

Fall 2010

Rally Around the Flag and Support the Black Stars: Multi-Relational Analysis of Nationalism and Contemporary Football in Ghana

Elka Peterson Horner
SIT Study Abroad

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection

 Part of the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), and the [Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Peterson Horner, Elka, "Rally Around the Flag and Support the Black Stars: Multi-Relational Analysis of Nationalism and Contemporary Football in Ghana" (2010). *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*. 911.
https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/911

This Unpublished Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Study Abroad at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

*Rally Around the Flag and Support the
Black Stars: Multi-Relational Analysis of
Nationalism and Contemporary Football
in Ghana*

Elka Peterson Horner

Villanova University

School for International Training: Cape Coast, Ghana

Independent Study Project: Fall 2010

Advisor: Dr. Daniel Avorgbedor

Abstract

This research paper examines the relationship between sports and nationalism in Ghana. I draw on Ghana's performance in the 2010 FIFA World Cup as a major resource and site of argument in framing the research. Ghana, just like many other postcolonial African countries, has a multitude of ethnic groups and cultural variations; past governments worked very hard to cultivate a sense of nationalism Ghana. I am arguing that football transcends these differences or variations, especially since the culture of football is a significant tool in promoting expressions and feelings of unity and nationalism. I also argue that football is an integral part of the Ghanaian national identity, and has taken a very important place in society. The paper first outlines the history of Ghana and the history of football, before highlighting the prevalence of football and nationalism in Ghanaian society. I have employed examples of various local teams and Ghanaian footballers to show how football is linked with Ghanaian nationalism. Interviews have informed my conclusions, as well as extensive readings and field observation. The goal of the research is to expose the link between football and nationalism in the contemporary Ghanaian context and thus make a contribution to the sociological approaches to the subject of sports and nationalism.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgments.....	4
Introduction.....	5
Significance.....	5
Methodology.....	6
Limitations.....	8
Football: An Overview.....	9
Nationalism.....	10
A Short History of Ghana: Transformation from Gold Coast to Ghana.....	11
Kwame Nkrumah.....	13
Ministry of Youth and Sports.....	15
Aspects of Nationalism in Contemporary Ghanaian Society and Culture.....	18
<i>Football is Love. Football is Life: Prevalence of Football in Contemporary Ghanaian Culture (and in the larger African context)</i>	21
Religion, Spirituality, Magic, and Football in Ghana.....	24
<i>Academic Sports: A Case Study of University Athletics at the University of Cape Coast</i>	25
Local Football in Ghana: A Look into Ghanaian-on-Ghanaian Football Competition.....	29
Cape Coast.....	29
Stadium Names as a Form of National Identity: Accra, Kumasi, & Cape Coast.....	32
Robert Mensah Stadium, Cape Coast.....	32
Baba Yara Stadium, Kumasi.....	33
Ohene Djan Stadium, Accra.....	33
A Secondary Diaspora: the Migration of African Footballers.....	34
The Case of Michael Essien.....	36
Sports as an Agent for the Promotion of Unity: New Perspective on Analyzing Sports in Relation to National Identity.....	38
Interviews: Feelings in Ghana during the World Cup.....	39
Interrelationships and the Multi-Faceted Interactions of Football and Nationalism in Ghana: Visual Representation.....	42
Theoretical Conclusions.....	42
Suggestions for Further Research.....	46
Bibliography.....	47

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I want to thank my fantastic parents, Carol Peterson and Tim Horner, for their love and support. Without them, I would not have been able to spend the semester in Ghana, and I am thankful for their encouragement and patience.

My deepest thanks go out to Dr. Daniel Avorgbedor, who was not only an excellent Academic Director, but an extraordinary ISP advisor. I will never forget his unfailing commitment to this project, and how much time and effort he put into helping me. My ISP would not even close to resemble what it is, were it not for him.

To my beautiful homestay family, the Opare's, you welcomed me into your house, and it became my Ghanaian home. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Uncle Ebo, thank you for always being there and being cool and awesome.

Auntie Lydia, your attention to the snack table in the office was very much appreciated.

I would like to thank Brianna for her sense of humor that kept me going during my ISP. Although Ghanaian babies may find us boring and insufferable, you are neither of these things.

Liz, I will never forget how to live, thanks to you.

My thanks also go out to Melanie, who was there for me at the beginning and kept me on course during this incredible journey.

To the rest of the group, thank you for being yourselves! Your unique and diverse personalities kept things interesting, and helped me to look at the world in new ways.

My deepest thanks go to those men who allowed me to interview them: Uncle Ebo Sam, Mr. Daniel Apak, Mr. John Yamoah, Mr. Cantah William Godfred, Mr. Emmanuel Koomson, Mr. Nana Kwame Awuah-Gah, Mr. Sir Koosa, Mr. Fynn, Mr. Abbiezieh Yankey, and Mr. Charles James Aryeh.

Introduction

Since a young age, I have been a sports fan. I avidly follow the sports teams of my city (Philadelphia) and my university (Villanova). Not only do I love the competition, but the feelings of community that come along with sports and athletics. This past summer, I watched the 2010 FIFA World Cup with great dedication, and followed Ghana's rise to the semi-final round of the tournament. I felt a connection with the Black Stars, that I attribute to the fact that Ghana was going to be my home for the coming semester. I was also very eager to follow the last remaining African football team in the World Cup hosted in Africa. If I felt a connection with the national team of a country I had never set foot in, and saw the larger implications of their performance from my place in the United States, how did the Black Stars change the social makeup of Ghana itself?

This research strives to look at the way that football, in particular the Black Stars national team, plays into Ghanaian nationalism. Ghana, being a post-colonial society that has only recently gained independence, has a unique national identity and forms of nationalism. These facets of Ghanaian life have not been adequately studied from the perspective of football. The research process employed mixed methods, and took place over the course of four weeks. The purpose of this research is to examine the relationships between the contemporary culture of football in Ghana and expressions of Ghanaian national identity; with the focus being on the effect football has on nationalism in a post-colonial society.

Significance

The topic of sports is largely understudied in the social sciences, and equally underappreciated. The study of sports has the potential to create a window into the examination of identity formation. As anthropologist Bea Vidacs explains, "In Africa, sport can be a fruitful field of inquiry for understanding the kind of dynamics that exist between different groups or between ideas of national and ethnic belonging and how the meanings of these units change or are manipulated".¹ Past sociological studies on sports have focused on the end result of sports being pleasure or fun; this research is focused on another aspect of sports, and the very serious, very essential role that it plays in society.² The study of football in Ghana

¹ (Vidacs, 2006)

² (Elias & Dunning, 1966)

specifically is not largely addressed, and this research aims to shed some light on the sport that holds such an important place in Ghanaian society.

Sports in general have often been employed amongst world nations as a rallying point during times of crisis; athletic teams have the potential to bring people together under a common goal. The recent World Cup provided Ghana with an incredible opportunity for nation-building. The Black Stars ability to make it to the semi-finals of the World Cup raised the fervor and spirit of the Ghanaian national identity to an unprecedented pitch; second, possibly, only to the nationalistic drive surrounding Ghanaian Independence in 1957. Ghana, being a country thrown together by foreign hands, sometimes has little more than boundaries on a map binding it together. Football has always played a very large role in Ghana, and with the success of the team, the attention and feelings of unity only increased.

For many reasons, the 2010 FIFA World Cup was afforded copious attention; one reason was that it was the first World Cup to be held on the African Continent. With Ghana as the last remaining African team, there was an especially bright spotlight on Ghana. There are also large numbers of Ghanaians (or individuals of Ghanaian descent) currently living abroad. With the combination of these two factors, the Black Stars were heavily supported by people all over the globe. With the spotlight on Ghana, the government was sure to pump a lot of money into supporting the team and providing Ghanaians with something to rally around and feel proud of. By tying together these forms of national identity, with the ongoing discourse of Pan-African identity, it becomes clear that the success of the Ghanaian Black Stars not only has Ghanaian ramifications, but Pan-African ramifications as well. This research is significant because of the current nature of the topic, as well as the lack of attention paid to sports and nationalism in the past.

Methodology

This research was officially conducted over a one month period in Cape Coast, Ghana. I also spent some time in Accra, Ghana. Cape Coast was chosen as a location because I was familiar with the location, and was able to navigate the resources available to me with more ease. Accra was a necessary location because it is the center of government business in Ghana, and it was there that I was able to access important primary sources related to government.

Observation was a key method used in this research, as the paper is qualitative in nature. The observations discussed in the paper, had been being accumulated for longer than the designated four weeks of Independent Study. Since my arrival in Ghana, I had noted the amount of Red, Gold, Green and football there was. And before my arrival in Ghana, I watched the World Cup and watched the Ghana Black Stars' ascent to the semi-final round. So, the theories and questions are informed by observations I had made before embarking on my ISP.

In sociological research, observation plays a very important role and there are different types of observation. One can either be an observer or a participant-observer. Although I did not physically participate in a football match, I did attend one, which made me a little more of a participant observer. Though I only attended one football match, it was an invaluable experience because it provided me with information on the emotion-levels during Ghanaian football matches, and interviews with true football fans.

As part of my pre-field, pre-formal research, I actively participated in Ghanaian culture by reading the newspapers and watching the news. Both of these provided current and authentic secondary sources on Ghanaian perceptions of sports and national identity. Reading the newspaper supplied me with a lot of information on how Ghanaians view themselves, and how nationalism and national identity are tied into everyday life. Watching the sports sections of the nightly news gave me insight into how prevalent football is in Ghanaian culture. The media was important in informing my research and giving me background information on what I saw on a daily basis in Ghanaian life.

At the football match, and around Cape Coast, I conducted interviews with Ghanaians of varying occupations. The interviews provided my research with a very personal and intimate look at Ghana's obsession with football and how it plays into nationalism. These exploratory interviews were conducted mostly as informal conversation, and some were done in groups. The informality of the interview style allowed the interviewee to open up about their feelings, and it is my belief that the information given was of high quality because of this. Because nationalism is an intangible, it would have been difficult and counter-productive for me to ask about it outright. For that reason, the informal structure of the information allowed the interviewee to talk about nationalism and Ghanaian identity without me leading them into it. I was able to ask general questions that steered the conversation-like

interviews. In some cases, the interviewee was reluctant to share with me the information I was looking for; this forced me to probe deeper and ask my questions in different ways.

There were a few interviews though, that were conducted in a more formal setting. I spoke with government and education officials, to provide my research with a formal dimension. The information provided served as great primary sources. I was able to talk to the Head Sports coach at the University of Cape Coast, and the Director of Sports Development. The interviews with these parties were recorded. In the more informal interviews, I just remembered what the people were saying, and reflected/took notes on it immediately after. And in some cases, I conducted follow-up interviews. The interviews provided me with a range of perspectives, and frequently (mostly in the group interview) with conflicting ones, which is to be expected. I balanced these inconsistencies by mentioning them in my research and analysis of Ghanaian identity in relation to football.

I also read extensively on nationalism, identity, football, and sports in general. The literature provided my research with concrete information and sociological theories. It allowed me to contextualize my observations and the information from my interviews. The journal articles that I read added a level of sophistication to my analysis and conclusions.

Limitations

There were several limitations in my research. The most glaring of which is time. Though four weeks are enough time to gather background information on football and nationalism in Ghana, they were not enough time to give the topic the in-depth attention necessary. Because of the time restrictions, the interviews were limited in number.

Another limitation was the gender of those I interviewed. Because of time constraints, I chose to limit my research to interviews involving only men. The choice to only interview males limited my perspective, but allowed me to pay more attention to what the interviewees were saying and the analysis of the information given.

I was also limited by my nationality. As an outsider to Ghanaian culture, I surely missed some cultural nuances that would have informed me even more about the devotion to nationalism and football. Also, because I do not speak the local languages, and the English spoken is slightly different from the English I was raised speaking, there were most likely miscommunications between my interviewees and me due to language.

Being in Ghana, where the internet is limited, and the library resources not the most current, I was also limited in some ways with my sources. I was not able to get a hold of the most recent sociological studies and research on my ISP topic, though I did my very best.

Football: An Overview

In a research paper that is centered on football, a little bit about the background history of the sport is appropriate. Although the first association football dates back to 1863, the sport itself is much older.³ However, games maintaining elements of contemporary football have been dated back to the second and third centuries B.C. For example, in China, a game involving kicking a ball into goals was used as a military exercise. Even though the use of feet, and not hands, in ancient versions of the game was common, it was an element not necessarily maintained when the game reached Britain.⁴

The Romans are credited with bringing the first football-like game to Britain around the eighth century, B.C. This primitive football was wildly violent, disorganized, and unruly. It involved vague numbers of players, and did not require a playing field as it usually took place in whole villages. The size of the ball was not standard, and kicking was not necessarily the means used to move the ball to the “goal”. There were certainly mob characteristics that could be found in old football “matches”.

Because of its destructive nature, early football was often banned or looked upon in an unfavorable way. This did not stop the sport from increasing in popularity though. Early football had mass appeal that was hard to stop, an early clue to its current global popularity. Various religious groups objected to the sport in the hopes that its popularity would wane, and though it was successfully banned on Sundays, the sport never really faded from the minds of the public.

Football really took off when it started being played in British schools in the early 19th century. Though the game was still pretty violent, educators saw the value in the sport; they acknowledged that it taught sportsmanship, loyalty, community, selflessness etc. At this point, there were still no standard rules to the game. When uniform rules started to be established, a rift began to form between the schools of England. While some wanted to limit

³ (FIFA)

⁴ Ibid.

the movement of the ball to the feet, others wanted to maintain the ability to touch (or even hold) the ball in their hands. October 26th, 1863 saw the first meeting of the Football Association (FA), and an attempt at setting fundamental, universal rules. On December 8th, 1863 football and rugby officially split due to irreconcilable differences regarding the rules.⁵

After the founding of The Football Association, other football associations began springing up across Europe. The sport itself was spreading across the globe, and officially came to Ghana in 1903. Football was frequently used by colonizers in Africa as a way to mould Africans into “disciplined” individuals, and the role of sports was frequently stressed.⁶ Because of this, football became a very political sport in the British Empire.⁷ It was not only used to shape the Africans, but to further indoctrinate European values, this was done through the control and administration of the rules of play. In 1904, the *Federation International de Football Association* (FIFA) was founded in Paris. FIFA quickly grew in popularity, with 21 national football associations affiliating in under a decade. Ghana affiliated with FIFA in 1958; one year after the Black Stars national team was founded.⁸

Football as we know it today is the product of thousands of years of violence, disagreements, and camaraderie. Today, it is the world’s most popular sport, and the love of the country of Ghana. As indicated earlier, football (or sports, in general) was closely associated with the cultivation of community values, patriotism and nationalism, even in those early stages. In sum, the contemporary Ghanaian example can be seen as creative and spectacular demonstration of these values and sentiments associated with football.

Nationalism

The Penguin English Dictionary defines Nationalism as,

“*noun* **1** loyalty and devotion to one’s nation; *esp.* the exalting of one’s nation above all other. [Editorial Note: nationalism has often been regarded as a benign force, expressing the essential identity of immemorially distinct peoples. Yet destructive passions can be unleashed in its name. Moreover, the concept itself is now challenged by a recognition that it appeals to a sense of community that is ‘imagine’, whether its appeal is to historical or territorial settlement, shared ethnicity or common religion –

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ (Fair, 1997)

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ (FIFA)

Professor Peter Clark.] 2 the pursuit of political independence for one's country or nation"⁹.

That said, nationalism is a term that, when used in an academic context, loses its concrete meaning and moves into a far more fluid realm of definition. Nationalism is a term that most people understand, but is hard to actually define. Pinning down the essence of nationalism in a theory has proved difficult, and has not yet truly been accomplished¹⁰. One can look at nationalism as a way of thinking, not as anything objective or solid; this particular way of thinking informs actions, social interaction, and relationships.¹¹

Because of the slippery nature of the definition of 'Nationalism', for the purposes of this paper, the term will have a more specific meaning in the Ghanaian context. Nationalism will refer to feels of pride towards Ghana, felt by Ghanaians. It will also refer to the expression of this pride; that may be through spoken word, song, dress, or support of the Black Stars. Also, because of the post-colonial history of Ghana, nationalism to Ghanaians will retain remnants of colonialism. Nationalism will have been influenced by the former British Rule, and also by the act of gaining independence. Independence was propelled by a new sense of nationalism, and following independence, the nationalist ideals were prevalent. Older nations have more deeply seeded ideas of nationalism, but because Ghana is such a young country, nationalism is a blossoming concept and is still growing. Being a part of independent Ghana and not a part of the British Empire, remains a contributing factor in Ghanaian nationalism and identity.

So while nationalism in a theoretical sense is hard to define, these examples and guidelines will serve as the definition for the duration of this research paper. In addition, the terms, National Identity and Patriotism will be used more or less as synonyms throughout my research (unless made explicit otherwise).

A Short History of Ghana: Transformation from Gold Coast to Ghana

A brief history of Ghana is necessary in order to more fully appreciate the Ghanaian national identity and the challenges that come with it. Colonialism officially commenced in

⁹ (The Penguin English Dictionary, 2003)

¹⁰ (Waldron, 1985)

¹¹ (King, 1997)

Ghana on July 24th, 1874.¹² At that time, it was named the Gold Coast Colony and was under the rule of the British. This official movement came after four centuries of commercial interaction between the Gold Coast and Great Britain.¹³ The British were not the first to stir the pot in Ghana though, the Portuguese set foot in Ghana in 1471 on their quest to find an alternative trade route to the Far East. Instead, they stumbled upon thriving communities, rich in tradition.

With the onslaught of European traders, there was an initial ban on firearms on the Gold Coast.¹⁴ But, because war was one of the main sources of slaves, the ban was lifted in the 16th century, around the same time that the Slave Trade was really picking up in pace. Up until 1650, natives of the Gold Coast were fairly autonomous and ruled themselves. The fact remains, that without the help of the Akans¹⁵, the slave trade would have petered out. In what would be the central part of current day Ghana, the Asante Kingdom was expanding to the north and the south. These huge expansions proved to be disruptive to the slave trade and subsequently to England.

The British sent Sir Charles McCarthy, an ambassador who was residing in Sierra Leone, to visit the Asante's in the early 1820s for negotiations. In 1821 war was declared by the British on the Asantes, which ended in the beheading of Sir Charles. Britain formed an alliance with the southern part of the Gold Coast, and in 1826 waged war against the Asante kingdom. The British 'defeated' the Asante with the aid of cannons and though they had vowed to leave the Gold Coast after this war, the British merchants claimed that they had invested too much in the Gold Coast to leave. So, in 1844, a Bond was signed by seven of the 60 chiefs along the Gold Coast. The Bond of 1844 tied the hands of the native people; it essentially gave the British Magistrate the power to govern absolutely. In 1874, the British forces officially defeated the Asantes and forced a treaty upon them that banned Asantes from the South of the Gold Coast. By this time, the south had become a protectorate of Britain.

When Africa was partitioned in 1884, Asante came under huge pressure from Britain to be colonized. When Asante refused, they once again went to war, and in 1901 the Asante were defeated and officially added to the Gold Coast colony. Shortly thereafter, the North

¹² (Addo-Fening, 2010)

¹³ (Perbi, 2010)

¹⁴ The fear was that Gold Coast citizens would revolt if they had access to firearms

¹⁵ A major ethnic group in the Gold Coast, and Ghana

was colonized. The German territories were the last to be added to what would be present-day Ghana in 1916.

The Gold Coast was created, piece-meal, over the course of 48 long years. Present day Ghana would not exist were it not for Colonization. As can be seen from this rocky history, the different parts of Ghana were not instantly cohesive. They warred, disagreed, and had conflicting alliances and interests. They were *put* together by Britain for the benefit of Britain, and not for any other reason. Because of this, nationalism is something that needed to be nurtured within the Ghanaian borders. Post-colonial nationalism is different from nationalism found in nations that have never been colonized; it is tempered with a rebellious spirit.

Nationalism in Ghana began to take form following WWII, and various political parties began springing up. Nationalism in West Africa at this time was aimed at defining a new African self and creating an African point of view.¹⁶ One of the first was the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), and it was the political party that Kwame Nkrumah first backed. But he soon broke away to form his own political party, the Convention Peoples Party (CPP). Nkrumah quickly rose in popularity and was elected to the position of Leader of Government Business. He was able to run the country under the direction of the British Governor. He was then elected Prime Minister. On the March 6th, 1957, the Gold Coast declared independence from Britain and renamed itself Ghana.¹⁷ March 6th was the day chosen for independence, because it was the date the Bond of 1844 was signed by those seven chiefs on the Gold Coast. The official colonization of Ghana had come to an end. The separation from Britain got Ghana out from under the rule of the British, but did not change the political climate within the country. Ghana is still struggling with the overpowering western influences and lingering aspects of colonization.¹⁸

Kwame Nkrumah

As mentioned briefly earlier, Kwame Nkrumah was an instrumental figure in the independence of Ghana. He focused a lot of his attention on fostering nationalism and

¹⁶ (Asafu-Adjaye, 1958)

¹⁷ Ghana is a name taken from a kingdom located somewhere around present-day Mauritania. The people of this kingdom are said to have had dark skin and a tall build. Tradition states that these people migrated south to the Gold Coast. So, the people of the Gold Coast felt kinship to this kingdom and why the name Ghana was chosen for the country. (Anquandah, 2010)

¹⁸ (Britwum, 2010)

national pride within Ghana. Without these nationalist ideals, there surely would not have been the same drive for independence. Creating a national identity was very important for his political goals. Although nationalism existed in Ghana when it was still the Gold Coast, it was of a different nature; in the years preceding independence, nationalism was still a huge focus of politics.¹⁹ Nkrumah had many different ways to foster this unity and nationalism, and one of the big ones was through sports/athletics. Nkrumah himself was the founder of the national football team, the Black Stars. He hired an African coach for the inaugural team, as a statement of African self-sufficiency. For him, sports were highly political and critical for the success of Ghana following independence.

Though football had been in Ghana for years previously, the Ghana Football Association was not established until 1957, the year of Ghanaian independence.²⁰ They were named the Black Stars, as tribute to the Black Star, the symbol of pan-Africanism; the team itself a vessel for Nkrumah's nationalist and pan-African ideas.²¹ Whereas most national teams in Africa had European head coaches, Nkrumah hired an African man to coach the team. This action was to prove that Africans could be self-sufficient and govern themselves, a subject of much debate in the year of revolution and independence.

Football for Nkrumah went beyond the name and the coach, it had a bigger purpose: African unity. In a speech given in Accra, Ghana on February 7th, 1960 Nkrumah addressed the crowd regarding the new sporting era in West Africa by saying,

“I hope the visiting teams have enjoyed their stay in Ghana and that from their association here in the field of sports, they will take back with them the seed of unity between our countries. I hope that they will scatter this seed among the youth and tend to growth with care, so that sportsmen may make their special contribution to the unity which we all cherish.”²²

He saw the importance of national football and the paths of communication that it opened up. The theme of unity also applied *within* Ghana. Nkrumah had to work very hard to foster relations between the different regions of Ghana, and football provided the nation with a

¹⁹ (Boahen, 1964)

²⁰ (FIFA)

²¹ The symbol of the Black Star was also employed when naming the Black Star Line, a shipping line founded by Nkrumah after Marcus Garvey. Its purpose was to transport Diaspora Africans back to Africa; it was a physical manifestation of the Pan-African idea, much in the same way the Black Stars football team was. The Black Star is a symbol which comes up frequently in the study and examination of Pan-Africanism.

²² (Nkrumah, *New Sporting Era in West Africa*, 1997)

common goal.²³ Football transcended ethnic and regional differences, and Nkrumah wanted to harness this unifying potential by providing Ghana with a national team Ghanaians could be proud of. Football “can also play a great part in the development of unity and understanding between the regions of Ghana. Sports, like art, culture and science, have no territorial boundaries”, Nkrumah told a Kumasi crowd at the opening of their Sports Stadium in late February of 1960.²⁴

Nkrumah was not only the founder of the Black Stars national team, but he set a high standard in regards to the level of government support that Ghanaian football was to receive.

Ministry of Youth and Sports

The government of Ghana is made up of ministries, each charged with the responsibility of a different aspect of Ghanaian life and politics. Their policies are enacted by different departments, and associations. The Ministry of Youth and Sports is the ministry delegated with the responsibility of overseeing sports in Ghana and its promotion amongst youth. The Ministry was formed in 1957, when Nkrumah overhauled Ghanaian government. The Ministry was first headed by Ohene Djan, the very first Minister of Sports. He was an incredibly influential figure in the beginning of sports in Ghana, football in particular. His accomplishments will be touched upon later. Currently, the Minister of Youth and Sports is Akua Sena Dansua. As seen in the previous sections, Nkrumah had very high regard for the potential of sports in nation-building and Ghanaian identity. In fact, sports are addressed in the Constitution of Ghana, under the Social Objectives. Article 37, Clause 5 states,

(5) The State shall ensure that adequate facilities for sports are provided throughout Ghana and that sports are promoted as a means of fostering national integration, health and self-discipline as well as international friendship and understanding.²⁵

This is governmental acknowledgment of the importance and potential of sports.

In order to gain more insight into the workings of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, I interviewed a director in the ministry. My interview was with Mr. Charles James Aryeh, the Director of Sports Development, with is a sub-department of the Ministry.²⁶ The Ministry of Youth and Sports is in charge of providing the facilities to Ghanaians so that they can pursue

²³ No pun intended

²⁴ (Nkrumah, Sports and African Unity, 1997)

²⁵ (Republic of Ghana, 1992)

²⁶ (Aryeh, 2010)

sports. The ministry deals with men's, women's, and youth sports of all kind, table tennis, boxing, football, track & field, basketball, etc. As the Director of Sports Development, Mr. Aryeh had a lot to say about the provision of stadia and the role of sports in society.

He also shared a lot of valuable information regarding the setup of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The main ministry has sub-departments that are each delegated specific tasks. They answer to the main Ministry in all that they do. The Ministry of Youth and Sports oversees the National Sports Council (NSC), which is an agent of the ministry.²⁷ The NSC job is to create policy about sports for the Ministry. In their 1994 pamphlet titled *Ghanaian National Sports Policy*, they stated that the purpose of Ghanaian athletics was to “weld together the heterogeneous cultures of the people of Ghana”.²⁸ This is another example of the role sports play in Ghanaian national identity. The government is fully aware of the unifying potential of sports, and that it should be fostered in Ghana. Interviews with Ghanaians pointed to the public acknowledgement of the fact that football transcended ethnic differences; this statement by the NSC just gives official context for their views. The NSC and Ministry of Youth and Sports are trying to harness the natural ability that sports have to bring people together.

Because the Ministry deals with the full range of sports, it is the job of the Ghana Football Association (GFA) to oversee football specifically. The GFA is both an agent of the NSC and a private organization of the associative nature.²⁹ It is an official football association and recognized by FIFA. Funding for the GFA comes from a variety of sources; the Ministry of Youth and Sports does have some funds trickling into the GFA, and FIFA also provides financial assistance to the association. Funding in the Ministry of Youth and Sports is a problem, and year after year the budget has decreased.³⁰ Upon its founding, the Ministry of Youth and Sports was receiving ample funding and attention. The Public Works Department (PWD) fully supported the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and was preparing to back the building of several sports facilities around Ghana. The interest and funding faded though; the stadia were never built and funding decreased drastically.³¹

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ (Ghanaian National Sports Council, 1994)

²⁹ (Ghana Football Association)

³⁰ (Aryeh, 2010)

³¹ Ibid.

Mr. Aryeh commented that because Ghana is a developing country, there are millions of things that the government needs to attend to. Sports, he said, have fallen to the second tier of funding. The government focuses most of its attention on education, economics, development, health, etc. The Ministry of Youth and Sports is ranked with cultural activities, and does not receive the funding necessary.³² Currently, the Ministry of Youth and Sports is presenting the 2010 Sports Bill to Ghanaian Parliament. The bill calls for more attention and funding to sports facilities and activities in Ghana.³³

With the past World Cup, the Ministry did see an upswing in funds directed at the Black Stars. The team was lacking the proper training for competition at the World Cup, and money was necessary to prepare them for the tournament. The government of Ghana provided most of these funds, with minor contributions from FIFA.³⁴ Because the Black Stars were able to do so well, FIFA paid Ghana more money which has subsequently gone towards soothing the initial costs the Government absorbed. Government also provided an airplane to take Ghanaian football fans to the World Cup in South Africa.³⁵ The fact that the government of Ghana has been putting funds into football and football fans shows its dedication to the sport. The whole ministry, according to Mr. Aryeh, is under-funded, but football has managed to be financially supported. In 2007, the government allocated GH¢ 11,322,257 million (old currency) to prepare Ghanaian facilities for the 2008 African Cup of Nations.³⁶

Nkrumah gave copious attention to sports, and went so far as to set up ministries and include sports in the new Constitution. The Ministry of Youth and Sports does its best to promote sports and provide facilities to the Ghanaian public, but with waning funding it has proved difficult to live up to the standards set by Nkrumah. The government has still been allocated money towards football, but has not been able to do as much as is needed. Ghana is still lacking the large sports stadia that Mr. Aryeh says are necessary. Luckily for the Ministry of Youth and Sports though, the Ghanaian love of football has very little to do with how much money the Ministry (or NSC) receives.

Football is deeply ingrained in the Ghanaian identity, and its ability to transcend ethnic differences would still exist if it was not written into the Constitution. In the past,

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ (Sam, Football in Ghana, 2010)

³⁶ (Government of Ghana, 2007)

football and sports were heavily encouraged by the Ghanaian government and these directives have had lasting impacts on Ghanaian national identity. In contemporary politics, the Ministry of Youth and Sports is under-funded, but with initiatives like the 2010 Sports Bill in progress, they are showing a continued dedication to Nkrumah's vision of Ghanaian sports. Government's role in football support as nationalism is to provide the facilities; it is the Ghanaian people who actualize this dedication and connection.

Aspects of Nationalism in Contemporary Ghanaian Society and Culture

Nationalism is a concept that is hard to define completely or comprehensively. There are, however, specific indicators, behaviors, symbols, attitudes and sentiments that scholars routinely associate with nationalism, worldwide. Some scholars take a very narrow approach when attempting to define or analyze nationalism, but it is important to look a society in a broader way in order to take into account all the places nationalism is present.³⁷

Instances or traits of nationalism are generally most obvious when, for example, there are moments of national crisis, or unique individual or collective achievements that are recognized internationally. These events usually create a common platform or rallying point for all citizens to come together in order to demonstrate their loyalty and support for their country, however temporarily. These elements that point towards strong nationalist ideals can also be found in Ghanaian contemporary culture, even in Ghana's past. In Ghanaian contemporary culture, signs of strong nationalistic ideals are found all around. The brief months I spent in Ghana have highlighted these nationalistic ideals, which are supported by a multitude of observations.³⁸

In Ghana, the Ghanaian flag is found almost everywhere you turn. It would be hard to look down a Ghanaian street and *not* see the Green, Gold, and Red flapping in the wind somewhere. Flags are an important element in forming a community; when used in the context of football they create a nation of football fans.³⁹ The flag is a state-level symbol that is used for the encouragement of a Ghanaian identity; it is also an easily identifiable symbol that is accessible to all.⁴⁰ The flag does not only exist in this physical form though; Ghanaian colors are found absolutely everywhere. Red, green and gold are splashed across houses,

³⁷ (Kraus, 1969)

³⁸ Notes in possession of author

³⁹ (King, 1997)

⁴⁰ (Chazan, 1978)

store fronts, and cars. The insides of taxis are often adorned with hanging Ghanaian flags, and the bumpers outfitted with Ghanaian flag decals. Lotto stands are almost always painted in the Ghanaian stripes. The unrestricted, rhetorical and symbolic use of Ghanaian colors shows the importance of the flag in the everyday life of Ghanaian citizens. If they did not stand behind what the flag represented, and what being Ghanaian meant, then it would be safe to assume it would not occur as commonly.

In the United States, the ‘Stars and Stripes’ hold great national importance and the flag is most often flown with pride. In Ghana, this also seems to be the case. The flag is also found on the schoolbooks and notebooks of primary school children. The incorporation of national identity into schools, and on something as mundane as a notebook, is another sign of an intense feeling of nationalism within Ghana. The flag is the clearest and simplest way to show dedication to the nation of Ghana.

On television, Ghanaian nationalism shines through and is a commonly discussed topic. The Diva Show, a Saturday morning talk show aired on TV3, focuses a lot of time and energy on the state of Ghana as a nation. When discussing the Black Stars football team, guests on the show said things such as, “He is Ghanaian, they are all Ghanaian. They are very patriotic, their own men”.⁴¹ This speaks not only to the esteem which they hold for their football players, but to the positive traits attributed to being Ghanaian. A Ghanaian is patriotic, and their “own man”. Pride in being Ghanaian is surely a nationalist attitude. The nationality is taken very seriously. When Ghanaian actors act amongst non-Ghanaian actors, the Opare’s are sure to make this fact known.⁴² Being Ghanaian is important *in* Ghana, but even more important *out* of Ghana, or when surrounded by non-Ghanaians.

In a September 30th publication of the Ghanaian newspaper, the Daily Graphic, a personality profile was featured that focused on a man by the name of Kofi Okeyere Darko (KOD). The article, titled “K.O.D. for short”, started off by highlighting the heightened nationalist ideals of KOD. KOD loves Ghana, and is said to make that known to the public. “Whatever situation he finds himself...is an opportunity to showcase Ghana by adorning himself or his car with the national flag.”⁴³ He, like so many other Ghanaians, uses the flag as an outward showing of how proud he is to be Ghanaian. Later in the article, KOD himself is

⁴¹ (The Diva Show, 2010)

⁴² Notes in possession of author

⁴³ (Smith, 2010)

quoted saying, “put Ghana first, and that is how it’s supposed to be. I think that it’s something that ought to be inculcated in the youth of Ghana for them to be proud of their heritage and spread it across the world any way they can”.⁴⁴ This display of nationalism also highlights the past history of Ghana, and its importance in the contemporary national identity.

The Colonial history of Ghana most definitely plays a role in their strong contemporary national ideals. As the Gold Coast, they were under the colonial rule of Britain for hundreds of years, and so assumed a pseudo nationalism and identity towards a nation they did not culturally identify with. The idea of being Ghanaian did not come about organically, it came with colonialism. Nationalism, on the other hand, rose from the desire for independence and self-determination.⁴⁵ The original national anthem of Ghana was in the English language, but was soon followed with a Twi⁴⁶ version which was composed by the late Dr. Ephraim Amu. Although the English version is taught in schools and found on the back of writing notebooks, the public identifies more with the Twi version. The preference for the second song speaks to the Ghanaian sense of pride and nationalism in what is theirs. Seen somewhat as a rejection of colonialism, the popularity of the Twi national anthem is a key example of Ghanaian nationalism.

In Kwame Nkrumah’s quest for independence, one of his greatest challenges was making the Gold Coast into a group of people that shared a national identity. In 1957, nationalism was seen a little differently by everybody, and Nkrumah struggled hard to unite these different ideals.⁴⁷ He pushed for this national identity, and Ghanaian nationalism has been a huge part of his legacy. His famous saying, “Forwards ever, backwards never” plays into this new Ghanaian sense of nationalism; as an independent nation, Ghanaians were now able look forward to express a real nationalism towards their motherland. No longer did they have to comply with the old form of colonial nationalism. Bouncing back from this lack of national identity, the heightened sense of nationalism felt across Ghana could be seen as compensation. It could also be seen as a political tool used to bind together ethnic groups that would find few reasons to live collectively otherwise.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ (Perbi, 2010)

⁴⁶ Twi is one of the major languages spoken in the southern parts of Ghana

⁴⁷ (Hechter, 1970)

Overall, nationalism in Ghana takes a variety of forms. But no matter what form it is taking, it is very clear that a nationalistic sentiment exists, even thrives, within Ghana. Whether or not Ghanaians believe in or support everything their government is doing, they are still outwardly proud of being Ghanaian. Ultimately, the country is held in higher regard/importance than village or region; a fact that was magnified by the Black Stars performance in the 2010 World Cup.⁴⁸ The flags, the national anthem, and the colors are all exemplary of nationalism in Ghanaian contemporary culture; these commodities are outward signs that project the national identity of Ghanaians. National symbols such as these promote the collective identity necessary for a heightened sense of nationalism.⁴⁹

Football is Love. Football is Life⁵⁰: Prevalence of Football in Contemporary Ghanaian Culture (and in the larger African context)

Football has been a part of Ghanaian life ever since its introduction in 1903, the celebration of 100 years of football in Ghana was held in 2003.⁵¹ The overall dedication of Ghanaians to the beautiful game is exemplary of the devotion of Africa as a whole.⁵² The sport took root in Africa over a century ago, and since then has progressively kindled interest and zeal among fans and the general public; it has become deeply integrated into the culture, and its influence is far-reaching and all-encompassing.⁵³ Football can be considered part of Ghana's popular culture; Ghanaians are highly committed in their love for this game and those who play it.⁵⁴ Not only that, but football has had the ability to enforce community and ethnic ties.⁵⁵ The love of games and sports is common across the globe, but it would be hard to find a place more singularly dedicated to a sport than Ghana is to football.

Just like the outward displays of nationalism found across Ghana, Ghanaians wear their love of football on their sleeve: sometimes literally. Football jerseys are commonplace; the frequency and pride with which the men wear them is spectacular and is sure to capture the attention of the observer. They are also sold on almost every street. Hanging colorfully from clothing racks, fences, and even trees, these football jerseys are a display and visual

⁴⁸ (Chazan, 1978)

⁴⁹ (Cerulo, 1997)

⁵⁰ (Godfrey, Koomson, Awuah-Gah, & Koosa, 2010)

⁵¹ (Quansah, 2010)

⁵² The Beautiful Game is a name often used to refer to Football.

⁵³ (Dugger, 2010)

⁵⁴ (Alegi, 2002)

⁵⁵ (Fair, 1997)

reminder of the country's dedication to football. There are always a variety of teams represented; various Football Clubs are advertised as well as national teams. The existence of multitude of clubs speaks to the large fan population distributed all over Ghana. Chelsea Football Club is one of the most supported teams in the Cape Coast area, and the jerseys are seen everywhere. Footballs are sold almost as often as the jerseys themselves. So, the love of football is not limited to simply supporting a team, but includes physically playing the game.

The footballs are put to use in all sorts of locations: professional fields, manicured pitches, public fields, school yards, parking lots, church fronts, abandoned lots, and empty roads. Boys ranging in age, carefully measure the distance between large rocks used as goal posts; or they drive long sticks into the ground for a more professional-looking goal. These makeshift fields are found all across Ghana (and Africa as a whole).⁵⁶ This use of public space is a way for Ghanaians who may not be as economically advantaged to tap into the popular culture of football, something that cannot happen in all instances regarding popular culture.⁵⁷ The makeshift fields testify to the importance of football in Ghanaian culture. The dream of many children is to go 'pro' as a footballer, and that goal could not be accomplished without constant dedication to the game. Football has made its way into all sorts of public spaces, and into the minds of even more young Ghanaians.

In all levels of schools, football is found with astounding frequency. From the primary level to Universities, football and the competition that goes along with it can be identified. At the primary level, the sport is played on the dusty school yards at all times of day. As the children grow older, the sport becomes more organized, with teams waking early on Sundays to train or compete in matches. At the university level, football is an inter-varsity sport, and matches between different universities are held in high esteem and importance. An interview with Mr. Daniel Apak, the Head Sports Coach of the University of Cape Coast sheds light onto this topic, and will be discussed later in the paper.

Most young boys are raised to love football. Boys as young as five have an astounding grasp on football statistics, significance of certain games, and Club rosters; Nathaniel Opare being my personal example, but he is surely not the most knowledgeable amongst his age group. It would be his wish to watch every football match aired on TV, but in a house full of women, that turns out to be a hard sell. Luckily for Nathaniel, football

⁵⁶ (Dugger, 2010)

⁵⁷ (Dolby, 2006)

exists on TV beyond the match broadcast. Football is common in advertisements. A standard example is a commercial for Vitamilk, where the child drinks a bottle of Vitamilk and immediately after, scores a goal in a friendly football match with his father. Football here is used as an advertising agent. The fact that the sport can be used to attract Ghanaians to a product is testimony to the esteemed place football holds in Ghanaian society.

Reality TV shows are rising in popularity in Ghana, so it comes as no surprise that there is a reality TV show centered on football. “MTN Football Academy” involves football players from across West Africa. The show is in its fourth season, testifying to West Africa’s love of football. MTN, the shows sponsor, is one of the largest cell phone carriers in the area, and is also a devoted sponsor of all things football. They were a key sponsor of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and many of their billboard ads contain images of football. But MTN does not hold the monopoly on football themed billboards. Other companies have used Ghanaians love of football to their advantage in advertising; private companies put a lot of money into the promotion of football in Ghana.⁵⁸

Western Union has billboard advertisements featuring Kofi, age 12, playing football. Next to his name, the ad says “Nation’s Best Striker 2022”. This billboard would seem fairly ordinary, were it not for the fact that in Benin, the same billboard featured a little boy who aspired to be an engineer: not a professional footballer. Glo, an internet provider, features the Black Stars football team telling *you* to sign up for Glo internet. FanMilk has a whole advertising campaign centered on Ghanaian national football players. Guinness, as well, has an advertising campaign based on the Ghanaian love and attention to football. It must be said that these advertisements are remnants from the recent 2010 World Cup. But even so, in the United States, the attention to the sport of football (or soccer) does not even come close to that of Ghana.

Along with the corporate advertising, Ghanaians personally advertize their love of football. Taxis, tro-tros and regular cars boast bumper stickers and decals in the shapes of footballs and in the colors of various football clubs. Personal advertisement of the adoration of football is only a part of how prevalent football is in contemporary Ghanaian culture.

Africa as a whole is also reliably dedicated to the sport. The African Cup of Nations, since its humble beginnings in 1957, has grown into a continent-wide tournament of great

⁵⁸ (Aryeh, 2010)

importance and prestige. The Cup of Nations is headed up by the governing body of African Football, The Confederation of African Football (CAF). CAF directs multiple football tournaments across Africa, including youth and women's tournaments. The Ghana Football Association (GFA) is, in fact, an association under the umbrella of the CAF. The GFA was discussed earlier in the research. The African Cup of Nations is a unifying tournament that brings together Africa in its love of the beautiful game.

Religion, Spirituality, Magic, and Football in Ghana

Those who have spent time in Ghana know that religion and spirituality are a part of every aspect of Ghanaian life, and for those who have not spent time in Ghana- religion and spirituality are a part of every aspect in Ghanaian life. They have permeated all levels of culture, and so it should come as no surprise that football in Ghana has a religious/spiritual element to it. Religion and spirituality are no strangers to the sport; prayers are murmured before and during football matches across the globe. In Ghana, because football holds such an important place in society, the stakes are high. During the World Cup, it was discovered that Ghanaian team had consulted with a Nigerian pastor.⁵⁹ They had asked for his blessing in upcoming matches, showing how highly valued religion is in the context of football.

Beyond organized religion, there are spiritual (and even magical) aspects to football in Ghana and Africa as a whole. Sorcerers and sorcery have long been a tradition in football in Ghana and Africa, though it has been outlawed many times.⁶⁰ A 2003 football match between Uganda and Rwanda quickly became a melee of sorcery and spell-casting that resulted in injuries and hard feelings.⁶¹ Magic is a very real part of football in Africa, and Ghana. In Ghana, if a team that has been playing very well all season loses suddenly, it is attributed to the opposition consulting with oracles.⁶² It is assumed that spells were cast. Causation is seen differently by different people, and while some believe that the cause of the outcome of a game is athleticism, others believe that it was caused by religion/spirituality/magic.⁶³

⁵⁹ (Sam, Football in Ghana, 2010)

⁶⁰ (Schatzberg, 2006)

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² (Sam, Football in Ghana, 2010)

⁶³ (Schatzberg, 2006)

This can all be traced back to the human need to know the outcome of competition.⁶⁴ Germany, during the 2010 World Cup, consulted with Octopus Paul who correctly predicted several of the match outcomes.⁶⁵ People just want to influence who wins, and find out who loses. This ties in perfectly with the conclusion that football holds high importance in Ghanaian society. Were it not important, the time and energy would not be spent investing in religious and spiritual outlets. Football, much like religion, has permeated Ghanaian society in an expansive way.

Ghana is a nation obsessed with football, from the young to the old. Male and female alike. Public schooled or private schooled. In and out of the classroom. Ghana is in a relationship with the sport, and it does not look like it will be ending anytime soon. The prevalence of football in contemporary Ghanaian culture is supported by its ability to transcend class, gender, age, and schooling. It does not matter the profession of the Ghanaian, there is still a love of football to be found. Football has permeated all aspects of Ghanaian life, and it is impossible to escape its presence.

Academic Sports⁶⁶: A Case Study of University Athletics at the University of Cape Coast

As previously established, football is integrated into every fiber of Ghanaian life, and this undoubtedly includes university campuses. This section is a case study that will examine, in detail, the state of University Athletics at the University of Cape Coast. The following information comes from an interview with Mr. Daniel Apak.⁶⁷

Mr. Daniel Apak is the Head Sports Coach at the University of Cape Coast (UCC), and he oversees the athletic department of the University. The sports department at UCC is an integral part of the Central Administration and Mr. Apak himself works directly under the Registrar of the University. He provides technical services in the area of sports and recreation for both students and staff. There is also a department of Health and Physical Education, where teachers are trained to teach Physical Education around Ghana. Mr. Apak's charge is

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ (Sam, Football in Ghana, 2010)

⁶⁶ (Apak, 2010)

⁶⁷ Ibid.

to ensure that athletics, sports, and recreation are part of student life and that the right opportunities are provided.

The range of sports at UCC is vast: football, track & field, basketball, volleyball, handball, tennis, table tennis, and badminton, to name a few. All sports have men's and women's teams. The demand for female teams though, is less than that for male teams, and there are few female athletes on UCC campus. General demand for sports on UCC's campus has improved over the past few years, but is still not what it should be. According to Mr. Apak, the students are responding to the increased efforts of the Department to raise awareness of the benefits of sports and athletics. Staff and students alike are realizing that in order to better their lives, they need physical activity/recreation. Along with the department's efforts, the recent World Cup plays into the increased demand for sports. With the highly publicized performance of the Black Stars, the motivation for participation is clear; the football frenzy on the national level is trickling down to university students at UCC.

Regardless, athletics still take a back seat on campus. Mr. Apak referred to them "academic sports". First and foremost, the students at UCC are there for academics. There are no recruited athletes, and no student picks a university because of the institutions athletic facilities. Once at university, the student may or may not pursue sports, and pursuit is rarely with the intention of playing at the professional level. There are other incentives to play sports in university though, according to Mr. Apak. Inter-University games receive a lot of attention on the national scale, and provide the student with exposure, travel opportunities, and international connections.

Within Ghana, there is the Ghana University Sportsmanship Games (GUSG). This is a biannual competition involving all public universities in Ghana.⁶⁸ GUSG is the main inter-university championship held in Ghana, and is hosted in a rotation of the participating universities. There are advantages to hosting the competition such as increased exposure of the universities athletics program. This often leads to motivation within the student body to become involved. It also gives the host university an opportunity to improve the athletic infrastructure on campus. UCC recently hosted the championship, and as a result has new tennis courts.

⁶⁸ Public, or government funded. There are private universities in Ghana, but they are excluded from this tournament.

Ghanaian university athletes also compete in competitions beyond Ghana's borders. There are the West African University Games, which were last held in Nigeria. A number of Ghanaian universities participated, along with universities from the sub-region. It was here that the second Tennis, Athletics, and Table Tennis Championship (TATTC) was held. At these games, the Ghanaian universities attend as representation of their Host University, and not Ghana as a whole. On the other hand, when competing in the African University Sports Association Games, there is a Ghanaian national team. The team is made up of local athletes selected from the public universities. These sportsmen and women come together, to represent Ghana on a continental scale. The last games were held in 2009.

Another Ghanaian national team is assembled to travel to the World University Games. This team however, also includes Ghanaian students studying outside of Ghana. These competitions provide motivation to students who want to travel, make friends, and meet different cultures. The medium of sports provides students with connections that may not have existed otherwise. It also encourages formation of national identity and Ghanaian nationalism, because the students are faced with competitive situations in opposition with other nations.

For university students, in general, sports are important for a few reasons. Some of the students may end up making their living off of sports, so for them, athletics have economic benefits. For others, sports may allow them to become better integrated into various communities; maybe they will end up moving to a town where a former teammate lives after graduation and will appreciate the connection. Still others find their life partners through university athletics. And, at a basic level, sports foster a sense of, and provide opportunities to demonstrate, patriotism and nationalism. Mr. Apak said that the list of reasons why sports are so important could never be exhausted.

However, despite their importance, athletics on university campuses do not receive adequate government funding, similar to the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The Sports Department at UCC is terribly underfunded and understaffed. Mr. Apak said that, even though a part of students' annual Facilities Fee goes towards sports, it is not nearly enough. There is not enough revenue in the department to meet the needs of all the students. Whereas in western societies university sports are part of the fiber of society, in a developing country such as Ghana, university sports are not seen as a necessity. Ghana may *think* that sports are

important, but they do not put the resources into them. Mr. Apak is hopeful for a future where there are government policies in place that requires funding for sports across the universities.

Problems with sports funding do not start in University, but are present from Primary School onwards. The following paragraphs will look briefly into sports at the primary and secondary school levels. Primary schools, according to curriculum, are supposed to pay attention to sports. But due to lacking resources, Physical Education is neglected to a certain extent. Primary school students are taught just the basics as a result of these funding and personnel shortages. Part of this neglect also comes from the fact that Physical Education is not testable in the traditional sense of the word. Because there are no written tests, or Physical Education requirement for upper-school admission, students put less importance on the subject. The teachers are also not properly trained, because the resources on that end are lacking as well. The teachers leave university ill-equipped to teach, and leave their students undereducated in Physical Education. Most of what the students know about sports, they learn from outside of the classroom.

Football is so integrated into the life of Ghanaians that the sport is present in children's lives from an early age, regardless of the lack of funding. When the students reach secondary school, where the Physical Education teachers are better prepared, the students themselves are underprepared technically, and so the whole learning process is set back a step. The support of sports in lower institutions does not immediately point to a strong tendency towards nationalism and national identity, but the existing efforts do contribute towards the overall spirit of nationalism in association with football (and sports).

Although all of this bothers the Head Sports Coach of UCC, his hands are tied by insufficient funds. He can barely make ends meet for the students of UCC, so starting programs for Primary and Secondary school students is out of the question. While the government is funding the national team, they are leaving their future Black Stars without proper Physical Education or sports training. Universities and university football is a breeding ground for national sentiment and zeal for football. Universities in general foster feelings of nationalism within Ghanaian students, and these international games heighten

these nationalistic feelings through sports.⁶⁹ Football will remain an object of national pride and identity as long as it is supported and present in schools.

Local Football in Ghana: A Look into Ghanaian-on-Ghanaian Football Competition

Local football clubs in Ghana are another outlet for the national love of the game. Rooting for the local team is one way for Ghanaians to show group/town loyalty.⁷⁰ There are clubs from all ten regions, and representing the major cities/towns of Ghana.⁷¹ The two with the biggest followings are the Accra Hearts of Oak and Asante Kotoko (from Kumasi). When these two teams play, they pull the biggest crowds, and receive the most publicity.⁷² Support for these teams is often along ethnic lines, with Ashanti's cheering for Kotoko and Fante's supporting Accra Hearts of Oak.⁷³ There are, of course, exceptions, the most high profile being the Patron King of Asante Kotoko who is actually an Accra Hearts of Oak fan.⁷⁴ While the Cape Coast team does not have quite as intense of a fan base as these teams, they certainly do have a hometown following.

Cape Coast

The name of the Cape Coast football team is the Cape Coast Mysterious Ebusua Dwarves. There are many theories as to where the name Dwarves comes from. Some say that it is because, at one point, the Cape Coast team was made up of very small men.⁷⁵ Another theory is grounded in the folklore of Ghana. Dwarves are said to be small and mighty, and can do anything that they set their minds to; they should never be underestimated, like the football team that takes their name.⁷⁶ Mysterious most likely comes from the fact that Dwarves themselves are apparently quite mysterious. Ebusua is a Fante word meaning "family", so Ebusua Dwarves are a family of dwarves. Families, and community, are hugely

⁶⁹ (Nicol, 1963)

⁷⁰ (Kampf, 1977)

⁷¹ Upper West, Upper East, Brong Ahafo, Northern, Ashanti, Volta, Eastern, Western, Central, and Greater-Accra

⁷² (Sam, Football in Ghana, 2010)

⁷³ (Godfreyd, Koomson, Awuah-Gah, & Koosa, 2010)

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ (Flynn, 2010)

⁷⁶ (Sam, Ebusua Dwarves, 2010)

important in the Ghanaian tradition. When a football team is called a family of dwarves, it is certainly a force to be reckoned with.⁷⁷

The symbol of the Cape Coast team is the crab, and also is the symbol of Cape Coast as a whole. Legend has it that a market area of Cape Coast, known as Kotokuraba, used to be “the place for crabs”, which may be why the crab holds such significance to Cape Coast.⁷⁸ It is also a coastal town, with a lot of trade coming out of the sea, and seafood playing a huge role in local cuisine, so the crab would have economic importance also to the people of Cape Coast.

The Accra Hearts of Oak get their name, predictably, from the Oak tree. The oak tree is seen as strong, mighty, and large. An individual with a heart of oak is someone one may not want to come up against in a football match. Asante Kotoko’s symbol is the Porcupine. The Porcupine is the totem animal of the Ashanti people; a peaceful group, the porcupines spikes symbolize Ashanti’s potential to retaliate should the need arise.⁷⁹ It is clear that the names of these teams are deeply rooted in Ghanaian history, tradition, and folklore. The team names are a way of incorporating Ghanaian national identity with football even more. On the other hand, there are local teams in Ghana with names such as Chelsea and Arsenal. They get their names from European football clubs.

On November 14th, 2010 a football team bearing a traditional Ghanaian name met with a football team named after a European Club. The Cape Coast Mysterious Ebusua Dwarves and Betchem Chelsea, both members of the Premier League, went head-to-head in Cape Coast. The match was held in Cape Coast Stadium which is officially known as Robert Mensah Stadium, after a famous Ghanaian footballer, but rarely called so in daily conversation.⁸⁰ The stadium filled slowly with boisterous fans, sporting the Green and Gold representative of the Dwarves. Drums were beating, people were singing and dancing, vuvuzelas and trumpets were being played. Before the match started, it felt more like a Ghanaian festival than a sporting event. The teams walked out onto the pitch, prayed, and the match was underway. The Dwarves, outfitted in Green and Gold were the first to score. The stadium erupted in shouts of ‘goooooaaalll’ before the ball was even in the net.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ (Manhyia Palace, 2010)

⁸⁰ (Yamoah, 2010)

The opposing team, Betchem Chelsea, wore white and blue. The team was named after the British team, Chelsea. The British teams' colors are also white and blue, and some of the benched players were even wearing socks made for the British Chelsea team. For a country so proud of football and its footballers, to name a team after a European club seems a little like defeat or lack of faith. Instead of forming a unique team identity, they are piggybacking off of a team that is already well established and popular among Ghanaians.

At the match, the crowd was made up of almost entirely male adults. Of the men in attendance, not all of them were supporters of either team. Some were just there for the love of the game, and because they enjoyed football matches so much.⁸¹ Some though, had been fans of Ebusa Dwarves their whole lives. One gentleman, Mr. Fynn was born and raised in Cape Coast, and had been going to Dwarves matches for as long as he could remember; he even used to travel with the team.⁸² According to Mr. Fynn, such dedication to local teams is waning. He no longer travels with the team, and he has observed fewer people in attendance at local team matches. Cape Coast residents would rather go to "media centers" to watch the international teams play.⁸³ The below average stadium attendance is one of the reasons Mr. Fynn gave for the slow progress on the building of the new Cape Coast Stadium.

Billboards around Cape Coast boast of a new stadium being built in Cape Coast, but the signs are from 2008. The ground has been cleared for the stadium, but nothing has been created so far. Politicians have been using the stadium as a way to pull votes from Cape Coast for the past couple years, each one promising they will complete (or start) the project.⁸⁴ This is an example of how political football has become in Ghana, a feat only possible because the sport is so fully integrated in the Ghanaian national identity.

The game of football did not originate in Ghana, but it has become an important thread in the tapestry of Ghanaian life. The local football teams get their names and mascots from historically significant Ghanaian tradition. Some local Ghanaian teams have incorporated their Ghanaian identity into this international sport. Nationalism is felt through the names of the teams, as well as the support of local Ghanaian players that leave the country to play elsewhere. The local clubs provide a venue for fans to develop relationships

⁸¹ (Yankey, 2010)

⁸² (Flynn, 2010)

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ (Sam, Football in Ghana, 2010)

with these Ghanaian footballers. National identity is an integral part of Ghanaian football, and is demonstrated in the support of local football club; local sporting events are celebrations of the local community and Ghanaian pastime.⁸⁵

Stadium Names as a Form of National Identity: Accra, Kumasi, & Cape Coast

The stadiums in the major cities in Ghana (Accra, Cape Coast, and Kumasi) all take their names from Ghanaian football legends. Like John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, New York, USA, these stadiums serve as an outlet to honor the accomplishments of these great men. The sports stadiums are a sign of the modernization of football, and the monetary investment necessary for their construction speaks to the importance of football in Ghana. This section will break down the stadium names in three cities of Ghana, and discuss how their naming is shaped by and shapes national identity and nationalism.

Robert Mensah Stadium, Cape Coast

This stadium is the site of the interviews discussed earlier in the section, and as explained, is commonly referred to as Cape Coast Stadium. Robert Mensah is the *official* name of the stadium. Robert Mensah himself was a goalkeeper for the Black Stars. He was voted Africa's best goalkeeper at the Africa Cup of Nations in February 1970.⁸⁶ He first started his professional career with the Ebusua Dwarves in 1960, which is why the Cape Coast stadium has adopted his name.⁸⁷ He spent some time with Asante Kotoko, and was an integral part of the clubs highly publicized win over the Zaire Republic (it was the first Africa Club Championship title ever won by a Ghanaian team). He was not only adored by the Ghanaian public for his athletic prowess, but for his sportsmanship. He was known for his sense of humor and positive attitude on the football pitch. "Bob will be remembered as a man with combined enthusiasm, courage, dedication and unblemished patriotism", the Sports Writers Association of Ghana wrote of Mensah.⁸⁸ The reference to patriotism is a perfect example of how intertwined football and nationalism are in Ghanaian society.

Mensah was not only a great footballer, but acknowledged as a great Ghanaian. When he died, he was given tribute by the National Assembly of Ghana, as well as by the Acting Prime Minister, Kwesi Lamptey.⁸⁹ His influence extended beyond the field, and into the halls

⁸⁵ (Mizruchi, 1985)

⁸⁶ (Brown, 2010)

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

of parliament and Ghanaian government. He was looked upon as a source of great national pride, and his death was mourned greatly. By Cape Coast Stadium taking his name, the football fans of the town are recognizing Robert Mensah's far-reaching influence. The name of the stadium is an outward admittance of strong national identity and national pride.

Baba Yara Stadium, Kumasi

Similar to Robert Mensah, Baba Yara was a Ghanaian footballer of great significance. The football stadium in Kumasi was first opened under the name Kumasi Sports Stadium, but was soon renamed the Baba Yara Stadium.⁹⁰ Baba Yara was also on the inaugural Black Stars football team of 1957.⁹¹ He received several honors, such as the award for the best player in West Africa. He was a proud representative of the Black Stars national team, and was well known across Europe for his athleticism. In Africa as well, Baba Yara became a name "that was a household word"⁹². He died at the young age of 33, and following his death it was said that "his name would be written in crimson red as one of Ghana's sports celebrities, while his image would continue to linger for all times".⁹³ His death was seen as national loss, showing how invested Ghana had become in him as a player and as a person. He had put the nation in the global spotlight, with his individual accomplishments and the hurdles that he helped the Black Stars jump.

The stadium in Kumasi taking his name is another example of how strongly the Ghanaian national identity is intertwined with football. Baba Yara's accomplishments have long outlived him, and have come to define the sports scene in Kumasi. Ghanaian nationalism, and national pride, is made explicit through the name of the stadium. If the Ghanaian people did not have pride in Baba Yara's performance and what he gave to the Ghanaian public, then the Kumasi Sports Stadium would have not adopted his name.

Ohene Djan Stadium, Accra

The Ohene Djan Stadium in Accra is currently the center of some controversy; there is heated debate going on over whether or not the stadium should be renamed the Accra Sports Stadium. Regardless, it still maintains the name Ohene Djan Stadium. Ohene Djan was the first Director of Youth and Sports under Kwame Nkrumah in post-colonial Ghana.⁹⁴ He

⁹⁰ (Nkrumah, Sports and African Unity, 1997)

⁹¹ (Brown, 2010)

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

ushered in a new era of Ghanaian sports, in which Ghana burst onto the international sports scene. He was respected by European players and coaches alike. In a 1961 statement on Ghanaian sports, the manager of England's football team said, "Ghana's success was due to one man, the Director of Sports, Mr. Ohene Djan. He runs the organization perfectly, keeps everybody happy and you know a happy athlete always does the best for his country".⁹⁵ Ohene Djan laid the foundations for a thriving sports scene in Ghana, and his work helped to bring Ghanaian athletes up to an international standard.

Because of his actions, Ghanaians have been left with part of their national identity embodied in sports. The sport of football is credited with being the force that has brought the country together more than others.⁹⁶ The Accra stadium has acknowledged Ohene Djan's contributions with its name. Ohene Djan does not represent the athletic side of football, but the political and administrative aspect. The fact that this contribution to the sport is seen as important enough to honor with a stadium is testimony to the depth of the Ghanaian love of football. It is acknowledgement that the current state of football is not just built on the performance of the players, but on the work of government officials as well. Just like the other two stadiums, a side of Ghanaian national identity is made apparent through the name of this stadium.

National identity is shown through the naming of the sports stadiums in these three instances. The stadiums were given their names after powerful figures in Ghanaian football (players and administrators alike). The people of Ghana were proud enough of these Ghanaians to honor them with stadiums bearing their name. Nationalism and Ghanaian national identity are deeply intertwined with football, and the stadium names are testimony to this dedication and relationship.

A Secondary Diaspora: the Migration of African Footballers

In the journey to understand football in Ghana, and how it plays into nationalism, it is impossible to not broach the subject of Ghanaian footballers playing overseas. For as long as there has been football in Africa and Football Associations in Europe, there have been African players migrating to play overseas. Between 1930 and 1960 the first phase of migration took place; this was a period that is defined by assimilation of African players into

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

the European clubs. After a short time though, African states began to set up their own teams and clubs. There were policies enacted that aimed to keep the best African players in Africa.⁹⁷ The ability to support national football teams quickly translated into a symbol of success for newly independent African states; it meant that they could support the players financially and thus had the infrastructure to maintain the team.⁹⁸

The Confederation Africaine de Football (CAF) enacted a ban on African expatriate professional players, which kept them from participating in the Africa Cup of Nations.⁹⁹ This “punishment” summarizes Africans’ serious commitment to football, not being able to play for your nation *would* be punishment; it demonstrates the overt and close intertwining of professional football and national identity. As far as the CAF was concerned, it was dishonorable for an African football player to leave their home-state to play for a European team. This resolve was short-lived though, and soon, the number of African players playing abroad was increasing quickly. FIFA even put in place regulations that forced international clubs to allow their players to go back and play for their national teams when selected.¹⁰⁰

Currently, the football clubs in Europe have varying policies when it comes to international players. Some teams, such as France, Portugal and Belgium take African players directly from Africa on a fairly regular basis. England, on the other hand, has formed relationships with smaller European football clubs; the smaller clubs take African players from Africa, and then sell them to high powered British clubs.¹⁰¹ The “export” of the African footballer is becoming more and more prevalent. This secondary Diaspora of Africans certainly has elements of the first; the strongest Africans are being taken from Africa for the profit of European nations. Of course, it would be entirely out of line to compare these expatriate footballers to slaves, but there are some parallels that are hard to ignore. Regardless, for a lot of Ghanaian football players, the ultimate goal is to play for a European club. The clubs in Europe are more competitive and seen as “better”, so when given the opportunity to play outside of Africa, players jump at the chance. Even with this international trend, football has the inexplicable ability to promote nationalism within a country, and cement a new national identity within the people.

⁹⁷ (Poli, 2006)

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

The Case of Michael Essien

A name that came up frequently in discussions centered on Ghanaian football is Michael Essien. Michael Essien was born December 3rd, 1982 in Accra, Ghana.¹⁰² He rose up through the Ghanaian football leagues, and played for Liberty Accra Professional club. From there, he was traded to his first European club, SC Bastia. He was traded for 8 million Euros.¹⁰³ In 2005, he was traded from Olympique Lyonnais to Chelsea for the record sum of 38 million Euros.¹⁰⁴ As of 2006, that was the highest amount paid for an African player in transfer.

Michael Essien is the subject of much controversy within Ghana, mostly because his allegiances are being called into question. He was absent from the 2010 World Cup Black Stars roster due to a knee injury that he acquired during Black Stars qualifying matches. Now that he is in recovery, he is back playing for Chelsea. The journey of Michael Essien is one that many young Ghanaian footballers aspire to follow. Nathaniel Opare, aged 7, wears his Essien jersey frequently, and with pride; Chelsea is his favorite team and Essien is his favorite player.

Often, African players who are playing abroad act as ambassadors for their home-country. They bring with them the support of their nation. They serve as popular icons and role models in their home country, and as representatives of Africa overseas. The patriotism of these players is sometimes questioned though. For example, Michael Essien has recently come under scrutiny from the Ghanaian media and public for his seeming lack of commitment to Ghana. The topic of Ghanaian players playing abroad received mixed responses from those interviewed.

In one of my group interviews, both viewpoints were present. On one hand, Essien was unpatriotic and had abandoned his countrymen for money. He had betrayed Ghana and Ghanaians everywhere. But on the other hand, Essien was a source of pride for Ghana. He is an athlete who was raised eating *fufu* and *kenkey*, traditional Ghanaian dishes, and now he is playing for a high-powered international team. He is an example of the strength and athleticism of Ghanaians, and has shown the football world what Ghana is capable of.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² (Michael Essien)

¹⁰³ (Poli, 2006)

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ (Godfreyd, Koomson, Awuah-Gah, & Koosa, 2010)

For other Ghanaians, Essien's choice to play for Chelsea is entirely justifiable. Essien is not seen (by some) as abandoning his national team, but as trying to recover from his injury. Chelsea will provide him with the opportunity to play active football, and recover properly.¹⁰⁶ By playing for Chelsea, he is acquiring the skills necessary to come back and play successfully for the Black Stars National team.¹⁰⁷ Essien has assured Ghana that his absence from the national team is only temporary, and that he *will* be returning to the Black Stars.¹⁰⁸ This is surely an indicator of the scope of his patriotism and national identity on behalf of Ghana.

The viewpoint that Essien is acquiring skills that he can take back to the Black Stars was fairly common. When Ghanaian players play overseas, they receive better training and can hone their skills better. The training is more rigorous than that offered by Ghanaian local clubs. By sending the best Ghanaian players abroad, they “learn from the best” and then they can come back to represent Ghana.¹⁰⁹ While this is a mildly optimistic way to look at Essien's departure from Ghana, it also shows a lack of confidence in local Ghanaian football. The local teams are not seen as being good enough for players of Essien's caliber, and while this may be true, it seems that nothing is being done to make up the difference. Instead of improving Ghanaian football, and changing its world image, the players leave for greener pastures. His actions have, in some ways, promoted nationalism and patriotism in the world of Ghanaian football, and in others degraded the Ghanaian national football identity.

In looking at the case of Michael Essien, one can learn a lot about how Ghanaians see themselves in the global football picture (and even the world in general). Ghanaians generally develop personal attachments to players, because they watch them grow up; they go to the universities in Ghana, they play for local teams, and then they leave Ghana to play for teams that are seen as better.¹¹⁰ Some Ghanaians support only teams that have African players on them. There is a strong sense of nationalism surrounding Michael Essien. Most people are proud that he is Ghanaian, and think that his notable performance in such a rigorous league reflects well on Ghana as a whole. Chelsea has gained huge support from Ghanaians

¹⁰⁶ (Apak, 2010)

¹⁰⁷ (Yamoah, 2010), (Flynn, 2010)

¹⁰⁸ (All Sports, 2010)

¹⁰⁹ (Yankey, 2010)

¹¹⁰ (Apak, 2010)

(especially in Cape Coast), not because it is a British football club, but ultimately because there is a Ghanaian playing for them.

Michael Essien is exemplary of the fact that Ghanaian nationalism, in relation to football, does not necessarily have to be focused on the Black Stars national team; nationalism can stem from a Ghanaian player making his way across the globe. Even though he is not physically in Ghana, the country feels an intense connection to him. Ghanaian national identity transcends Ghanaian borders; it seems that football breaks down those boundaries.

Sports as an Agent for the Promotion of Unity: New Perspective on Analyzing Sports in Relation to National Identity

For anyone who has ever watched a sports game (or even attended one), the feeling of community that comes along with these athletic competitions is inescapable. Unfortunately, as indicated in the related literature, the topic of sports is under-addressed. This is regrettable, as it offers unique opportunities to investigate more deeply issues of identity, community, and ethnicity. The further would reveal the ways in which each of these elements are wrapped up in sports.¹¹¹ Teams provide communities with a common platform for constructing and renewing a sense of belonging and unity. For example, during the month of March in the United States, college students around the country align themselves with their universities and band together against other fans during NCAA March Madness.¹¹² Current students and alumni alike don their apparel and rally around their schools' basketball team. Personal differences are often put aside in honor of the common interest in the success of the team. Competition unites groups of people, and pits them against a common enemy; town vs. town, city vs. city, etc.¹¹³ This unity occurs on national levels as well, and in athletic competitions other than basketball.

In Ghana, football has become that common factor. The excellent performance of the Black Stars in the 2010 World Cup served as a catalyst for these feelings of nationalism and community. Even in the United States, where football is not as popular as elsewhere in the

¹¹¹ (Vidacs, 2006)

¹¹² March Madness refers to the NCAA college basketball tournament that is held every year; the championship often falls in the month of March.

¹¹³ (Sugden, 1993)

world, there was a real sense of American pride and nationalism during the World Cup.¹¹⁴ Soccer was an outlet for American ideals, and their performance seen as a reflection on America. In the Ghanaian context, these ideas and feelings remain. The individuals who were interviewed for this research testify to the feeling of unity and nationalism in Ghana during the World Cup.

In the past three months, the feelings of community in Ghana have become more and more explicit to me; family and community relationships are incredibly important. But, there are certain ethnic differences that create some fractures in the Ghanaian community. The show, Ghana's Most Beautiful, aired on TV3 has the tagline, "Regional Beauty to Promote National Unity". The reality show features women from each of the ten regions of Ghana, showcasing their regional traditions and differences. Although the shows intention is to bring Ghana together under one flag, it does highlight differences between regional traditions. It shows how many differences can be found within the country, which is to be expected in a nation put together by foreigners.¹¹⁵

The Ghana Black Stars national football team reached the semi-final round of the 2010 FIFA World Cup held in South Africa; they were the last remaining African football team. This being only the second World Cup that the Black Stars took part in (the other being in 2006), their performance was extraordinary. In a country that is in love with football, the Black Stars have a considerable fan-base, and were a huge source of national pride. Ghanaians were unfailingly and overwhelmingly committed to the team, and their journey. The general feeling in Ghana during the World Cup is a topic worthy of investigation, and is something that can uncover the level of nationalism of the country. In each of the interviews I conducted, this very topic was discussed.

Interviews: Feelings in Ghana during the World Cup

While the responses of the interviewees varied slightly, they were all positive in nature. According to Mr. John Yamoah, there was a "feeling in hope in Ghana" during the World Cup.¹¹⁶ Teaching Assistants on the University of Cape Coast's campus said that during the World Cup, Ghana was "peaceful".¹¹⁷ There was no talk of politics, economics, poverty,

¹¹⁴ (Essig, 2010)

¹¹⁵ See section on the History of Ghana

¹¹⁶ (Yamoah, 2010)

¹¹⁷ (Godfreyd, Koomson, Awuah-Gah, & Koosa, 2010)

or other problems facing Ghana while the Black Stars were playing; the whole country was all about football. Mr. Charles Aryeh commented that during the World Cup Ghanaians saw Ghana in a positive light, whereas right now all that Ghana does is talk about problems. He said that sports foster peace between Ghanaians and within Ghana.¹¹⁸ Mr. Daniel Apak felt that Ghana was “optimistic” during the World Cup. There was a “belief that the team would do well, and they did not disappoint us”.¹¹⁹ Ghana was hopeful and happy during the World Cup; their team was performing well on an international level.

There was also an overwhelming feeling of unity in Ghana during the World Cup that was brought up in every one of the interviews. Ghana was one; they had united around their national team and set aside their differences.¹²⁰ Ghanaians were unified and, according to interviewees, feelings of nationalism were strong. Mr. Fynn commented that during the World Cup, there was a feeling of unity that brought the country together.¹²¹ And on more than one occasion, interviewees mentioned how local team loyalties (and rivalries) were set aside. Local teams are frequently supported along ethnic lines, but during the World Cup these differences were put on the back burner.¹²² There was one thing that everybody in Ghana to support, and that was the Black Stars. National football cut away all differences within Ghana, and provided an outlet for Ghanaian nationalism.¹²³

People threw out their ethnic differences and threw on the Red, Gold and Green of the Ghanaian flag. Cohesive Ghanaian identity, separated from ethnic loyalties, is rare in Ghana, which made the unity from the World Cup especially significant. From the interviews, it is easy to see how football-crazy Ghana became during the summer of 2010.¹²⁴ The country was in a “frenzy” over the Black Stars.¹²⁵ The feelings described by the interviewees perfectly support Nkrumah’s reasoning for starting the Black Stars national football team. Football served as a way to overlook the little differences between groups, and helped them look towards a cause greater than themselves. This is an offshoot of intense nationalism, putting the needs of your country above the needs of the individual. Nationalism promotes community and unity, and World Cup football cultivated nationalism within Ghana.

¹¹⁸ (Aryeh, 2010)

¹¹⁹ (Apak, 2010)

¹²⁰ (Yankey, 2010)

¹²¹ (Flynn, 2010)

¹²² (Godfreyd, Koomson, Awuah-Gah, & Koosa, 2010)

¹²³ (Sam, Football in Ghana, 2010)

¹²⁴ (Chazan, 1978)

¹²⁵ (Yamoah, 2010)

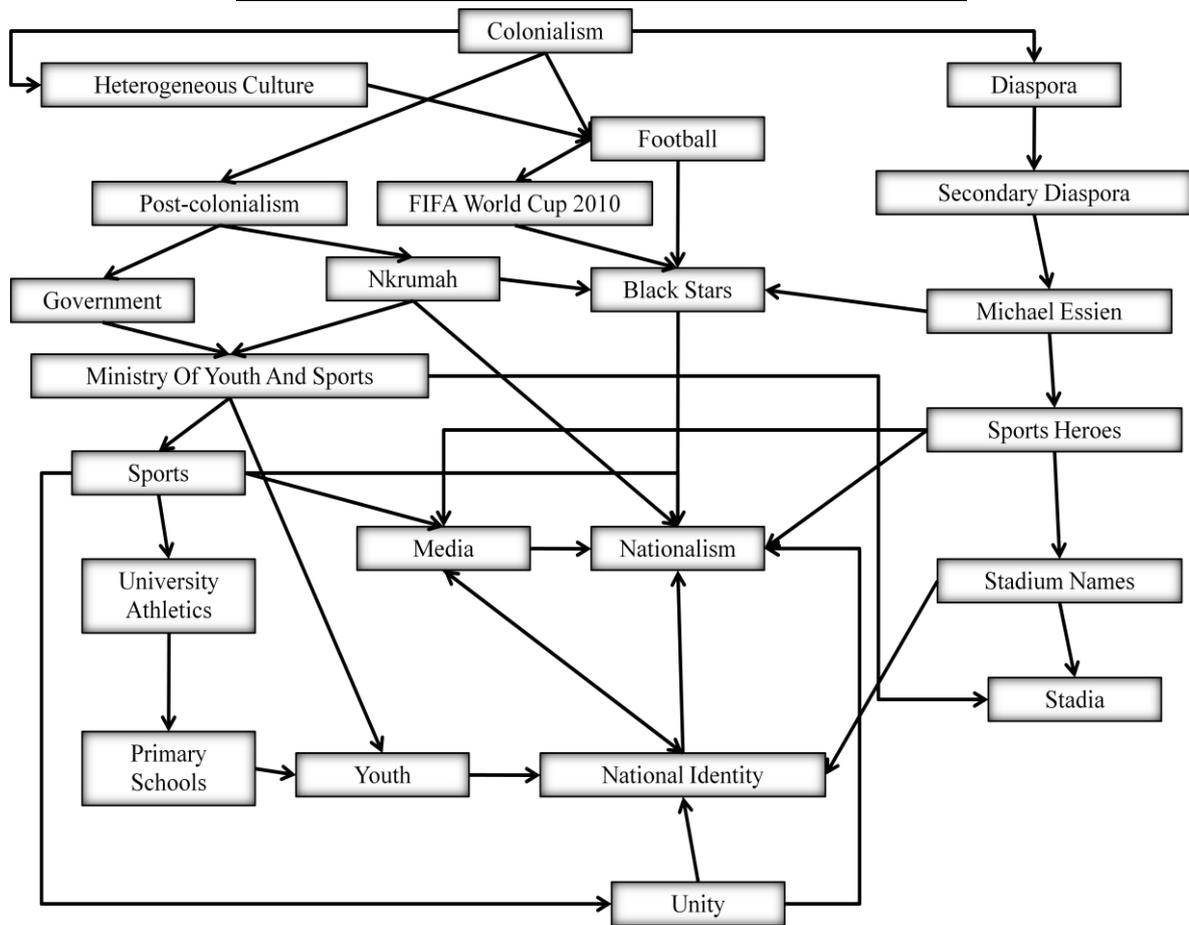
For all of the unifying that the Black Stars did within Ghana, their performance also bore greater implications beyond the boundaries of Ghana. In two of the interviews, the interviewees mentioned how united Africa became during the final games of the World Cup. During the preliminary rounds of competition, it may have been all about Ghanaian nationalism, but towards the end (when they were the final African team in the tournament) it was also about pride in Africa. Africa was one. Mr. Abbiezieh Yankey told the story of a meeting of African Political Officials. The government officials were meeting during the semi-final game of the World Cup, but the game was so important to all of them that they put their meeting on hold to watch the Black Stars in the semi-final match against Uruguay.¹²⁶ The game became important for all of Africa, not simply Ghana. This would have also made Nkrumah incredibly proud. His efforts to promote football and sporting events between West African nations were but a small element of his greater plan to unite Africa. Ghana's national football team was a source of pride not just to Ghana; it was a source of pride for the continent of Africa.¹²⁷

In summary of the interviews, football transcends differences in Ghana. Young and old, poor or rich, Nzima, Brong, Fante or Twi, the Black Stars were the team that represented them all, and the team that gave them a sense of unified pride. Nationalism was at a fever pitch in Ghana, and all the conflict melted away in order to support the football team. The flag was raised, and football jerseys were donned, and people who may have agreed on little else cheered for the same team. In Ghana, football had the ability to do what politicians probably dream of; it brought people together under a common goal. As a billboard in Accra told the public, "*Rally around the Flag and support the Black Stars*", and that is exactly what happened for those sweet summer months of 2010.

¹²⁶ (Yankey, 2010)

¹²⁷ This is, of course, a statement made from the Ghanaian perspective.

Interrelationships and the Multi-Faceted Interactions of Football and Nationalism in Ghana: Visual Representation



Theoretical Conclusions

This “web” (i.e., interactive flow-chart) is a visual, illustrative summary of my research findings. The web is informed by my premises and perspectives which have been tested, argued and upheld by the various research strategies and tools, primary and secondary sources, all of which are summed up in the “Methodology” section. The specific terms employed in the chart are subjects that have already been discussed in detail earlier. For example, stadium names as a form of national identity were examined in detail in the paper; Kwame Nkrumah’s role in football and nationalism was also discussed. The arrows between specific and universal terms are symbolic of their interactions and relationships. While some of the arrows in the web are going one way, others point in two directions. This is an illustration of how fluid the relationships between the terms are. The web shows how multi-

faceted the relationships between football, nationalism, and Ghanaian national identity are; Ghanaians pull from a multitude of sources to form their national identity.

It is important to note the flow of the chart. Colonialism's position at the top of the chart signifies its huge role in informing the whole Ghanaian experience. It has shaped everything that falls beneath it. Then the chart shows football flowing into nationalism, which is related to national identity. At the bottom of the chart is Unity, which demonstrates how football bridges the gap between a violent colonial history and contemporary Ghanaian unity. Football is an integral part of Ghanaian national identity and the conceptualization of nationalism.

The web of interconnections articulates clearly the interrelationships between colonialism, football, nationalism, national identity, including their sub-themes or processes. Although the individual components, their sites and routes of intersection, would seem very complex at first sight, they all inevitably point to – and highlight – “unity”. This fact very much supports my original premises and hypotheses linking football and nationalism in Ghana. (e.g., trace the straight line from Football, Black Stars, to Unity. Even with this linear relationship, see how the “straight” line interacts with the rest of the components.) The scope and theoretical implications of the “web” are broad enough to be applicable in universal contexts but it still retains features and appeal that are unique to the Ghanaian example. So, part of the strength or plausibility of this analysis rests in this interactive, multifaceted framework or model. In sum, notions and experiences of Colonialism, Diaspora, Nationalism, National Identity, and Post-Colonialism can be closely intertwined with other important universal features; they still have meaning and possible application outside of the Ghanaian experience.

In post-colonial societies (put together by foreigners), ethnic differences are a source of internal divide, and can sometimes be a hindrance to the feelings of overall nationalism/patriotism. I am arguing that sports transcend these differences to provide a common ground which fosters feelings of nationalism and national identity. In Ghana, football is the sport that unites the nation, and the Black Stars bring together Ghanaians under the banner of nationalism. There are multiple sources for nationalism and even more factors that inform national identity, but sports are unique amongst them. Sports are an accessible aspect of culture; no schooling is necessary, no particular income required, and regardless of

age or gender, national sports are a commonality. In Ghana, football is integrated into every part of daily life and culture, and thus accounts for a substantial portion of the Ghanaian national identity. In the 2010 Black Stars performance on a global stage in the World Cup, the sport of football took on the role of catalyst for nationalism and unity between Ghanaians.

The conclusions I have reached on the example of Ghanaian nationalism, in a developing country and in relation to football, are supported by general development theories in sociology. In particular, the theories which emphasize economic, social and cultural transformations and the fact that they reaffirm national identity, tie into the importance of the Black Stars achievement and national identity.¹²⁸ The cultural and social transformations that took place in Ghana during the World Cup reaffirmed Ghanaian national identity and nationalism. As a post-colonial society, Ghanaian nationalism has been fostered by the government, particularly the efforts of Kwame Nkrumah. This paper has shown that nationalism in Ghana goes beyond government initiatives, and into the everyday life of Ghanaians. Football, being a social phenomenon that permeates all levels of culture, provides Ghanaians with a unifying factor. Ghanaian national identity is influenced heavily by football, and unity springs from this nation-wide love of the sport. Football transcends ethnic differences in Ghana, and the 2010 FIFA World Cup brought the country together in a peaceful way. The national football team, the Black Stars, served as a rallying point for Ghanaians, and their commendable performance fostered unity between Ghanaians.

This research has shown the multi-faceted connections between nationalism and contemporary football in Ghana. The analysis of the prevalence and importance of football in Ghana highlights the dedication to the sport and the nature of national identity in Ghana. Theories that focus on social and political identity must be revised and enriched in light of these Ghanaian examples. In particular, dimensions of mass support and how they translate into support of the nation as a whole.¹²⁹ These theories must now acknowledge sports as an element in the social and political constructions of identity. The Ghanaian example proves the importance of sports, and that their value should not be underestimated; it also exemplifies the connection between nationalism and football, a connection which surely exists in other contexts.

¹²⁸ (Portes, 1976)

¹²⁹ (Huddy, 2001)

The presence and interplay of multiple factors and processes in the Ghanaian example of football and nationalism have been under-studied and under-represented in literature, both locally and globally. While there are sources that examine the role of sports in unity, they do not focus specifically on Ghana. My focus on the dynamic and complicated interactions between these factors, presents a set of unique resources for future theorizing about the relationship between nationalism and sports, in Ghana and worldwide. As summarized in the flow chart/web, my analysis and research acknowledges the contributions of specific elements or actors in relation to larger, more universal terms. The information I have gathered and laid out on these specific elements and universal terms has strengthened the assumption that football plays a part in Ghanaian nationalism. The dynamics between the factors and the subsequent outcome explains the original hypothesis of a close relationship between football and nationalism in Ghana. This relationship is one of the major theoretical and methodological contributions of my research.

Suggestions for Further Research

Because of the time constraints put on this research, there were multiple components which were glazed over a little. Further research on the topic of football and nationalism in Ghana would benefit from a more detailed look into funding. By investigating the funding of sports, one could potentially quantify the attention paid to football in Ghana.

Also, my study only looked at the opinions of men, further research on this topic would benefit from the female perspective. An inquiry into how football is viewed and received by female Ghanaians would substantiate the connection between nationalism and football.

In addition to these two Ghanaian areas for further research, looking at this idea in other countries would prove very interesting indeed. Following the example set by my Ghanaian research, looking at football in other post-colonial African nations would be very enlightening. This would serve as a way to test the theory I am proposing. It would also add more substance to the body of work done on sports and national identity.

Because the topic is so under-studied, further research is necessary. It would not be difficult to approach this topic from a new angle, and there is clearly a lot to be done in articulating the importance of sports to national identities and their roles in nationalism. I recommend that future analysts examine, in detail, the power and influences of the Ghanaian media and symbolic forms, in regard to how and why they encourage patriotism and nationalism in relation to football.

Bibliography

- Addo-Fening. (2010, October 4). Colonial History of Ghana: Lecture. Accra, Ghana.
- Alegi, P. C. (2002). Playing to the Gallery? Sport, Cultural Performance, and Social Identity in South Africa 1920s-1945. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* , 35 (1), 17-38.
- All Sports. (2010, October 12). Essien Begg for Mercy. *All Sports* , pp. 8-9.
- Alug, T. B. (2010, May). Yemeni Football and Identity Politics. *Middle East Institute Viewpoints: Sports in the Middle East* , pp. 16-19.
- Anquandah. (2010, October 5). Archaeology in Ghana: Lecture. Accra, Ghana.
- Apak, D. (2010, November 12). University Sports Overview. (E. Peterson Horner, Interviewer)
- Aryeh, C. J. (2010, November 23). Ministry of Youth and Sports. (E. Peterson Horner, Interviewer) Accra, Ghana.
- Asafu-Adjaye, E. O. (1958). Ghana since Independence. *African Affairs* , 57 (288), 182-188.
- Boahen, A. (1964). The Roots of Ghanaian Nationalism. *The Journal of African History* , 5 (1), 127-132.
- Britwum. (2010, October 13). Contemporary Politics in Ghana: Lecture. Cape Coast, Ghana.
- Brown, W. (2010, October 22-25). Ohene Djan worthy of honour. *Graphic Sports* , p. 7.
- Burnett, C. (n.d.). *Assessing Development of the 2010 Soccer World Cup*. Retrieved from Toolkit Sport Development: <http://www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/html/resources/6C/6CDCFA80-207E-4886-8B9B-F68FA77BC768/2010%20impact%20assessment%20Burnett%20Cora%20-%20Assessing%20Development%20of%20the%202010%20soccer%20world%20cup.doc>
- Cerulo, K. A. (1997). Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions. *Annual Review of Sociology* , 23, 385-409.
- Chazan, N. (1978). Political Culture and Socialization to Politics: A Ghanaian Case. *The Review of Politics* , 40 (1), 3-31.
- Cicourell, A. V. (1964). *Theories and Measurement in Sociology*. London: The Free Press of Glencoe.
- Dolby, N. (2006). Popular Culture and Public Space in Africa: The Possibilities of Cultural Citizenship. *African Studies Review* , 49 (3), 31-47.
- Dugger, C. W. (2010, July 8). To Those With Nothing, Soccer is Everything. *The New York Times* , pp. C1-C5.
- Elias, N., & Dunning, E. (1966). Dynamics of Group Sports with Special Reference to Football. *The British Journal of Sociology* , 17 (4), 388-402.

- Essig, L. (2010, June 28). *Losing at soccer and at war*. Retrieved from Trueslant: <http://trueslant.com/laurieessig/2010/06/28/losing-at-soccer-and-at-war/>
- Fair, L. (1997). Kickin' It: Leisure, Politics and Football in Colonial Zanzibar, 1900s-1950s. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* , 67 (2), 225-251.
- FIFA . (n.d.). *FIFA Associations, Ghana*. Retrieved November 14, 2010, from FIFA: <http://www.fifa.com/associations/association=gha/index.html>
- FIFA. (n.d.). *The History of Football*. Retrieved November 14, 2010, from FIFA: <http://www.fifa.com/classicfootball/history/game/historygame1.html>
- Flynn, M. (2010, November 14). Mysterious Dwarves. (E. Peterson Horner, Interviewer)
- Foddy, W. (1993). *Constructing Questions of Interviews and Questionnaires*. New York: The University of Cambridge Press.
- Francis, E. K. (1947). The Nature of the Ethnic Group. *The American Journal of Sociology* , 52 (5), 393-400.
- Ghana Football Association. (n.d.). *Statutes of the GFA*. Retrieved November 6, 2010, from Ghana Football Association: <http://www.ghanafa.org/gfa/statutes/>
- Ghanaian National Sports Council. (1994). *National Sports Policy: Purpose*. Accra: Assembly Press of Ghana Publishing Corporation.
- Godfreyd, C. W., Koomson, E., Awuah-Gah, N. K., & Koosa, S. (2010, November 11). Football in Ghana. (E. Peterson Horner, Interviewer)
- Government of Ghana. (2007). *Year 2007 Budget: Sports*.
- Hechter, I. W. (1970). Social Rank and Nationalism: Some African Data. *The Public Opinion Quarterly* , 34 (3), 360-370.
- Hogg, M. A., Terry, D. J., & White, K. M. (1995). A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly* , 58 (4), 225-269.
- Huddy, L. (2001). From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory. *Political Psychology* , 22 (1), 127-156.
- Kampf, L. (1977). A Course on Spectator Sports. *College English* , 38 (8), 835-842.
- King, A. (1997). The Postmodernity of Football Hooliganism. *The British Journal of Sociology* , 48 (4), 576-593.
- Kraus, J. (1969). On the Politics of Nationalism and Social Change in Ghana. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* , 7 (1), 107-130.
- Manhyia Palace. (2010, October 14). Tour. Kumasi, Ashanti.
- Michael Essien. (n.d.). *Biography*. Retrieved November 13, 2010, from Michael Essien: www.michaellessiengh.com/biography.html#

- Mizruchi, M. S. (1985). Local Sports Teams and Celebration of Community: A Comparative Analysis of the Home Advantage. *The Sociological Quarterly* , 26 (4), 507-518.
- Nicol, D. (1963). Politics, Nationalism and Universities in Africa. *African Affairs* , 62 (246), 20-28.
- Nkrumah, K. (1997). New Sporting Era in West Africa. In S. Obeng, *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah: Vol 1* (pp. 23-24). Accra: Afram Publications Ltd.
- Nkrumah, K. (1997). Sports and African Unity. In S. Obeng, *Selected Speeches of Kwame Nkrumah: Vol 1* (pp. 26-27). Kumasi: Afram Publications Ltd.
- Perbi, D. A. (2010, October 4). History of Ghana and The Slave Trade: Lecture. Accra, Ghana.
- Platero, J. S. (2010, May 10). Argentine wants to play for Ghana. (R. D. Ahenkro, Interviewer) Soccer News.
- Poli, R. (2006). Migrations and Trade of African Football Players: Historic, Geographical and Cultural Aspects. *Africa Spectrum* , 41 (3), 393-414.
- Portes, A. (1976). On the Sociology of National Development: Theories and Issues. *The American Journal of Sociology* , 82 (1), 55-85.
- Quansah, E. (2010, October 29). Ohene Djan To Jubilee House, The Value Is The Same! *Daily Guide* , p. 30.
- Republic of Ghana. (1992). *The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana*. Accra: Assembly Press of Ghana Publishing Corporation.
- Riley, M. W. (1963). *Sociological Research II Exercises and Manual*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc. .
- Rommel, C. (2010, May). Assyrians or Syrians?: Middle Eastern Identity Formation Through Football in Sweden. *Middle East Institute Viewpoints: Sports and the Middle East* , pp. 20-23.
- Sam, U. E. (2010, November 15). Ebusua Dwarves. (E. Peterson Horner, Interviewer)
- Sam, U. E. (2010, November 5). Football in Ghana. (D. Avorgbedor, Interviewer)
- Schatzberg, M. G. (2006). Soccer, Science, and Sorcery: Causation and African Football. *Africa Spectrum* , 41 (3), 351-369.
- Shor, E. (2010, Month). In Search of a Voice: Arab Soccer Players in the Israeli Media. *Middle East Institute Viewpoints: Sports and the Middle East* , pp. 8-10.
- Smith, H. L. (2010, September-October 30-6). K.O.D. for short. *Graphic Showbiz* .
- Sugden, J. (1993). Political Football. *Fortnight* , 36-37.
- Taustad, D. (2010, May). Al-Wihdat: The Pride of the Palestinians in Jordan. *Middle East Institute Viewpoints: Sports and the Middle East* , pp. 24-26.
- The Diva Show. (2010, October 10). The Diva Show. Accra, Ghana.

The Penguin English Dictionary . (2003). Finland: the Penguin Group.

Van, T. (2010, September 9). *Ghana Soccer Culture: Football, the King of Sports*. Retrieved from Essay Forum: <http://www.essayforum.com/research-papers-11/ghana-soccer-culture-18627/>

Vidacs, B. (2006). Through the Prism of Sports: Why Should Africanists Study Sports? *Africa Spectrum* , 41 (3), 331-349.

Waldron, A. N. (1985). Review: Theories of Nationalism and Historical Explanation. *World Politics* , 37 (3), 416-433.

Yamoah, J. (2010, November 14). Football in Ghana. (E. Peterson Horner, Interviewer)

Yankey, A. (2010, November 14). World Cup and Football in Ghana. (E. Peterson Horner, Interviewer)