broader neglect of scholarship of the actual day-to-day activities of the "common people," notwithstanding

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[180] Albert Hessler, *In Sunny Nigeria* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1926), 141-42.
[181] Leith-Ross, Sylvia Leith-Ross, *African Women*: *A Study of the Igbo of Nigeria* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1939), 250.
[182] "3rd Battalion the Queen's Own Nigeria Regiment," *Nigerian Military Forces Magazine*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (April 1958):68-69.

the concern of social historians with the lives of ordinary men and women. Historians would in general prefer that their subjects "construct culture" and "struggle against domination" rather than relax and have fun.[183] This means the issue of leisure in Africa is not a simple issue of participation in recognizable activities such as soccer or even the struggles to define and control such activities, although these are important tasks.

In towns where the physical separation of these various communities could not be created through already existing geographic features such as hills, rivers, and valleys, other mechanisms had to be used to accomplish the task. Recreational playing fields therefore became an important means of establishing the contrived geographic separation. As Phyllis Martin described in her study of leisure in colonial Brazzaville, an important feature of colonial urban planning was to use the beautification of European work and leisure spaces to segregate them from Africans, using physical space as "an instrument of social and psychological distancing."[184] For these reasons, land provided for leisure activities needed approval at the highest levels.

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By the time the colonial economy had improved, cricket's popularity had sunk too low for even for even a massive investment in equipment to make a difference. During the school holidays in Abeokuta in the 1930s, for example, students schooling in the elite

[183] Eckert and Jones, "Historical Writing about Everyday Life," *Journal of African History* 31 (1990): 295-313.
[184] Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 6.

boarding schools elsewhere such as Government College, Ibadan and King's College, Lagos would return home. Although in their various schools—especially King's College—cricket was promoted as the sport of gentlemen, when these students went home, it was improvised soccer they turned to, not cricket. According to Government College, Ibadan student Saburi Biobaku, "We usually met at our improvised playing grounds near Chief Odejinmi's imposing two-story building and there in the evening we played our own football matches."[185] If they could not afford a regular soccer ball, how could they afford cricket equipment?

Cultural reasons, too, could have likely played a role. Conceivably for Nigerians, Cricket was all too structured and rule bound for their liking. Alternatively, the sport of soccer allowed for more speed and inventiveness, adhering more to indigenous activities people had come to appreciate like dancing and wrestling that placed a high value of personal virtuosity. Thus, when exposed to the less structured game of soccer, the choice between the two activities would have been an easy one to make. C.A. Obashoro, A Nigerian soldier serving in India with the Royal West African Frontier Force, promoted a combination of both the cultural and economic reasons for cricket's demise. In a 1945 letter to the West African Pilot, Obashoro expressed his preference for soccer over cricket because, "I tried, but I found it too dull. It does not arouse in me half the interest that

185 Saburi Biobaku, *When We Were Young*, 61.

football does. It takes too long to finish a game. It is, in my opinion, not all suitable for young men. It is also too expensive for ordinary men."[186]

The fact that Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka, two of Nigeria's literary giants, used accounts of wrestling in their works exhibits the central place of wrestling in indigenous Nigerian sport.[187] Even in African sports generally, wrestling appears to be something of a universal, although practiced in different forms. I will here outline some examples of wrestling's form and function in different parts of the territory that is now Nigeria.

Among the Igbo in the 1920s, wrestling was extremely popular. According to the British missionary G.T. Basden, "Every youth physically capable practices and continues to do so up to the time of marriage."[188] Contests were one on one and strictly amateur, the only prize being pride and honour, "…the successful competitor being fully content merely to receive the plaudits of the crowd as an acknowledgement of his skill and strength."[189] The rules were limited and the sole objective was to throw the other man to the ground. In the matches, there were often "…exhibitions of rare skill and endurance. Every part of the body is brought into play; hands, legs, and head."[190]

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186 *West African Pilot* "Nigerian Soldier in India Prefers Football As It Engenders Spirit and Sportsmanship," April 24, 1945, 4.
187 Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1958), 3 and Wole Soyinka, *The Lion and the Jewel* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 44.
188 G.T. Basden, *Among the Ibos of Nigeria* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1966), 129.
189 Ibid.
190 Ibid.

Exhibiting the bias of his own British ideals, Basden accused Igbo men of poor sportsmanship, saying, "They cannot take defeat with good grace."[191] Because defeat invited ridicule, especially from women—the worst disgrace an Igbo man could face—men would not wrestle after marriage, would rarely challenge opponents they felt could beat them, and would sometimes retire from contests with poor excuses rather than risk total defeat. Preparation for wrestling contests did not involve training, but rather included charms and taking of medicines to protect the wrestler and make him stronger.[192]

Among the Yoruba in the 1930s one writer described wrestling as the only indigenous organized sport. Wrestling matches were organized between two sides at night under the light of the moon, all participants fighting naked, with only men in attendance. Competitors from each side entered the ring one at a time, any man knocked down immediately had to leave and another from the team entered in his place. The last man standing and his team emerged winners. Exhibiting how elements of colonial gentlemanly sporting culture had already entered the "traditional" realm. Yoruba writer, Isaac Delano writes, "When wrestling is finished the two teams shake hands cordially—a courtesy introduced in recent years."[193] By the late 1930s, urbanized Yoruba in Lagos lamenting that "Now-a-days there is little or nothing heard of the favorite pastime of the

[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid., 130.
[193] Isaac Delano, *The Soul of Nigeria* (London: T. Werner Laurie Ltd., 1937), 232.

Lagos people—wrestling," organized a wrestling tournament under the auspices of the Yoruba Tennis Club.[194]

Among the Hausa, the other of Nigeria's three main ethnic groups, wrestling—known as *kokawa*—was a rural sport carried out by young men specifically set apart as athletes.[195] Wrestlers would go through various stages until they became fully competitive participants. When approaching the age of forty, a wrestler would shave his head and discard his special wrestling attire to join the elders. Contests could be between athletes of different ages—serving as something of a generational struggle, or between athletes of various towns—making it a struggle over pride, even while tying people of different generations and towns together. Indigenous wrestling in Hausaland was a very organized activity, occurring mostly in rural areas. Another form of wrestling was known as *langa*. In this form, the competitors fought on one leg and the objective of knocking the opponent out of the ring, knocking them down, or forcing them to release one of their legs. According to Sigrid Paul, however, the spread of Islam severely diminished the practice of wrestling in Hausaland as Islam devalued sporting activities.[196] Although

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194 "Wrestling," *The Nigerian Pioneer*, May 4, 1934, 4.

195 The professional Hausa wrestler was quite different from the amateur wrestlers of the Yoruba and Igbo. The same distinction between amateur sportsmen—gentlemen, and professional athletes—commoners, was very important in British sports. Soccer was the first game in which the distinction was discarded, entailing that soccer would quickly become the sport of the masses in the late nineteenth century Britain. One wonders that if not for the influence of Islam, Hausa people accustomed to a professional athletic tradition may have been more culturally inclined towards soccer than people in the South.

196 It is interesting that among Yoruba Muslims, sport was not a taboo. In Lagos over the years, Muslim sports clubs of various kinds participated in cricket, soccer, athletic and other sporting activities. For example, to celebrate Ramadan in 1903, the Muslim Athletic Club organized a series of athletic sports as part of the festivities. "Epitome of News," *The Lagos Weekly Record*, December 26, 1903. The distaste was more because of the links of indigenous sports with a non-Islamic past, than an actual distaste for sporting activities themselves.

Hausa folktales tell of men wrestling with spirits, and even the devil himself, Islam looked down on the activity because of its strong link with pre-Islamic rituals.[197]

Perhaps there was also some level of nationalist sentiment involved in the why some sports were not widely accepted in Nigeria and why some were not. How could the populace really identify with a sport whose national representative teams were often made of uninvited expatriate rulers? When English cricket teams began touring India in the 1890s, they at first competed against teams made of up of Englishmen in India, Arjun Appadurai goes as far as to argue that India was partially invented as a cricket opponent for England.[198] Over time, however, Indians began representing India, a pattern that closely followed the rise of Indian nationalism as a broad based movement.[199] In Nigeria, even to the close of the colonial era, Europeans continued to represent Nigeria in cricket, entailing that the sport remained foreign in the eyes of the Nigerian masses. In addition, with separate cricket bodies for Europeans and Africans in place until 1956, the sport always had a racist flavor that organized soccer never did. In South Africa, similar forms of racialism in sport helped further the popularity and development of African soccer.[200]

Except perhaps for basketball, the most popular sports the world over today are largely those that were first organized by the British in the mid-1800s and spread across

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197 Sigrid Paul, "The Wrestling Tradition and its Social Function," in William Baker and J.A. Mangan, eds., *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1987), 27.
198 Appadurai, 98-99.
199 Ibid, 98.
200 Peter Alegi, *Laduma!: Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa* (University of Kwazulu Natal Press, 2004),71-81.

the globe as the British "taught the world to play"[201]The British carried their games not only to their formal Empire, but also to their much bigger informal Empire, areas of the world that they never ruled but had major influences over through trade. The latter largely Latin America where in spite of minimal British colonial presence, "the history (and language) of "modern" organized sport in Latin America is the history of the diffusion, adoption and manipulation of sports invented/or codified and institutionalized by Europeans, mainly the British and Anglo-Americans."[202] In an article describing the British cultural influence worldwide through sport in the last two centuries, Harold Perkin argues that where formal rule existed entailing a substantial presence of Public School and Oxford/Cambridge bred young men with their gentlemanly athletic imperative, the more elite sports like cricket and rugby became the most popular. In the informal empire, where the merchants predominated with their working class grammar school backgrounds, soccer triumphed.[203]

While this pattern proves that the rule in most of the world—Brazilians, for instance, greatly influenced by British trade in the late 1800s and early 1900s, play soccer. Indians, on the other hand, formally colonized and ruled by the cream of the colonial service for two centuries, play cricket. When one comes to West Africa,

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[201] Sir Charles Tennyson, 1959, quoted in J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 17.

[202] Joseph L. Arbena, "Nationalism and Sport in Latin America, 1850-1990: The Paradox of Promoting and Performing 'European Sports,' The International Journal of the History of Sport, Volume 12, Number 2 (August 1995), p.221.

[203] Harold Perkin, "Teaching the Nations How to Play: Sport and Society in the British Empire and Commonwealth," in J.A. Mangan, ed., *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire and Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), 217.

however, the theory does not hold. Nigeria, colonized formally for sixty years, is now a soccer playing country and cricket and rugby are barely known. What is it that made cricket and rugby, still popular in East and Southern Africa, so forgotten in the West African Commonwealth states? Could it be because the overall number of administrators are so few, the small number of immigrants from cricket playing India, and the lack of British settlers? Or was it that, because of the bare bones administration the British had in place in West Africa, most education was carried out by administrators who were more likely to come from the soccer playing masses than their official colonial counterparts? The question is difficult to answer, but a combination of the speculative reasons above would certainly provide enough grounds for at least a generalized explanation.

VI

The sports events in both primary and secondary schools introduced the first set of educated Nigerians into how best to use their leisure time. These early educated Nigerians became very interested in sports, and they had already taken it as their way of life. This interest generated some useful thoughts in their minds which led to the formation of clubs. Initially, clubs were formed at local levels using area and location names to name their clubs. It was not uncommon then to find Isale Eko Soccer Club, Tinubu Square Tennis Club, Yemetu Boys' Boxing Club, and Isale-Oba Social Football Club.[204] Imperial Boxing Club of Lagos, one of these sports club, produced Hogan Kid Bassey who became the first Nigerian to win a world title when he defeated French

[204] Babatunde Aliu Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (London: George Allen Unwin Ltd., 1974), 92-95.

Algerian Cherif Hamia in 1957 to win the world featherweight championship.[205] Later on, towns, cities, factories, and government enterprises started to expand and more school leavers were employed. This brought about the formation of clubs by these workers in various works of life. The enthusiasm of this group of people for sports which they so much loved in schools helped the growth and development of modern sports in Nigeria.[206]

By the early 1940s, boys in Lagos had started coming together to form clubs in the various neighborhoods of Lagos. They started demanding, with more fervor, for exclusive club houses from the colonial authorities as their numbers began to grow. For example, the Isale Eko Area Boys' Club in a letter to the Colony Welfare Officer on October 19, 1943, said "Our club stands in need of a Club House, for indoor games etc., as the present one now being used is quite inadequate to accommodate the Club, which contains not less than four hundred boys."[207] This request was turned down by the Commissioner of the Colony in his letter to the Colony Welfare Officer because the cost of acquiring the club would be borne from public funds and because "no area could be set aside for the exclusive use of any particular Club or Association."[208]

Although athletics was the first modern sport to enjoy popularity in Nigeria, soccer overtook it as the game of the people. The articulation of distinctive playing styles

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205 Hogan Bassey, MBE, *Bassey on Boxing* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1963), 9-14.
206 Fafunwa, 93.
207 Comcol 1, no. 248/s.122, "Letter to the Colony Welfare Officer, Lagos," from "Isale-Eko Area Boys Club, October 19, 1943, Ibadan National Archives.
208 C.C. 1789/21, "Letter to the Colony Welfare Officer," from the Commissioner of the Colony, October 21, 1943, Ibadan National Archives.

and the impact of the local popular press further highlight its subaltern agency.[209] Before school age, children kicked small balls all about in any available open space; the game became more or less traditional to the people. Most of the rules of the game were picked up during play at an early age. Soccer was very influential in the way men perceived themselves, and it fostered friendships and camaraderie among team members and fans. The meritocratic principles upon which the sport is predicated helped to transform soccer into a field of action where Lagosians pursued and maintained social visibility, status and prestige. Getting together for soccer afforded people the opportunity to network on a social scale.

Around the same period, similar interest was developing on other sports like boxing, hockey, cricket, table tennis and lawn tennis. Many clubs were formed in these sports by people who were avidly interested in sports. Boxing was another outstanding sport that also commanded large followership. The nucleus of amateur boxing in Nigeria is the organization of Boys' Clubs in the 1940s.[210] Mr. (later Revd.) Donald Ernest Faulkner, the then Social Welfare Officer for Lagos, started boxing activities with the boys in the Green Triangle Hostel at Kakawa Street, Lagos, a home for juvenile delinquents. Other boys outside the hostel were soon attracted to the new sport. Kakawa hostel was usually crowded with boys trying their hands with boxing gloves every

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209 Peter Alegi, *Laduma!: Soccer, Politics and Society in South* Africa,3-6.

210 Olu Soile, "Development of Boxing in Nigeria," *Oluyole '79* (August 30, 1979), 40. For more examples of these boxing clubs, see Adeyinka Makinde, *Dick Tiger: The Life and Times of a Boxing Immortal* (Tarentum, Pa.: Word Association Publishers, 2004); Damola Ifaturoti, *The Life and Times of Africa's Most Accomplished World Boxing Champion* (Princeton, NJ: Sungai Books, 2002); and Justina Ihetu, *In Africa's Honor: Dick Tiger versus Gene Fullmer III: A Blast from Nigeria's Glorious Past* (Bloomington, IN: IUniverse, Inc., 2012).

evening. The Daily Times Cup was then presented by the Daily Times of Nigeria for boxing competition among the Boy's Clubs which were now all over Lagos, Ikeja, and Agege. Other boxing clubs formed around this period were Paramount Boxing Club (formerly known as Imperial Boxing Club) founded by Mr. Nap Penegrino, Broadway Boxing Club founded by Mr. N.A. Taiwo, and the Railway Boxing Club.[211] These clubs are credited with the production of Nigeria's foremost amateur boxers who later turned professional. Some of the boxers produced are Hogan Bassey, former World Featherweight Champion; Dick Tiger, former World Middleweight and Light Heavyweight Champion; Kid Olori, Fred Ilori, Rafiu King, and Omola Ogbe.

In 1958, Hogan "Kid" Bassey was named the Sportsman of the Year in Nigeria. Describing this stellar boxer, the *Nigeria Yearbook* of 1958 wrote:

> …The greatest boxing personality in the past year was of course Hogan Bassey, world feather-weight boxing champion. And who could grudge him that high his position in Nigerian sport? For he fought not only for himself, but also fo for his country….Nothing could stop Bassey now—not even the insistence of Cherif Hamia, No. 1 contender, that the fight for the world title be held in Paris, Bassey defied this and the fact that a French Referee was chosen to officiate, went into the Palais de Sport ring and came out victorious, the referee stopping the fight in the tenth round to save Hamia unnecessary punishment.[212]

Other sports also struggled to exist along with soccer, boxing and athletics. One of such sports is cricket, which was called "the gentleman's game." The sport was given the moniker because of the nature of its play as the outfits worn by the players and the equipment use to play the game. Also, any member of a cricket team may ask for time-

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211 Bassey, 7.

212 The Nigeria Year Book, 1958, "Sportsman of the Year," p. 259.

out for tea which overrules the umpire of the game. Cricket, of course, was one of the games that was introduced early in Nigeria by the Europeans. However, it did not lend itself to the indigenous people of Nigeria because of the expensive equipment and playing suits. What happened was that most of the members of the cricket team were Europeans while only a few of the players were Nigerians. Many friendly matches were organized between European and African clubs in Lagos. The first inter-colonial friendly competition was held in 1903. In this year, Cricket Club of Nigeria invited their Gold Coast (later named Ghana) counterparts for cricket, billiards, tennis, and golf competitions. These friendly competitions took place at the Race Course in Lagos on April 10, 1903. The colonial teams from the Gold Coast won most of the events.[213]

In fact, these inter-colonial competitions served one good purpose—it initiated the formation of more clubs in Nigeria. The games were the talk of the season and people started to think seriously about forming more clubs and reinforcing the existing ones. Among the clubs formed were the Unity Cricket Club led by M.L. Goyea, Derby Cricket Club and Recreational Club. There were series of matches organized among these clubs in preparation for the return match against Ghana in 1905.[214] One of such matches was organized to select the Nigerian side was the "All versus All" which took place in Lagos in the same year. At the close of the tournaments, the following names were selected for the cricket return match: Kitoyi Ajasa, S. B. Refell, J. B. Paris, T. Jackson, Evelyn

213 Sports Editor, *Lagos Weekly Record*, Vol. XIII, No. 30, April 11, 1903, 8.
214 Sports Editor, *Lagos Standard*, Vol. XI, No. 31, April 26, 1905, 10.

Williams, Hudson Cole, Herbert Macaulay, and Victor Campbell.[215] This preparation yielded a good result for Nigeria beat Ghana in the competition of that year. The Inter-Colonial Competitions between Nigeria and Ghana continued to exist up to after Nigeria's independence, even though it was later called International Cricket Match between Nigeria and Ghana.

Now that the Cricket Association was formed, the game was no longer the Colony of Lagos' affairs and it extended to all parts of the country, particularly the southern provinces. With the help of the Nigeria Cricket Association (NCA), a team consisting mostly of Europeans on vacation went to play some matches in England. The only Nigerian who played in all of the matches in England was E.A. Hughes. The purpose of the tour was to let the cricketing fraternity in England know that organized cricket of a high standard was played in Nigeria and perhaps to establish a touring club affiliated to the Nigeria Cricket Association (NCA) for the purpose of making such tours an annual event. It was also felt that such tours might pave way for a fully representative Nigerian side.[216]

In the early part of sporting activities in Nigeria table tennis did not develop as expected. This was because most people did not find the sport appealing. They also thought it did not involve and physical strength and endurance. The narrative of ideal sport around this time, however, was that of promoting a virile, athletic masculinity in the on the field, transforming the participant into an alpha male. The spectators and critics of

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215 Ibid.

216 Nigeria Year Book, 1954, *Big Defeat*, 125.

this game also felt it was just a game of chance. However, things changed as many competitions were organized by many local clubs and lovers of the game. The game of table tennis was only popular in secondary schools until such time when the players were out of school. The few that played table tennis took to the sport because it was cheap to play and because it did not require a big space.[217] In the sports review of *Nigeria Year Book, 1954*, the sports writer wrote:

> "…Much table tennis is not being played throughout the country but Local organizations are lacking except in Lagos, Kaduna, and Ibadan. This is regrettable and surprising since it is a cheap game and requires the least playing space of all sports…"[218]

Such was the condition of table tennis around the early 50s. However there were some table tennis clubs in Lagos and around the Western, Northern and Eastern Regions and league tournaments were organized in Lagos. For about four years the Atomic Table Tennis Club of Lagos won the Lagos League in succession and to crown the monopoly of this game by the club, its second team took second place. In 1954, the United African Company (UAC) won the knockout tournament and thus retained the Mayor's Cup for the year. In the same year, a knockout tournament was organized among secondary schools in Lagos. The tournament was won by Eko Boys' High School, Surulere. Prominent among the players were the National Singles Champion, O. Ayanlaja; A. Chuckwuba of Police who won the Christmas tournament and the Red Cross Singles Championship.[219]

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217 Ibid.
218 Ibid.
219 *Nigeria Year Book*, *1955*, "*Nigeria Tames The Gold Coast*," 183.

Hockey did not gain much ground in Nigeria because people thought of hockey as a dangerous game, and that materials needed for the game were too expensive. Owing to the expensive equipment, only few secondary schools belonging to the government played hockey. These are schools like King's College, Lagos; Government College, Ibadan; Queen's School, Ibadan; Government College, Kaduna; and Government College, Ughelli. There was some significant progress in hockey in these government schools, and a bulk of the players in the national team were chosen from these schools. Apart from these schools, the Army also played hockey. The players who had the opportunity to play hockey showed keen interest and tried to project the game wherever they went. King's College became the premier school in terms of the quality of their game and the number of players drawn from the school by the national team selectors. [220]

Lawn tennis was played among the elite because the kits and equipment were not cheap. Only rich people who could afford the expensive outfits and the tennis rackets usually played the game. These people formed themselves into clubs of multilateral activities, and making tennis prominent and elitist. They established places like Lagos Recreational Club, Ibadan Tennis Club, Ife Tennis Club, and Intellectual Social Club. One thing bound these recreation clubs together—lawn tennis. The early competitions in tennis were therefore among the recreation clubs in different towns and cities. More clubs were later formed and consequently more tournaments were held. For example, in 1961, the lawn tennis tournament was competed for as an associate event of the West African

[220] Ibid, 127.

Games between Nigeria and Ghana, and it ended in a draw. Nigeria won the doubles event while Ghana won the singles event. Championships were also held in this game among the states annually. Apart from the school tennis competitions, the Nigerian Lawn Tennis Association is the main body responsible for the organization of competitions throughout the country.

After the Second World War, most big employers became concerned with the time spent on leisure, or what they called "workers' welfare." The railway, however, had been the home of organized recreational associations much earlier. From the late 1920s at least, European and educated African employees initiated their own literary, debating, and social organizations. Railway sports got their start during that period, although individual workers and administrators probably engaged in them before that. With official encouragement and subsidies, staff at various stations built tennis courts and playing fields, and organized themselves into sports clubs

At the first annual sports meeting of the Nigeria Railway, held in Lagos in 1928, participants competed for prizes in track and field events. Organized soccer, which became the railway's greatest claim to sporting fame, began in 1936 when a fledgling squad joined the Lagos African Football Association.[221] Sports provided opportunities not only for male recreation, but for group activities which facilitated networking within the railway, within the working class, and across the country. Organized athletics became a means through which men gained special access to the institutions of public life.

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[221] Tiyambe Zeleza and Cassandra R. Veney, eds., *Leisure in Urban Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 117-122.

Men and boys were encouraged to play football, run races, engage in boxing through large employers like the railway, the Boy Scouts, Boy Brigades, and other boys' clubs, the military, schools, and municipal leagues. Beginning in the mid-1940s, the Nigerian Department of Labor reported regularly on employers' efforts to promote European-style sports and games among their workers. Sports clubs became part of the architecture of social and political life, helping participants and spectators to imagine their national and work-based communities while forming part of a distinctly masculine public sphere.[222]

The teams which were founded in different neighborhoods in the 1940s provided a strong platform for interaction among people. The players in these teams established and cultivated friendships through sport. Moreover, since majority of them were from the same ethnic group—Yoruba— they were able to bond easily and considered themselves as brothers, a notion which was located in primordial sentiments. Inside the area clubs many men passed their lives, remaining actively involved even after they quit playing. Thus majority of the boys who played soccer in Lagos at this time looked upon the founding elders of the club with great respect, not only for starting the teams, but also for continuing to support and nurturing players. Between the age of sixteen and twenty many would the go on to play for the first division team, moving from the feeder team to the newly-created first division. Consequently, it became, at least within a significant number of neighborhoods, an increasingly important rite of passage marking the social

[222] Ibid, 186-188.

transformation of a boy into a man to progress from the junior tem to the senior team. If a player was skillful, no matter how young, he could play with the adults.

The growing sense of manhood that playing for the first division team engendered amongst urban men was further enhanced by their growing notoriety around twenty. One of the most important "profits" men earned from playing soccer was becoming popular. The popular players were idolized and they carried themselves around with so much swagger. Except for his skill as a footballer and his work with the Railway, Marines and PWD, a player like Tesilimi "Thunder" Balogun would never have been known. Also, notoriety earned through football "opened doors" in their personal, occupational or political lives that otherwise would have remained firmly shut.

Hegemony can never be complete, however. No matter how great the effort made to regulate what games Africans would play, where and how they would play them, and who they would play them against, there was no way the colonial state could prevent a colonial subject from learning a game through observation and teaching it to others using homemade equipment. Africans playing a soccer game with makeshift goalposts and ball could, therefore, have in itself been an act of defiance to the colonial state. Games, then, were not just recreation, but also were a rather important part of the colonial power play for both colonizer and colonized.

Decolonization changed the territorial and political landscape of the globe, creating inviolable borders and independent countries where they had not existed prior and morphing colonial subjects into citizens of states. While decolonization was a

complex global phenomenon that gained prominence shortly after the Second World War, for many states the changing of the flag marked the most significant date of decolonization. In Africa, the formal transfer of power started with Ghana on March 6, 1957. At the stroke of midnight, the Union Jack slowly descended at Accra for the last time and was replaced by a new standard that featured red, yellow, and green horizontal stripes with a lone black star in the center. The raising of new flags, waving defiantly in the air as a repudiation of over one hundred years of formal imperial subjugation, was more than a symbolic gesture; the changing of flags represented the beginning of a new era as much as the closing of an old one. In 1960—Africa's year of independence—seventeen colonies replaced their flags with new African banners. This astounding, and in many ways shocking, achievement embodied the "winds of change" that British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan had described as sweeping through the continent and carrying with it the transformative current of African independence.[223] Decolonization in general, and the hoisting of new flags in particular, signaled to the world that Africans would now be in control of their future.

Conclusion

Even while sports were used as a means to inculcate loyalty to the Empire, even though many Africans learned the rules of British recreational activities only through

[223] A full copy of the address can be found in *British Documents on the End of Empire* [hereafter BDEEP], *The Conservative Government and the End of Empire 1957-1964*, Part II, (London: The Stationery Office, 2000), 167-174; see also Ritchie Ovendale, "Macmillan and the Wind of Change in Africa, 1957-1960," *Historical Journal* [Great Britain] 38:2 (1995): 445-477.

servility, and even though the control of recreational spaces and equipment was an important part of the process of colonial domination, for the Africans themselves, sports became something much greater. As far as the British were concerned, the importance of school sports was to teach Nigerians values of sportsmanship and discipline while for Nigerians, participating in school sports was an opportunity to mingle with other Nigerians. As this chapter has indicated, schools in colonial Nigeria were important to the spread of sports throughout the country. Sporting competitions allowed people to dialogue across highly monitored colonial boundaries. That is, instead of creating loyal subjects of Empire, therefore, school sports created a sense of cohesion among the indigenous people. Leisure spaces created a unifying national commonality. In addition, even while recreational spaces were used to divide Africans from each other and from Europeans, these spaces ultimately served as the playing fields on which some of Nigeria's strongest unifying forces were forged. In chapter two, I will look at the plural collectivities of the stadium as they show up in Nigeria, and the effects that they had on ethnic identities within the Nigerian space. The chapter analyzes how, through sports and the stadium, the people imagined their ethnic nationalities' position within the country.

CHAPTER 2: Stadium, Spectatorship, and Regional Identities in the First Republic

The climax of Africa's year was on October 1, 1960, when Nigeria raised its green and white flag over Lagos for the first time. There was palpable joy all over the country. *The Times* correspondent covering the ceremonies from Lagos said, "Rarely if ever can the end of empire have been announced with so much dignity and good will; rarely can the relationship of master and servant have been transformed into partnership with so much understanding, sincerity, and humility."[224] Prime Minister Balewa, basking in the glow of independence, told an audience of feting Nigerians that he was appreciative of what the British did in Nigeria, assuring them that "history will show that the building of our nation proceeded at the wisest pace: it has been thorough, and Nigeria now stands well built upon firm foundations."[225] The task of creating a unified identity immediately became difficult for the newly-independent country.[226]

Nigeria had been the model African colony under British rule, and as an independent state the West believed that Nigeria would serve as an ideal test of the transformative power of Western modernization and development in Africa. Roughly one-third larger than Texas, Nigeria is exceptional in terms of its population and diversity. With an estimated thirty five million people at independence one out of every

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[224] *The Times*, "Nigeria Celebrates the Great Day," October 3, 1960, 67.
[225] Toyin Falola and Matthew Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 156.
[226] Toyin Falola, *Violence In Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1998), 54.

six Africans was Nigerian—and economic potential awarded Nigeria the label the "Giant of Africa."[227] While the rest of the continent seemed to be floundering and seemed to have no potential for viability, President Kennedy of the United States explained to a group of Nigerian economic advisers, "Nigeria offered great hope in Africa for progress and for economic and political stability."[228]

The Kennedy administration selected Nigeria as a model trailblazer nation for two reasons. First, Nigerian leaders shared Kennedy's views of modernization and emulation in Africa. "Nigeria was trying to provide an example to all of Africa," Prime Minister Balewa confided to the American president. "If the United States could assist Nigeria in becoming an example of economic development, it would be helping not only Africa but the whole world."[229] Kennedy prized Nigeria's willingness to follow the West's lead and take a leadership role in Africa. Second, although Nigeria professed non-alignment in the Cold War it was in actuality firmly entrenched in the Western camp and followed the American lead on the continent.[230]

The policy implications were clear: "Nigeria may serve as a double model for other African states as a democratic development model and as a responsible international relations model," one policy report stated. "Either model would be important, together they are an overwhelming combination in the free world's

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[227] Falola and Heaton, 158.
[228] Larry Grubbs, "Bringing the Gospel of Modernization to Nigeria: American Nation Builders and Development Planning in the 1960s," *Peace & Change*, 7 (2006): 123-144.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid.

interest."[231] American sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein, aware of the special importance placed on Nigeria by the Kennedy administration, noted in 1962 "there is a widespread belief that of all the newly independent African nations Nigeria is the outstanding example of a fairly stable, relatively pro-Western, liberal democracy. This belief is largely an illusion nourished on superficial analysis and self-deception."[232]

On February 18, 1962, *The Nigerian Tribune* published a map of Nigeria. It outlined a nation divided by a heavy diagonal line. The map thus differentiated between the industrial south and the agrarian north.[233] The map, which certainly paralleled the historical divide between a "modern" industrial and a "traditional," agrarian Nigeria evoked the connection between geography and sport in a powerful fashion. In delineating between a leisure activity and geography, the newspaper turned sporting predilections into a marker of local or regional distinction. At the same time, the map also implicitly made the argument for a broader collective that encompassed both soccer-watchers and boxing supporters. Sporting south, by the logic of the *The Nigerian Tribune*'s map, was constituted by local communities of sporting enthusiasts, whether they embraced athletics, the round ball of soccer, or boxing.[234]

The map in short, underscored the complex set of territorial discourses associated with sport, stadium, and spectators in the immediate years after independence. Boxing and soccer, not to mention other explicitly local region sports like wrestling, were

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[231] Ibid.
[232] Immanuel Wallerstein, "Nigeria; Slow Road to Trouble," *The New Leader* Vol. 45, No. 15 (July 1962): 15-18.
[233] "The Two Sides of Nigeria," *Nigerian Tribune*, February 18, 1962, 47.
[234] Ibid.

embedded in notions of "place." The stadium, itself sometimes generated articulations of local specificity. More frequently, however, the stadium framed local identity in terms of spectator culture; spectator behavior and its discussion in the press, especially in the newly-opened Western Nigeria Television (WNTV), helped forge locally-specific sporting affiliations. If spectatorship, both in practice and as discussed in the press, became the marker of local distinction. It also helped defined the national collective, through crowd culture as national-team matches and through discussions of what constituted a "Nigerian" public. Finally, the stadium and spectators contributed to the construction of Nigerian national identity through the constant comparisons generated in the Nigerian press between the Nigerian stadium and the crowds and their counterparts elsewhere in Africa, especially in Ghana, which was Nigeria's number-one rival in West Africa.

The connection between sport and territorial collective identities, whether local or national has certainly not escaped other scholars. Eric Hosbwan and Terence ranger recognize spectator sport, in general, as one of the "invented traditions" key to the creation of twentieth century nationalism.[235] In the case of Nigeria, Sam Akpabot has clearly outlined how soccer came to represent the southern part of the nation in the twentieth century.[236] Olu Akindutire, for his part, has masterfully traced the development of local soccer spectator culture in Nigeria, focusing mostly on the UK Tourists of 1949.

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[235] Eric Hobswan and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 17.

[236] Samuel Akpabot, "Will Calabar Regain Rule of Nigerian Football This Season?," *West African Pilot*, September 18, 1953, 4.

The stadium, he argues, symbolizes the city, and represents the nation in miniaturized form during a match.[237] The connection between Nigerian sport and national identity, too, also drew attention after the world title fight between Dick Tiger of Nigeria and Gene Fulmer of the United States held in Ibadan in 1964. A common thread among these scholars is fact that they all explored the complicated relationship between a multiethnic sport team and national identity in Nigeria in the twentieth century.

Most of the above scholarship linking sport and territorial identity in Nigeria, however, focuses heavily on the sports history in Nigeria from the seventies. There are practical reasons for this emphasis: as Akindutire and Akpabot have noted, Nigerian soccer clubs lacked a fully-organized "supporter" culture along the English lines, until the middle of the 1970s when teams like I.I.C.C. Shooting Stars of Ibadan and Rangers International of Enugu started to do well in continental competitions in Africa.[238] Moreover, the links between national identity and Nigerian sport have been much clearer since the late 1970s. The success of IICC Shooting Stars and Rangers International, for its part, was interpreted by some as a symbol of a new and more ethnically-tolerant Nigerian Republic that was Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba.

This chapter, in contrast, examines the territorial significance of the collective identities generated by sport in Nigeria in the 1950s and 1960s. While acknowledging that the collective supporter culture in Nigeria was certainly less extensive than it was in

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[237] Olu Akindutire, "The Historical Development of Soccer in Nigeria: An Appraisal of its Emerging Prospects," *Canadian Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 22, no 1 (May 1991): 25-31.
[238] Ibid.

Britain during this period, this chapter suggests that spectatorship was nonetheless integrated into narratives about local distinction, particularly in the case of the western and eastern regions of the country. This chapter departs from the scholarship to argue, however, that local conceptions of place and spectatorship were incorporated into constructions of national identity, through spectatorship surrounding the national team, national events like the National Sports Festival and the discussion of "one Nigeria" inside the stadium, even during the war period. Secondly, this chapter examines Nigerian perceptions of foreign sports and spectators, a topic almost entirely ignored in the current scholarship. While relatively few Nigerian men and women traveled to Europe for sporting events, the techniques of "imaginary mobility"—notably the radio and sports press—still made it possible for Nigerians to think about national identity in the context of sports and the stadium. In the years before the Civil War, this chapter suggests, the dominant narrative propagated by the sort of displacement and comparison centering on stadiums highlighted Nigerian inadequacy and weakness.

This chapter consequently analyzes the stadium, in part as landmark and in part as a site of spectatorship, as crucible for territorial identities in postcolonial Nigeria. I first focus on the local meanings attached to stadiums before analyzing the practices and narratives surrounding spectatorship, particularly in Ibadan and Lagos. I then suggest how local spectatorship fed into the construction of national identity, before scrutinizing the impact of stadiums and spectators on internal perceptions of the Nigerian national collective.

II

Nigeria owes its name to Flora Shaw, Lugard's companion and future wife, who in 1897 proposed the appellation "Nigeria" as way to differentiate it "from the British colonies of Lagos and the Niger Protectorate on the coast and from the French territories of the Upper Niger."[239] Indeed, the British carved Nigeria out of crowded territory, and its name, size, and boundaries demonstrate the fact it was a colonial creation whose shape was determined as much by the territorial claims of other European powers as any other influence. There was no internal logic to the shape or size of the Nigerian colony, and British colonial officials never undertook any determined effort to create a territory filled with a homogenous people. Nigeria was, according to Oxford historian Margery Perham, "an arbitrary block of Africa."[240] Obafemi Awolowo, one of Nigeria's foremost politicians, took it further when he described Nigeria as merely a "geographical expression."[241] The Northern Protectorate and the Colony of Southern Nigeria were amalgamated in 1914.

It is important to start to highlight the processes that led to the unification of the Northern protectorate and the colony of Southern Nigeria. Contrary to popular opinion, officials in the Colonial Office in Britain considered and reviewed several proposals

[239] "Nigeria," by Flora Shaw *The Times*, January 8, 1897, 6.
[240] Margery Perham, *Native Administration in Nigeria* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 360.
[241] Obafemi Awolowo, *Path to Nigerian Freedom* (London, Faber &Faber, 1947), 3.

calling for the amalgamation of Nigeria long before 1914.[242] In 1897, Herbert Read, a permanent official at the Colonial Office submitted a memorandum which made the following recommendations: the amalgamation of British administrations in the Lagos Colony, the Niger Coast Protectorate and the Royal Niger Company; direct control of the amalgamated territories by the Colonial Office; the development of a quasi-military police force similar to the Royal Irish Constabulary; implementation of projects such as the building of railways to facilitate commerce; establishment of coin based currency; and the development of natural resources.

Another proposal in support of amalgamation surfaced in 1898. The report, written by members of the Niger Committee, itemized the following: first, unlike Read's report, it advocated for a gradual or transitional amalgamation process, resulting in the merger of the Lagos and Southern Nigerian territories and then leading to the eventual amalgamation of the Northern protectorate and the Southern colony. Second, the report supported the inclusion of traditional institutions in colonial administration (indirect rule system); third, members of the committee proposed that each colony be divided into conventional divisions and districts and administered by British colonial servants.[243] Permanent officials approved the Niger Committee report and thereafter developed a scheme in support of a gradual amalgamation process. The first step taken in fulfilling the

[242] Many people believe that Lord Lugard was the original architect of the amalgamation. This view has been challenged by many historians. Tekena Tamuno, "British Colonial Administration in Nigeria in the Twentieth Century," in *Groundwork of Nigerian History*, ed. Obaro Ikime (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980), 394. A.H.M Kirk Greene, *Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria: A Documentary Record* (London: Frank Cass and Co Ltd, 1968), 4.

[243] John Carland, *The Colonial Office and Nigeria, 1898-1914* (California: Hoover Institution Press, 1985), 50-54.

scheme occurred in 1906 with the merger of the colony of Lagos and Southern protectorate. Without consulting the local groups and traditional leaders, in 1911, European officials began deliberations on how to unify the Northern protectorate and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria.

Economic developments recorded in the Northern protectorate as well as in Southern Nigeria in 1912 convinced Lewis Harcourt, the Colonial Secretary, and members of the British parliament even more on the need to unify both territories without delay. The protectorate of Northern Nigeria ran into financial difficulties. Income derived from direct taxation of the population did not generate sufficient revenue needed to sustain administrative cost. Unlike the colony of Southern Nigeria, commerce did not develop fully mainly because the area was landlocked, lacking direct access to the sea. To cover its deficit, the protectorate became heavily dependent on two sources: annual imperial grant in aid, approximately about £300,000, provided by the Imperial Treasury and annual subsidies from the colony of Southern Nigeria derived from profits made from liquor sales. Added to the inability to balance its budget, the Northern protectorate lost most of its European staffs.[244]

For colonial officials, amalgamation provided the much needed solution to these problems. Officials decided to make Southern Nigeria, a territory with immense material wealth and a successful trade record, the financial lifeline for Northern Nigeria, until the

[244] CO 879/119/8, "Report by Sir F.D Lugard on the Amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria, and Administration, 1912-1919.

time the latter was able to stand on its own.[245] To bring about the task of unification, Lewis Harcourt recognized the need to appoint an official with extensive experience and vast knowledge. Frederick Lugard, an administrator known for his impressive yet controversial track record in Northern Nigeria, was appointed as the man for the task in 1912. As mentioned earlier, between 1900 and 1906 Lugard served as the first High Commissioner for the Northern Protectorate. He was serving as the Governor of Honk Kong before he was summoned by the Colonial Office. In September 1912, he took a preliminary tour to Ibadan, Zungeru, Lagos, Offa and different part of the Eastern and Central provinces.[246] Based on the information gathered during the survey, he decided to create his own scheme for the amalgamation of the Northern Province and the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. His scheme called for the creation of new laws to align the legislations of both territories. Second, his scheme did not support the complete amalgamation of both territories instead it advocated for the maintenance of the existing administrative structure in both territories. As Okonjo noted, Lugard "aimed at producing the minimum of common institutions and the minimum of common administrative policies."[247]

Kirk Greene has shown in his study how Lugard ignored recommendations made by other colonial officials on to how to go about implementing the re-organization of both territories. For instance, E.D Morel, editor of the *African Mail* and an outspoken

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[245] CRL, Annual Report Southern Nigeria, 1913.
[246] Margery Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1898-1945 Vol.II* (London: Collins, 1960), 390-391.
[247] I.M. Okonjo, *British Administration in Nigeria*, *1900-1950: A Nigerian View* (New York: NOK Publishers, 1974), 76.

writer on Nigerian affairs, advocated the division of both territories into four provinces including: the Northern and Southern province; the Central province; the Eastern Province; and the Western Province. Instead of maintaining administrations in both territories, C. Temple, the acting Governor of Northern Nigeria, favored the division of Nigeria into seven provinces, each under a Chief Commissioner, comprising besides Lagos the three existing Southern ones and three Northern ones.[248] Lugard rejected both proposals on the basis that they ignored the difficulty presented by the fact that both territories operated under different set of laws, system of land tenure, system of taxation and system of the courts of law.[249]

During Lugard's tenure as the High Commissioner of Northern Nigeria, he institutionalized native administration, a system which allowed for the governing the local populace through appointed emirs and local leaders. Under this arrangement, European officials did not really intervene in native affairs. After taking a tour of the Southern provinces, Lugard came to the conclusion that the indirect rule as it existed in the Northern protectorate could be applied to Southern Nigeria. His scheme included not only the introduction of the indirect rule system, but also the introduction of direct taxation on the people of Southern Nigeria. He believed that a system of taxation would generate funds for local administration and development projects.

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[248] A.H.M Kirk Greene, *Lugard and the Amalgamation of Nigeria: A Documentary* Record (London: Frank Cass, 1968), 9-11.
[249]CRL, *Annual Report*, Northern and Southern Nigeria, 1914.

Throughout the colonial period the northern half of Nigeria played a special role in Lord Lugard's administration. It was there that the English governor developed and implemented his ideas of indirect rule. Because of its distance from the coast and hostility by its Muslim emirs to Christian missionaries, the North did not have the same amount of Western influence as the rest of Nigeria. As a result, Northern Nigeria lagged behind the South in education and literacy. While British colonial officials did not completely ban Christian missionaries from Northern Nigeria, Lugard dissuaded Christians from proselytizing in the north. "The premature teaching of English," Lugard maintained, "inevitably leads to utter disrespect of British and native ideals alike, and to a denationalized and disorganized population."[250] Unlike the southern half of Nigeria, Lugard could control the rate of acculturation and assimilation in the North, which allowed the English governor to make allies amongst the Muslim elite in the Northern Nigeria and further British interests in the region.

In his book titled, Nigeria: *A Critique of British Colonial Administration,* Robert Crocker offered a critique of Lugard's administration. Indirect rule system, he observed, gradually "degenerated into a systematic glorification of a number of able but unscrupulous careerists." It was used by Lugard and his cohorts to promote and preserve "at all costs the status and power of the families of the hereditary Emirs and chiefs." He added that advocates of the indirect rule system turned a deaf ear to the needs and

[250] Lugard, *The Dual Mandate*, 171.

aspirations of non-Muslim groups and became unnecessarily pre-occupied with Islam.[251] Crocker was one of the few political officers who had the courage to challenge Lugard's administrative system, which many of his superiors and colleagues, including those in the Colonial Office in London, considered to be an epitome of success. Crocker spoke at a time when Lugard's achieved enormous fame within official circles at home and abroad.

Educated elites in the Southern Province did not keep silent. They spoke against the principles of administration upheld by Lugard and his disciples. Unlike European political officers, these group comprising of men and women, mostly drawn from immigrant communities in Lagos, unabashedly raised their voices against policy decisions made by Lugard, especially those that concerned key issues such as the extension of the system of taxation into southern Nigeria, increased water rate in Lagos, denial of right to legal representation in Native and Provincial courts, irrational suspension of traditional leaders, indiscriminate arrests, promulgation of obnoxious laws such as the Criminal Code and Collective Punishment Ordinance, public floggings of offenders and official use of corporal punishment, maintenance of white prestige, placing of the judiciary under the control of the executive arm of government and press censorship.

In their writings and speeches, educated elites depicted Lugard as an autocrat who operated a nefarious system of administration, which was nothing short of an experimental failure and a "standing disgrace to British tradition of justice and fair

[251] W.R Crocker, *Nigeria: A Critique of British Colonial Administration* (London: George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1936), 215.

play."[252] They detested the fact that Lugard gave authority to corrupt and illegitimate local leaders "tin gods of wheels" who endeavored "to ride rough shod over the wishes and feelings of the people."[253] One educated elite described Lugard on the pages of the Lagos Weekly record in 1919 as "the victim of an exaggerated personality." He added that Lugard lived in world by himself "so high was he in the clouds that he saw very little of the people he was called upon to govern."[254] Lugard from service at the end of World War One (or the Great War as it was then called). As far as the majority of the people in Southern Nigeria, his departure was a welcome development, a much needed relief from the yoke of an administrator who ruled with an iron hand and failed to yield to voices crying for reform. Lugard's exit from the political scene was uneventful in Southern Nigeria.[255] He was not showered with accolades from the local press neither did he receive special awards from elites in recognition of his achievements. Most of the praise he received was directed by his disciples in Northern Nigeria and officials in London.

A lack of missionaries and Western education was not a problem in the southern half of Nigeria, however. By 1957, missionaries and British colonial officials had created 13,473 Primary schools and 176 Secondary schools in the South. In comparison, only 2,080 of the former and 18 of the latter existed in the Northern Region.[256] Still, neither religion nor education served as an adhesive that could bond the South. Instead, the

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[252] Lagos Weekly Record, "A Critical Review of Sir Hugh Clifford's Address to the Nigerian Council," January 29, 1921.
[253] Ibid.
[254] *Lagos Weekly Record*, "The Retirement of Sir Frederick Lugard," February 22, 1919.
[255] *Lagos Weekly Record*, "The New Governor General of Nigeria," June 14, 1919.
[256] James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 134.

British divided the Southern region into two, Western and Eastern Nigeria. In Western Nigeria, the Yoruba peoples were the predominant ethnic group. While all Yoruba share a common origin story, they were known as much for political fracture and infighting amongst themselves as for unity and uniformity within their culture. The traditional Yoruba system of government was highly centralized, resembling the courts of European kings during the Middle Ages and Renaissance era. For example, the *Alafin*, or king, of Oyo State during the eighteenth century ruled over a vast kingdom and exercised control over much of what became the Western Region in colonial Nigeria. Centralized rule helped to spark urbanization in the Western Region, which had no parallel in the rest of Nigeria. In 1953, Ibadan, the West's largest city, had three times the population as Kano, the most populous city in the North. Thanks in large part to the trans-Atlantic slave trade that flourished on the Western coast of Africa, the Yoruba maintained the longest and most sustained contact with Europe. The missionary influence was profound, especially when comparing literacy levels with Northern Nigeria. While only two percent of Northern Nigerians could read English in the 1950s, eighteen percent could in the West. While still a small number, the discrepancy between the two regions was what mattered, especially since the educated classes in the southern half of the colony provided the base for anti-colonial nationalism in Nigeria before and after the Second World War.[257]

The British came later to the Eastern Region of Nigeria, yet by the 1930s the twin pillars of the British Empire in Africa—indirect rule and Christianity—were firmly

[257] See especially, Toyin Falola, *Nationalism and African Intellectuals* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2004), 103.

entrenched in the east.[258] Politics in the Eastern Region largely followed Igbo customs and traditions, as the Igbos were the most populous group in the region. Unlike the West, Eastern society and political structures were exceedingly decentralized with authority usually coming from consensus among chiefs or a group of elders. With small-scale societies that tended to be no bigger than a village or town, no kings comparable to the Northern Emirs ruled over the east; no empires that defined the Western Region stretched over the vast woodland wilderness of the east. The lack of centralization also explains why urbanization did not develop in the East as it did in the West. The largest eastern city in 1953, Onitsha, would have been just the eighth largest in the West.[259]

While there were certainly earlier antecedents, the first organized attempt at creating a broad-based Nigerian nationalism began in 1938 with the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM). This organization emerged as the foremost political party in the 1930s. It was founded by Ernest Ikoli, Samuel Akinsanya, Dr J.C. Vaughan and H.O. Davies with the intent to achieve Nigeria's complete autonomy within the British Empire. In 1936 the organization was renamed as the Nigerian Youth Movement. Two years after, it changed face and became recognized as a pan Nigerian political organization. The movement spread from Lagos to different parts of Nigeria including Ibadan, Ijebu-Ode, Warri, Benin City, Calabar, Jos, Kaduna and Kano. Another important political organization was formed in 1944 by members of the Nigerian Union of Students with the

[258] S. O. Okafor, "Ideal and Reality in British Administrative Policy in Eastern Nigeria," *African Affairs*, vol. 73, no. 293, 459-71.
[259] Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, 74.

intent to attain self-government for Nigeria. Originally founded as an organization advocating for better access to higher education for Nigeria's elite, the Lagos-based NYM quickly shifted to galvanizing all Nigerians toward anti-colonial agitation.

The group's most important member was Nnamdi Azikiwe, or Zik, who was the embodiment of a cosmopolitan Igbo anti-colonial nationalist. Born the son of a civil servant in Northern Nigeria in 1904, Zik's pan-Nigerian nationalism grew out of his childhood experiences of traveling and living in all three of Nigeria's regions. His mother and father were two of the many Igbos that left the Eastern Region for better opportunities within the colony. In 1925, Azikiwe left Nigeria for the United States where he earned degrees from Lincoln University and the University of Pennsylvania.[260] After a short stint in the Gold Coast, where he was charged with sedition against the British colonial government, Azikiwe returned to Nigeria in 1937 and launched *The West African Pilot*, a daily newspaper that agitated for African independence. After spending three years as the leader of the Nigerian Youth Movement, Azikiwe resigned from the organization in 1944 and founded the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC). Ostensibly a non-political party, the NCNC nevertheless acted as an umbrella organization for the panoply of ethnic and social organizations throughout Nigeria and, according to historian Toyin Falola, "became the mouthpiece for the concerns of a broad swath of the Nigerian population."[261] Azikiwe aspired for the NCNC to be a truly

[260] Igbos, more than any other group, traveled to the United States for university education. See James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 41.
[261] Falola and Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, 145.

national party that put ethnicity on the back burner while taking up the torch of anti-colonialism that he believed the Nigerian Youth Movement had dropped.

The 1940s witnessed the rise of radical nationalism in Nigeria. It is crucial to pause here to highlight some major events that provided the context in which fire-brand nationalism evolved in Nigeria. First, although Nigeria did not feel the direct brunt of the Second World War at the initial stages of the war, pressure for war demands increased in Nigeria after two significant events occurred: the closure of the Mediterranean route to the Allies after Italy joined the Axis powers and the loss of the Far Eastern colonies. These events drew Nigerians closer to the theatre of war and produced far reaching consequences. First, the closure of the Mediterranean route meant that the Allied forces had to look to other regions for a steady supply of economic goods. Nigeria, being a leading producer of goods such as tin, coal, cocoa, and rubber gained the attention of the British government. Second, with the loss of the Far Eastern colonies to Japan in 1942, Allied forces marked Nigeria as an alternative strategic highway for their military movement.[262]

Also, in 1947, NCNC delegates travelled to London to protest against the Richards Constitution and certain obnoxious bills. The Secretary of State for Colonies failed to heed to their demands and told them to return home. Second, in the mid-1940s, frontline political parties such as the NYM, NCNC and the NNDP were already split along ethnic lines. All these parties failed to form a united front against colonial

[262] Olusanya, *The Second World War and Politics in Nigeria,* 48.

authorities due to the unending ethnic rivalry, internal factions, bickering and bitter contest for power among party leaders. Young nationalists grew impatient over inactivity on the part of their party leaders. Thus, they began to talk about the need to organize for change.

Third, the economic situation in the country did not improve after the war ended. Consumer goods remained expensive and the high price of goods impoverished many Nigerians. Unemployment increased to record level. Nigerians who served in the military during the Second World War returned home only to face the reality of unemployment. It did not take long before they began to organize and call for change. In 1949, for example, to protest the clamping of some journalists in jail, some members of the Zikist movement launched new campaigns against the government. New leaders including Raji Abdallah, Oged Macaulay and Frederick Anyiam resolved to organize a peasant movement against the colonial government. To launch the movement, they organized a lecture at Glover Memorial Hall. At the lecture, Oged declared openly: "If Britain could throw away the imperialistic yoke of the Romans, I see no reason why we should not throw down the imperialistic yoke of Britain."[263] Abdallah gave his infamous speech titled "Age of Positive Action," in which he stated: I hate the Union Jack with all my heart because it divides the people wherever it goes…It is a symbol of persecution, of domination, a symbol of exploitation."[264] Once again, security agents moved into action. They arrested

[263] *The West African Pilot*, "Accused Oppose Court Probing Alleged Sedition, November 27, 1948.
[264] James Smoot Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (California: University of California Press, 1958), 298.

ten leaders of the Zikist Movement including Raji Abdallah, Oged Macaulay and Frederick Anyiam and charged them with sedition.[265]

After the Second World War, there was a boost in a whole variety of social changes in Africa: the intensification of cash-crop production, the acceleration of migrations of all kinds, the rapid growth of cities, the diversification of the occupational structure and, eventually, the movement of Africans into its upper echelons, and the expansion of modern education at all levels.[266] However, these features of change resulted from the progressive incorporation of the African society into wider units, of which the colonial system was the most important. The full emergence of these elements of change, rather than their transformation, was to be the major aspect of social change in the years that followed. The 1950s became the golden era of hope and optimism in the history of modern Nigeria.[267]

Despite the best efforts of Azikiwe and the NCNC to form an inter-ethnic, pan-Nigerian party that could cut across ethnicities and factions to unite the colony, regionalism and ethnic identity more and more became the de facto organizing feature of Nigerian politics following the Second World War. There were two reasons for the regional turn. First, during the 1940s Nigerians reacted to the internal changes within the colony and flocked toward organizations that promoted regional cultures, languages, and

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[265] *The West African Pilot*, "Mr Oged Macaulay and Three Others Arrested," November 22, 1948.
[266] . Michael Crowder, ed., *The Cambridge History of Africa, from c. 1940 to c. 1975*, vol. 8 (London; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 145-153.
[267] . Toyin Falola, *The History of Nigeria* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999), 92.

politics. While studying law in London during the Second World War, the Yoruba leader Obafemi Awolowo established the Egbe Omo Oduduwa, which literally means the Society of the Descendants of Oduduwa, the mythical founder of the Yoruba. The Egbe Omo Oduduwa, according to its 1948 constitution, sought to, "unite the various clans and tribes in Yorubaland and generally create and actively foster the idea of a single nationalism throughout Yorubaland."[268]

Igbos created these types of organizations as well. In the East, the Ibo Federal Union formed in 1944, which became the Igbo State Union in 1948. Azikiwe served as President of the group, concomitantly pushing forward a nationalist program with the NCNC and a local Igbo agenda through the Igbo State Union. At the first Igbo State Union conference at Aba, Eastern Nigeria in 1948, Azikiwe argued for a special place for the Igbo in Africa. "It would appear that the God of Africa has specially created the Ibo nation to lead the children of Africa from the bondage of the ages," Zik proclaimed boldly.[269] For Awolowo and Zik, there seemed to be no inherent contradiction in agitating for a regional sub-nationalism alongside a broader, pan-Nigerian national agenda. In the North, too, regional organizations emerged, though these came later, were even more regional in focus, and were a direct response to the ethnic organizations surfacing in the South.[270]

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[268] Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism*, 344.
[269] Ibid., 347.
[270] Each major ethnic group created their own group. These groups served as outlets for anti-colonial agitation, but they did so only as a function of parochial ethnic interests. While on the outside paradoxical, Nigerians did not see an inherent contradiction in agitating for regional sub-nationalism alongside a broader anti-colonial agenda. The Northern groups were different from Southern cultural organizations in that they

The promulgation of the 1947 Richards Constitution was the second reason for the rise of regionalism in Nigerian politics. Nigeria had gone through a series of constitutional reforms before the Second World War that gave Nigerians limited control over their internal affairs. The 1922 Constitution, for example, allowed for the direct election of a handful of Nigerians to a Lagos-based Legislative Council that passed laws for Southern Nigeria and Lagos Colony. It had little effect on Northern Nigeria, which remained legislatively separate from the South. In his address to the Legislative Council in 1934, Governor Cameron indicated his plans to reform the system of indirect rule. Cameron did not out rightly reject the principle of native administration as laid down by Lugard but he wanted native authority system to be guided by new spirit of liberalism, free from all repressive and reactionary tendencies.[271] He wanted a situation in which members of the society could participate in the process of appointing their representatives at the local government level. By introducing reforms, Cameron hoped to ascertain the real indigenous institutions of the people. Native authority, he argued, "must be real authority in the eyes and mind of the people affected."[272] Furthermore, Cameron hoped to give the local populace a chance to appoint representatives who they considered to be legitimate title holders.[273]

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came later, were more regional in focus, and were a direct response to the ethnic organizations emerging in the South.

[271] *The Nigerian Daily Times*, "A Big Step Forward," March 8, 1933.

[272] *Address by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Donald Cameron to the Legislative Council 6th March 1933* (Lagos: Government Printer, 1933), 11.

[273] Donald Cameron, *My Tangayika Service and Some Nigeria* (London: George Allen & Unwin Limited, 1939), 14.

The Governor indicated in a memorandum, written in 1934, that for native administration to become legitimate, it must be recognized as appropriate not only by the government but also by the people.[274] The memorandum was followed by a new Native Authority Ordinance (No.43 of 1933), which reformed native administration in Southern Nigeria. The new ordinance empowered the Governor to make rules and regulations for the government of Native Authority prisons. The significance of the new ordinance lies in the fact that that it reduced excessive powers enjoyed by local chiefs and judges. It also democratized local government administration and brought agents of local administration under close government supervision.

The 1947 Richards Constitution, named after the British Governor of the Colony Arthur Richards, changed that by placing Northern Nigeria legislatively under the control of Lagos.[275] While the Richards Constitution was Britain's first small step toward marching Nigeria down the road of self-rule, not all Nigerians were happy with the new constitution. With some Nigerians wanting a unitary state with little autonomy for the regions, more pushing for a federalist system in which residual powers were reserved for the regions, and still others hoping to divide the colony along regional lines to create three separate and independent nations, Richards expected his constitution to mollify Nigerian criticisms and foster unity in the colony. By formally including Northern Nigeria in the Legislative Council, the Richards Constitution achieved its first objective

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[274] *The Nigerian Daily Times*, "Sir Donald Cameron and the Native Administration," January 21, 1933.
[275] The Richards Constitution had two main goals: fostering unity through political and legislative integration and preserving regional autonomy. By formally placing Nigeria under the control of the Lagos-based Legislative Council, the Richards Constitution achieved its first objective.

of promoting the political and legislative integration of Nigeria. However, the second objective of the Richards Constitution, accommodating "the diverse elements which make up the country," largely undermined those efforts for Nigerian political unity.[276] The Richards proposal created three regional Houses of Assembly, with representatives coming from the traditional ruling class of each section. This established elite then selected the representatives that would meet in the Legislative Council at Lagos. While laws passed by the Legislative Council trumped those adopted by the Regional Houses, political power in Nigeria started at the regional level and worked its way to the center. Richards did not view this process of legislative devolution as troublesome for a nation struggling for unity. As Richards explained, his aim was "to encourage the regions to develop each along its characteristic lines" and "by that very process the unity of Nigeria will be strengthened."[277]

The Richards Constitution, then, served paradoxical purposes of promoting both national unity and regionalism in the colony. Rather than strengthening unity in Nigeria, the 1948 constitution had the opposite effect. This is most easily traced through the development of political parties in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The Richards Constitution encouraged the creation of regional, not national, political parties that only had to run on a regional platform for political power at the center. The 1951 Macpherson Constitution, named after Richards' successor as Governor James Macpherson, furthered

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[276] Kalu Ezera, *Constitutional Developments in Nigeria*: *An Analytical Study of Nigeria's Constitution Making Developments and the Historical and Political Factors that Affected Constitutional Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 67.
[277] Quoted in Ezera, 74.

constitutional reform in Nigeria that exacerbated regional politics and stunted the growth of national political parties. Extensively covering political developments in Nigeria from London, *The Times* remarked that the Macpherson Constitution adopted the assumptions of the Richard Constitution, which concluded that, "a tripartite regional organization is a more natural mould in which to cast Nigeria's future."[278] Most significantly, the Macpherson Constitution called for the first general election in the history of the Nigerian colony. In response to the announcement of an election, regional and cultural organizations mobilized into full on political parties. In the East, the already politicized Azikiwe-led NCNC dominated. In the Western Region, Awolowo's Egbe Omo Oduduwa transformed into the Action Group, a Yoruba controlled party that had little pull outside of its home region. And in the North, a group of conservative Muslim leaders turned the Northern People's Congress (NPC) into a highly conservative political party that looked to preserve northern cultural, religious, and political structures. Without a national political system where parties fought and campaigned at a national level for scarce resources, Nigerian politics remained local, parochial, and non-competitive outside of its home regions. Even before independence, Nigeria found itself in a political situation very

[278] "Nigerian Democracy: Federal Aspects of the New Constitution," 2 July 1967, *The Times*, 7. *The Times* author goes on, "This was an inevitable consequence of political trends among Nigerians themselves. Dr. Azikiwe's National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (N.C.N.C.) was the only influential political movement which attempted to function on an all-Nigerian basis, and this attempt failed, particularly because of the attitude of the Islamic north, and also because it conflicted with the Yoruba in the west."

similar to the United States before the American Civil War where there was very little national party competition and political parties served sectional interests.[279]

The development of parties in Nigeria following the Macpherson Constitution revealed a structural problem in Nigerian politics. Formed out of ethnic and cultural organizations, the major political parties in Nigeria neither seriously attempted to campaign outside of their home region, nor produced a national platform that was appealing across the whole of Nigeria. The NCNC came the closest, and did win some votes in the Western Region in the 1952 election. But its close relationship to Igbo nationalism meant that it found little traction in the West and absolutely no support in the North. Regionalism had always been a reflection of ethnicity, but now political parties became a reflection of ethnicity. The Macpherson Constitution continued to allow for the central legislature to be selected from the Regional Houses of Assembly and political parties only had to win at the local level to send party members to the central government.

Far from creating a nationalist-minded political system where parties campaigned vigorously over national issues, constitutional reform in Nigeria produced political parties that did not have to worry about winning votes in other regions. Without party competition at a national level, politicians pandered to regional and ethnic politics. The results were undeniable. In the 1952 election, the NPC took all of the seats available in the North. The NCNC won all but a few seats for the East, and in the West, where some

[279] For this interpretation, see especially Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978), 73.

party competition was present but negligible, the Action Group held a solid majority. Regional interests and parties controlled the mechanisms at the center and used the power of the central government to further regional interests on behalf of the parties. It was a vicious cycle that was built into this particular vision of Nigerian unity.

III

The stadium in the eyes of the municipal authorities, stood as a bold statement of progress and modernity. For Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the Premier of the Western Region, the Liberty Stadium symbolized the Action Group's commitment to physical fitness. Awolowo also believed the Liberty Stadium gave Ibadan the right to rival Lagos as the chief city in Nigeria, as Lagos itself lacked any kind of municipal stadium apart from the aging King George V Stadium in Onikan, Lagos.[280] The connection between stadiums and a sense of local pride and superiority are also evident in Kaduna and Enugu, two cities where the municipal officials mooted the idea of stadium-building projects. In Enugu, the municipal authorities crowed that they were in the process of creating a park for sports and hygiene that would be the envy of all other regions. When the Liberty Stadium, Ibadan, opened its doors in 1960, the local press bragged that the new edifice was the most beautiful and impressive of its kind in Africa.[281]

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[280] *Daily Service*, "Liberty Stadium: Sport Centre of Western Nigeria," March 11, 1959, 12.
[281] *Daily Service*, "Liberty Stadium Is The Answer," Sunday, October 2, 1960, 17.

Indeed, the Liberty Stadium was the most modern stadium at its completion in 1960. It was the first modern stadium to be built in Africa,[282] complete with internal and external communications facilities for administration and broadcasting. Record has it that England, for the first time in the world, used the floodlights for a sporting event on September 14, 1955, the game was a first-round replay between Kidderminster and Harriers and Brierley Hill Alliance.[283] Barely five years later, on October 10, 1960, Ibadan, the quiet town in western Nigeria, achieved this feat ahead of the so-called developed cities in Europe, America and Asia. The match was between the West Rovers and the Portuguese Guinea. This was an unrivaled achievement not only in Nigeria, but in Africa as a whole. The running track was laid and supervised by the firm of A.C. Butler, the same firm that did those of the Olympic Games in London and Melbourne, as well as the Commonwealth Games in Cardiff.[284] The Liberty Stadium also had one of the most efficient drainage systems installed for tropical rains. Within minutes of heavy downpour, the stadium gates can be thrown open for a sporting event to commence. At Nigeria's independence in October 1960, the Liberty Stadium played a pivotal role in the development of sport in Western Nigeria. For eleven days the stadium hosted nine different events as part of Nigeria's Independence Day celebration. The stadium also became the home of the Western Sports Council.

On a few occasions, the stadium was integrated into existing stereotypes about regional character and architecture. While the stadium was normally portrayed as a modern

[282] Sebastine Ofurum, *Africa Cup of Nations* (Lagos: P&A Publications, 1980), 56-57.
[283] David Goldblatt, *The Ball Is Round*: *A Global History of Soccer* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2006), 31-57.
[284] *Nigerian Daily Sketch* "Ibadan, Lagos Meet Today," May 29, 1965, 7.

edifice designed for sport devoid of any regional-specific characteristics, it occasionally was depicted as another building that fit within a particular landscape. In 1960, *The Tribune* admired the way in which the architect of the new stadium in Ibadan had integrated local architectural and historical details into the stadium[285]; the roofs and grandstands were both deemed to be typically grandiose in the style of Oyo Empire. Moreover, the spectators within the stadium enjoyed an obstructed panoramic view of the city of Ibadan, itself a Yoruba landmark. The Liberty Stadium in Ibadan, for its part, was interpreted as typically Nigerian. A technical report issued in the early planning process praised the effort of the architect in seeking to "harmonize" the stadium with the setting of the local climate.[286]

From the vantage point of municipal officials who constructed the stadium for specific local policy ends, then the stadium acquired special significance. The built for of the stadium, however, did not necessarily generate feelings of pride or attachment for spectators. The Liberty Stadium in Ibadan, for instance, may have been a grandiose installation, but it rarely hosted soccer matches—most soccer matches were held in the King George V Stadium in Onikan, Lagos. The Lagos press, in fact, complained bitterly that spectator sport was a "far too infrequent spectacle" in Ibadan, and always pleaded with the government of the Western Region to volunteer the stadium more frequently for Nigeria's Green Eagles' soccer matches.[287] In Lagos, the National Stadium begun by Balewa-led Federal Government, too, remained under construction for most part of the 1960s, thus rendering it virtually useless for spectator events. The Federal

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[285] *Nigerian Tribune,* "Charity Soccer Will Be Played This Evening," June 28th, 1961, 1.
[286] Ibid.
[287] *Daily Times,* "A Stop Must Be Put To This," October 19, 1961, 27.

Government often frowned at national events holding at the Liberty Stadium for political reasons. The Liberty Stadium was built and owned by the Western Region Government and the Premier of the Western Region belonged to a rival political party, The Action Group (AG). The Federal Government, based in Lagos, had to provide funds to build a temporary national stadium in Lagos. It was built at a cost of £356, 575, and opened by Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa with great fanfare in September, 1960.[288]

However, local identity also emerged in the culture of spectatorship inside these stadiums, built without s self-promoting civic agenda. Lagos and Ibadan became cities firmly associated with the sport of soccer, and most of the dominant clubs that dominated Nigerian soccer in the 1960s were from these two cities. Spectatorship and local identity were firmly intertwined in Lagos and the Western Region even before the outbreak of the Civil War in 1967, as the successes of clubs like Ibadan Lions and Lagos Railway were appropriated and retranslated by local journalists and spectators as a positive assertion of local singularity. While the Ibadan Lions won the Challenge Cup in 1959, 1961, 1966 and 1969, the Lagos Railway won it in 1956, 1957 and 1964. On the eve of the 1960 Challenge Cup Final between Lagos ECN and Ibadan Lions at the King George V Stadium in Lagos, *The West African Pilot* framed the match as a combat between Ibadan and Lagos.[289] Its columnist sarcastically said the colors worn by Ibadan were a reflection of their spirit and talent. In this context, the Challenge Cup final was a battle ground for "smaller actors wrestling for the prestige of the entire nation."[290] After Lagos ECN's

[288] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, pp. 154-157.
[289] *West African Pilot* "Ibadan Meets ECN In Soccer War," November 11, 1960.
[290] Ibid.

victory, the same columnist exulted in the triumph of the capital city, noting that the crowd in attendance represented all the distant heroes of Nigeria. This soccer matches at the King George V Stadium, in this example, asserted both specific local pride and slightly broader sense of collectivity, mobilizing and assembling spectators from all across Lagos and the southwest within the confines of the stadium.

After the Civil War, Lagos's hold on soccer with Lagos ECN winning the first Challenge Cup after the war by beating Plateau United 3-1. This victory placed a territorial claim on the entire competition, too, in the sense that the final of the competition was played until the 1990s at the King George V Stadium in Onikan, Lagos and later at the National Stadium in Surulere, Lagos. For the press based in Lagos, the territorial identification of soccer with Lagos was usually depicted in positive terms. *The West African Pilot* and *The Daily Times*, two of Nigeria's most influential newspapers, spent a great deal of time describing Lagos soccer (both the game and its fans) in terms lifted from stereotypes about the sophistication and order inherent in the city. On the other hand, they depicted the game in Ibadan as an unruly game watched by out-of-control spectators.

If the Lagos press connected the entire Western Region to violent soccer players and spectators, local journalists within Ibadan rejected the association between their historical and popular city and violence, while employing those stereotypes to differentiate between Western Region's soccer and the game as played elsewhere in other parts of the nation. The Ibadan press would, in fact, argue that local spectators at the Liberty Stadium were in fact highly knowledgeable, even more than their Lagos counterparts. If the Ibadan crowds had a fault, wrote a

columnist for the *Nigerian Tribune*, they were demanding and difficult, demanding quality soccer as opposed to mere victory.[291] The tendency to both reject Lagosians' criticism of one specific part of the game in Ibadan and to displace that criticism into other parts of the nation was evident in *The Tribune*'s response to an incident of spectator violence in 1963. Lagos sports journalists, the paper complained were "so adept at not making mistakes when it comes to criticizing that which is reprehensible in the Western Region." Indeed, the paper's main complaint was that Lagosians continually disparaged the entire Western Region as violent, when, as the paper stressed, disreputable activities took place in specific localities well beyond their city.[292] In this was way, the Ibadan press, differentiated the urban area surrounding the stadium from the rest of the city, tacitly acknowledging that violence was part of the southwestern sporting landscape but redefined it as the product not of an entire region but of specific localities in Ibadan.

In this instance, sport and spectatorship served as signposts for a contested territorial identity. For Lagosians, is appeared sport elsewhere in the nation, especially in the west, amplified stereotypical traits of violence and disorder. In Ibadan, in contrast, soccer served as a statement of local pride and, somewhat ironically, a means of distinguishing a city from the other parts of the nation. Spectatorship behavior at the Liberty Stadium, in fact, was interpreted by the Ibadan press as a sign of superiority in relations to Lagos, both in terms of spectator knowledge and discipline and in local team's sheer ability to play soccer. The association between soccer and Ibadan identity continued throughout the 1960s, not exclusively in the context of the Liberty Stadium in Ibadan. Spectators in Ibadan also cheered Water Corporation Football Club,

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[291] *The Nigerian Tribune*, "Jungle Fans At Stadium," November 16, 1964, 15.
[292] Ibid.

and a local cricket team. However, Lagos remained the uncontested center for many variants of sport; on most Saturdays, for instance, soccer, cricket, boxing, athletics, etc clashed at the King Geroge V Stadium in Onikan, Lagos.[293]

If soccer, as a practice and spectator sport, solidly embodied the west, particularly a city like Ibadan, boxing's stronghold emerged in Lagos. Boxing implanted itself as a working-class sport in the areas of the city dominated by automobile and textile industries. These areas were also characterized by the migration from people from the hinterland. Boxing here functioned as a form of language, solidifying local communities and aiding the integration of migrants into Lagos society. In Ibadan, soccer likewise integrated a highly-diverse working class population. As Lekan Salami argued, the strong labor traditions of Ibadan provided a "compost" that fertilized the implementation of soccer in the city.[294] Ibadan, like Lagos, was also a city of mobility, attracting migrants from the other parts of Nigeria in large numbers. Not surprisingly, Ibadan Lions, the main soccer team in the city in the 1960s, had a lot of migrants from the other parts of the nation playing for them: the Ekpe brothers and Godwin Etemike are a few of the players who played for Ibadan Lions.[295]

The association between soccer, its stadiums, and the local community of spectators was visible during the derby between Stationery Stores and Electricity Corporation (E.C.N.) of Lagos. These two teams battled each other in LAFA, Oba, and the Challenge Cups. In addition, players switched sides from one to the other on several occasions. Paul Hamilton, who

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[293] Akpabot, *Football in Nigeria,* p.72.
[294] Lekan Salami, *Over Three Decades of Ibadan Soccer History: 1937-1973* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Board Publications Limited, 1977), 9.
[295] Ibid, 7-19.

played for ECN when the rivalry between the two clubs was at intense heights said, "The stadium was always packed for ECN versus Stores games. If you did not get there by 12 noon then you will have a problem watching the game."[296] While these matches never acquired the scale of derby matches in England, they were still characterized by an "animated" and "passionate" topic that asserted its loyalties. For the Stores-ECN derby, special buses from crowded areas like Mushin and Agege transported over 2,000 spectators to the stadium.[297] The Stores supporters paraded their flags and sang different tunes on their way to the stadium. Not only did Stores' supporters travel for derby matches, the restaurants and beer parlors surrounding the stadium were always "assaulted" by Stores' fans. During the match itself, different bands of spectators differentiated themselves through their costume and their cheers. The supporters of ECN wore red and white scarves, while Stores supporters wore maroon and yellow and carried banners with the inscription "Flaming Flamingoes."

Communal identity, in the case of the derby, was solidified both through the practice of spectatorship (including costumes, chants, songs, and travel) as well as the mediated diffusion of the match through the press and the radio (the latter was a more popular medium). Understandings and interpretations of sports in the Nigerian context, although less extreme than the English stadiums' example, also indicated a level of indigenization that Europeans would not have expected. For example, as the popularity of the game of soccer grew in Lagos, a pre-dominantly Yoruba city, weekend and holiday

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[296] Quoted in Chuka Onwumechili, *CHUKASTATS 1: History, Records, and Statistics of Nigerian Football* (Lowell, MA: Mechil Publishing, 2010), 24.
[297] Akpabot, *Football In Nigeria*, 39-48.

crowds of men, women and youths—ranging from domestic and factory workers, dockworkers, railway men, and other elements, made their way to this soccer ground to participate in sporting rituals of urban popular culture. Fans cheered support of their team, jeered their opposition, sang, danced and strummed guitars. The most interesting appropriation of the game was giving players nicknames, which formed part of the rituals of spectatorship. The ritual of spectatorship is a practice borrowed from rural tradition of *oriki*, or praise names. The *oriki* identify a person, embody his personality and mark the subject so that in a way, it is outside the power of the individual to remove or contest it. It becomes part of the identity. Praise names move individuals closer to memory in Yorubaland, open the door to a history long forgotten, create puzzles in language and vocabulary, and provide a daily mental exercise.[298] The *oriki* is contextualized within the Yoruba culture as something that must be memorized and chanted, not read. It is also a practice that is supposed to be elongated with the passage of time.

As a phenomenon, memory ties individual participants in any social order to the eternal present,[299] while also helping them as a group to collectively remember the past

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[298] Toyin Falola, *A Mouth Sweeter Than Salt: An African Memoir* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 22. For more on memory and oral traditions in Africa, see David Henige, *The Chronology of Oral Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 3-4; Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 12-13; Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1973), 5; Ledwien Kapteijns, *African Historiography Written by Africans, 1955-1973: The Nigerian Case* (Leiden: Afrika-Studiecentrum, 1977), 39; Davide Henige, *Oral Historiography* (London: Longman Group Ltd., 1982), 3; Bogumil Jewsiewicki and David Newbury, eds., *African Historiographies: What History for Which Africa*? (Beverly Hills, C.A.: Sage Publications, 1986), 92; and John Edward Philips, ed., *Writing African History* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 39.

[299] Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, "Counter-Memory," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989):8.

from a critical distance.[300] No memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections.[301] And, since soccer is ingrained in the collective memory of Lagosians, the game assumes different forms and meanings, styles and symbols, as it is molded and marked by the spatial, temporal, and social peculiarities of place, time and society, and history. It is the supposition of historical thinking which charges itself with the preservation of what would otherwise be lost both mentally and physically.[302] For the Yoruba, memory is an abundant source of history, which contains the total sum of past experience, and can explain the how and why of present day experience. Thus chanting the nicknames of soccer players by spectators, in line with Yoruba tradition, was mnemonic because they used the exercise as a strategy that enhanced the learning and later recall of information.

The African mnemonic is residual throughout the continent in the way it structures its myths and legends. As a result, the mnemonic device not only serves as a remembrance of things past, but is also a source of living tradition, which informs, modifies, and is modified by systems of ongoing social relations[303] Toyin Falola, in his memoir, *A Mouth Sweeter than Salt: An African Memoir,* captures the importance attached to memory in traditional Yoruba land:

"…within the compound, within the clan, within the village, everybody knew who was older, who died before whom, and who married after whom, all without birth certificates.

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300 Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 3.
301 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 56.
302 Susan Crane, "Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory," p. 1373.
303 Francis Harwood, "Myth, Memory, and Oral Tradition: Cicero in the Trobriands", *American Anthropologist, New Series* 78, 4(1976): 783.

Memory served them. And it served them so well that only an insane person would attempt to corrupt it."[304]

It is important to note that the *oriki* did not only express agrarian culture's continuity and change in urban settings, they also symbolized the possibilities of soccer in the context of intensifying intra-ethnic discrimination. Nicknames helped to strengthen the identification of fans with their sporting heroes. It also showed the spectators' intolerance of mediocrity and praise for exceptional ability. A soccer player's physical attributes or technical abilities often inspired fans' nickname for him. Players could be compelled to deliver a particular style in accordance with their nicknames. Sokari Dokuboh, an inside forward for the Lagos Railways, was called "Burma Devil" because he had seen action in Burma during the Second World War[305]; Onwudiwe, a defender, was called "Agbo" which in Yoruba means battering ram because of his crunching tackles; Richard Henshaw the skipper of the Nigerian team which toured Britain in 1949 and who was reputed to have two feet that could let off canon shots with equal dexterity was called the "Perfect Footballer";[306] and Alex Utomi, who was fond of running before finding out just where a pass was going was called "Free Wheel Utomi."[307] Successful players were held in awe by the crowds, who assigned them nicknames according to their styles of play, and they were followed in the streets by boys who idolized them.[308]

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304 Ibid.,22.
305 *Daily Times*, "Railway the Home of Many a Star," September 29, 1956, 10.
306 *Daily Times*, "Skipper Henshaw on His Way Home," June 9, 1950, 7.
307 Akpabot, pp. 35-38.
308 *West African Pilot,* "All-Nigeria Railways Sports," April 12, 1957, 4.

The act of spectator displacement, while again on a much smaller scale than the traveling groups of supporters in Europe, especially in England, during the same period, helped to crystallize this sense of local belonging. The Challenge Cup, in particular, generated multiple travels, both between regional cities and from the Western Region to Lagos and back again. Supporter trains transported thousands of supporters to key matches during the Challenge Cup competition, particularly the final at the King George V Stadium in Onikan, Lagos. *The Tribune* stressed the importance of spectatorship when it proclaimed in 1964, that it was the duty of all soccer fans to be in Lagos for the Challenge Cup Final between ECN and Ibadan Lions. The newspaper argued that the trip was economically feasible for working-class supporters, noting that 2-pound price for the ticket and train fare was within the reach of all income levels.[309] At times during the immediate years before the war period, too, the Challenge Cup final was a glorified derby itself, a regional showdown that took place in Lagos. The 1967 final match, for instance, pitted the darling club of Lagos, Stationery Stores, against Ibadan XI. Although Stores won 3-0, the match retained the flavor of a local match, as spectators from both teams descended on the capital via trains exclusively chartered for the occasion.[310]

As much as spectatorship affirmed the local sense of communal belonging, however, those practices also constituted a nascent national sporting identity. In the case of soccer, the local partisans of Ibadan culminated their season at the Liberty Stadium that also functioned as a place of conviviality. Fans who went to the stadium to see the cup final embarked on a journey that

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[309] *The Nigerian Tribune,* "Ibadan's Quest For Glory," September 21, 1964, 15.
[310] Lekan Salami, *Over Three Decades of Ibadan Soccer History: 1937-1973*, 31.

connected them to Lagos. The Challenge Cup final, too, was imbued with national symbolism, given the perennial presence of the Head-of-State, Major-General Yakubu Gowon, at most of the final matches from 1966 to 1975. Without assuming a clumsy equivalence between the city of Lagos and the nation, it is possible to read the Challenge Cup Final as an assertion of national territoriality through the participation of local or regional actors in an event centralized, at its climax, the capital city of the nation. Teams from all the regions in Nigeria battled for the Challenge Cup in Lagos; *The West African Pilot* continually highlighted this geographic reality by running cartoons featuring different regions of Nigeria (represented by players or soccer balls) courting a feminized Challenge Cup trophy, often super imposed over a map of Nigeria.[311]

The charmingly animated specificity of the local people usually corresponds with national identity during the national soccer team's matches at the Liberty Stadium outside of Lagos, primarily because the team was mainly comprised of players based in Lagos. The Ibadan press—notably *The Tribune*—asserted the importance of regional players to the national team, and often urged local spectators to make the effort to watch the national team's matches. While the spectators waited several hours for the match to begin, they improvised their musical entertainment, singing traditional songs often drawn from folklores. The organizers of these matches understood the importance of carrying the spectators along. They (the organizers) accommodated the local fans, blaring popular local music from the loudspeakers in the stadium in order to make the crowd feel at home.[312]

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[311] See, for example, the back page of *The West African Pilot*, December 26.
[312] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, p.256.

This evidence for the fusion of local and national sentiment, while it might be anecdotal, resonates with recent scholarship that affirms the importance of local distinction to the process of constructing national identity in Nigeria. Ejikeme Anene, locating her argument on the plank of boxing, highlights the centrality of identity, or local departments, to the forging of national consciousness in the new nation of Nigeria. The national and the local, as she argues, were deemed perfectly compatible; the nation was the harmonious assembly of different constituent territorial and cultural parts. The act of travel within Nigeria, too, has been linked by Onwumechili to the process of Republican nation-building, as travelers discovered the regions of France as part of a broader whole.[313] In the case of sports spectatorship, spectators could travel to matches themselves, read about rowdy southwestern crowds or enthusiastic soccer supporters in the eastern cities, or listen to radio broadcasts of matches at the Onikan Stadium (King George V Stadium was renamed Onikan Stadium after Nigeria's independence). These disparate activities all helped to construct the territorial sporting identity of Nigeria. Local spectator identity, in its own right through sport, was integrated into national identity through national competitions like the Challenge Cup.

However, national identity in the stadium was based on far more than spectatorship at Challenge Cup or national team games. If collective identity, as it has been argued, often derives from a process of differentiating between "Us" and "Others," comparisons between what was Nigerian and what was foreign inside the stadium permeated the pre-civil war press. Not only did the press scrutinize the fields and the grandstands of Nigerian stadiums for examples of national

[313] Chuka Onwumechili, *CHUKASTATS 1: History, Records, and Statistics of Nigerian Football* (Lowell, MA: Mechil Publishing, 2010), 27.

difference, mostly Liberty and Onikan, it devoted considerable attention to stadiums and spectators in specific regions of the country. Through both literal travel and imaginary displacement through the radio and the press, regional spectators could make comparisons that called attention to Nigerian deficiencies rather than strengths, and validated a sense of inadequacy regarding Nigeria's position in Africa in the 1960s.

III

Even within Nigerian borders, stadiums functioned as a lens of alterity and national difference, transcending markers of local distinction to separate "local" from "national." While some local players became national players because of their skills, some other players remained outside the national community. The discussion of alterity accelerated in the 1960s when Ghanaian-born players like Ganiyu Salami started playing for the national team. The inclusion of Ghanaian players in the national team meant that the huge Ghanaian community in Nigeria always came out to watch Nigeria's national team games whenever they played.[314] The Ghanaians were clearly identifiable in the stands because of their rhythmic clapping and cheering, as well as their attire. *The West African Pilot* complained that Lagos was on its way to becoming another Accra or Kumasi.[315]

The Stadium therefore focused attention on certain foreigners who could be part of the national community and other subsections of the spectator community who were external to

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[314] Segun Odegbami, "Ghanaians That Changed The Face of Nigerian Football," *The Punch*, August 11, 2007, 57.

[315] *West African Pilot,* "Daredevilry of Ghanaian Fans," December 3, 1968, 19.

Nigeria. Soccer players from Ghana were relatively common in Nigeria, and they often stood out because of their skills. Sani Mohammed, Fred Aryee (Baba Ali) and Yakubu Mambo, all Ghanaian-born players, became part of the real stars for the all-conquering Stationery Stores in the late 1960s, and played for the Nigerian national team. Yet their nationality elicited as much commentary as their soccer skills. As much as they were stars, they were clearly exotic and different in the spectator's eyes.[316]

The physical travel of the spectators throughout the country to watch matches was, of course, diffused and reproduced for "virtual" spectators through the press and through the proliferation of radio broadcasts. The latter, in particular, increased throughout the 1960s, bringing action from matches in the stadiums in Ibadan and Lagos into the living room of the Nigerian spectator who wanted to follow the match as it happened, but could not or did not physically travel to the match itself. International matches were regularly retransmitted by regional radio stations. Radio mediated international travel even for spectators already inside Nigerian stadiums. Despite frustratingly poor audio quality, the stadium was a double act of displacement; the Nigerian stadium-goers prepared for their own match by travelling (at least imaginatively) to Lagos, speculating on the weather 150 kilometers away, and noting the thunderous reception accorded Nigerian heroes.

Physical travels, combined with narratives propagated over radio airwaves and in the very press that helped facilitate actual travels in the first place, created a landscape that, while featuring the same kind of sites (stadiums) that one could fins in Nigeria, called attention to the

316 Odegbami, "Ghanaians That Changed The Face of Nigerian Football."

differences spectators encountered between these stadiums. In the sports world, the model stadium has been Wembley Stadium in London, England. The stadium is lauded for its sheer scale. It was originally built to accommodate 125,000 spectators in 1922, but the capacity was later reduced to 82,000.[317] Although Nigerian stadiums were not as big as Wembley Stadium, but many Nigerian spectators managed to fit into stadiums, regardless of the physical dimensions of the stadiums.

The Superior crowd totals in England, it can be argued, resulted from better tactics of crowd control and the spirit of the British crowd themselves. The British stadium was continually portrayed as an efficient, crowd-managing marvel, thanks to a system of turnstiles installed in the gates. *The West African Pilot* marveled that gate receipts in England were always high because all the spectators at the grandstands had to pay to enter, whereas Nigerian stadiums were filled with non-paying spectators.[318] The English also accepted crowded conditions in the grandstands with better aplomb then their Nigerian counterparts. Not only were they statuesque around close to the playing pitch, they were also physically sparse on the terraces. It should be emphasized that Nigerian crowds, however, displayed sporting erudition and self-control. During most of the matches, especially Challenge Cup matches, the crowds were both festive and differential, disciplined in the context of the match and in regards to social betters.[319]

Crowds and stadiums in Nigeria, then, were interpreted by the Nigerian press as proof that the Federal Government had revitalized the nation after the Civil War. In addition, the

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[317] Goldblatt, *The Ball Is Round*, 214-295.
[318] *The West African Pilot* "Football Is A Money-Making Venture," January 12, 1964, back page.
[319] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 257.

government earned more admiration from the press and the populace by investing heavily in sport and spectator enthusiasm inside the stadium. This positive assessment of stadium-related developments fueled sentiments of nationalism, which were often exacerbated by the military government overtones of reconciliation, reconstruction, and rehabilitation after the war. For the press, the invigorated stadium culture in Nigeria was a testament to the involvement of the Nigerian government in promoting sport, and was also a symbol of Nigerian dynamism and wealth.[320] Meaning, Nigerian-style modernization could no longer be considered as fundamentally soulless and antithetical to traditional European society. The dominant image of sporting wealth in Nigeria thus prevailed in the sports press throughout the 1970s, making other African countries look poorer in comparison.

The sole of comparisons that allowed the Nigerian press to feel smug about the state of stadiums and spectator discipline in Nigeria, with the exception of examples of out-of-control crowds on other parts of Africa, especially in North Africa, were narratives about the sophistication of Nigeria. The depiction of stadiums in North and West Africa allowed Nigerians to mock the sporting culture in these areas and to recognize the "progress" that Nigeria had made since independence in 1960. Thus the comparisons generated during the 1960s through sport always emphasized Nigerian superiority and knack for success. Comparisons of stadiums and spectators in Nigeria cast other African countries as undisciplined and fractious, in relation to their better-behaved and more sporting African "brother." Moreover, the actions of the autocratic governments in countries like Mali, Guinea, and Zaire stressed the unwelcome displays of

[320] Ofurum, *Africa Cup of Nations*, 19.

military behavior inside stadiums in these countries, while simultaneously highlighting the lack of decisive action in these countries regarding stadiums and sport policy.

The Nigerian superiority narrative surrounding stadiums and spectators in the 1960s and 1970s was undeniable connected to the stellar performances of Nigerian teams against African competition. In boxing, Nigeria's Hogan Kid Bassey and Dick Tiger won world titles in the featherweight and middleweight categories respectively; Nojim Mayegun won the bronze medal in the men's Light Middleweight (71kg) category at the 1964 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, Japan; the men's national soccer team played a 3-3 draw with the great Brazilian team at the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City; and Nigeria topped the medals' table at the All-Africa Games held in Lagos in 1973.

IV

Stadium and spectatorship thus provided a basis for collective identities for Nigeria in the first two decades after independence. Stadiums, as both architectural landmarks and sites of spectatorship, certainly glorified the construction of particular local identities. Stadium culture also reinforced existing stereotypes, or sometimes partially rejected them (as in the Ibadan defense of local spectatorship). In any case, local sporting culture helped constitute national sporting identity, exemplified through the responses to the Challenge Cup and spectator practices surrounding the Nigerian national team. But sport and stadiums, as sites of national meaning, also reinforced perceptions of Nigerian advancement and superiority in relation to other nations in

Africa. The relatively standardized space of the stadium (and the universal spectacle of modern sport within it) functioned as a convenient benchmark for comparison between localities and nations; Nigerian men and women could readily read the stadium landscape to determine what the nation was about.

The discussion of stadiums and sporting spectatorship first suggests that scholars should ignore Nigerian stadium spectatorship as a potential generator of collective, territorial identities during the first two decades after independence. Paul Darby and Peter Alegi have both underlined what they perceive to be the fundamental feeble affiliation between soccer and collective identity in Africa up until the 1970s.[321] While not contesting the idea that communal identity surrounding sports teams was weaker in Nigeria than in England, the chapter has noted several parts of Nigeria where sports and spectatorship clearly defined local practices, and an assertion of a vigorous, specifically territorial identity. This chapter has also argued that stadium spectacle also played a critical role in shaping Nigerian national identity. Instead of making a positive assertion about Nigerianness, however, it construed a Nigerian identity as a condition of sporting weakness and spectator indiscipline.

Secondly, this chapter ultimately suggests that the production of collective identification and territorial affiliations came through mobile displacement, whether physical travels or virtual journeys. As Phyllis Martin has argued, the act of travel—and the explicit comparison between what is familiar and "normal" and what is different and "foreign"—is

[321] See, for example, Paul Darby, "The New Scramble for Africa: African Football Labour Migration to Europe," *European Sports History Review,* Vol. 3 (2000) and Peter Alegi, *Laduma!: Soccer, Politics and Society in South Africa* (University of Kwazulu Natal Press, 2004).

productive of identity, not only in the individuated and gendered being, but also as a producer and consumer, a citizen of national political community and a person with experiences in common with spectators in other nations. In the specific context of the Nigerian sports, however, existing scholarship has argued that Nigerian spectators mostly traveled, either within Nigeria or abroad. This assertion is certainly correct on the empirical level, and reflects the broader reality that the average Nigerian man or woman, in general, traveled frequently in the first two decades of Nigeria's independence. Yet I would suggest that the analysis downplays the importance of both actual travelers and imagined ones during this period. The thousands of fans who made the trip to Ghana for the annual Ghana-Nigeria soccer matches were discussed in the sports press at length, a reality which diffused their spectatorship and rendered their travels visible to a much wider reading public. More broadly, travel narratives about spectators and stadiums in the Nigerian press made it possible for Nigerian men and women to "be elsewhere" while reading the sports pages at home, on the bus, or at work. In this sense, the mediated travel surrounding stadiums and spectators was perhaps one of the chief ways through which average Nigerian readers came in contact with other Nigerians from other ethnic groups; such act of imaginary travels during these decades also prepared Nigerian men and women for what Lisa Lindsay called "the modern public sphere."

Stadium specific narratives, then constituted local and national collectivities, and emphasized displacement and travel during the first two decades of independence. Another kind of spectator sport, however, also created spectator narratives in Nigeria, while also offering a more positive vision of the nation during the aforementioned period. Athletics not only celebrated

the Nigerian nation by producing stellar athletes from different parts of the country, but also showcased Nigerian athletes and spectators wherever it went. Athletics competitions differed, in some ways from boxing and soccer, as it took the spectacle to the tracks wherever it went. Yet, as I will argue in the next chapter, the sport remained embedded in the commercial realities of stadium sports, and extended many of the narratives about stadium spectatorship to the nation at large.

CHAPTER 3: Crowd Control: Transforming Spectatorship In a New Nation

An unprecedented number of spectators welcomed the first day of 1941 by watching a soccer match between Marines and Railway at the King George V Stadium in Onikan, Lagos.[322] *The West African Pilot*, the most-read Nigerian daily newspaper, described the unparalleled noise at the entrance to the stadium; the stadium authorities were forced to close the gates to both the sides that had cheap tickets and the expensive part of the stadium. The whole stadium was jam-packed and there was palpable fear of a stampede.[323] There were soon to be mixed emotions in the stadium, however. When the visiting Railway side easily dispatched the Marine side 3-1, the Marine faithful in the stadium wanted to vent their anger on the referee, J.W. Johnstone, who they thought favored the Railway boys in some of his decisions. At the conclusion of the match, the crowd stormed the field, hoping to beat Johnstone. Referee Johnstone was able to get out of arms way through the protection of the policemen in the stadium, and he was shielded into the safety of the locker room. After waiting in the locker room for several hours, Johnstone escaped from the stadium in the car of one of the soccer officials unbeknownst to the angry crowd still waiting outside the stadium to beat him up.[324]

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[322] Adedayo Oke, *The History of Nigeria's Football Team*: *From UK Tourists to Super Eagles* (London: Okestra Publications, 2000), 6-15.
[323] *West African Pilot*, "Zik Athletic Club Releases Soccer Fixtures For Its Goodwill Mission Throughout Nigeria," December 3, 1941, 19.
[324] Ibid.

This incident sounded alarm bells to Nigerian journalists and sports officials. *The West African Pilot*'s editor deplored the conduct of the crowd, and described the reaction of the fans as "impetuous and banal"[325] The sports press and concerned sports authorities also read the incident as an ominous portent of a new kind of sports crowd in Nigeria, one that was comprised of true sportmen (as the press described the well-heeled and well-rounded athletes) but of spectators who lacked the requisite understanding of the beautiful game of soccer. The rhetoric was a thinly-veiled reaction to the influx of largely working-class spectators into the stadium, a phenomenon that accelerated drastically with the aggressive industrialization policy of the government in the 1950s. As Nigerian soccer, for instance, expanded throughout the 1960s, the sporting public increased, particularly for key matches in the Challenge Cup competition. Sometimes, thousands of people were turned away at the gates.

Rather than celebrating the emerging popularity of spectator sport, however, journalists and sports officials were understandably concerned worried by about the intransigent, ill-disciplined and impulsive behavior of spectators. In an attempt to reform the crowd during this period, the sports press and other stakeholders in sports transmitted a narrative about ideal spectator behavior, which urged spectators to master appreciating sport for its own merits, suppress any kind of partisan leanings for the teams involved, and tolerate the physical rigor of the stadium experience through a system of sporting education that would eventually lead to participation in sports. The narrative effectively

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[325] Ibid.

defined spectatorship as a bourgeois male pastime, dismissing both working class male spectators and female spectators of all classes as irrational, emotional, and undisciplined people who could acquire the necessary knowledge and rational self-control to behave appropriately inside the stadium with difficulty, if indeed at all. The narrative of ideal spectatorship was paired with its spatial implementation inside the stadium, as fencing and separated seating sections controlled spectators. But these physical and narrative attempts to define spectatorship existed in continual tension with the collective practices of spectators themselves, which eluded easy regulation or definition. From the development of "supporter" culture to crowd violence to female spectatorship itself, mass spectatorship emerged with its own rituals, codes, and behaviors that not only contested the ideal spectator narrative, but effectively redefined the idea of the spectating public.

The following chapter, then, explores the development of spectatorship within the stadium as a contested field of learned practices, ranging from ludic festivity to outright violence. It traces the rise of mass spectator sport in Nigeria, focusing notably on the transformation of soccer from relatively intimate gatherings in the early 1900s to 60,000-plus gatherings in the 1960s and 1970s. It focuses primarily on the contested nature of early spectator behavior, and ignores the question of collective territorial identities generated by the stadium crowd. Moreover, this chapter does not truly reconstruct the crowd in pre-independence Nigeria in a structural manner. While it presents evidence for the massification of sport, it cannot make any detailed argument for the socio-economic breakdown of the crowd from the 1960s due to source limitations. Instead, it charts the

tensions generated by the emergence of mass stadium crowds, notably the ongoing attempts to "improve" and regulate them and the difficulties authorities faced in making the crowd behave appropriately. Put another way, this chapter analyzes the interplay between "text" (the sports press and its narrative about spectatorship" and "texture" (the practice of spectatorship themselves), or between what Heidi Gengenbach calls the "representations" of space and "representational" space as directly lived through practice.[326] As much as it argues for the stadium's place in understanding the development of mass leisure culture, and the gradual evolution of stadium spectators into a consuming public with certain rights and privileges.

Finally, as a methodological note, this chapter adopts a certain linguistic fluidity to describe gatherings inside stadiums. In this regard, I follow the examples of contemporary sources, which use terms like "public," "masses," and "spectators" interchangeably. *The Tribune* used these terms in an identical vein to describe the over 45,000 people in attendance at the Liberty Stadium in Ibadan for the World Cup qualifier between Nigeria and Sudan in 1969.[327] These terms were often used to convey the impression of a large crowd, but not consistently enough to justify privileging one over the other. Thus, I rotate the use of these terms throughout this chapter, while attempting to retain the language of the original commentators as faithfully as possible.

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[326] Heidi Gengenbach, "Naming the Past in a Scattered Land: Memory and Powers of Women's Naming Practices in Southern Mozambique," *International Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 33 (2000): 523-545.

[327] *The Nigerian Tribune,* "Nigeria Plays Sudan For World Cup Ticket," September 13, 1969, 21.

II

By the time of the Johnstone incident in 1941, the sporting public was already transforming and growing in size. If boxing was still the most important sport, crowds for soccer began to slowly grow in the twenty years before Nigeria's independence. The earliest spectators at soccer matches came from the same social caste as the athletes on the field, which was largely working-class. Peter "Baby" Anieke, later a member of the 1949 UK Tourists, complained in 1946 that club teams would benefit more from spectators at its matches; he therefore urged club members to come to the King George V Stadium games, but not in "sufficiently vast" numbers that would overwhelm the modest installations at the side of the pitch.[328] Moreover, Sam Akpabot couched spectatorship as a communal ritual and a demonstration of affinity rather than a form of mass entertainment.[329] The spectator, in this context, affirmed his (or her) club affiliation and social standing by attending a match, and was likely capable of participating himself (herself) in the sports being witnessed.

However, this era of rabid followership was already disappearing by the 1960s. By the 1970s, a popular sports journalist, Sebastine Ofurum, noted that thousands of people filled the enclosures around soccer fields on a weekly basis. He went further to claim that the crowd had completely transformed his beloved sport. Lastly, Ofurum claimed that the players played simply, "among friends," for the joy of the game.[330] Now,

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[328] *The Nigerian Daily Times* "Lagos African Football Cup: Captain v Vice-Captain," January 2, 1946, 8.
[329] Akpabot, *Football In Nigeria*, 34-41.
[330] Ofurum, *Africa Cup of Nations*, 1-4.

however, the general public had forced the players to play more flamboyant game that prized continual offense over the "bodily combat" of the interminable rucks and mauls of early boxing that were tiresome for the "gallery." At the same time that Ofurum criticized the growing crowds for being conquered by this new vogue for showy soccer, he also blamed the players, particularly the celebrated Green Eagles, for adapting their game to suit the public.[331] Since the Eagles had astounded Africa with their virtuosity, the sport ceased to be a "rite" and had become a "spectacle."[332] While these remarks suggest a certain nostalgic romanticization of soccer's early days, his remarks testify to the growing spectacular logic to mass sport; as sports other than boxing and cricket grew in popularity, they attracted a crowd that demanded spectacular action from players, who in turn changed the way they played to satisfy the public.

With the industrialization and modernization of the Nigerian society from the 1940s, athletes mobilized behind the government's effort, and soccer and boxing emerged as mass sports that attracted a large section of Nigerian working classes.[333] Industrialists and government agencies in Lagos actively promoted soccer (as both participatory pursuit and spectacle) and as a means of ensuring social harmony amongst their employees.[334] The Railway, for instance, forced the professionalization of Nigerian soccer by openly paying the players and offering them clerical jobs. At the club level, some of the expatriate administrators had to add coaching to their itinerary—G.O. Urion

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[331] Ibid., 8.
[332] Oke, *The History of Nigeria's National Football Team*, 27.
[333] Keith Howard, "Big Choice Faces Dick Tiger," *West African Review*, January 1960, Vol. XXXI, p.48.
[334] Comcol 1, no. 248/s.122, "Letter to the Colony Welfare Officer, Lagos," from "Isale-Eko Area Boys Club, October 19, 1932, Ibadan National Archives.

and J.B. Welsh in Lagos Transport Corporation (LTC); A.P. Iveh for Police; and J.B. Hallam for Public Works Department (P.W.D.). Admittedly, the stadium was not exclusively a space for laboring Nigeria; spectators at these games could choose different types of seats.

In the press, the image of the stadium during the match of soccer was that of a mass society in all its earthy splendor. In 1947, *The West African Pilot* poetically described the Governor's Cup (as the Challenge Cup was then called) as a spectacle typical of the ability of black people to organize a competition. The crowd of about 35,000 people were all anonymous common people, the 22 players were humble regular guys.[335] When the Governor appeared at the stadium, he was sort of reaching to the people in a warm manner.

The emergent public of the Challenge Cup was often depicted as "festive" and "natural." If the crowd could be disorderly and rambunctious at all times, it was usually described as good-humored. In this benignly Rabelaisian vision of the crowd, the lucid and the festive took center stage. For the soccer final held between Stationery Stores and Ibadan in 1968, held at the King George V Stadium in Lagos, the masses flooded the stadium as soon as the gates were opened at 10 a.m.; the small grandstands filled quickly and the spectators ringed the field quickly. The stadium, noted the *West African Pilot*, did not have the capacity to hold the number of spectators who thronged out to watch the match, and the stadium seemed too small. The spectators panicked and waited in

[335] *West African Pilot,* "Nigerian Eastern Mail Praises Goodwill Tour," February 21, 1947.

increasingly high spirits for the arrival of the two teams; when Stores and Ibadan took to the field around 3:30 pm, the "human tide" of the crowd extended almost to the touchlines of the field, in "good humor" despite its long wait.

The road the 1,000 pounds Challenge Cup, Nigeria's most coveted trophy, was always a grueling one. However, the 1972 edition, in which clubs from Nigeria's twelve states participated can never be forgotten—for the final was played two times. The first final was at the traditional venue of the Challenge Cup final—the King George V Stadium in Lagos, where Bendel Insurance representing the Mid-Western State, met Mighty Jets, representing the Benue-Plateau. Bendel Insurance led Mighty Jets 2-0 for 85 minute of the 90-minute game. But then Sam Garba of Mighty Jets broke through the opposition's defense to score his side's first goal. A minute before the game, Garba scored what the crowd thought was an equalizer. However, the goal was disallowed by veteran referee Sunny Badaru. So Bendel ran out 2-1 winners. Mighty Jets fans were enraged and they invaded the pitch.[336]

Fights erupted throughout the stadium between many of the thousands of spectators who had paid for their places and who felt aggrieved about the officiating. When the referee signaled an end to the match, the two opposing spectators were too busy fighting among themselves to notice, demolishing the barriers between the grandstands and the field, and spilling into the area of the field beyond the touch-line to

[336] Segun Odegami, *Issues in Nigerian Football* (Lagos, Nigeria: Worldwide Sports, 1999), 38.

beat the officials.[337] The festive, crowded stadium thus easily transformed itself into a site of combat and violence. In this example, the crowd's exuberance and enthusiasm for the match led directly to violence. Not only did the spectators try to attack the referee, their desire to merely attend a soccer game turned out to be a disruptive and disorderly act.

The overarching explanation floated by the sports press for the perceived propensity for disorder, both benign and malignant, was that Nigerians lacked the "sporting education" to behave properly in a mass venue. For *Daily Times*, the Challenge Cup was a victim of its own success. At the matches, these unruly spectators—who constituted at least half of the crowd—expressed ignorant and partisan sentiments without the least expectation. Even if some of these spectators eventually became "calm and reasonable" sportsmen, the *Daily Times* feared that they would be replaced by another batch of ignorant spectators in even larger numbers.[338] The task of educating the crowd would therefore be a perpetual process as more and more people flocked the stadiums to watch sporting events.

Throughout the 1970s, then, the press and other stakeholders in sports attempted to prevent scenes like the chaotic Bendel Insurance versus Mighty Jets final by controlling the spaces of the stadium, and establishing a narrative about sophisticated, well-comported spectatorship that they hoped the public would internalize. On the physical level, stadiums gradually evolved into segregated spaces that constrained

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[337] *Drum,* "The Match They Played Twice," February 1973, 17.
[338] *Daily Times*, "The Problems With The Challenge Cup," November 28, 1978, back page.

spectators to sit in particular sections based on their ticket class.[339] In response to field invasion before or after a match, sports authorities like Isaac Akioye of the National Sports Commission argued that fencing separating the grandstand from the field needed to be installed. However, the press considered fencing an insult, because only one "only caged people needed to be caged." *The Daily Times*, however, concurred that the crowd deserved to be kept under security watch.

Nigerian sports officials and journalists voiced their hopes that the spatial demands of life inside the stadium would be second nature to Nigerian spectators. Indeed, the sports press habitually complained that Nigerian spectators needed to adapt the cramped conditions in order to maximize the number of people who could attend a given match. In 1971, for instance, *The Daily Times* lamented that the crowd at the final of the Challenge Cup between WNDC of Ibadan and Enugu Rangers at the King George V Stadium was not nearly as large as organizers had hoped, because the crowd had not sufficiently compressed itself in the standing section of the stadium.[340] The Nigerian spectator, the paper opined, needed to learn how to better fit within the designated space of the stadium.

While the stadium, in this sense, was a disciplinary space designed to contain spectators, journalists and sports officials also campaigned for the sporting education of

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[339] Olu Akindutire, "The Historical Development of Soccer in Nigeria: An Appraisal of its Emerging Prospects," *Canadian Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 22, no 1 (May 1991).

[340] Salami, *Over Three Decades of Ibadan Soccer History: 1937-1973*, 33-4.

the public inside the stadium.[341] This sporting education was simply about teaching the uninformed crowd of the rules of soccer. For The *Daily Times* and most of its counterparts, spectator ignorance of the basic rules of the game was a chief cause of disorderly behavior within the stadium. While the sports press blamed itself for not educating the public thoroughly enough, it sharply criticized the uninformed crowds who jeered at the referee because they did not understand the sport thoroughly. *The Daily Times* bashed the public at a match between IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan and Raccah Rovers of Kano in the November 1977 for "once more demonstrating its complete ignorance of the code of football." (The crowd had ordered Raccah Rovers players to walk off the field because they felt the goal scored by the Stars should have been disallowed). A year later, over seventy-eight spectators lost their lives in the stampede that followed the semi-final match between Bendel Insurance and I.I.C.C. Shooting Stars at the National Stadium in Lagos.

If part of sporting education entailed teaching the spectator the rules of various sports, another aspect focused on the spectator's acquisition of particular code of conduct inside the stadium. The ideal spectator, according to the dominant narrative, was able to control his (or more rarely her) emotions and remained disciplined at all times. Writing in 1978 in the *The Tribune*, in the wake of "aggravating incidents" concerning spectators, Sam Akpabot argued that a good public had to be passionate and emotionally invested in a match, but also needed to be fair and even-handed. The "good public" thus had the duty

[341] The image of the stadium as a space of surveillance fits within the work of Michel Foucault on other disciplinary spaces, notably prisons and hospitals. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 26.

to not intervene in the match by criticizing the referee or, even worse, subjecting him to more than verbal pressure (as in the Bendel Insurance and Mighty Jets match).[342] Moreover, the ideal crowd needed to maintain the (arbitrary) distinction between sports and politics, and refrain from turning sporting matches into political protest rallies. Akpabot concluded that the culture of spectatorship, if properly instilled in the spectating masses, would help spread class and good conduct to the public inside the stadium.[343]

Beyond the criticism of spectator behavior in Nigeria, the proponents of the ideal spectator narrative praised the crowds that already exhibited signs of disciplined, orderly spectatorship. At every occasion, *The Daily Times* and the rest of the sports press highlighted the growing size and sophistication of the Nigerian crowd. In 1979, *The Daily Times* lauded the crowd at the Challenge Cup final between I.I.C.C. Shooting Stars of Ibadan and Sharks of Port Harcourt for its stoicism at it huddled under the main grandstands of the National Stadium throughout a torrential rainstorm. After the world Cup qualifier between Nigeria and Egypt in 1978, the same newspaper lavished high praise on the enthusiastic, knowledgeable and disciplined Nigerian spectators who packed the National Stadium in Lagos. Despite their reputation as hotheads, the Nigerian supporters behaved "with terrifying calm." The newspaper concluded that the match, which had been "impeccably organized," not only broke records for gate receipts but also set a new standard for crowd behavior.[344]

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342 *The Nigerian Tribune*, Sam Akpabot, "The Oracle Speaks," September 12, 1978, 31.
343 Ibid.
344 Ibid.

Nigerian sports officials also looked across the Atlantic to Europe, and to England in particular, to offer models of disciplined spectatorship. As I mentioned earlier in chapter two, the rest of the world continually idealized British crowds as well-informed, disciplined, and differential.[345] Nigerian observers who attributed crowd misbehavior to a lack of "bearing and class" were continually amazed that the spectators in England understood sport more profoundly than their counterparts in Nigeria. ESBEE (as Tunde Osuntolu, Sports Editor of the Daily Times who chose to call himself using his initials of S.B.), writing in the *Daily Times*, marveled that the British crowds anticipated the movements of players and could read the flow of the match perfectly. The sports press in Nigeria suggested that crowds in the United Kingdom, already imbued with Anglo-Saxon calm, understood the action on the field than their Nigerian counterparts because the spectators played sports themselves. In contrast, Nigerian crowds lacked the experience to watch a match properly, and continually demonstrated their "bad humor" towards the referee, the opposing team, or their own players.

If the British functioned as one model for appropriate spectatorship, Nigerian elites in the grandstands served another source of inspiration for the sports press and other sports officials. As early as 1947, city and prefectural officials received invitations to certain sporting events in Lagos, all councilors for the City Council were granted an entry card into the King George V Stadium at Onikan, Lagos, which gave them the

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345 See, for example, David Goldblatt, *The Ball Is Round*: *A Global History of Soccer* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2006), pp.213-250; William Baker and J.A. Mangan, eds., *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1987), 27; and Allen Guttmann, *Games and Empires*: *Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 41-70.

ability to circulate freely inside the stadium.[346] They were hardly the only politicians to attend important sporting events; Sir Arthur Richards, the Governor-General of Nigeria, attended the first final of the Governor's Cup in 1945.[347] Sir John Macpherson, Richards' successor, also continued in that tradition, and the culture was carried over in the post-independence period when Sir Tafawa Balewa and Major-General Yakubu Gowon attended the final matches of the Challenge Cup. The official presence of the head of state and other influential officials in the stadium, particularly at the Challenge Cup final or international soccer or boxing matches, valorized spectatorship in the eyes of the *Tribune* and other newspapers, as it gave the public clear proof that the most politically and socially important people in Nigeria knew how to behave appropriately inside the stadium. Their appearances in the stadium, too, could alternately be interpreted as a form of campaigning, especially for city councilors or members of the Parliament, who appeared in front of their constituents inside the stadium.

Above all, proponents of the ideal spectator narrative urged sports crowd to respect the authority of their superiors, whether those happened to be their social betters in the stadium, the referee on the field, or the sporting experts in the press. Yet this narrative of deference and sporting education, along with its spatial implementation inside the stadium, was perpetually renegotiated by the spectators themselves. For "supporter" culture to outright fan violence, the crowd itself developed its own practices

346 *West African Pilot* "Nigerian Eastern Mail Praises Goodwill Tour," February 21, 1947.
347 "African League Tables," *West African Pilot*, August 28, 1945, 4.

inside the lived space of the stadium that continually circumvented the discursive and physical limits of ideal spectatorship.

III

The whole narrative of ideal spectatorship in the stadium singly depends on the amount of detachment the crowds show during soccer matches, and this is tremendously weakened by the reality of the Nigerian public, who unsurprisingly displayed a tendency for rabid followership and partiality on the terraces of the stadium. In reality, the atmosphere in the stadium was usually carnival-like. Consequently, the normative practice of spectatorship at most soccer matches was highly partisan, active process that involved singing, chanting, and other behaviors that did not endear them to the press. Trading expletives or wisecracks at the players or referee, for instance, appeared to be common practice even as the sports press did its best to discourage such behavior. *The Nigerian Tribune* opined that the crowd at a 1969 match between WNDC and Water Corporation at the Liberty Stadium in Ibadan continually whistled each call called against the team that they supported. Even worse, the spectators mocked the players: after one of the forwards of Water Corporation had his jersey torn, revealing a "fleshy" torso and a "cascading" stomach.

Not content to merely heckle the players or the referee, the public continually eluded the neutrality that the proponents of the ideal spectator narrative would have desired. Despite all entreaties to the contrary, sporting crowds periodically voiced their reaction to contemporary political events within the confines of the stadium. Sam Akpabot, then a young man attending a soccer game in 1929, recalled that several spectators threw stones at the representative of the Governor-General in solidarity with the Nigerians killed during the Aba Women's Riot of 1929.[348]

On November 13 1925, Graeme Thomson, an English bureaucrat with little administrative experience,[349] replaced Hugh Clifford as the Governor of Nigeria. A number of historians have depicted Thomson as the weakest Governor to rule Nigeria in the post Lugardian era. He is ranked low particularly for his inability to command the respect of officials in Northern Nigeria. Thomson, at different times, was challenged by old guards of the Lugardian system who wanted the absolute separation of the Northern and Southern provinces, the rehabilitation of Lugard's political treatise and the constitution of large and affluent Islamic emirates into semi-independent states.[350] In addition, Thomson attracted the criticism of historians for introducing austerity measures that negatively affected the general well-being of Nigerians. One of such measures was

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[348] Akpabot, *Football In Nigeria*, 34-39.

[349] According to Harry Gailey, Thomson lacked experience in colonial administration, he began his career as a Colonial Secretary of Ceylon in 1919 and in 1920 he was made the Governor of Guiana. Harry Gailey, *Sir Donald Cameron: Colonial Governor* (California: Stanford University Press, 1974), 90.

[350] Chika B. Onwuekwe, "Constitutional Development, 1914-1960: British Legacy or Local Exigency," in *The Foundations of Nigeria: Essay in Honor of Toyin Falola*, ed. Adebayo Oyebade (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2003), 189. Toyin Falola, *Nigerian History, Politics and Affairs: The Collected Essays of Adiele Afigbo* (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 2005), 21. Andrew Barnes, *Making Headway: The Introduction of Western Civilization in Colonial Northern Nigeria* (New York: Rochester Press, 2009), 79.

the extension of direct taxation to Southeastern part of the country. This drastic measure led to the outbreak of one of the most researched revolt in the annals of Nigerian history, the Aba Women's War of 1929. It is important to point out that Thomson was limited by his health predicament – he suffered from degenerative health condition that often led him to seek medical treatment in London throughout the course of his tenure as the Governor General.[351] It is likely that his ill health contributed immensely to his lack of administrative prowess.

Whether focused around local club or directed against foreign opponents, supporter culture gradually acquired its own rites and rituals. Partisan support for specific teams institutionalized itself on a small scale throughout the 1950s and 1960s with the emergence of supporters clubs for soccer teams, notably in the migrant-heavy part of Lagos and Ibadan. In Lagos, the Supporters' Club was highly active; it had a lot of members quickly after its formation, and posted a representative on the administrative council of soccer by the late 1960s.[352] While such supporter groups were sometimes organized by the clubs themselves, or by national authorities (as was the case with the Nigerian national soccer team supporters club), they were also initiated by independent group of spectators. Never as large supporter groups in Nigeria, these institutions nonetheless helped integrate club within the local community, and also facilitated intercity travel for important matches, such as the Challenge Cup final.

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[351] Thomson's health condition led him to vacate his position as Governor General on September 2 1930. *The Nigerian Daily Times*, "His Excellency the Governor's Embarkation," September 2, 1931.
[352] Odegbami*, Nigerian Football*, 256.

If partisan enthusiasms were grudgingly tolerated by the proponents of the ideal spectator narrative, another reality of spectator sport—erratic attendance at most matches—aggravated the sports press enormously. The fact that spectators failed to show up for matches on a regular basis destabilized the nation that spectators appreciated all matches equally out of pure appreciation for sport itself. *Daily Times* and its counterparts routinely lamented the public's fickleness, and its tendency to only attend international matches or Challenge Cup finals. It suffices, wrote *Daily Times*, for the "magical virtue of the international formula" to assure success of a soccer match.[353] Several years later, the same paper lamented that Lagos supporters did not support normal club matches in the same manner as international ones.[354] While the National Stadium was packed to the gills for international matches, club matches that attracted a few thousand people were the rule rather than the exception. Finally, the Nigerian public was also chastised for its desire to only support winning teams.

Beyond the reality of fickle attendance, more deviant crowd behaviors contributed to body practices that constituted spectatorship, even as they exasperated the sports press. The field invasion and the "unsporting" whistling of the referee occurred with particular frequency as did ticket reselling and price-gouging. The latter practices contributed to scenes like the November 1978 IICC-Bendel Insurance at the National Stadium, where some legitimate ticket holders could not enter the stadium because the seats in the

[353] *Daily Times,* "FMG Approves N2 Million For Liberty Complex," December 14, 1977, 29.
[354] *Daily Times*, "Mammoth Crowd At Green Eagles Versus Algeria Match," October 10, 1981, back page.

stadium had already been occupied, by some spectators with fake tickets.[355] The National Sports Commission (NSC) overmatched in its attempt to crack down on resellers, eventually tried to allocate tickets directly to clubs and their groups of supporters, thus cutting down on sales to the general public. In 1978, the NSC indicated that it would enforce a limit of five tickets per individual in order to prevent reselling. To confront counterfeiting, the NSC made its tickets harder to imitate by producing them through a photoengraving process. Plainclothes policemen also tried to "sting" counterfeiters by posing as innocent ticket-buyers outside the stadium. But, as the NSC later admitted, the only sure defense against counterfeited tickets was to rely on the spectators to buy their tickets directly from the NSC itself.[356] Faced with determined deviance, Nigerian sports authorities could only hope that the ideal spectator would eventually prevail in Nigeria.

Another act of spectator misbehavior was entering the without a ticket at all, was once the humor in the sports press and an ongoing problem for sports officials. Accounts of the earliest matches from the 1930s and 1940s all contain references to the spectators climbing nearby trees to watch soccer matches, or evading the ticket-seller. The eternal battle between the spectators and the ticket-sellers is well documented by the press. Despite the amusement which these stories generated, the problem of stadium infiltrations again highlighted the gap between the local spectator narrative and the actual practices of the Nigerian stadium public.

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[355] Twenty-six people died in the stampede that ensued after the match. Fans panicked when the floodlights in the stadium went off. A panel of enquiry was later constituted by the Federal Government, which recommended the dismissal of the stadium manager.

[356] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 259.

Most drastically, spectators periodically refused to occupy their designed spots in the stadium, despite whatever restrictions the stadium fences and barricades placed on their behavior. In some cases, movement within the stadium was limited to the relatively benign rush of spectators for the main grandstand after the match to catch sight of the players and the dignitaries as they departed.[357] On other occasions, however, spectators occupied forbidden parts of the stadium. At the National Stadium in Lagos during the All-Africa Games in 1973, part of the crowd defied the local police force to climb on the roof of the south grandstand to watch the games. Because the stadium was newly built, the spectators dislodged some building tiles in the process of getting to another section of the stadium.

The unruly behavior of spectators inside the stadium often culminated in violence. As the Bendel Insurance versus Mighty Jets demonstrated, crowds naturally directed much of their anger and violent tendencies at the referee. Sometimes, some violent spectators also entered the conflict with the players on the field and the other occupants of the stadium terraces. The image of the violent crowd was normally associated local soccer, and more precisely with Lagos. Most of the derby matches between Stationery Stores and E.C.N both of Lagos, while relatively calm on the pitch, witnessed numerous battles on the sidelines between spectators and players and amongst the crowd itself.[358] In response to spectator taunts, Yomi Peters of Stores knocked out an E.C.N. supporter in a game in 1976. He was later banned for three years (the ban was reduced to three months

[357] Ibid., .279.
[358] Onwumechili, *CHUKASTATS 1: History, Records, and Statistics of Nigerian Football,* 30.

on appeal) for attacking a spectator.[359] Another telling example is the IICC "Shooting Stars" and Ibadan Water Corporation rivalry. After Water Corporation defeated IICC 2-0 in a league match played at the Liberty Stadium on July 20, 1979, IICC supporters destroyed Water Corporation's team bus and held their players hostage.[360]

At the beginning of the 1970s, spectator violence came to be associated with anti-modern, regional identity, and the overriding need for big-city spectators to see their local champions prevail on the pitch. Contemporary observers argued that the so-called city fans were responsible for the increasing violence in the sport. In the mid-1970s, the incessant violence in the matches played by Lagos teams necessitated a reorganization of in the state's soccer administration. Hence, the name was changed from Lagos Amateur Football Association (LAFA) to Lagos Divisional Football Association (LDFA) in 1976. According to the *Daily Times*, soccer teams in Lagos thus "represented too much of the city! Sometimes, it was the city in its entirety."[361] Lagos spectators, the newspaper argued, were desperate to defend their fiefdom against outsiders, and incited their local players to violence. The paper blamed the violence in the matches involving Lagos teams, not on the players, but on a public who prized victory above all other outcomes.

Spectator violence, in this context, was doubtless exaggerated by the press, which wasted few opportunities to criticize crowd behavior. The vast majority of matches undoubtedly passed without serious incident, and I have not found other references to

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[359] Adeola Balogun and Olufemi Atoyebi, "Israel Adebajo Died The Day He Made Me to Join Stationery Stores," *The Punch*, September 22, 2012, 57.
[360] Onwumechili, *CHUKASTATS 1: History, Records, and Statistics of Nigerian Football*, 31.
[361] "The Changing Face Of Football In Lagos*," Daily Times*, Tuesday, October 19, 1976,

other on-field fatalities during the 1960s and 1970s. However, violence—on the fields and in the grandstands—clearly existed to the point where the Federal Government had to directly intervene in 1977 during the Cup Winners Cup semi-final between IICC and Rangers.[362] In any case, the sports press certainly continued to criticize what it perceived as the inherent disorder, ignorance, and violence of the mass crowd, and propagated these sorts of images throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Spectatorship, John Bale suggests, did not imbue the mass crowd with "class" and "bearing;" instead, the largely working-class mass crowd resisted attempts to "improve" it or make it behave in ways more acceptable to the middle-class journalists and sports officials.[363]

The narrative of the ideal spectator, which essentially tried to render the mass crowd harmless, responded to the influx of laboring society into spectator sports spaces from the 1930s, and voiced middle-class fears about crowds and mass politics. It was also a fundamentally gendered vision of the crowd, as it associated spectatorship with a specifically masculine form of self-discipline. The female spectator was ridiculed and dismissed as incapable of properly participating inside the stadium; the press attempted to reinforce and reconstitute the gendered nature of spectatorship by repeatedly emphasizing the hardships the spectator needed to endure, from the long walk to the stadium to the crush through the gates to reach the grandstands to the multiple hours spent exposed to the hot weather.[364] The sports press also openly ridiculed female spectators as ignorant

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362 Sam I. Mbah, Ikechukwu P. Okoye and Okey Ezea, *Rangers International*: *The Story of Nigeria's All-Conquering Clubside* (Enugu, Nigeria: Reynolds and Company Publishers, 1993), 32-39.
363 John Bale, *Sport, Space and the City* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 12.
364 Akpabot, *Football in Nigeria*, 44-47.

and irrational. At the same time, however, the anxieties about gender present in the discourse surrounding female spectatorship reflected a real concern over masculinity within the stadium, and a fundamental incapability on the part of the sports officials and the press to completely mold the stadium crowd as they desired.

IV

The assumption that mass spectatorship in the Nigerian stadium from the 1930s to the 1970s was the preserve of men was never seriously questioned. Spectatorship was indeed a largely male practice throughout this fifty-year period. Although it is difficult to accurately evaluate the gender composition of the crowd for mass sporting events in the this period, photos of the Liberty Stadium, King George V (later named Onikan) Stadium, and the National Stadium testify to the presence of female spectators in admittedly small numbers (they were more prevalent at the National Stadium). Other evidence from other African countries suggests that Nigeria was not alone in terms of the scanty admittance of women to sporting events. In fact, Nigeria was far better than some other African countries where the influence of Islam prevented them from allowing

women into the stadium.[365]All along, women not actively organized in the participation and organization of sports, though some school girls took part in some local athletics competitions. The Women Amateur Athletics Association (WAAAN) was formed in 1951, and Lady Macpherson—the Governor-General's wife—was elected President and Lady Abayomi and Lady Alakija were elected Vice-Presidents. Mrs. J.R. Bunting was the Chairwoman, and Mrs. I. Fatayi-Williams was the Honorary Secretary.[366]

But if women were empirically outnumbered in the stadium, they certainly occupied a prominent place in the writings about spectatorship. Indeed, the sports press continually described women inside the stadium, through the depiction of crowds during matches and a flourishing crop of serialized short articles that all commented on gender roles within the stadium. Women in the stadium were usually gently mocked by male observers as ignorant, emotional and superficial spectators.[367] *The Tribune* published a piece in the mid-1976 satirizing a female reporter for not knowing the basic term of "shoot," thinking instead that the fans were ardently encouraging a soldier to fire a rifle.[368] The idea of women as "experts" in sport was clearly a ludicrous one within this narrative.

Not only were female spectators ignorant according to the narrative, but they also attended matches because of their romantic infatuation with handsome male athletes on

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365 Susan M. Shaw, "Feminist Approaches to the Study of Leisure: Incorporating Gender Into the Analysis of Leisure in Africa," in Tiyambe Zeleza and Cassandra R. Veney, eds., *Leisure in Urban Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2003), 57-83.

366 Sports Editor, *Daily Times*, August 20, 1957, 16.

367 Ibid.

368 "The Oracle Speaks," *The Nigerian Tribune*, June 26, 1976, p.27.

display inside the stadium. Unable to appreciate sport for its intrinsic values, women focused on the players themselves. The press sometimes uses the phrase "sex appeal" to describe the behavior of female spectators inside the stadium. In this narrative, the idea that women might appreciate sport for reasons other than heterosexual attraction to the vigorous manly athletes on display was never considered. It has to be said, however, that at the same time that the press trivialized female spectatorship as proof of female ignorance and emotional frailty, it attempted to promote the participation of female spectators in ways that emphasized their femininity.

Unlike the typical working-class spectator, the woman inside the stadium could not be redeemed through the hope that she would eventually be sportive, with a deep knowledge of the sport.[369] Women's athletics floundered in obscurity in Nigeria from the 1930s to the 1960s, thus rendering participation a more or less impossible goal. However, the entire body of anecdotes and stories about female spectators suggest that the potentially subversive married unmarried woman who attended sporting events and mingled with athletes and other spectators could be transformed into a less destabilizing wife or mother. Put another way, the single woman inside the stadium had the potential to be selected "Miss Football," and marry an affluent man in the Nigerian society. The female spectator thus became an acceptable when relegated to normal heterosexual relationships, where attractive young women enjoyed the entertainment of a match not as independent, self-reliant women but as the female dependents of a male figure.

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[369] Zeleza and Veney, *Leisure In Urban Africa*, 57-63.

Although some of the anecdotes of women in the stadium do not stand as hard empirical evidence for the presence of women in the grandstands in the Nigerian stadiums, perhaps they resonate with wider anxieties about gender relations in Nigeria in this era. As Mary Louise Roberts has suggested, the image of the "modern woman"—who cut her hair short, smoked cigarettes, and did not necessarily want to bear children—became a privileged symbol of the sexual and cultural anxieties, a dominant representation of change in world cultural landscape.[370] That image may not have corresponded with reality, as Roberts notes, but the perceived behavior of the frivolous "vamp" or, more ominously, the man-hating "virago," threatened to render the world a "civilization without sexes."[371] As women increasingly acted in ways that blurred that blurred gender distinctions, men—it was feared in some quarters—had been emasculated by happenings in the world around this time. The narrative of ideal spectatorship, however, attempted to redress the balance, by promoting a virile, athletic masculinity in the grandstands and on the field, transforming the unattached female spectator into a happily married woman. The female spectator, in the pages of Nigerian newspapers, was quite literally the "anti-vamp," a reassuring symbol of continuity in a new era.

And yet the frequency with which the female spectator appeared in the sports press spoke to the limits of the gendering of the crowd. The constant depictions in the press, of the stadium as a masculine space undoubtedly helped discourage female

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[370] Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 10.
[371] Ibid.

participation as spectators inside the stadium.[372] Yet, while not as spectacular an activity as violence or ticket-scalping, the very act of being present inside the stadium, despite the discouragement of the press, testifies to ways stadium spectatorship was claimed by women as something more than a simple romance narrative. Not all women, I would suggest, could be effectively transformed into appropriate spectators within the stadium. The ideal spectator narrative thus reflected broader anxieties about class and gender in Nigeria from 1930 to 1960, and the inability to resolve those questions inside the stadium. It was not, however, through a lack of trying on behalf of the press. The narrative of idealized spectatorship—and assumptions about appropriate spectator behavior—permeated much of the Nigerian press between 1930 and 1960.

The ideal spectator narrative accompanied, in practical terms, the relatively slow growth of commercial sport in Nigeria. Nigerian soccer, at its inception, was never the same in terms of development with Ghana's. Soccer in Ghana was characterized by the Ghana Football Association's (GFA) attempts to regulate the local transfer market and control player wages, and the prevalence of semi-professional players who still maintained another career on the side. Soccer clubs in Nigeria were not officially profit-making enterprises, as they were formed under laws which explicitly barred them from making commercial activity their primary function. Soccer remained officially amateur until 1991.

[372] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 256.

Both logistically and rhetorically, then, Nigerian sports authorities seemingly worked to discourage spectatorship and commercial spectacle, or at least manage the two quite carefully. Yet as I have suggested here, stadium spectatorship was still an important and useful phenomenon in Nigerian society that demonstrated the limits of middle-class control on popular leisure culture. As this chapter has demonstrated, the crowd claimed the stadium as its own space, despite discursive and physical restrictions that tried to constrain its behavior. Working-class spectators continued to display a lack of "sporting education;" the presence of female spectators was consistent (and threatening) enough that it needed to be "normalized" through newspaper stories that emphasized female respectability and dependence upon men. The stadium crowd, in short, created its own patterns of supporter culture and attendance that transformed the stadium into a different space than its planners and custodians intended.

Spectators still forged entirely new practices and new realities within the stadium beyond simple resistance to the constraints placed upon them. Public demand forced sports officials to modify some of their general indifference to spectator indifference during the 1970s in order to cater to the crowd. The NSC, for instance, gradually realized that the public would not pay to watch mediocre soccer in the relative discomfort of the typical Nigerian stadium on the 1970s. Also, it became evident that poorly-performing teams simply drew small crowds, and that clubs—if they wanted to attract a sizable public—needed to put a better product on the field.[373] Little by little, the public emerged

[373] Samuel Akpabot, *Football in Nigeria* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1984), 72.

as a collective of paying customers with certain prerogatives, particularly the right to be informed. Having often purchased a ticket in the express hope of seeing star players, spectators were quite legitimately annoyed if those players were not on the field, particularly if match organizers did not inform them about the turn of events.[374] Informing spectators via newspaper advertisements, blackboard or a loudspeaker thus became an established practice from the late 1970s. Female spectators, too, were courted by at least one club, Rangers International of Enugu, which offered half-price admission for women in 1978 for a match against a club from Algeria.[375]

The slow transformation of the sporting crowd into a consuming public, I suggest, captures the dynamic of stadiums more adequately than the frequent comparison raised between spectatorship and religious practice. Religious imagery has been often deployed to describe stadium space and the act of spectatorship. For example, Adedayo Oke referred to the National Stadium in Surulere, Lagos as the "football cathedral" shortly after its completion in 1972, and wrote that faith came to those went to the stadium.[376] Scholars have also argued that collective spectatorship, and the supporter culture that emerged in the 1970s surrounding soccer in Africa, was an alternate form of religious practice. Nicholas Fishwick, in his work on soccer in Britain, has explicitly compared

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[374] Segun Odegbami, *Nigerian Football, 1960-1990* (Lagos, Nigeria: Worldwide Sports Ltd, 1990), 62,
[375] Patrick Ehizojie and Lucky Odogun, *Professional Football in Nigeria: An established Methodology* (Surulere, Nigeria: Lagos Publishers, 1987), 21.
[376] Adedayo Oke, *The History of Nigeria's Football Team*: *From UK Tourists to Super Eagles* (London: Okestra Publications, 2000), 17.

religion and sport, in his quip that the stadium was the "Labour Party at Prayer."[377] Yet the parallels between sports and spectatorship and religion inadequately capture the creativity of the spectator experience, and are less helpful for historians than the comparisons between politics inside the stadium and religious practice. While the links between politics and religion, for their part, capture the longer trajectory of outdoor festivity in Nigeria, the notion of sports spectatorship as "worship" reduces the plurality and heterogeneity of that practice to a single kind of behavior. Moreover, sports spectatorship, even as it invokes some of the ritualistic components of religious belief, lacks overarching cosmological vision involved in organized religion. If the stadium spectator emerged as a tentative consumer during this period, he/she was also part of much broader collectivities. Stadiums across Africa proved crucibles for spectator identity-formation in the 1950s and 1960s, whether local, regional, or national lines.[378] But the masses were pleased with by evocations of the national colors and national jerseys. This sort of connection between spectatorship and particular places, fit awkwardly into the narrative about idealized spectatorship, but became essential to the nature of modern spectator sports.

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[377] Nicholas Fishwick, *English Football and Society, 1910-1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 150.

[378] Phil Vasili, "The Right Kind of Fellows: Nigerian Football Tourists as Agents of Europeanization," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 11, no. 2 (August, 1994): 191-211.

CHAPTER 4: The Challenge Cup, the Stadium, and the Construction of Identities

The Challenge Cup final replay on October 21, 1972, which pitted Bendel Insurance of Benin against Mighty Jets of Jos, was played at the Liberty Stadium in Ibadan. That was the first time the Challenge Cup had been played outside its traditional home, Lagos.[379] Mighty Jets of Jos, star-studded with some of the most exciting forwards of that era in Nigeria, Sam Garba Okoye, Layiwola Olagbenro and Sule Kekere,[380] were highly favored to win the trophy that year. The match drew a crowd of 36,000 people to the Liberty Stadium.[381] In this match, Bendel Insurance won through a free-kick scored during extra-time by Sebastine Brodericks. However, the spectacle inside the stadium was dwarfed by the crowds along the roads leading to the stadium. The tournament that year had more participants than in the previous years. Wherever they went, the players were greeted by enormous crowds at the side of the road. *Tribune* marveled at the "extraordinary enthusiastic and colorful crowd" which "made a gigantic hedgerow" for the players during the final.[382] It hailed the "astonishing spectacle" of clusters of people clinging to the rocky hillside outside of the stadium, clamoring in delight as the players and officials of Bendel Insurance passed by. It also noted the "fanatics" carrying drums

379 *Drum*, "The Match They Played Twice," February 1973, 17.
380 These players were seasoned internationals who were among the players that represented Nigeria at the soccer event of the Summer Olympics held in Mexico in 1968.
381 Odegbami, *Football In Nigeria*, 237
382 *The Nigerian Tribune*, "Astonishing Spectacle At Challenge Cup Final," October 22, 1972, back page.

who lined the roads and would rather be jolted by passing automobiles than cede a morsel of ground in their quest to cheer on the victorious team.

The first match had ended in controversy in Lagos. Bendel Insurance was leading Mighty Jets by two goals up till the last two minutes of the game. Single-handedly Sam Garba Okoye took on the defense of Bendel Insurance. With one minute to go he reduced the deficit to one, and he scored the equalizer as referee Sunny Badru blew his final whistle. Did the referee's whistle signify a goal or an end to the match? The question was answered in the boardroom of the Nigeria Football Association (NFA).[383] A replay was ordered, and the match was moved to Ibadan, a city some seventy-eight miles outside of Lagos. The crowds who enthusiastically followed the players in Ibadan were no aberration.

The Colonial era was not only about political and economic control. As this study has shown, another important aspect of the colonial period was the cultural encounter. It was through the latter that some of the most enduring legacies of colonialism emerged that would outlast the actual political control of the territory by the declining British Empire. One of the legacies was, of course, soccer. This chapter shows how a soccer tournament established by the British played a role in uniting the nation. As I will argue, this role is indicative of the important place soccer had taken in the Nigerian polity, a role that in the post-colonial period would become increasingly important as internal divisions

[383] Odegbami, *Football In Nigeria*, 238.

threatened to tear Nigeria apart. Further, I briefly discuss what soccer has meant for Nigeria, and the role it continues to play in the post-colonial era.

The Challenge Cup was conceived in 1945 as a publicity stunt, the Challenge Cup was desperately in need of national acceptance, the tournament quickly became the most popular sporting event in Nigeria. It created a whole crop of new working-class heroes whose determination, courage, and stoic tolerance of pain were repeated lauded in the press covering the tournament. The tournament familiarized the nation with its own geography and valorized Nigeria as a nation united in its liking for sporting events. The Challenge Cup presented a more positive image of Nigerian national sporting identity. As a spectator event, the Challenge Cup, thus brought life, activity and excitement to the people, and introduced a festive, carnivalesque atmosphere whenever the final is being played.

As befitting cultural and social phenomena of its stature, the Challenge Cup has drawn considerable scholarly analysis that has analyzed the multiple meanings of the tournament. It has been convincingly interpreted as a geographic lesson for the nation, a link between the sporting South and the unsporting North, a harbinger of mass consumerism, and a source of public narratives about heroism, gender, industrialization, class relations and local and national identities. Critically, the Challenge Cup has also been viewed as fundamentally different because of the infusion of traditional practices into the game. In Nigeria, some scholars have suggested that the tournament drew its

immense popularity from the fact that it exported modern athletic contests to the spectators.[384]

While the tournament brought sporting spectacle to people who would not have witnessed it inside a Nigerian stadium, this narrative about the tournament denigrates the importance of other kinds of sporting spectacle (particularly boxing, wrestling and athletics) in Nigeria, and obscures the reality that the tournament was in fact highly integrated into a network of urban stadiums and commercial sport. The Challenge Cup constituted a key component of vast Lagosian sporting empire that included the daily sporting newspaper, Sporting Record, the *Lagos News*, and the UAC Stadium. The Lagos chapter of the Challenge Cup final and the two stadiums in Lagos were all administered and owned the state government. The tournament's organizers, in fact, lobbied to use the local Onikan Stadium in the hope of maintaining better crowd control inside them and in the anticipation of top government dignitaries attending the game because of the stadium's closeness to the seat of government.[385]

In this sense, then, the Challenge Cup was grounded in urban sports spectacle, because of its hosting in Lagos, Nigeria's chief city. Like the organizers of boxing and athletics, too, the organizers of the Challenge Cup were confronted with the realities of

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[384] See, for example, Olu Akindutire, "The Historical Development of Soccer in Nigeria: An Appraisal of its Emerging Prospects," *Canadian Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 22, no 1 (May 1991); Phil Vasili, "Colonialism and Football: The First Nigerian Tour to Britain," *Race & Class*, vol. 36, no. 4 (April-June 1995); and Phil Vasili, "The Right Kind of Fellows: Nigerian Football Tourists as Agents of Europeanization," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol. 11, no. 2 (August, 1994): 191-211; Adedayo Oke, *The History of Nigeria's Football Team*: *From UK Tourists to Super Eagles* (London: Okestra Publications, 2000), 6-15; and Chuka Onwumechili, *CHUKASTATS 1: History, Records, and Statistics of Nigerian Football* (Lowell, MA: Mechil Publishing, 2010), 24

[385] Akpabot, *Football In Nigeria*, 37-42.

mass sports spectatorship, both inside the stadium and at the roadside. The enormous crowds that followed the Challenge Cup confirmed, even more dramatically than other sporting events, the appeal of sport in post-independent Nigeria. The public was at mainstay of the Challenge Cup, encompassing everyone from local blue-collar workers to educated middle-class people, was much more diverse (and numerically superior) to the typical stadium crowd of mainly the common man.[386] The spectators also enjoyed a certain prominence within the stadium itself that their counterparts watching soccer matches in some less-developed part of the country never enjoyed; as the Challenge Cup showcased the nation in all its geographic and demographic diversity, the colorful and folkloric crowds inside and outside the stadium became one of the main subjects of journalistic commentary, together with the daily race developments themselves. Moreover, the public was physically much closer to the spectacle on the television than some of the spectators inside the stadium, which was separated (however ineffectively) from the action by the fencing barriers. At the same time the tournament's public differed from the conventional crowd, however, the Challenge Cup generated anxious narratives about crowd behavior that paralleled fears about unruly and emotional stadium gatherings. The public of the Challenge Cup, like the crowds in most Nigerian soccer arenas, could be festive and spontaneous, but simultaneously alarming and rowdy, swarming over the road and defying injunctions from authorities to behave properly. And despite their best efforts to encourage appropriate spectatorship, the organizers of the

[386] Ibid.

Challenge Cup proved unable to eliminate disruptive crowds, troubling displays of emotion, or ethnic excesses, whether in a regional arena, or at the final in Lagos.[387]

The tournament thus was not only logistically integrated into a network of commercial spectacle, but it also broadened the potential spectating public beyond the stadium to include the entire nation every December. The chapter therefore begins by detailing the centrality of the stadiums to the Challenge Cup, as part of the complicated empire that dominated Nigerian sport after independence, and as key sites for the tournament itself in Lagos and its environs. While the close relationship between the Challenge Cup and the spectators has been frequently discussed by commentators, less attention has been paid to mutually beneficial affiliation between the tournament and the stadium. This chapter then turns to the nature of spectatorship at the Challenge Cup; I highlight the centrality of a diverse, national crowd to the mission of the competition, but also underline the anxieties generated by the annual transformation of Nigeria itself into a nation of sports spectators. Other sports like boxing, wrestling, and athletics evolved nearly simultaneously as the soccer in Nigeria, but soccer became the chief sport over time, and the Challenge Cup became the number one soccer competition in Nigeria.[388]

Lagos was central to the development of organized soccer in Nigeria. In 1905, a commentator described that cricket was the most popular outdoor game in the Colony of

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387 Odegami, *Nigerian Football*, 256-257.

388 Onwumechili, *CHUKASTATS 1: History, Records, and Statistics of Nigerian Football* (Lowell, MA: Mechil Publishing, 2010), 24-31.

Lagos, but that soccer and a few others should be introduced.[389] Evidence shows that the game had already been introduced, although not in a widespread fashion. Soccer historian M.O. Awoyinfa claimed that a certain businessman named Harry Bennet organized rudimentary soccer matches in Lagos starting in 1904.[390] In 1906, two events took place that would have a major impact on the development of soccer in Nigeria. The first was that due to political restructuring, the Colony of Lagos and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria were unified with Lagos as capital. Because of this, many of the educated Africans-indigenes of Nigeria took a liking to the game of soccer.

It was also on 1906 that Frederick "Baron" Mulford arrived in Lagos to work for the Lagos Stores. Over the ensuing decades, Mulford contributed in numerous ways to the popularization and organization of soccer in Lagos and beyond and was lovingly called "Baba Eko" or "Father of Lagos." In his recollections of early Lagos soccer, Mulford indicated that between 1906 and 1908, he and others played matches regularly on the Race Course. Many of the games were between European teams from the merchant, military, and administrative communities in Lagos.[391] However, they also played against African teams, "…among which a Calabar XI was very prominent."[392] Mulford then left Lagos until 1915, a period during which he was traveling all over

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389 "The Youths of Lagos," *The Lagos Standard*, December 13, 1905. In a 1907 column, the writer still discussed cricket as the most popular game among Lagos youths, but lamented the fact that more youths were involved in hanging around and causing trouble than in playing sports. "Lagos Youths and Their Leisure Hours," *The Lagos Standard*, July 24, 1907.

390 M.O. Awoyinfa, "Origin of Football in Nigeria," *West African Pilot*, Thursday, November 7, 1957, p.4.

391 Ibid.

392 "Mr. Mulford Gives History of Lagos Football," *West African Pilot*, Wednesday, December 1, 1943, p.4.

Nigeria on behalf of the trading company he worked for. He continued to play a major role in soccer development, at different times serving as soccer coach to King's College, St. Gregory's College, and Igbobi College.[393]

By 1913, British soccer reports were included in Lagos papers,[394] but little was written about the game's development within Nigeria itself. Soccer had become sufficiently localized that as early as 1915. By 1917, when the Nigerian press finally began including local soccer news on a regular basis, it is obvious that the game was already well established. Nigerian youths were said to be learning the game in school "under expert European supervision"[395] The Nigerian players generally played barefoot and were "… tricky, fast, and nearly always in splendid training."[396] Besides the specific educational settings, another big impetus for the development of soccer in Lagos were matches against crews from visiting mail,merchant, and navy vessels, similar to the first recorded match in Calabar against HMS Thistle. In 1917, one of these matches was attended by the Governor.[397] This tradition continued for decades.

Upon his return to Lagos in 1915, Mulford found schools thriving. He also found that weekly matches between King's College and European teams were popular affairs. Mr. Kerr, who managed the European teams, provided King's College boys with serious soccer competition, his team at times including players with experience in professional

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393 M.O. Awoyinfa, "Tribute Paid to Late Mulford As Football Pioneer in Lagos," *West African Pilot*, September 7, 1953, 4.
394 *The Lagos Standard*, December 24, 2013.
395 *West Africa*, "In the Open, European Games in West Africa," February 3, 1917, 16.
396 Ibid.
397 Ibid.

English soccer such as I. Brown of Manchester City and Denyer of Swindon.[398] Although the elite school whose students would later imbibe the attitude that cricket was superior to soccer.[399] In June 1917, the actual soccer season began and weekly Friday evening matches between King's College players and European select teams became an important social activity. In an early season game, an observer noted the inter-racial match was played in a very friendly and sportsmanlike manner, going on to comment that, "It is in this field that one was bound to see mutual relationship between white and black which must now and ever exist the more."[400] The number of spectators at the matches grew from week to week, and included numerous European and Nigerian spectators. Exhibiting soccer's universal appeal from its early days, the crowds at these matches were diverse, encompassing a broad spectrum of Lagos society across racial, ethnic, class, and generational divides.[401] While war was raging in Europe, these weekly inter-racial King's College games became a big attraction.

By 1925, soccer's popularity among the literate Western educated members of society who patronized the print media was sufficiently recognized that an advertisement for a product called Phosferine Tonics included a picture and pitch from Stan Seymour, a British soccer star.[402] Nigerians also adjusted soccer early on to meet their daily needs. By the late 1920s, soccer was growing in popularity and appeal, but intercolonial cricket

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398 *West African Pilot,* "Mr. Mulford Gives History of Lagos Football," December 1, 1943, 4.
399 See, for example, Chief Anthony Enahoro, *Fugitive Offender*: *The Story of a Political Prisoner* (London: Cassell, 1965), 4.
400 "Sport," *The Lagos Standard*, June 20, 1917.
401 *West Africa*, "In the Open: Europeans and Africans at Football," August 4, 1917, 460.
402 *The Nigerian Pioneer*, "Stan Semour," November 27, 1925, 11.

and the Lagos Races were still the most popular annual sports events. Soccer as yet did not have a single event or tournament of sufficient import to displace these more established Lagos sporting traditions. That would soon change with the founding of the Lagos District Amateur Football Association (LDAFA) and the organization of inter-racial two-division soccer league in Lagos. Soccer, then, was just one of several options for Lagos youths, and there was little that would yet have made it clear that soccer would soon become the most popular sport in Africa.

In 1932, soccer enthusiasts came together and formed the first organized soccer association in Lagos, the flagship of Nigeria, Lagos District Amateur Football Association (LDAFA) later renamed Lagos Amateur Football Association (LAFA). Ibadan, Nigeria's second biggest city followed Lagos's lead by establishing Ibadan Football Association in 1937. The functions of LDAFA were to include the organization of soccer matches, leagues, the formulation of cup rules, and the management of soccer affairs generally. It also aimed at popularizing soccer and bringing Nigerian soccer into recognition in other parts of the Empire.[403] Existing soccer teams in Lagos were required to join LDAFA and pay an annual subscription fee of five shillings. The feat, LDAFA hoped, would arouse more interest in soccer. LDAFA's main mandate, however, was to build a stadium for the people of Lagos.

The LDAFA organized the War Memorial Cup competition (later renamed the Mulford Cup) as well as separate African and European leagues. The oldest organized

[403] *The Nigerian Daily Times*, "Sports Comments," July 1, 1932, 3.

soccer club is believed to be the Public Works Department (PWD) formed in 1929.[404] *The Nigerian Daily Times* of Monday, September 1, 1930, in a piece titled "Public Works First Annual Sports" recounts the exploits of Public Works Department Athletic Club at the sports fiesta held in Onikan, Lagos. A letter written by the Administrator of the Colony to the Chief Secretary to the Government in 1931, a year before LDAFA was established also shows that the Public Works Department Athletic Club was already in existence before the formation of the league.[405] The club of Harry A. Porter, founding president of LAFA, the PWD never won a major honor, but had an interdepartmental league of 13 teams even three years before the Lagos Amateur League began. Even though there were many soccer players and clubs in the Colony of Lagos when the amateur league was established, the Association still extended invitations to as many athletes and clubs as possible from outside Lagos,[406] in the hope that they would improve the standard of soccer generally, and the general records of Nigeria in particular would improve, and ultimately, this would provide a valuable guide to the selection of the Lagos team to meet selected sides from Accra in the future. It is pertinent to point out here however, that Nigerian control over fixtures was not possible, as white social workers took on the crucial rational and normative function of refereeing games until after Nigeria's independence in 1960. The keenness and enthusiasm with which all contestants entered into the league in its inaugural year, manifested in such vivid clarity

404 Armstrong and Guilianotti, 66.
405 Lagos 1/1 no. 1152/42 "Public Works Department Athletics Club" from C. Lawrence, Administrator of the Colony, December 8, 1931, Ibadan National Archives.
406 Comcol 1, no. 248/s.122, "Letter to the Colony Welfare Officer, Lagos," from "Isale-Eko Area Boys Club, October 19, 1932, Ibadan National Archives.

throughout the season, contributed a great deal to the enjoyment of the spectators.[407] From the report in the papers, it could be gathered that the matches were played in a spirit of real sportsmanship by the participating teams in the league.

The initial days of soccer under the British-controlled Lagos Amateur Football Association saw radical transformation in the way the game was played. Although there was loss of autonomy, some of the promised benefits, however, materialized. With the help of government subsidies, most of the things needed to play the game like nets for goalposts, balls, jerseys, and socks became available to most of the teams in LAFA. It is pertinent to emphasize here that soccer boots were beyond the reach of most soccer players at this time because it was expensive and hard to come by. Most of these early soccer players played barefooted since they could not afford boots, and many of them preferred to do so. Each club had a European administrator and coach who worked with the players to improve their skills. The municipal authorities cleared new sports grounds. Old teams were also reorganized. An analysis of the relationship between soccer and broader struggles for space and time will enhance our understanding of how local and national power was negotiated and contested in Lagos in the colonial era.

The British authorities in Lagos considered soccer to big a task to be left in the hands of less seasoned men of the colonial service. As with most governing bodies in Nigeria at this time, the British guaranteed themselves an official majority in LAFA, and indeed the British maintained a majority in the Association until after independence.

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[407] *The Nigerian Daily Times* "Football Sports Meeting," February 4, 1939, 4.

Appointments to LAFA read like a list of the top shots in Lagos social circle. *The Nigerian Daily Times* of August 25, 1933 mentioned the names of the principal officers: The president was Mr. Harry A. Porter; the three vice presidents were Adeyemo Alakija,[408] Frederick Baron Mulford and Dr. Ladipo Oluwole; and Mr. Wells as asked to act for Mr. Mead as secretary. Available records at the Nigerian National Archive, Ibadan, indicate that the men who were appointed to the Association were chosen in the hope that they would vote as the administration thought they would, and endless memos went back and forth between the British Consul and the Association's president over the appointment of a "local" to the Association. Any appointees who overstepped these boundaries found their appointment terminated at the earliest possible chance.

Participation in the governing of sports was seen as basic training for groups and individuals who would one day control of Lagos, and men who played cricket and golf were typically chosen for appointment to LAFA. Although they had African principal officers, the Association refused to entertain the idea that Africans would ever take a role in governance any time soon, it was seen as something that would happen in the distant future. Dr. J.M. Charles, one of the leading British sports administrators in Lagos said that, "he hoped that the encouragement of the youth in the field of sports generally would advance, and anticipated a time when Nigerians would own their place in the comity of sportsmen."[409] It is important to stress at this juncture that although

[408] Adeyemo Alakija was a Nigerian lawyer, politician, and businessman. *The Nigerian Daily Times* of Saturday, August 18, 1948, in an piece titled "Sir Adeyemo and Lady Alakija Honoured" provide more details about Sir Adeyemo's contribution to Lagos social and sports circles.

[409] *West African Pilot*, "Young Salvador Beats Jack Benson in Boxing Encounter," October 3, 1938, 8.

working class Lagos men comprised the majority of soccer players and fans, their presence was conspicuously absent from LAFA.

There were attempts in 1929 by private companies in Lagos, particularly A.J. Tangalakis & Co., to secure an unused land for recreational purposes from the Commissioner of Lands. In its letter to the Commissioner dated August 22, 1929, Cecil Gilbert, the acting manager of Tangalakis wrote, "It is noted that the land forming part of the old Lagos Golf Course and situate at the lower end of Ajasa street has not been in use for a number of years. In the circumstances, we would be pleased to learn if it is possible to come to some arrangement so that you may grant us permission to use it."[410] Despite the Commissioner of Lands having no objections to the use of the land by the company, the Administrator of the Colony turned down the application in his memo to the Commissioner under the excuse that the Town Engineer had objections to allowing the company use the land because he was not clear what land they referred to because he had not seen the plan, and he was also not sure about the ownership of the land.[411] It should be noted that the reason for turning the company's application down by the British authorities was purely political because Tangalakis & Co. had strong German links, and this was at a time when anti German sentiments were rife in Europe and America as a result of the First World War.

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[410] Lagos 1/1 no. 887 "Application for use of land as tennis court" file 01811/3, Messrs. A.J. Tangalakis & Co. to the Commissioner of Lands, Lagos, August 29, 1929, Ibadan National Archives.
[411] Lagos 1/1 no. 187/1929 "Memorandum to the Commissioner of Lands" from The Honourable Administrator of the Colony, September 21, 1929, Ibadan National Archives.

As regards LAFA's primary mandate of building a stadium for the people, the Association's January 25, 1934, letter of application to the Commissioner of the Colony for lease of land in Ikoyi, states that "this Association is desirous of securing a portion of land near to Lagos Town for the purposes of a football field and general sports activities."[412] However, the Association's application was delayed because of the change in the helms of affairs in Nigeria. It was not until July 10, 1934 that Sir Donald Charles Cameron, the new Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria, finally agreed to lease LAFA a piece of land for six months, inserting a clause that "If during if during the time created it shall appear to the Governor that the land demised or any part thereof is required for any public purpose, the Governor may give notice in writing to the Lessees of his intention to resume the land before on expiration of the six months." [413] This clause, apart from having no security of tenure, made LAFA believe their stay on the land was impermanent. *The Nigerian Daily Times* of Monday, September 1, 1934 described the location of the ground in glowing terms: "the spot itself is ideal and lends itself to quiet exercise of muscles in one way or the other."[414] This arena would turn out to be the Mecca of Nigerian soccer, particularly in the inter war years.

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412 Lagos 1/1 no. 1598 "Lagos Amateur Football Association: Application for Lease of land at Ikoyi (near Ikoyi Prison)" file 02923/4, Lagos Amateur Football Association to The Commissioner of the Colony, Lagos, January 25, 1934, Ibadan National Archives.

413 Lagos 1/1 no. 1598 "This Indenture made the 10th day of July 1934" file 30474, His Excellency, Sir Donald Charles Cameron, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria to the Lagos Amateur Football Association, July, 10, 1934, Ibadan National Archives.

414 *Daily Times*, "Public Works First Annual Sports: Excellent Ground and Spacious Pavilion," September 1, 1934, p.17.

The building of this soccer arena coincided with the period when soccer was increasingly becoming an exceptionally popular pastime in Lagos, and in indeed in Nigeria as a whole. The size of the crowd on the terraces was the major standard of judging the popularity of a team in certain local competitions in Lagos, and this tradition of incorporating spectators as a central part of the competition was continued in sports. Like the crowds who came to watch dance and music contests, soccer fans at this stadium played a decisive role in proclaiming victory for one team over another, particularly in the years before they had referees for every game. Even when they had referees, fans, mostly men, on the terraces and sidelines often determined the "winners" through continuous analysis of players, strategy and style.

Officially launched in 1930, [415] the Lagos League in 1930 included Lagos United Football Club, Railway African Amateur Club, Diamond Football Club, Nigeria Marine African Staff Recreation Club, Star Football Club, French Football Club, Red Roof Football Club, Oriens Football Club, and the Posts and Telegraphs Football Club.[416] In order to ensure proper administration of the burgeoning league and the overall growth of soccer, the Lagos and District Amateur Football Association (LDAFA) was officially formed the following year. At the LDAFA's 1932 Annual General Meeting, Governor Donald Cameron consented to serve as the Patron of the association. Among the four Vice-Patrons were Frederick Mulford, Kitoyi Adisa, and two others who were

[415] *The Nigerian Pioneer*, "Editorial: Lagos Football League," December 8, 1933, 8.
[416] M.O. Awoyinfa, "Sports Writer Reviews Progress Made in Football Since 1930," *West African Pilot*, April 13, 1953, 4.

Europeans.[417] By 1932, the Association's mandate included the organization of the revived War Memorial Cup, a knock out competition involving school and league teams,[418]as well as the Lagos League with its Senior and Junior Divisions.[419]

Teams such as Railway Institute were composed entirely of European players while teams like Calabar A and Afric Games Club were all Africans. The majority of teams, however, were racially mixed. Every team in the League, no matter their racial makeup, competed against one another. Unlike what happened with cricket where separate European and African governing bodies and leagues existed, organized soccer in Lagos only briefly had segregated leagues. The first period was in the late 1920s when the PWD inter-departmental league served as a rudimentary African League alongside a European League made up of PWD, Banks, UAC, French Company, and Syrians.[420] The other brief period of segregated soccer occurred during World War II when the European military personnel stationed in Lagos organized separate league for European players in lieu of contributing four military teams to the regular Senior League.[421]

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417 "Lagos Amateur Football Association," *The Nigerian Pioneer*, March 4, 1931, 7.

418 "The Lagos Memorial Cup," The Nigerian Pioneer, September 16, 1932, 7. The winners of the War Memorial/Mulford Cup up to 1932 were1918-King's College, 1919-King's College, 1920-Lagos Merchants, 1931-French Club, 1932-Africs, 1933-Africs, 1934-Africs, 1935-Harbour, 1936-Lagos Town Council, 1937-Lagos Town Council, 1938-Lagos Town Council, 1939-Marine, 1940-Marine, 1941-Marine, 1942-ZAC Bombers, 1943-Marine, 1944-Railway, 1945-Railway, 1946-Marine, 1947-Marine, 1948-Railway, 1949-Railway, 1950-Railway,1951-Railway, 1952-Marine. M.O. Awoyinfa, "Sports Writer Reviews Progress Made in Football since 1930," *West African Pilot*, April 13, 1953, 4.

419 "Lagos Amateur Football Association," *The Nigerian Pioneer*, May 13, 1932, 8.

420 "First Match of Season Will Be in Honour Of A Pioneer," *West African Pilot*, Wednesday, April 6, 1955, 4.

421 "Football Season Opens," *West African Pilot*, May 1, 1942, 2 and "African League Tables," West *African Pilot*, August 28, 1945, 4.

Indicative of the growing popularity of soccer in Lagos, midway through the 1932 season, the *Nigerian Pioneer* reported that, "The youths of Lagos are at the present moment completely obsessed with the game of football…Some really good games are to be witnessed on the Race Course now-a-days."[422] After the first weeks of the following soccer season, the press reported, "Since the past few days football has been absorbing interest in Lagos. Every day spectators crowd round the Football ground at the Race Course to witness this season's matches."[423]

And regardless on the tension between the groups that make up a nation, they still conceive a nation as "a deep, horizontal comradeship."[424] Consequently, the linguistic and cultural homogeneity of Lagos's predominantly Yoruba-speaking population facilitated the gradual spread of Yoruba pre-colonial rituals into soccer in urban Lagos. For example, traditional Yoruba martial practices diffused into the urban game. The teams in Lagos, whether comprising migrants or indigenes, participated in camping rituals.[425] Before an important soccer game, teams were known to go on retreat to a secret place to reenact purifying rituals performed by *babalawos* (herbalists) before military encounters. The night before the match the players and officials must "camp" together around a fire or grave of a Yoruba warrior. Incisions are made on their knees, elbows, and joints. The following morning, the players drink powerful concoctions and vomited,

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422 "Football," *The Nigerian Pioneer*, August 12, 1932, 6b.
423 "Sports: Lagos Amateur Football League," *The Nigerian Pioneer*, April 7, 1933.
424 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), p. 6.
425 Steve Bloomfield, *Africa United*: *Soccer, Passion, Politics, and The First World Cup in Africa* (London: Harper Perennial, 2010), 155-183.

emulating the *eebi* (vomiting) cleansing ritual of Yoruba warriors before going to battle. The sprinkling of *asegbe* on the soccer ball and on players' boots recalled the "doctoring" of warriors' weapons, and the burning of special roots.[426]

The symbolic recreation of past Yoruba prowess aided the construction of team spirit and aided camaraderie. In the variation of the regimental column march to the battle field, participants in the camping ritual were expected to get together in the same bus to the match. On occasions when the teams had to commute from one location to another, they still made every effort to maintain a very tight formation, with every man touching the man in front of, behind and beside him. Once inside the stadium, teams drew on *ijo ogun* (war dancing tradition).[427] The use of magic in sports is not peculiar to Nigeria. Among the Zulu in South Africa, a soccer team usually moved into the actual playing field with their stylized trotting step, acting very hostile to outsiders for fear that intruders will attempt to bewitch the players in some way to spiritually and psychologically weaken their opponents.[428]

In some cases, in order to forestall the players from stepping on the opposition's medicine, strong men are hired to carry the players on their back onto the pitch. Also native doctors were paid to smear jelly on soccer boots in the hope that it would make them run faster and kick harder.[429] However, it was mostly people born in the rural areas who believed in the efficacy of this medicine. Most times, particularly in the example of

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[426] "Oleru Says Juju Has Nothing To Do with Football Game," *West African Pilot*, April 5, 1954, 4.
[427] Ibid.
[428] N.A. Scotch, "Magic, Sorcery and Football Among Urban Zulu: A Case Study of Reinterpretation under Acculturation." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* (January 1961):72-103.
[429] Ibid.

Lagos, people born in urban Lagos did not believe in such things. Even so, the majority of players whether educated or not, urban, and Christian, seemed to accept the ritual use of magic in soccer because of its psychological team building qualities. The mixture of traditional beliefs with sport reveals a way young Nigerian men decolonized soccer through cultural practice and in so doing, influenced the institutional growth of soccer.

Although repeatedly referred to and debunked by African soccer analysts in Nigeria's colonial history, accusations of "juju" were often heaped on opposing teams.[430] Roughly translated, "juju" refers to "traditional medicine," something obviously difficult to define or describe, and can be either object or practice. The complaints of "juju" were usually made by losing teams who felt that in the zero sum game of the spiritual realm, a team's loss was the result of something other than their own performance. Examples of what "juju" might cause included making goalposts impregnable as was believed to be the case with the seemingly unbeatable soccer team of St. Gregory's College, Lagos in the 1930s.[431] Others were the beliefs in the supernatural abilities of Calabar soccer teams to make opposing goal keepers see several balls at once and the facility of a particular player to fly into the air with the ball at his feet.[432] That such beliefs would be widespread in the context of a European-introduced leisure activity indicated how pervasive

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[430] See, for example, "Oleru Says Juju Has Nothing To Do with Football Game," *West African Pilot*, Monday, April 5, 1954, 4 and Omolewa, "Juju Plays No Football: It is Man And Man Alone who Does," *West African Pilot*, October 7,1955, 4.

[431] T.M. Aluko, ed., *Government College*, *Ibadan* (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Nigeria Limited, 1979), 19.

[432] Samuel Akpabot, "Will Calabar Regain Rule of Nigerian Football This Season?," *West African Pilot*, September 18, 1953, 4.

indigenous sensitivities still were even in Westernized social setting.[433] As Laura fair found to be the case in Zanzibar, so it was in Nigeria where no matter how much the government attempted to control games like soccer, "influencing the interpretation of symbols" was much more difficult.[434]

Even though league club soccer in Lagos dates back to 1931, and schools soccer dates back even farther, it was not until 1938 that the idea of the Challenge Cup came clearly into view. Baron Mulford, who was the chief motivator of organized soccer in Lagos, presented the Mulford Cup for competition between Lagos club sides. The cup was still being competed for in 1952. Earlier than this was the Bergedorf Cup, donated for competition between junior teams of the Lagos League, which was won by ZAC (Zik Athletic Club) in 1938 beating the LTC (Lagos Town Council) junior team 4-3 in a replay after a draw in the first encounter. The Bergedorf Cup was replaced by the Zard Cup for the same competition. By 1939, when the Second World War started, the two cups for league competition were the Mulford Cup for senior sides and the Zard Cup for junior sides.

The momentum continued throughout the decade, and by 1938, the teams making up the Lagos League Senior Division were Marine, Town Council, Posts and Telegraphs,

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[433] Indicating the perceived importance of the role of "juju" or "traditional medicine" in African soccer, two of the overall limited numbers of academic articles referring to African soccer cover the topic, although others use terms such as "witchcraft" or "sorcery" which in my opinion place unnecessary European stigmas on the practices. See Anne Leseth, "Use of Juju in Football: Sport and Witchcraft in Tanzania," in Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti, eds., *Entering the Field*: *New Perspective on World Football* (Berg: New York, 1997),159-174; and N.A. Scotch, "Magic, Sorcery and Football Among Urban Zulu: A Case of Reinterpretation Under Acculturation," *Conflict Resolution*, Vol. V, No. 1 (March 1961): 70-74.
[434] Laura Fair, "Kickin' It: Leisure, Politics and Football in Colonial Zanzibar, 1900s-1950s," *Africa*, No. 67, Vol. 2 (1997): 233.

Police, Gold Coast Everton, Rangers, Shell, Marine 2, and UAC.[435] At this juncture, Marine in charge of Nigeria's shipping and sport and port facilities was the pre-eminent soccer team of Lagos, having two teams in the Senior Division. By the time World War II started in 1939, soccer in Lagos was growing strong. The Lagos League of that year saw many new entrants into the Senior Division including those of Zik Athletic Club and the Lands and Survey Department.[436] Even the Junior Division was packed with impressive teams, including Marine 3, Lagos Town Council 3, Elders, Railway, UAC, Land and Survey, Muslim, Police 3, ZAC 2, P&T 2, P&T 3, ZAC 3.[437] Emphasizing the important role soccer plays in the promotion of interaction across ethnic, religious and racial lines in Lagos, according to a local sports writer, "One has only to be closely in touch with the different Clubs that played in the League last season (1938) before one realizes in full the comradeship and fellowship that the contact has engendered, not only between Africans and Africans, but also between Africans and Europeans.[438]

In spite of the higher level of soccer organization in Lagos and the broader scope of competition, until the 1930s Calabar was still believed to be the real powerhouse of Nigerian soccer. In light of this, annual matches took place on Lagos between Lagos selections and visiting teams from Calabar, described as "…born geniuses of the game…"[439] After some debate, non-Efiks living in Calabar were invited to join the 1939

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435 "Lagos Amateur Football Association Senior Division," *West African Pilot*, July 21, 1938, 8.
436 "Old And New Soccer Clubs Get Ready for 1939 Season," *West African Pilot*, January 21, 1939, 8.
437 "Lagos Amateur Football Association Junior Division League Table," *West African Pilot*, June 28, 1939, 8.
438 "Old And New Soccer Clubs Get Ready For 1939 Season," *West African Pilot*, January 21, 1938, 8.
439 "Players from Calabar Will Arrive For Friendly Match," *West African Pilot*, June 28, 1939, 8.

team. Exhibiting the importance of such matches for Calabar pride, Selection Committee Chairman Etim Ekpenyong reminded his players, "The name of Efik Eburutu is in your hands. Remember the glory is not mine but yours…So that on your return, your names may be written in letter of gold on the breasts of those who are waiting to hear of your doings in Lagos. And you know very well that they will receive you on your return."[440] In spite of the indomitable reputation, Calabar was thrashed by the Lagos XI 5-1 before a crowd of 10,000.[441] The Calabar team was able to redeem themselves somewhat by beating a Lagos European XI a few days later before 6,000 fans.[442]

The idea of Association Cup in the mold of the English F.A. Cup was first muted by soccer enthusiasts towards the end of the Second World War. They were enthralled by the increasing number of soccer clubs in some part of the country, especially Lagos, Calabar and Ibadan. The War Memorial Challenge Cup was launched during the war years, but was renamed the Governor's Cup in 1956 at the end of the Second World War. When Nigeria became independent from Britain in 1960, the trophy was renamed the Nigeria Challenge Cup and matches for competition for it were played under the rules and regulations of the Nigeria Football Association. The story of the Challenge Cup competition is, in reality, the story of Nigerian soccer for it was in this competition that all that was good in Nigerian soccer was displayed before the eyes of the vociferous and, at many times, partisan crowds.

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[440] "Ekpenyong Advices (sic) Calabar Players In a Nobel Speech," *West African Pilot*, August 26, 1939, 1.
[441] Lagos Versus Calabar," *The West African Pilot*, August 28, 8.
[442] "Calabar XI Beat Europeans By 3-2 Goals In Big Match," *West African Pilot*, August 29, 1939, 8.

In 1945, the Governor-General of Nigeria, Arthur Frederick Richards (later Lord Milverton), donated an exquisite silver trophy for competition among the soccer clubs in Nigeria. Although at the time he was known for his "Richards Constitution," it was his inauguration of the national up competition that had the longer legacy for Nigeria. It was called the Governor's Cup when it started, but it was renamed the Challenge Cup in 1955.The championship remains the only colonial soccer tournament still extant. When the three regions of Nigeria—Northern, Eastern and Western—were created and regional governors were appointed, it became imperative for the name of the competition to change to avoid the confusion that was bound to arise since the regions had started their own local competitions for the regional governors. In 1954, therefore, the Nigeria Football Association which was formed in the same year that the Governor's Cup started held a general meeting on a change of name for the competition. The outcome of the meeting held on Monday, February 25, 1954, was a new name for the competition. The NFA renamed it Nigeria Football Association Cup (F.A. Cup). The maiden competition featured eight teams—all from Lagos which already had an organized competition called the Mulford Memorial Cup. The eight clubs were: Marines(later renamed the Nigerian Ports Authority), Corinthians(a team of the Labour Department), Zik Athletic Club (ZAC), Post and Telegraph(P&T), Public Works Department(PWD), United Africa Company (UAC), Lands and Survey Club, and Railways. The competition remains the only significant colonial tournament still in existence in Nigeria.

In a discussion of the history of West African soccer in 1960, Father Fitzgibbons wrote, "In a big country like Nigeria, sport, football helps to bring us all together. It is not a coincidence that a great number of our national leaders are outstanding sportsmen."[443] According to Father Fitzgibbons, although Nigeria's soccer was not yet the source of national pride one would have hoped for, the fact that Nigerian players were instilled with ideals of sportsmanship, to him the greater victory.

To the British, that Nigerians had inculcated not only their sports but also the ideals of sportsmanship was among the great accomplishments of the colonial encounter, even if that sport was not cricket. Illustrating this clearly, at the NFA dinner celebrating Chairman Pius Anthony Quist's inclusion on Queen Elizabeth's New Year's Honors List in 1955, Governor-General John MacPherson said, "On and off the field, Pius Quist…was always a sportsman, a gentleman…When future generations look back on Britain's connection with Nigeria, they might decide that not the least among the benefits which the British had brought to this country was a sense of sportsmanship and a love of sports." [444]

Although the Governor's donation of the trophy indicates government interest in soccer's development in Nigeria, it is important to note three factors. To begin with, lower level officials around the territory had been donating trophies for soccer competitions on local, provincial and regional levels already for decades. In addition,

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443 Father Fitzgibbon, "Soccer in West Africa Began in Freetown and Nigeria," *West African Pilot*, October 14, 1960, 7.

444 "A Night To Be Ever Remembered by NFA: It was At Ikeja Arms," *West African Pilot*, February 8, 1955, 4.

there was a tradition of Governor's Cup being given for various competitions throughout the history of colonial Nigeria. The annual Lagos Races, for example, already had a Governor's Cup in the 1890s, as did the annual Lagos Regatta.[445] Soccer was, in fact, one of the lasting sporting activities to be awarded a trophy for a competition by a colonial governor, indicating that patronage on the highest official levels came very late in for soccer. Further, the donation of the Governor's Cup for soccer competition in Nigeria as late as 1945 showed how far behind the colonial government in the country was in recognizing the importance of soccer. In Gold Coast, for example, there was already a Governor's Cup for soccer in 1923.[446] In Zanzibar, the equivalent tournament of the Zanzibar cup was already inaugurated in 1926.[447]

The first club to win the Governor's Cup in 1945 was the Marine team of Lagos which beat Corinthians by a lone goal. At its inception the tournament was an all-Lagos affair launched with little fanfare or national attention. The inaugural tournament included thirteen teams mostly from organized Lagos leagues.[448] The 1945 Governor's Cup final of Marine over Corinthians was barely noted even in the usually soccer-mad West African Pilot,[449] and was attended by only 6,500.[450] It was fitting that that Marine should win, as they had been the dominant team in Lagos soccer over the previous years

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445 "The Annual Reggata," *Lagos Weekly Record*, March 30, 1892, p.3 and "The Lagos Races," *Lagos Weekly Record*, November 12, 1893, 3.

446 The winners of the Governor's Cup (Gold Coast) 1922-1923," Photograph caption, *West Africa*, February 17, 1923, 115.

447 Laura Fair, "Kickin' It: Leisure, Politics and Football in Colonial Zanzibar, 1900s-1950s," *Africa* 67 (2) (1997): 233.

448 Kunle Solaja, *Goal!* (Lagos, Nigeria: Extra Time Communications Ltd, 2007), 73.

449 See "Football Result," *West African Pilot*, November 8, 1945, p. 4.

450 Solaja, 71.

by winning the Lagos Memorial Cup in 1939, 1940, 1941, and 1943.[451]The following year, for the first time, a team outside from Lagos reached the final but in the end Port Harcourt Red Devils, as they were called, lost to the Lagos Railways, who were to dominate Nigerian soccer for many years, by three goals.

The 1946 edition saw major changes in the format of the competition. First, the Lagos District Amateur Football Association (LDAFA), the body responsible for organizing the competition until the reorganization of the Nigeria Football Association (NFA) allowed it to take over in 1948, to open the tournament to the entire territory. With this in mind, the LDAFA invited all the teams in the Lagos Senior Division to participate. Although the Lagos association understood that it would be difficult for non-Lagos teams to get ready that year, they hoped the invitation to teams outside Lagos would attract future interest in the competition...."as an encouragement to football throughout Nigeria…in order that the expressed wish of this association that all provincial teams shall be able to compete may have some substance…"[452] While teams from Okigwe, Umuahia and Owerri indicated that they did not have teams good enough to participate, Aba expressed interest in participating although they would need financial assistance for away matches.[453] Port Harcourt, however, decided to send a team under the name of Port Harcourt XI. That year's competition also saw the participation of another team outside of Lagos, Abeokuta Town Selected. The team was led by a school teacher called Mr. E.E.

[451] Mr. Mulford Gives History of Lagos Football," *West African Pilot*, Wednesday, December 1, 1943, 4.
[452] Ibid.
[453] Ibid.

Efiok. Although only a few teams from outside Lagos participated in the competition in the first couple of years, words about the competition spread outside Lagos afterwards, and most of the teams who could not participate in those early years were regular participants by the 1950s.

According to the *Nigerian Daily Times*, "By throwing the Governor's Cup open to the Country, the Association has no doubt made a practical approach towards fostering football throughout Nigeria."[454] In the first year of the Governor's Cup being a "national" tournament, teams from Port Harcourt, Warri, and Ibadan participated.[455] The involvement of outside teams caused some disorganization, Port Harcourt arriving some three days late. The suggestion was therefore made that rather than donating tournament profits to charity as Richards had intended, money should be used to assist teams outside Lagos with making participation possible.[456] Also, in 1946, a decision was made to prevent school teams from participating in what was supposed to be an adult competition where schoolboys could easily get injured.[457] In spite of calls to the contrary, the policy remained firm and a separate competition for Lagos schools was introduced by the LDAFA known as the School Cup[458] and later the Zard Cup, after the donor, Mr. C. Zard.[459] Railway emerged victorious in the 1946 Governor's Cup, beating Port Harcourt in the final. The Railway team was steadily displacing Marine as the pre-eminent team of

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454 "Lagos District Amateur Football Association" *Nigerian Daily Times*, November 13, 1946, 6.
455 "Lagos District Amateur Football Association," *Nigerian Daily Times*, November 15, 1946, 7.
456 Ibid.
457 Ibid.
458 "Sports Today: Football," *West African Pilot*, October 21, 1948, 4.
459 "Football School Cup," *West African Pilot*, June 14, 1951, 4.

Lagos soccer. Mr. G. Urion, the Deputy General Manager of the Nigerian Railway, was firmly committed to making Railway the best team in Lagos, attracting players from around the territory. In this way, Urion was able to assemble an unbeatable Railway team that became known as the "Old Reliables," often frustrating other clubs by poaching their best players. The Railway frontline of Balogun, Anosike, Okoh, and Okere became known as the "Urion Line," and were feared by defenders and goalkeepers throughout Lagos soccer. Railway went on to win the Governor's/Challenge Cup again in 1948, 1949, 1951, 1956, 1957, and 1964.

Railways tried to repeat that feat in 1947, but the Marine eleven, one of the pioneer clubs of the Lagos league, now fortified by young players recruited from Calabar by Commander Ivey, beat them 3-1. In 1948, other town teams entered the competition—Port Harcourt, Calabar, Jos, Kano, Aba, Kaduna. The famous members of the Railways "Urion Line," smarting over that unexpected defeat, returned in 1948 with a victory over the second non-league team, Warri eleven, by one goal. The Warri team was to get into the final three more times, losing each time, but they did not go back home empty handed because there was a trophy called the Guinness Cup donated by the makers of the well-known brew to the losers in the final. After losing to Railways in 1948, Warri came back in 1952 to be soundly beaten by Lagos Pan Bank by 6-0. This was the highest goal tally recorded at the finals history of the competition. The Railway team was steadily displacing Marine as the preeminent team of Lagos soccer. Mr. U.G. Urion, the Deputy General Manager of the Nigerian Railway, was firmly committed to making Railway the

best team in Lagos, attracting players from around the territory. Urion personally traveled around the country to recruit players for Railway and he offered some of them jobs with the Railway. In this way, Urion was able to assemble an unbeatable Railway team that became known as the "Old Reliables," often frustrating other clubs by poaching their best players.

Although the most infamous, Urion was not the only European team manager to pamper his players and treat them more like semi-professionals than the real amateurs the ideals of the public school/Oxbridge sporting code called for. The path had been pioneered by both Commander Ivy of Marine and Captain Holley, the future secretary of the NFA, of the Lagos Town Council (LTC) in the early 1940s. There was also a racial element to the control of soccer, ZAC being the only major team totally managed by Africans. When St. Gregory's soccer coach released some of his boys to play for ZAC against other top teams in Lagos soccer such as Marine and LTC who had themselves been poaching ZAC players, he found himself in big trouble. In his memoirs, Father Slattery wrote, "I had supported a local club run by a Nigerian against a local club run by colonialists. It was not on the cards of my boss. I had sounded my death knell and soon I was packing out of Gregory's."[460] Other teams that were known to toy with the rules of amateurism in Lagos soccer by the mid-1904s were PWD, P&T, Lands and Survey, and

[460] Slattery, 59-61.

Police.[461] The players, however, remained officially amateurs as they did all the way 1990 when Nigeria's first formally professional league started.

Owing to the official policy of amateurism, players could not be compensated financially for participating in matches. This entailed that if players traveled for competitions such as the Governor's Cup, they would suffer financially from lost wages while away from their place of work. Similar to the policy developed in 1934 in Downing Street regarding pay for travelling African and European inter-colonial competitors, a policy was developed by the colonial government mandating that employers had to continue to pay their African staff and officials while away on official competitions.[462]

While the first three years of the Governor's Cup tournament did not augur well for it becoming a truly All-Nigeria event, a shaky foundation had been established for that to become a reality. Nobody then—certainly not Governor Richards—would have been able to predict how popular the event would become, and how much it would contribute to a sense of common purpose for fans and players across Nigeria. By 1948, the tournament's profile was raised when the final between Port Harcourt and Railway was broadcast live on the radio, the first time that had been done for a soccer match in Nigeria.[463]

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[461] Phil Vasili, "Colonialism and Football: The First Nigerian Tour to Britain," *Race & Class* Volume 36 Number 4 (April-June 1995): 59.
[462] Ibid.
[463] "Football Topic Will Feature In Local Broadcast Today," *West African Pilot*, November 6, 1948, 4.

Throughout the 1950s, the Governor's Cup grew in scope and stature, drawing in Nigerians from the length and breadth of the territory. In the process, the tournament promoted soccer's expansion even further and solidified local affiliations to a greater sense of common purpose and practice with other Nigerians. In 1951, an impressive team from Jos made it to the final that included "Thunder" Balogun, John Dankaro, and his younger brother Sunday, together forming the core of an impressive team. Although Railway beat Plateau in the final, the fact that so many would attend a match not featuring any teams from Lagos, and that the Lagos team was considered the underdog team in the final, indicated how far soccer had progressed in Nigeria. Before the 1956 final in which Railway defeated Warri, it was said that no competition in Nigeria could, "…compare with the glamour and tradition of premier soccer trophy, the Challenge Cup."[464] It also claimed the tournament touched almost everyone in the country, as "There's hardly a man, woman or child in the whole country who has not been, in some way or another, connected with the magic of the 'silver pot'."[465]

By 1958, the colonial era was fast drawing to a close in Nigeria, the Challenge Cup competition had grown to increase thirty teams from Western Region, seventeen from the Eastern Region, and fourteen from the Northern Region.[466] It is hard to imagine that there was any other single non-religious and non-political event in Nigeria that could include sixty-one representatives from these places spread across the provinces and

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464 Darby Allen, "Prospects of Rival Teams In Today's National Final," *West African Pilot*, September 29, 1956, 7.
465 Ibid.
466 "Official Fixtures For Nigeria Challenge Cup," *West African Pilot*, June 2, 1958, .2.

regions of Nigeria. And these were not the only eligible teams in Nigeria as by 1958 the NFA had seventy-six affiliated local soccer bodies.[467]It is important to note that all the early rounds of the tournament involved travel by teams from one town to another; a further means that soccer brought the people of Nigeria closer together. In the 1958 final, Port Harcourt defeated Lagos representative team Federal United 6-0, further stamping the reality of soccer's status as a truly national phenomenon.[468] In 1959 Ibadan won the tournament, meaning that by independence each region of Nigeria had won the trophy at least once. The following year, 79 teams from every corner of Nigeria participated.[469] Emerging soccer powerhouse Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN), coached by Father Fitzgibbon of 1954 Calabar fame, won the cup for Lagos less than a month before independence was granted in October 1, 1960.[470]

The struggle for independence was not only related to the actual political structures of Nigeria. Independence struggles occurred in all areas of colonial society as Nigerians sought to take control of local institutions and practices even while the eventuality of political independence was being negotiated. The independence of sport and recreation was therefore an intrinsic part of the independence movement as Nigerians endeavored to take full equality, and then control, even of the most British social settings. This included not only battles for the administration of sporting bodies like the Nigeria Football Association (NFA), for which calls were made for its "Nigerianization" in the

467 "Closing Date for NFA Membership is Near," *West African Pilot*, March 19, 1958, 4.
468 "Challenge Cup Goes East for Third Time," *West African Pilot*, September 29, 1958, 4.
469 "Challenge Cup Regional Games Start On May 21," *West African Pilot*, May 17, 1960, 4.
470 Perry, "Lagos Fans Say Thanks To Father Fitzgibbon," *West African Pilot*, Tuesday, September 6, 1960

interest of "national pride" in 1957,[471] but also of the old colonial club described in detail in chapter two.

Although the first African chairman of the NFA was Pius Anthony Quist in 1952, during his tenure the real control of the association was with Europeans R.B. Allen and Father Dennis Slattery. Prior to the 1959 NFA elections, calls were made by Nigerians for a "truly Nigerianised NFA."[472] Although not all Nigerians were in agreement, the remaining European in the NFA R.B. Allen left the association that year so that Godfrey Amachree could take complete charge. The administration of soccer had, therefore, become a completely Nigerian affair. Soccer was an important part of the road to independence for Nigeria and other African countries. For example, to celebrate Togo's independence in April 1960, the Nigerian national team participated in a three-country tournament. Nigeria's first drew with Togo, while the subsequent match against Cameroon ended controversially with a goalless draw, the Cameroonian side walking out after the Nigerians had been awarded a penalty.[473]

During the heady days around independence in Nigeria in 1960, there was a busy soccer schedule centered largely on the capital of the soon-to-be independent Nigeria. While here track and field athletes and boxers were preparing to compete at the Rome Olympics, where they put in Nigeria's worst ever Olympics performance, [474]Nigeria's soccer players were defeated by Ghana in a World Cup qualifier in Accra at the end of

471 "Retired Footballer Wants Nigerianization of NFA," *West African Pilot*, January 8, 1957, 7.
472 Perry, "Implement Marshall Plan: A Call for Nigerianisation of NFA," *West African Pilot*, January 8, 1959, 4.
473 "Kameroun Team Walk Out to Avoid Defeat," *West African Pilot*, April 28, 1960, 7.
474 "Spotlight on Rome Olympics and West Africa Games," *West African Pilot*, October 5, 1960, 7.

August. The return match ended in a draw, entailing that Nigeria lost the opportunity of qualifying for their first world tournament.[475] The day after the Accra match, the man elected to lead Nigeria to independence, Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa, officially opened the new national stadium in Surulere, Lagos for use for independence celebrations, and in future, as the centerpiece of Nigeria's sporting spectacles.[476] At the opening of the 30,000-seater stadium, Balewa congratulated the builders for, "…getting the stadium ready on time both for the independence Celebrations and the West African Games and possibly the next Olympics in which Nigeria shall be the host country."[477]

By the time of Nigeria's independence, it would be impossible to argue that soccer was not an immensely important national phenomenon, which had over the years morphed into an obsession. In the 1960 Challenge Cup competition there were 79 teams competing from across the country. In the Lagos League of the same season, 90 Senior League and 90 Junior League matches were played.[478] The annual Lagos Schools Cup "…provided the usual frills and fun for the old and young. Old boys in the blazers and ties of their alma mater and school children in their immaculate white uniforms…"[479] while inter-district friendly matches took place between Lagos and Port Harcourt,

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475 See *West African Pilot*, Wednesday, August 31, 1960, p.7. In the second leg, Nigeria drew 2-2 with Ghana and was thus knocked out of World Cup contention on goal aggregate. "Nigeria Fail to Qualify in World Cup Soccer—Ghana Force 2-2 Draw," *West African Pilot*, September 12, 1960, 7.
476 "Balewa Will Open Stadium Today," *West African Pilot*, September 1, 1960, 7.
477 "Nigeria National Stadium Opened," *West African Pilot*, September 2, 1960, 3.
478 "Lagos Attains High Standard In Soccer During 1960 Season," *West African Pilot*, November 25, 1960.
479 Ibid.

Onitsha and the Mid-West team.[480] International matches were played in 1960 against teams from Togo, French Cameroons, Ghana, Portuguese Guinea, Cote D'Ivoire, Congo Brazzaville, Egypt, England, and the Soviet Union while Nigeria participated in West African and World Cup soccer competitions as well as receiving an invitation to participate in the next African Cup tournament.[481] In addition, national teams from Sierra Leone and French Soudan (Mali) participated in local soccer events, although not against official Nigerian teams.

By 1951, six years after the competition started, one player had firmly stamped his authority on the game in the country. It had become a common assumption that the F.A. Cup went wherever "Thunder" Tesilimi Balogun went. Balogun was Nigeria's biggest soccer star in the 1950s, and holds the record for most Governor's/Challenge Cup appearances.[482] He was an imposing 6 foot 2 inch center forward. After helping the Railways to win the cup in 1951, the third time they had won the trophy with "Thunder" Balogun spearheading their attack. Tesilimi Balogun, the live wire of the "Urion Line" fell foul of Mr. Urion and was excluded from the team's line up. A man with the same name as the excluded favorite player of the spectators was brought in to replace Balogun, and the crowd took such a dislike to him, for they felt he had usurped the place of their favorite, that they named him "Counterfeit Balogun." Some much was the dislike for him that he only lasted for one season with the Railway team. The departure of "Thunder"

480 Ibid.
481 "Nigeria To Compete For Africa Cup," *West African Pilot*, April 6, 1960, 7.
482 These were in 1947 with Marine, 1949 with Railway, 1951 with Plateau, 1952 with Pan Bank, 1953 with Dynamo, 1959 and 1961 with Ibadan.

Balogun from the Railway eleven caused a few key players to leave and join forces with others to form the Pan Bank Football Team. It was this team of decampers who lined up against the visiting Warri team in the 1951 final.

It was assumed by soccer followers that the cup would automatically move to the rocky hills of Jos Plateau because Plateau XI just acquired "Thunder." Plateau XI got to the finals where they met the Railways, "Thunder's" former team. His goal scoring touch left him on the day and after ninety minutes, Railways ran away with a lone goal and the cup. The following year when "Thunder" left Plateau XI and returned to Lagos to sign for Pan Bank Football Club, his magic returned. He scored two of the six goals in the final against Warri. Balogun was to later spend time playing for Queen's Park Rangers (QPR) in England while studying printing at the London School of Printing. Indicating Balogun's status as a star, he spent time with Western Region's Premier Obafemi Awolowo while Awolowo was in England for the Nigerian Constitutional Conference.[483] Balogun returned to Nigeria in 1958 to become coach of the West Regional Football Association, having also taken coaching courses while in the UK.[484]

Lagos teams, far more established than teams in the other parts of Nigeria, continued to dominate the competition by winning the trophy for the first eight years. Kano XI was the first team outside Lagos to win the Governor's Cup in 1953. They defeated a Lagos soccer team, Lagos Dynamos, by 2-1. Thereafter, other teams outside Lagos became emboldened to contest Lagos' domination of the competition. So, for two

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[483] "Tesi Balogun Visits West Premier in UK," *West African Pilot*, June 19, 1957, 4.
[484] "Tesi Balogun Arrives Today," *West African Pilot*, April 30, 1958, 4.

years after Kano's victory in 1955, no Lagos club got to the final of the competition. The 1954 and 1955 editions were won by teams from Calabar and Port Harcourt respectively. Perhaps the most consistent team in the history of the Cup has been Port Harcourt which appeared in six finals between 1945 and 1963, winning three and losing three. By beating the Federal United team of Lagos 6-0 in 1958, they equaled the record of the Lagos Pan Bank who had beaten Warri by the same margin in 1952. After 1960, the Jos Plateau teams got to the finals nine years out of fourteen without winning a single edition of the competition. In fact, Jos Plateau teams have the unenviable record of having appeared in five consecutive finals between 1962 and 1966 losing each time. Indeed, in their last appearance in 1966, they became so dispirited that they lost the title to Ibadan eleven on a walk-over. The Police team's win over them in 1962 was the surprise result of the year. They had come down to Lagos with a solid reputation and the Police team was not given a chance at all. But, as it turned out, the Police team surprised everyone by winning the cup with a lone goal win—the only time they would win the cup.

Another town that made great impact on Nigerian soccer was Ibadan. The Ibadan team reached the finals of the Challenge Cup five times losing only once. Their playing pattern was so consistent that they appeared in the finals in a row. In 1959 they beat Lagos Police by one goal, in 1960 they lost 2-5 to ECN, and in 1961 they came back to beat U.A.C. of Lagos by a lone goal. In 1966, five years after their last win, they bounced back to beat Plateau eleven by a walk-over. As if to prove that this was not a fluke, they came to Lagos again in 1969 to beat Warri eleven by a wide margin, 5-1, and in 1971 to

beat Enugu Rangers by 2-1. After that, their fortunes changed, and they went into limbo until first in 1977, and then again in 1979, when IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan won the cup bringing memories of the glorious days of Ibadan soccer. In their quest for the Challenge Cup, the teams representing Ibadan were variously known as Ibadan Lions, Ibadan Rovers, WNDC (Western Nigeria Development Corporation) and IICC (Industrial Investment and Credit Corporation).

The Nigeria Football Association (NFA) had certainly recognized the socializing power of the Challenge Cup. With this in mind the NFA, and therefore control of Nigerian soccer, was permanently taken over by the federal government in 1962. The silver cup originally donated by the Governor-General in 1945 was replaced with a gold trophy in 1970. The two thousand Naira-worth trophy was donated by the NFA.[485] The gold trophy was first won by Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN) in 1970. By doing this, Nigerian government officials attempt to enhance their own prestige and increase the further development of a coherent national consciousness. The use of soccer as a tool in nation building in Africa is not peculiar to Nigeria. Other African countries, most notably Cameroon,[486] but also post-apartheid South Africa, and more recently, Eritrea[487] have attempted to use soccer in the same way. Despite top down governmental attempts to control soccer and gain glory through triumphs, just as in the days of the colonial state, the real impetus for soccer's popularity was because the average Nigerian loved the

[485] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 233.
[486] Harry Mokoeba, *The Politics of Diplomacy in Cameroon Sports: A Study in the Quest for Nation-Building and International Prestige*, Columbia: University of South Carolina unpublished PhD dissertation, 1989.
[487] Martin Barclay, "In Unity is Strength," *African Soccer* No. 43 (March 1999): 30-33.

game, a love he or she could share with other citizens. Although a rather weak base on which to build national cohesion, as scholars of similar processes in Latin America have argued,[488] in the absence of anything else it is certainly a beginning. Most importantly, the mass of Nigerians themselves recognize soccer as an important unifying force, providing some hope for the longer term development of a more cohesive national identity.

The early exposure of Lagos to soccer allowed it to present individual clubs to take part in F.A. Cup. The format of the competition, however, permitted other regions to present a combined team as Lagos was regarded as too strong for individual regional clubs. In 1967, with the creation of twelve states, that format was changed. Regions which were willing could present individual clubs. A three-man committee headed by Yinka Togun, Chairman of the Western Regional Football Council, with Whyte Ukor and Oyo Orok Oyo as members, were set up to organize a new format for the competition. They introduced the National Preliminaries where a preliminary competition at zonal level (four zones were created from twelve states) was played and winners in the four zones met in Lagos for the semi-finals and final. The NFA reinforced this decision in 1971 by making it mandatory that only clubs would be allowed to register for the competition. The NFA felt that club soccer held the magic to soccer's rapid development.

[488] Joseph Arbena, "Nationalism and Sport in Latin America, 1850-1990: The Paradox of Promoting and Performing 'European Sports," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Volume 12, Number 2 (August 1995), p. 232. See also Joshua H. Nadel, *Futbol: Why Soccer Matters in Latin America* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2014), 8.

In addition, a league was being proposed and only clubs would be able to give it a solid foundation.

Most of the teams that took part in the matches were sponsored by the government or business establishments. In this respect, I will mention two teams that reached the finals of the Challenge Cup entirely due to the efforts and finance of private individuals. In 1962, Israel Adebajo, with a consuming love for soccer, founded Stationery Stores Football Club of Lagos, fondly known as the "Flaming Flamingoes" or "Adebajo Babes." He reorganized the team in 1966 and a year later, the team stunned everyone by beating Ibadan by three goals to nothing to win the Challenge Cup. The following year, 1968, they repeated the performance by beating Plateau eleven by 3-1 to win the cup for the second time in succession. Not only did they win the cup, they so dominated Nigerian soccer that they won the league and every other cup that they competed in for those two years. When the country took part in the Olympic Games in Mexico in 1968, nine of the eleven players selected for the tournament came from the Stationery Stores team. Adebajo not only picked his team from players around Lagos, but also stretched his hands across to Ghana where he recruited some outstanding players. When Israel Adebajo died in 1969, the dreams, hopes and aspirations which he had for the teams also died and the team disintegrated with some of the players leaving to join the army and others opting for new clubs.

The Enugu Rangers FC have got to the finals of the Challenge Cup a record six times, winning four times and losing twice. The story of Enugu Rangers is a story of guts

and determination considering that they got to their first final just a year after a the Civil War which brought so much destruction to lives and property in the eastern part of Nigeria where Enugu was the capital of the East Central State. One year after the end of the war in 1970, the people of Enugu and its surroundings were able to get together a team of ageing players mixed with up-and-coming young men to challenge for the Challenge Cup, and they narrowly lost to 1-2 to WNDC of Ibadan. They then embarked on an intensive training schedule and recruitment drive and came back to win the Challenge Cup three years in a row in 1974, 1975, and 1976 to join Ibadan as the only two teams to achieve this feat. They got to the final again in 1978, but Bendel Insurance of Benin beat then by three goals to nothing.

The reasons for how and why there was a civil war in Nigeria are diverse.[489] The most common explanation traces the roots of Nigerian instability to 1914 following Lord Lugard's decision to amalgamate Lagos Colony and the Northern and Southern protectorates into one administrative unit.[490] The British colonial system, one Nigerian historian remarks, left a political and economic structure with "so much inequality and injustice" that the civil war might as well of been predetermined.[491] While it is certainly true that much political and economic inequality lingered after colonial rule,

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[489] For the historiography on the Nigerian Civil War that pays particular attention to these debates, see Toyin Falola and Emily Brownell, *Essays in Honor of A.G. Hopkins* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2010), 541-554.

[490] James S. Coleman rightly points out that Nigeria was a British creation that served British interests. "The only bond of political unity," he writes, "was the person of Sir Frederick Lugard, the new governor-general." See James S. Coleman, *Nigeria: Background to Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958), 46.

[491] Fred Onyeoziri, "What Caused the Nigerian Civil War?" in Osaghae, Onwudiwe, and Suberu, *Nigerian War and Its Aftermath*, 91-99.

interpretations that make this claim only do so with the gift of hindsight. Proponents of this interpretation make Nigeria a victim of its own past and create a teleological narrative in which Nigerians had little choice but to accept their fate. The Nigerian Civil War becomes less of an avoidable tragedy and more of an inevitable formality.

Because Ibadan's soccer, which once ruled the roost, had fallen on to bad times, the advent of the IICC Shooting Stars was widely and, at most times, widely cheered by the inhabitants of the ancient city of Ibadan. The supremacy of Rangers of Enugu, who had come through a civil war to build a formidable team, was too much for the proud people of Ibadan to take. Emmanuel Okala in goal and Christian Chukwu in defense had been the driving forces behind Rangers' successes. Okala, tall and surprisingly mobile for such a big man, completely turned his goal area into a restricted zone as he foiled every attempt by opposing forwards to penetrate his goal area. In this task, he was aided and abetted by Christian Chukwu who was an all-round defender.

This was the challenge that IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan sought to upset and matters were not helped by some Rangers of Enugu fans that saw the team's success as a complete and utter vindication of the all-conquering might and supremacy of the Igbo people. As a result, the IICC team was turned into a vehicle for asserting Yoruba might and supremacy and their supporters found folk heroes in players such as Muda Lawal, Segun Odegbami, Felix Owolabi, and Best Ogedegbe. It is important to note here that after the All-Africa games, which was staged at the National Stadium in 1973, all Challenge Cup finals were moved to this new stadium from the Onikan Stadium, and it

was on this field that Enugu Rangers, IICC, Bendel Insurance of Benin and Stationery Stores of Lagos won the Challenge Cup.

The National Stadium in Lagos was the best stadium in Nigeria when it was built. The National Stadium, Surulere, was a project of the Federal Ministry of Labour. However, in view of the fact that it was a major civil engineering project in Nigeria, the Federal Government directed that the supervision and its construction should be carried out by the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing, so that the Director of Federal Public Works could be the Engineer for the project.[492] Describing the National Stadium, *The Nigeria Year Book, 1973*, had this to say:

The oval-shaped stadium in the city of Lagos is designed to hold 50, 000 spectators of whom 10, 000 will not be sealed can be divided into four segments:

(1) West Stand or the Grand Stand;

(2) The East Stand;

(3) The North Stand; and

(4) The South Stand.

The West Stand or the Grand Stand is the only part of the stadium that is covered and will have sitting accommodation for 10,000 persons. It has two terraces—the lower and upper terraces. This stand holds the State box and the press box. On the ground level are the toilets, changing rooms, showers and medical rooms for first aid.

[492] Adewale Odunsi, *Gold Medal Football* (Lagos, Nigeria: Jetage Press Limited, 1973), 11.

The East Stand, like the West Stand, also has two terraces—the upper and the lower. Though all spectators will be seated, but they are not all terraces are covered. Below the terraces, on the ground level, are storage accommodations for sport equipment, workshops, and a service pit. The ceremonial service entrance to the arena is at the ground level of this stand.

The North Stand also has two terraces. The Upper terraces are meant for spectators that will be seated while the lower terraces are for standing spectators. The arrangement of the South Stand is similar to that of the North Stand except that at the basement of the stand is a tunnel which leads from the dressing rooms to the arena. Facilities are provided for competitors and they consist of changing rooms for about 100 men and 60 women. Competitors come into the arena through a tunnel and above this tunnel are changing room for officials.[493]

The Challenge Cup obviously captured the imagination of the Nigerian public, and dramatically boosted the circulation of *The Tribune* around December when the final was being played. The paper sold three times its normal tally. The competition also ensured the survival of other papers on the on the stable of the publishers of *Nigerian Tribune,* African Newspapers of Nigeria Limited. To these newspapers go the credit for the nationwide appeal which the competition received in Nigeria, particularly in the southwest. In obscure villages, small towns, and in the cities, record crowds filled the

[493] *Nigeria Yearbook, 1973*, pp. 155-156.

local arenas and the vast stadiums.[494] However, most of these newspapers did not provide the numbers of the spectators at the games, so it is difficult to estimate how large the crowds at the games were.

Also, *Daily Times* and *Nigerian Tribune* were popular with the sporting public because they dedicated a whole page to reporting sports in their newspapers. Their sports writers also took interest in mastering the laws of most of the games they wrote about. *Daily Times* had household sports columnists like Ajibade Fashina-Thomas, Peter Chukwuma Osugo, who wrote under the pen name Pecos, or, as in later years, Esbee, as Tunde Osuntolu, Sports Editor of the *Daily Times* for a long time chose to call himself. Cyril Kappo, writing for *The Daily Times* under the name CeeKay, always reported on the Lagos Amateur Football Association (LAFA) matches.[495] It was obvious that was his preference. The reports of soccer matches by these journalists were like essays in terms of their attention to detail. They did not seek to capture the high points first, before the details. They began from the blast of the whistle, and moved bit-by-bit in reporting what transpired during a soccer match. Sports had always been mainly a back-page affair that changed on the first anniversary of The Sunday Times in August, 1954. The front page of the newspaper had the picture of the wife of A.G. Marshall presenting the Pius Anthony Cup to Peter "Baby" Anieke, the captain of the Lagos team. It was the combination of these factors that made *The Daily Times* very successful. Such success also promptly drove some of its competitors like *The Daily Service* and *West African*

494 Tayo Adetola, "Dupe Oshikoya: A Pride to Nigeria," *Daily Times*, February 15, 1974, 29.
495 "Railway The Home of Many A Star*," Daily Times*, September 29, 1956, 10.

Pilot out of business in the 1960s and 1970s. If the commercial triumph of the Challenge Cup buoyed *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Times*, and the National Stadium and Liberty Stadium by extension, it also emboldened the publishers of these newspapers to diversify and expand into the business of sports promotion by founding an indoor sports arena, the Massey Centre, operated by a company controlled by the parent company, and several shareholders, the Centre opened its doors in the Olowogbowo area of Lagos Island on February 17, 1967.[496]

By 1970, *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Times* thus controlled the private main venues for swimming, boxing, and table tennis in Lagos and Ibadan, as well as organizing their own soccer competitions, which were tailored after the Challenge Cup. These sports spectacle were usually from March to December. The National Stadium and the Liberty Stadium operated to each other's benefit.[497] When the Liberty Stadium was fully booked, they typically took place at the National Stadium. The two stadiums also cross-promoted their events; spectators at the soccer matches at one stadium or patronized the other stadium. The two stadiums both profited, in turn, from the popularity of the Challenge Cup. Not only did the Challenge Cup attract a huge public to the National Stadium, but the stars that competed in other sporting events also routinely drew large crowds when they competed at the stadium for regular boxing fights or track and field events.

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[496] "Massey Centre Opens," *Daily Times*, February 17, 1967, 11.
[497] Sports Editor, "Liberty Stadium Becomes Self-Governing as WSSC is to Reconstitute," *Daily Sketch*, May 17, 1976, 14.

The Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) affected the development of sports in Nigeria. Not only did the war dampen the morale of athletes, it also prevented some athletes from preparing for and participating in national and international competitions. For those who were not at the war front who wanted to train and stay in shape, there was no equipment for training because the Federal Military Government (FMG) had banned the importation of any type of equipment into the country. Nigeria, faced with a civil war, was preoccupied with sustaining its economy and winning the war against the break-away Biafra. Also, people were afraid of engaging in sporting activities in certain areas for fear of being rounded up and ultimately being conscripted into the army by the authorities.

After the Civil War, everybody was back into active and normal life the in Nigeria, despite the fact that the country was going through a process of reconstruction, reconciliation, and rehabilitation. The Federal Military Government was in full support of sports, and they used it to mobilize the people. On August 12, 1971, a year after the civil war ended, the Federal Government of Nigeria issued Decree Number 34, establishing the National Sports Commission (NSC).[498] The National Sports Commission took its role from the former National Sports Council which was established in 1961. By this decree, all the national sports associations and the states sports councils were under the control of

[498] National Sports Commission, Decree No. 34, Official Gazette No. 41, Vol. 58 (August 12, 1971), 149-154.

the National Sports Commission. Abraham Ordia was chosen as secretary, and Jerry Enyeazu as the first Director of Sports.[499]

According to Decree 34, the following members of the Commission shall constitute the Executive Committee:

a) the Chairman of the Commission;

b) the Secretary of the Commission;

c) the Chairmen of the States Sports Councils;

d) one person appointed by the Commissioner from the representatives of the national sports associations;

e) one person appointed by the Commissioner from the disciplined forces;

f) one person appointed by the Commissioner from the representatives of the Universities Games Association;

g) the appointed woman member;

h) the representative of physical medicine;

i) the representative of the Nigeria Olympic Association;

j) the representative of the schools' sports; and

[499] "Liberty Stadium Now Goes to FG," *Daily Sketch*, July 10, 1978, 15.

k) two persons appointed by the Commissioner from among those appointed to represent sports generally.[500]

Thus, the National Sports Commission became the agency of the Federal Government of Nigeria, and was charged with the responsibility of encouraging, developing, and coordinating sports programs throughout the country. The Commission was also charged with hiring sports experts from abroad, buying sports equipment from foreign countries, and helping the states with logistics. In addition, a board known as the National Stadia Management Board was established, and it consisted fifteen members. The National Stadia Management Board was charged with the responsibility of maintaining every stadium in Nigeria owned and controlled by the Federal Government, and directing the affairs of this stadiums. The National Stadium in Lagos was placed under the National Sports Commission, while the management of the Liberty Stadium was under the management of Western State Sports Council. It is worthy of note, however, that the National Stadium reached in apex in terms of sporting activities when Isaac Akioye became the Director of Sports. Akioye was a workaholic ex-international soccer player and ex-Director of Sports at the University of Ife. He had a hand in every sporting activity under the National Sports Commission, and his incredible energy rubbed off on the Commission.[501]

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[500] National Sports Commission, Decree No. 34, Official Gazette No. 41, Vol. 58 (August 12, 1971), 149-154.

[501] "Akioye Visits Liberty Stadium Complex," *The Nigerian Tribune*, December 8, 1977, 15.

The administrative evolution of the Commission, particularly under Akioye, paralleled a period of innovation across board at the organization of sporting activities held at the National Stadium. Not satisfied with the way sporting events were organized at the stadium before he assumed office, Akioye rearranged things at the Commission to reflect his character. He reviewed the conditions under which the Challenge Cup final was played at the National Stadium. He established the Medical Centre in the stadium, and a full-time physician was employed head the Centre. This Centre took over the equipment used by the National Sports Commission for the January 1973 2nd All-Africa Games held in Lagos. Also, in line with providing a smoother hosting of the Challenge final at the National Stadium, the Commission also introduced new administrative machinery to in its operation. Committees were set up to handle tickets for the final, crowd control, discipline, transportation, accommodation, and protocol. It was during his tenure as Director of the Commission that clubs were allowed to fund expenses incurred in the final through the creation of a publicity "caravan" of vehicles that followed after the final game. He also raised the requested subsidy from the soccer clubs playing in the final, and varied the itinerary to accommodate clubs not playing in the final. Even if the stadium had been built to accommodate many team sports and competitions, the Challenge Cup proved to be the most popular. The primacy of the Challenge Cup was underscored by the sports weekly, *Sporting Record*, which observed that the National Stadium's capacity to "acclaim the giants of the Cup had been doubled thanks to dynamic

management.[502] True to form, the Challenge Cup drew massive crowds of more than 70,000 spectators for the final matches in the 1970s, particularly in the matches involving Rangers of Enugu, IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan, and Bendel Insurance of Benin.

The stranglehold of the National Stadium on the Challenge Cup final was unopposed. The only real challenger to the National Stadium in Lagos, the Liberty Stadium in Ibadan (built in 1960 to mark Nigeria's independence from colonial rule) certainly promoted some commercial sporting spectacle similar to those at the National Stadium, and featured its fair share of speed and distance track cycling events. It was also the scene of World Boxing Association (WBA) middleweight title fighter between Dick Tiger of Nigeria and Gene Fullmer of the United States on August 10, 1963. As stated earlier, the Liberty Stadium only hosted the replay of the Challenge Cup final of 1972 because of the controversy surrounding the first final. However, the playing pitch and the locker rooms were in deplorable conditions. Yet the Liberty Stadium complemented rather than competed with the National Stadium, which in turn did not try to drive the Liberty Stadium out of business. The management of the National Stadium and the Liberty Stadium worked out an arrangement so that teams preparing for the final can use the facilities of both stadiums for their practice sessions.[503] Moreover, the National Stadium continually publicized events at the Liberty Stadium, and helped out Liberty Stadium organizers.

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[502] "Stadium Under Dynamic Management," *Sporting Record*, April 27, 1977, 27.
[503] "Liberty Stadium Staff Commended," *Observer*, May 21, 1977, 16.

Yet in spite of everything being in place in terms of logistics and facilities, the Challenge Cup final has not been without controversy at the National Stadium, particularly in the 1970s. The challenge Cup, while popular, still was not lucrative enough to prevent the organizers from running a deficit. Also, some of the clubs that played in the final were not able to recoup the money they spent en route to the final in Lagos, in part due to the free-spending ways of those saddled with the responsibility of running the clubs. In the late 1970s, for example, to resolve the collective financial problems of IICC Shooting Stars and Rangers International of Enugu, the state governments of Oyo and Anambra where these clubs were located, sought to divest some of the managers of the clubs of their duties, a tricky position given state governments' propensity for sacrificing merit for party loyalty.

Major General David Jemibewon, the military governor of Oyo State, worked tirelessly to keep the fortunes of IICC Shooting Stars alive, and he ensured that IICC rose to prominence during his tenure in office. Jemibewon made occasional visits to the camp of IICC Shooting Stars before important matches, and he also appointed dynamic, forward-looking and result-oriented people to manage the affairs of IICC Shooting Stars.[504] Also, he established the Oyo State Sports Council to organize and oversee sport activities in the state, with many of the same personnel as the Western Sports Council. With an office inside the Liberty Stadium, the Council solidified the finances of the soccer clubs under its management. The management of IICC, in particular, did not take

[504] Olu Aina, *Shooting Stars International*: *Another Glorious Dawn* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Molua Publishers, 1995), 9-15.

kindly to the Council's interference. They saw the Council as meddlesome and exploitative, and they believed the Council was trying to capitalize on the success of IICC to boost its own prestige. Moreover, they believed the Council's involvement should only be limited to advisory and supportive roles. The Council, on its part, staged different soccer tournaments as testament to their ability to successfully put things in order. IICC, however, suffered from tensions between the National Sports Commission and the Oyo Sports Commission.

In addition, the usual bottlenecks associated with the Civil Service took a toll on the growth of IICC Shooting Stars. Funds were not released on time for political reasons, and decisions were slow and undynamic. All these factors resulted in bad performances for the IICC Shooting Stars in the Challenge Cup.[505] The Council ran the club as an integral part of the state government, drawing its authority from the governor's office. In most cases, finance affected the scope of operation of the club and hindered the smooth operation of the club. The management of IICC Shooting Stars was cash-strapped and could not recruit good players to make the team perform well in the domestic league and in the Challenge Cup.[506] It is important to note, though, that the Council's take-over of the club gave it more stability, although their performance may not have been spectacular at all times. In essence, the Council not only controlled IICC Shooting Stars, but also leveraged the club to its advantage. So, the winning of the Challenge Cup in 1971, 1977, and 1979 thus proved key in the reinforcement of the Council's control of the club.

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505 Ibid.

506 Iyiola Lawal, "FMG Spends N3 on Liberty Stadium," *The Nigerian Herald*, December 22, 1978, 15.

Jemibewon's enormous influence assured the continued flourishing of the club in the Challenge Cup in the 1970s, and the ongoing affiliation between the Liberty Stadium in Ibadan and the National Stadium in Lagos.[507]

Rangers of Enugu, as mentioned earlier, were formed in 1970 in response to the civil war. They were representatives of the part of Nigeria that just lost the war, Eastern Nigeria. So, soccer assumed the role of a pivotal instrument for an honorable re-integration into the Nigerian mainstream for a people vanquished in war. Rangers proved a point that soccer could indeed be a continuation of politics by other means, which was exemplified by the resilience and determination of a people to survive and excel. Rangers, the name of the Biafran strike force that operated with great success behind enemy lines during the war proved handy. The name bore a ring of history as did the club's motto: "Through Difficulties To the Heights."[508] The significance of this fact goes beyond symbolism, and speaks volumes to what the club represents to the Igbo people of Eastern Nigeria. For Rangers, soccer became a succor and hope after the experience of the war. With its capacity to provoke extreme passions among supports and rivals, Rangers Football Club established itself as a team that could not be wished away. Indeed, it became the greatest soccer phenomenon that the country had witnessed since independence in 1960. The string of achievements was unmatched by any club in Nigeria. In 1971, barely a year after its formation, Rangers won the G.K. Amachree Cup, forerunner to to the league championship in a national inter-club knock out competition,

[507]Aina, *Shooting Stars International*: *Another Glorious Dawn*, 19.
[508] Mbah, Okoye and Ezea, *Rangers International*: *The Story of Nigeria's All-Conquering Clubside*, 19.

and finished joint-winners with Mighty Jets of Jos in the first ever National League competition in Nigeria in 1972. They won the league three times in the 1970s—1974, 1975, and 1977; and they also won the Challenge Cup three times in the same decade—1974, 1975, and 1976. In fact, they became the first Nigerian soccer club to win a double on two occasions— 1974 and 1975. I will be looking at what Rangers' Challenge Cup victories signified in the 1970s.

In spite of the difficulty and disappointment losing in the final of the 1971 Challenge Cup to WNDC of Ibadan, Rangers appeared in the final in 1974 a more determined, experienced, and better team. After the loss in the final in 1971, the handlers of Rangers embarked on an extensive recruitment drive aimed at reinvigorating the club. No fewer than eight founding players were dropped at the end of the exercise. This coupled with the administrative changes carried out by the club rekindled hope of a bright future ahead. What emerged was a close-knit and efficient club, rearing to go. The new squad surpassed anything that Rangers' opponents had ever experienced before, tearing teams apart with relative ease.[509] The club's ruthless disposition left no-one in doubt that it was ready for national honors.

Rangers shot its way into the final of the Challenge Cup in 1974 by beating Zaria FC, Vasco and ECN of Lagos in the semi-finals. The final against Mighty Jets of Jos was a grudge match. Rangers was still smarting under what it experienced at the maiden National League in 1972, when Mighty Jets won the league through what Rangers

[509] Ibid.

perceived as a compromise between Mighty Jets and Wunti FC. The experience, as scathing as it was, constituted such a traumatic obsession to the team, and they believed only a win over Mighty Jets could heal the scar. Mighty Jets on its part paraded a redoubtable outfit. Rangers, however, put in a brilliant performance to exact their revenge, beating Mighty Jets by two goals to nothing. The encounter went down as one of the most memorable in the annals of the Challenge Cup. The two direct shots that brought Mighty Jets crumbling were unleashed by Ogidi Ibeabuchi and Kenneth Ilodigwe. Against the well-organized Rangers, Mighty Jet's oft-touted brilliance paled into insignificance. Mighty Jets players were promised Volkswagen Beetle cars if they won the Challenge Cup by the club financier, Alhaji Isiaku Ibrahim. However, Mighty jets lacked the kind of cohesion and team spirit that Rangers had.[510] As the captain Dominic Ezeani stepped forward to receive the Challenge Cup on the podium of the National Stadium, memories of 1971 came flooding back as thousands of nostalgic supporters thronged forwards chanting in excitement. There was prolonged dancing in the streets of Lagos and all major towns in East Central State and anywhere there was a concentration of Igbos.

Rangers were not only the Challenge Cup champions; they were Nigeria's double champions. Four years after its formation, the dream had turned a reality. The outpouring of emotion that greeted the players and officials on approaching Benin in the team's homeward journey proved too strong. The crowd grew uncontrollably as the team

[510] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 273.

approached home. It became necessary, therefore, to make a number of unplanned stops in the course of the journey. Villagers, women and children would not be left out of the celebration. The Igbos in the Midwest— Agbor, Benin, and Asaba—also trooped out in their thousands to welcome Rangers because, like the people in the core Igbo speaking areas, they also saw Rangers' victory as their own ultimate triumph. On arrival in Enugu, the team was treated to a carnival that evoked so much passion. Those who could afford to, cheered and rejoiced; but the majority shed tears, tears of joy. It was not so much the Challenge Cup trophy as what it symbolized. The realization that a defeated people could excel in the field of sports meant more than words could convey.

Rangers returned to the final the following year, 1975. Their opponents in the final were IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan (formerly WNDC) of Ibadan, it would be recalled, beat Rangers in the final of the Challenge Cup in 1971. IICC Shooting Stars, an old campaigner in the Nigerian soccer scene, was seen as representing the ethnic interest of the Yoruba. Rangers, on the other hand, were seen as representing the Igbo. Both clubs had fanatical and cult-like followership. At stake was not only the pride of the two clubs, but also the pride of the two ethnic nationalities that they represented. Thousands of fans of both clubs streamed into Lagos from all over the country. Scores of buses from Enugu, capital of East Central State and the home base of Rangers, carried fans to the National stadium for the showdown. The supporters of IICC from Ibadan and its environs had a much lesser distance to cover. The "battle" for supremacy between the two clubs started with the supporters of both clubs twenty-four hours before the match. All night long,

singing, dancing, and drinking went on. The match bore all the trappings of a grudge match. IICC Shooting Stars were no pushovers, either. The mammoth crowd was treated to a delightful final. In the end, it was winger Ogidi Ibeabuchi's volley that settled matters, but only after Abana of Rangers had missed a penalty. The celebrations that followed were a reenactment of 1974: wild jubilation, conviviality, and dancing. Rangers retained the trophy in 1976 beating a relatively unknown Alyufsalam Rocks Football Club of Ilorin. Rangers' capacity for surprise was never to be underestimated, having left a number of big teams gasping for breath in their run to the final. Chimezie Ngadi scored two unforgettable goals to crown a glorious individual effort on a bright sunny afternoon of November 20, 1976 inside the National Stadium in Lagos. The victory was historic and an all-time record: the first time a team would win the Challenge Cup back-to-back for three years. Overall, the Challenge Cup was dominated in the 1970s by Enugu Rangers. (See **Fig. 1**, pgs. 217-218).

The Challenge Cup, then, was inextricably connected to the network of Nigerian commercial stadium spectacle. The competition's popularity was confirmed and made visible every year in by the grand spectacle of the final stage at the National Stadium, Lagos. The National Stadium, too, gave southwestern clubs leverage for winning the competition. However, the competition did not merely depend on the stadium in Lagos; the regional stadiums were also a critical element in staging regional/state finals before the grand finale in Lagos.

Figure 1: Challenge Cup Winners from 1945 to 1980

1945	Marine of Lagos (1) vs. Corinthians of Lagos (0)
1946	Railway (3) vs. Port Harcourt (0)
1947	Marine of Lagos (3) vs. Railway (1)
1948	Railway (1) vs. Warri (0)
1949	Railway (3) vs. Port Harcourt (0)
1950	Lagos U.A.C (3) vs. Port Harcourt (2)
1951	Lagos (3) vs. Plateau (2)
1952	Lagos Pan Bank (6) vs. Warri (0)
1953	Kano (2) vs. Lagos Dynamos (1)
1954	Calabar (3) vs. Kano (0)
1955	Port Harcourt (4) vs. Warri (1)
1956	Railway (3) vs. Warri (1)
1957	Railway (5) vs. Zaria (1)
1958	Port Harcourt (6) vs. Federal United Lagos (0)
1959	Ibadan (1) vs. Lagos Police (0)
1960	Lagos ECN (5) vs. Ibadan (2)
1961	Ibadan (1) vs. Lagos UAC (0)
1962	Police (1) vs. Plateau (0)
1963	Port Harcourt (1) vs. Plateau (0)
1964	Railway (3) vs. Plateau (1)
1965	ECN (3) vs. Plateau (1)
1966	Ibadan won by walkover against Plateau
1967	Stationery Stores of Lagos (3) vs. Ibadan (0)
1968	Stationery Stores of Lagos (3) vs. Plateau (1)

Figure 1 (continued)

1969	Ibadan (5) vs. Warri (1)
1970	ECN of Lagos (3) vs. Jos (1)
1971	WNDC (IICC) of Ibadan (2) vs. Enugu Rangers (1)
1972	Replay: Bendel Insurance of Benin (3) vs. Mighty Jets of Jos (2).The match was played at the Liberty Stadium, Ibadan, after the first final ended in a controversial 2-2 draw.
1973	The Challenge Cup did not hold because of the All-Africa Games.
1974	Enugu Rangers (2) vs. Mighty Jets of Jos (0)
1975	Enugu Rangers (1) vs. IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan (0)
1976	Enugu Rangers (2) vs. Alyufsalam Rocks FC of Ilorin (0)
1977	IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan (1) vs. Raccah Rovers of Kano (0) (actual scoreline was one nil when Raccah Rovers refused to play in the second half).
1978	Bendel Insurance of Benin (3) vs. Enugu Rangers (0)
1979	IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan (2) vs. Sharks of Port Harcourt (0)
1980	Bendel Insurance of Benin (1) vs. Stationery Stores of Lagos (0)

Figure 1

Source: Segun Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 238-240

In the period between 1970 and 1980, organizers of the Challenge Cup final feared crowd disturbances in the stadium after the final. This was because the Nigerian civil war was still fresh in the memories of the supporters, some of whom fought in the war. Some of them saw the final as a continuation of the war. An increasing percentage of finals in this decade finished with incidents after the final whistle. In 1977, for instance, the Challenge Cup final was not decided on the field of play. The final was between IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan and Raccah Rovers of Kano. IICC Shooting Stars had missed a penalty kick taken by Segun Odegbami. After his miss, Raccah Rovers took over control of the match, and piled pressure on IICC Shooting Stars. Occasionally, the ball went towards the Rovers' goal, but it was never something threatening. It was one of such balls that got to Raccah Rovers' and the goalkeeper collected the ball. However, he stepped beyond the 18-yard line while attempting to kick the ball. Referee Phillip Gomah and his linesmen awarded a free-kick for the infringement. It was an unexpected gift for the under-pressure IICC Shooting Stars. The Raccah Rovers wall of defense was formed and, Segun Odegami, with the outside of his right foot, curved the ball beyond the reach of Raccah Rovers' goalkeeper. A goal was scored and duly awarded.

The game was halted. Some spectators from the terraces protested against the goal. The summoned the Raccah Rovers' captain, and instructed him to walk off the field if the referee did not rescind his decision. They claimed the free-kick should have been an indirect kick, not a direct one. An indirect kick would have required a second player making contact with the ball before it could be considered a goal. Pandemonium ensued

in the stadium between the supporters of IICC Shooting Stars who felt the referee made the right call by awarding a direct kick and the supporters of Raccah Rovers who felt the goal should have been disallowed. Raccah Rovers eventually walked off the playing pitch in protest, and so the 1977 Challenge Cup final ended without a clear winner. The Football Association, the organizers of the Challenge Cup, had to present the trophy to IICC in the boardroom.[511]

For the tournament's organizers, a peaceful ending to the final was desirable for many reasons. Employing the National Stadium for the final usually entailed less work and cost for the organizers of the Challenge Cup. In contrast to the rancorous finals of 1972, 1975 and 1979, where the organizers had to erect additional bandstands and barriers, and provide facilities for the media and loudspeakers to keep the crowd informed, the other finals in the decade were played without any incidents. The barriers at the stadium did not, of course, guarantee that the crowd would be contained, but they were inherently better at holding the public back than any temporary installations around the stadium. Beyond the manner in which the National Stadium terraces separated rival supporters during Challenge Cup finals, the stadium also allowed the organizers of the competition to stage a sporting fiesta in a location that became the spiritual home of the tournament. Not only could organizers charge admission to the National Stadium for the final, they could showcase the best players from the local soccer clubs that helped to make the Challenge Cup to final something to look forward to.

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511 Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 207.

Moreover, the pre-game pyrotechnics and cultural dance, in the minds of the tournament's organizers, kept the crowd attentive and prevented it from becoming disruptive while it waited for the final game to start. Spectators were entertained by the exploits of the acrobats and dancers on the field, and could listen to frequent updates on their clubs over the loudspeakers, thus allowing the crowd to follow their beloved clubs without leaving the stadium. When the players eventually make their way from the dressing rooms to the field, the crowd is already in a frenetic mood. Sometimes, some of the supporters drew too close to the players as they march onto the field, and the stadium security had to hastily clear the way for the players so that the final could commence. Upon entering the field of play, the players typically performed at least one full lap before match kick-off. At the conclusion of the game, the victorious side habitually performed an "honor lap," often collecting bouquets of flowers or club souvenirs from the supporters in the crowd.

Owing to the fact that the National Stadium is located in the heart of Lagos, the Lagos State Sports Council lobbied the Lagos State Government to make moves to the Federal Government to affiliate the National Stadium to the Lagos State Sports Council. In their attempt to have the stadium under its control, the Council argued that the federal control of the stadium was antithetical to Nigeria's federal constitution. Their lobby was, however, rejected by the Federal Government, which decided that the stadium should remain under the National Sports Council. The case of Lagos State Sports Council does not only demonstrate the influence that the state sports councils have, but it also indicates

that the stadium's political maneuverings generated conflicting reactions between state and federal governments. The Challenge Cup final, too, promised the city of Lagos a mini-economic boost, from the influx of spectators on the day of the final to the players and clubs who patronized local hotels and restaurants. These were some of the tangible benefits of the final being held in Lagos.

As a logistical, physical presence, then, the stadium was integral to the operations the Challenge Cup in the various states in Nigeria. The stadium finish in Lagos was attractive for security and economic reasons, and the tournaments' organizers actively courted access to the National Stadium. But the competition, of course, also thrived outside the National Stadium in Lagos; the bulk of the preliminary matches took place in various stadiums across the country. As a mass spectator event, then, Challenge Cup broadened the potential spectating public beyond the National Stadium to a more diverse crowd in various parts of the country. The Challenge Cup was unique in the way it turned the entire nation of Nigeria, and the Nigerian population, into both its setting and subject. The tournament imitated older narratives about Nigerian diversity and unity, like showcasing a successful player of Igbo descent, Sam Garba Okoye, playing for Mighty Jets of Jos, a northern soccer club. As the tournament carried the players to the diverse extremities of the country during the preliminaries, *Nigerian Tribune* observed that the "admirable beauty" was constituted by the different regions it traversed, from Sokoto to Lagos, Maiduguri to Port Harcourt, and from Ibadan to Enugu.[512]

[512] "Okoye the Master Dribbler," *Nigerian Tribune*, November 16, 1974, 14.

The topography of Lagos provided a great deal of drama for the competition, and introduced men and women to the working-class areas that they had never visited, notably areas like Ajegunle, Olodi Apapa, Boundary, Agege and Mushin. These areas offered the players a dramatic challenge that newspapers covering the tournament never hesitated to emphasize. *The Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Times* published frequent photos that showed the players meeting with the representatives of their ethnic groups at the hotel where they lodged in Lagos for the final. After the Africa Nations Cup hosted by Nigeria in 1980, this practice of feting Challenge Cup teams continued in Lagos, as the clubs found new outlets for entertainment, notably Eko Hotel in Victoria Island and Sheraton Hotel in Ikeja.

The geographic variety of Lagos thus became a splendid and photographic backdrop to the grand finale. If the tournament, as commentators have argued, presented Nigerian men and women with the image of a nation united through topographic diversity, the organizers of the tournament also depicted the spectators of the Challenge Cup as a similarly picturesque collection of stereotypes, whose very heterogeneity constituted Nigerian unity. In this sense, the Challenge Cup mimicked the creation of regional distinction within the context of stadium-based sports. In mainstream press such as *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Times*, spectators at the roadside were seemingly plucked from the ethnographic museum. The spectators in Lagos were religious; the crowds in the stadium were enthusiastic, exuberant, and good-natured. Radio coverage of the Challenge Cup final, which began when Lagos ECN played against Ibadan XI in the 1960 edition,

also reinforced the notion of the tournament's national peculiarity. To add color to the tournament in 1972, for instance, broadcasters recorded songs performed by local artists in praise of the victorious team in the Challenge Cup final.[513] Yet the tournament's coverage in the press and over the airwaves emphasized that, despite the regional diversity, the crowd was united by its passion for the tournament. As Sam Akpabot noted in 1983, " the story of the Challenge Cup is, in reality, the story of Nigerian soccer for it was in this competition that all that was best about in Nigerian soccer was paraded before the eyes of vociferous, and many times, partisan crowds."[514]

The competition's organizers promoted this notion of the Challenge Cup final spectatorship as an expression of regional pride by deliberately encouraging the participation of regional clubs. Even though many of these players lived, trained and played for teams outside of their original home, the tournament was structured in a way that deemphasized their origins in the expectation that spectators would feel more of a connection to the competition if it included players who could be promoted as local heroes. While some regional crowds did not embrace some players that they felt were not too indigenous, Akpabot observed that crowds in the stadium for the final matches cheered outstanding players because of the quality that they brought to the team.[515] The post-independence Lagos crowds, as another example, were especially appreciative of the presence of Tesilimi Balogun, an indigene of Lagos, in the final on a constant basis.

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[513] See, for example, Sunny Ade's *Ogun* and Ayinla Omoruwa's *Challenge Cup*, 1972, in which they sang praises of Bendel Insurance of Benin who triumphed over Mighty Jets of Jos in the Challenge Cup final replay at Ibadan.

[514] Sam Akpabot, *Football in Nigeria* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1984), 27.

[515] Akpabot, *Football in Nigeria*, 28-31.

Despite the fact that he turned out for different clubs in the finals at various stages of his career, the crowds always gravitated towards the direction of the teams that Balogun played for.

Beyond emphasizing the specifically regional and national appeal of the competition, the organizers of the Challenge Cup stressed the overall popularity of the competition in their depiction of the crowds. The competition, in its earliest years, attracted crowds interested in good players, regardless of where in the country they came from. The competition, wrote Sam Akpbabot in 1983, was warmly received by traders and working-class Nigerians. *The West African Pilot* always pointed out the "delegations" of dock workers or railway workers whenever the Marine team or the Railway team played in the Challenge Cup final. The competition also drew a lot of foreigners to the stadium to watch soccer games, particularly the British. As more and more British men and women comfortably settled in Nigeria over the course of the interwar period, soccer indeed attracted a foreign affluent patronage, and this continued after the war ended. In 1946, for example, Lord Mulford invited those who "professed to like sports to patronize the Governor's Cup, instead of spending their time gambling at the Race Course in Onikan."

Whether these Europeans who watched these games actually hailed from England or (perhaps more likely) came from other parts of Britain, their presence demonstrates the fact that the tournament attracted an elite foreign crowd after the Second World War. The tournament's final became more and more of a meeting point for leisure for most of

them, an opportunity to show off their affluence, particularly the way they parked their automobiles one behind another outside the stadium.[516] The proliferation of cheaper means of transportation, too, notably bicycles and motorcycles, along with the advent of mandatory paid vacations under Labour Party's Clement Attlee's government after 1945, further diversified the kind of foreign crowd on display in and outside the stadium. That is, the tens of automobiles outside the stadium were accompanied by many motorcycles, evidence for a fairly heterogeneous crowd even at one of the final's more intense crowds.

Crowds at the Challenge Cup final, then, became both regional and national, mobilizing local residents as well as tourists of different varieties. The tournament broadened the political spectating public in Nigeria to include everyone in the contraption, uniting them in the festivities in the stadium. In Lagos, the crowd that usually welcomed the players to the stadium comprised in part of artisans, traders, and factory workers. While waiting outside the stadium before the game, the crowds camped outside in a picnic-like manner, drinking and dancing. Whenever the buses conveying the players came into sight, the spectators surged from where they are gathered to embrace the players and hold up special banners welcoming the players to the stadium.[517] For all the festivity of the Challenge Cup final, however, spectatorship was potentially problematic because of the proximity of spectators to the action. The proximity to players, too, was facilitated by radio coverage that duplicated the sense of close contact to game that spectators felt in person. By 1974, the year after Nigeria hosted the All-Africa

516 "Mr. T.B. Welch is Father of Railway Amateur Athletic Clubs," *Daily Times*, May 12, 1953, 16.
517 "Come-Back for Railway," *West African Pilot*, July 11, 1956, 7.

Games, radio broadcasters were recording key moments of the Challenge Cup final in the stadium and chiming in with regular updates during the final, to give the listener continuing coverage throughout the day.[518] Letters to the editor of *Daily Times* revealed, in 1974, that radio listeners felt that they were inside the terraces of the National Stadium because of the graphic coverage of the game on radio.[519] With its rapidity and sense of being plausibly live, radio thus re-emphasized the immediacy that made the Challenge Cup final spectatorship so powerful.

But proximity and immediacy, while part of the tournament's unique appeal could heighten the crowd's disruptive potential. Although the public of the Challenge Cup final at the National Stadium was more inclusive and diverse than the typical stadium gathering, it was—like the public of Lagos and the regional King George V Stadium—still criticized for its lack of discipline. The crowd at a temporary checkpoint between Western Avenue and Ikorodu Road in 1978, for example, was so disruptive that several fans were involved in accidents.[520] The same year, thirty-two people lost their lives in the stampede that followed the semi-final match between IICC Shooting Stars and Bendel Insurance of Benin at the national Stadium.[521] Spectators in the stands continually proved problematic for the policemen in the late 1970s. Four-time Challenge Cup winner, Emmanuel Okala, recounted how the fans blocked the road after the Challenge Cup final

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[518] Before Nigeria's independence in 1960, the newspapers were the only chroniclers of the Challenge Cup, and it was only in the 1960s that radio stations actively started airing live soccer matches. Radio blazed the trail in popularizing the game of soccer in Nigeria.
[519] "Letter to the Editor," *Daily Times*, Tuesday, October 29, 1974, 17.
[520] "Fatal Accident on Ikorodu Road," *Daily Times*, December 3, 1978, 21.
[521] Odegami, *Nigerian Football*, pp.237-238.

in 1975, nearly provoking a brawl.[522] If enthusiastic, undisciplined crowds proved a continued presence in the stadium and outside the stadium, they rarely became overtly violent, except for the 1975 final, marred by ruffians who attacked the team bus of Rangers on the players' way to their hotel.[523]

Yet the tournament's organizers found themselves powerless to keep the crowd of the road outside the stadium, and to prevent minor acts of undisciplined spectatorship like the general chaos after a match. *Daily Times* and later *The Nigerian Tribune* pleaded with spectators to respect match officials and avoid violence. The press also pointed out examples of well-behaved spectators in the stadium in an attempt to inspire the troublesome section of the stadium to behave itself appropriately. In 1979, for example, *Daily Times* lauded the "progress" of the crowd in the National Stadium for the Challenge Cup final between IICC Shooting Stars and Sharks Football Club, which now respected the police presence and did not attempt to cause any trouble outside the stadium. After the final match of 1979, *Daily Times* lauded the spectators for the way they behaved, which was both enthusiastic and disciplined, and "intelligently obeyed" the "imposing" police forces.[524]

All the praise for crowd "discipline" amounted to little more than whistling into the wind, as spectators clearly continued to get uncontrollably close the players and touch them at close quarters, despite the pleadings of the stadium authorities and the press. In

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[522] Mbah, Okoye and Ezea, *Rangers International*: *The Story of Nigeria's All-Conquering Clubside*, 67-72.
[523] Ibid.,77.
[524] "IICC Triumphs over Sharks," *Daily Times*, November 18, 1979, 21.

this sense, the relative failure of attempts to control spectator behavior at the tournament mirrored the fate of similar endeavors inside the stadium, although in regards to a bigger and more diverse crowd that played a more active in the entire tournament. The organizers' inability to regulate the public also paralleled their difficulties in controlling of the tournament's players themselves. No serious attempts were made by the authorities to shape the behavior, appearance, and the socioeconomic rise of the tournament's spectators, who were predominantly young working-class people.[525] The press advocated that the authorities should institute rules against public urination, improper dress in public, and acts of aggression against fans, officials, and one another. None of these rules was, however, instituted by the authorities. Faced with the authorities' inability to control the spectators, *The Punch* was reduced to running humorous cartoons about the spectators' misbehavior, suggesting that the public should be amused rather than scandalized by spectators parading around in costumes, entertaining one another with acrobatics, or "forgetting" to pay for meals and drinks in the shacks outside the stadium.[526] By 1980, crowd misbehavior inside and outside the stadium was clearly expected as part of the tradition of the tournament. It was perceived by the authorities as an acceptable development for the final stage of the tournament; it was hardly worth antagonizing the public by restraining it forcibly.

[525] Kunle Solaja, *Super Eagles Through the Ages* (Lagos, Extra Time Communications Ltd., 2010), 106-109.
[526] "Omo Oba," *The Punch*, September 12, 1979, back page.

In this context, then, undisciplined spectatorship was rendered normal at the final of the Challenge Cup. Highly-visible female spectators at the final, too, challenged assumptions about appropriate gender behavior, only to have their behavior normalized to a certain extent by the dominant narratives surrounding the race. The tournament's final match undeniably attracted a more mixed crowd than typical stadium event in the 1970s. The National Stadium was certainly a more accessible destination than the other stadiums for women, particularly educated women.[527] While watching the final, women often behaved in emotional ways. *Daily Times* noted the presence of dozen of young ladies high up on the terraces in the 1979 Challenge Cup final, who cried and gesticulated whilst the match was going on.[528] Their presence flustered the policemen, who could not decently make them behave properly on the terraces. The paper, however, concludes that the female spectators at the final were not as unruly as the male spectators, and that they were not likely to spill onto the road to cause trouble like the men after the match. As a final example, *Daily Times* observed that the hotel occupied by the players and officials of IICC Shooting Stars was practically "assaulted" by a multitude of young charming ladies who came to catch a glimpse of their favorite players.[529]

This sort of disorderly and aggressive behavior was explained, by the organizers of the tournament, as a result of the heterosexual attraction female spectators felt towards the players, who are represented as paragons of virile masculinity. Female spectators who

[527] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 244.
[528] "IICC Triumphs over Sharks," *Daily Times*, November 18, 1979, 21.
[529] Ibid.

swarmed the hotel of soccer players, ogled them at the start, or who frantically reached out to them in the stadium were simply irrational women awed by such vigorously handsome and masculine athletes. The female spectator, in this narrative, is silly and ignorant. *Daily Times* ran a cartoon in 1976 that depicted a pair of female spectators debating whether or not to ask a soccer player in the stadium, busy getting ready to go into the playing pitch, for his autograph.[530] But the tournament's organizers also cast relations between female spectators and male soccer players as inherently harmless. The female soccer fan in the stadium was usually depicted as pretty, innocent female attracted to players who noticed her and flirted with her, but did nothing worse than offering a kiss on the cheek or a suggestive wink.[531] *Nigerian Tribune* repeatedly profiled the long-suffering, loyal wives of the players, who could only hope that the husbands survived the tournament in one piece.[532] By emphasizing women as steadfast, if emotional, nurturers of manly heroes, notes Phyllis Martin, soccer attempts to cast spectatorship within traditional, complementary gender roles, which were under assault after World War II.[533]

The tournament's organizers, then, treated female emotion or unruliness as part of female spectatorship, a natural response to an event that created hyper-masculine heroes. Martin and her colleagues also attempted to dismiss the phenomenon of chauvinism in the stadium by associating spectatorship with local people expressing avid support for their local team inside the stadium. In this sense, the organizers of the Challenge Cup

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[530] *Daily Times*, October 19, 1976, back page.
[531] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 246.
[532] "'Jungle' Fans at Stadium! A Stop Must be Put to This," *Nigerian Tribune*, November 16, 1964, 14.
[533] Phyllis Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 9.

recognized that ethnic sentiment was never far from the tournament, and indeed cultivated it indirectly by organizing regional challenge cup finals. Clearly, the organizers tolerated good-natured ethnic pride and enthusiasm, as long as it did not become disruptive. In general, the press rarely criticized Nigerian spectators for excessive chauvinism. Instead, the press mostly emphasized the exuberant demonstrations of pro-ethnic sentiment that greeted the representative of the ethnic groups playing in the final.

Yet there is a fine line between partisanship and chauvinism. On the pages of *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Sketch,*[534] both based in the western part of Nigeria, excessive partisanship was almost associated with the Igbo from the east and their premier soccer club, Rangers International of Enugu. The Igbo were criticized for being too demonstrative and aggressive. The Challenge Cup finals of 1971 and 1975 between the representatives of the Yoruba in the west and the Igbo in the east, sparked hostilities between Yoruba and Igbo spectators in the stadium. The Yoruba spectators demonstrated their support for their team in a vociferous manner, while Igbo spectators cheered Rangers and sang the wildly the Igbo war song *Nzogbu Nzogbu, Enyimba Enyi*. Throughout the 1970s, too, western-Nigeria-based newspapers perpetually complained about the "incessant aggressiveness" of the Igbo fans, and the nearly "unbearable behavior" of Igbo supporters in the stadium.[535]

The criticism of Igbo supporters by the western press displaced a highly undesirable spectator characteristic, aggressive regional partisanship, onto a distinct

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534 See, for example, *Nigerian Tribune* of December 8, 1977, 16 and *The Sketch* of May 17, 1976, 14.
535 Mbah, Okoye and Ezea, *Rangers International*: *The Story of Nigeria's All-Conquering Clubside*, 82.

minority community in Lagos. In part, the negative depictions of Igbo supporters stemmed from their visibility during the final. It is important to note at this juncture that the Igbo population in Lagos increased rapidly after the civil war in 1970. Thus Igbo spectators were tarred with the brush of chauvinism, as they made an easy and familiar target for the observers of the Challenge Cup final after the war. Yoruba spectators undoubtedly voiced rapidly nationalistic sentiments in the stadium as well; indeed, Igbo spectators complained of being provoked by Yoruba spectators in the stadium in the finals of 1971 and 1975. Yet the press almost entirely ignored this sort of behavior by Yoruba spectators, and focused instead on the transgressions of Igbo spectators, who were already criticized for their excessive partisanship in the stadium.[536] In this fashion, overt spectatorship became associated with the Challenge Cup final, but with a marginalized ethnic group that could easily be excluded from the triumphal narrative that the Challenge Cup generated about the territorial and demographic unity of Nigeria.

For the Challenge Cup, despite the problems with partisan crowds, it showcased a largely positive vision of Nigeria. In contrast to the discussions of stadiums and crowds in some other parts of Africa, which reinforced the idea of Nigerian sporting sophistication in Africa, the Challenge Cup directed attention inwards, towards Nigerian regions, players, and spectators. The resulting image of Nigeria was that a marvelously diverse and picturesque nation, and appropriate arena for grueling athletic contest. While the tournament's organizers proved unable to control the behavior of certain groups of

[536] Ibid.

spectators, crowd misbehavior did not reflect poorly in Nigeria as a whole, as it did within the stadium. Instead, it became neutralized as part of the "folklore" of the tournament, or was displaced onto spectators who were external to Nigerian collective.

Cynics may consider a nationwide phenomenon developed over the colonial period of Nigerians representing colonially founded cities such as Lagos, Enugu, Port Harcourt, Jos, and Kaduna; colonially derived political entities such as Northern Region, Warri Province, or Nigeria itself; colonially constructed ethnic identities such as Igbo and Yoruba; in a colonially introduced game like soccer as a story of tragedy, of the total success and domination of the colonial power in the colonial encounter. As I have attempted to outline, however, in spite of its total foreignness, in a matter of decades soccer emerged as the sport of choice and the Challenge Cup emerged as the bellwether tournament of the Nigerian masses, regardless of the greater promotion of other activities they chose to ignore.

In the colonial period the Governor's Cup/Challenge Cup provided Nigerians indigenous to Nigeria with a means of commonality to begin the difficult construction in positive ways of local, regional, national, and international identities, contributing to the development of Nigeria's "Imagined Community"[537] in ways few other phenomena could. In the midst of colonial and post-colonial differentiation between peoples, soccer provided something that they could share, giving impetus towards the development of Victor Turner's ideological *communitas*, a concept for factors that offer a means of

[537] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006). Interestingly, Anderson fails to include sport as a factor aiding the creation of national identities, something this work and others show to be an error.

seeing beyond "… the political, racial, ethnic and linguistic boundaries that divide humans from one another, not be erasing them from the consciousness of the actors, but by demonstrating a commonality that undergirds the normative order and makes it possible."[538] That process is not yet completed, but as Nigerians around the world will continue to declare, soccer remains one of the sole unifiers and one of the few sources of pride for an increasingly impoverished and divided society.

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The Challenge Cup remained grounded, at the organizational level, in the old network of followership until the 1980s, although some transformations in the late 1980s heralded a gradual process of change. What changed the situation in the late 1980s was the provisional approval that Nigeria got the host the 1991 version of the U-20 FIFA/Coca-Cola World Youth Championship. The Mecca of the Challenge Cup final, the National Stadium, was closed for renovation, and the final was played in different stadiums across the country from 1988. As part of FIFA's requirements, the pitch of the National Stadium in Lagos was converted into an automatic "cell system," an automatic underground watering system that kept the grass permanently green and moist, and the surface water-free in case of heavy rains. The National Stadium in Lagos, with improved

538 Quoted in John MacAloon, "Olympic Games and the Theory of Spectacle in Modern Societies," in John J. MacAloon, ed*., Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984), 266.

facilities, was reopened in August 1990. The stadium had been converted into an all-seater one, and with a new capacity of 45,000.[539]

The move to play the Challenge Cup final outside its traditional home in Lagos, while duplicating (to a lesser degree) the atmosphere of the National Stadium, continued the organizers' ongoing move to broaden the potential spectating public. From its inception, the Challenge Cup final was a magnificent arena for a sporting fiesta and enthusiastic supporters.[540] The Challenge Cup, in the sense, exported stadium spectacle to everyone wherever it went, rendering all Nigerian men and women spectators, and creating problems fueled its popularity and the intimate nature of soccer spectatorship in the stadium. This move, also, furthered the organizers' ambition to include everyone in Nigeria as a possible spectator. It came at a time when the Challenge Cup final was increasingly experienced as a televised spectacle, rather than in person; by the late 1980s, tens of millions of Nigerian men and women viewed the Challenge Cup final on television. By broadcasting the Challenge Cup final, the tournament gained a more recognizable backdrop, a clearer marker of its "Nigerianness," that was transmitted via television around the nation.

The Challenge Cup final's move beyond the National Stadium confirmed, in this sense, the expansion of the spectating public in an era increasingly dominated by television. But it also reflected the changes to Nigerian society produced during the period of intensive economic and social restructuring in the middle of the 1980s, known

539 Odegbami, *Football in Nigeria*, 154-163.
540 "Football Notes," *Daily Times*, December 8, 1972, 47.

as the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). The Challenge Cup final lost part of its glamour when it was officially moved out of Lagos after the seat of government was relocated to Abuja in December 1992.[541] In the final chapter, I turn to the events held in the stadium and the experience of spectatorship. I suggest that these events not only remained grounded in urbanization and sports promotion, but also extended narratives and practices surrounding stadium spectatorship to the nation at large, turning Nigeria itself into an arena.

[541] Solaja, *Super Eagles Through the Ages*, 76.

CHAPTER 5: "This Stadium brings All of Us Together": Stadium as the Theater of Dreams

When the National Stadium in Lagos was opened on Monday, December 4, 1972, after two years of construction, the game program for the official inauguration (a soccer match between Nigeria and Mali) included an essay by Jerry Enyeazu, the Director of Sports of the National Sports Commission. Enyeazu felt that the spectator amazed at the sophistication of the new National Stadium. He wrote that, "many countries of the world, developed and developing, responding to an awareness of the importance of physical health, are now spending large sums of money on the promotion of sport. They are doing this for many reasons, not the least that a healthy citizen contributes most towards the nation. There is in every youngster, or there should be, a spirit of aggression. The best place for this aggression to be properly developed is on the playing field or in an arena under the supervision of instructors and in strict accordance with the rules of sports."[542]

The new National Stadium was indeed a technological marvel. Designed by architects Mence, Moore & Mort and built Messrs Cappa & D'Alberto construction group at the demand of the Federal Government of Nigeria, the new National Stadium shared little with the facility that it replaced, other than its name and location.[543] In its design and execution, the National Stadium was very innovative. Mence, Moore & Mort not only used computers on a wide scale, but also used a radical building technique which

[542] Souvenir Programme of the 2nd All-Africa Games in the National Stadium, January 7, 1973, 3.
[543] *Daily Times*, "Nigeria Welcomes Africa," January 8, 1973, 27.

involved using concrete for nearly the entire stadium, particularly for the northern and eastern ends of the stadium.[544] The roof of the stadium, for its part, covered half of the terraces, without any visible supports that would block the view of the fans in the stadium. As a sign of its integration within urbanized Lagos, the National Stadium was perched on the new urban center in Lagos, Surulere. Lastly, the new modern stadium was built with the comfort of spectators in mind, whether within its confines and those watching matches on television.[545]

The building of the new National Stadium heralded the construction of spectator-friendly stadiums in Nigeria. The building of this stadium paralleled the overall urge of modernization in Nigeria in the early 1970s, a period of impressive economic growth and urbanization dubbed the oil boom era.[546] The National Stadium, in this light, was a highly appropriate symbol of Nigerian modernization. Between the end of the Nigerian Civil War in 1970 and the opening of the National Stadium for the All-Africa Games in 1973, the nation's GNP quadrupled, energy consumption quintupled, and Nigerian consumers benefited from significant increase in the number of automobiles. Economic change coincided with the double demographic transformations of growth and urbanization. The Nigerian population grew from 56 million in 1970 to 63 million in 1973, fueled by a higher postwar birth rate and increased immigration in the 1970s.[547] Nigerian men and women simultaneously moved definitively from the countryside to urban agglomerations:

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544 Odunsi, *Gold Medal Football*, 9.
545 Ibid.
546 J. Isawa Elaigwu, *Gowon: The Biography of a Soldier-Statesman* (Ibadan, Nigeria: West Book Publisher Ltd., 1986), 154-173.
547 Ibid.

if only 38 percent of Nigerians lived in the city before 1960, that figure soared during the oil boom.[548] The construction of the stadium coincided with other urban transformations in Lagos, notably the expansion of the transportation system and the building of the Eko Bridge as part of a broader renovation of Lagos. When finished the National Stadium was a distinctly different innovative stadium that testified to Nigerian ingenuity and sophistication.[549] This transformation, for better or for worse, played an important role in shaping the Nigerian society.

The National Stadium, in this light, was a highly appropriate symbol of Nigerian modernization. The government tore down the old stadium, the bulk of which dated to 1960, in the process of building a new multi-lane highway on Western Avenue around the Stadium to facilitate automobile travel. Yet, in other ways, the sporting reasons for building the National Stadium aligned to fit the political purposes of the state. Building the stadium was a prominent facet of a governmental push to unify Nigeria geographically and socio-politically.[550] The National Stadium fomented a sense of symbolic and institutional unity between the government and the people. With its patriotic trappings, The All-Africa Games—the first major sports event the stadium

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[548] Toyin Falola and others have connected the rapid urbanization of Nigeria and the increase in population of the early 1970s to the buoyant economy. See Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 125-183; Toyin Falola and Steven J. Salm, eds., Urbanization and African Cultures (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2005), 17-22; Martin J. Murray and Garth A. Myers, eds., *Cities in Contemporary Africa* (New York: Pelgrave Macmillian, 2007), 51-72; and Jeremiah I. Dibua, *Modernization and the Crisis of Development in Africa* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), 111-152.

[549] Odunsi, *Gold Medal Football*, 23.

[550] Gabriel Akinola Deko, *Oluyole '79*, "History, Evolution and Development of National Sports Festival in Nigeria," 38.

hosted—marketed as an affirmation of a new, truly nation-wide sense of collective belonging.[551] Sport institutions and sport-related discourse around this period created a means of integration on a regional, national and international level, and the All-Africa Games was a prominent facet of this integrative movement.

The building of the National Stadium unfolded through a period of two years which suffered some financial problems owing to bureaucratic bottleneck, design changes, and cost overruns.[552] The building of the stadium thus stands as an awkward example of Lagosian modernization in the 1970s. It also serves as evidence for the shifting nature of Nigerian attitudes towards leisure spaces, and overall transformations regarding spectatorship and politics inside the stadium. By taking control of the National Stadium and funding its entire construction, the Federal Government of Nigeria acknowledged its role in promoting sport as a spectacle, and not solely as a participatory activity.[553] Furthermore, the form adopted for the stadium was radically different from that of the older Liberty Stadium, catering to both the spectator inside the stadium and at home in an armchair in front of the television.[554] Finally, the National Stadium as emblematic of the modern Nigerian stadium, no longer accommodated the same sorts of political spectacle that leisure spaces of old had fostered.

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551 Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 40-2.
552 Sketch Sports, "West African University Games," *Daily Sketch*, March 20, 1977, 16.
553 Ibid.
554 Souvenir Programme of the 2nd All-Africa Games in the National Stadium, January 7, 1973, 11.

This chapter examines how Nigeria appropriated two continental sporting events held at the National Stadium—the All-Games of 1973 and the Africa Cup of Nations held in 1980.

II

The post-Civil War period was a period of economic prosperity for Nigeria, and the country emerged from the war as the bellwether country in Africa because of its oil wealth.[555] Thus there was an urge for a modern stadium to fit the country's new status not only in Africa, but also in the world. The two older stadiums in Nigeria, the oldest dating back to the colonial period, were small and becoming antiquated. The Liberty Stadium, built by the Government of the Western Region in 1960, was the home of the Ibadan soccer powerhouse IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan, and had hosted many international sporting events, including a world boxing title fight. Yet barely ten years later, sports fans and the media were yearning for a stadium in the capital of Nigeria, Lagos. The scene of Nigeria's great sporting feats, the Liberty Stadium was widely praised as a testament to Nigerian ingenuity and technical prowess upon its opening in 1960.[556] In the late 1960s, however, the sports press predicted the imminent construction of a bigger stadium in Lagos. Cracks riddled the concrete portions of the Liberty Stadium. *Daily Times* blamed politics and bad management for the bad state of the Liberty Stadium, but also conceded that the government of Western State deserved criticism for not maintaining the facility

[555] Elaigwu, *Gowon*, 155.
[556] "Liberty Stadium Opens with Pomp and Fanfare," *Nigerian Tribune*, Saturday, October 1, 1960, 12.

properly.[557] By 1969 when Santos of Brazil with Pele in their ranks visited Nigeria to play some friendly soccer matches, *Daily Times* observed that nothing, short of a complete new modern stadium, would befit Nigeria.[558]

The other stadiums that existed before the National Stadium—like the Liberty Stadium in Ibadan and the Ahmadu Bello Stadium in Kaduna—were small and not properly maintained.[559] The state governments that controlled these stadiums treated them with extreme indifference; the Federal Government intervened after the Civil War to repair the roof of the Liberty Stadium out of concern for public safety. Used less and less frequently for international sports events, the Liberty Stadium still was the venue for the home matches of some soccer clubs based in Ibadan. Except for 1972 when it hosted the replay of the Challenge Cup final between Mighty Jets of Jos and Bendel Insurance of Benin, the Liberty Stadium rarely hosted any of national sporting event of note. The stadium was deployed mostly for local events like Oluyole Day, Principal's Cup final, and the Western F.A. Cup final.[560]

The plans for a new national stadium appeared destined from success from the day the foundation ceremony took place—March 14, 1970. After clearing the site of the temporary grandstands and buildings, the setting out for the foundations of the frames of the stands was carried out. Simultaneously, trial concrete mixes were carried out for the various types of concrete to be used for the construction works. Suitable mixes were

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557 *Daily Times*, "The State of Liberty," March 20, 1969, 21.
558 Ibid.
559 Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 154-163.
560 Mirror Sports Review, "Principal's Cup Here Again," *Weekly Mirror*, Vol. 8, November 3-10, 1979,11.

obtained without difficulty and work started and progressed satisfactorily until there was shortage of steel reinforcement in May 1970.[561] The plan for a new stadium befitting Nigeria's new status aligned with the government's Second National Development Plan, designed to stimulate the Nigerian postwar recovery and provide increasing governmental direction to the economy. At a press conference on December 5, 1969, the Federal Commissioner for Information, Chief Anthony Enahoro announced that three different proposals were in consideration for the new stadium.[562] The Federal Military Government (FMG) had already created a scheme that would see it solely undertake the financing the stadium project, estimated at about 33 million British pounds. *Daily Times*, while still cautious about the financial viability of the project lauded the designs of the stadium, which had "lifted sporting architecture, which countless times had assuredly served to beat records for ugliness, to the level of the most magisterial conceptions of modern architecture."[563]

The plans for the National Stadium and the municipalized Lagos not only reflected a more interventionist approach to managing leisure spaces on the part of the Federal Government, but was consistent with the urban planning developments in Nigeria. The new decrees after the Civil War gave the Federal Government more powers to build more housing and improve transportation infrastructure.[564] As a result, the government of Lagos State in conjunction with the Federal Government embarked on the

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[561] *Daily Times*, "New National Stadium Hits A Snag," June 22, 1970, 19.
[562] *The Observer*, "Fiery Tigers May Sink Eselemo XI," December 6, 1969, 15.
[563] Esbee, "Commandant Calls For Hard Training," *Daily Times*, December 8, 1969, 21.
[564] Elaigwu, *Gowon*, 161.

construction of Western Avenue which extended the bus system to the surroundings of the stadium. State and national planners also drew up plans for express motorways around Lagos, including a new bridge into Lagos Island, which (in 1971) was in its planning stages. As the proposed trail of the highway sliced through the front of the stadium, the construction of the stadium made a lot of sense, because it would logically be easier in the hands of the Federal Government.

Yet when the National Stadium opened for the All-Africa Games with a soccer match between Nigeria and Ghana on January 7, 1973, there was an electric feeling in the stadium and throughout the country. The overall reaction to the stadium across the country was one of pride and general satisfaction.[565] The Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon said the National Stadium was an "incontestable success,"[566] on both technical and aesthetical fronts. *The Nigerian Tribune* praised the "well-turned out urban stadium"[567] for its perfect visibility on the interior and the obvious attention paid to the press, radio, and television inside the stadium. It also noted that the overall price for the stadium, while higher than planned, still was far less per seat than recent stadiums the Olympic Stadium in Munich. And *Daily Times* praised the "superb, imposing, luminous stadium." *Daily Times*, though, criticized the location of the stadium in the heart of the city because they feared traffic jams whenever there was an event at the stadium.[568] In response to such concerns, the police ended up banning parking in the immediate area

565 Odunsi, *Gold Medal Football*, 21.
566 Ibid.
567 Tribune Sport, "Water Tame Police 4-0," *The Nigerian Tribune*, May 29, 1974, 15.
568 Editorial, *Daily Times*, Thursday, January 11, 1973, 27.

around the stadium, and heavily encouraged spectators to ride on public buses, which appeared to calm the immediate fears that the neighborhood would be paralyzed by traffic.

The National Stadium fits within contemporary narratives about Nigeria as a "technocrat" regime. So-called technocrats—engineers, high civil servants, and planners, among others—defended their perceived predominance in Nigerian policymaking by using their knowledge to create a better and a more organized future for Nigeria. Mence, Moore & Mort's stadium's design, a design they justified as a "social choice" reflecting the stadium's role in assembling people from all across the social spectrum, arguably demonstrated that technology and judicious spending of oil revenue improved the quality of life for Nigerians, and even democratized leisure.[569]

Beyond the ways in which the building of the National Stadium fit comfortably within other developments in postwar urban modernization, it also signaled broader transformations to spectatorship and, to a certain extent, mass politics. The completion of the National Stadium led directly to the decline of the Liberty Stadium, criticized for years by the press in Lagos as too sectional and too uncomfortable for certain spectator events. The National Stadium, unlike the Liberty Stadium, which had been constructed in 1960, actually catered more to television, the new model for spectatorship that threatened to render the stadium experience obsolete.[570] Secondly, the National Stadium was

[569] General Olusegun Obasanjo, Head of the Federal Military Government, *Report of the 3rd National Sports Festival, Kaduna*, July 22, 1977, 72-4.
[570] Tunde Sadiq, "Sports Development in Nigeria—The Giant of Africa," *The Nigerian Tribune*, May 25, 1974, 11.

designed to accommodate a generation of consumer-spectators who had more choices as to how they spent their leisure time than their counterparts enjoyed several generations earlier.[571] The ordeal of spectatorship at the Liberty Stadium was less attractive to a generation of spectators who were not accustomed to the rigors of standing on the terraces to watch matches. Hence the greatest innovation of the new National Stadium, beyond the technical virtuosity of crossed prestressed concrete and computer-aided design, was its guarantee of more seats for spectators in the crowd, a reality which rendered the stadium a more consumer-friendly environment.[572]

The reconversion of the National Stadium at the expense of the Liberty Stadium not only symbolized a new approach to spectator spaces from an architectural standpoint, but also reflected the broader acceptance on the part the authorities. Ultimately, the Federal Government's willingness to build the National Stadium, whatever the motivations, reflected its recognition of its more direct participation in the business of stadium spectacle. The National Stadium provides evidence for the changing official approach to sports spectatorship in Nigeria.[573] Also, unlike the Liberty Stadium which was owned and controlled by a regional government, the Federal Government enjoyed much greater control over what took place within the confines of the National Stadium, and moved to ban non-sporting events.

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[571] Ibid.
[572] Ibid.
[573] Bobby Naidoo, "Where Football Really Began," *The Nigerian Tribune*, May 24, 1974, 11.

The modern National Stadium in Lagos thus broke with the past by reshaping spectatorship in a new kind of space and by rejecting the old heritage of the Nigerian stadiums. The National Stadium certainly functioned as a marker of Nigerian modernity; it satisfied the demands of the era for an imposition of Nigeria's presence in the comity of nations, and fit within the broader changes to the Nigerian landscape. It proved a model, too, for other stadiums in Africa constructed in the 1970s, both in terms of its material sophistication and its provisions for seated spectators. Yet the National Stadium also stands as evidence that Lagosian and Nigerian modernization, at least in this domain, did not always arrive through chance and accident, but through a well-planned agenda for change.

III

The All-Africa Games are a continental multisport event held every four years, and the games are organized by the Supreme Council for Sports in Africa. The competing nations are from the continent of Africa. In February 1964, a preparatory conference for the All-Africa Games was held in Brazzaville, Congo, to consider discuss all matters related to organizing the first Games. Invitations were sent by the President to Congo Brazzaville, Alphonse Massemba-Débat, to all the independent countries of Africa.[574] The invitation was honored by over twenty-one African countries, and a meeting was held where a committee for All-Africa Games was formed with one representative from

[574] Souvenir Programme of the 2nd All-Africa Games in the National Stadium, January 7, 1973, 7.

each independent African country as member.[575] The High Commissioner for Youths and Sports in Congo Brazzaville, Andre Hombassa was elected president; Abraham Ordia, Secretary of the National Sports Council of Nigeria as vice-president; and Jean Claude Ganga Director of Sports of Congo Brazzaville as secretary.

The first Games were held in 1965 in Brazzaville, Congo. Athletes from thirty countries participated in the Games. Egypt came first with eighteen gold, ten silver, and three bronze medals. Nigeria came second with nine gold, five silver, and three bronze medals. At the congress held during the Games in Brazzaville, the participating countries looked up to Nigeria to take up the responsibility of hosting the next All-Africa Games because of her wealth and status in Africa.[576] *The Sunday Times*, in an editorial in 1965, described Nigeria's reaction as "cold feet." The paper wrote, "We talk of stature, yet we could not contest with Mali and Cameroon for venue of the next African Games."[577] In 1966, the SCSA awarded the second edition to Mali to be held in 1969. The Organizing Committee for the Second All-Africa Games worked hard to make sure everything was ready for the Games in Bamako, Mali. However, a military coup forced the cancellation of the Games. The Executive Committee of the Supreme Council for Sports in Africa contacted many African countries to host the games, but they all declined on the ground that the time for preparation was too short. Nigeria finally accepted to host the Games and, because of the Nigerian Civil War just ended, the Federal Government of Nigeria

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[575] Ibid.
[576] Abraham A. Ordia, *History of the All-Africa Games* (Lagos, Nigeria: National Sports Commission of Nigeria, Publication, 1973), 5.
[577] *Sunday Times*, "Nigeria Develops Cold Feet," November 22, 1955, editorial page.

requested the Supreme Council for Sports in Africa (SCSA) to move the Games to January 1973 to allow more time for preparation.[578] The Head of State of Nigeria, General Yakubu Gowon, took personal interest in all aspects of preparation for the Games. The National Stadium in Lagos was built and ready to host the rest of Africa in January 1973. A torch was lit in Brazzaville a week before the Games and transported to Lagos to symbolize continuity of the Games.[579]

The opening ceremony of the Games in Lagos was very colorful and remarkable, and it was akin to the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games.[580] The ground opening started with over four thousand sportsmen and women marching across the main bowl, with each contingent behind their national colors.[581] Then followed the release of hundreds of pigeons and balloons to grace the occasion. The competitors participated in eleven sports: track and field, boxing, basketball, soccer, volley ball, swimming, lawn tennis, cycling, table-tennis, handball, and judo. Nigeria, the host country, participated in the eleven sports. The Nigerian contingent comprised 149 men, 47 women, and 19 team officials. Athletes from Nigeria set five African records during the Games. The records set were in 4 x 100 meters relay (men), with a new record of 38.84 seconds which erased the previous record of 40.5 seconds; high jump, short put, long jump; and 100 meters hurdles. Out of the five records set by Nigeria, Modupe Oshikoya alone set three records in 100 meters hurdles, high jump and long jump. She was chosen as the most outstanding

[578] Ordia, *History of the All-Africa Games*, 6.
[579] Ibid., 7.
[580] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 40.
[581] Ordia, *History of the All-Africa Games*, 5.

athlete of the Games because of her feat. Another Nigerian girl, Evelyn Okeke, established her own record in shot put with a throw of 13.58 meters.[582]

By far the "biggest" medal won by Nigeria was the gold medal of the soccer event. Soccer, all over Africa, is regarded as the chief sport, and it is the national sport of Nigeria. The Green Eagles of Nigeria did the nation proud by becoming the strongest soccer team in Nigeria after beating Ghana, Egypt, Guinea and Mali to with the gold medal.[583] Twenty-three countries participated in the Games in Nigeria, with Egypt, just as in the first edition held in Brazzaville, topping the medals' table with 25 gold, 16 silver, and 15 bronze medals. Nigeria was second with 18 gold, 25 silver, and 15 bronze medals. Kenya came third with 9 gold, 9 silver, and 10 bronze medals. The participating athletes displayed good sportsmanship on the track and field. Also, the aims of the Games which were the fostering of unity, friendship, understanding, and mutual respect among the teeming youth of Africa was achieved.[584]

Nigeria's "social question" was foremost on General Yakubu Gowon's mind as Nigeria hosted the Games. For him, the Games, with its emphasis inter-regional "fraternization" and national unity, would constitute a "social healing project" for Nigeria in the wake of the just-ended Civil War. By bringing to Lagos athletes from all over the country, the Games would, as *Daily Times* wrote in its sport editorial, "establish an exchange of players, profoundly linking one [player] to another, renewing and

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[582] Ibid.
[583] Olu George Amadasun, *History of Football in Africa* (Lagos, Nigeria: Times Books Limited, 1994), 5.
[584] Ordia, *History of the All-Africa Games,* 8.

expanding…a spirit of nationalism and true Nigerianism."[585] The Games rapidly became more than a "work of bonding and mutual acquaintanceship [among different athletes from various ethnicities within Nigeria], however. Abraham Ordia and some of his counterparts believed the Games should play a "supplementary role in government policy" in combating divisive sentiments within Nigeria.[586] In a widely-series of lectures delivered from 1970 to 1973, the Chairman of the National Sports Commission, Jerry Enyeazu, outlined how the games could mold Nigerian men into productive workers, archetypes of masculinity, and into a bulwark of nationalism against divisive ideologies. To an audience of state governors attending a banquet he said, "As the Chairman of the National Sports Commission, one of which strives for greatness of Nigeria, I believe it is my duty to demand from you every possible moral and material support for organized sports in the states under your governance. Fomenting sports energizes our people and keeps the masses from vice; sport attempts to form a conscientious, capable and patriotic citizens."[587]

To effect these lofty ends, logistically speaking, would require some colossal financial contribution to the Commission. The Federal Government assumed the obligation of paying for the athletes trips to Lagos from their respective locations within Nigeria. It provided each delegation with first-class transportation and accommodations, as well arranging numerous banquets, field trips, and tours of the capital city of Lagos.

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585 Sports Editorial, *Daily Times*, January 19, 1973, 21.
586 Ordia, *History of the All-Africa Games,* 7.
587 Odunsi, *Gold Medal Football*, 29.

Even so, costs were enormous, and with the official state support could the agenda could be brought to fruition. Political luminaries like Sir Adetokunbo Ademola and Chief S.B. Bakare supported Enyeazu's ideas and donated significant funds to ensure the success of the Games. An experienced politician, Sir Adetokunbo Ademola brought to bear the full strength of his family name and political connections to support the Games.[588] Overall, not only did governmental support invest the Games with airs of legitimacy, it also symbolically linked the Games' ambitions to the nation-building goals of the state

[588] Ordia, *History of the All-Africa Games,* 19.

Second All-Africa Games, Lagos, Nigeria, 1973
Medals Table

Position	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Egypt	25	16	15	56
2	Nigeria	18	25	20	63
3	Kenya	9	9	18	36
4	Uganda	8	6	6	20
5	Ghana	7	7	13	27
6	Tunisia	4	6	3	13
7	Algeria	4	5	13	22
8	Ethiopia	4	3	6	13
9	Senegal	4	2	6	12
10	Ivory Coast	2	0	4	6
11	Morocco	1	3	3	7
12	Sudan	1	1	1	3
13	Guinea	1	1	0	2
14	Mali	1	1	0	2
15	Tanzania	1	1	0	2
16	Zambia	1	0	6	7
17	Somalia	1	0	0	1
18	Madagascar	0	2	3	5
19	Cameroon	0	1	3	4
20	Congo	0	1	3	4
21	Gambia	0	1	0	1
22	Niger	0	1	0	1
23	Dahomey	0	0	1	1
24	Swaziland	0	0	1	1
25	Togo	0	0	1	1
		92	92	126	310

Figure 2: Source: Second All-Africa Games Report, Lagos, Nigeria (Jan. 7-18, 1973), 112.

Through these actions, the authorities conveyed a clear message of what was at stake in the Games. For them the sporting event was an exceptional opportunity to preach to the people a gospel of national unity based on both persevering the military political system and staving off "exotic" ideological elements. The athletes invited from the interior to represent Nigeria at the Games saw the event as an opportunity to refute on a continental stage the idea that they were culturally and ethnically backward.[589] To deposit such transcendent ambitions in a sports event may seem, to modern sensibilities, misplaced or confusing. In the early 1970s, however, these hopes were not far-fetched. As outlined in chapters one and two of this dissertation, sports, for a long time in the history of Nigeria, retained vestiges of elitism. To excel in sports meant to embrace and advance modernity.[590]

With this in mind, intellectuals and the emerging elite from Northern Nigeria saw the Games as an historic opportunity to regain a measure of the national prominence the region had lost over the previous fifty years. The Northern part of Nigeria, compared with

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[589] Tribune Sport 2, "Sportsmen Must Be Fit Again," *Nigerian Tribune*, June 28, 1974, 11.

[590] J.A. Mangan and some other scholars connected the diffusion of sports to the notion of modernity in Africa and Latin America. See William J. Baker and James A. Mangan, eds., *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1987), 3; "The Early Evolution of Modern Sport in Latin America: A Mainly English Middle-Class Inspiration," in *Sport in Latin American Society: Past and Present*, ed. J.A. Mangan and Lamartine Dacosta, 9-42 (London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002; and Richard Guilianotti, *Football: A Sociology of the Global Game* (Oxford and Malden, MA: Oxford Publishers, 1999), 8-9. See also Allen Guttmann, *Games and Empires: Modern Sports and Cultural Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 56-63.

the other parts of the country, remained for the most part untransformed. Thus, the Christian cosmopolitan South became in many instances the default formulation of Nigerian national identity, a formulation that most travelers eagerly portrayed abroad. The largely Muslim North, in contrast, came to be perceived as uncivilized and regressive. *The New Nigeria*, possibly the most influential newspaper in Northern Nigeria, envisioned a dialogue between the Northerners and the rest of the country during the Games. Its editorial concluded that excellence in the Games by Nigerian athletes of Northern extraction would help "those who consider us less Nigerian and backward."[591]

Though the Federal Government deposited elevated hopes into the Games, there is little evidence to suggest it fulfilled its set-out objectives. The notion of the Games being a popular state project never became widely reproduced beyond the speeches of the Games' officials and other government appointees. Still, by infusing the Games with state-building rhetoric, the Federal Government succeeded in attracting the moral support of the people of Nigeria. And on an institutional level, the All-Africa Games provided an avenue for some players from the North to force their way into the all-important national soccer team, a uniquely emblematic institution traditionally dominated by Southerners. At the final soccer match of the multisports event, Nigeria, captained by an Igbo player, beat Guinea 2-0 in a spectacle designed to show Nigeria's emerging power in sports and beyond. It also exhibited Nigeria's full reunification after the terrible war where players

[591] Weekend Sports, *New Nigeria*, January 7, 1973, 14.

from all parts of the country, including the defunct Biafra, brought the nation glory.[592] Thus the National Stadium and the All-Africa Games were important to the remaking of Nigeria as an emerging leader of the Black and African world.[593] Furthermore, it provided Nigerians with a means of commonality to begin the difficult construction in positive ways of local, regional, national and international identities, contributing to the development of Nigeria's "imagined community"[594] in ways few other phenomena could. Sport became one of the sole unifiers and one of the few sources of pride for an increasingly impoverished and divided society. Sport, however, is too shallow a force to contend with very real problems bedeviling Nigeria.

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[592] Wiebe Boer, "A Story of Heroes, of Epics: The Rise of Football in Nigeria," in Gary Armstrong and Richard Guilianotti, eds., *Football in Africa: Conflict, Conciliation and Community* (Basingstoke; Hampshire[England]; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 70.
[593] Ibid.
[594] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York, Verso, 1991), 79.

III

The coach carrying the Green Eagles players and officials came to a halt at the State House in Lagos. Twenty-two young men, meeting with President Shehu Shagari after winning the Africa Cup of Nations hosted by Nigeria, pressed their faces against the windows and met with an astonishing sight. Fully half of the city of Lagos, it was reported had come out to meet them. As they stepped off the bus, a group of security men pushed their way through a group pf reporters, anxious to claim the men's soccer players as a historical relic. That day, March 24, 1980, was declared a public holiday by the Federal Government. It was also marked by a series of parades, speeches, parties, and exhibitions of the coveted Africa Cup of Nations, which the players had won on home soil. The Green Eagles of Nigeria had defeated the Desert Warriors of Algeria 3-0 and, most importantly, it was the first time that Nigeria had won the trophy.[595] President Shehu Shagari was so elated when he was presenting the trophy to the captain of the Green Eagles Christian "Chairman" Chukwu that he said, "I am happy you made it in my own time."[596] Until that afternoon of March 22, 1980, President Shagari had given the impression of being a man who kept his emotions under control in public. However, he stood up to wave his rattle to the crowd gleefully after the Green Eagles won the final match of the tournament. The players were featured in innumerable stories and interviews in the media. They had become national celebrities due to winning a competition which

[595] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 83.
[596] Sports Commentator, *Daily Times*, March 24, 1980, 2.

was considered to be, in the words of *The Daily Times*, "the most important continental sports event of all time."[597]

Established in 1957 by the Confederation of African Sports (CAF), the Africa Cup of Nations competition is the premier international association soccer competition in Africa. Since 1968, it has held every two years. Apart from the objective of running a continental soccer competition among African countries, CAF also wanted to forge closer contacts among African players. It was hoped that a good sporting image would be built up in this way, and African soccer standards improved.[598] After passing through regional qualifying rounds within their respective regions, the finalists would compete for the trophy in an African country chosen by CAF. What had begun as a three-team competition in 1957[599] was by 1980 an eight-team competition involving hundreds of players, coaches and officials, and hundreds of thousands of fans. To become champions of Africa, Nigeria beat Tanzania 3-1, drew with Ivory Coast 0-0, beat Egypt 1-0, Morocco 1-0 in the semi-final, and Algeria 3-0 in the final. Each Green Eagles player was rewarded with a Peugeot 504 car and a three-bedroom flat in a government-owned housing estate in Lagos. The Lagos tournament of 1980 was the twelfth edition of the Africa Cup of Nations.

The initial, highly symbolic contests between the Green Eagles of Nigeria and their opponents allowed the mass media to utilize soccer tournament as

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[597] Ibid.

[598] Ofurum, *Africa Cup of Nations*, 13.

[599] South Africa was originally scheduled to compete as the fourth participating country, but were disqualified because of the apartheid policy of the Hendrik Verwoerd government in South Africa.

quintessential characteristics as expressed through the physical performances of the players. Different Nigerian agents constructed, disseminated and/or received essential narratives of player behavior, differentiating or likening Nigeria to that of their opponents. The basic organizing principle of the tournament was to get eight representatives of the continent together in a chosen country, proffering an exhibitionist sentiment in the same spirit as a continental beauty pageant, wherein the main purpose of the event was to place African countries in juxtaposition on the field of play. The focus on interregional integration and regional exposition was what made the Africa Nations' Cup highly popular, leading the *Daily Times* to call it "the most significant soccer event in Africa."[600] The players and fans were hailed in the press as members of a greater, shared masculine Nigerian nationhood. However, selection of the twenty-two man squad for the tournament reinforced long-existing inter-ethnic grudges and stereotypes. Some segments of the press used the tournament as a way to funnel and symbolize long standing regional antagonisms—deeply held feelings of local identity and resentment aimed at a capital—

Lagos—historically seen as domineering.[601] By channeling local discourse of regional pride and laying claim to their own soccer playing style that contrasted favorably with that of Lagos, the Eastern press created powerful, widely propagated regional

[600] Sports Commentator, *Daily Times*, March 24, 1980, 2.
[601] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 86.

formulations of Nigerian-ness in explicit contradistinction to the federal capital[602]—formulations of identity that have endured until present day.

The theme of national cohesion, already written into the organizational structure of the tournament, was emphasized repeatedly by the Federal Government. "Rarely have we felt more Nigerian, more wholly national, without borders or rivalries,"[603] declared Christian Chukwu at the banquet organized for the players after the tournament. "Awakening and helping these feelings take root has been the greatest triumph of the Africa Cup of Nations."[604] According to Isaac Akioye, leader of the delegation and Chairman of the National Sports Council, the intermingling of geographically diverse players and officials officially served to break down regionally-bound barriers. At the end of his speech he hailed the players as the "spiritual current of Nigerian blood."[605] The intermingling of Nigerian players from all parts of Nigeria made possible by the Africa Nations' Cup seemed to have created a more national Nigerian citizen—one to be celebrated by the government.

The seriousness with which the Lagos-based Nigeria Football Association (NFA) approached the tournament was reflected not only in the social agenda surrounding the tournament, but also in the soccer agenda. One of the biggest sources of excitement for the Nigerian players was the opportunity to meet and compete against the best soccer teams on the continent of Africa. Due to the increasing influential sports press, the Green

602 Ibid.
603 *Souvenir*, 8th Africa Cup of Nations, 1980, 17.
604 Ibid.
605 Ibid.

Eagles' players were already household names in Nigeria. The agreement of the players to work together for a common goal reflected the powers of persuasion by Akioye, animated by his belief in the social importance of the tournament. The Green Eagles featured many of Nigeria's biggest soccer stars from most of its prestigious clubs increased nationwide interest in the tournament and reinforced the sense of national togetherness projected by the event.

Though press accounts well chronicle the Nigerian public massive outpouring of elation in the wake of Nigeria's victory in the tournament, historians are mostly left to guess as to how individual players experienced their 1980 African championship. Two singular texts from the Lagos newspaper *Daily Times*, however, provide tantalizing glimpses into the sentiments of the broader Nigerian public. The first is a selection of popular letters submitted—spontaneously, it seems—to the newspaper in the wake of the Green Eagles' championship performance, selected and introduced by an unnamed writer. "Inspired by the long-dreamt triumph of our players, the barriers holding back good judgment have been broken,"[606] the writer observed wryly. "The conquest of the African championship has awakened many souls that had laid dormant."[607] The letters themselves—assuming their content was unaltered—constitute a rare example of sports literature, some in the form of couplets, some in the form of odes, and even one arranged to be sung to the melody of a popular local song. Another letter—submitted by Tunde

[606] Sports Commentator, *Daily Times*, March 29, 1980, 43.
[607] Ibid.

Shittu from Ibadan read "The North Africans who used to beat us easily now know that WE are the champions."[608]

Daily Times also attempted to register public sentiment and expressions of local pride in a lengthy publication unusual for both its tone and subject matter. The publication consisted of a series of "on-the-scene" interviews conducted in the morning after the Green Eagles 3-0 victory over the Algerians. Here, too, respondents emphasized s sense of revenge for the defeats Nigeria had endured from North Africans in recent years. "I'm happier than ever," gushed Emeka Ofodile, friend of Christian Chukwu.[609] According to Idris, a student of Yaba College of Technology, Nigeria's victory in the tournament "demonstrated before the world and before the annals of sport that Nigeria has arrived."[610] The most vehement and eloquent expression of national sentiment came from Chief Lekan Salami, businessman and administrator and one of the most influential people in the sports circle of Nigeria. As the Chairman of IICC Shooting Stars of Ibadan—one of the most prestigious soccer clubs in Nigeria— as well as occasional soccer columnist for *Sketch*, he wrote that "They (Algeria) looked down on us, and there they are. We've given them a thorough beating in our own backyard."[611]

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608 Ibid.
609 Sports Commentator, *Daily Times*, April 5, 1980, 43.
610 Ibid.
611 Lekan Salami, "Salami Speaks," *Daily Sketch*, March 28, 1980, 15.

IV

Expressions of Nigerian pride were not limited to the realms or sports events or to the pages of newspapers, though these were key elements in the construction and dissemination of statements in this vein. From 1973 when Nigeria hosted the All-Africa Games to 1980 when it hosted the Africa Cup of Nations, the National Stadium in Lagos underwent cultural blossoming into which the victories in both events eagerly folded. These triumphs fit perfectly into the spirit of national affirmation.[612] For Isaac Akioye, who was intimately involved in promoting and translating the work of the government, the Africa Nations' Cup tournament was a confirmation of a truth which seemed to have historical roots: that the different ethnic nationalities in Nigeria are from the same family, and were destined for a bright future together as one indivisible nation.[613]Triumphs at the All-Africa Games and the Africa Cup of Nations seemed to alleviate the pessimism from within. These triumphs actualized the academic claim of historical national greatness, bringing them into modern day.

The period between 1973 and 1980 was a transformative period in Nigerian history. Profound demographic change by way of internal migration from the country to the city, a series of urbanization projects, as well as a political change from military rule to civilian rule. The government during this period attempted to dissolve ethnic, regional, and class identities with the common goal of promoting a uniquely "Nigerian" sense of

612 *New York Times*, "All-Africa Games in Lagos," January 8, 1973, 36.
613 Akpabot, *Football in Nigeria*, 42-50.

national belonging. The story of these sporting events illustrates the different geographic, economic, and social factors that played into nation-building during a dynamic period of Nigerian history. These examples highlight the constructive, cohesive powers of institutionalized sport—its singular capacity to transcend geographical distance and highlight commonalities across regional and national borders just as often as it foments differentiation.[614] Through competitive networks, even fierce rivals and geographically distant populations were tied together in stable, regulated patterns of interaction.

The national repercussions of the All-Africa Games and the Africa Cup of Nations were due in part to a unique conjunction of governmental support, tireless press attention, and a voracious public appetite for sporting events. However, these events had a unique potential to articulate, funnel, or even make worse Nigeria's internal social cleavages. Analyzing the National Stadium and the events it hosted sheds light on the quotidian contestations to Nigerian subjectivities, showing the ways local and national power was configured on an everyday level—the very stuff at the heart of nation-building.

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[614] For examples of how sport is institutionalized, see Rosentraub, *Major League Losers: The Real Cost of Sports and Who is Paying for it* (New York: Basic Books, 1999); K. Schimmel, "Take Me Out of the Ball Game: The Transformation of the Production Consumption Relations in Professional Team Sport ," in C. Harrington and D. Bielby, eds., *Popular Culture: Production and Consumption* (London: Blackwell, 2001) ; and J. Silver, *Thin Ice: Money, Politics and the Demise of an NHL Franchise* (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, 1996).

Conclusion

The Liberty Stadium in Ibadan and the National Stadium in Lagos remained the preeminent stadiums in Nigeria for approximately thirty years, until the completion of the Abuja National Stadium, just north in the suburb of Abuja, in April 2003. The new Abuja National Stadium, a 60,491-seat enclosure crowned futuristic roof, was hailed as the "largest installation ever devoted to sport" in Nigeria upon its inauguration, in advance of the 8th All-Africa Games. While Nigeria had been doted with many stadiums under different administrations, both military and civilian, the Liberty Stadium in Ibadan earned praise from the press as outstripping the other stadiums as one of the "greatest architectural success" of independent Nigeria. *The Nigerian Tribune* columnist Fabio Lanipekun, in fact, remarked that the stadium represented the "biggest achievement" for the times.[615] The 1960s, he went further, had been the decade of sport; the new stadium thus represents "our concerns and passions" as an independent nation.

To argue that the Liberty Stadium was the most appropriate sport symbol of a history that, in Nigeria, was marked by flag independence, a civil war, and tremendous economic and social modernization might appear hyperbolic. Yet Lanipekun's assessment of the Liberty Stadium echoes the central argument of this dissertation: sport and the spaces in which it unfolded, profoundly shaped society, politics and culture in Nigeria from 1930-1950. As an urban landmark, the stadium concretized

[615] Fabio Lanipekun's Column, *Nigerian Tribune*, October 19, 1990, 29.

fears about national health after independence, offered proof of government physical fitness policies from the AG-led government of the Western Region during the First Republic through the Second Republic, and symbolized the process of modernization in the twenty years after Nigeria's independence. Finally, as a crucible for spectatorship and leisure culture, the stadium—and the Challenge Cup, the All-Africa Games,

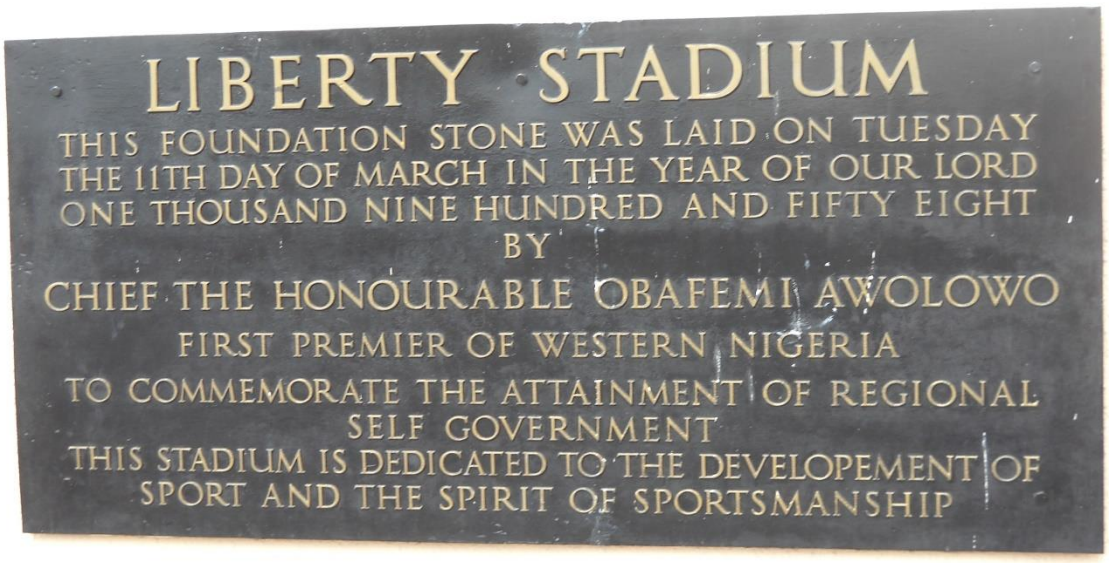

Figure 3: Foundation Stone of the Liberty Stadium, Ibadan (photograph by the author).

Figure 4: Main Bowl, Liberty Stadium, Ibadan (photograph by the author).

Figure 5: Olympic swimming pool of the Liberty Stadium, Ibadan (photograph by the author).

and the Africa Cup of Nations—showcased the contested transformation of the sporting public from the smattering of elite sportsmen and women to a mass public.

At the very least, the analysis presented here highlights the fact that the history of sports in Nigeria and its spaces cannot be separated from the history of colonization, urbanization, or social transformation in modern Nigeria. Mahmood Mamdani has argued that spectator sport is profoundly revelatory of the broader forces that characterize social activity.[616] The history of stadiums, however, suggests that spectator sport not only reveals social reality, but in many ways produces it. The space of the stadium, as I have demonstrated, constituted more than the setting for sports spectatorship, although that act was immensely meaningful in Nigeria. More broadly, the stadium framed the discussion of national health in Nigeria. Further, the stadium space was a privileged for articulating much broader anxieties about class, gender, ethnic and national identities, through conflict over spectator behavior in Nigeria, for instance, the stadium produced a new kind of consumer-spectator, highlighting the true expansion of mass consumption in Nigeria in the booming 1970s.

Given the fact that stadiums and spectator sport developed across the continent at roughly the same time in the twentieth century, however, one might very well question what exactly distinguished the stadium and its social significance in Nigeria from stadiums and spectator sport elsewhere in Africa. On one level, the answer comes from the relationship between stadium construction, spectator sport, and the government in

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[616] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 285-303.

Nigeria. At a time when some dictators in Africa constructed massive stadiums as government prestige projects, the governments in Nigeria were more about the merits of the stadium. It is perhaps not surprising, in this context, that Chief Obafemi Awolowo and General Yakubu Gowon, both popular leaders, wielded more direct influence and helped push particular projects to completion. The stadium in Nigeria mobilized the people to participate in civic and political life through an emphasis on the vigorous body (both individual and collective). In this way, I would suggest the stadium contributed to better understanding of citizenship in Nigeria.

Beyond the stadium's emphasis on the vigorous and healthy body, it also proved one of the key spaces for integrating the Nigerian working class within the nation. The stadium crowd at the Liberty Stadium or the National Stadium, in some ways, gave working class society a very visible presence in postcolonial Nigeria, outside the context of labor activism or radical politics. Even as stadium crowds generated tremendous anxiety, they ultimately testified to the indisputable prominence and acceptance of the mass public in Nigeria. It is too simplistic to merely argue that stadiums "mellowed" the crowd, rather, the stadium legitimized sport as a working-class spectacle. The same concept applies to the Challenge Cup, which broadened the concept of the "stadium public" to include the entire nation.

The stadium also emerged in Nigeria at the same moment that a full-fledged crisis erupted over perceived changes in gender roles in the aftermath of Nigeria's independence. The stadium in this context, became a privileged space for articulating a

virile, athletic masculinity on the field, and defending spectatorship as a masculine activity as well. Stadium spectatorship was certainly destabilized as a male pastime by the presence of women in the terraces. No matter how frequently the press dismissed the female spectators as emotional and irrational, they still attended stadium events, and still enjoyed the Challenge Cup. Yet the vigorous reaction against female spectatorship effectively marked spectator sport, and its spaces, as masculine preserve.

Finally, the history of stadiums and spectator offers a useful way to consider possible kinds of collective identity in Nigeria between 1960 and 1980. Stadiums not only produced local and regional affiliations, but generated broader narratives about the Nigerian national collective. Stadiums and stadium spectators contributed to a broadly positive image of Nigerian athletic prowess. The sporting spectacle that broadened the potential base of spectatorship beyond the stadium, the Challenge Cup, reinforced a much more vigorous image of Nigeria. By mobilizing the entire population to follow the competition, the Challenge Cup transcended the limitations of the stadium, and directed scrutiny towards the nation at large, unified in its demographic diversity.[617] Thus spectator sport produced conflicting kinds of narratives about place, territory, and collectivity; the analysis of stadiums should remind historians about the fluidity and mutability and collective identities in postcolonial Nigeria.

As the Liberty Stadium and the National Stadium indicate, the stadium remains a key marker of urban development, spectator behavior, and identity in contemporary

[617] Odegbami, *Nigerian Football*, 72.

Nigeria. The National Stadium in Lagos, for instance, was intended at its inception to be the lynchpin of an urban revitalization project in Surulere. In terms of spectator identity, the National Stadium was the scene of Nigeria's remarkable performances at the All-Africa Games in 1973 and the Africa Cup of Nations in 1980. The triumphs of Nigeria was celebrated by millions of men and women in every part of the country. Moreover, the multiethnic nature of the Nigerian national squad that won the Africa Cup of Nations in 1980, which contained players of Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa and Edo descent, seemingly symbolized a new, ethnic-diverse and tolerant Nigeria.

The stadium, then, remains a highly symbolic and meaningful space in Nigeria in 2015, much as it has exercised a critical influence in the country since the Liberty Stadium was opened in 1960. In its relevance to the experience of modern Nigeria, the history of the stadium almost reinforces the words of Chief Obafemi Awolowo at the inauguration of the Liberty Stadium, who (writing in 1960) described the newly-built Liberty Stadium as the immortal theater of dreams.[618] The stadium has functioned beyond Chief Awolowo's description; the stadium has been fully integrated into the debates over the shape of the contemporary nation, and stands as a symbol of modernity. Moreover, it has immensely shaped the trajectory of urban change, ethnic identity, and mass leisure in Nigeria.

[618] Obafemi Awolowo, "Awo's Voice," *Nigerian Tribune*, October 2, 1960, 15.

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