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Big Men playing football: money, politics and foul play in the African game

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Big Men playing football

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Money, politics and foul play
in the African game

Arnold Pannenburg

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against Asante Kotoko at the stadium in Accra, Ghana.

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Introduction

Lubumbashi, 7 November 2009. TP Mazembe beats Nigeria's Heartland FC 1-0 in the CAF Champions League final. President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of Congo watches the match from the VIP section at the Stade Municipal, together with tens of thousands of spectators. It is the third time for TP – or *Tout Puissant*, meaning All Powerful – Mazembe to clinch the continent's most prestigious club trophy. The team successfully defends the title the following year.

The team's star player is a youthful striker by the name of Mputu Mabi, called Tresor by his father who saw his son as a treasure, and rightly so. The club's true star, however, is a wealthy man named Moise Katumbi Chapwe, who has been its president since the late 1990s. Under his tutelage the club won five league titles in the first decade of the new millennium. Katumbi has consistently stated that his goal is to make TP Mazembe one of Africa's biggest club sides. For the 2010 season he announced a \$10 million budget plus an extra \$2 million to renovate the stadium.

Moise Katumbi is one of many African businessmen who sponsor and run clubs. Although TP Mazembe's recent budgets have been rather high in comparison with most clubs in Africa, a rich and influential man taking over a club and turning it into a powerhouse is an example of the situation on the continent. Katumbi, who was elected governor of Katanga Province in 2007, made his fortune in the fishing, mining and transport sector in both Zambia and DR Congo. It was and still is a time of turmoil and unrest. The Big Man has always remained close to those in positions of power.

Why would a wealthy man such as Katumbi invest time and money in a football club? For one thing, Katumbi understands the political ramifications of the club's massive following, having stated that 'TP Mazembe is the hope of the Congolese people'.¹ He nevertheless denies having any political aspirations. 'I have no interest in politics,' he says. 'If I had to choose between politics and my

football club I would choose football.’² Yet one would be wise to take such words with a few grains of salt.

The de-virtualised world of football

It is claimed that Africa’s national teams have evolved to a point where they can rival the world’s best national teams. This idea is caused by the fact that some of the most popular players contracted by Europe’s richest clubs are Africans. As a result, the national teams of Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon boast well-known professionals. The 2010 World Cup nevertheless proved once again that Africa’s performances leave a lot to be desired. To me, the main cause is to be found in the way the African game is organised, financed and managed. As journalist Jonathan Wilson remarked, inept and corrupt ‘administration coupled with political interference leads to confused governance and (a football) infrastructure that never develops’.³

This is an anthropological study and as such the data have been gathered during fieldwork at what one might call the grassroots level. My argument is based on what happens within the management of clubs in Africa’s leagues and, to a lesser extent, within Africa’s football associations (FAs). Most examples therefore deal directly with club affairs. However, the results of this study can with relative ease be extrapolated to the level of Africa’s national teams for the simple reason that those who run clubs and those who run the FAs (and by implication the various national teams) are more often than not the same people. In fact, football in Africa is organised and run in a more or less similar fashion no matter how high or low the level of the game.

The topic at hand originated out of a five-month stay in the town of Buea (pronunciation *Boy-ya*) in southwestern Cameroon in 2003. It was here, in the foothills of West Africa’s highest mountain, that I joined two teams and immersed myself in the lives of footballers, team managers, coaches, referees, witchdoctors and others who were directly involved in the game. I researched the spiritual practices and beliefs that are so prevalent in the African game.⁴ Yet it was a meeting with Calvin Foinding, the owner and president of Buea’s top league club at the time, that made me aware of the existence of what I perceived to be a parallel world – one inhabited not by players, team managers and coaches but by presidents, chairmen, directors and patrons.

Calvin Foinding is a successful businessman who founded his private club Mount Cameroon in the late 1990s. He once acted as president of a community-owned team in his native town Bandjoun, during which time he was voted into parliament. As a businessman-politician, Foinding can easily be compared to the president of TP Mazembe, Moise Katumbi. Both men decided to spend time and money on managing a football club and both of them became well-known

personalities in the process. Founding and Katumbi belong to a group of men (and a few women) whom I label as Big Men, a concept to which I will return shortly.

Although the other world of which I speak is actually far from hidden – for instance, Katumbi is a prominent figure in public life – these Big Men’s motives for investing money in football are rather secretive. That is, they do not talk about it openly. Yet their interests are clear to everyone who wishes to see them. There is a world where the concept of winning is not limited to the sheer joy and excitement of collecting a trophy. Perhaps more to the point, those involved in sponsoring and running the game want victory as much as the next person, but not always for the sake of victory itself. These Big Men’s aspirations reach beyond the confines of the stadium as they tend to transform success in football into personal glory: Status and popularity, political influence and business opportunities.

The reasons presidents, chairmen, directors and patrons have for getting involved in football will take up one part of this dissertation. The other part deals with the consequences of their actions. Calvin Founding, for example, belongs to the Bamileke, an ethnic group known for its entrepreneurial spirit. The Bamileke own a number of top league clubs, partially as a means to gain a foothold in the political arena.⁵ Persistent rumours – and in some cases there is evidence – have it that these Bamileke club presidents are engaged in bribing referees and opponents in order for their clubs to be promoted and win titles. This desire to win is, of course, not uncommon in sports, but in their case a victory on the pitch yields a victory in the political arena. It can be argued that the Bamileke will do anything, including foul play, to achieve their (political) goals.

Football serves both as a *model of* and a *vehicle for* practices and beliefs in society. The *model of* idea refers to the game as constituting a mirror of society. As the sociologist Richard Giulianotti asserts, football ‘in any setting provides us with a kind of cultural map, a metaphorical representation, which enhances our understanding of that society’.⁶ Silvio Berlusconi, owner of AC Milan, said that ‘soccer is a metaphor for life’.⁷ And although discussing *American* football, the anthropologist William Arens could have referred to association football when he argued that the game

... tells us much about who and what we Americans are as a people, and if an anthropologist from another planet visited here, he would be struck by the American fixation on this game and would report on it with glee and romantic intoxication anthropologists normally reserve for the exotic rituals of a newly discovered tribe. This assertion is based on the theory that certain significant symbols are the key to understanding a culture; football is such a symbol.⁸

In short, football and sports in general tell us something about the world we live in.⁹ The anthropologist Jeremy MacClancy argues that sport ‘is not a “reflection”

of some postulated essence of society, but an integral part of society and one, moreover, which may be used as a means of *reflecting on society*'.¹⁰

While the *model of* idea can be regarded as a mode of representation and reflection, the *vehicle for* idea is mainly a mode of action and transformation. The *vehicle for* idea refers to the game as a means for individuals and groups to achieve certain goals. Indeed, football can be regarded as "capital" that is convertible into other forms of capital. The Bamileke convert the game's popularity into political capital by using football as a 'stepping stone' to a career in politics, as one informant called it. At the same time, the Bamileke convert the game's commercial value into economic capital by being active in the global player transfer market. In short, individuals and groups use football as a vehicle for prestigious, political and business purposes.

Labelling football as capital brings me to the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) whose generative structuralism acquired a place in sports studies.¹¹ Bourdieu goes beyond the dichotomy between objectivism versus subjectivism by focusing on everyday 'practice', which 'discloses both people's practical understanding of the social world and how social reality is made'.¹² On the subjective end lies his concept of *habitus*, defined as a system of dispositions, which 'captures the complexities of human agency as that agency repeatedly engages with forms of structure and influence'.¹³ On the objective end lies his concept of *field*, which is a structured system of social positions occupied by individuals or institutions.¹⁴ For example, a football club is a field, meaning 'a system characterized by a series of power relations, where positions are viewed as more or less dominant, reflecting an individual's access to capital'.¹⁵

Bourdieu's concept of *capital* is a central element of this dissertation. His idea of capital goes further than the Marxist notion of capital as a surplus value derived from the production process which, in turn, can be used as an investment by those who control the means of production. In Bourdieu's scheme, capital is not necessarily of a monetary kind; it can 'assume monetary and nonmonetary as well as tangible and intangible forms'.¹⁶ Bourdieu's main forms of capital are economic capital (material wealth), social capital (social positions and networks), cultural capital (educational and artistic knowledge) and symbolic capital (honour and prestige). In *Distinction*, Bourdieu explains how these forms of capital are used a means by the dominant classes to retain their positions in society.¹⁷

Cultural capital is a crucial factor in Bourdieu's scheme but, for reasons that will soon become clear, I instead focus more on the related symbolic capital. Figure 1 thus represents my model of the forms of capital in modern-day football. One aspect of this model is the interconnectedness between symbolic, social and economic capital in the sense that the 'various types of capital can translate into one another (...)'.¹⁸ For example, symbolic capital is perceived as a 'credit' that is easily convertible into economic or socio-political capital.¹⁹ Also, power holders tend to control more than one form of capital. This is evident in the case of the Bami-
 leke in Cameroon who focus on all types of capital as mentioned above.

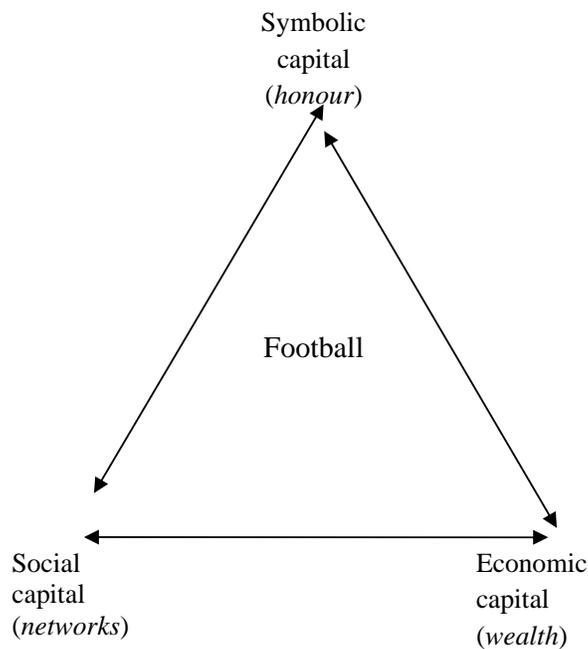


Figure 1 The forms of capital in football

Cultural capital exists in various guises such as cultural goods and educational qualifications. One distinction is that between *incorporated* cultural capital, which refers to education and knowledge, and *symbolic* cultural capital, which is the 'capacity to define and legitimize cultural, moral, and artistic values, standards, and styles'.²⁰ In Africa, the distinction between cultural and symbolic capital 'is less relevant because the various fields are less separated, power differences rely less on education, and culture tends to be shared by all the players in the political field'.²¹ This is especially true in the case of football, a sport that is widely supported by the lower classes as well as the elite in Africa. I will therefore focus on symbolic capital, which has a potent strength throughout the continent.

Symbolic capital refers to honour and prestige (discussed in chapter 4). It is, in the words of Bourdieu, a 'credit of honourability'.²² In sports, a title or trophy may not have much economic value, it does have immeasurable prestigious value. The anthropologist Wouter van Beek writes about the 'crowning glories of the symbolic capital: The titles, championships and records'.²³

A sports cup is the obvious example. The "Cup" lacks any practical value, is all show and no content, and may sometimes be beautiful but often is hideously ugly; yet, it is highly prized, not for its intrinsic economic value, but for the efforts needed to win it.²⁴

Indeed, football *is* symbolic capital or, put differently, a ‘highly valued global commodity’.²⁵ João Havelange, president of the *Fédération Internationale de Football Association* (FIFA) between 1974 and 1998, once summed up his encounters with world leaders and concluded that ‘They’ve got their power, and I’ve got mine: The power of football, which is the greatest power there is’.²⁶

The game’s symbolic capital is related to the fact that it captures the imagination of literally billions of people. In fact, modern sports such as football have often, albeit not altogether correctly, been labelled a secular faith or religion.²⁷ One way to look at it is that players (gods) play on pitches (sacred turfs, altars) inside stadiums (temples) in front of supporters (worshippers). Modern team sports are sometimes regarded as a form of ‘ritualized warfare’²⁸ or a ritual hunt whereby players make the ‘symbolic kill by shooting at the goalmouth’.²⁹ Seeing football as a form of symbolic warfare is logical considering the game’s inherent rivalry.³⁰ A home team beats the visitors, thereby symbolically defending its territory (city, region, nation).

Identification with teams is based on class, religion, ethnicity and nationalism, among other factors.³¹ A nation’s ‘imagined community’ becomes real when it is pitted against other nations during high-profile tournaments.³² As identification with the nation-state tends to be weak in most African countries, the national team may well be the glue that brings people together. Support for teams in Africa’s leagues is primarily predicated on the basis of ethnicity, defined here in political terms as ‘informal interest group(s) whose members are distinct from the members of other groups within the same society’ in that they share features of kinship, religion and communication.³³ In Cameroon, among other countries, the prevalence of teams in areas dominated by certain ethnic groups has even proven to strengthen ethnic affiliation.³⁴

It has to be noted that the strong bonds people have with teams often result in the game being far from merely *symbolic* warfare. In fact, spectator violence or hooliganism has for long been part and parcel of the game. According to Giulianotti, such hooligans are part of groups that can be regarded as a mixture between ‘modern subculture and postmodern neo-tribe’.³⁵ Much has been written about on- and off-pitch spectator violence which in rare cases even triggered war.³⁶ In Africa too, spectator violence is common and as such I will deal with this subject later on. It is nevertheless not my intention to explain its causes and processes; rather I treat intimidation and violence as part of a repertoire to influence the outcome of matches.

Social capital is comprised of social networks and positions. Bourdieu defines social capital as ‘the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition’.³⁷ The

level of social capital depends both on the size of the network and on the volume of the forms of capital the individual possesses.³⁸ Social capital generally arises out of group membership, be it a family, a political party, an ethnic group or a football club. Sports organisations tend to be predominantly controlled by the rich and powerful, thus constituting an abundance of social capital.³⁹ Football is no exception in this respect.

The game's social capital is most visible at the VIP section where important people from all walks of life meet and greet. In a documentary on the 2010 World Cup one could watch the rich and famous entering Soccer City Stadium in Johannesburg on the day of the final.⁴⁰ These days companies rent sky boxes in order to facilitate social meetings between employees, clients and potential partners. Club directors all of a sudden find themselves travelling to all corners of the globe to watch matches and interact with people. As social capital, football seems to attract interest from agents in both the formal and informal economy. Indeed, one study concluded that sport 'can be a route for criminals to become "celebrities" by associating with famous people and moving upwards to powerful circles within established society'.⁴¹

In (African) football, social capital is convertible to political capital (chapter 5). Clubs tend to maintain connections with ethnic groups, regional authorities and political parties. The links between social and political capital are a two-way street. On the one hand, research in Ghana and Tanzania, among other countries, shows that in order to be voted into the managements of clubs and FAs not seldom requires one to be active within a political party.⁴² On the other hand, research in Brazil and Malta, among other places, suggests that *patrons* use clubs in a similar vein as the Bamileke in Cameroon, namely as vehicles to a political career.⁴³ In both cases, a club director or football administrator often either is a politician or has (in)direct access to those that are.

Economic capital refers to material wealth. Bourdieu sees economic capital as that 'which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights'.⁴⁴ In Bourdieu's view, economic capital lies at the 'root' of the other forms of capital which are actually 'transformed, disguised forms of economic capital'.⁴⁵ He also asserts that some forms of economic capital can be obtained without secondary costs while other forms can be obtained only through social capital. Converting economic capital into social, cultural or symbolic capital is closely related to Thorstein Veblen's theory of 'conspicuous consumption',⁴⁶ meaning the display of wealth 'through extensive leisure activities and through lavish expenditure on consumption and services' in order to increase one's socio-cultural standing.⁴⁷

As with symbolic and social capital, football is well-endowed in terms of economic capital. The modern game has been commercialised to the extent that

by 1998 football as a global industry was said to be worth \$250 billion. For instance, the 2010 edition of the World Cup delivered a turnover of around \$3 billion. It was former FIFA president João Havelange who with the help of the late Adidas top executive Horst Dassler transformed football from a blue-collar, cash-strapped sport into a white-collar, multibillion dollar business.⁴⁸ This success was accomplished in collaboration with multinational corporations, called “partners” in FIFA terminology.⁴⁹ Other sports, under the umbrellas of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), have also undergone this transition.

These days players, clubs, leagues and tournaments are increasingly used as economic capital (chapter 6). Many Premier League clubs in England, among other countries, are now run by foreign businessmen and investors. Such clubs are regarded as lucrative investments rather than leisure activities or, put differently, as economic capital rather than social organisations. The same can be said of broadcasting rights and sponsorship opportunities with regard to leagues and tournaments. The journalist David Conn rightfully speaks of the ‘football business’ in this respect.⁵⁰ Although Africa as a whole cannot be compared to Europe in terms of economic capital, here too the game’s increased commercialisation allows one to speak of a business.

The player transfer market has witnessed a surge in profits in recent times. Both transfer fees and salary caps have increased exponentially, making players, agents and other intermediaries exceedingly rich in the process. Indeed, football players are treated as commodities, ready to be bought and sold on the international market. They are, in other words, economic capital to those who represent them, but also to those who control clubs and FAs. A body of literature exists in relation to the global transfer of athletes in general and footballers in particular. It is theorised that since Africa lies at the periphery of world football, its players tend to migrate to the core that is Europe. Holders of capital throughout Africa evidently display an interest in this form of economic capital.

Having discussed the forms of capital in relation to football, it needs to be emphasised that Bourdieu’s scheme is essentially a theory of power. For one thing, Bourdieu considers each field to be a *game*. Agents take positions within the game according to their habitus and to the types of capital they possess. Positions are thus never static and, according to Bourdieu, ‘no one can benefit from the game, not even those who dominate it, without taking part in the game and being taken in by the game’.⁵¹ As with an actual game, players need to get acquainted with its rules and devise strategies. Bourdieu ‘pictures capital in terms of game tokens with different colours to designate each player’s varied capabilities’. In this game, players ‘adopt different tactics to protect and augment their capital’.⁵²

This brings us to the second part of this dissertation which, as one would recall, relates to the ways power brokers, in their attempts at converting capital, tend to change the nature of the game. The world of sports is governed by a set of ideals or ethics known to everyone and more or less taken for granted by athletes, administrators and spectators alike. Examples include Pierre de Coubertin's Olympic ideal and FIFA's Fair Play Code. The overall ideal is to approach the game as though the competition itself is more important than the ultimate goal (winning). It suffices to quote the first of ten rules that make up the Fair Play Code:

Winning is without value if victory has been achieved unfairly or dishonestly. Cheating is easy, but brings no pleasure. Playing fair requires courage and character. It is also more satisfying. Fair play always has its reward, even when the game is lost. Playing fair earns you respect, while cheats are detested. Remember: It is only a game. And games are pointless unless played fairly.⁵³

However, these days this statement will come across as naive to those who follow the game. Those with knowledge of football need no convincing of the fact that winning is important in so many respects that one is tempted to violate the Fair Play Code.

Ideals or ethics become part of public scrutiny when agents violate its principles. The bribery scandal surrounding the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City triggered a public outcry over the violation of the Olympic ideal. Similar scandals have plagued FIFA in recent times, from the dubious contacts with a company called International Sport and Leisure (ISL) to the voting procedures for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups. Several journalists and academics have set their teeth into these issues so there is no need to get into detail here.⁵⁴ The point is that while club, FA and FIFA administrators consistently utter the mantra that they act "for the good of the game" (thereby denying foul play of any kind), real-life crises cause its validity to be openly questioned.

Again, I regard clubs, FAs and football as a whole to be games/fields in which power brokers aim to convert (and accumulate) capital. These power brokers play a game that is governed by a set of ideals or ethics. My argument is twofold: First, that one requirement in the attempt to convert capital is to be "successful"; and second, that to achieve success leads power brokers to devise tactics and strategies that may not always be congruent with the game's rules and regulations. I will explain this argument by focusing on three aspects in which holders of capital become successful, namely the ability to (1) control the game's bureaucratic organisation, (2) win matches, particularly those played at home, and (3) collect league and tournament titles, earn promotion and avoid relegation.

The first field of inquiry is the game's bureaucratic organisation (chapter 7). Power brokers strive to acquire crucial positions within this bureaucracy in order to maximise their chances to convert capital. This applies to clubs, FAs, the

Confederation of African Football (CAF) and FIFA. Bourdieu makes this point in relation to social capital when he speaks of the 'internal competition for the monopoly of legitimate representation of the group'.⁵⁵ Put simply, a president/chairman is the foremost representative of a club, FA or FIFA and in that capacity he is in control of the forms of capital. But, as the above statement from Bourdieu already indicates, the president/chairman will have to fend off competitors. One consequence is that a president/chairman resorts to patronage politics in order to monopolise power.

An example of this practice, which includes levels of mismanagement, corruption and nepotism, can be found within the ranks of FIFA itself. For example, journalist David Yallop describes the reign of former FIFA president João Havelange as a string of cronyism, wheeling and dealing, secret business deals, nepotism, lack of democracy and dictatorial leadership.⁵⁶ His successor Joseph "Sepp" Blatter has, among other things, been accused of creating a group of loyalists, called the F-Crew. He is also said to have reshuffled the set-up of FIFA committees, 'giving his supporters key positions, but also making sure that potential opponents were kept in the club'.⁵⁷ Transparency and accountability mean little in the world of football.⁵⁸ During my research in Africa I have observed similar practices within the management ranks of clubs and FAs.

The second field of inquiry is the playing of matches, particularly those from the perspective of the home team (chapter 8). Presidents, chairmen, directors and patrons know that their attempts at converting capital by and large depend on winning matches. For example, converting economic capital into symbolic capital requires one to earn the admiration of those supporting the team. One of the best ways to do that is to win home matches. This is, of course, related to the fact that a team represents a geographical location, making victory vital for the pride of the population. Many club officials and football administrators tend not to leave the outcome of such matches to chance. They instead violate the Fair Play Code by engaging in extra-sportive activities, i.e. match-fixing, occult forces, and intimidation and violence.

Match-fixing may well be the most effective way of winning matches. It is also a practice that really flies into the face of fair play. Fairly recent investigations and arrests in Italy, Germany and Turkey, among other countries, indicate that match-fixing is a worldwide phenomenon. Africa is by no means an exception. Players, fans and officials also engage in religious acts so as to increase the likelihood of victory. In Africa, such beliefs are widespread and are said to have both physical and psychological effects. Indeed, spiritual practices (known as *juju* or *muti*) are used as extra-sportive means to win matches. Finally, we have already touched upon the subject of spectator violence or hooliganism.

In Africa, intimidation and violence are part of a collective effort to beat opponents, particularly at home grounds.

The third field of inquiry is the ability to collect league and tournament titles as well as earning promotion and avoiding relegation (chapter 9). Although winning home matches is a good start to be successful as a club or FA official, winning titles evidently is even better. A Champions League or African Cup of Nations trophy undoubtedly increases a club's or national team's economic, social and symbolic capital. Also, the higher the league the larger the capital. Indeed, top leagues generate more capital as compared to lower-level leagues. The majority (but not all) of club officials therefore strive to gain entry to their country's top league. Vice versa they try to avoid relegation, which inevitably leads to loss of capital, at all costs.

Social capital is a crucial form of capital in this respect. Social networks among club officials and football administrators have proven to lead to "deals" and "favours" which, in turn, have had an impact on final league tables. This, of course, is in disregard of the Fair Play Code as well. More importantly, the rules and regulations of leagues and tournaments are overseen by FA boards and committees. Here, too, social networks come in handy in the sense that in Africa the rules and regulations are not seldom subjectively applied by the authorities. Labelling this phenomenon Big Man politics, I will show that powerful individuals who occupy top positions within clubs and FAs tend to influence the judicial aspects of the game as well as issues regarding promotion and relegation.

One last aspect of the third field of inquiry is that economic capital also plays a role. This is particularly true in relation to the global transfer market. I already mentioned how (some of) those who control clubs and FAs in Africa use players as commodities in order to make profits. One consequence is that the ages of players are lowered so as to increase their commercial value. Also, the owners and presidents of some clubs specialise in buying and selling players to the extent that these teams no longer vie for titles but simply exist as player terminals. It is possible to identify different methods of increasing one's capital in this manner, but let us not go into the details until the appropriate time (again, chapter 9). It should, however, be noted that the uncompetitive nature of such teams also goes against the Fair Play Code.

The overall point is that the violation of the Fair Play Code signals a "de-virtualisation" of or "disenchantment" with the game. To set up this argument properly I should start with Dutch historian Johan Huizinga's premise that by entering the world of play and games one steps 'out of "real" life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own'.⁵⁹ As the French sociologist Roger Caillois states, play is 'essentially a separate occupation, carefully isolated from the rest of life, and generally engaged in with precise

limits of time and place'.⁶⁰ The domain of play and games is, again according to Caillois, 'a restricted, closed, protected universe: A pure space'.⁶¹ Van Beek refers to the world of play as a 'virtual world': 'Each game, each play, creates its own reality'.⁶²

In *From Ritual to Record*, Guttmann argues that modern sports are characterised by a high degree of secularism, equality, specialisation and professionalisation, rationalisation, quantification and a drive towards setting records.⁶³ FIFA's 140-page Laws of the Game, which includes official standards for the size of the pitch as well as a list of instances that require disciplinary measures, is testimony to this tendency towards rationalisation.⁶⁴ The very essence of such a document is to ensure that opponents always start out with an equal chance of winning, no matter where in the world they step onto the pitch. However, Guttmann maintains that the rationalised world of modern sports, seemingly existing in "splendid isolation" from real life, can be pinched through at any time.⁶⁵

The commercialisation and politicisation of the modern game has rendered the idea of a virtual world meaningless. As the anthropologist Kendall Blanchard states, professional sports are 'more often about record salaries than about record performance, dollars rather than diversion, and profit rather than play'.⁶⁶ 'Sport is too much a game to be a business and too much a business to be a game,' the American journalist Roger Kahn once said.⁶⁷ Indeed, the everyday world of money, politics and power is intricately linked to the world of sports. For example, clubs in Europe and Africa will do anything to reach the lucrative group stages of the Champions League. At least on Dutch television, club officials, journalists and others never fail to emphasise the financial remunerations. "Surviving the winter", is the euphemism they use.

The world of sports is falsely presented as a virtual (or neutral) world, a pure space that is free of all the hazards of modern life. This statement will unlikely come as a surprise to most football fans. Still, doping scandals in cycling or match-fixing scandals in football and cricket, among other sports, do appear to have shocked many fans. One reflex by the authorities is to pretend nothing happens. This is true for FIFA but also for, let us say, Japan where stories about corruption in sumo wrestling abound.⁶⁸ Yet burying one's head in the sand does not make the problem go away. As the economists Ian Preston and Stefan Szymanski conclude, 'most cheating seems to take place when the incentives to win are too great. Many people bemoan this aspect of modern sport, but in truth it reflects the enormous value placed on winning today.'⁶⁹

A study of Big Men in the African game

This dissertation is not so much about football, it is about the people who run it. The world of modern sports has become highly bureaucratized and institutionalized, with its ‘primary, technical, managerial and corporate social organizations that arrange, facilitate and regulate human action in sport situations’.⁷⁰ FIFA is comprised of a wide array of confederations, associations, departments and committees. The same is true for, let us say, Ghana. In 2006 and again in 2011, the president of the Ghana Football Association (GFA) appointed more than 150 administrators to run 25 committees and league boards.⁷¹ Also, hundreds of clubs are led by patrons, presidents, vice presidents, members of Boards of Directors, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and management members. These people are hired to make sure football is run properly.

Club officials and football administrators nevertheless appear to suffer from a negative image. This is true, for example, for both João Havelange and Sepp Blatter.⁷² Clubs too seem to attract dubious characters of various casts.⁷³ Also, club officials and administrators alike are often alleged to know little to nothing about the game.⁷⁴ Another point of criticism is that they tend to feel they themselves are more important than the players themselves.⁷⁵ It is fairly easy to lambast those who run the game in Africa in a similar manner and, admittedly, I will spend some pages discussing their shortcomings. However, I refuse to see them merely as having a negative influence on football. For one thing, club presidents in Africa typically spend a lot of their own money on maintaining the team. Without their help many clubs would most likely cease to exist.

Earlier I explained the origins of this study when discussing the so-called parallel world in the African game. Now it is time to present the research question at hand. This question is stated as follows:

How do African Big Men convert symbolic, social and economic capital through football and in what ways does this influence the nature of the game?

One notices that the research question actually consists of two interrelated questions. The first question, derived from the notion that Big Men do indeed convert capital, is mainly aimed at *how* they convert one form of capital into another. The second question is based on the hypothesis that these Big Men tend not to leave their attempts at converting capital to chance. They instead resort to strategies to ensure “success” in the field of football, even if that means violating the Fair Play Code. The second question is therefore aimed at finding out these Big Men’s strategies in the game/field.

I sought for answers primarily among club officials and secondarily among FA officials, although, as stated earlier, there is a great deal of overlap between the two categories. The bulk of the data was gathered during fieldwork in

Cameroon and Ghana. I first visited Ghana in January and February 2008, at a time Africa's most prestigious football tournament, the African Cup of Nations, was held there. I returned to Ghana the following year for fieldwork in the months of March, April, May, June and July. The next stop was Cameroon, where I lived from October 2009 until February 2010. Finally, I returned to Ghana in February 2011 for a follow-up. Also included in this dissertation is fieldwork performed in Cameroon in 2003.

Before getting into the details of my research methods and settings, I should first explain the research population, namely Africa's top club and FA officials. As said, I refer to them as Big Men. As former and current head of FIFA, both Havelange & Blatter are Big Men *par excellence*. Havelange embodies the perfect Big Man, not in the literal sense (the Brazilian is not that tall) but because he has a 'big presence'.⁷⁶ More importantly, Havelange has excelled in several fields, namely sports, business and politics. This involvement in more than one field characterises the Big Man. Armstrong and Mitchell also use the label Big Men with regard to football in Malta, referring to 'well-placed, wealthy and entrepreneurial characters – often with political ambitions and connections'.⁷⁷ Similar Big Men types in football are observed elsewhere.⁷⁸

Armstrong's & Mitchell's statement brings us to the core of the concept, namely the idea that a Big Man strives to own and accumulate economic, social and symbolic capital. The most typical Big Man in African football is either a self-made businessman or the appointed general director of a company. He uses his or the company's economic capital to gain a position in the game's bureaucracy. As said earlier, converting economic capital into social and/or symbolic capital relatively easily leads to political capital. Throughout Africa, political capital is by definition convertible in economic capital. Indeed, the other most typical Big Man in African football is the businessman-politician. The circle is round: Economic capital begets symbolic and social capital which, in turn, leads to the accumulation of economic capital.

The French sociologist Jean-Pascal Daloz argues that leaders in Africa tend to act as Big Men who try to control 'as many fields of activities and networks as possible'. Their strategy in the accumulation of wealth and power is to be 'surrounded by the greatest possible number of supporters and clients'.⁷⁹ This system is called patronage politics and it appears to have found a fertile ground in the world of (African) football. After all, the game is rife with economic, social and symbolic capital which, in turn, are excellent means by which Big Men enter into patron-client relationships. Daloz states that this theory applies not only to businessmen and politicians but also to traditional rulers, religious leaders and top military personnel. Indeed, many top club and FA officials in Africa belong to one of these categories.

Photo 1.1 Flanked by his entourage, Hearts of Oak Board member Alhaji Fawaz Zowk observes a practice session at the El-Wak Stadium in Accra, Ghana



The emphasis on creating patron-client ties means the African Big Man resembles other leadership types. For instance, he can be likened to the Melanesian Big Man who redistributes wealth to attract a following.⁸⁰ There is, however, a difference in the sense that the Melanesian Big Man mainly converts social capital into economic capital while the African Big Man mainly converts economic capital into other forms of capital. Overall, the Big Man-type leader can be observed practically everywhere, whether called ‘entrepreneur’, ‘patron’, ‘cacique’ or ‘informal leader’.⁸¹ In Africa itself, the anthropologist Jean-François Bayart identifies the ‘big types’ (in Ivory Coast), the ‘decree men’ (in Cameroon), the ‘acquirers’ (in Zaïre), the ‘wabenzi’ (in eastern Africa), the ‘nizers’ (in Tanzania) and the ‘mafutamingi’ (in Uganda).⁸²

The Big Man-type leader thrives in Africa precisely because patronage politics, coined the ‘politics of the belly’ by Bayart,⁸³ is pervasive in the majority of countries on the continent. It is the (neo-)patrimonial office that so characterises African political life. In Max Weber’s definition, the patrimonial office ‘lacks above all the bureaucratic separation of the “private” and “official” sphere. For the political administration, too, is treated as a purely personal affair of the ruler, and political power is considered part of his personal property.’⁸⁴ The state in Africa, Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz argue, is ‘no more than a décor, a

pseudo-Western façade masking the realities of deeply personalized political relations':⁸⁵

... the notion that politicians, bureaucrats or military chiefs should be the servants of the state simply does not make sense. Their political obligations are, first and foremost, to their kith and kin, their clients, their communities, their regions, or even to their religion. All such patrons seek ideally to constitute themselves as 'Big Men', controlling as many networks as they can. But to succeed as a 'Big Man' demands resources; and the more extensive the network, the greater the need for the means of distribution. The legitimacy of the African political elites, such as it is, derives from their ability to nourish the clientele on which their power rests. It is therefore imperative for them to exploit governmental resources for patrimonial purposes.⁸⁶

Africa's biggest Big Men after independence are undoubtedly its presidents. We can deduct at least two characteristics of this "ultimate" Big Man-type.⁸⁷ First, his power is absolute. By the end of the 1980s, Africa 'was renowned for its Big Men, dictators who strutted the stage, tolerated neither opposition nor dissent, (...) demanding abject servility and making themselves exceedingly rich'.⁸⁸ Despite the introduction of multi-partyism in the 1990s, elections are generally free nor fair. Second, his power is based on personal rule. Jackson and Rosberg, who identify four types of personal rule,⁸⁹ argue that it rests on 'a distinctive type of political system in which the rivalries and struggles of powerful and wilful men, rather than impersonal institutions, ideologies, public policies, or class interests, are fundamental in shaping political life'.⁹⁰

Following several studies into the phenomenon of African Big Men, I will refer to them broadly as members of today's elites.⁹¹ Presidents, politicians, governors, military men, civil servants, self-made businessmen, general managers of corporations, traditional rulers, upper-class professionals and former footballers have all engaged in football management. As club and FA officials, their power too is largely absolute and based on personal rule. Similar to Jackson's and Rosberg's classification of presidential types, the Big Men in African football too can be roughly categorised. On one end of the spectrum lies the flamboyant, charismatic and populist Big Man who uses his social skills and popularity to gain political support. On the other end lies the entrepreneurial Big Man who avoids public attention while building his football empire.

As said, the actions and motivations of the Big Man as club or FA official should not necessarily be viewed in a negative sense. It is true that a president commonly runs a club in a personal capacity and as such completely controls the organisation. Yet there is a distinct *quid pro quo* in the relationship between the Big Man and the club. Most importantly, the Big Man brings capital along which allows a club to sustain itself. This situation resembles that of the 'padrino' (godfather, patron) in Argentina, described by Duke and Crolley as 'occupants of high positions of power who looked after the interests of a particular club'. 'It enhanced (the padrino's) profile and status in society. Clubs benefited by having

someone in power to represent them so it was in their interests to offer support in return.⁹²

Moreover, the patron-client ties that exist between Big Men and “lesser men” are beneficial to both. This mutual benefit is visible within the bureaucracy of clubs and FAs in the sense that the president/chairman more often than not takes care of his subordinates’ needs. There is, at least on the face of it, an immense respect for Big Men by lesser men which is governed by social etiquette. Labelling it the Big-Man Small-Boy Syndrome, Robert Price argues that the Big Man behaves arrogantly towards inferiors who, in turn, show deference towards the Big Man.⁹³ It also requires the Big Man to show his wealth through conspicuous consumption. In Africa, the Big Men in football not only own luxurious cars and mansions, they also tend to have corpulent physiques which, in Africa, is a metaphor for power and accumulation.

Last but not least, football itself brings forth Big Men. Africa’s top players are global icons who rival presidents in terms of symbolic capital. Keeping in mind the Big-Man Small-Boy Syndrome, it cannot be a surprise that they regularly clash with football’s “true” Big Men: Top FA and CAF administrators. After all, famous footballers turn the traditional hierarchy of administrators (Big Men) above the athletes (Small Boys) upside down. When Ivory Coast star Didier Drogba gained a majority of votes in the African Player of the Year contest in 2007, but then announced he would not attend the ceremony, CAF president Issa Hayatou named Frédéric Kanouté best player instead. In doing so, Hayatou evidently punished Drogba for disrespecting his superiors. In other words, the CAF president showed the footballer who the real Big Man was.

For my data, I have relied upon such typical anthropological methods as participant observation as well as conducting interviews and informal conversations. Football lends itself perfectly for participant observation. I observed top league as well as lower league matches, either from the sideline, the stands or the press box. I also visited training grounds, club secretariats, radio stations, bars and private residences. Furthermore, I observed African Cup of Nations matches in Ghana in 2008. Formal interviews and informal conversations were conducted with a few dozen Big Men and other club and FA officials, and with coaches, players, supporters, referees, journalists, jujumen and people not officially involved in the game.

Explaining the topic at hand to the research population was far from an easy task. I often sensed a mixture of scepticism and amazement whenever I explained I was conducting doctorate research into football. (To be sure, many Dutch people expressed a similar disbelief.) Moreover, some people were obviously suspicious of my motives. A few club officials and referees seemed to mistake me for a spy sent by the FA; and FA officials sometimes wondered whether I was

a FIFA investigator. A number of interviewees assumed I was a journalist reporting about Africa's participants at the then upcoming 2010 World Cup. The majority of the people I met thought I was a scout or agent, and they were visibly confused by my lack of interest in talented players.

It was not always easy to get in touch with the game's Big Men. Many times they asked me to call back the following day. "Call me again tomorrow, I'm busy at the moment," was a favourite phrase. Some of them used this evasive method so consistently that it became ludicrous. Their daily schedules did not appear to be written down in agendas, and secretaries seemed to have perfected the art of turning down interview requests. Interviewing one wealthy club president in Kumasi turned out to be a catch-22. While club officials told me to make an appointment with his secretary, the secretary stated that this was possible only with her boss' written consent. Yet nobody was willing to give me his phone number.

Another challenge was to get beyond the rhetoric Big Men use to describe the world they live in. They will say that their clubs are organised and run professionally for that, of course, is how it is supposed to be. Ghanaians constantly referred to the situation in England – the one place they think football is organised the way it should be. When Big Men do not describe an ideal world, they at least tell stories from a certain point of view. Personal, economic and political considerations all play a part in how stories are framed. Big Men tend not to make statements that may harm themselves, their colleagues or others – yet sometimes that is exactly what they will do for reasons known to them alone. A prolonged stay in the community can overcome such obstacles.

Regarding fieldwork methods, I am inspired by the concept of investigative journalism. Such an approach has often been used to gain information from within difficult-to-access sub-cultures. The paradox of my research lies in the fact that while football is essentially a public affair, the top men (and a few women) who run it tend to be secretive about their daily activities. Journalist Andrew Jennings became aware of this when he tried to investigate FIFA's top administrators.⁹⁴ Other journalists, such as David Conn and Tom Bower, have come across the secretive and dubious actions of club officials when describing the commercialisation of English football.⁹⁵ Moreover, Declan Hill, who mixes journalism with academic research, also had to delve deep into a world where football had become enmeshed with Asian gambling syndicates.⁹⁶

The approach by John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson is of particular interest, as it combines methods employed in sociology, ethnography and investigative journalism.⁹⁷ They take a stance with the Chicago School, with its 'classic, long-term, depth-immersion studies' and a short-term approach of 'ethnographic visiting'. They state that 'even if classic Chicago-style ethnography is not the main

research tool, gaining a sense of space, place, character and culture – which can only be achieved through spending some time in the living research environment – sharpens a researcher’s critical gaze, helps the formulation of questions and enhances interpretation and theorisation’.⁹⁸ My fieldwork included short-term and long-term stays with an emphasis on the latter.

My interest in investigative journalism notwithstanding, my fieldwork is distinctly anthropological in nature. As research settings, I chose to be based in Kumasi (Ghana) and Bamenda (Cameroon). Kumasi is home to Ghana’s top club Asante Kotoko whose exploits I observed in the 2008/2009 Premier League season. I also followed other Kumasi-based teams, namely Kessben FC and King Faisal. Also under consideration were Accra Hearts of Oak, Sekondi Hasaacas and Eleven Wise, and AshantiGold FC. Bamenda is home to two relatively prominent clubs, namely PWD Bamenda and Yong Sports Academy. I followed the latter’s exploits in the 2009/2010 Elite One league season and the former’s struggles in one of Cameroon’s lower-level leagues. Other teams that I watched closely include Mount Cameroon FC and Tiko United.

I have taken into account rumours and gossip. This may seem contradictory to academic research but anthropologists tend to find rumours quite helpful in making sense of the world they study. Stephen Ellis and Gerrie Ter Haar explicitly discuss the role of rumours and gossip (also known as *radio trottoir*) in their study of religion and politics in Africa. Gossip, they argue, ‘represents people’s attempts to understand the world, usually by attributing causes to events’.⁹⁹ In this dissertation I have included stories that cannot be regarded as facts. An example is the rumour that one Ghanaian club was repeatedly saved from relegation by powerful politicians. The rumour is widely believed to be true, even though the politicians never confirmed it. The manner in which this story circulates tells us that Ghanaians find the story credible.

Newspapers and radio broadcasts are useful channels through which to pick up rumours and gossip. In fact, in Africa radio stations and football form a rather perfect tandem. Big Men, coaches, supporters and others seem to find pleasure in discussing the affairs of clubs and the national team “over the airwaves”. Similarly, numerous sports newspapers are published throughout Africa. In Ghana, I bought at least five different football-related newspapers every week. One needs to keep in mind, though, that journalists on occasion accept money to write subjective reports. Also, several journalists are in one way or the other connected to clubs and/or Big Men, leading stories to be biased.

It has not been easy to obtain documents from Ghana and Cameroon, largely because club and FA officials tend not to maintain archives. Some of the sources I could get were the constitutions of Hearts of Oak and Asante Kotoko. Also useful were the newspapers published by both Hearts and Kotoko. The same

applies to books written by African journalists or academics, particularly the histories of football in Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon and Zambia.¹⁰⁰ Books on football in Africa by the Nigerian journalist Anver Versi and the Tunisian journalist Faouzi Mahjoub were also helpful, as were Armstrong's and Giulianotti's *Football in Africa* and David Goldblatt's *The ball is round*.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, I used collections of articles on sport (and football) in Africa that appeared in edited works as well as various academic journals.

The 2010 World Cup encouraged a range of journalists and academics to publish articles, books and documentaries on football in Africa. Examples include books written by journalists Ian Hawkey and Steve Bloomfield.¹⁰² Another book worth noting is one written by the historian Peter Alegi, whose study encompasses a history of the African game.¹⁰³ It nevertheless appears that most attention has been accorded to two subjects: First, the exodus of African football talent to Europe and elsewhere and, second, the legacy and impact of the World Cup in respect to the development of South Africa and the continent as a whole. Literally dozens of articles have recently been published in this respect.¹⁰⁴ The majority of these publications, especially those in the second category, are beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Having done research in only two countries while claiming to be writing about Africa requires an explanation. I am well aware of the fact that Africa encompasses more than 50 countries with distinctive histories, peoples, cultures, landscapes and climates. This even applies to the countries I visited for my fieldwork. After many years of economic despair and political unrest, Ghana is now regarded as a relatively peaceful and prosperous democracy. Ethnic divisions appear less markedly strong than elsewhere on the continent. The largest of the 60 or so ethnic groups are the Ashanti, who are part of the Akan people and who speak the Twi language. Colonised by the British, Ghana employs English as its official language. Although there are levels of corruption, human rights are reasonably upheld and the press enjoys quite a bit of freedom.

In contrast, Cameroon is governed by an autocratic regime whose inhabitants have known only two presidents since independence; the most recent one ruling the country for thirty years now. Although multi-party politics were introduced in the 1990s, only one party – the CPDM – exerts power. The president is known for favouring his own ethnic group at the expense of virtually everyone else. This is quite an issue in a country with over 200 ethnically diverse groups. Colonised first by the Germans and then by the British and the French, Cameroonians officially speak both English and French. There is widespread corruption as well as human rights violations, particularly in respect to critical journalists, homosexuals and opponents to the government.

There are similarities as well. Both Ghana and Cameroon are situated in the Mid-Western part of Africa and there is not much difference in the size of their populations (Ghana: 24 million, Cameroon: 19 million). Both countries are poor, but relatively wealthy in comparison with many other African countries. Ghanaians' annual per capita income is \$1,500 with around 30 percent of the population living off less than \$1.25 a day; Cameroonians' annual per capita income is around \$2,300 with almost 50 percent living below poverty level.¹⁰⁵ With regard to football, Ghana and Cameroon have each won the African Cup of Nations four times. Both countries reached the quarter finals of the World Cup at one point in time. Their domestic leagues are comparable in the sense that both Cameroon's Elite One and Ghana's Premier League are semi-professional at best.

It is my intention not to highlight the differences but to focus on the commonalities in African football. From Kenya to Senegal and from South Africa to Libya, Big Men play an important role in the history and development of the game. Moreover, their motivations for getting involved in the game and the consequences of their actions are surprisingly similar all over the continent. As the historian Martin Meredith states, 'Although Africa is a continent of great diversity, African states have much in common, not only their origins as colonial territories, but the similar hazards and difficulties they have faced'.¹⁰⁶

Let us now see how these similarities play out when I present a history of the game in Africa.

A short history of football in Africa

For one month in 2010, Africa found itself at the centre of attention. Journalists roamed the continent in search of stories that were “typical” of Africa. They interviewed famous (former) players, visited slums in Johannesburg and Nairobi to look at sports development projects, and talked to *sangomas* who predicted the outcome of matches through magical rituals. Fans the world over came to know the Bafana Bafana and the sound of vuvuzelas.

“Waka Waka”, sang the Colombian artist Shakira, and “This Time for Africa” was indeed a fine summary of Africans’ expectations at the World Cup. On the eve of the tournament, the South Africans increased home advantage by slaughtering an ox at Soccer City Stadium. Yet something went wrong as Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Algeria and Nigeria all left the tournament after the group phase. So did South Africa, which made it the first time the host failed to progress to the second round.

Luckily, there was a beacon of hope. Ghana’s Black Stars made it through the group phase and then beat the United States in the next round. The Ghanaians were then renamed the BaGhana BaGhana by South African fans. But the match between Ghana and Uruguay on 2 July would go down as the third time an African nation failed to take the quarter final hurdle. The Uruguayans ended the dream of millions of Africans by beating the Black Stars 4-2 in a penalty shoot-out.

As fast as it came, the World Cup caravan left the continent again. The Africans had every reason to feel sad. Africa’s six representatives had won only four (out of 20) matches. Samuel Eto’o Fils, Didier Drogba and the other stars had failed to impress. The question is whether African football had improved ever since Pél  predicted an African team would win the World Cup by the turn of the century. Cameroon’s reputation as a football powerhouse is based on a single success story in 1990. Nigeria performed well in the 1990s but has since

gone into decline. Egypt may have won seven African Cup of Nations titles but did not even qualify for “Twenty Ten”.

Africa, football and the early days

In August 1951 a bunch of footballers from the Gold Coast went on a tour to England. ‘We played barefoot,’ remembered one of them. ‘We had no knowledge of playing in boots. But we played good football against those teams in boots.’¹⁰⁷ The Ghanaians were not the first to go to Europe. In 1949 the Nigerians visited Britain which made it the first tour ‘by a Black African team purporting to represent its national football association’.¹⁰⁸ When the Gold Coast players returned home, chairman Charles Dickson of Asante Kotoko bought 72 sets of boots and ordered the players to wear them. Initially, these changes were not appreciated and supporters beat up players who wore boots. When Kotoko beat Venomous Vipers in their second “match on boots”, the critics were silenced and designer boots were ordered from Dakar, Senegal.¹⁰⁹

The issue whether to play barefoot or in boots turned into a struggle over power and authority in colonial Congo-Brazzaville. The trouble began in 1936 when a player named Makossa died after sustaining an injury. The European-dominated Native Sports Federation expressed its worry over the increased violence on and off the pitch and ordered all teams to play barefooted henceforward. Four senior players wrote a letter of protest to the governor-general, arguing that they were accustomed to playing in boots. Phyllis Martin argues that the boots turned into a symbol of broader issues. For the Europeans ‘the controversy was a test of their authority; it seemed another manifestation of African aspirations for independence’. For the Africans ‘the incident was another example of overbearing colonial authority and intervention in daily life’.¹¹⁰

The introduction of football in Africa is closely linked to the colonisation of the continent by the European superpowers. The first European to explore the coasts of Africa was a Portuguese named Prince Henry the Navigator. The Portuguese established forts and settlements in West Africa throughout the fifteen century before the British, Dutch, French, Germans, Danes, Belgians and other powers joined in. The colonisation intensified between 1880 and 1914 in a period known as the Scramble for Africa. By the First World War, the European powers had carved up the continent amongst themselves, with the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia. Britain and France occupied the largest territories with Belgium, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain controlling the rest.

The first match on African soil reportedly took place on 23 August 1862 in Cape Town between soldiers and employees of the colonial administration. At the start of the nineteenth century, the British had annexed Cape Town and the Cape Colony and in 1909 they created the Union of South Africa. Soldiers,

sailors, traders and missionaries brought football to South Africa, precisely during Britain's imperial expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹¹¹ Football was played in other towns as well, and the game grew in scope and popularity when more British soldiers arrived to crush indigenous resistance. Football in those days was an all-white affair. The British team Corinthians visited South Africa in 1897, beating most of the all-white teams and drawing huge crowds to the field of play.

The game was introduced on the island of Zanzibar in the 1870s by workers of the British Eastern Telegraph Company. Laura Fair describes how the game was spread by these workers and graduates of St. Andrew's College to such an extent that by the 1920s 'everyone' was playing football. Several clubs were founded and daily matches were played at a sandpit named Mnazi Moja. The first official league was organised in 1926, in which nine teams participated. Matches at Mnazi Moja regularly attracted crowds of 3,000 to 4,000 spectators. Positions on the administrative side of the game were reserved for the colonisers whose policies were aimed at reinforcing European dominance. Zanzibari felt aggrieved that only Europeans were selected as referees.¹¹²

On the mainland, in Tanganyika (now Tanzania), colonial administrators and the armed forces spread the game in the 1920s. One army major helped organise the first Dar es Salaam league in 1921. One year later the first match between an all-European team and an indigenous one took place. The Dar es Salaam Association Football League was formed in 1929. From the 1930s onwards several clubs emerged in Dar es Salaam, some organised along ethnic lines, some institutional. In 1945 the Tanganyika Football Association came into being and the game expanded to the entire country.

Football was introduced in Congo-Brazzaville before the 1920s. Europeans organised matches through the Union Sportive Brazzavilloise by the year 1913. In 1926 Europeans founded the Club Athlétique Brazzavillois (CAB). Martin writes that Brazzaville football was a 'child of the streets'.¹¹³ The Native Sports Federation was formed in 1929 and two years later a championship was organised featuring 27 teams. On the other side of the river, in Belgian Congo, Europeans founded separate teams while Belgian missionaries and a local businessman founded African teams. As of March 1936, Kinshasa and Brazzaville set up a tournament in which 25 teams took part. Europeans tried to keep control of the game but after the shoe incident the Native Sports Federations was disbanded and Africans wrestled football away from the colonisers.¹¹⁴

The diffusion of football in West Africa was not so much instigated by the army and colonial administration but rather by mission posts and government schools. In Nigeria, for instance, the game was brought to Calabar by a group of Jamaican Presbyterians. In 1902 the Reverend James Luke, carrying a football

along, arrived in town to take up the position of headmaster of the Hope Waddell Training Centre. The first reported match took place in 1904 between pupils and teachers of the school and soldiers from the British vessel HMS Thistle. The Nigerians won.¹¹⁵

The Reverend A.G. Fraser, who had first introduced football in Uganda's capital Kampala, took the game to the Gold Coast. There, in Cape Coast, West Africa's first football team Excelsior was formed in 1903. Seven years later a second team, Invincibles, was founded in Accra's James Town district. A group of young men from neighbouring Ussher Town then came together to start a rival team. On 11 November 1911, their team Hearts of Oak played its first match against Invincibles. Today, Hearts is credited as West Africa's oldest existing club. Many clubs were set up in the coastal part of the Gold Coast between 1903 and 1930. Well-known examples include Accra-based teams Argonauts and Standfast, Sekondi-based teams Eleven Wise and Hasaacas, and Cape Coast-based teams Mysterious Dwarfs and Venomous Vipers.

Sir Gordon Guggisberg, governor of the Gold Coast, started a competition among clubs in Accra in 1922. Hearts of Oak dominated the so-called Guggisberg Shield competition, winning six out of twelve editions. Only two clubs existed in the Ashanti Region around this time: Evertons and Royals. In 1924 a taxi driver from Kumasi founded the Rainbow Football Club. Later called Ashanti United and then Titanics, the club took on the name Asante Kotoko in 1935. The famous Jackson Park Stadium in Kumasi was built in the 1930s. In 1936 a match between Kotoko and Kumasi Cornerstones marked the opening of the venue. Cornerstones won the match 2-0. Muslims refused to enter Jackson Park as it was built on a Muslim cemetery.¹¹⁶

North Africans came into contact with the game in the late nineteenth century. French settlers in the Algerian town of Oran created a team in 1897. Several other teams were since founded and a competition was played in Oran as early as 1902. The Algerians benefited from British sailors and tourists who shared their experiences. A match between the French national team and a selection of Algerian players in 1931 drew 10,000 spectators.¹¹⁷ In 1910 Algeria's first Arab team, L'Étoile Sportive de Dupere, was formed. Muslims used their clubs as places 'for the training of leaders of the national movement and for a wider political mobilisation'; their clubs' names commonly included the word 'musulman'.¹¹⁸ In neighbouring Tunisia a club named Racing was formed in 1906.¹¹⁹ A league was set up around the time of the First World War, featuring French, Italian, Jewish and Maltese teams. In 1919 Tunisian Arabs founded the club Espérance de Tunis, initially with French management members. Clubs dominated by Tunisians entered the national league from the 1920s onwards.

The British conquered the countries along the Nile in 1882 in order to secure dominance over the Suez Canal. One year later an Egyptian team played against a team consisting of British soldiers. Egypt's first club, the Al-Sekka Al-Hadid Railways Club, was formed in 1903. The country's biggest clubs Al-Ahly and Zamalek were founded in Cairo in 1907 and 1911, respectively. Egyptian and foreign teams played each other in a competition called the Sultani Cup. Sudan's biggest clubs were both founded in Omdurman: Al-Masalam in 1908 (renamed Al-Merreikh in 1927) and Al-Hilal in 1957. Morocco's Wydad Casablanca was founded in 1937. The country's first Arab club, Wydad, was set up for wealthy Moroccans under the patronage of King Hassan. His political rival Abderrahman Youssoufi assisted in founding Raja Casablanca in 1949.

Football generally found its way into Africa through the coastal areas before spreading inland following railway and road networks. The game's organisation and control depended on different approaches by Africa's two foremost colonisers. Known for their policy of indirect rule, the British used existing power structures to govern the colonies. Sports could be used to promote values such as discipline, teamwork and a spirit of fair play, or so the British thought. They kept a firm control over the game as they were afraid that the Africans might use it to undermine British authority. In Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) the British allowed for the creation of a native-controlled African Welfare Society (AWS), which promoted football in Bulawayo in the 1930s. When the British became concerned about the high levels of self-organisation in the colony, they tried to take control of the AWS, which resulted in boycotts and massive strikes.¹²⁰

The policy of the French relied on assimilation or *Frenchification* which meant that peoples of the colonies effectively became citizens of the French empire. The French feared the organisational and political potential of sports clubs and tried to exert maximum control. As a result, football diffused at a slower pace in the French colonies in comparison to their British counterparts. This occurred, for instance, in Ivory Coast where the game was introduced in the 1920s – not by the colonisers but by Ghanaian migrants. Ivorians set up the country's top clubs in the then-capital Abidjan in the late 1940s: Club Sportif Bété (later known as Africa Sports) in 1947 and ASEC Mimomas (also known as ASEC Abidjan) in 1948.

The differences between French and British rule were especially visible in Cameroon, a country divided into a British and a French colony. A photographer from Sierra Leone is said to have introduced football in Douala in the 1920s.¹²¹ The French colonisers did not have the resources and manpower to create clubs and initially relied on migrants from other African countries. The exact dates of the first founded clubs are shady. André Ntonfo states that Oryx, for long Douala's foremost club, was set up in 1928.¹²² In its early years football was the

terrain of Europeans in the metropolitan areas. When on 11 November 1930 a French submarine entered the Douala harbour, two white teams played each other as part of the celebrations. Only afterwards were Cameroonians allowed to play. The French also forbade the adoption of French club names. Olympic (named after Olympique Marseille) was renamed Oryx and Diablos Noirs (named after Sporting Club de Five) became known as Léopard.¹²³

Football first spread in Cameroon's economically developed areas, namely Douala and the South. Yaoundé's foremost club Canon was founded in November 1930, followed by Tonnerre in 1934. But, as Clignet and Stark argue, the French did not encourage companies to invest in football, and several clubs that either belonged to the railways or the police disappeared, and others that recruited players from civil servants experienced internal transformations.¹²⁴ Entrepreneurs who were willing to get involved in clubs often did not have enough financial resources. In (Anglophone) West Cameroon clubs could not rely on wealthy benefactors; here clubs were dependant on state-owned corporations and regional governmental departments. In neighbouring (Anglophone) Nigeria, clubs were sponsored by government departments as well,¹²⁵ and the same goes for other English territories such as Sudan.¹²⁶

Europeans did not introduce the game in Liberia. The first club was formed in 1934 by an ethnic group called the Kru, some of whose members had taken the game home from a trip to Britain. One of the country's biggest clubs, Invincible Eleven (IE), was set up in 1943 by wealthy inhabitants from Monrovia. IE was the country's best team in the 1940s and early 50s. Its main rival, Mighty Barrolle (MB), had a more pronounced ethnic background. The club was founded in 1956 by members of the Basa ethnic group and was most successful from the 1960s onwards.¹²⁷ In Ethiopia, another country that escaped colonisation, many sports clubs were linked to churches, factories and youth clubs. An example is the mighty Saint George Sports Club in Addis Abeba, founded in 1928, which is associated with St. George's Church.¹²⁸

Urbanisation hit the continent in the years before independence, influencing football in no small way. Nigeria's largest city Lagos doubled in terms of the number of residents in slightly over twenty years; from 126,000 in 1931 to 267,000 in 1953.¹²⁹ The population of Brazzaville grew from 6,000 in 1914 to 75,000 in 1951.¹³⁰ Football was the most important activity in the capital of the Congo. Rivalries between clubs from the larger cities in Africa intensified, for instance Canon vs Tonnerre (Yaoundé, Cameroon) and Simba vs Yanga (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania). Yanga was formed in the 1920s under the name of the Jangwani Sports Club.¹³¹ Simba was set up by players of Yanga under the name of Queens, followed by Sunderland. In terms of rivalry, Egypt is host to Africa's most violent derby: Al-Ahly vs Zamalek.

Photo 2.1 Football infrastructures throughout Africa are largely inadequate. Players of Tiko United (Cameroon) practice on a barren ground inside the town stadium



The terms creolisation and Africanisation have been used in relation to the spread, growth and popularity of football in Africa. Two noticeable features were the role of magic (*juju* or *muti*) and indigenous playing styles. First, spiritual practices were commonplace from the game's earliest moments on the continent. South African clubs employed healers, diviners and sorcerers to decide matches in their favour.¹³² Martin notes with regard to Congo-Brazzaville that teams needed to 'tame' the occult forces and for that purpose *marabouts* from as far as West Africa were hired to win matches.¹³³ Second, in terms of playing styles, Africans first adopted the English "kick and rush" and other European tactics in the 1920s and 30s. Yet supporters truly appreciated individual skills such as strength, improvisation and dribbling.¹³⁴

Indigenous resistance to colonial rule through football was visible all over the continent. New clubs, organised along racial and ethnic lines, emerged in Zanzibar during the 1930s and 40s. This competition led the players of three clubs – New Kings, New Generation and Caddies – to form a new, stronger team: African Sports. The aim of the founding members was 'not only to rebuild a team that was capable of taking the league championship but to form and strengthen a sense of African ethnic identity and ultimately to struggle for the recognition of the interest of the island's majority populations in colonial governance'.¹³⁵ Indeed, the success of African Sports contributed to the development of African nationalism in Zanzibar.

The situation in Algeria in the 1950s is arguably Africa's most prominent case of the interplay between football and the fight for independence. The Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) set up a team that represented the Algerian resistance against the French. Professional players overseas were asked to join the FLN's team. Several players, among whom Rachid Mekhloufi and Mustapha Zitouni, responded and escaped France. 'We were the true ambassadors of Algerian independence,' said Mohammed Maouche, who was captured and imprisoned when he tried to flee France.¹³⁶ Journalist Ian Hawkey argues that the FLN team may be Algeria's best-ever national team.¹³⁷

Football after independence: The good old days

'Seek ye first the political kingdom, and all else will follow.' President Kwame Nkrumah's words echoed on 6 March 1957 when the former Gold Coast, now Republic of Ghana, became the first Sub-Saharan nation to gain independence. North African nations – respectively Libya, Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia and Morocco – had by then already shown their colonisers the door. After years of intense violence, Algeria jumped the bandwagon in 1962. Three dozen other countries gained independence in the 1960s. The mood was one of optimism and joy. An abundance of natural resources, an economic boom and leaders who advocated to

strive for development and nation-building caused a wave of euphoria amidst the people of the newly independent nations.

National associations and leagues were set up around the time the French, British and other colonial powers were packing their bags. Cameroon's *Fédération Camerounaise de Football* (FECAFOOT) was created in 1959. Oryx Douala won the maiden edition of the national league that took off the following year. The Kenya Football Federation (KFF) came into being in 1960 and a national league was started three years later. The *Fédération Sénégalaise de Football* (FSF) was founded in 1960 as well, but a national league did not commence until 1966.

Some countries had already laid down their football structures decades earlier. The Egyptian Football Association was created in 1921 and became affiliated to FIFA in 1923. The Egyptians were the first to start a football league on the continent. The league's maiden edition in 1948/49 was won by Al-Ahly.¹³⁸ The Liberia Football Association (LFA) was formed in 1936. Ethiopia followed in 1943 with the creation of the Ethiopian Football Federation (EFF). Mozambique and Angola, on the other hand, were late. When they finally gained independence from Portugal, they set up associations in 1976 and 1979, respectively.

Kwame Nkrumah was one of the first African leaders who understood the power of football. He invested heavily in the Gold Coast XI, which he renamed the Black Stars, after Marcus Garvey's famed Black Star Line. He appointed the player C.K. Gyamfi as national team coach. Nkrumah, nicknamed Osagyefo (Redeemer), reckoned that a black man could do what white men could – and better. His confidence in Gyamfi paid off: The Black Stars won the African Cup of Nations twice, in 1963 and 1965. The Ghanaians were invited by other newly instated African leaders, among whom Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya. Kenyatta would come to regret it. Ghana defeated Kenya 13-2.

Nkrumah's interests went further. He appointed Ohene Djan as head of the National Sports Council (NSC) and together they came up with the idea of creating a national club. Not all clubs liked the so-called Real Republikans and to sooth matters it was decided that Nkrumah's team would enter the competition on a non-scoring basis. Yet these limitations were lifted and Republikans won the 1962/63 National League season. When Nkrumah was overthrown in 1965, his club was swiftly disbanded and the national team's performances deteriorated. Ghana plunged into an economic crisis and witnessed a series of military coups, until a Flight Lieutenant by the name of Jerry Rawlings came to power in 1981.

Egypt and Ethiopia were among the four nations that initiated the founding of the Confederation of African Football (CAF), the others being Sudan and South Africa. The birth took place on 8 February 1957 at the Grand Hotel in Khartoum, Sudan. Its headquarters were set in Cairo, despite the objections made by Ethio-

pia's Ydnekatchew Tessema, CAF's longstanding president in the 1970s and 1980s, who thought Addis Abeba a more suitable place. The organisation would grow to become the largest of FIFA's six confederations, and Africa's power in the world of global football has increased significantly ever since. By 1965 CAF had welcomed 26 members, by 1970 this number had risen to 34, and by 2010 to 55.

One of the first steps CAF's founders took was to create a new tournament. Named the African Cup of Nations, it was to become Africa's biggest sporting event. Only three nations took part in the contest of the first edition in 1957, after South Africa had been disqualified for wanting to field white players only. Egypt beat Sudan in the semi-final and Ethiopia in the final. Two years later Egypt, briefly called the United Arab Republic, secured the hosting of the second edition. The Pharaohs again won the tournament by beating Sudan in the final. The third edition (in 1962) was won by Ethiopia.

South Africa's apartheid regime made the independent African nations aware of their growing influence on a global stage. South Africa was boycotted by excluding it from taking part in international sports contests from the early 1960s onwards. In 1968, however, an IOC committee decided that South Africa was eligible to participate in the Olympics in Mexico City. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) immediately staged a boycott. Dozens of countries in Africa announced their withdrawal, forcing the IOC to reverse its decision. In May 1970, South Africa was expelled from the Olympic movement.¹³⁹ The white-controlled football association FASA was suspended in 1962 and expelled in 1976. South African football would find itself isolated for almost three decades.

Football in South Africa was defined by racial segregation. There were different associations for whites (FASA), blacks (SANFA), the coloured (SAFA) and Indians (SASA). The killings in the Sharpeville and Langa townships in 1960 led African, Indian and coloured administrators to found the non-racial South African Soccer League (SASL). The SASL league took off in 1961 and instantly became a success. After some time the South African government and FASA ordered the proprietors of playing grounds to cancel SASL matches. SASL had to abandon the league in 1966 due to a lack of playing grounds. Peter Alegi argues that SASL was 'the most important force in the history of South African football before the 1990s'.¹⁴⁰

Football was seen as a means to instil a sense of nationalism and national pride after independence. Ghana and Nkrumah had led the way. In Cameroon too, the game was used to forge unity among the more than 200 ethnic groups. The then president Ahmadou Ahidjo ordered that the national team be made up of players from all over the country. Cameroon hosted the African Cup of Nations in 1972.

The country's biggest stadiums in Yaoundé and Douala are a reminder of the tournament of which it was rumoured that most of the money disappeared into the organisers' pockets.¹⁴¹ When the host nation stumbled in the semi-finals, Ahidjo was so upset that he demanded a fearsome nickname for the team – hence the Indomitable Lions.

The organisation of, and support for, Cameroonian clubs was (and still is) predominantly ethnic in nature. The biggest Douala-based clubs, for instance, were founded in specific *quartiers* by members of distinctive ethnic groups. The founding fathers of Caiman Douala came from the Akwa district and those of Oryx from Bali. Léopard derived its support from the Deido and Union originated from the Bamileke-dominated New Bell area.¹⁴² In a move to detribalise football in 1970, the Minister of Sports ordered the Douala clubs to change names to Douala I, II and III. It had been done elsewhere, most notably in Guinea. It did not work out in Cameroon and president Ahidjo subsequently sacked his minister.¹⁴³

A Presidential Decree in Kenya in 1980 demanded all organisations to adopt national or ethnic-neutral name. The country's most popular clubs, Abaluhya Football Club and Gor Mahia, were run by respectively the Luhya and Luo and were ordered to change names. Abaluhya Football Club was renamed AFC Leopards, Gor Mahia temporarily switched to Gulf Olympic Rangers. The country's powerful Kikuyu played a subordinate role in the national league. W.W.S. Njororai relates this to the Mau Mau war for national independence after which numerous Kikuyu were held in camps. This gave the Luhya and Luo the opportunity to engage in recreational activities. For them, football became a vehicle for ethnic identity and resistance.¹⁴⁴

Ethnic divisions have had an impact on football throughout the continent, including Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria. The struggle for political power by the country's foremost ethnic groups – the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Igbo in the east, and the Yoruba in the west – adversely affected the game. In fact, due to political instability and the Biafran War between 1967 and 1970, a national league did not kick off until 8 January 1972.¹⁴⁵ The Nigerian national team only became a force to be reckoned with from 1976 onwards. A notable club in the early days was Enugu Rangers, a team founded in 1970 in an Igbo-dominated region. The Rangers came in second in the 1975 African Cup of Champions Clubs.

Football was not only used by those in power but also by those who felt oppressed or neglected in the political domain. In Algeria, where the Berbers were suppressed by Arab rulers, the club JS Kabylie (JSK) came to represent Berber identity. The club's immense successes, culminating in the 1981 and 1990 African Cup of Champions Clubs and the 1995 African Cup Winners' Cup titles,

led fans to refer to JSK as “*Je suis Kabylie*”. The FLN-dominated government opposed the club’s ethnic base and ordered the name to be changed to Jeunesse Électronique Tizi Ouzou for most of the 1980s,¹⁴⁶ although elsewhere it is stated that clubs like JSK had to be named after the companies that sponsored them.¹⁴⁷

The Cameroonian club PWD Bamenda represented the English-speaking (Anglophone) population and as such the team drew large numbers of fans to the field of play. Supporters in Bamenda claim that the powerful men in Yaoundé loathed the club’s Anglophone identity and therefore obstructed PWD’s matches any which way they could. ‘There were always truckloads of soldiers coming from Yaoundé to our stadium,’ one supporter remembered, ‘and they would seriously beat up anyone who rooted for PWD.’ One famous story (told in chapter 6) deals with the Francophone Sports Minister poisoning the PWD players before the 1979 Cup of Cameroon final.

Football was also subject to foreign powers and ideologies. The Soviet Union developed sporting relations with more than 30 African countries in the 1960s and 70s. This interest increased in the 1980s as the USSR sent specialists and various materials to the continent. Ethiopian sports clubs were officially taken over by the Marxist government in 1976. Sports, football included, came under strict government control, and military influences in sports activities were significant. These influences diminished after the overthrow of the Marxists in 1991.¹⁴⁸

President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania resorted to a policy of socialism and self-reliance called *ujamaa*. Between 1967 and 1971 measures were taken, in line with the Arusha Declaration, to give the government maximum control over sports. The National Sports Council (NSC) would come to oversee all sports in the country. The administrators at the Football Association of Tanzania (FAT) were accused of incompetence and replaced by members of the ruling TANU political party. Nyerere’s main goals – national integration and promotion of African unity – were hardly achieved through football as matches occasionally descended into violence.¹⁴⁹

CAF set up continental club competitions from the 1960s onwards. The African Cup of Champions Clubs was proposed by the Ghanaian delegation at CAF’s General Assembly in January 1962.¹⁵⁰ The prestigious competition was aptly called the Nkrumah Cup in the first years of its existence. Cameroon’s Oryx Douala beat Mali’s Stade Malien 2-1 in the competition’s maiden final in 1964. The African Cup Winners’ Cup, a competition for clubs that had won the domestic cup final, was introduced in 1975. Cameroon’s Tonnerre Yaoundé became Africa’s first cup champion by beating Ivory Coast’s Stella Club d’Adjamé 4-1. The CAF Cup came into being in 1992. It was a competition for the runners-up in Africa’s domestic leagues.

Clubs from West and Southern Africa dominated the continental competitions in the first two decades. Canon Yaoundé was ‘arguably the best African team in the late 1970s’¹⁵¹ (although it is fair to mention Hafía Conakry’s three Cup of Champions Cup titles). The club from Cameroon’s capital lifted 14 trophies between 1970 and 1980: Five championships, five Cups of Cameroon, three Cups of Champions Clubs and one Cup Winners’ Cup. Rival Tonnerre Yaoundé collected the first Cup Winners’ Cup with the help of Liberian star George Weah. Asante Kotoko won the Cup of Champions Clubs in 1970 and 1983 with the assistance of Ibrahim Sunday, first as player, then as coach. ‘Those were the good old days,’ former Kotoko player Ernest Appau recalled. ‘There was no money but we were so popular back then. We just liked to play.’

Stadiums all over Africa were filled to capacity. Several stadiums were built in the years after independence, many bearing names of presidents or signifying a country’s unification. The Nigerian prime minister Alhaji Sir Tafawa Balewa inaugurated the National Stadium in Lagos in the year of independence.¹⁵² Zambia’s national stadium in Lusaka was opened in 1964 to host the country’s independence festivities. Safety was (and still is) an issue. Overcrowded stands have led to numerous deaths. Many stadiums have over the years been deemed unsuitable to host international matches.

Top matches in Ghana attracted between 40,000 and 45,000 fans in the early years of the National League. When Asante Kotoko and Real Republikans met at the Wembley-Accra Stadium on the last days of the league season in 1961, the venue was ‘as usual packed with all classes of men and women and chiefs, the fashionably dressed ladies, including the expensive cloth type, taking the upper row’.¹⁵³ People flocked to the field to watch the likes of forward Wilberforce Mfum and Robert Mensah, one of Ghana’s best goalkeepers, who was stabbed to death in a bar in 1971.¹⁵⁴

Part of the game’s popularity was the fact that Africa’s best players could be watched on the continent’s lousy pitches. To be sure, African footballers played in European leagues from as early as the 1920s, most notably those from the French colonies.¹⁵⁵ Britain started importing black South African players around that period, among whom Steve Mokone, known as the Black Meteor. Players from Mozambique and Angola found their way to Portugal. Yet the number of African footballers abroad initially remained small. One reason was that Africa’s performances at the World Cup – Morocco participating in the 1970 edition, Zaire in 1974 and Tunisia in 1978 – were unimpressive. Another reason was that stereotypes about Africans were much alive.

Roger Milla played for Cameroonian clubs for 12 years between 1965 and 1977 before moving to Europe. Similarly, Théophile Abega, another Cameroonian star, was Canon Yaoundé’s best player between 1974 and 1984. Fantastic

nicknames were accorded to players. The former Ghanaian international Osei Kofi was known as ‘The Wizard Dribbler’. People also called him ‘One Man Symphony Orchestra’ for his ability to steer the team to victory.¹⁵⁶ Fans in Congo-Brazzaville nicknamed players ‘Elastic’ (a goalkeeper), ‘Dancer’, ‘Technician’, ‘Phantom’ and ‘Steamboat’.¹⁵⁷ Zaire’s top striker Mulamba Ndaye was so fast they called him ‘Volvo’ and ‘Mustang’, after newly imported automobiles.¹⁵⁸ One Nigerian goalkeeper named I.S. Adewale was nicknamed ‘The Boy is Good’,¹⁵⁹ requiring no further explanation.

Some African governments passed laws to prevent players from leaving the country. Zaire installed a ban on the movement of footballers in the 1960s. For several years players were effectively nationalised in the same manner as copper and diamonds.¹⁶⁰ Star players such as Mulamba Ndaye failed to cash in and players from this era struggled to sustain themselves after ending their careers.¹⁶¹ All-time greats like Ghana’s Baba Yara and Cameroon’s Mbappé Lépé died relatively young – and poor. The former Ghanaian player Prince Polley remembered a talented footballer who sustained an injury from which he never recovered. ‘Sometimes I see him limping at a roundabout begging for money,’ Polley said. Former players have been spotted cleaning the VIP stands in the same stadiums where spectators once applauded their moves.¹⁶²

The lost decade: Economic crisis and structural adjustments

The oil crisis and the drop of global cash crop prices were some of the causes of the economic crisis that hit the continent in the 1980s. One by one African nations called out for help. Billions of dollars in foreign aid were sent to Africa, especially during the heydays of the Cold War. African leaders started borrowing money to make up for deficits. The continent’s debts rose from six billion dollars in 1970 to nearly 200 billion dollars by the mid-1990s.¹⁶³ Much of the money from the loans was spent on the luxurious lifestyles of the elite. Africa’s economic decline in the 1980s was so great that Martin Meredith calls it the ‘lost decade’.¹⁶⁴ Western donors developed a new strategy to rid the continent of economic despair – the ideology of the free market.

Senegal became Africa’s first country to accept a so-called structural adjustment loan from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Kenya followed in 1980, Ghana in 1983. African governments complied with the wishes of donor institutions. They trimmed down their bureaucratic apparatuses, they privatised state-owned corporations and they opened up their borders to welcome foreign capital. These measures were thought to wipe out corruption and patronage. Multinational corporations would start to invest with the money trickling down to the poorest people. The consequences, however, were disas-

trous. Around 55 percent of all Africans lived in abject poverty in the 1960s. By 2002 the number had risen to 65 percent.¹⁶⁵

The impact of the so-called Washington Consensus on football proved harsh. As Armstrong and Giulianotti state, 'State-owned enterprises had helped to run football clubs that were important community resources. Following their takeover by TNCs (transnational corporations), the newly privatised institutions have tended to reduce expenditure in all social programmes, including sports-related associations.'¹⁶⁶ Club football in Cameroon declined in the 1980s. Union Douala has the dubious honour of being the country's last club to win a continental trophy – the Cup Winners' Cup in 1981. CDC Tiko, a club from Anglophone Cameroon, lost its sponsorship from the Cameroon Development Corporation in the 1980s. The club was renamed Tiko United. In Limbe, CDC Victoria became Victoria United. 'We grow and sell bananas and palm oil,' one CDC manager told me. 'Football is not part of our core business.'

A few African countries managed to overcome the economic crisis. Ghana, for instance, was on the brink of bankruptcy by the time Jerry Rawlings came to power. Rawlings accepted economic reform, resulting in a sharp rise of cocoa prizes in the 1980s. Inflation was reduced, and so was the high number of government employees. But as the economy grew, so did the country's external debt. By 1998 Ghana's GDP was lower than it had been almost thirty years earlier.¹⁶⁷

Company clubs flooded the Ghanaian league in the 1970s. The 1979 league consisted of six company-owned clubs. The power of the company clubs waned in the 1980s, most likely due to the economic crisis. 'The workers who found their wages cut were increasingly angered by the fact that the company kept on putting money in a football team,' said the former CEO of a club named State Traders. The performances of so-called community-based clubs deteriorated in the 1980s and 90s. Ebusua Mysterious Dwarfs, once one of Ghana's top clubs, relegated on several occasions. Sekondi Eleven Wise found itself in the second tier for many years. Asante Kotoko never won another continental trophy after 1983. Only Hearts of Oak managed to win a continental prize – the 2000 CAF Champions League.

Africa's mining industry had been responsible for the successes of many clubs. When the privatisation of state-owned corporations set in, sports-related sponsorships were slashed. Zambia's Nkana Red Devils won several league titles and reached the final of the 1990 Cup of Champions Clubs but later fell into decline.¹⁶⁸ In fact, football in Zambia experienced dramatic moments during the credit crisis in the new millennium. Clubs ran into financial difficulties when companies from the Copper Belt withdrew their sponsorships.¹⁶⁹ Komkola Copper Mines announced to cut in half its annual contribution of \$232,000 for the

national team. Power Dynamos, on the other hand, won the Cup Winners' Cup in 1991 and claimed four league titles since. In 2011 the club still enjoyed the sponsorship of the Copperbelt Energy Corporation.

Only well-organised and financially stable clubs prospered in continental club competitions during and after the economic crisis. North African clubs pushed West and Southern African clubs to the background. Between 1965 and 1983, 15 out of 19 Cup of Champions Clubs titles were won by Sub-Saharan clubs. Asante Kotoko's 1-0 victory over Al-Ahly in 1983 marked the ending of black Africa's hegemony. The following eleven finals were won by North African clubs and the Maghreb's dominance has never waned since. Top clubs were Tunisia's Club Africain, Espérance de Tunis and, later, Etoile du Sahel; Morocco's Wydad and Raja Casablanca as well as FAR Rabat; Egypt's Zamalek and Al-Ahly; and Algeria's JS Kabylie.

The economic climate in North African countries has been more favourable in comparison to Sub-Saharan Africa. Although Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria were (and in some cases still are) governed by autocratic regimes, there was – at least until 2011 – a political stability which was largely absent elsewhere. North African clubs paid their star players significantly higher salaries than clubs in, for example, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Nigeria. David Goldblatt argues that North African clubs established facilities that 'were the envy of Africa'.¹⁷⁰ Huge crowds occupied the stands on match days and top clubs could afford scouting systems and youth programmes. Perhaps only Ivory Coast's ASEC Mimomas and South Africa's top clubs are able to match the North Africans in terms of facilities and youth programmes.

North Africa's infrastructural superiority was especially visible between 1980 and 1990 when four out of six African Cup of Nations were hosted in the Maghreb (Libya 1982, Egypt 1986, Morocco 1988 and Algeria 1990). West African nations nonetheless dominated most of the tournament's history. Indeed, the usual suspects for a place in the final were Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon. No less than 14 out of 18 African Cup of Nations finals between 1957 and 2000 featured at least one of these nations. With respect to North African nations, the statistics were 10 out of 18 finals. From Southern Africa came, albeit on a much less prominent scale, Zaire/DR Congo, Congo, South Africa and, perhaps, Zambia.

There have been few East African successes both with regard to clubs and national teams. Ethiopia won the African Cup of Nations in 1962, Uganda was runner-up in 1978 and that was about it. The impact of clubs from East Africa in continental competitions was minimal. Uganda's Simba FC was runner-up in the 1972 Cup of Champions Clubs. Villa SC, also from Uganda, reached the final of Africa's top club competition in 1991 yet failed to beat Tunisia's Club Africain.

Gor Mahia, one of Kenya's most popular clubs, is the East Africa's only club to have won a continental trophy (the Cup Winners' Cup in 1987). Burundi's Vital'O and Kenya Breweries also reached the final of the Cup Winners' Cup.

South Africa was admitted back to international football after the formation of the non-racial South African Football Association (SAFA) in 1991. When Kenya withdrew as host of the 1996 African Cup of Nations, South Africa stepped in and began preparations. The Bafana Bafana went on to win the tournament, beating Tunisia 2-0 in the final. The multi-ethnic team received the trophy from Nelson Mandela, F.W. de Klerk and the Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelithini. South Africa made it again to the final of the next edition in Burkina Faso but lost out to Egypt. By that time, Orlando Pirates (founded in 1937), Moroka Swallows (1947) and Mamelodi Sundowns (early 1960s) had to tolerate the company of Kaizer Chiefs (1970), Jomo Cosmos (1983) and SuperSport United (1994). The Soweto derby between Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates still stands as one of the toughest matches on the continent.

The euphoria around the time of independence vanished in the political domain as well. Ivory Coast's Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Malawi's Hastings Banda, Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, Senegal's Léopold Senghor and Cameroon's Ahmadou Ahidjo were some of the presidents who had ruled their countries for decades. Most of them installed one-party systems, funded brutal intelligence services and clung on to power through patronage and corruption. Most if not all African leaders used the state's coffers for personal use. For example, Mobutu Sese Seko reportedly side-tracked around \$5 billion to off-shore accounts. The privatisation of state-owned corporations led to what some have called crony capitalism, whereby relatives, friends and allies were given top positions within these companies.

War and famine were (and still are) common in Africa. The genocides in Rwanda and Sudan's Darfur region, the breaking up of Somalia's state and civil wars in Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Angola were some of the continent's ghastliest conflicts. Droughts and politics in the redistribution of food led to the famine in Ethiopia in 1984/85. Football was severely hindered in parts of Africa and several leagues were abandoned, sometimes for years on end. This happened in Liberia where the civil war killed 150,000 Liberians after the overthrow of Samuel K. Doe in 1990.¹⁷¹

The longstanding war between Eritrea and neighbouring Ethiopia all but destroyed football in the small East African nation. Ethiopia had annexed its neighbour in 1962. The Ethiopians went on to win the 1963 African Cup of Nations with the help of nine Eritrean-born players. Eritrean liberation movements took up arms. Supported by the Soviet Union, Ethiopia's Marxist dic-

Photo 2.2 Clubs in Africa have suffered from low patronage in recent times. A Hearts of Oak supporter watches his team play at the Len Clay Stadium in Obuasi, Ghana



tator Mengistu reclaimed control over Eritrea in the late 1970s. Eritrean clubs were founded on communist principles; they were attached to factories and carried names such as Shoe Factory and Food Preparation. Matches were played in between fighting. Eritrean forces finally liberated the country in 1991, the country's FA was founded the following year. No match has taken place between the two countries since the July 2000 ceasefire. Thousands and thousands of people on both sides of the border died in a war lasting thirty years.¹⁷²

African football reached an all-time low in 1993 when 18 members of Zambia's national team perished in a plane crash off the coast of Gabon. They had been en route to Dakar to play a World Cup qualifier against Senegal. Captain Kalusha Bwalya escaped his teammates' fate due to club engagements in Europe. After the crash, questions were asked why the squad flew in an old military cargo plane. For years the widows of the deceased players tried to sue the government for money, but to no avail.¹⁷³ Zambia reached the final of the 1994 African Cup of Nations but lost to Nigeria.

The end of the Cold War triggered a wave of political reform in Africa. A new set of leaders entered the political arena. Ali Hassan Mwinyi took over from Nyerere in Tanzania, Yoweri Museveni came to power in Uganda and Robert Mugabe became president of Zimbabwe. Many of them received praise and were supported by western donors but their political reforms were mostly done on paper. In reality, power structures by and large remained the same. In Cameroon, Paul Biya took over the presidency in 1982. He was forced to allow rivals to form parties in the early 1990s. Biya consistently rigged elections to stay in power. He also capitalised on the successes of the national team by attaching the logo of a lion to his party.¹⁷⁴

Cameroon was Africa's first nation to make an impact on a world stage. To be sure, Egypt was the continent's first representative at the 1934 World Cup (the Pharaohs lost their match and went home). The closest Africa came to reaching the second phase was Algeria in 1982. The North Africans, however, were eliminated due to what has been widely considered an "agreement" between Germany and Austria. Also in 1982, Cameroon recorded three draws in the group stage and was sent home. The Indomitable Lions' biggest success was accomplished at the 1990 World Cup. Cameroon beat the defending world champions Argentina in the opening match and were unluckily defeated by England in the quarter finals.

Africa's national teams defied the economic crisis and went on to perform reasonably well in international tournaments. More slots had been allocated to the continent in the 1970s, courtesy of FIFA president João Havelange who promised to increase the number of participants at the World Cup. Africa benefited from the Brazilian's power politics as it went from one representative at the

16-team 1978 World Cup to three at the 1994 World Cup. By 1998, when the World Cup had expanded to its present 32 participants, Africa was allowed to send five representatives.

Nigeria made it to the second round in the 1994 and 1998 World Cups. The country's Golden Generation, among whom Jay-Jay Okocha and Nwankwo Kanu, played under the dictatorial leadership of Sani Abacha. The general acted as patron of the Super Eagles. Former national team coach Clemens Westerhof remembered Abacha asking him at the start of the 1994 African Cup of Nations: 'Do you bring me the cup, yes or no?' Westerhof answered: 'The name Nigeria is already in the cup.'¹⁷⁵ The Ogoni Nine were executed only months after Nigeria had become African champions. When Nelson Mandela questioned Abacha's human rights record, the dictator withdrew the national team from the 1996 African Cup of Nations.

Another of Havelange's promises was to create international youth tournaments. From its inception in 1985, African teams performed well at the U17 World Cup – the tournament for players under 17 years of age. Nigeria reached the finals six times, winning three. Ghana played four finals, winning two. The Ghanaians won the U20 World Cup in 2009. Africa has also performed reasonably well at the Olympics. The Nigerians won the Gold medal at the 1996 edition in Atlanta. Cameroon followed in 2000 with a Gold medal at the Sydney Olympics.

The new millennium: Exodus, commercialisation and Europe

Abédi "Pele" Ayew was born on 5 November 1964. He was voted best player in the 1978 Accra Juvenile League and earned himself a transfer to a club named Real Tamale United. He went on to take part in Ghana's qualifying series for the 1982 African Cup of Nations. The Black Stars won the tournament and Abédi Pele turned into one of Africa's most talented players. Later that year, at age 18, he signed a contract worth \$50,000 at a club in Qatar. The Ghana star was most successful in the early 1990s when he played for Olympique Marseille. Abédi Pele won the African Player of the Year award in 1991, 1992 and 1993.

Abédi Pele's fame did not go unnoticed. Young African players wanted to follow in the Maestro's footsteps. Ghana had become one of Africa's biggest actors on the transfer market at the turn of the century, exporting more than 10 percent of Africa's entire 'output'.¹⁷⁶ To be sure, Nigeria topped the charts with nearly 16 percent of all African players, Cameroon came in second with 10.9 percent.¹⁷⁷ The exodus accelerated in the new millennium, one reason being Africa's 'new image' since 1982.¹⁷⁸ Another reason is the freedom of players to move around Europe due to the Bosman ruling. Yet another reason is related to

the 'fragile political economy of African football',¹⁷⁹ although this does not apply to all the countries on the continent.¹⁸⁰

The exodus is most visible during the African Cup of Nations. Every other year a large number of European-based Africans fly to Africa for a few weeks. When the tournament was held in Mali in 2002, 62 percent of the 311 participating players enjoyed club contracts in Europe. The squads of Cameroon, Senegal and Nigeria consisted entirely of European-based players.¹⁸¹ The percentage rose to 69 percent for the 2008 African Cup of Nations. Twenty players of the 23-member Ghanaian national team at that tournament took their salaries from clubs outside their home country. Five countries – Cameroon, Nigeria, Senegal, Guinea and Mali – had their entire national team selections playing abroad.¹⁸²

The temporary migration of some of Europe's best African players causes resentment among clubs in England, France, Belgium, Spain and elsewhere. European-based African players go into training camp by late December, thereby missing the busiest period in the English Premier League. European clubs are obliged to keep on paying these players' salaries, and not seldom are they found to suffer from injuries upon their return. CAF took a cosmetic measure by starting the 2010 edition ten days later (on 20 January instead of 10 January). CAF then decided to switch the African Cup of Nations to odd years with South Africa hosting the tournament in 2013.¹⁸³

The exodus of Africa's best players is matched by a 'reverse migration of skilled technicians', as Lanfranchi and Taylor put it.¹⁸⁴ Four out of six coaches who led African national teams at the 2010 World Cup were non-Africans. A mere five out of 16 coaches at the 2010 African Cup of Nations were Africans. Most of Africa's successes have nevertheless been achieved with local coaches at the helm. Ghana won its four African Cup of Nations titles with a local coach on the bench. Hassan Shehata collected three African Cup of Nations titles in a row in the new millennium (2006, 2008 and 2010) with his native country, Egypt.

A plethora of football academies have been founded in recent years.¹⁸⁵ Early academies were the Salif Keita Football Centre (founded in 1993 by a former Malian football star) and the academy belonging to the Ivorian club ASEC Mimomas. Ghana's Feyenoord Fetteh Academy is known to combine football practice with school classes. Hundreds of small, illegal academies flooded Africa and it is estimated that Ghana's capital Accra alone boasts 500 academies,¹⁸⁶ although this number may be exaggerated. African club officials too increasingly occupy themselves with selling players, preferably to clubs abroad.¹⁸⁷

Most attention is accorded to the players who made it. Didier Drogba, Samuel Eto'o, Michael Essien and Emmanuel Adebayor are household names. Drogba is credited for contributing to peace in Ivory Coast. He dropped on his knees on

national television in 2005 and asked his countrymen to stop fighting. The country nevertheless temporarily plunged into chaos again later on. Africa's top players now earn salaries their predecessors could only dream of. In 2010, for example, Chelsea-midfielder Michael Essien earned a weekly salary of £120,000. It is said that Africa's national teams benefit from the experience of their European-based players.

Africa's football administrators have tried to keep pace with worldwide developments. When Rupert Murdoch's Sky paid £305 million for England's Premier League broadcasting rights in 1992, it set off what Conn has called the 'football business'.¹⁸⁸ Murdoch's company paid £1.1 billion in 2001 in exchange for the exclusive rights to cover five seasons of Premier League football.¹⁸⁹ When Issa Hayatou took office as CAF president, he adopted a 'far more sympathetic approach to commercialism' than his predecessor Tessema which resulted in a number of changes with the aim of 'privatizing' the game.¹⁹⁰ Corporate sponsorship came in and broadcasting rights increased the game's commercial prospects. Africa's continental competitions and tournaments were about to turn into marketable products.

CAF and the French-based company MediaFoot signed a contract in the early 1990s to manage the sales of TV rights for the African Cup of Nations. The fact that the majority of African households did not own a television in the decades after independence rapidly changed in the 1980s and 90s. More and more Africans gained access to television and the commercialisation of the game grew along with it. A renewed deal between CAF and MediaFoot in 2000 was worth \$50 million. The downside is evident as several state broadcasters have been unable to pay the fees to show African Cup of Nations matches.¹⁹¹

CAF took notice of the introduction of the lucrative UEFA Champions League in 1992 and set up the CAF Champions League five years later, replacing the Cup of Champions Clubs. Although the initial total prize money of \$2.1 million, provided by CAF's partner MediaFoot, was not comparable to that of Europe, it is argued that for the first time serious money was poured into African football.¹⁹² The competition's first winner Raja Casablanca earned \$675,000 in prize money with runner-up Ashanti Goldfields receiving \$225,000. The competition's set-up resembles the one in Europe. Clubs play preliminary rounds in order to qualify for the group phase, thereby collecting \$150,000 each. The CAF Champions League expanded to 64 clubs in 2001.

The CAF Champions League has increasingly become a playground for the wealthiest clubs. The prize money was raised to \$1.5 million for the winner and one million for the runner-up in 2009. Even the fourth placed club in the group phase received \$400,000. North African clubs have dominated the competition, having won nine finals between 1997 and 2011. Africa's all-time most successful

club is Al-Ahly, the Egyptian giant that won four CAF Champions League titles in the new millennium alone (2001, 2005, 2006 and 2008). Tunisia's Etoile du Sahel played three finals (2004, 2005 and 2007), winning the last one. Nigeria's Enyimba, meaning People's Elephant in the Igbo language, won the competition in 2003 and 2004.

Getting to the profitable group phase of the competition has become quite difficult for most clubs. For instance, financial limitations forced Ghanaian clubs such as Hearts of Oak, Asante Kotoko, Heart of Lions and Nania FC to pull out of the competition's preliminary stages in recent years. CAF fines teams that fail to show up.

In 2004, the Cup Winners' Cup and the CAF Cup merged to form the CAF Confederation Cup. Hearts of Oak beat Asante Kotoko 8-7 in a penalty shoot-out in the competition's maiden final. North Africans clubs have so far dominated the Confederation Cup with FAR Rabat (Morocco, 2005), Etoile du Sahel (Tunisia, 2006), SC Sfaxien (Tunisia, 2007, 2008), FUS Rabat (Morocco, 2010) and MAS Fez (Morocco, 2011) all collecting trophies. Here too, prize money went up. The champion took \$625,000 in 2009, the runner-up had to make do with \$432,000.¹⁹³ A third competition was introduced in 1993. The CAF Super Cup is a match between the winner of the CAF Champions League and the CAF Confederation Cup.

South Africa set the standard in the commercialisation of football. In the 2007/08 season the Premier League signed a multiyear TV and marketing deal worth 1.6 billion rand (\$200 million).¹⁹⁴ The country's top clubs now boast some of the continent's highest turnovers. However, aside from Orlando Pirates winning the 1995 CAF Champions League and Mamelodi Sundowns reaching the final of the 2001 edition, this increased financial prowess has so far not resulted in continental successes. This is in contrast to Egypt, another country where top clubs enjoy huge budgets but where supporters are spoiled with significantly more continental trophies.

Africa's football administrators have tried to professionalise and commercialise the game in the 1990s. Ghana's top officials set up the Premier League after a series of stakeholder meetings in the coastal town of Winneba in 1993. They ordered all clubs to register as limited liability companies, demanded them to set up physical offices with full-time secretaries and urged them to float shares on the Ghana Stock Exchange. These demands have only minimally been met by the clubs. Hearts of Oak, however, did float shares in 2011, raising 2.5 million cedi (approximately €1.2 million). The biggest shareholder, a businessman who was already a director of Hearts, was elected chairman of the Board of Directors.¹⁹⁵

These days the Ghana Premier League attracts corporate sponsorship. For example, the GFA signed a five-year deal worth \$15 million with the Nigerian company Globacom in 2008. The English Premier League model was adopted in many African countries. Although clubs receive money at the start of the season, officials have complained that it is not enough and they staged boycotts on several occasions. Similar problems have been cited in relation to broadcasting rights. In fact, seeing quality league matches on Cameroonian television is a rare phenomenon. The sponsorships notwithstanding, the professionalisation of the game never fully materialised. For instance, the Algerian government instigated the formation of a professional league in 1999. Years later the clubs' financial state were described as fragile and a number of problems have plagued the league since.¹⁹⁶

Photo 2.3 Playing abroad has made some African players rich. One of Ghana's national team players leaves Accra's military airport in his expensive SUV



Football in Africa suffers from mismanagement and corruption. One scandal was uncovered by South African Supreme Court Judge Benjamin Pickard who investigated the practices of SAFA officials in 1997. SAFA chairman Solomon Morewa was found guilty of pocketing 500,000 Rand (€50,000) from a grateful

sponsor. Similarly, members of SAFA's Executive Committee awarded themselves handsome bonuses for staging the 1996 African Cup of Nations. Accusations of corruption have been made against many administrators over the years.

Africa's domestic leagues have been plagued by match-fixing accusations. Visiting teams and referees also suffer from intimidation and violence by the home crowd. Unfortunately, deaths are common in and around stadiums. Two of Africa's worst football disasters occurred in 2001 – first in South Africa, then in Ghana – and were caused by organisational flaws, contempt for safety measures and inadequate security personnel. Things have hardly improved since, despite Chinese firms building ultramodern stadiums all over the continent. Early in 2012, 74 people died in Port Said (Egypt) after Al-Masry fans attacked Al-Ahly supporters.

At one point, African fans were presented with an alternative. The launch of satellite TV opened up the European football market. The South African company DSTV grew from 44,000 subscribers in 1998 to 1.7 million in 2008.¹⁹⁷ Nowadays, bars with satellite television are packed while Africa's stadiums are virtually empty. The popularity of European leagues has led to a devaluation of domestic leagues. The admiration goes so far that matches involving Manchester United, Chelsea, Liverpool and Arsenal lead to violence in Africa. Akindes, borrowing a theory from Thomas McPhail, labelled the broadcasting of European football in Africa as 'electronic colonization'.¹⁹⁸

Algeria has witnessed a process of "Italianization" from the early 1990s onwards. The Italian *Serie A* grew so popular that the country's oldest club Mouloudia Football Club was nicknamed Juventus while its rival Algiers Union Football Club became known as AC Milan.¹⁹⁹ A similar process took place in Ghana. Indeed, clubs such as Berekum Arsenal, Bechem Chelsea, Westham United and Kade Hotspurs still bear the names of their counterparts in the English Premier League. At some point, the administrators were so annoyed that they forbade clubs to take on foreign names. One victim was Accra-based club Manchester United, which was renamed Man U.²⁰⁰

The popularity of European football has led clubs in Africa to suffer budget deficits. 'Why would I pay money to see rubbish in the stadium when I can watch Essien on television?' one supporter remarked. Most Premier League matches in Ghana are watched by only a handful of spectators. Iya Mohamed, president of FECAFOOT, once stated that the exodus 'is bad for football'.²⁰¹ CAF has tried to reverse the trend by introducing a new tournament, called the African Nations Championship (CHAN). CAF president Issa Hayatou has argued that CHAN increases the value of domestic leagues by offering a platform for locally-based players. Several players who featured in the first final in 2009, however, went on to play for clubs abroad.

Recent African Cup of Nations editions were held in countries with autocratic regimes. Staging matches in the contested Angolan enclave of Cabinda backfired when Togo's national team bus was ambushed by rebels. North Africa's spring revolutions in 2011 gave rise to a new Libyan national team, featuring players who had fought against Colonel Gaddafi's regime. The 2012 African Cup of Nations was extraordinary in the sense that Egypt, Cameroon and Nigeria were notably absent. Zambia beat favourite Ivory Coast in the final in Libreville. The Zambians dedicated the trophy to the 18 players who died in the 1993 plane crash.

Looking for a wealthy Big Man

Kumasi, 22 April 2009. A black limousine arrives at the main entrance of the Baba Yara Stadium. Out steps Otumfuo Osei Tutu II who, accompanied by his entourage, is immediately led onto the pitch. The King wears a pair of black trousers, a white polo shirt and a baseball cap. He greets Asante Kotoko's management members, coaches and players, followed by those of the opposing team, King Faisal. Naturally, the Asantehene is guest of honour during today's Otumfuo Challenge Cup final.

Otumfuo Osei Tutu II ascended the Golden Stool on 26 April 1999 following the death of Opoku Ware II. Otumfuo is said to be an ardent sports lover. His favourite place is the Royal Golf Course in Kumasi. Otumfuo also inherited the foremost club of the Ashanti people, Asante Kotoko. Rumour has it that he prefers golf over football and, more worryingly, favours arch rival Hearts of Oak over Kotoko.²⁰² In any case, Kotoko's constitution states that the Asantehene is the 'father, Spiritual Head and Custodian and Chief Patron of the Club'.²⁰³

Otumfuo's job is to hire and fire directors and managers. He also takes care of the club's finances, which prompted some informants to state that Kotoko is financially sound. One journalist disagreed: 'How can you say that Kotoko is rich when you see their sandy training pitch?' He has a point, although the club now owns a new training centre. Otumfuo does not run the club all by himself. Two traditional rulers in the Kumasi area – the Hiahene and the Akyempimhene – take care of Kotoko's affairs. Yet Otumfuo has the right to *Kasapreko*, literally meaning "he who speaks once and for all".

This week the Asantehene celebrates his ten year anniversary on the throne. It is rumoured that King Faisal was ordered to throw the match. Several teams other than Kotoko have won this Cup but this time around losing the final would have been quite embarrassing for the King. In the end, Kotoko rather predictably

beats Faisal 1-0. Otumfuo Osei Tutu II steps onto the pitch again, this time to hand out the trophy.

From community-based clubs to one-man shows

In one way, Asante Kotoko is an exceptional club. It is owned and run by the person who inherited the sacred Golden Stool. Indeed, the Asantehene is a highly respected and influential figure in Ghanaian society. As owner and patron of one of Ghana's biggest clubs, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II is a true Big Man in football. With "exceptional" I mean that Kotoko can always rely on the funds and leadership of an individual who obviously is in possession of a significant amount of symbolic, social and economic capital.

In another way, Kotoko is a rather common club. It is one of the most typical community-based clubs one can find in Africa. On the face of it, Kotoko is a public club, meaning that the team is owned by the community at large. The opposite of the public club is the private club. In a sense, all clubs in Africa are public entities for the simple reason that they fulfil a communal role. In terms of ownership, however, there is a difference between the two categories. Broadly speaking, decisions within the ranks of private clubs are made by its owners/presidents with supporters lacking power. In contrast, supporters are considered to be the backbone of public clubs.

I have discerned four types of clubs in Africa, which by and large correspond to a categorisation made by Tado Oumarou and Pierre Chazaud.²⁰⁴ The *community-based club* is the true public club; the *company club* and the *government departmental club* lie somewhere in between public and private clubs; and the *one-man show* is the true private club. The distinction is nevertheless fluid and clubs occasionally switch from one type to the other. The overall point is that these club types own different forms of capital in different quantities.

Community-based clubs

Africa's oldest and most successful clubs typically are community-based clubs. A few exceptions aside, these clubs enjoy large fan bases and richly filled trophy cabinets. Ghana's top clubs Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko neatly fit into this category. The same goes for Cameroon's Canon and Tonnerre Yaoundé, Tanzania's Simba and Yanga, Kenya's Gor Mahia and AFC Leopards, Uganda's Express FC and Egypt's Al-Ahly. As most community-based clubs were once founded by members of certain ethnic groups, identification is mostly predicated on ethnicity and home turf, often mixed with politics.

From the four club types, community-based clubs generally enjoy the greatest support. Ghana's top clubs in terms of support – which arguably are Asante Kotoko, Hearts of Oak, Ebusua Mysterious Dwarfs and Eleven Wise – are firmly

rooted in Kumasi, Accra, Cape Coast and Sekondi, respectively. Some community-based clubs, for example Express FC and Al-Ahly, are even nicknamed Club of the People. Their grounding in communities is the reason why community-based clubs are sometimes referred to as traditional clubs, meaning that the club is run by (members of) the ethnic group that owns the club's home ground. Overall, community-based clubs serve as social clubs whose membership transcends the mere love for the game.

The advantages of this club type are evident. First, footballers are drawn to these popular clubs. 'It's difficult to keep players here as opposed to the traditional clubs,' explained Kojo Fianoo, CEO of company club AshantiGold FC. 'A player may be employed by Asante Kotoko for five years without ever playing for the team. But he's satisfied just because he's with Kotoko. Someone can play for a company club for two or three years but then he's in a rush to go and play for one of the traditional clubs. These clubs don't have the facilities but still the player prefers to play for Kotoko.' Coaches will also abandon their clubs when given the chance to coach a community-based club. The movement of personnel thus goes in the direction of this club type, which is why it is said that other club types mostly act as "satellites".

For players and coaches alike, community-based clubs are regarded as a stepping stone to a potentially prosperous career. These clubs commonly win lots of titles and trophies. They also regularly take part in continental competitions, thereby enhancing a player's and coach's visibility. Hearts and Kotoko are historically seen as Ghana's foremost "player terminals" because players tend to leave the country through either of these two clubs. In short, community-based clubs enhance a player's market value. These clubs also boast of strong representation in the game's wider bureaucracy and are, as a result, regarded as powerful entities in the world of football.

It is evident that Big Men will want to be connected to these clubs as well. More than any other club type, a position within the management of a community-based club brings forth symbolic capital. One explanation is that community-based clubs generate much more media attention than other club types. (Hearts and Kotoko even create their own news by publishing *Hearts News* and *Kotoko Express* several times a week.) Big Men find community-based clubs appealing because of their large fan bases, meaning that a management position significantly increases their own following. As these clubs draw upon wide networks in society, Big Men are able to acquire social (and political) capital.

Guardianship of this type of club normally rests with the (descendants of) the founding fathers and community leaders, especially traditional rulers and elders. An advantage of this loose ownership is that the club should theoretically be able to draw upon the financial resources of the population at large. Also advanta-

geous is the fact that a large fan base should theoretically result in high gate proceeds – at least higher than is the case with other club types. Also, sponsors should find it worthwhile to invest in these clubs. This means that community-based clubs generate economic capital, making this club type in my view the only one that possesses all three forms of capital from the outset.

The strength of public ownership is nevertheless also its weakness. It can be argued that community-based clubs are owned by everybody and nobody at the same time. Put differently, when the team performs well, everybody will want to be associated with it and financially support it. When the team does not perform well, it is common to see it being abandoned. A relegated, community-based club may find a return to the top league to be quite difficult since nobody claims responsibility and nobody is willing to invest in an ailing team. After all, what benefit does a Big Man enjoy for sponsoring a club that has lost its appeal and popularity among the wider population?

This brings us to a paradoxical situation that is so characteristic of community-based clubs in Africa. They may enjoy the (financial) backing of more Big Men than any other type, but at the same time they suffer from almost permanent power struggles within the management ranks. For instance, Cameroon's top clubs Canon and Tonnerre Yaoundé have underperformed for years due to infighting. Similarly, disgruntled players, management members and/or supporters have occasionally formed rival factions in order to challenge their club's officials. Some of these rival factions even left and formed clubs elsewhere. A related – but probably rare – situation is that the availability of several extremely wealthy Big Men in one area can be financially disadvantageous for the welfare of a public club. This happened, for example, with Stade Bandjoun in Cameroon.²⁰⁵

Yet another disadvantage is that the fanatical support of hundreds of thousands or even millions of fans puts too much stress on players, coaches and Big Men alike. 'The pressure is higher than with other clubs,' said Bashir Hayford, who coached several clubs in Ghana, one of which was Asante Kotoko. 'Everybody thinks that they are a shareholder and that they have a role to play. If you win you are comfortable but if you lose they will harass you.' Harassing occasionally means physical violence and destruction of property which not seldom extends to the family of the unfortunate player, coach or Big Man. The result is that those attached to a community-based club fear for their jobs almost on a daily basis – and with good reason.

Community-based clubs have been hit hard by the supporters' declining interests in Africa's domestic leagues. Attendance rates have dropped dramatically and so has a vital source of income for community-based clubs, namely gate proceeds. From all indications it is safe to conclude that this type of club is

experiencing dark times in terms of both finances and successes while other club types have instead flourished. Indeed, the nature and structure of the community-based club could lead to its demise in this day of professionalism and commercialism. This was aptly voiced by Valentine Molulu, owner of the Cameroonian one-man show Botafogo FC:

We are a football club with private ownership. We try to implement a working formula and a model borrowed from the successful leagues in Europe. There should be a clear divide between ownership of a club which is an enterprise and supporting the club as a fan. The old model [of community-owned clubs] is no longer viable as shown by the problems in Canon and Tonnerre, and also as demonstrated by the demise of clubs which were run by government parastatals, the last surviving of which is Coton Sport [Garoua]. But the day the cotton trading goes out of fashion then Sodecoton will not have the resources to support Coton Sport any more. It happened to PWD Bamenda, Kumba, etc. The new and emerging models are clubs like Mount Cameroon, KSA [Kadji Sports Academy] and Botafogo, where individuals are investing their own money and attempting to run an enterprise.²⁰⁶

Molulu rightfully remarked that one-man shows now outdo some of the most popular community-based clubs. For many years Molulu's own Buea-based club Botafogo FC has had more successes than the town's community-based club, Prisons Buea. Similarly, the company club Coton Sport Garoua has beaten Cameroon's community-based clubs time and again over the last fifteen years or so.

The economic crisis that engulfed Africa from the 1980s onwards and the increased popularity of European football have indeed put the future of many community-based clubs in jeopardy. Officials of several Cameroonian clubs, particularly those in the West Region, have tried to reverse the trend by ingeniously expanding their potential fan base. By changing their clubs' names they stopped appealing only to supporters in the club's immediate environment – the village, town or city – and instead addressed the inhabitants of the wider administrative division or region.²⁰⁷ Whether these measures will prove successful is difficult to say at this point.

Company clubs

It is common to see clubs in Africa being owned and sponsored by private or state-owned companies, operating in different fields of businesses: Agriculture, petroleum, minerals, gas and electricity, construction, media, soda and alcoholic beverages, banking. The mining industry's dominance over Zambian football is a good example. Some of Algeria's biggest clubs are sponsored by oil, petrochemical and electronics companies.²⁰⁸ Kenya Breweries, owned by the East African Breweries company, changed its name to one of the company's beer brands, Tusker FC. Angola's top clubs Atlético Sport Aviação and Petro-Atlético are financed by the national airway operator and the national oil company, respectively. Egypt's PetroJet, Asyyut Petroleum and Arab Contractors are, as the names suggest, company clubs as well.

As mentioned in chapter 2, Ghana's National League featured several company clubs in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Akotex, one of the most successful company clubs, was owned by Akosombo Textile Limited. Another successful club, Dumas, belonged to Ghana Textile Printing in the harbour city of Tema. The STC, Ghana's official bus company, had a Tamale-based team named Roadmasters. One company club, State Traders, promoted to the top league but relegated at the end of its first season. It was common to see companies pulling their hands off football as soon as their teams went on relegation. An exception is Power FC which is still owned by the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) after being relegated in 2007.

It is said that the company clubs were Ghana's most professionally run clubs. 'We take care of the players' salaries and their medical expenses and we pay their utility bills because we are an electricity company,' said CEO Emmanuel Adotey of Power FC. 'The company clubs are better run than the community clubs,' added Kojo Fianoo. 'In the community clubs it's the passion that moves people.' What he meant to say was that passion alone is not a guarantee for a well-organised and financially stable club. What distinguishes the company clubs from other club types is finance and a business-minded approach. First, the clubs are commonly owned by companies for the full 100 percent and thus (should) have a sound financial base. Second, the general directors of the companies tended to run the teams as regular businesses.

Ghana's most prominent company club is Ashanti Goldfields. Based in the mining town of Obuasi, the club's proliferation in the early 1990s coincided with the professionalisation of the game in Ghana. Ashanti Goldfields won the newly initiated Premier League three times in a row and established itself as the main contender to break the hegemony of Hearts and Kotoko. The club's professionalism and successes could for a large part be attributed to the former general director of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation (AGC), Dr. Sam Jonah.²⁰⁹ The economist A.A. Taylor argues that Jonah convinced the Board of Directors to increase its investments into the club in order to provide entertainment and recreation in Obuasi.²¹⁰ According to Kojo Fianoo, Jonah also knew how to make international oil companies contribute to the club.²¹¹

Ashanti Goldfields' origins are typical of company clubs all over Africa. The club's founding in 1978 came in response to a call from the Ghanaian government to corporations to start sponsoring clubs. Initially, the directors and managers saw the game as a leisure activity for the workers, who made up the bulk of the team. In respect to Ashanti Goldfields, Taylor states that there 'tended to be a positive correlation between the football club's fortunes and morale and production on the mine. True to this, production managers reported that output

increased considerably in the days following that victory (the 1994 National League title).²¹²

A similar story can be told of Coton Sport Garoua. Founded in 1986 by employees of the *Société de Développement du Coton du Cameroun* (SODECOTON), the club's intention was to fill the void left by the relegated community-based club L'Etoile Filante. When Coton Sport gained entrance to the top league in 1993, it established itself as Cameroon's best team since, winning the league title eleven times between 1997 and 2011. Despite being a company club, Cameroonians supported the team when it played the final of the 2008 CAF Champions League. It was, after all, more than twenty-five years since a domestic club had achieved that feat. Coton Sport, the country's sole professional club, operated on a €750,000 budget in 2007.²¹³

The company clubs nevertheless faced a set of problems. First of all, the regular workers were commonly hostile to those who played for the team. 'The workers used to become angry,' said Bashir Hayford, who coached two company clubs. 'Sometimes they wouldn't get paid for a week while the players would receive winning bonuses. The workers would say: "We're all part of the same company. Why are the players being treated differently?" They would stage strikes. When I was in Power FC, the workers wanted the team to go away.' Kojo Fianoo experienced similar problems. 'Footballers have to be comfortable,' he said. 'They use the best buses, they eat the best food. Some of them don't even go to work. So there would be serious agitation.'

Another disadvantage is that the company clubs are too dependent on a football-loving general director. 'A company normally doesn't want to invest in football. They say that football eats their budget, which is true,' said Hayford. In 2005, two years after AGC had merged with AngloGold to form AngloGold Ashanti Limited, Jonah stepped down as general director. Now named AshantiGold Sporting Club Limited, the club did not receive help from the new directors. 'The club signed a deal with Ajax Amsterdam in 1999 but this contract was abrogated in 2002,' said Fianoo. 'When Ajax left, they gave AshantiGold \$2.5 million. The club used the money and never went to AngloGold for support. The new directors didn't even know they owned the club. When they found out, they tried to make the club a communal affair but it's difficult.'

If we were to compare company clubs to community-based clubs in terms of capital, then the former certainly appear to own more economic capital than the latter. Yet the difference should mostly be viewed in terms of stability, meaning that a company's funds are more "reliable" than a community-based club's external sponsor. A company club nevertheless cannot compete with a community-based club in terms of social capital. This is due to this club type's relatively low patronage. In Ghana, Ashanti Goldfields may be the exception in

the sense that the team is reasonably supported in Obuasi, although this support is mostly of a temporary nature as former employees who leave town stop taking an interest in the club.

Finally, this club type does not have much symbolic capital. Indeed, in the eyes of players, coaches and supporters alike, the company clubs lack appeal. Remember the earlier statement that players and coaches tend to run to community-based clubs. If a company club and a community-based club were locked in a virtual battle for symbolic capital, the company club would not even dream of winning this match. This is what Kojo Fianoo said in relation to his time as CEO of State Traders:

You may have had an employee who supported State Traders for 40 percent but you knew that he supported Hearts or Kotoko for a full 100 percent. When we played Hearts he might be brought into the stadium as a supporter of State Trader but as soon as he was inside he would support Hearts. When we played against regular clubs and we supplied buses for the staff to go and watch the match, most of the times these buses would be empty. But when we traveled to Kumasi to play Kotoko we needed five buses that were all filled to capacity. Many employees were Kotoko supporters and they grabbed the opportunity to watch Kotoko play. When Kotoko beat State Traders everybody would be celebrating on the way back to Accra. When we beat Kotoko the whole bus would be quiet and only a few people would be celebrating. The same thing applies to AshantiGold. A lot of people working in the mines are Hearts or Kotoko supporters.

There is also a disadvantage of location in the sense that most company clubs are randomly based in a town. The directors of State Traders, a company operating nationwide, bought the company club Akotex and took over its home ground, Akosomba. Another company club, Power FC, decided to be based in Koforidua. These clubs are strangers and do not attract much support, if at all. In fact, most inhabitants dislike these clubs for competing with the town's community-based club. AshantiGold, for instance, is Obuasi's outsider team while Adansiman FC is the true indigenous team. Moreover, clubs belonging to state-owned companies generally experience hostility when playing away. This is how Kojo Fianoo explained it:

Ghanaians think that the mines in Obuasi are meant for everybody. They see that the money is spent on a particular club and they are not benefiting. So they will be hostile: "We are suffering while you are using state money for your own comfort." They will say that you are feeding yourself from their sweat. When you get out of the bus they start insulting you. "You are chopping good money!" That's the general attitude.

The number of company clubs in Ghana's top league dropped dramatically in the 1980s and 90s.²¹⁴ The privatisation of parastatals due to the World Bank's and IMF's Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) is the most probable explanation for their decline.²¹⁵ Cameroon only had a handful of public enterprises around the time of independence but registered 219 of such enterprises by the mid-1980s, employing approximately 100,000 people.²¹⁶ These figures then

sharply dropped and, parallel to these developments, most company clubs have since disappeared.²¹⁷ A similar process occurred in the Anglophone zone.²¹⁸

Government departmental clubs

Whereas the company clubs belonged to economic organisations, the government departmental clubs were (and in some cases still are) owned by public service institutions. In Africa, it is common to see police, army and prisons owning their own teams. Decades ago, Ghana had a competition in which five teams participated: First Brigade, Second Brigade, Support Services, Navy, and Air Force. One army team travelled abroad to compete against an Ugandan army team in the days of Idi Amin. In Gabon, the *Ligue Militaire Omnisports* organised sports competitions, football included, between the army, air force, gendarmerie, firemen and (other) public service teams. The same thing occurred in Cameroon with the formation of the *Association Sportive des Forces Armées et Police* (ASFAP) in 1978.²¹⁹

There is indeed a strong tradition in terms of military and police clubs on the continent. Rwanda's APR and Morocco's FAR Rabat are two prominent examples. Togo's Dynamic Togolais Lomé, a club belonging to the army, is effectively controlled by the powerful Gnassingbé family. Gabon is home to the well-known army club FC 105 Libreville. Senegal's AS Forces Armées and ASF Police, both Dakar-based clubs, were once powerful forces. The army, security services and the police all maintain a club in the Nigerien Premier League. In Zambia, the army club is called Green Buffaloes; in Congo, the police club is simply called AS Police. Angola has an army club called Primeiro and a police club called Interclube.

In Uganda, Simba is the army team, Police FC that of, indeed, the police and Prisons that of the prison institution. Known as The Forces, these three clubs were quite powerful in the days of Idi Amin. 'There was no war, the soldiers had very little to do,' former national team player Tom Lwanga explained. 'Many of them were released to play full-time. That's what Amin wanted. So the players in those teams played very well together.'²²⁰ Another example of a government-owned club is Kampala City Council (KCC). The club was founded by Samuel Wamala, the head of the Sewage Works section of the city council's Engineering Department. KCC won several titles since its promotion to the top league in 1974.

The connection between football and government departments can be traced back to the colonial days. The Public Works Department, the Medical Department and the Police formed teams in Zanzibar in the 1930s. 'If a man took a job with either of these departments, he was required to play for the department team, if they wanted him,' Fair states.²²¹ As was the case with company clubs,

players were lured with perks and privileges. Some people within the Public Works Department offered players jobs and driving licenses. Although PWD was Zanzibar's most formidable force for two decades, the employees-turned-players were not too enthusiastic about the departmental clubs:

Working for the PWD was a way for these men to earn a living, but their larger social identities were constructed in relation to their friends and communities, not their jobs. What this meant was that men would often miss practice or show up late for PWD and Police matches so that they could attend the games of their own teams which were simply more important to them.²²²

In other words, they did not identify with the departmental clubs as much as they did with their own community-based clubs.

Sudan had its share of government departmental teams in the 1920s, among which Public Works Department, Stores and Ordnance, Railways and Steamers.²²³ The league in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) in 1942 consisted of teams with names as Government School, Post Office, Railways, Kings' African Rifles, Police and Medical Department.²²⁴ It is alleged that Nigeria's oldest club bore the name Public Works Department. The club was formed in 1929 in Lagos.²²⁵

Lindsay argues that the Nigerian government stimulated departments to promote European-style sports and games among their employees. By 1941 the railways maintained football fields at its headquarters in Lagos and it ran a league with four competing teams. Somewhere along the line, things went astray as the game became enmeshed with workplace factions. First, teams were split up in blue- and white-collar employees. Second, the regular workers were jealous of the player-employees who were often hired solely based on their football skills and who only performed nominal work in between competitions. This sort of favouritism caused friction and resembles what happened at the company clubs.²²⁶

Anglophone Cameroon boasted a plethora of clubs consisting the prefix PWD. The Public Works Department, as the name suggests, took care of community services such as roads and the like. When the region was still called West Cameroon, this department was very active in promoting football. Bamenda, Victoria, Mamfe and Kumba, among other towns, all had their own PWD teams. Similarly, the Cameroon Produce Marketing Board (CAMMARK) set up clubs in Mamfe, Victoria and Bamenda. Other departmental teams included Police Mutengene and Kumba Federation of Cocoa Farmers. For one reason or the other, and in contrast to their Zanzibari counterparts, the PWD teams became some of the most popular teams in the region.

Two Bamenda-based clubs stand out: CAMMARK in terms of professionalism, PWD in terms in support. CAMMARK Bamenda was regarded as a professional club whose team entertained the crowd with its Brazilian style of play. The club was led by a traditional ruler by the name of Fon Doh and was

sponsored by a board responsible for selling farmers' produce. Once a mighty force, the club suffered from mismanagement as well as and from Francophones taking over the Marketing Board. CAMMARK Bamenda relegated in the early 1990s. PWD Bamenda was (and still is) the town's most popular club. The team thrived in the 1970s and early 80s but things went sour after the Public Works Department handed the team over to the community (see chapter 5).

Prisons Buea in Cameroon's Southwest Region is another prominent example of a government departmental club. The club was formed in 1967 under the patronage of the director of the Central Prison who 'used his office' to sponsor the club.²²⁷ The founding of the club reportedly came as an Anglophone response to the successes of Francophone-based club Oryx Douala. Barely one year after its creation, Prisons reached the 1968 Cup of Cameroon final. After some years in the top league, the team lost its link to the prison, turned into something of a community-based club and subsequently relegated. Various Big Men have unsuccessfully tried to revive the fortunes of the team. Prisons dropped to the Third Division in 1990.

The situation in Cameroon is not typical of Africa as a whole, as the following case from Nigeria testifies. When the economic crisis diminished the number of Nigerian company clubs in the 1980s and 90s, the government stepped in. Almost half of all the Premier League clubs in the 2000 season were state-owned.²²⁸ Ten years later almost all the top clubs belonged to the respective State.²²⁹ Having the financial backing of the state is no guarantee for success. Bayelsa United, league champion in 2009, ran into difficulties in the 2009/10 season and ended up in the relegation zone.

In sum, this club type appears to have undergone changes to such an extent that many government departmental clubs either ceased to exist or witnessed a transition towards community-based clubs. In some countries, government departmental clubs are rather unpopular in comparison to the community-based clubs. In other countries, notably Cameroon, former government-sponsored clubs occasionally rival the community-based clubs in terms of popularity (see Prisons Buea and PWD Bamenda). Generally speaking, government departmental clubs are modestly well-off in terms of social and symbolic capital, but come up short when it comes to economic capital.

One-man shows

Private clubs have become quite popular in Africa in recent years. There are two ways in which a Big Man is able to start a club. First, he registers a new club at the FA and enrolls his team in the Third Division. A second way is to buy an existing club from somebody else. To be sure, this has been done by individuals and companies alike (remember the company club State Traders). Such a

scenario is mostly profitable when that club is active in the top league. Both options commit the Big Man to find a suitable home ground for his new team. He may opt for his place of birth but this is not a given. In case of a take-over, the Big Man may decide to stick to the original location.

One-man shows are named this way because they are intimately connected to and associated with the founder/owner. King Faisal, the team that played the Otumfuo Challenge Cup final in 2009, was founded by a Muslim businessman named Alhaji Karim Grunsah. (He once visited Faisal bin Abdul-Aziz al Saud, King of Saudi Arabia from 1964 to 1975, to ask for his permission to use his name.) Ghanaians do not distinguish the club from its owner, which can be illustrated by a cartoon published in the *Kotoko Express* in July 2009. Prior to the derby between Asante Kotoko and King Faisal, the cartoonist pictured Grunsah standing in front of a goalpost wearing gloves, thereby implying that his team (Kotoko) would take on Faisal's Big Man himself.²³⁰

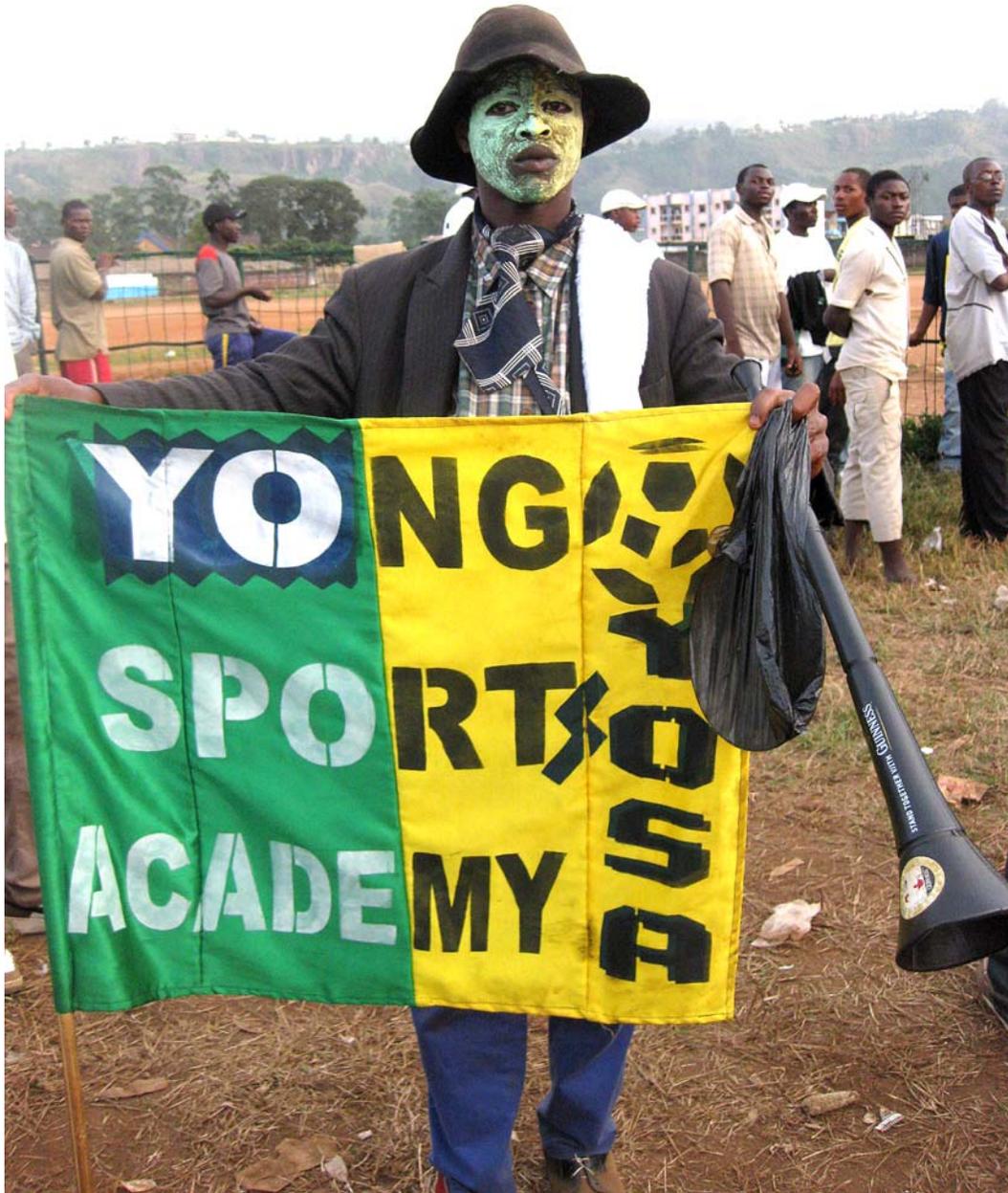
Ghanaian one-man shows may not be wealthier than community-based clubs but they are more professionally run, at least on paper. Bashir Hayford, who coached Asante Kotoko before moving on to one-man show Kessben FC, had the following story to tell:

When I was with Kotoko I didn't have an office. Kotoko has an office but that's the management office. Did you see the car outside the Kotoko office? The one with the broken windows and the flat tyres? That's the coach's car. But here with Kessben FC I have a car of my own. And it works. Kessben FC also has a secretariat at Aseda House [in Kumasi's city centre]. There is an office for the CEO, for the kit man, for the directors. I also have an office. I can watch the clips from the previous matches. You see, it's not about money, it's about management and foresight. When I coached Kotoko, I would not go to the office after training. I would be sitting under a tree.

From my own observations it can be argued that one-man shows indeed own better offices than community-based clubs. The office of one-man show Heart of Lions, located in a suburb of Accra, certainly has all the facilities one needs.

Like the company clubs, one-man shows too cannot rely on much support. The Cameroonian one-man show Yong Sports Academy (YOSA) has a supporters union but with few members. I once travelled along with the team to Bafang. The original 56-seater bus was replaced by a smaller one due to low patronage. Mount Cameroon FC, as we known owned by businessman-politician Calvin Foining, on average drew a few hundred supporters at home. It was only when the team played against big guns like Canon Yaoundé, Coton Sport Garoua, Union Douala or fellow Anglophone teams that Buea's Molyko Stadium was filled to capacity. But here another problem popped up: Mount Cameroon supporters would be outnumbered by those of the visiting team. The traditional home advantage rule does not seem to apply to one-man shows.

Photo 3.1 A supporter of one-man show Yong Sports Academy shows his self-made flag at the stadium in Bamenda



One consequence is that one-man shows collect few money from gate takings. This is no small matter, for whereas company clubs can rely on company funds, the one-man shows rely on the finances of one man only. In 2009, when YOSA promoted to the Elite One league, the team travelled to faraway places. Its first match generated 2.2 million CFA francs (€3,400) but only because it was the first top league match in Bamenda in five years. President Yong Francis collected 50

percent of that amount but was forced to spend it on fixed club expenses. The Big Man had to fund the following away match, a two-day journey to Garoua, out of his own pocket. Kessben FC earned 200 cedi (€100) for playing Wa All Stars at home in 2009. ‘That’s normal for many of our home matches,’ said club accountant Samuel Ellis-Obir. ‘That money won’t last a week.’

Kessben FC is, in fact, a good example of a one-man show lacking support. The club was founded in April 2002 by the Kumasi-based businessman Kwabena Kesse. Although Kesse owns several businesses and buildings in the Ashanti capital and thus ensures employment on a modest scale, his club is hugely unpopular among the population. Kwame Owusu Donkor, the club’s deputy CEO, explained the matter:

Kesse is a rich man and he has to take care of his family. Here people say: “Why should I support an individual like Kesse? He has more than enough money. Do I really need to pay for a ticket so that he can provide for his family?” You see, people in Ghana don’t go to watch football just to watch football. They go to the stadium to support their own team. There is plenty of support for the traditional teams in this country but people don’t want to support an individual. It’s the same thing with Liberty Professionals. Normally you would expect that team to have a lot of support because they are playing the best football in the country. But Liberty doesn’t have many supporters because nobody wants to sponsor the owner, Sly Tetteh. They don’t take such a team as their own.

There are others reasons for Kessben FC not having many supporters. First, Kwabena Kesse used to be a director of Asante Kotoko before resigning his post in 2006. It upsets Kotoko supporters to see an Ashanti businessman spending his money on a team other than Kotoko. Second, Kessben FC’s stadium is located in Abrankese, which is a 30 minutes’ drive from Kumasi. ‘It’s an area with a lot of small villages and lots of poverty,’ said Owusu Donkor. Most people are unwilling or unable to make the trip.

This lack of popularity and support does not apply to all one-man shows. Heart of Lions and Berekum Arsenal are two Ghanaian Premier League clubs that have managed to become quite popular in Kpandu and Berekum, respectively. Founded in 1978, Berekum Arsenal is owned by a businessman named Alhaji Yakubu Moro. ‘This club is different,’ said one sports journalist. ‘The team is owned by a man who was born and raised in Berekum. So the population feels that the team belongs to the town and they want to support it.’ Similarly, Heart of Lions was set up by a local businessman by the name of Victor Akpene Ahiakpor. Although the team practices in Accra, the Kpandu community still more or less regards it as a public team.

One thing that company clubs and one-man shows generally have in common is that they tend to rival the community-based clubs. Mount Cameroon FC and Kessben FC were both disliked by supporters of Prisons Buea and Asante Kotoko, respectively, for this very reason. YOSA too is looked upon with contempt by inhabitants of Bamenda. As was the case with Kwabena Kesse,

Yong Francis was involved in the (now) community-based club PWD Bamenda before founding his private club. When YOSA underperformed early in the 2009/10 Elite One league, it was rumoured that angry PWD supporters had spiritually blocked the team.

In terms of capital, one-man shows fall short when it comes to social and symbolic capital, especially in comparison to community-based clubs. A more nuanced view is that the image of one-man shows by and large depends on the popularity of its founders/owners. In other words, if a Big Man is popular and respected, it will undoubtedly reflect positively on his private club. This is true of the late Sly Tetteh, founder of the Accra-based club Liberty Professionals. As with company clubs, the advantage of one-man shows is their economic capital. A wealthy Big Man should be able to sustain his private club.

This club type's economic capital is nevertheless far from stable. The main disadvantage of one-man shows is that they tend to fall into disarray when the owner's businesses go bad, when he loses interest or, ultimately, when he dies. This is the moment when many one-man shows disappear altogether. It was said that Calvin Foinding ran into financial difficulties, after which he attempted to sell Mount Cameroon FC. Another example is that of the Nigerian club Alyufsalam Rocks, founded by the Muslim businessman Alhaji Yussuf Salami, which turned out to be a 'one year wonder'. As S.E. Akpabot states, after reaching Nigeria's cup final in the club's maiden season, the 'fortunes of the team slumped gradually until his (Salami's) dream went up in smoke and the team fell into the limbo of forgotten club sides'.²³¹

Some academy clubs fit into this category. Whereas YOSA started out as a club and not an academy, Kadji Sports Academy (KSA) is a good example of an academy whose first team promoted to the Elite One league. Owned by the famed Cameroonian businessman Gilbert Kadji, KSA played in the highest division for three years before being relegated. One problem of this particular academy is that it is based on the outskirts of Douala, which makes it difficult to attract supporters. A similar story can be told of the Feyenoord Academy in Gomoa-Fetteh which at one point in time also maintained a team in the Ghanaian Premier League.

Who is the boss?

It may seem as if community-based clubs are the place to be for a Big Man aspiring to convert capital. After all, the community-based club is the one club type that in theory is blessed with an abundance of all forms of capital: Social, symbolic and economic. Seen this way, it can be argued that the one-man show lies at the opposite end of the spectrum. Indeed, a typical one-man show possesses economic capital (provided for by its owner) but falls short when it comes

to both social and symbolic capital. Choosing the ideal vehicle through which to convert capital thus seems like a no-brainer. Such a decision, however, would not take into consideration issues related to power.

To explore this issue we need to map out positions of power. I will focus on community-based clubs and one-man shows since these club types represent the true public and private club, respectively. I will limit myself to clubs in Ghana and, to a lesser extent, Cameroon. The question is: Who ultimately exerts power within a club? I briefly touched on this issue at the outset of this chapter. This is where we noticed a disadvantage of community-based clubs, namely the fact that Big Men share power with other Big Men and with the club's supporters. In contrast, one Big Man alone owns, sponsors and runs a one-man show. The owner thus fully controls the club, which could be a reason why a businessman would be so crazy as to fund a club all by himself.

Traditionally, football clubs are organised as voluntary associations, meaning that clubs are hierarchically structured with a president/chairman at the helm, followed by one or more vice presidents, a technical director, a communications officer, a secretary-general and a treasurer. Those who occupy these positions tend to do so on a voluntary basis. In practice, many club officials receive some sort of salary. This was the way most if not all clubs were organised prior to the professionalisation of the game. Most clubs in Cameroon are still organised in this manner. In 2010, for example, Dynamo Douala was run by a *président-exécutif* and no less than four vice presidents. Clubs in Ghana's lower divisions are generally also organised as voluntary associations.

As said, the professionalisation of football in Africa changed club structures in such a way that many clubs now operate as limited liability companies. As of 1993, a Ghanaian Premier League club is comprised of a Board of Directors and a CEO who heads a management team. The foremost reason for these changes was that a full-time CEO was expected to bring a business-minded attitude to the game. It can nevertheless be observed that these changes have been implemented poorly. Put differently, clubs are organised analogous to companies *on paper* but run through a system of patronage *in reality*. This topic is explored in chapter 7. In the meantime, I do think it is important to explain the *official* structures of clubs in Africa today.

The best way to do this is by analysing the constitutions of clubs. I will limit myself to the constitutions of Ghana's top clubs Hearts of Oak and Asante Kotoko, which are exemplary of the power structures at Ghanaian Premier League clubs.²³² At certain times I will compare these structures to the situation in Cameroon. It should be noted that the constitution of any given club is a historical document in the sense that it is the result of several decades worth of expertise in club management. We could easily go on a lengthy tour down

memory lane (in the case of Hearts back to 1911) but this would distract us from the topic at hand.²³³

The first thing to notice from the constitutions of Hearts and Kotoko is that the Council of Patrons serves as the club's highest advisory body. The Hearts constitution describes patrons as 'persons of high respectability and honour and proven to have shown interest in the affairs of the club'. The president of Hearts' Council of Patrons acts as the 'father' of the club 'with no executive powers but (he) shall serve as the custodian of the spirit, noble ideas and visions, which motivated the Founders who, by their significant contributions and widely recognised efforts, founded and established the Club'. The Kotoko constitution mentions two types of patrons. The first type is the 'Chief Patron' or 'occupant of the Golden Stool' who is, as we know, none other than the Ashanti King himself. The second type of patron, personally selected by the Asantehene, is more or less comparable to a Hearts patron.

Patrons officially lack power. However, they do exert power in the sense that they act as advisers and are involved in electing directors (see below). Patrons also exert power because they typically are Big Men, meaning that they are powerful in their own right. A person normally gets accepted into the Council of Patrons after having served the club for a long time. This is why patrons are called fathers, custodians and/or elders. They are literally elderly people who know firsthand the history and traditions of the club. Some patrons are, in fact, their clubs' founding members. Most clubs in Africa are familiar with patrons. Many of them fulfil a ceremonial role. For instance, the foremost role of PWD Bamenda's honorary patrons is to add a respected name to the club.

The Hearts constitution also mentions a Board of Trustees whose members 'have the power, subject to the approval of the Annual General Meeting to acquire, invest and hold any immovable property for and on behalf of the Club'. Its members, drawn from the ranks of the Council of Patrons and the Board of Directors, maintain a so-called Reserve Fund whose contents are used only to replace 'fixed assets and equipment'. Also, the Board of Trustees is closely linked to the club's limited liability status in the sense that its members act as 'guarantors' who are 'jointly and severally liable'. This idea of guarantors, in turn, is related to the notion that clubs need to float shares on the stock exchange. Few clubs, however, actually float shares.

The most powerful body of both Hearts and Kotoko is the Board of Directors. Kotoko's Board of Directors, whose members are elected by the Asantehene, serves as the club's 'policy-making body'. Their task is not only to elect the members of the management committee but also to meet with them every three months and review their work. Hearts' Board of Directors also serves as a policy-making organ. According to the constitution, the Council of Patrons nominates a

maximum of five persons as members of the Board; the other members are nominated by registered supporters and are drawn from the ranks of National and Chapter Members (see below). As with the Council of Patrons, one is eligible to become a Board member if he/she 'made significant contributions towards the achievement and progress of the Club'.

It could be argued that the chairman of the Board of Directors is the club's most powerful individual. At Hearts and Kotoko, he presides over a body that has the final responsibility over the club's financial aspects, including budgets and end-of-year audited accounts. At Hearts, the Board of Directors may, in consultation with the Board of Trustees, borrow money and mortgage the assets of the club. Moreover, the Board is 'charged with the general direction of the affairs of the Club, including the employment, control and dismissal of all employees of the Club'. Finally, Hearts' and Kotoko's Boards of Directors have, in collaboration with the Council of Patrons, the power to appoint an Interim Management Committee (IMC) to temporarily run the club.

The next body in line is the management team whose members run the club on a daily basis. Kotoko's management committee consists of a CEO, a Director of Finance and Administration, a Director of Operations, an administrative secretary and a team manager. Also part of the management committee are representatives of the national supporters union, the old players' association, the ladies' group, and the squad (termed the 'playing body').²³⁴ The Asantehene (not the Board of Directors) elects the CEO based on the recommendation of a 'special committee'. The Kotoko constitution states that a CEO should be 'reasonably educated, credit worthy, physically fit and (with) qualities to lead a Sporting Club'. Hearts' management committee is elected by the Board of Directors; the committee is normally run by a CEO.

I said earlier that the chairman of the Board of Directors is the club's most powerful person. This could also be said of the CEO. After all, it is the CEO and his management team who run the club on a day-to-day basis and, by implication, control the club's most vital asset: The team. They spend club money to fund home and away matches and to pay salaries and bonuses to players and coaches. With regard to several Premier League clubs in Ghana, the CEO and the other management members are powerful individuals indeed. However, this is not true in the case of one-man shows where, as we know, it is the owner/president himself who exerts full power. In countries such as Cameroon, where the majority of clubs lack business-like structures, the position of president/chairman more or less equals that of CEO.

We need to pause for a moment to discuss the difference between community-based clubs and one-man shows in terms of organisation. In Ghana, it looks as though there is no difference at all. King Faisal, for example, also employs a

CEO who runs the club on a day-to-day basis. At Kessben FC, people act as CEO, deputy CEO and directors with specific tasks. The same thing applies to Heart of Lions, Wa All Stars and other one-man shows. On closer inspection, these clubs normally do not have a properly functioning Board of Directors. Moreover, the founders/owners of these one-man shows still act as the *de facto* president, thereby rendering the business-like positions meaningless. Again, I will discuss these issues more fully in chapter 7.

The main difference between community-based clubs and one-man shows in terms of power is their support base. Community-based clubs generally have extensive supporter networks. At Hearts, a registered supporter group is called a Chapter; at Kotoko, such a group is called a Circle. There are approximately a few hundred Chapters, each made up of at least 100 members (same for Kotoko Circles). It is widely acknowledged that supporters are the true owners of community-based clubs. 'The people who run the club are within our control because we have the power to make or break them,' said Edmund Palmer, the secretary of the National Chapters Committee. Circle groups, however, are less powerful. 'It's tradition that you cannot defy the King but we do make our voices heard,' said Kwaku Anor, Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Ashanti Regional Circles Council. 'We can always advice the great King.'

The first requirement for anyone desiring a formal position is to become a member of the club. At Hearts, membership is open to 'all persons of sound mind and good behaviors (sic), irrespective of nationality, sex, tribe or creed' (the same applies to Kotoko). An aspiring Hearts member needs the backing of at least two members of the club. A member is entitled to a Membership Card only if he or she pays a monthly fee. Hearts' members can be divided in two categories. A National Member is a general member of the club who pays a monthly fee of 10 cedi (₵). The National Members are less in numbers but compensate it by being important individuals (for instance, president John Evans Atta Mills was a National Member). A Chapter Member pays one cedi per month. Kotoko's members are divided in similar categories.

The supporters of community-based clubs exert power in the sense that they are able to elect their club officials and hold them accountable for their actions. At one-man shows, nobody elects or checks the officials but the founder/owner himself. At company clubs, the top club officials are generally also the general managers of the company. This used to be true for AshantiGold, only now the company appointed an non-company man (Kojo Fianoo) as CEO. Officials of company clubs are accountable to the company's Board of Directors. 'The managers are interested only in the judicial use of our finances,' said Fianoo. 'Since the club is spending company money we should follow the patterns about

how purchases are made.’ At government departmental clubs, the officials are accountable to the relevant local or regional authorities.

As said, those who run community-based clubs are obliged to report to the Council of Patrons, the Board of Directors and registered club members. The time and place to discuss all matters related to the running of the club is at the so-called Congress (sometimes known as the General Assembly). According to the Kotoko constitution, the club should hold a Congress in Kumasi at the end of the season. The Asantehene chooses the chairman of the Congress and opens the meeting. All stakeholders – patrons, directors, CEO, management members, old players, ladies, playing body, supporters – are cordially invited. Each registered member is entitled to submit a resolution. A resolution is adopted by majority vote through a secret ballot.

The Hearts constitution allows for a Congress to be held every four years. As the ‘highest decision-making body of the Club’, the Congress has ‘the power to take binding decisions on all matters affecting the Club’. At the Congress, amendments to the constitution can be made and officials can be (re-)elected. The Hearts constitution also gives the Board of Directors the power to hold a General Meeting at the end of each season. Moreover, the Board of Directors is, in consultation with the Council of Patrons, entitled to call for an Extraordinary Congress ‘to consider such matters as the Board may deem necessary’. As was the case at Kotoko, ‘questions’ submitted to the Congress are decided by a majority vote. In case of an amendment of the constitution, two-thirds of the votes are required.

Clubs elsewhere in Africa also organise Congresses. Those in charge of organising the gathering will rent a hall at a suitable location, for instance a church or a town hall, and fill the room with plastic chairs. Club officials and prominent people such as chiefs, elders, mayors, prefects and governors take a seat behind a long table from where they conduct the proceedings. Also present are representatives of the (regional) FA. It is custom for everyone to speak his/her mind. All decisions and donations are written down. It is worth adding that a Congress does not always commence peacefully. One coach remembered an incident during a Congress in Limbe (Cameroon) where one supporter group attacked a rival group with machetes.

A Congress fulfils two important functions. First, it is here where club officials are elected and where their actions come under scrutiny. A Membership Card allows a Hearts supporter to vote for or against officials. The situation at Kotoko is different in the sense that officials are summoned to the palace and questioned by the King (see chapter 7). Second, it is at the Congress where money is raised for the club’s budget. Everybody – taxi drivers, market salesmen, petty traders, businessmen, and so on – is urged to donate in order to ensure the

future welfare of the club. Ni John Fru Ndi, former president of PWD Bamenda, explained it as follows:

The purpose of the Congress is to present a budget for the next period. This is to raise money and see if we can recruit players, buy equipment, see how we can maintain the players, the team and the buses and all those things. You also give a stewardship account for a specific period. We spent this, we borrowed this. This player is ill so we spent so much on him.

A Congress normally fulfils both functions simultaneously, as happened in 2009 when the Cameroonian musician Petit Pays became president of Caiman Douala.²³⁵ In terms of raising funds, a Congress is sometimes organised to collect money for the upcoming league²³⁶ or as preparation for a crucial match or tournament.²³⁷

I have on occasion been told that the funds raised at a Congress are not sufficient to sustain the club for the whole season.²³⁸ Indeed, Big Men often complain about supporters contributing little to nothing. ‘Sometimes you come up with a budget (at the Congress) and the money is not forthcoming,’ said Fru Ndi. Also, registered Hearts and Kotoko supporters are, as said earlier, required to make monthly donations. However, it is claimed that many of them fail to pay their dues, which was confirmed by both Kwaku Anor and Edmund Palmer. Frank Nelson Nwokolo, a former management member of Hearts of Oak, expressed his frustrations thus:

Most supporters don’t really contribute to the club. Sometimes we ask them: “How can you say you are a supporter of Hearts of Oak when you don’t contribute financially?” The constitution recognises the people who contribute financially and then you can say you are a member. Some of those people are always making noise but they don’t have what it takes. When we go to Congress we look at who qualifies to be a member. Are you a Chapter Member, a National Member? If you’re not a member, you’re not entitled to be in the Congress. But at the end of the day they are sympathisers too.

It is evident that such problems arise due to poverty but poor management is also to blame. This became apparent when MTN, sponsor of Hearts of Oak, asked the club to provide a list of 100,000 supporters for promotional purposes. It is claimed that Hearts has a support base of four to five million fans. Yet an editorial piece in *Hearts News* indicated that the club found it difficult to fulfil MTN’s request.²³⁹

The fact that supporters tend not to make financial contributions on a regular basis does not mean that they do not contribute at all. On the contrary, there are numerous stories of supporters offering money to players after a match or of supporters making donations to the club in general. Also, one characteristic of community-based clubs is that their support base extends far beyond the home town. For instance, Chapter and Circle groups are found all over Ghana. The same applies to community-based clubs in Cameroon. Tiko United can count on supporter groups elsewhere, notably Douala and Yaoundé, for the simple reason

that many inhabitants of Tiko migrated to these cities. ‘Whenever we play a match in Yaoundé,’ club president Eteki Charles explained, ‘the supporters there take care of lodging, feeding and the like.’

This is a good moment to make a few observations in relation to club finances. We have seen the (non-)availability of economic capital at each club type. Generally speaking, clubs in Africa receive income from the following sources: League sponsorships, television and marketing rights, private company sponsorships (including jersey sponsoring), gate proceeds, membership fees, the Congress, selling club paraphernalia, selling players, prize money and in some cases also government sponsorships. From all indications it seems that this is not enough to sustain clubs (discussed in chapter 6). In fact, both Hearts and Kotoko reportedly amassed huge debts.²⁴⁰ One Nigerian journalist noted that the clubs in his country’s Premier League were also heavily indebted.²⁴¹

A few exceptions aside, clubs throughout Africa now find themselves in almost permanent financial crises, partly because they seem unable to generate economic capital by themselves. The situation seems to have gotten worse in recent years. As said earlier, interest in Africa’s leagues is waning which results in less gate proceeds. Another explanation is that clubs are having a hard time coping with increased expenditures. This was voiced by Herbert Mensah a few months after he became CEO of Asante Kotoko in 1999:

People should not forget that it takes money to rebuild and manage a great institution like Kotoko. Times have changed where players played for free and management only needed to manage the matches. Planning did not include the development of training facilities, medical support, gymnasiums, offices, internet development, newspaper, radio station, PR and Publicity management, fund raising, youth development programme, reorganisation of the basis for supporters and membership drive and the corporate image of the Club. Last year Kotoko owned nothing. (...) We must be looking forward to the point where the Kotoko family generates its own funds through internal inertia.²⁴²

This void, however, is commonly filled by Big Men.

Wanted: A Big Man

It would be far from inconceivable to read the following advertisement in a newspaper in Ghana, Cameroon or, for that matter, anywhere else in Africa:

Looking for a club president. Requirements: (1) a huge bank account and a willingness to part with it, (2) a vast experience in terms of leadership and management skills, (3) a spirited attitude and in possession of an elephant’s skin (to ward off verbal and physical abuse), (4) an undying love for our club, (5) a significant network and connections in high society, and (6) a relentless determination in bringing fame and fortune to our beloved club.

From this hypothetical ad we can deduct that clubs are looking for Big Men who “love” the club. First of all, a Big Man has to have the club “in his heart” or,

Photo 3.2 Through a public signpost in a Kumasi suburb, members of Asante Kotoko's Circle group 98 are reminded of a six o'clock meeting on a Thursday



more precisely, he needs to convince the supporters that this is the case. One might argue that the community will only hand over the proverbial key to the club's executive room if there is sufficient trust or faith in a Big Man's drive to steer the club towards success. In this respect, Big Men who were born in the club's home area are more likely to get elected than those who were born elsewhere (see chapter 4).

One could get the impression that Big Men only get involved in football to convert capital. However, I have come to learn that in many cases a Big Man's love for the game is real. It appears that most Big Men, at least the ones who run clubs, genuinely want to be part of football for football's sake. Big Men such as Harry Zakkour, Jamil Maraby, Ni John Fru Ndi, Eteki Charles Dikonge and Yong Francis all stated that football was 'in their blood'. Indeed, it is difficult to fake this love if one realises that the Big Men mentioned above have all shown an interest in football from a very early age. It would in any case be unwise for anyone to admit that he got involved only to get something out of it. This is equal to saying that he does not love the game which, in turn, would seriously undermine his credibility among the supporters.

We can also deduct from our hypothetical ad that Big Men should preferably have experience in football management. Indeed, one characteristic of a typical Big Man is that he occupies various positions throughout his football career. Harry Zakkour, for example, already gained experience as director of Accra Great Olympics before making the switch to Hearts of Oak. Jamil Maraby already owned a lower league club by the time he reached the age of twenty. Eteki Charles had years of experience as management member of PWD Bamenda before he took up the presidency of Tiko United. In fact, it seems to be difficult to convert capital through football in a short period of time. It may take many years before a Big Man is able to reap the benefits of his involvement in the game.

A third deduction is that a Big Man needs to own capital to begin with. Recalling that clubs in Africa are generally unable to financially sustain themselves, it can be stated that the most important form of capital in this respect is economic capital. Indeed, a position within a club's management depends on a Big Man's ability to redistribute his wealth. 'You have to spend your money to become a management member of the club,' said Hearts of Oak's former management member, Frank Nelson Nwokolo. 'It's my money!' said Ben Nab Eyison, CEO of Hasaacas. 'The club doesn't have any money so I have to spend my own.' 'Most of the money I spent was out of my own pocket,' remembered Ni John Fru Ndi with regard to his time as president of PWD Bamenda. One of Fru Ndi's successors, Augustine Iche Ozoemena, said:

The money comes from my own pocket, yes! It goes so far that my wife and I sometimes do not greet each other in the morning. She doesn't want me to be part of the club. You pay for the team while you cannot afford your children's school fees. I remember the previous president whose wife publicly stated that nobody should come near her husband. She asked whom he married: PWD or his wife? So he abandoned the club.

The businessman is the football Big Man *par excellence*. Indeed, no less than 12 out of 16 clubs in Ghana's 2008/09 Premier League season were run by businessmen.²⁴³ There are broadly speaking two types of businessmen active in club management. A common type is the self-made businessman. Former Hearts CEO Harry Zakkour owns a restaurant and a bar/night club in Accra; former Kotoko CEO Herbert Mensah made his money in the mobile phone business, among other sectors; and Yong Francis, founder of Yong Sports Academy, owns four public schools in the Bamenda area. The list is endless. The self-made businessman commonly founds a private club or becomes a management member of a community-based club. This is true as well of famous footballers, many of whom became businessmen after retiring from playing football.

Another type of businessman is the general manager of a private or state-owned corporation. He does not necessarily own economic capital of his own (although in most cases he does) but uses company funds to finance a club. Such

businessmen commonly run company clubs. One example is the aforementioned Dr. Sam Jonah who used the funds of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation to finance the company club. A well-known example from Cameroon is Iya Mohamed who founded Coton Sport Garoua during his tenure as general manager of SODECOTON. Yet another example is Jean-Baptiste Nguini-Effa who founded his private club Renaissance Ngoumou when he was still general director of the *Société Camerounaise des Dépôts Pétroliers* (SCDP). Here too, the list is quite extensive.

In terms of economic capital, there is a difference between those who offer products/services and those who earn money by siphoning percentages off other people's work. The latter are, in the words of Daloz, not real owners of capital.²⁴⁴ An example in this respect is the politician or top bureaucrat who tends to use his position to acquire land, percentages of business contracts and/or other perks through which to increase his wealth. This is where we find other types of Big Men in football, namely the politician, the military leader, the traditional ruler, the regional civil servant, and so forth. For all types of Big Men, it can be stated that the origins of their wealth are not always exactly clear. This certainly applies to another type of Big Man, namely the one who is involved in the trade of illegal substances.²⁴⁵

At this point, we can finally answer the question who the real boss of a club is. The one who exerts most power within a club typically is the one who redistributes most economic capital. Many informants in Ghana uttered the phrase "he who pays the piper plays the tunes", meaning that the one who provides the money makes the decisions. There are nevertheless management members who do not contribute financially. One example is Vincent Sowah Odotei, a former CEO of Hearts of Oak and King Faisal. Another example is the aforementioned Kojo Fianoo, who receives a salary for being the CEO of AshantiGold FC. In fact, Fianoo is generally credited as Ghana's only CEO who is employed on a full-time basis. However, we will see that those who do not spend their own money are looked upon with scepticism (chapter 7).

Economic capital may be the defining quality of a Big Man aspiring a position in club management, it certainly is not the only form of capital that may open doors. After all, wealth is not always of a material kind. Social and symbolic capital sometimes do the trick. From Cameroon comes the notable example of the aforementioned (former) president of Caiman Douala. A larger than life personality in his country, the musician Petit Pays evidently is in possession of social and symbolic capital. It is said that he used his social network to persuade members of the Douala elite to invest in the club. Of course, famous former footballers also possess social and symbolic capital. On their part, politicians

maintain social connections in the political arena. As we will see in chapter 5, clubs generally welcome such capital with open arms.

I have argued that Big Men get crucial positions in club management only if they bring in capital to the benefit of the club. This applies to all club types: Those running community-based, company and government departmental clubs as well as one-man shows all finance their respective clubs, albeit from different sources. It is now time to present a few cases from my fieldwork. The question is: How does a Big Man become club president, chairman, CEO or director? Based on these cases it can be stated that Big Men (1) announce their candidacy for a position after which they succeed or fail to be elected at a Congress or (2) receive an invitation to fill a position after which the voting procedure at the Congress is ceremonial in kind. In the latter instance, a Big Man is practically begged to take up a position.

Ben Nab Eyison is a wealthy businessman who acted as CEO of community-based club Sekondi Hasaacas for more than two decades. 'I became a part of the club because of E.A. Nartey, who was in the timber business,' Eyison said. 'He had one of the best factories in West Africa. Nartey was first involved in Hearts of Oak before moving to Sekondi-Takoradi. He ran Hasaacas for ten years between 1974 and 1984. Mr. Nartey's son was a mate of mine.' In those days Eyison was still a young man. 'From Monday to Friday I was womanising,' he explained. 'So one day Mr. Nartey called us and said: "Young men, you are wasting your time and energy. I want you to be management cadets." Everybody thought that he wanted to give the club to his son but that wasn't it. We were sitting in on meetings and learning about managing the club.'

A problem between chairman Nartey and his vice led both of them to leave the club in 1984. 'Myself and six others were approached by the Sekondihene (the paramount chief of the Sekondi area),' Eyison said. 'He wanted us to take over the club. So that's when I came in. We steered the club out of the relegation zone and we even won the FA Cup in 1985. That was around the time my first child was born. I also had some financial difficulties. I needed to take some time off so I left the club.' In the 1988/89 season, Hasaacas was involved in a huge bribery scandal (see chapter 8), resulting in the club's demotion to a lower division. Eyison told me that in 1993

the club was still in the Second Division. Some people came to my house and called me to the palace. The Sekondihene told me: "The supporters have confidence in you and they want you to help the club. Can you do it?" I asked them to give me a week to think about it. During that period everybody called me. There was pressure from all around. So I did it. It took us two years to get back to the First Division. We started playing in the Premier League in 1995/96 and never looked back.

Ni John Fru Ndi, founder of Cameroon's main opposition party, the Social Democratic Front (SDF), became president of PWD Bamenda in the late 1970s.

In those days, he was the well-known owner of the Ebibi Book Centre on Commercial Avenue. 'I was a businessman in town,' Fru Ndi explained. 'At first I was allowed to just quietly donate some money. I didn't have much interest in football, mostly because some of the things they did were against my Christian beliefs.' He was referring to juju. 'The team would visit a native doctor. I didn't believe in that fetish thing. I believed in training because that's how I did it in my business.' Many supporters, however, seemed convinced Fru Ndi should take up the presidency of PWD Bamenda:

I was sleeping in my house when people came over and knocked on the door. They said that they were looking for a new president but I told them to go and look for somebody else. But they said they didn't have confidence in the other candidates. Someone said: "Mr. Bibi is a strong supporter. We need to bring him on board." I said that if I were to go to the Congress and they would announce me as the new president, I wouldn't go. I told them that they could have my money but that I wanted to concentrate on my business instead. So they tricked me. They said: "The whole town is there and they want to see you. Just come along and see what happens." As soon as I got to the Congress Hall people started clapping. Somebody proposed me to be the new president and everybody was clapping. That was the end of it. I was so confused that I didn't know what was happening. When they called me to say my first words as president, I couldn't even remember the name of the team that I had to run.

PWD Bamenda belonged to the Public Works Department. While the Provincial Delegate was in charge of the club, in reality he did not contribute much. The club could more or less be regarded as a community-based club which meant that businessmen were needed to become sponsors. Fru Ndi alleged that the population tricked him: 'As soon as I got in, the other businessmen stepped out. Off they went. I told the supporters that I had a business to run. I had to visit warehouses and bookshops in Douala, Yaoundé, even Nigeria.' Although Fru Ndi does not remember how long he ran the club – some say a decade, others say a few years – he was eventually voted out office. 'The supporters wanted someone else,' he said. 'They thought that I was blocking access to the team for those native men. By that time I had contributed a lot and my business was going down. Somebody came in and took over.'

Both Eyison and Fru Ndi were asked by the population and/or traditional rulers to become club president. The same is true for Eteki Charles Dikonge, who became president of Tiko United (Cameroon) in 2000. 'I used to be involved in PWD Bamenda in the 1990s,' he said, 'because I was working for the Public Works Department. Then I moved to the Southwest Region to become the Provincial Delegate of Public Works.' He explained how he became president:

A delegation of the club met me at my house in Limbe and pleaded with me to become the new president. At first I refused. I had too much work to do and becoming president would take too much time. But then everybody pleaded and begged me. Eventually I had to agree. I'm originally from the Tiko area and I had to do something for my community. There was a Congress and they made me the new president.

‘Tiko United is a community team but Tiko is only a small town without companies,’ said David Obenge, the club’s former secretary. ‘So we needed a sponsor to take the team to the Elite One league. Mr. Eteki was the only one available. He’s a son of the soil and he had experience in football management. He also has the financial means. When we presented him at the Congress, nobody objected to his appointment.’

Those wishing to become part of the Asante Kotoko’s management team need to wait for the Asantehene to ask them. From behind his desk at the University of Legon, lecturer Kwame Baah-Nuako explained how he became Director of Communications in 2006. ‘I met the Asantehene at Harvard University where I was doing my PhD research,’ he said. ‘We had a chat and he asked me to join the management of the club. I went back to Ghana and a few months later he formed a new management.’ The management team consisted of five people. ‘Otumfuo put me in charge of communication through newspapers, radio, television and website,’ Baah-Nuako said. ‘Everybody knows me as a talk show host so that’s how I got that role.’

A position within Kotoko’s management team is a big deal. ‘When Otumfuo asks you to become part of the club, you cannot refuse,’ Baah-Nuako said. ‘You have to do what he says.’ ‘Everybody wants to be a management member of Kotoko,’ said Kwame Owusu Donkor, a former Circle group leader. ‘Nobody sends his resume, they just go to the palace and present themselves. If Otumfuo chooses you to run his club, it’s an honour. That’s why people get involved and they don’t earn a salary for being a management member. It’s enough for them that they were personally asked by the Asantehene.’ Baah-Nuako and the other management members were presented to the public at Manhyia Palace. The privilege of being installed during such a ceremony will make the loudest Ashanti proud beyond belief.

When it comes to selecting club officials, arch rival Hearts of Oak is prone to follow democratic procedures. Former management committee member Frank Nelson Nwokolo can testify to that. ‘I’ve been in management for years,’ he told me in 2009. ‘I’ve handled the youth department before and even now I’m responsible for youth development.’ How did the businessman, specialised in construction projects, get to become a high-profile Hearts official? ‘You start out as a member of the club,’ he explained. ‘I belong to a Chapter and I am a National Member. You have to invest your time, your energy and certainly also your money. Sometimes when the club is in a difficult position you have to rise to the occasion.’

Frank Nelson announced his candidacy for the position of CEO in 2007. Who selects the CEO and the members of a management committee, in this case an IMC? ‘The patrons decide together,’ he explained. ‘They have a meeting with the

Board of Directors. Fortunately I was already a Board member.’ Nelson then explained the criteria on which the patrons and the directors base their decisions:

First of all, they look at your background in terms of club support. How have you been with the club? You have to come from a Chapter. Your Chapter will nominate you based on the information they have of you: your history, your experience, your know-how, your financial strength. The patrons may think that if you are put in a certain position you may be able to direct the club to success. The patrons can choose you on so many grounds. You are a very reliable person, you are a respectful person, you are a very experienced person. That’s how you can be appointment as a management member.

In 2008, Hearts formed a new IMC consisting of three Big Men, including Nelson. ‘I run the administrative side of management,’ he said. ‘The other two guys handle the operational side. I deal directly with the secretarial staff. I go to the training ground, I talk to the team manager and then I inform my colleagues about what’s happening. We also have meetings with the supporters.’ In 2010, a new CEO was presented to the public, thereby relieving Nelson and the other IMC members of duty.

The instalment of an IMC clearly sidesteps the voting powers of the supporters. After all, Nelson and his two colleagues were chosen by the patrons and the members of the Board of Directors, not by supporters at a Congress. However, fourteen members of the same Board of Directors were, in fact, voted into office by supporters at a Congress in 2005. One of them, Alhaji Fawaz Zowk, told me that he had the backing of a significant number of supporters. ‘I’ve been with the club for more than 20 years,’ he said. ‘I became the welfare officer of Hearts back in the 1970s and worked my way up to become a member of the Board. You have to support the club in good times and bad times. I would die for Hearts.’

A different way of becoming president or CEO of a community-based club is by effectively taking over the club altogether. Jamil Maraby, managing director of several interconnected companies, among which Avanti Solutions and Global Media Alliance, formally requested the paramount chief of Sekondi to take over Eleven Wise in 2007. ‘The club was owned by nobody,’ he explained. ‘Because nobody owns the team, it is the law of the town that controls it. The chief is the highest authority in town which makes him the custodian.’ Nana Kwabena Nketia V, the Omanhene of Esikado area, granted Maraby and his associates an audience at the palace:

We came with a proposal to take over the club. He read it and then called for the other six chiefs in the area. They announced a Congress and told the public that they should come if they wanted to have information about the take-over. We went there and there were about 500 to 600 people. They asked us what we wanted to do with the club. They all voted in favour. We signed the agreement and the Omanhene, the other chiefs and the Queen Mother also signed. We took the agreement and registered the club as a company. It was an association before but now it’s a company.

Maraby explained that the chiefs allowed him to take over the club because the team had been lingering on in Ghana's lower division for years. 'The club was nowhere. There was no money. Everybody was happy that somebody came to rescue the club.'

Maraby's company bought 70 percent of the club's shares, the other 30 percent remained in the hands of the chief. Maraby, who made himself the club's CEO, explained that he had two main reasons for purchasing Eleven Wise. 'First, Eleven Wise is Ghana's fourth club in terms of support. Since we want to run the club like a business, it's important to have a lot of supporters. Second, we knew that they were building a new stadium in Sekondi for the Nations Cup. So we figured that by the time we entered the Premier League we would be playing our home matches in a modern stadium.' I asked him why he did not take over Ebusua Mysterious Dwarfs, a club whose support base probably surpasses that of Eleven Wise. 'We actually tried to take over Dwarfs,' Maraby laughed, 'but their chief asked for too much money.'

The question is why Maraby, who indeed managed to get the team into the Premier League, would want to take control of a club in the first place. 'I just love football,' he said, echoing the words of so many Big Men. 'I wanted to be a footballer but there was no money in football in those days. My father told me to finish school. But it's in my blood. I owned my own team when I was 19 years old. Before I took over Eleven Wise I owned two Second Division clubs in Accra.' But why Eleven Wise? 'The problem with lower league teams is that there is no support so you cannot really do anything with them,' Maraby said. 'But when you have a communal team you can build things around it. We want to make Eleven Wise part of our corporate business.'

The take-over of Sekondi Eleven Wise is typical of modern football management (see chapter 6). Community-based clubs now want Big Men to come in and buy shares. I myself discovered that any beneficiary will do. Kumasi Cornerstones was once one of Ghana's top clubs but now struggles in a lower league. During a visit to the club's patron's house, he and the CEO made it abundantly clear that I was invited to place a bid and help the club get back on its feet. 'You can run the club if you like,' said the club's CEO, R.K. Morrison. 'I will make way for you to take over the club when you bring in the money. But you have to prove your love for the club to the supporters.'

How Big Men become FA officials

Let us now briefly reflect on the way Big Men get to become football administrators, FA officials in particular. I have to emphasise that the distinction between club and FA officials is both real and false. It is real because, of course, Big Men who become club officials deal with matters related to clubs and Big

Men who become FA officials perform tasks that relate to their positions within the FA. In a sense, FA officials are superior to club officials, and the latter often express anger and resentment about the way the former tend to run the game. However, the distinction is also false because club officials and FA officials are more often than not the same people. Put differently, club officials commonly take up positions within the FA and/or within FA committees.

This has not always been the case. Traditionally, FA officials were appointed by government officials. To be more precise, FA officials usually *were* government officials. These days FIFA does not like to see governments interfering in football-related affairs. 'Governments needed to retract from football since the late 1990s,' said Joe Aggrey, the former Ghanaian Deputy Minister of Sports. 'In Ghana these changes came only in 2006. Before that, the government always appointed the chairman of the FA. Now we vote for the chairman because that's how FIFA demands it.' The Ghanaians I spoke to referred to this principle as "football being run by football people". Most governments in Africa nevertheless still exert some level of control, not in the least because the president selects the Minister of Sports. There are also National Sports Councils whose chairmen are government-appointed.

Nowadays, Big Men who want to become FA president need to register as a candidate to stand for election at a Congress. This process is similar to the way the FIFA president is chosen or the way Big Men are elected to run community-based clubs in Africa. Let me explain how it works by taking Ghana as an example. As stated in its Statutes, the Congress is the 'supreme and legislative organ' of the Ghana Football Association (GFA).²⁴⁶ There are two types of GFA Congresses. First, the ordinary Congress is held every year during which regular matters, such as audited accounts, are discussed. Second, the Extraordinary Congress is held at the request of a fixed number of members and deals with specific, often urgent, topics. A GFA Congress is attended by the FA president and 123 delegates, 80 of whom are club officials. Elections are conducted through a secret ballot.

Anyone aspiring to become FA president must be 'bona fide representatives of members of the Association and must not be less than 18 years and not above 70 years'.²⁴⁷ In order to stand as a candidate, he (or she) needs an endorsement of one Congress member, followed by ten other members. The 123 delegates, excluding the president, cast their votes and whoever receives a 'simple majority (half of the votes plus one) of valid votes recorded' is the new president. 'If no candidate obtains a simple majority in the first ballot, the candidate(s) with the lowest number of votes shall be eliminated from the next ballot. This process shall continue until one candidate obtains a simple majority.'²⁴⁸ Big Men can also try to become a member of the GFA Executive Committee, which is comprised

of the FA president, 20 elected representatives of clubs and regional FAs combined, and one representative of schools, colleges and universities each. The GFA president normally stays in power for a four-year term.

In 2005, Kwesi Nyantakyi beat four other candidates during the GFA presidential elections by claiming 91 votes. In 2011, he was re-elected unopposed which means he will run football in Ghana until 2015. In Cameroon too, the FECAFOOT president has been one and the same person for quite some time. Iya Mohamed was elected president in April 2000, beating his rivals by picking up 134 (out of 148) votes during an Extraordinary General Assembly. He was re-elected in 2005 and again in 2009. FECAFOOT's Executive Committee is comprised of 33 members, most of whom are drawn from the ranks of the ten regional FAs. In 2009, Iya Mohamed and his Executive Committee assigned 168 officials to supervise 24 committees and league boards.²⁴⁹ However, as we shall see later on (in chapter 7), many FAs suffer from power struggles which have caused presidents to enjoy their positions only for a short while.

Many Big Men who are part of football administration take up positions in league boards and committees. Football in Ghana is run by a few dozen of such bodies whose 150+ members are selected by the Executive Committee every four years. Several committees are charged with running the national teams, for instance the Black Stars Management Committee, the Black Meteors Management Committee and the Black Princesses Management Committee. Other committees deal with specific tasks, for instance the International Relations Committee, the Marketing and Sponsorship Committee and the Legal Committee. Well-known club presidents such as Sly Tetteh, Emmanuel Kyeremeh and Alhaji Karim Grunsaah all took up positions within these committees in 2011.²⁵⁰

League boards, such as the Premier League Board (PLB) and Division One League Board (DOL), are slightly different in the sense that its presidents and members are said to operate semi-independently of the GFA. In Ghana, the clubs also have their own body called the Ghana League Clubs Association (GHALCA). 'We hold elections every four years,' chairman Emmanuel Adotey told me in 2009. 'A chairman and six executive members do the day-to-day running of the body.' Finally, there is a relatively powerful body called the Sports Writers Association of Ghana (SWAG) whose members organise seminars, ceremonies, tournaments and other activities.

To summarise this chapter, we have seen how different club types own different forms of capital in different quantities. On one end of the spectrum is the community-based club, richly endowed with symbolic, social and (in theory) economic capital. On the other end lies the one-man show, relatively rich in economic capital but not so much in symbolic and social capital. Big Men wishing to convert capital thus typically become attached to community-based

clubs. However, the Big Men at community-based clubs share power with others while those at one-man shows make decisions by themselves. Finally, a Big Man who becomes FA president controls the forms of capital. Let us now focus in more detail on the different forms of capital in football. Starting with symbolic capital, it is time to say something about identity and the notion of the Other.

Honour, prestige and the other

It is quiet around the Municipal Stadium, an area full of repair shops, boutiques, beauty salons, phone booths, bars and small restaurants. 'This place would be filled with supporters by now,' former PWD Bamenda striker Nji Sunday says. 'Back in the 1970s and 80s the whole town would come to the field on match days. Those were the glory days. I remember playing my first match. I scored three goals. Afterwards supporters were putting money in my pocket.'

The streets in Bamenda's city centre are dirty and dusty. The stadium is in a rather sorry state. Goats graze inside the stadium's brick walls. Toilets are absent; supporters relieve themselves behind the grandstand. In 2009, when Yong Sports Academy (YOSA) promoted to the Elite One league, FECAFOOT ordered the stadium to be upgraded. Owner Yong Francis paid a contractor 15 million CFA francs (€2,800) but no work was done. Eventually a fence was put up to prevent supporters from entering the field.

YOSA will play Canon Yaoundé at four P.M. today. One mechanic waves away the request to come and watch the match. 'I only support PWD,' he says. The PWD supporters' regular hangout is deserted. 'No business here today,' says bartender Alhaji. 'When PWD is alive there is life in Bamenda,' PWD supporter Cleopas explains. 'The political atmosphere in town changes. When a politician calls for a strike on a match day, he's wasting his time. Even business is fine when PWD is in the top league.' Unfortunately, PWD Bamenda does not play in the Elite One league.

This is YOSA's first season in the top league. Up to a thousand spectators find a spot on the side of the field. Yong Francis is shaking hands near the grandstand. Canon's president arrives just in time for kick-off. After 90 minutes of play, radio journalists report to their listeners that the match ended in a 1-1 draw. 'I don't know why people still support PWD. The team's in the Third Division, it's gone,' says YOSA's secretary Semma Valentine. 'Our president organised two

Congresses but nobody showed up. If people in Bamenda want to see football it's better to come and support us.'

Football and identity

Why do the inhabitants of Bamenda identify with PWD and not with YOSA? This is not an easy question to answer. First of all, both clubs are not community-based clubs in the true sense of the word. PWD Bamenda became a community-based club only when the Public Works Department withdrew from the team. In a way, it is still a club for "strangers". 'PWD is mostly supported by migrants from surrounding villages such as Wum, Bali, Menchum,' said one supporter. In fact, Bamenda's true community-based club is another team altogether, namely Mankon United, located in an area presided over by a traditional ruler named Fon Angwafor III. 'Mankon United is more than 40 years old,' said supporter Cleopas. 'But the fon doesn't support the team. He said that he will contribute as soon as the team is successful.'

One explanation for PWD Bamenda's popularity is its link to politics (further discussed in chapter 5). This link to politics, in turn, is related to the fact that PWD Bamenda is based in Cameroon's foremost stronghold of opposition to president Paul Biya. Indeed, the identification with and popularity of a club can partly be explained by examining its home ground. The significance of location is evident in the sense that clubs are always based in a neighbourhood, village, town, city and/or region. Club names commonly include the names of home grounds.²⁵¹ Examples from Cameroon are Sable Batie, Fovu Baham, Union Douala, Coton Sport Garoua, Ocean Kribi and PWD Kumba. A similar observation can naturally be made of national teams.

Identification based on a team's home ground only partly explains the issue at hand. Popular clubs such as Yanga, Al-Ahly and Hearts of Oak supersede geographical boundaries in the sense that their supporters can be found all over the continent. In Cameroon, Tiko United receives financial assistance from as far away as Ireland. 'The Diaspora is an important source of revenue,' said the club's former secretary, David Obenge. In fact, his identical twin-brother is said to be among the Tiko supporters who live in Ireland. 'There are a few well-to-do supporters who contribute to the welfare of Tiko United,' said the Cameroonian spiritual adviser (witchdoctor) Zé, who coached several teams in Ghana, Cameroon and Nigeria. 'They live in Europe but they still follow the club very closely. They all want to see their team win.'

We need to look beyond location to determine why people identify with clubs. Ethnicity, class, occupation, religion, "race" and other factors also play a role. Phyllis M. Martin provides a description of the different forms of identification with regard to clubs in urban colonial Congo-Brazzaville:

Football teams reflected and shaped emerging identities in the city, where class, occupational, ethnic and religious loyalties coexisted, just as clubs world-wide have expressed the variety of social distinctions that exist among urban populations. Some examples of Brazzaville teams illustrate this point: *Olympique* and *Diables Noirs* (Baongo) and *Renaissance*, *L'Etoile* and *Lorraine* (Poto-Poto), (city neighbourhoods); *ASM* and *Patronage* (religious affiliation); *Diables Noirs*, the Lari team (ethnicity); *Cheminots* (railway workers), *Gendarmerie*, and *Police* (occupations); *CAB* (race and class); *Ecole de Cadets* and *Ecole Generale de Clercs* (future administrative and military elites).²⁵²

These forms of identification are evidently linked to the different types of clubs as explained in the previous chapter. Support for AshantiGold FC, for example, is partly related to working in the mines in Obuasi.

Mauritius is a case in point. As with South Africa under apartheid, Mauritian clubs also mirrored a multi-ethnic and -religious society, consisting of Creoles, Franco-Mauritians, Chinese, Hindu, Tamil, Muslims and '*gens de couleur*'. As Edensor and Koodoruth argue, 'Fire Brigade represented the Creole community, and Tamil Cadets, Muslim Scouts and Hindu Cadets were clear in their allegiance to communal groupings. There were also Chinese (the Dragons) and 'Coloured' (Racing club) clubs'. As happened elsewhere, there were attempts to de-communalise the leagues, but ethnicity and religion still play a role. Violence is common and 'communal identity' is reinforced by 'the parading of particular clothing and banners, and the rituals of fans including ethnically based songs and chants against opposing teams and their supporters'.²⁵³

Many clubs in Africa have over the years become social institutions. Tanzania's Yanga and Sunderland (later Simba) served as *chama* (social clubs) that were used as 'a gathering place for friends'. 'They spent evenings at the clubhouse talking over coffee or playing table games, irrespective of their ethnicity or class,' writes Tsuruta.²⁵⁴ Club members would also assist each other in finding job and houses; and funds were raised to pay for a member's funeral. This sort of 'burial society' was common within Orlando Pirates as well. The Soweto-based club served as a 'social institution that instilled civic pride and forged community bonds'. 'Many residents of Orlando supported Pirates because they believed that football was a means to develop self-respect and civic-mindedness among the youth – a healthy alternative to joining the *tsotsis* (urban toughs, street criminals) in township streets,' Alegi argues.²⁵⁵ Clubs thus provide an important sense of belonging.

The most common form of identification with clubs in Africa is based on ethnic allegiance. This is especially true in the case of community-based clubs. Much has been written on the proliferation of ethnicity – or its more popular term, tribalism – on the continent. Cohen, in studying Hausa traders in Nigeria, defines ethnicity as a political phenomenon. Ethnic groups are 'an informal interest group whose members are distinct from the members of other groups within the same society in that they share a measure of (...) compulsory

institutions like kinship and religion and can communicate among themselves easily'.²⁵⁶ According to Bayart, ethnic groups are by and large 'the products of the colonial period':

Far from the problematic intangibility of tradition, ethnic consciousness reveals social change, of which it is a matrix. It cannot be divorced from the changes of this century: Urbanisation, the construction of a new communication network, the introduction of new relationships of production, and the increase in migratory and commercial movements. If this extreme diachronic flexibility of ethnic identities were recognised historically, one would see that pre-colonial black Africa was not, strictly speaking, made up of a mosaic of ethnic groups.²⁵⁷

This certainly applies to the Beti and Bamileke in Cameroon, ethnic groups that can easily be divided in separate sub-groups.

National teams evoke a sense of nationalism. Benedict Anderson defines the nation as an imaged community 'because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'.²⁵⁸ In respect to football, Hobsbawm states that 'the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people. The individual, even the one who only cheers, becomes a symbol of his nation himself.'²⁵⁹ This imagery is most visible during international tournaments where nations are pitted against one another. National team players act as ambassadors. When the Cameroonian player Marc-Vivien Foé died during the 2003 Confederations Cup, he was honoured with a state burial.

Calls for nationalism and patriotism pop up during tournaments. Ghana, host of the 2008 African Cup of Nations, adhered to the motto "Host and Win" and urged all inhabitants to pray for the Black Stars. When Ghana had won its first two matches, president John Kufuor told the players at their hotel: 'I am here to inform you that the whole nation stands behind you (...). Ghana is aching for victory.'²⁶⁰ When Ghana made it to the semi-finals, the president stated that the 'continuous victory of the Black Stars has invigorated the spirit of the nation, particularly the unparalleled display of patriotism, the great show of sportsmanship and the "can do it attitude" which is necessary for the continued success of the country'.²⁶¹ The host failed to win the tournament, but Ghanaians were proud that they had staged a major football event.

Identity, however, is a tricky concept. For one thing, one's identity is fluid and flexible and has the capacity to change over time. This also applies to the world of sports. As MacClancy argues, sport 'may not be just a marker of one's already established social identity but a means by which to create a new social identity by oneself as well'.²⁶² Also, sport-based identities are not exclusive as 'people may have multiple identities either simultaneously, seasonally or consecutively'.²⁶³ Football identities are part of a dynamic process, and Africans regularly

switch allegiance. It is common to see Africans support Africa's last remaining national team at the World Cup. Similarly, when Coton Sport Garoua reached the 2008 CAF Champions League final, it instantly represented the whole of Cameroon.

This dynamic character is also visible in the fact that many Africans support European teams. Farred, for example, describes the 'long-distance love' between a South African fan and Liverpool.²⁶⁴ Part of the reason for supporting Arsenal by people in Bugamba (Uganda) was that many African players ply their trade in England.²⁶⁵ Another reason, A.O. Omobowale argues, is that Africans – in this case Nigerians – see European clubs as more professional, and their style of play as more entertaining.²⁶⁶ This identification with clubs in faraway places should not be taken lightly. A Manchester United fan drove his bus into a crowd of Barcelona supporters, who were celebrating their team's victory over Manchester United in the 2009 UEFA Champions League final. Four fans died. Driver and victims were all Nigerians.

It is often claimed that sports serve as a unifying factor. Football, for example, is said to, albeit temporarily, unify the divided peoples of Africa's nations. We have seen the example of Ivory Coast's national team (chapter 2). Similarly, Cameroon's approximately 250 ethnic groups all root for the Indomitable Lions. However, ethnic sentiments never cease to play a role in relation to Cameroon's national team. If football brings people together (which it does) it also sets them apart. Armstrong and Giulianotti argue that

beneath the unity of the national side, the cultural politics of identity difference are often contested. In which city should the national team play? What club background should the national team coach have? Which club players should be selected? These kinds of questions and their ensuing public debates capture the processes by which religious, ethnic and regional groups typically struggle for symbolic hegemony over the nation's representation through football.²⁶⁷

Elsewhere, Armstrong and Giulianotti argue that football is inherently a story of 'rivalry and opposition'.²⁶⁸ In other words, the game is essentially about binary oppositions: Us versus them, the Self versus the Other.

The importance of the Other is exemplified in the fact that clubs are on occasion founded in response to the existence of other clubs. Canon Yaoundé, for example, was once set up to accommodate a match between a team from Douala and one from Yaoundé.²⁶⁹ Sometimes teams merge in order to create one strong team that is able to meaningfully compete against a mighty adversary. This happened in colonial Congo-Brazzaville with the formation of a club by the name of Diabes Noirs. The teams in the Bacongo area were no match for those in the Poto-Poto area, particularly a club by the name of Renaissance. This brought the leaders of the Bacongo teams to form a new team which would be able to beat the Poto-Poto rivals. Diabes Noirs entered the Brazzaville cham-

pionship in 1950 and was undefeated between 1952-54. One reporter remarked that the players had a sacred mission to perform, which was to beat the Poto-Poto teams.²⁷⁰

Jeffrey provides us with the example of clubs in Sharpeville, South Africa. At one point, a club named Corrugated Fast XI was unable to gain promotion. Players, administrators and supporters in Sharpeville came together and formed a team that would be powerful enough to beat the Soweto Big Four: Orlando Pirates, Moroka Swallows, Moroka Big XV and, later on, Kaizer Chiefs. The new team, Transvaal Professionals, was run by other Sharpeville teams and featured other teams' players as well. 'The Vaal Professionals was a new creation, a special creation,' said football administrator George Thabe. 'There was universal support from the whole township because it did not come from a certain area. It commanded support because it was considered to be strongly the Vaal team.'²⁷¹ Transvaal Professionals brought a sense of pride to Sharpeville as the team was finally able to match its rivals.

The notion of the Other is most visible in intra-city, inter-regional and international rivalries. Traditionally, the strongest rivalries exist between teams from the same city, commonly called the true derby. Some of Africa's most anticipated derbies are the encounters between Al-Ahly and Zamalek (Cairo, Egypt), Al-Hilal and Al-Merreikh (Omdurman, Sudan), Wydad and Raja (Casablanca, Morocco), Yanga and Simba (Dar es Salaam, Tanzania), Gor Mahia and AFC Léopards (Nairobi, Kenya), Africa Sports and ASEC Mimomas (Abidjan, Ivory Coast), Canon and Tonnerre (Yaoundé, Cameroon) and Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs (Johannesburg, South Africa). Inter-city or -regional rivalries include Hearts of Oak vs Asante Kotoko (Accra vs Kumasi, Ghana) and Highlanders vs Dynamos (Bulawayo vs Harare, Zimbabwe).

Giulianotti observes that derby matches are the 'definitive moment in the football season for opposing supporters, if not the most important dates in their emotional calendars'.²⁷² Rivalries thrive on what Ossie Stuart calls the 'against factor', meaning that supporters of one team rejoice at the prospect of their rival being kicked out of competitions.²⁷³ It often goes further than this. Harry Zakkour, former CEO of Hearts of Oak, said that Hearts supporters sometimes 'prefer that Hearts doesn't lose to Kotoko above winning the league title'. In some cases the encounter is such an anticipated event that the country is split in two. With regard to the 1970s, one journalist observed that Tanzanians often identified one another through team allegiance. A typical question was: 'Are you Simba or Yanga?'²⁷⁴

Rivalries are subject to change over time. Hearts of Oak initially considered Accra Standfast and Great Olympics its fiercest rivals before Asante Kotoko took over that role. Similarly, a match between Asante Kotoko and Kumasi Corner-

stones has for long been seen as ‘a battle between two nations’.²⁷⁵ This true derby was a struggle for dominance between the Ashanti and the Fanti in Kumasi. When Cornerstones fell into disarray and relegated, the derby lost its meaning. This also applies to Canon and Tonnerre Yaoundé when the latter relegated to a lower division.²⁷⁶ Tonnerre’s downfall robbed Canon of its fiercest rival in Cameroon, which also happened on a slightly more modest scale when Racing Bafoussam relegated a few years earlier.

Rivalries tend to depend on the idea that both teams are approximately of equal strength. Matches between Hearts and Kotoko are said to be tough at all times, no matter their positions on the league table. In fact, a difference in strength between rivals takes away the excitement. Although the Cairo derby between Al-Ahly and Zamalek is arguably still Africa’s toughest derby, Al-Ahly has become ever more powerful, both in and outside Egypt. When journalist Bloomfield joined a Zamalek supporter to see the derby, the latter did not express too much enthusiasm. ‘We’re going to lose,’ he said. Many Zamalek supporters did not show up and large banners were arranged to obscure the empty seats from view.²⁷⁷

Rivalries and the notion of the Other also exist at an international level. Neighbours Cameroon and Nigeria are traditional enemies. So are Ghana and Nigeria. Prior to the quarter final match between the Black Stars and the Super Eagles at the 2008 African Cup of Nations, the media in Ghana re-lived the history and antagonistic feelings between the two nations. A thorn in the Ghanaians’ eyes was the fact that the Black Stars had not beaten Nigeria in fifteen years. The Ghanaian players were thus urged to break the jinx. When they finally did, a massive folk fest broke out.

Arguably Africa’s biggest rivalry is the one between Egypt and Algeria. In 2009 the Pharaohs and the Desert Foxes played several World Cup qualifiers against each other to determine which team would go to South Africa. Prior to the encounter in Egypt, Algeria’s team bus was attacked and several players were injured. As a consequence, Egyptians living in Algeria were molested. The authorities decided to stage the decisive match on neutral territory, namely Sudan. Thousands of armed policemen were called up to contain supporters on both sides. Algeria prevailed and went to South Africa, which led to more violence between Egyptians and Algerians.

Histories, traditions and rituals

It can be argued that the level of identification with a club or national team determines its symbolic capital. Put simply, the stronger people identify with a team, the stronger the team’s symbolic capital. After all, what do honour and prestige mean if nobody cares whether a team wins or loses? We have seen how

identification is based on locality, ethnicity, religion, class and nationalism, among other things. As we will see in the next chapter, in Africa identification with a team is also commonly a result of ethno-politics.

Whenever I asked someone why he supported a team, he would immediately start to sum up his team's past accomplishments. Indeed, it is with pride that he will recall his team's heroic matches and seasons. Such stories are passed on from generation to generation and linger on in people's collective memories. The same person will also make an attempt at explaining his club's ethos, which includes the way he sees his team in relation to opponents. It also includes the club's traditions, rituals, jersey colours, nicknames, mottos and logos. All of these stories bear a relationship to the club's home ground, the community, the region and sometimes the country itself.

Before we move on to the link between Big Men and symbolic capital, I will first present the histories, traditions and rituals of some of Ghana's and Cameroon's most well-known clubs. The focus will for the most part be on the community-based clubs which, as we know, have the greatest support, based on strong markers of identification. The following story starts on 11 November 1911 when, according to the mythology surrounding Hearts of Oak, a group of young men sat down at 11 A.M. to sign an agreement.

Held in Accra's Ussher Town district, the meeting signalled the birth of Ghana's and West Africa's oldest existing club, Accra Hearts of Oak. Afterwards, the team jerseys were presented in traditional style. 'All the players met at the home of a Captain Mark Nettey at Ussher Town,' Stephen Borquaye writes. 'From there, they moved to the Korle Lagoon at the Old Fadama Railway Crossing, bathed in the Lagoon for some minutes and then put on the jerseys. All dressed up in the jerseys, they marched to an open space nearby (...) and put up two posts.'²⁷⁸ The first club members were players who would later become the founding fathers. One of them was C.B. Nettey, the later chairman of the Accra Football Association. When his son S.T. Nettey died in 2007 at the age of 98, he had served as player, chaplain, director and patron of the club.²⁷⁹

Aside from being located in Ussher Town, Hearts is also associated with the Ga ethnic group. Nii Tackie Tawiah II, who was installed as Ga Mantse (King) in 1944, played for the club before becoming chairman. Another Ga Mantse, Nii Amugi II, was a staunch Hearts supporter. Although its origins lie within Ga territory, the club is nonetheless not overly identified with this ethnic group. This can partly be explained by the Ga's perceived openness towards strangers. Being a town of migrants, Accra accommodates migrants from all over Ghana and beyond. Many of them support Hearts. One example is the Nigerian businessman Frank Nelson Nwokolo who occupied a position in the club's management team

(chapter 3). Hearts thus derives its support from an urban rather than an ethnic identity.

Asante Kotoko, on the other hand, derives its identity primarily from its origins as an Ashanti club. A taxi driver by the name of Kwasi Kuma first founded the Kumasi Rainbow Club in 1924 before assembling another team in 1926 with Ashanti players only. Named Ashanti United Football Club, the team's inauguration took place in Ashanti New Town and was witnessed by, among others, the later Boamanhene (the paramount chief of the Boaman area). Ashanti United, drawing support from Kumasi inhabitants, was renamed Titanics in 1931. Then, in 1935, a teacher by the name of J.S.K. Frimpong took control of the club and renamed it Asante Kotoko. He had asked permission from the Asantehene who, after having lived in exile, had returned that very year to occupy the Golden Stool. The inauguration of the new club was done in Ashanti tradition:

On August 31, 1935, before a great assembly of chiefs, clergymen, intelligentsia and hundreds of men, women and children, all in gala attire, Frimpong opened the inaugural meeting of the Asante Kotoko Club with a revitalising address in which he threw open the doors of the Kotoko Club to all Ashantis. (...) "We are solidly behind you", said Nana Boakye Yam, Atipinhene of Kumasi, addressing the gathering. "The long-looked-for-day has come in the formation of this Asante Kotoko Football Club. That it may succeed will be our constant and earnest prayer and desire." (...) The Otumfuo Asantehene, Nana Osei Agyeman Prempeh II, Nana Atipinhene and Nana Anantahene were elected as Patrons. The Atipinhene completed the day's event by pouring libation to invoke the Ashanti gods to guide, guard and "inspirit" the Club.²⁸⁰

'Kotoko is more than a football club,' said Kwame Owusu Donkor, a former leader of one of Kotoko's Circle groups. 'Kotoko is the embodiment of the people. It's the soul of the Ashanti.' The name itself emphasises the link with Ashanti culture. Kotoko means Porcupine in the Twi language, which is also the Ashanti's totemic animal. Moreover, the club's home ground (Kumasi) was the centre of the Ashanti empire.

Other community-based clubs in Ghana also adopted names based on traditional and/or religious symbols. The Brong-Ahafo Region is home to several prominent clubs, one of which is Bofokwa Tano, named after the god of the river Tano. The last two words in the name of the club Abuakwa Susu Biribi are also the motto of the nearby Abuakwa State College, literally meaning "to think of something". Coach Isaac "Opee" Boateng told me that opponents generally dread having to travel to the Brong-Ahafo Region because of the perceived spiritual powers of the teams there. In any case, these club names say something about their owners' beliefs. Clubs in the Brong-Ahafo Region typically belong to Akan sub-groups.

Photo 4.1 Asante Kotoko's nickname (Fabulous!) and motto (Kum apem a, apem beba) are written on the side of the team bus



Two of Africa's most beautiful club names can be found in Cape Coast. Drawing support from the Fanti ethnic group, this town's most popular teams are Venomous Vipers and (Ebusua) Mysterious Dwarfs. The latter's name is derived from an Akan belief in forest-dwelling spirits, commonly depicted as dwarfs.²⁸¹ In the twin-city of Sekondi-Takoradi, one can find Eleven Wise and Hasaacas whose support rests on the Achantas and Fanti ethnic groups, respectively. Located in the middle of Ghana, Real Tamale United (RTU) is a predominantly Muslim club, drawing support based on territory and religion.

The interplay between football and ethnicity is markedly strong in Cameroon. Clubs in Douala are located in specific *quartiers* and attached to the ethnic groups residing there (chapter 2). Although Douala's native inhabitants are the Duala, urbanisation has led members of other ethnic groups to permanently settle in the country's largest city. The Bassa, whose traditional home ground lies in Douala's hinterland, maintain a large presence in the city. Founded in the Nkonmondo area, Dynamo is the principal Bassa club. The Bamileke are notably present in Douala as well. Their principal club Union was founded in 1957 (out of a club named Jeunesse Bamileke) in the New Bell area. Caiman was founded

by members of the Akwa dynasty; Oryx, founded in 1928, by the Déido. Both clubs are linked to the Duala.

Cameroon's largest ethnic groups control the most successful clubs in the country. The area in and around the capital Yaoundé is the home territory of various ethnic (sub-)groups collectively known as the Beti. Both Canon and Tonnerre were founded by a Beti sub-group called the Ewondo.²⁸² To be more precise, Canon was founded in 1930 in the Nkoldongo area by a sub-group of the Ewondo while Tonnerre was founded in 1934 in the Mvog-Ada area by another sub-group.²⁸³ The Bulu, yet another Beti sub-group, founded clubs in Yaoundé's hinterland, for instance Colombe Sangmélima and Epervier Ebolowa. As was the case in Douala, the Beti have no monopoly over football in their area. The Bassa and Bamileke also founded clubs in Yaoundé, the most prominent of which are Dragon and Diamant, respectively.

André Ntonfo notes how many Cameroonian club names are derived from totems and natural phenomena, for instance Caiman, Oryx, Léopard, Tonnerre, Panthère, Aigle and Epervier. One reason seems to be to foster a connection between the club and the ethnic group. As Ntonfo states, 'Caiman Douala is considered to be the son of the Wouri river, which implies a familiarity with its secrets and mysteries, and which is acquired by birth.'²⁸⁴ To be sure, such name-giving based on totems can be observed elsewhere as well, for instance in Benin and Togo.²⁸⁵

Canon's name is a case in point. On 9 November 1930, a meeting was held to determine the name of the new club. Several names – Guépard, Musaraine, Panthère, Epervier, Cobra and Zèbre – were rejected. Then the village patriarch asked: 'What is the name of the famous gun that was brought along by the Germans who were defeated in 1916, which was rattling "Kpa" and was followed by the detonation "Kum"?' All cried: 'Canon! Canon! Canon!'²⁸⁶ Canon and its nickname Kpa Kum thus bear reference to warfare in the colonial period (see below).

Such name-giving extends to Africa's national teams. Togo's national team is called the Sparrow Hawks, the Senegalese squad is known as the Lions of Teranga and Tunisia's national team is named the Eagles of Carthage. It is implied that these teams assume animalistic qualities: Strength, endurance, speed. An interesting case came up in 2008 when Benin's Minister of Sports questioned the timid nature of the animal that represented the national team, the Squirrels. His proposal to rename the national team the Emerging Panthers nevertheless fell on deaf ears.²⁸⁷ At one point, president Thabo Mbeki thought the nickname of South Africa's national team inappropriate for a World Cup host. Mbeki is no longer president, the name Bafana Bafana (meaning The Boys in Zulu) is still there.²⁸⁸ Several national teams did change names over time with

Nigeria's Green Eagles becoming the Super Eagles and Sudan's Nile Crocodiles becoming the Falcons of Jediane after the split with the South in 2011.

The origins of clubs in Africa can normally be traced back to the founding fathers and their families. As is the case with ethnic groups, political parties and even nation-states, club loyalties are often visualised through the metaphor of the family. The Congolese club Diables Noir was affectionately known as *yaka dia mama*, an expression linking children to their mother. In the football context it meant that the fans supported this club through thick and thin.²⁸⁹ Cape Coast Mysterious Dwarfs was renamed Ebusua Mysterious Dwarfs, with *ebusua* meaning family or kin in Twi. Similarly, the name of Aduana Stars, a club in the Brong-Ahafo Region, is derived from a Twi word, meaning clan.

Links between football, ethnic groups and familial ties are generally closely related to tribal warfare, traditions and/or beliefs in ancestors. For one thing, clubs maintain longstanding traditions. Players, coaches and officials all need to be initiated into the club's traditions. Every newcomer at Asante Kotoko has to swear an oath in front of the Asantehene. This is to ensure that one abides by the customs and traditions of the club. One should not take such oaths lightly. 'You have to promise never to tell the secrets of the club,' said footballer Ashu. 'Whoever does say something may risk his career. Something bad may happen to him and he will never play again.'

In Africa, there exists a correlation between football and war. George Orwell once described sports, referring to football in particular, as 'war minus the shooting'.²⁹⁰ Football is often explained through war-like metaphors,²⁹¹ and in Africa the game can be regarded as a pacified form of tribal warfare.²⁹² N.A. Scotch observed the links between football and war rituals in his research among the Zulu in South Africa. The way teams go to a camp the night before a match resembles the manner in which army regiments used to prepare for war.²⁹³ Also, a comparison can be made between a team going to the field of play and Zulu warriors going to the battlefield in the early 1800s:

... we perceive many elements of unmistakable similarity: The circle around the fire; the medicines to endow strength and courage; the medicines on the weapons (currently, on football jerseys and shoes) to increase their potency (currently, to make them slippery); and the purificatory emetic which, in Shaka's time, was taken on the morning of the battle, and nowadays on the morning before the football match.²⁹⁴

It is generally accepted that the traditions and rituals associated with Asante Kotoko go back to the Ashanti's violent past. As stated earlier, the name refers to the porcupine, the Ashanti's totemic animal. Kotoko is said to play according to the foremost physical feature of the porcupine, namely its stinging quills. The club's motto, itself derived from the Ashanti's culture of warfare, is testimony to this view: "Asante Kotoko! Kum apem a, apem beba: Monka ntoa, monka ntoa, monka ntoa!" ("Asante porcupine! When thousands are killed, thousands more

will come: Get to arms, get to arms!’). Both porcupine and motto feature on Kotoko’s team bus.

The rituals in the era of tribal warfare have by and large been transferred to football. An example given by spiritual adviser Zé with regard to Cameroon is a good starting point into this issue:

Those who control Racing Bafoussam have the Rock of Bafoussam. This is something they believe in and which they derive powers from. These places have a specific historical background. Before the colonial period there was no football. What existed was intertribal warfare. When people went to war they would go to these places and meditate to collect powers. They believed that after taking these powers they would defeat their enemies. The only war we have now is football. But they still uphold these traditions and you will see it in football.

Equivalents of the Rock can be found throughout Cameroon. Menchum has a waterfall from which they derive powers. And the people in Baham perform sacrifices near a cult named Fovu (not quite incidentally also the name of the town’s foremost club).

These occult powers (ancestors, gods, spirits) give players extra strength in the same way they gave strength to warriors in the old days. Chiefs or elders perform rituals at specific places to call upon these powers. Ntonfo provides the example of the 1993 Cup of Cameroon final between Léopard Douala and Canon Yaoundé. On the eve of the match, the players of Léopard underwent a magical ritual in the nearby Wouri river, rendering them invisible. This was a tradition among the Déido to which the club belonged.²⁹⁵ Those in charge of Mysterious Dwarfs consult a Goddess of Cape Coast named Nana Etue.²⁹⁶ The Silures, a team from Burkina Faso, have a similar tradition. As Royer explains, ‘the Silures regularly visit the popular religious site of Dafra at the source of the river that flows through the city. Morsels of sacrificed animals are thrown to enormous catfish that live in this sacred water hole.’²⁹⁷

Cameroon’s Southwest Region boasts several natural phenomena, among which a mountain and an ocean. ‘The people who live around Mount Cameroon and near the ocean are the Bakwéri,’ Zé explained. ‘There is a god of the mountain and there is also a goddess of the ocean. Since the Bakwéri own the land they are the only ones who are allowed to use these powers.’ At one point in time Victoria United went to a certain place to receive powers before going to the interpools. Zé told me what happened:

The coastal Bakwéri control the villages near the ocean – Wovia, Bota Land, Batoké, Idenau. They are the ones who have something to do with the ocean and Nyango na Muna, which is the goddess of the ocean. They worship it and have rights over it. Once every while the chiefs perform rituals at the shrine – a rock in the sea. Chief Etule of Wovia [who passed away in 2007] is the biggest chief of all. When Victoria United went to the interpools they took the team there to perform the rituals. They gave them blessings. The team went and qualified. That’s how these people do it.

As traditional rulers, chiefs and fons are said to have knowledge of the traditions of their peoples. No wonder, then, that teams visit them to obtain powers. Before Mount Cameroon had to play Sable Batie in the 2002 Cup of Cameroon final, the team visited the palace of the paramount chief of Buea. ‘We went there at two P.M.,’ footballer Essomba explained. ‘He gave us something to drink and told us that we were all one. One by one we had to drink from the ancestral cup. The teams from the Northwest and West Regions all go to the palace for special powers.’ This is what Ashu told me in 2003 after his team Botafogo FC had gone to the interpools a year earlier:

Before we entered the palace, the top of the mountain was covered in cloud. We all stood in a circle – the players, coaches, everybody. The chief took the cup from the ancestors and gave it to us. You can only drink from it when he gives it to you. Then the chief grabbed a broom and splashed the water from the cup over the players and staff. He said: “Go, my children, you will not be sick, you will not break a leg, come back safely. You are guided by your ancestors.” We looked up and saw that the clouds on the mountain were clearing. The sky was bright, the sun was shining. It meant that the ancestors had accepted us.²⁹⁸

Kumbo Strikers, a club from the Northwest Region that won the 2000 Cup of Cameroon, maintains a close relationship with the palace and the fon. ‘When I coached Kumbo Strikers,’ spiritual adviser Zé said, ‘they had their rituals which they performed before every match. It was laid down as a club principle from the outset. The whole team would go to the palace and have a drink to ensure victory. They also slaughter a goat and sprinkle the blood on the players’ feet. They have done that for years and everybody believes in it.’ The link between the club and the fon went further than that. ‘The fon also had a stick,’ Zé explained. ‘The team would always bring the stick along to away matches and present it to the people in town. The stick represents the fon and signifies his presence. It obliged the population to provide us with accommodation and food, and to make sure we were safe.’

Chiefs and fons also bless the field of play in order to appease the ancestors. Scotch notes that those in charge of Zulu clubs slaughtered a goat ‘to open the doors to luck’ before the start of the season. Another sacrifice was made at the end of the season.²⁹⁹ ‘It’s only done with the traditional clubs (whose owners also own the land, see further below),’ said Zé. ‘Elec Sport Limbe is not a traditional club, Union Douala is not a traditional club. They do not own the land so these are not their ancestors. But when (the Limbe-based traditional club) Victoria United was not winning matches I advised them to consult the ancestors.’ Zé explained that the chief and his following would go to the field to perform traditional libation:

The ancestors are people who have died many years ago. But they still exist in one way or another. They have part-ownership of the place. That is why people come to the field at night and sprinkle food and drinks on the field. They believe that the ancestors will eat it. The ancestors cannot eat like you and me. You put the food inside a clean pot, wash the plates

and put it on the field or at the junction. Then the chief and the lesser chiefs all come together and start pouring libation. They call the ancestors and give them drinks. When the ancestors are given food and drinks they are happy.

Such rituals strengthen the bond between club, territory and population. In a way, it is the reason people take a club as their own. ‘All the clubs do it,’ said Zé. ‘When you come to the club they will tell you: “This is how we do it.” The population is aware of it and it is their tradition. So anyone who comes there has to abide by the tradition.’

Clubs in Cameroon also have rituals performed by the players on the pitch. The captain of Canon Yaoundé shouts ‘Canon!’ with the other players responding ‘Bombarde’. Then the captain shouts ‘Arme!’ with the others responding ‘Défense!’³⁰⁰ The rituals of some clubs go back many years, others are relatively new. When the players of Tiko United step onto the pitch, they all place their left hand on their heart and their right hand in the air, and recite: “Allez Samba, Allez Samba Samba, Allez Samba, Samba Samba, Allez Allez Samba.” It is said that this ritual was adopted ten to fifteen years ago during a Congress. The Douala-based club Les Astres employs a different ritual. ‘They assemble the players and wash their feet with a liquid,’ said Ashu. ‘The president is not there but he knows about it because he’s the one paying for it.’

Clubs also adopt mottos, logos and jersey colours related to their locality and identity. Giving teams nicknames is quite common as well (and as we saw in chapter 2 this extends to players and others as well). Although community-based clubs are certainly not the only ones with nicknames and mottos, they typically do have the most impressive ones. All club types, including the often relatively young one-man shows, employ such symbols. Nicknames, mottos, logos and colours are a form of pride not only for those who own and control the clubs but also for the wider community.

Some nicknames are based on characteristic features of a club’s home ground. For instance, Sable Batie is also called the Sand Sand Boys (with *sable* being French for sand) because the region around the village of Batie is known for its prevalence of, indeed, sand. In fact, many Batie inhabitants earn a living digging up and selling sand. Mount Cameroon is nicknamed the Lava Boys because of the presence of the active volcano near the club’s home base Buea. The origins of other nicknames are less clear (to me). Victoria United is known by the inhabitants of Limbe as Opopo, which means One People One Power.

Some nicknames simply refer to a club’s home area. Ghana’s Real Tamale United (RTU) is known as the Pride of the North for being this region’s only high-profile club (at least, until RTU’s relegation in 2011). PWD Bamenda is known as the Abakwa Boys because the team originates from Bamenda’s Abakwa neighbourhood. Similarly, Caiman Douala is nicknamed the Akwa Boys. Once the West Region’s most powerful club, Racing Bafoussam is also

called Tout Puissant l'Ouest (TPO). In the same vein, Unisport Bafang is known as the Flambeau de l'Ouest (with *flambeau* meaning torch). Finally, Dynamo Douala's nickname Bon Ba Job (which means Child of God in the Bassa language) refers to both territory and ethnic group.

Nicknames and mottos are sometimes based on a team's game approach or style of play. Sekondi Eleven Wise is nicknamed the Western Show Boys because the team, as Bediako states, has a 'longstanding tradition of playing the type of fascinating and entertaining game punctuated with eye-pleasing dribbling that keep fans on their toes'.³⁰¹ The motto of city-rival Hasaacas is "Play the game, but lovely", also referring to playing beautifully; supporters regularly chant "Hasmal! We go do!" Tiko United is nicknamed the Samba Boys because of their Brazilian style of play. Tonnerre Yaoundé is known as the Kalara Club (*kalara* means book in Ewondo) which is a reference to the team's scientific game approach. The same goes for Liberty Professionals, nicknamed the Scientific Soccer Lads, for allegedly playing Ghana's best tactical game.

Nicknames often relate to memorable moments in a club's history. Heroic victories are recounted over and over again, and help shape a club's identity. Hasaacas managed to beat mighty Kotoko on several occasions in the late 1950s and so earned itself the nickname Giants of the West. One match in the 1959 season truly earned them the title of Kotoko's bogey club. Kotoko travelled to Gyandu Park in Sekondi, the 'grave-yard of their hopes',³⁰² to play Hasaacas in a league match. Everything went well for the Kumasi-based team, who were leading Hasaacas 3-1 with only fifteen minutes on the clock. Four late goals, including two from the legendary Joe Aggrey-Fynn delivered Hasaacas a spectacular 5-3 victory.³⁰³

Kotoko earned its nickname Fabulous around that period as well. They lost twice to Hasaacas but still convincingly took the league title in the 1959/60 season. As the story goes, one journalist was so impressed that he described the team's display as Fabulous. The nickname is still widely used today. For instance, the editorials of the *Kotoko Express* always end with the phrase "Fabulous, The Greatest!" and in 2008 a text message service came into being (text FABU to 1935).³⁰⁴ Hearts' nickname, Phobia, is explained with the phrase "You will be struck by the Hearts' Phobia". It means that anyone who faces Hearts trembles with fear (and thus suffers from the phobia called Hearts). In 2009 Hearts launched a text service called Phobia 1911 with subscribers receiving the latest club news.³⁰⁵

Both Hearts and Kotoko adopted mottos that relate to their histories and game spirit. Kotoko's motto was mentioned earlier. Hearts' motto is "Never say die until the bones are rotten", referring to the conviction that the team is not defeated until the final whistle. This view of "we will never give up" is expressed

time and again by those who belong to the club. Hearts' logo is, unsurprisingly, an oak tree. The club also has an anthem named "Arise, Arose, Arisen!"³⁰⁶

Cartoonists of *Hearts News* and *Kotoko Express* regularly mock each other's nickname and motto. Two weeks before a Hearts vs Kotoko match in June 2009, a cartoon in *Hearts News* featured three cooks pouring 'Phobia oil' over an open fire, while another man dragged a porcupine along. According to the caption, the animal was about to be 'roasted alive'.³⁰⁷ Another cartoon depicted the Kotoko coach and his assistants pushing a trolley with chainsaws and axes towards the Ohene Djan Stadium in Accra. The Kotoko coach said: 'We go cut down that big tree.' The caption read: 'Ha! Ha! Ha! Fabu, you go need more powerful and sharper machine to cut down the mighty oak.'³⁰⁸ A few days later, when Kotoko had beaten Hearts, a cartoon in the *Kotoko Express* depicted a Kotoko man chopping down the Oak tree.³⁰⁹ A subsequent photo report was headlined 'The day the bones got rotten'.³¹⁰

Accra Great Olympics, winner of the 1974 National League, is widely known as the Wonder Club. Several theories exist as to the origins of the nickname with Bediako arguing that it was conferred to the club in the early 1960s.³¹¹ Many players were soldiers and left the club when the army decided to form a team of their own (Ghana Army). It forced Great Olympic to assemble a squad consisting mainly of young students. The team went on to perform surprisingly well. This prompted the famous sports administrator Ohene Djan to grant the club its nickname Wonder Club. Great Olympics nonetheless discovered that such a name gives room for insults during times of turmoil. The club relegated twice in the new millennium and phrases such as "no more wonders" were easily fabricated.

The relatively young one-man show Heart of Lions already earned itself the nickname Giant Killers. The Kpandu-based team beat several high-profile teams since its promotion to the Premier League. Of much more importance is the title Third Force in Ghanaian football. When Obuasi Goldfields won the Premier League three times in a row, the team was expected to break the hegemony of Hearts and Kotoko. Thus Goldfields was respectfully named the Third Force. Goldfields' poor performances in recent times made it to lose this title and other teams (Liberty Professionals, Heart of Lions) have laid (disputed) claims to being called the new Third Force.

Finally, some nicknames and mottos are based upon notions of luck. Caiman Douala's nickname, which is also uttered during the team's on-field ritual, is *À Six Heures*. This phrase refers to the common perception that Caiman used to beat opponents in the dying minutes of the game. This happened, for instance, in 1941 when Canon was beaten by a goal in the last minute.³¹² PWD Bamenda's nickname P-Ton-Ton gives rise to multiple explanations. It first of all appears to

be literally meaning Big Uncle. ('It's a sign of respect,' former footballer Nji Sunday said.) P-Ton-Ton also signifies the team's unpredictability in both positive and negative ways. 'PWD will always surprise you,' Nji Sunday said. 'We always beat the biggest teams in the country. But we also lost to lesser teams when nobody expected it.'

Jersey colours are both linked to identity and to notions of good and bad luck. Hearts adopted its current rainbow jerseys (red, yellow and blue) in 1917. It was a teacher named T.F. Bruce-Tagoe who designed the jerseys and who ordered them to be manufactured in Manchester (England). Borquaye states:

When the jerseys arrived, a match was arranged with Invincibles, the first club formed in Accra. It was played at the London Park, which is the present site of the James Town Police Station. Hearts won, 1-0. But what attracted the crowd was not so much the manner of play as the bright jerseys of Hearts. This drew both spectators and some players of Invincibles to the Hearts camp after the match and thereafter, several players from other clubs began streaming into the club in the hope of wearing the bright jerseys.³¹³

The team still wears the rainbow jerseys today.

The history of Kotoko's red and white jerseys goes back to the 1950s. The players used to wear gold and black jerseys before switching to red and white in 1952. The new colours apparently brought them luck since Kotoko did not lose a single match that year. In 1954 the club switched to yet another set of jerseys – the all-red jerseys – whose origins are still recounted today. As the story goes, Kotoko and (the now defunct) Accra Standfast have always been considered brothers. Whenever Kotoko or Standfast had to play a strong opponent, their "brother" would assist by sending two or three players. When Standfast split up and several players formed another club (Great Olympics), Kotoko adopted Standfast's official red jerseys.³¹⁴

Somewhere along the line the club started using the red and white jerseys again, meaning a red shirt with white numbers. This was, as one supporter argued in 2009, the type of jerseys in which Kotoko won the 1983 Cup of Champions Clubs. That same supporter, however, blamed the club's bad streak in the middle of the 2008/09 season on the use of the red and white jerseys which, he said, are in fact the colours of Sekondi Eleven Wise. Although the traditional colours of Kotoko are yellow, black and green (the colours of Asanteman), he pleaded to again adopt the all-red jerseys in a letter to the *Kotoko Express*:

The all red colours of Kotoko was used when Kotoko had a match with Cape Coast Dwarfs in Accra. Both teams came with yellow and green colours. After a toss of coin Kotoko had to change their jerseys. Kotoko fell on their traditional friends Accra Standfast who used to wear the all red colours. Kotoko beat Dwarfs 2-0. They went on to beat Cornerstones, the traditional bogey club of Kotoko by three goals to one.³¹⁵

His arguments in favour of using the all-red jerseys are vague, but his letter clearly shows the link between jersey colours and perceptions regarding success or failure.

The prestigious side of the game

Football's symbolic capital is linked to territory, ethnicity and traditions, among other things. Its power is felt whenever one visits a town with a high-profile team. This is true for Kumasi where, on match days, the area around the Baba Yara Stadium is as lively as the city's Kejetia Market. The bars are packed with supporters drinking beer. People all over town turn on their radios. A match day in Accra is no different. On Sunday 14 June 2009, I took a taxi to the Ohene Djan for the match between Hearts and Kotoko. The taxi driver was stopped by policemen at a roadblock a few kilometres away from where I needed to be. I then joined thousands of Hearts supporters in their march towards the stadium.

The power of football is also noticeable in towns whose teams have fallen on hard times. That is to say, it is felt because of its conspicuous absence. Former footballer Nji Sunday explained how the area around Bamenda's Municipal Stadium was a bustling hub of social and commercial activity in PWD's glory days. 'When PWD is up, you see people walking upright,' said supporter Cleopas. 'They're proud of the team, the town and themselves.' Until a few years ago, Racing Bafoussam was the centre of football activity in the West Region. Even though the team relegated to the Third Division, its training sessions are watched by dozens of supporters (which is more than top league club Fovu Baham whose players also practice in Bafoussam). People in Bafoussam wait anxiously for someone able enough to return the team to the Elite One league.

We have earlier established links between clubs/national teams and different forms of identity. We have seen how Asante Kotoko represents the soul of the Ashanti. I also quoted informants who said that becoming part of Kotoko – as player, coach or Big Man – is a great honour (chapter 3). Indeed, standing before the Asantehene and being sworn in as director is something no Ashanti will ever forget. Also, a businessman who joins Kotoko's management team instantly finds his name being mentioned across Kumasi, the Ashanti Region and Ghana in general. 'Whoever is elected as CEO of Kotoko,' former Kotoko coach Herbert Addo told me, 'is the third most important person in Ghana (after the president and the Asantehene).' Of course, Addo exaggerated the CEO's importance. But not that much.

The field of sports is an important avenue through which Africans are able to increase their status and popularity – in short, their symbolic capital. (Another avenue is religion; religious leaders in Africa literally reach millions of worshippers.) From cricket in South Africa, boxing in Uganda, long-distance

running in Kenya and football practically everywhere – sport attracts Africans from all walks of life. Football is entertainment and religion in one as a match is a mass spectacle watched by thousands or millions of fans. As president Eteki Charles observed with regard to his club, ‘Tiko United is sort of a religion to the people in my town.’ With regard to symbolic capital, Ntonfo expressed it best when he said that football ‘serves as the barometer of popularity’.³¹⁶

Indeed, those attached to the King Sport (or, in French, *le Sport Roi*) commonly turn into celebrities of sorts. Moreover, the Big Man who is willing to become club president or CEO earns the community’s respect and admiration. In fact, almost every “man of means and power” wants to be associated with the game. The Ghanaian journalist Ibrahim Sannie made the following statement in a short documentary:

Football really took off in Ghana. It spread like wildfire. These players, these teams became very popular in the country. (...) The owners or leaders of these clubs became very powerful. (...) Every leader or any powerful person or any rich businessman wanted to be known and wanted to be associated with football (...). So they took advantage of the situation, pouring money into the teams just to make people happy and also to be recognized.³¹⁷

Cameroon is a well-known football country. ‘People also become known because of football,’ said Ni John Fru Ndi. ‘I remember travelling to Europe with my son. Somebody came up to me at the airport and said: “I know only two people in Cameroon: Roger Milla and Fru Ndi.” He didn’t even mention the president.’ When asked why everybody wanted to become a Hearts official, former management member Frank Nelson said that ‘they want to be associated with the club’s success and its good name. Shopkeepers, judges, doctors – they’re all Hearts supporters.’

Big Men generally regard their involvement in football both as a privilege and an obligation. Remember Eteki Charles’ election as president of the community-based club Tiko United. He explained that when he moved to Limbe to become the new Delegate of Public Works in the Southwest Region, he felt an obligation to contribute to the welfare of Tiko. Being asked to become club president was also an honour. ‘The job is a privilege and a matter of pride to my village,’ he told me. An important reason for his election as club president was that Eteki Charles was born and raised in Tiko. He is, in other words, a son of the soil. Big Men who are sons of the soil are more likely to be elected president or CEO than those who were born elsewhere. They also tend to earn more respect and prestige. Indeed, most Big Men who lead Ghana’s and Cameroon’s most popular clubs are sons of the soil.³¹⁸

This is best explained through the concepts of traditional clubs and the politics of belonging in Africa. A club is traditional when the ethnic identity of its founding father(s) coincides with the ethnic group who owns the club’s home ground. A traditional club is always a community-based club but a community-based club

is not necessarily a traditional club.³¹⁹ Racing Bafoussam and Union Douala are both Bamileke-owned, community-based clubs. Yet only Racing is a traditional club because it is based in the West Region, which is Bamileke territory. Traditional clubs tend to be even more popular than community-based clubs and as such Big Men who lead these clubs tend to convert most symbolic capital. This is also why a Big Man should not switch to a club controlled by a rival ethnic group. As I will discuss in chapter 5, there are rivalries between clubs belonging to Bassa, Beti and Bamileke. Ntonfo argues that these feelings are so strong that a Bamileke Big Man normally never becomes president of Canon Yaoundé and no Beti Big Man could lead Union Douala.³²⁰

This leads us to consider another aspect, namely the politics of belonging.³²¹ I first became aware of the importance of belonging during my fieldwork in 2003. At the time, several Buea residents did not have much flattering to say about the owner of Mount Cameroon FC. They asked questions why a Bamileke had to invade their land and build a club and academy there. By founding a private club in an ethnically hostile area, Calvin Foinding did not seem to gain much in terms of popularity. Similar questions were asked in relation to PWD Bamenda's Nigerian president Augustine Iche Ozoemena in 2010. Was there no son of the soil (an Anglophone Northwesterner) willing to take up the presidency of this club?

The proliferation of multi-party politics in Cameroon in the 1990s gave rise to the politics of belonging. This has led to an *autochtones/allogènes* dichotomy, which can be translated as a struggle between sons of the soil on the one hand and strangers on the other. In Anglophone Cameroon, the distinction is labelled as one between indigenes and settlers (or *kam-no-gos*), the latter meaning people who come but do not leave. Piet Konings and Francis Nyamnjoh argue that in Cameroon a new constitution in 1996 defined 'identity for the populations concerned not by where individuals are born or live, but by their ethnic ancestral area':

The Cameroonian state insists on patriarchal identification by ethnic area, district and province (region) of origin in national identity cards, birth, marriage and other civic certificates. Its constitution, like the others, enables ethnic areas to make the distinction between what Mamdani has termed "ethnic citizens and ethnic strangers".³²²

The motivations were political; people could now only vote in the territory controlled by their own ethnic group. The politics of belonging is equally visible in that many Cameroonian Big Men, especially the Bamileke from the West Region, started setting up clubs in their ancestral areas.

The debate between *autochtones* and *allogènes* is alive in football as well. Eteki Charles, as a true son of the soil of Tiko, is now all the more popular for

Photo 4.2 Ghana's national team player Harrison Afful receives a welcome by FA officials and other Big Men after having played a World Cup qualifier



sponsoring the club in his ancestral area. But Eteki does not sponsor the club all by himself. 'Eteki doesn't work alone,' said the club's former secretary, David Obenge. 'The vice president is a businessman, he also contributes. It's just that he likes to remain in the background. He's a Nigerian, so people see him as a stranger.' In fact, several clubs in the Anglophone zone, particularly those in market towns such as Tiko and Kumba, have been sponsored and run by Nigerians for a long time. President Augustine Iche Ozoemena of PWD Bamenda made the following statement:

I'm often provoked by people who say that I'm not a Cameroonian [as said earlier, he is a Nigerian]. They just use provocative words: "How can a foreigner be leading this old Anglophone club? And they're giving him all the respect. So why aren't we Cameroonians around?" Had it been that I'm a Cameroonian I would've been very far up. I would've received medals.

What Ozoemena is saying is that he would have earned more respect if he were a Cameroonian or, more specifically, an Anglophone from the Northwest Region.

Nantang Jua provides us with an example from Cameroon's Southwest Region between an *autochtone* (Henry Njalla Quan) and a *kam-no-go* (Innocent Bonu). The former suffered a blow when the latter was elected president of Victoria United in the late 1990s. Njalla Quan, a powerful man in the Southwest Region, then obstructed Bonu any which way he could. Finally, Bonu resigned as president and formed his private club Victoria Shooting Stars while Njalla Quan took over the presidency of Victoria United. Matches between Victoria United and Victoria Shooting Stars have since been a struggle between *autochtones* and *allogènes* for prestige and (political) control. Jua points out that both *autochtone* and *allogène* Big Men use the game to enhance their own as well as their ethnic group's symbolic capital.³²³

Being a son of the soil is not the only factor which determines a Big Man's ability to convert economic into symbolic capital. It also depends on his ability to *publicly display his wealth* as well as on his *personality* and his *management skills*. Let me first present a simple case of the interplay between a Big Man's public persona and the image of the game.³²⁴ In 1988 the Indomitable Lions won the African Cup of Nations and went on a victory tour around Cameroon. Ni John Fru Ndi told me he used his Lions Club membership to 'bring the trophy to Bamenda'. During a ceremony on his compound, he presented the Nations Cup trophy to fans and dignitaries. 'Everybody was really proud of him,' said a supporter, who witnessed the occasion. Fru Ndi thus successfully linked the Lions' victory to himself (which was a political act as well, see chapter 5).

A Big Man's ability to publicly display his wealth is related to the theory of conspicuous consumption. In his analysis of the (cultural) elite in nineteenth century Britain, Thorstein Veblen coined this phrase to explain how they spend large amounts of time and money on seemingly non-productive activities, i.e. leisure pursuits.³²⁵ Extending this theory to present-day Africa, it can be stated that Africans, many of whom live in poverty, regard a Big Man who spends a fortune on football as a powerful individual. This form of conspicuous consumption enhances his prestige. As Daloz states, a Big Man's clients or supporters 'expect their respective leader to display external signs of wealth with regard to those representing other networks' which indicates that 'he possesses more prestigious and impressive goods for these are in some way a credit to the whole community or of the faction which identifies with it'.³²⁶

We have earlier seen how clubs benefit from a Big Man's financial input (chapter 3). Now we see how a Big Man himself benefits from sponsoring and running a club. In general, a Big Man's personal and financial sacrifices are very much admired. One example is that of the Cameroonian businessman Claude

Zoundja, a former president of Diamant Yaoundé, who was said to have single-handedly financed the club in his days. ‘It was a personal sacrifice,’ said Zoundja. ‘I was quite wealthy through my company Etracam and I employed around 1,200 people. (...) When I brought up Diamant to the First Division, each player received a sum of five million CFA francs (€7,600) as a bonus. And all of it came out of my own pocket.’³²⁷ His fame undoubtedly grew when it became known that he almost had to file for bankruptcy.

There is indeed a mutual benefit to both Big Man and club. Jeffrey argues that clubs in South African townships enjoyed a businessman’s financial support while he, in turn, could prove his leadership capacities to a wider audience. In Sharpeville, ‘a system of football patronage operated whereby “big men” were able to grant favours in return for allegiance, so enhancing their prestige and status within the township community’.³²⁸ In short, ‘financial sponsorship was certainly a way of enhancing their personal prestige, which was more often than not achieved in a flamboyant fashion’. In doing so, they became ‘men of means’.³²⁹ Jeffrey provides the example of the founder and owner of Transvaal Jumpers, C.J.J. “Sam” Ngwenya, who controlled the club for four decades; the team’s successes were attributed to the Big Man.

An advertisement in the *Kotoko Express* in 2009 signalled that the link between financial generosity and prestige extends to those who are not officially part of a club’s management. In the ad, wealthy sympathisers of Kotoko were urged to become members of the so-called Patrons Club. It read: ‘The PATRONS CLUB is open to an exclusive group of 100 Asante Kotoko SC supporters who would be classified as “PATRONS” and who are entitled to certain exclusive benefits during the course of every football season.’³³⁰ These 100 patrons (not to be confused with the patrons as explained in chapter 3) would not only enjoy certain privileges but also enhance their status among ordinary supporters.

Indeed, many supporters know that in order to grab a portion of their club’s popularity one needs to make financial contributions. The example of Kotoko will again prove this point. In July 2009, wealthy supporters donated items to boost Kotoko’s chances of winning the league title. A supporter named Kwabena Takyi donated beef, rice, energy drinks and cooking oil.³³¹ Another supporter, Alhaji Lamin, donated beverages and stated that he would ‘stop at nothing to motivate the team to deliver’.³³² These and other donations were presented in public and highlighted in the *Kotoko Express*. Sponsors also engage in such public gift-giving practices. When MTN donated a team bus to Hearts of Oak, the club’s newspaper featured a picture of a company spokesperson handing over the keys to several of Hearts’ Big Men.³³³

The theory of conspicuous consumption (and the public display of wealth) is also visible in the way Big Men fund entire tournaments. One example includes the Ethiopian businessman Mohammed Hussein Ali Al Amoudi who sponsored East Africa's CECAFA Cup. In a similar vein, D. Manirakiza argues that amateur football is a means by which Cameroonian Big Men can promote themselves. Local and regional competitions and tournaments such as the *interquartiers* and the *deux-zéro* are patronised by businessmen, politicians, company directors, football personalities and presidents. Some tournaments are sponsored by famous players, for instance *Tournoi Djemba-Djemba* and *Tournois de football Eto'o Fils*; others are organised by Big Men such as *Championnat Iya Mohammed* (sponsored by the president of FECAFOOT) and *Coupe David Mayebi* (sponsored by the chairman of the footballers' association).³³⁴

I once watched an end-of-year tournament at the Molyko Stadium in Buea. Foreign-based Cameroonian players (excluding perhaps those based in England) normally return home during the Christmas holidays to spend time with family and friends. Buea's sons of the soil such as Atem Valentine, Eyong Enoh and Marcus Mokake then get together to play against locally-based players. When I arrived in Buea on Monday 21 December, I learned that a young businessman had organised a tournament lasting three days. Dressed in a sharp suit, the businessman parked his car next to the field of play and then sat down on the grandstand. These kinds of tournaments are commonly organised and sponsored by businessmen and politicians who want to make a name for themselves (and for their businesses).

As said, acquiring symbolic capital also depends on a Big Man's personality and his management skills. There tends to be a correlation between a Big Man's personality and the image of the club he runs. For example, Ghanaians label Hearts of Oak and Asante Kotoko as their country's "most glamorous" clubs. These perceived identities are reflected in the personalities who make up these clubs' management ranks. A Hearts or Kotoko patron, director or CEO more often than not is a charismatic, flamboyant and extrovert person who likes communicating with the press. Vice versa, Tiko United is known as a rather modest club from a small town, which is echoed in the way president Eteki Charles refrains both from celebrity status behaviour and showing off his wealth (thus contradicting the principle of the public display of wealth).

In terms of management skills, some Big Men are successful in a club's business aspects while others are successful in collecting titles and trophies. Of course, supporters prefer Big Men to master both, but this does not happen all the time. Winning titles evidently increases a Big Man's status and prestige. Eteki Charles was relatively unknown prior to taking up the presidency of Tiko United. When the club won the league title in 2009, he became famous throughout

Cameroon. ‘I received a phone call from the prime minister on the day we won the league,’ he told me. ‘People all over the country now know my name.’ Similarly, the Bamileke businessman Prince Emmanuel Ngassa Happi is a household name in Cameroon, partly because he led Union Douala to win the 1979 Cup of Champions Clubs title. The then president Ahmadou Ahidjo honoured him with the nickname Emperor.

Mentioning Ngassa Happi brings us to the argument that it helps if a footballing Big Man is active in an era of fierce competition. During the time of Union Douala’s domestic and international successes, Cameroon boasted of a number of big clubs led by well-known Big Men. A few years ago, the newspaper *Le Messager* published a series of articles about so-called “mythical club presidents”. At least three of them – Claude Zoundja (Diamant Yaoundé), Ferdinand Koungou Edima (Canon Yaoundé) and Martin Omgba Zing (Tonnerre Yaoundé) – were active in Ngassa Happi’s days.³³⁵ It can be argued that such rivalries increase their status and fame.

One of Ghana’s fiercest rivalries was the one between the CEOs of Hearts and Kotoko in the late 1990s and early 2000s, respectively Harry Zakkour and Herbert Mensah. As Zakkour’s time as CEO of Hearts is discussed in the next chapter, I will limit myself here to saying he became famous for winning various prestigious trophies. In contrast, Herbert Mensah’s time as CEO of Kotoko was characterised more by his business skills than by the team’s successes (which were mostly absent). Mensah’s approach to football management was hailed by supporters, coaches and journalists alike. In 1999, he announced a five-year plan to professionalise and commercialise the club. The Ghanaian journalist Ken Bediako remembers him thus:

The club was gradually losing its trademark firepower and Herbert actually utilized his public relations skills to the full and exploited the popularity of Kotoko to useful advantage. He made the numerous supporters feel a sense of belonging and supporters realised the need to make contributions to the running of the club and especially the upkeep of the players who were dearly motivated. Matches involving Kotoko consistently pulled heavy gates and on some occasions special cash donations dubbed “yibima” were collected in specially designed boxes. Despite all this the team was strangely not performing all that well. It is to the credit of the supporters that they sportingly accepted Herbert Mensah’s oft repeated explanation that he was on a team building exercise and continued to back him. Unfortunately somewhere along the line Herbert’s abrasive style of administration and his extrovert nature did not go down too well with officialdom and there were many instances of clash of personalities.³³⁶

Mensah’s biggest problem was that Kotoko was consistently overpowered by Hearts. Although Mensah never won much in terms of titles, it would be difficult to find even a single Ghanaian who does not know his name.

Herbert Mensah’s popularity rested not only on the way he applied his management skills but also on his extrovert character. Several club leaders in Ghana

were flamboyant individuals whose tenure in office were characterised by an unorthodox game approach. In 1987 Hearts' chairman Dr. Nyaho Tamakloe fired the entire team and hired a bunch of unknown youngsters instead. Later nicknamed The Musical Youth, the squad ended up in fifth place on the league table. Businessman John Ackay Blay Miezah made Sekondi Eleven Wise hugely popular in the 1980s. The wealthy Big Man knew how to lure supporters to the stadium. He introduced the catch-phrase "Akara Ka Chi" after which the crowd would shout "Show! Show!".

The founders/owners of some one-man shows are also admired for their management skills, in this case their ability to buy and sell players. Victor Akpene Ahiakor and Alhaji Ibrahim Sly Tetteh have in recent years been very successful in what has become known as the "football business". Sly Tetteh especially was renowned for nurturing some of Ghana's biggest football stars. The exploits of these two Big Men will be further discussed in chapter 6.

A Big Man's ethnic background, wealth redistribution abilities, personality and management skills aside, it should be noted that football normally also generates symbolic capital all by itself. Owning a club is a means by which a Big Man increases his status and prestige. 'It's prestigious to own a club,' said Jamil Maraby, the former CEO of Eleven Wise. 'These businessmen found a club just to be able to say that they own one.' Also, a position within the football bureaucracy instantly indicates a certain status. This is how Wilson and Mafeje described it in 1963:

Scope for leadership among Africans is very limited and office in almost any sort of organisation is a source of social prestige. Whereas for a white man or woman, there are many alternative opportunities of exercising leadership in work, in politics, in local government, as well as in church or social clubs or sport, the opportunities for an African are few. To a white man the secretaryship of a rugby club may indeed be a burden, not willingly undertaken, but to most Africans office in almost any organisation carries prestige (...).³³⁷

Daloz argues that Big Men are keen collectors of titles: Doctor, Chief, Alhaji, Manager, Officer, Chairman, and so on.³³⁸ These are exactly the titles that Big Men give themselves when becoming part of a club or FA. Whoever is able to call himself chairman of the Board of Directors or chairman of the Council of Patrons is almost by definition an important, influential and respected person.

Arguably the most prestigious title in football is that of president. When I accompanied Eteki Charles on his daily routine for a few weeks in 2010, literally everyone addressed him as president. In Ghana, the top FA official used to be called chairman. Kwesi Nyantakyi, who currently occupies this position, changed his title from chairman to president. FA officials derive status from the titles they get when assuming office. This is the point where "lesser men" become Big Men themselves. 'Sometimes you see a friend who got a position at the FA,' said Kojo

Fianoo. 'Then you see him in a flashy suit driving a fancy car. Now he's a big man. That's why everybody wants to be in football.'

In fact, FA officials control the game's most prestigious asset: The national team. On Monday 8 June 2009, the Black Stars landed at a military airport in Accra after having beaten Sudan in a World Cup qualifier. GFA general secretary Isaac Addo invited me to join him in welcoming the squad. When we arrived at the airport, several luxurious cars were parked near the landing strip. I asked Addo whether it was normal for businessmen and politicians to welcome back the national team after an international assignment. 'Of course,' he said. 'Success has many mothers and fathers, but failure is always an orphan.' We could thus add that a Big Man's ability to acquire and increase symbolic capital depends on his *visibility* in the public domain. This behaviour of being visible is most notably observed at the VIP section of any given stadium.

The fact that FA officials become Big Men is also true in respect to players. Ivorian star Didier Drogba is a 'national hero' to such an extent that to 'be associated with him can bring a lot of political gain to public personalities including politicians'.³³⁹ A Big Man in Liberia, George Weah 'seems to support a whole industry of Weah worshippers frequently found in his hotel and bar'.³⁴⁰ In Ghana, Abedi "Ayew" Pele has acquired a legendary, almost superhuman status. I saw him park his Hummer in front of the Black Stars hotel during the 2008 African Cup of Nations. Out stepped the Big Man, followed by his wife and his football-playing sons. Everybody wanted to be around the Maestro, asking him for an autograph, an interview or just a favour. Coaches, referees and supporters too can earn a name, albeit on an evidently smaller scale.³⁴¹

Finally, the game offers Big Men who suffer from a bad reputation the opportunity to earn themselves a respectable name. I have earlier said that some Big Men in Ghana were accused of being involved in illegal activities (chapter 3). During an interview with a Ghanaian journalist, Herbert Mensah claimed that the majority of club officials are 'borderline semi-criminals'.³⁴² There are nevertheless two sides to the medallion. Big Men who earn a name through football sometimes lose it. Jean-Baptiste Nguini-Effa, founder of Renaissance Ngoumou, lost his respectability when he was sent to prison on account of embezzling state funds.³⁴³ The same goes for Issa Bongam, president of PWD Bamenda during my fieldwork in 2003, whom supporters described as a 'very, very important man'. Bongam was later accused of embezzling state funds, after which he reportedly fled the country.

The example of Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin has to be mentioned. A traditional ruler of a village named Balikumbat in Cameroon's Northwest Region, Fon Doh became famous as president of CAMMARK Bamenda. According to several supporters in Bamenda, the fon was an avid football fan. Supporter Cleopas

remembered how Fon Doh always sat next to the coach and players on the reserves bench during matches. In 2010, I unsuccessfully tried to interview him. It appeared that the traditional ruler had other things on his mind, having been summoned to court on the charge of murdering a politician. 'He was a great man, a powerful fon,' said Cleopas. 'We all knew him for his involvement in CAMMARK. But now he has lost everything. He has no more powers.'

In sum, we have seen how the symbolic value of teams depends on the way people identify with them. Clubs and national teams have histories, traditions and rituals that are passed on from generation to generation. Many Big Men are sons of the soil who see their involvement in football both as a privilege and an obligation. They finance and run teams that are based in their ancestral areas and in return are admired and respected by the community – in short, they increase their symbolic capital. In Africa, the link between football on the one hand and honour and prestige on the other is mostly a result of ethnicity being arguably the strongest source of team allegiance. Ethnicity, in turn, is closely related to politics and power. This leads us to the next chapter, which deals with social (and by implication political) capital.

Politics, power and the football map

An order of chicken with rice and a Castle beer arrives at my table. Here, at the Bus Stop restaurant alongside Accra's Ring Road, I arranged a meeting with Harry Zakkour. A son of a Lebanese father and a Ghanaian mother, Zakkour owns this restaurant and the night club next door. A car stops in front of the terrace and out steps the Big Man. When he pulls up a chair, he announces his allegiance to one of the world's most popular clubs. 'Anybody here will tell you that I am a Man United fan.'

Harry Zakkour enjoys extraordinary fame. He owes this to the fact that Hearts of Oak won the treble in the 2000 season: The Premier League, the FA Cup and, most important of all, the CAF Champions League.³⁴⁴ It was the first time Hearts won the continent's most prestigious club competition.³⁴⁵ As CEO of Hearts, Zakkour was largely credited for these successes. Hearts had an aura of invincibility in those days, winning several Premier League titles in a row and beating Asante Kotoko 4-0 in 2000.

Zakkour's position later came under threat after he fired a popular coach. He was also accused of embezzling club funds. 'I have used my money to run the club and it is unfair for people to say that I am in Hearts for financial gains,' he said.³⁴⁶ Although Zakkour quit his post, he never left. At a Congress in November 2005, he was elected to a position on the Board of Directors, which proved he was still quite popular. 'The fans listen to me because I did a lot,' he explains. 'Hearts never won the Champions League but in my time of office we won the title. I am the godfather of the club.'

Unlike most Big Men in football, Zakkour publicly announced his desire to enter politics. 'I am a key member of the NDC, a party I love so much,' he told the Kumasi-based radio station Angel FM early in 2009.³⁴⁷ 'It's through football that I'm going into politics,' he tells me at the Bus Stop restaurant. 'Football does a lot. Everybody knows me.' In December 2009, Zakkour was elected the NDC Chairman of Korley-Klottey constituency in Accra. His victory was marred in

controversy. Reports indicate that he was hand-picked by a regional politician,³⁴⁸ critics also argued that he was unqualified and that he did not own an NDC membership card.³⁴⁹

Mixing football with politics

Harry Zakkour is one of those Big Men in Africa who evidently understand the game's political ramifications. As we will see, his club Hearts of Oak is linked to one of Ghana's two main political parties, the NDC. Hearts thus possesses social capital to the extent that club officials and supporters tend to be part of a political network. In a way, it can be argued that Zakkour (at least partly) owes his management position to the support he gives the NDC party. In another way, however, it can also be argued that the Big Man's attachment to Hearts increases his political capital.

This chapter deals with the political benefits of social capital in football. It has to be noted that FIFA as well as CAF frown upon such mixing of football and politics. But, as one Nigerian Minister of Sports once said, to say that sports and politics should not mix is 'hypocritical'.³⁵⁰ Indeed, football and politics are so intertwined in Africa that it can almost be taken for granted that a Big Man would want to get involved for political purposes. We have earlier seen how the game's symbolic capital increases a Big Man's popularity and social standing (chapter 4). Social capital increases a Big Man's chances of gaining a foothold in the political arena. Let us first take a look at how African presidents have used football for various purposes.

Ideologies, image and the presidency

While Africans tended to challenge colonial rule through football (see the examples of Zanzibar and Algeria in chapter 2), from the late 1950s onwards the game was used as a tool for bringing ethnic groups together and fostering a sense of nationalism among the populations of Africa's independent nations. Indeed, the links between football and nation-building processes have been notably strong throughout the continent. Paul Darby emphasises the role of the formation of CAF in 1957 in this respect:

The need for the co-ordination of the game throughout the continent was great, but the promotion of a pan-African sporting body, which limited its membership to independent states, was also indicative of the general political mood at that time. The inception of CAF was crucial in a political sense in that it lent considerable weight to the use of the game as a tool for asserting national and pan-African identity and represented a highly visible podium for mediating that identity throughout Africa and on a global basis.³⁵¹

In fact, Africa's international influences grew significantly through its involvement in sports. Africa's boycott of the 1976 Olympics in Montreal is testimony

to that. Yet while football invokes a sense of nationalism during international tournaments, the game's tendency towards divisiveness and violence has been 'counterproductive in the uphill struggle to nationhood of many African states'.³⁵²

African presidents have used the game for political and ideological purposes. I have mentioned the example of Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah. Without repeating what I wrote before (in chapter 2), I want to quote part of a speech he made after the first Cup of Champions Clubs in 1964 had just ended:

It is encouraging to note that with progress towards the attainment of African unity at the political and economic levels, the interchange of sport and cultural activities is making its influence felt in the creation of a healthy atmosphere for African Unity and total independence. It is for this reason, that I, as a citizen of Africa, have donated the Osagyefo Trophy for an annual African clubs championship to help consolidate the foundation of a continental movement to bring all Africa together in the field of sports.³⁵³

Whereas Nkrumah strove to promote pan-Africanism, presidents in countries such as Ethiopia, Tanzania and Mozambique used the game to promote Africanised forms of socialism and Marxism (often with the assistance of the USSR). Others, among whom Hastings Banda, Mobutu Sese Seko, Idi Amin Dada, Bakili Muluzi and Kenneth Kaunda, seemed to have appropriated the game's appeal mainly for personal reasons. Kaunda even named Zambia's national team after himself: KK XI.

Presidents employ a variety of methods to link their own personas and their governments/countries to football. Examples include naming stadiums either after themselves or key events in their nations' history and organising international tournaments. For instance, Cameroon celebrated the unification of East and West Cameroon in the same year the country hosted the African Cup of Nations (in 1972). In case of successes, presidents organise festivities of various kinds. When Togo qualified for the World Cup on 10 October 2005, president Faure Gnassingbé declared it a national holiday. 'In giving his people a day off, President Gnassingbe was continuing a long and not always honourable tradition, but I'm sure it was an act that won him many new supporters,' a commentator on African football wrote.³⁵⁴

An African president is commonly considered the father of the nation which, by implication, makes national team players his sons.³⁵⁵ Pre-tournament rituals include gatherings during which the players are urged to perform their patriotic duties. Post-tournament rituals include welcoming back the squad and presenting players with gifts (bonuses, cars, houses, honorary titles – although these are usually mere promises).³⁵⁶ Unlucky squads undergo punishment when disobeying their father and failing to live up to his expectations. Eliminated at the 2000 African Cup of Nations, Ivory Coast's national team was sent to a military camp for four days. 'What you have done is not undignified for a country like ours,'

said general Robert Gueï. ‘If you get Ivory Coast into shame again you will be locked up for a longer period – of eighteen months.’³⁵⁷

The politicisation of football sometimes takes a negative turn as dictators have been in the habit of using the game to their advantage. Motubu Sese Seko and Idi Amin fit into this category. General Sani Abacha is another example (see also chapter 2). Hosting and winning the 1994 African Cup of Nations gave Abacha’s regime media attention which by all standards it did not deserve. Autocratic regimes in particular have made use of the game’s appeal, which is still true, considering the fact that recent African Cup of Nations tournaments were hosted by Angola (2010), Gabon and Equatorial Guinea (2012). As African presidents tend to stay in power much longer than is democratically feasible, football – as symbolic capital – is often used as part of a variety of methods to legitimise their personal rule. For an interesting example in this respect, let us briefly travel to Central-West Africa, namely Cameroon.

Sworn in for a sixth term in 2011, president Paul Biya and his wife Chantal have lived in Yaoundé’s presidential palace for three decades now. Over the years, Biya became known as the Maradona of Cameroon, one who manages to dribble past his political foes and continues to score goals in the political arena.³⁵⁸ He is said to have understood that football, Cameroonians’ favourite pastime, has the capacity to mask the realities of economic and political despair. Perhaps a more important realisation that follows from this example, however, is that a president’s involvement in football is no guarantee for success. He often takes a risk for a ‘close association’ with the game can ‘seriously damage the reputations of political figures’.³⁵⁹

The then prime minister Paul Biya and protégé of president Ahmadou Ahidjo took over the presidency when the latter voluntarily stepped down in 1982. At that time, Cameroon was recognised as an African economic success story. The same could not be said of the performances of the Indomitable Lions. Whereas Cameroonian clubs performed more than admirably at a continental level, the national team had not won any significant titles during Ahidjo’s tenure in office. Coincidentally or not, Biya’s reign marked the beginning of unbridled national football successes. Cameroon won the African Cup of Nations in 1984, 1988, 2000 and 2002, collected a Gold medal at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, and participated at six World Cup finals from 1982 to 2010, which is a record in Africa.

There was an overwhelming feeling of optimism when Biya came into power. In 1985 he changed Ahidjo’s CNU party into the Cameroon People’s Democratic Party (CPDM). In a rather ironic move, the party adopted the motto “Unity, Progress and Democracy”. Biya broke away from Ahidjo’s autocratic rule and introduced a so-called New Deal philosophy in which he advocated a policy of

“rigour and moralization”. At least three events negatively changed the general mood. First, Biya soon abandoned his policy and turned to the so-called *Beti Lobby*, meaning the appointment of members of his own ethnic group to top positions.³⁶⁰ Second, the country’s economic climate deteriorated from the late 1980s onwards. Oil revenues dried up, international cash crop prices plummeted and Cameroon’s external debts rose. Third, calls for democracy were heard throughout Africa (and elsewhere) by the end of the 1980s.

The late 1980s and early 90s were trying times for Biya and the CPDM. He was forced to allow multi-party politics which led to the founding of numerous opposition parties. Luckily for him, the Indomitable Lions had just reached the quarter finals of the World Cup. Since he had made sure Roger Milla was included in the squad, Biya could take (some of) the credits. He declared the day on which the Lions returned home a national holiday and then used the Indomitable Lions’ image during his campaign for the 1992 presidential elections, as Paul Nkwi and Bea Vidacs state:

Biya’s propaganda machine created an election poster divided into two panels: On one side the president, on the other side a lion with the words ‘Courage Man – Lion Man’ written over both images. On one of the panels it also says ‘My President Paul Biya’. People often sarcastically refer to the president as *Lion Man*.³⁶¹

Whereas V.J. Ngoh argues that many ‘Cameroonians began to look at the CPDM as a winning organization’,³⁶² Biya’s use of the national team was nevertheless frowned upon by sections of the population.³⁶³ Worse, it was widely believed that Biya had rigged the elections and that opposition leader Ni John Fru Ndi had won instead. The opposition, referring to the event as the “stolen elections”, called for a strike on 11 October 1993. As it turned out, the national team played a World Cup qualifier against Zimbabwe on 10 October. The Lions won and qualified for the World Cup. Biya declared 11 October, the day on which the squad returned home, a public holiday. And so the strike was effectively called off.³⁶⁴

The 1994 World Cup campaign made it clear that Biya’s close association with the national team is not necessarily a winning formula. For one thing, the Indomitable Lions performed horribly. Prior to the tournament, prime minister Simon Achidi Achu had initiated a national collection called *Opération Coup de Coeur*. Amidst poverty, Cameroonians were asked for donations to fund the Lions’ stay in the United States. But when the national team’s first match ended in a draw and they lost the second and the third (the last one by 6-1), Cameroonians who phoned in to make comments on radio started to criticise Biya and his government. As Vidacs notes, ‘the callers of the program were implying that if the government appropriated the glory of 1990, it should also take the blame

for the shame of 1994'.³⁶⁵ Moreover, it was unclear what was done with the billion CFA francs that was generated by *Opération Coup de Coeur*.

The 1998 World Cup campaign did not go as well as planned either. While Biya had made sure that preparations went well this time around, the Lions again could not get past the group stage. This time Biya found a scapegoat in the person of the Hungarian referee Laszlo Vagner, who had denied the Cameroonians a penalty in their last match against Chile. He thus presented the national team's World Cup campaign as a stolen victory. This gave the opposition the ammunition to link the match to the "stolen elections" in 1992.³⁶⁶ Although Cameroon picked up African Cup of Nations titles in 2000 and 2002, things turned ugly when the national team failed to qualify for the 2006 World Cup. It was said that Biya forbade the coach to select Pierre Womé, who had missed a last-minute penalty in the decisive qualifier against Egypt.

In the months leading up to the 2010 World Cup, rumours indicated that Biya planned to switch the presidential elections from 2011 to 2010.³⁶⁷ It was claimed that he wanted to cash in on the national team's successes in South Africa. The political ramifications were already visible on Saturday 6 July 2009, the day on which the new coach Paul Le Guen arrived at Yaoundé airport. Three days of excessive festivities were organised in the Frenchman's honour in what was undoubtedly a political show.³⁶⁸ Unfortunately for Biya, the national team stranded in the group phase yet again.

Overall, it appears that Biya wins elections with or without football, which was proven once again when he won the 2011 presidential elections. Early in 2010, one of the ministers in his cabinet gave Biya a new nickname, Elephant Man. 'For 27 years Biya has distinguished himself as the most prestigious animal in the forest,' said the minister, '(which is) the great elephant, still very energetic to sail the nation through any troubled waters.'³⁶⁹

Clubs, political parties and the football map

It is evident that there are connections between clubs, ethnic groups and political parties in Africa. An example can be found in Zimbabwe. Highlanders FC's home base is Bulawayo in Matabeleland, which is inhabited by the Ndebele ethnic group; Dynamos FC's home ground is Harare in Mashonaland, the territory of the Shona ethnic group. While the majority of the Ndebele supported Joshua Nkomo's ZAPU party, most Shona backed Robert Mugabe's ZANU party. When thousands of Ndebele were killed during the *Gukurahundi* campaign in the 1980s, Nkomo was forced to merge with ZANU to form the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Party (ZANU-PF). These days several ZANU-PF barons act as patrons and chairmen of Dynamos. When the club

barely escaped relegation in 2005, celebrations were attended by government officials, among whom ZANU-PF ministers.³⁷⁰

Sometimes clubs are directly linked to powerful figures within the government. It is widely believed that Tonnerre Yaoundé has (had) close relations to the Cameroonian government, especially in the 1980s. At least one minister (of Education) used to be part of the club's management. Another political figure and director of Tonnerre was Omgba Damase, who acted as president Biya's confidante. General Pierre Semengue, Biya's former Chief of Staff, was a prominent leader of Tonnerre as well. Another of Biya's ministers, Ferdinand Edima Koungou, was president of Canon Yaoundé in the 1970s. Although Tonnerre and Canon were and still are linked to powerful men in Yaoundé, I did not get the impression that Cameroonians overly associated these clubs with the CPDM party.

This begs the question when a club and a political party are indeed perceived to be connected to one another. Let me present three general indicators. First, a partial or complete overlap between a club's home territory and a political party's foremost stronghold of support may suggest a link. A second indicator may be the presence of members of the same party in a club's management over a longer period of time. Third, club officials who use the popularity of the club to enhance a political party's visibility among the wider population may also be indicative of a close connection. Examples of the third indicator include political rallies that start or end at the club's training grounds and banners featuring party slogans on the stands during top encounters.

These three indicators applied to football in Tanzania a few decades ago. There existed relationships between the Young Africans Sports Club (now Yanga) and the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) on the one hand and the Wananchi Sports Club and the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) in Zanzibar on the other. Since political rallies were prohibited but group meetings under the header of sports were allowed, party members used club meetings as a place to discuss politics.³⁷¹ Young Africans and Wananchi also maintained relations with each other, and matches between the two were used to raise funds for the parties.³⁷² H.S. Ndee describes the interconnections between the clubs and the parties thus:

Both sports clubs had played an important role in the activities of the two political parties in their struggle for independence for their respective countries. It is thus fair to state that the involvement of the top leadership of the country in the affairs of the two sports clubs was aimed at bonding to them, for further use, the affiliates who had been useful for them in the past. After all participants and spectators were potential voters who could be subjected to political indoctrination. One immediate result was the expansion and consolidation of the parties in terms of numbers of members. For example, all members of Wananchi were automatically members of the ASP on the Isles. Correspondingly, the majority of the members of

the Young Africans Sports Club were members of the ruling party, TANU, on mainland Tanzania.³⁷³

Two events in particular are cited by researchers as being exemplary of the relationships between Young Africans–TANU and Wananchi–ASP, and especially between the four of them. In 1970 the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council approved a \$300,000 donation for the construction of a new clubhouse for Young Africans. The building's foundation stone was laid by Zanzibar's president Abeid Amani Karume (who would later become vice president of Tanzania) in 1971. Julius Nyerere, the then president of Tanzania and leader of the TANU party, was also said to have visited the clubhouse. The other event relates to a crisis within the ranks of Young Africans halfway through the 1970s. When a coach accused his superiors of embezzling club funds, the TANU-dominated government fired the management team.³⁷⁴

The three indicators also apply to Ghana's two "glamorous" clubs, Hearts of Oak and Asante Kotoko. A commonly held belief is that Hearts and Kotoko are affiliated to the country's biggest political parties, respectively the NDC and NPP. It appears that these links are a result both of the fact that top club officials occupy top positions within these parties and that supporters of both clubs tend to support these parties as well. Indeed, a survey within three parliamentary constituencies conducted by K.S. Fridy and V. Brobbey suggests that 'respondents who support Hearts are more likely to support the NDC than respondents who support Kotoko, and respondents who support Kotoko are more likely to support the NPP than respondents who support Hearts'.³⁷⁵ Moreover, political rallies have been organised by Hearts and Kotoko supporters in relation to the NDC and NPP, respectively. I will discuss the case further below.

The links between clubs, ethnic groups, political parties and regions give rise to what I call the football map. It means that by looking at clubs' home turfs in a single league one can deduce the geography of political power *vis-à-vis* opposition. A history of clubs and league tables, then, forms a football map which, in turn, underscores the idea that football mirrors society. 'Just as it is easy to analyse Kenyan politics along ethnic lines,' W.W.S. Njororai argues, 'the same applies to sport especially football.'³⁷⁶ This argument leads to two assumptions: First, that the biggest and most successful clubs are often (but not always) located in the capital and controlled by dominant ethno-political groups; and second, that underperforming, marginalised clubs are often (but not always) located in opposition strongholds and controlled by dominated ethnic groups.

The second assumption is related to minority ethnic groups. Njororai describes a minority as 'an ethnic group having a distinctive presence within a society yet having little political power relative to other groups within a society'.³⁷⁷ The minority-majority dichotomy in Africa is related to ethnic politics and signifies a

difference in social-cultural, economic and political power within the borders of a nation-state. Indeed, minorities form a distinctive part of the football map. Earlier I mentioned the example of the Berbers controlling the Algerian club JS Kabylie (chapter 2), whose success in fact clearly is an exception to the premise that clubs owned by marginalised groups are underperformers. I also provided the example of the Anglophones in Cameroon who control the popular club PWD Bamenda. The latter case is discussed further below.

For an elaboration of the first assumption we will once again travel to Cameroon, a country where football is heavily enmeshed with ethno-politics (or 'political tribalism', as Peter Geschiere, following John Lonsdale, calls it).³⁷⁸ While president Ahidjo adhered to a politics of regionalism to keep powerful ethnic groups satisfied, the dominance of the CPDM and Biya's favouritism towards his Beti kinsmen led to a distinctly visible football map. This, in turn, was mainly a result of the introduction of multi-party politics. The Social Democratic Front (SDF), led by Ni John Fru Ndi and based in Bamenda, was and still is widely supported by Anglophones in the Northwest and Southwest Regions. The Union of the Peoples of Cameroon (UPC) maintained links with the Bamileke and Bassa of the West and Littoral Regions. Biya's CPDM drew most of its support among the Beti ethnic group of the Centre and South Regions.³⁷⁹

Cameroon's top league is influenced by these ethno-political divisions. Most clubs in the Southwest, Northwest, West and Littoral Regions are associated with respectively the Anglophones, Bamileke and Bassa. Clubs such as PWD Bamenda (Anglophones, Northwest), Union Douala (Bamileke, Littoral) and Racing Bafoussam (Bamileke, West) thus belong to opponents of Biya and the CPDM. Most clubs in the Centre and South Regions are linked to the Beti. Clubs such as Canon and Tonnerre Yaoundé (Beti, Centre) and Colombe Sangmélima (Beti/Bulu, South, Biya's home town) are perceived to be controlled by people who support Biya. Since PWD Bamenda and the SDF party are dealt with further below, I will now focus on the Bamileke vs the Beti.

Historically speaking, the biggest rivalries existed between clubs from Yaoundé and Douala and, to a lesser extent, between clubs from Yaoundé and Bafoussam. Matches between Racing Bafoussam and Union Douala (the biggest Bamileke clubs) on the one hand and Tonnerre and Canon Yaoundé (the biggest Beti clubs) on the other have invariably had a political undertone. Once a first-class referee, Louis-Marie Ongoum described officiating a match between Union and Tonnerre in Yaoundé. At a score of 1-0 in favour of Tonnerre, Ongoum granted Union a penalty. He was immediately surrounded by Tonnerre players and, according to Ongoum, Roger Milla said: 'On marque le pénalty et tu est mort' ('Allow that penalty to be taken and you're dead'). The referee's report on

what happened after Union scored, includes references to being beaten up and urgently having to visit the hospital.³⁸⁰

Racing Bafoussam was the Bamileke's most successful club in the late 1980s and early 1990s, winning league titles in 1989, 1992, 1993 and 1995.³⁸¹ Encounters between Racing on the one hand and Tonnerre or Canon on the other were generally chaotic, violent and frightening. The animosity grew in the aftermath of the elections in October 1992. Incidentally, Racing and Canon were pitted against each other at the stadium in Yaoundé in the final league round on 31 October. The author of an article in the newspaper *Le Quotidien* witnessed 'disturbing scenes' during the match as Canon supporters attacked their Racing counterparts. It was clear from the verbal and physical abuse of supporters on both sides that the encounter bore a direct link to recent political events.³⁸²

Ethnic and political tensions have never ceased to play a role in Cameroonian football.³⁸³ In July 2008, Foudre Akonolinga (Beti, Centre Region) and Aigle Royal Menoua (Bamileke, West Region) played each other in the semi-final of the Cup of Cameroon.³⁸⁴ The encounter was decided in favour of Aigle during the second leg in Dschang. When the news reached Akonolinga, Beti residents started beating up Bamileke, killing one person. Although the immediate cause of the violence was the news that the Foudre delegation had been molested in Dschang,³⁸⁵ the underlying causes were linked to politics. Foudre's secretary-general was quoted as saying that there 'are ten Bamileke clubs in the Elite One league. This is not normal. We, the people of the Center Region, must unite against them. The Bamileke clubs win through fraud.'³⁸⁶ The violence once again highlighted the hatred between the two groups.

The route from football to politics

In 2010 TP Mazembe won the CAF Champions League title by beating Espérance Tunis 6-1 on aggregate. Moreover, Les Corbeaux (the Ravens) made it to the final of the FIFA Club World Cup, the first time an African club ever managed to do so. As a son of the soil, club president Moise Katumbi Chapwe enjoys massive support in Lubumbashi and the wider Katanga Province. Perhaps somewhere in the future Katumbi will decide to run for president. He certainly would not be the first to take the route from club president to actual president. Ghana's president John Evans Atta Mills and his predecessor John Kufuor both switched the chairmanship of Hearts and Kotoko, respectively, for Osu Castle (the presidential residence).

Nigerians are quite familiar with this particular career path. Nnamdi Azikiwe, once a gifted athlete, founded his club Zik's Athletic Club (ZAK) in 1938. For a while, ZAK was Nigeria's only native-controlled club. The team travelled the country on good-will tours during which Azikiwe held anti-colonial post-match

speeches. Azikiwe held several political positions as a member of the Mambili Party. In 1960 he became Nigeria's first president.³⁸⁷ More recently, Orji Uzor Kalu, at the time governor of Abia State and president of Enyimba FC, steered the team towards CAF Champions League titles in 2003 and 2004. Kalu was later crowned Pillar of Sport, an honorary title that originally belonged to another footballing Big Man, M.K.O. Abiola. Kalu later unsuccessfully ran for president. 'I believe the state of football in Nigeria is dead,' one club owner said. 'The clubs are run as political tools, not as businesses.'³⁸⁸

The link between football and politics is a two-way street. On the other hand, one can see parliamentarians (MPs), ministers, party leaders and chairmen of committees, among others, getting involved by taking up club and/or FA positions. In Africa, politicians interfere with anything related to football, for instance by discussing it in parliament. Cameroon's Minister of Sports was booed by MPs when he explained the national team's disappointing results at the 2010 African Cup of Nations. When he suggested that spiritual forces had caused the Lions' demise, MPs shouted 'Resign! Resign!'.³⁸⁹ Ghanaian MPs congratulated the Black Stars on reaching the final at the same tournament. Despite the fact that several MPs criticised the Minister of Sports, Honourable Osei Kyei-Mensah-Bonsu (NPP) made the following comment:

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to also rise to add my voice to congratulate the Black Stars for the wonderful display of football artistry last Sunday. (...) We all saw that the current Black Stars, which represented us in Angola, was indeed an under-strength conglomeration of players. They struggled through but they were extremely determined and committed to do their country proud and they succeeded in doing just that. Madam Speaker, we should highly commend them for their steadfastness. Madam Speaker, all of us Ghanaians should learn useful lessons in commitment and dedication from these young lads.³⁹⁰

On the other end stand Big Men – usually self-made businessmen or company directors, but also traditional rulers, military leaders and even former footballers, among others – who use their financial strength to sponsor clubs and increase their visibility in public life. It seems that such Big Men got increasingly involved in football when multi-party politics allowed them to attach themselves to political parties. Kojo Fianoo, CEO of AshantiGold FC, argues that this happened in Ghana after Jerry Rawlings' ascendancy to power in the 1980s. 'When the Revolution came and the country was driven towards democracy, all those who wanted to go into politics aligned themselves to clubs,' Fianoo told me. 'That was the way in which they could project their own names. People came to know them through football. When the ban on political parties was lifted, their names were already in the minds of people.'

Photo 5.1 A Hearts of Oak player performs a prayer before the match between Hearts and Asante Kotoko at the packed Ohene Djan Stadium in Accra



The route from football to politics also occurs in Cameroon. It also has a historical trajectory, as this account by Clignet and Stark with regard to the 1970s testifies:

While clubs are able to benefit from the network of influences established by a successful member of the élite, this also tends to reinforce his socio-economic and political pre-eminence. In the framework of a one-party state, the ability to mobilize popular energies around sports is often viewed as evidence of the local power held by an individual who becomes correspondingly a more valuable political asset. In Cameroun, as apparently elsewhere in French-speaking Africa, club presidents and league officials are often chosen as political candidates, and in return their increased status is used for the benefit of the players themselves.³⁹¹

An interesting example comes from the West Region. Over the last twenty years the top league regularly boasted of at least six Bamileke-owned clubs.³⁹² ‘The Bamileke are the richest people and they love spending money on football,’ said spiritual adviser Zé. It is claimed that their sponsoring of clubs is politically motivated (see also the politics of belonging in chapter 4). This is what Zé told me in 2003:

Let’s take Mount Cameroon. Their president is in parliament. The president of Bamboutos Mbouda is in parliament. The president of Racing Bafoussam is in parliament. The president of Fovu Baham is in parliament. They use their clubs to gain popularity so that the people vote for them. They use football as a stepping stone to a political career. Without football they wouldn’t have been known. Everybody will vote for someone who sponsors football. And they [the voters] also know that when he [the Big Man] is in Yaoundé he will continue to sponsor the club and the region. The club presidents know that they have to spend money first and get it back when they enter parliament. It’s all corrupted money. As parliamentarians they can do anything. Parliamentarians normally receive millions of CFA francs to develop their own regions. You cannot compare, let’s say, 100 million CFA francs to the money they spend on the club.

Zé’s statement reveals two issues. First, one becomes an MP by gaining a majority of votes in one’s division, which means that Big Men who run “their” community-based clubs have a fair chance of getting elected. Second, Big Men who spend their money on a club think it will pay off once they get into politics. The perception is that there is nothing as financially rewarding as a career in politics.³⁹³

Calvin Foinding, president of Mount Cameroon FC, is a case in point. The businessman originates from the Koung-Khi division in the West Region. He once was the president of a traditional club named Stade Bandjoun. Around this time Foinding successfully ran for public office through the CPDM and became the division’s elected representative at the National Assembly in Yaoundé. I do not know whether his political career jumpstarted because he was club president (and the Big Man appears to have remained silent on the issue), but this assumption would most likely not be far off the mark. Foinding’s private club Mount Cameroon relegated to a lower division in 2009. Former player Essomba offered

one reason for its demise. ‘The president didn’t care about football anymore since he became a politician,’ he said.

From all indications it can be stated that many of the Big Men who take the route from club official to politics resort to populist discourse. To be sure, football is a sport for the masses. Whoever wants support for voting purposes needs to appeal to the problems of the man in the street. Ni John Fru Ndi is one club president-turned-political leader who has been labelled a populist and a rhetorician.³⁹⁴ His road to fame is said to have started when he took up the presidency of PWD Bamenda in the late 1970s. His popularity gained momentum when he became the chairman of the SDF. At his compound in the Ntarikon area in Bamenda, Fru Ndi said he thought people at least partly voted for him due to his achievements as club president:

People came to know me and they saw my sacrificing spirit and because of my ability to do certain things, they came to respect me. When I formed the party, the spirit of what I had done in PWD followed me into the party. People who had seen me on the field said: “If he’s with the party we will support him because we saw how he handled his players on the field.”

Another example of a Big Man who uses a populist discourse is the aforementioned Harry Zakkour. As one of Hearts’ most successful CEOs ever, Zakkour enjoys wide support and popularity among Hearts sympathisers. In 2009, management member Frank Nelson Nwokolo called the former CEO his ‘senior brother’ and explained his status within the club to me:

In his time as CEO he [Zakkour] did well very. He’s somebody who’s always very close to the team. He’s the kind of person you can run to when the team is not doing well. He still wants to show his support and he will always help out. When we were about to visit the former coach of Hearts [Jones Attuquayefio, who was ill at the time] I called Harry and he said: “I will be there.” That shows you his moral support. It’s not only money that helps. His presence is also very important. And there are a lot of supporters who like him, so it’s good to have someone of that calibre around. It brings the club together.

Zakkour’s appeal to the ordinary man – and the not-so-subtle political motivations behind it – was obvious during our conversation at the Bus Stop restaurant in Accra:

I just want to help people like them [he points to a couple of Ghanaian journalists sitting at our table]. I feel sorry for them. I see how these people live. This guy here works for a radio station. What future does he have? He has to work hard, maybe marry a girl, save a little money, and pay the rent. (...) But what does he get? Nothing! (...) Every government comes in and says: “I will do this and that.” The minute they get into power they forget about the poor people who voted for them. But I want this man to enjoy! He’s a young man. If he doesn’t have a roof over his head, the boy can be a prostitute, he can be an armed robber. But if he has a house and he has paid for it for 20 years, if he is not there the children will take over the house. (...) These are the people who vote! It’s not the rich people who vote. That’s the reason why I want to get into politics.

Finally, a top position in football administration not seldom leads to a political career. This relationship is not new, as Jeffrey points out in his study on Sharpe-

ville (South Africa). Described as the Transvaal's most important football administrator, George Thabe controlled the game for fifteen years, having been elected president of the Transvaal Football Association in 1965 and the South African National Football Association (SANFA) in 1970. Jeffrey argues that such Big Men used their status and position to stand as candidates in local government elections. Thabe was elected chairman of the Transvaal Triangle Community Council in 1977.³⁹⁵ Kenyan FA officials too have gone on to become politicians. For instance, Kenneth Matiba was KFF chairman (1974-78) before becoming MP, minister and presidential candidate.³⁹⁶

Several Big Men have made comparisons between football politics and actual politics. Joseph Ade Coker compared his career as a NDC politician to his time as vice president of Ghana's FA. 'I am finding my party politics administration easier because I have been toughened by football administration, which is more difficult and demanding on (a) daily basis,' he told a news agency. Although he admitted that party politics was 'dirty' he said that 'football politics is the dirtiest as people can directly barricade your office and call for your outright dismissal'.³⁹⁷ The aforementioned George Thabe was described as having the 'patience and skill of a Grand Master' with which he 'eliminated all effective opposition' as a football administrator:

This reference to the game of chess suggests the degree of manipulation and control required, as well as the political skill doing so. Indeed, such was the politicking in the sporting world, it is not surprising that community politics in Sharpeville has been dominated by people who originally made a name for themselves in the arena of sport.³⁹⁸

Similar statements were made by Ni John Fru Ndi. 'I came to know people,' the former president of PWD Bamenda said. 'I came to know the intricacies of governing people when they came to social events like football. I learned to challenge the referees, the FECAFOOT. If I have gained anything from football that I have used in politics is that I became outspoken.'

The club and the party: Hearts vs Kotoko

As it turned out, Sunday 8 February 2009 was a very bad day for sympathisers of Asante Kotoko. On that day, Hearts of Oak travelled to Kumasi for the Ghanaian version of Spain's *El Clásico*.³⁹⁹ As usual, officials and supporters of both teams had hurled insults at one another and had accused the other team of dirty play in the run-up to the match, particularly with regard to bribery and juju. Many thousands of Kotoko fans occupied the stands at the Baba Yara Stadium, only to see their team lose the match 1-2. Intense heat, too many spectators and poorly trained security personnel led to four deaths and more than 400 injured spectators. Kotoko's Belgian coach Maurice Cooreman was fired a few days later.

The match was a reasonably typical encounter between Ghana's two biggest clubs. There was only one thing that was out of the ordinary. Ghana had just witnessed a highly contested presidential election. Nana Akufo-Addo, the candidate of the New Patriotic Party (NPP), had taken on John Evans Atta Mills, who was attached to the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The first round remained undecided, as both candidates failed to pass the required 50 percent vote margin. The run-off took place on 28 December 2008. After a prolonged counting of the votes, Mills was elected president. The match between Hearts and Kotoko six weeks later was seen as a rerun of the elections. 'That's why people say we won twice,' one Hearts supporter told me.

It is important to provide a brief historical background if we want to understand these clubs' links to Ghana's two biggest political parties. Although Hearts and Kotoko were both founded during the colonial days, it is argued that the basis of their rivalry can be traced back to the 1950s. To say that the rivalry between the two clubs is based on ethnicity – Hearts being Ga, Kotoko being Ashanti – is only part of the story, especially in the case of Hearts. The animosity between Hearts and Kotoko is rather more predicated on the basis of Accra as the centre of the government and Kumasi as the centre of the government's main opposition. It is, in short, a mixture between ethnicity and politics with an emphasis on the latter.

Before the launch of the National League, Accra and Kumasi organised regional leagues and several regional FAs existed throughout the country. One administrator, Richard Akwei, proposed to form a national FA by the late 1940s, which finally led to the formation of two separate bodies. Akwei himself became the chairman of the Gold Coast Football Union while John Darkwa, who commanded support from the Ashanti Region, headed the Gold Coast and Ashanti Union. A tour by the national team to Great Britain brought the two factions together and a new FA – the United Gold Coast Amateur Football Association – was launched in October 1950. Darkwa, the new FA chairman, was soon voted out in favour of Akwei, a move that strained relations between Kotoko and the FA.⁴⁰⁰ Akwei finally resigned at a general meeting in September 1957, having been granted the allegedly worthless title of Life Patron.

Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah and his hand-picked football administrator Ohene Djan worsened relations between Accra and Kumasi. Ohene Djan launched the country's National League in 1958.⁴⁰¹ In the 1961/62 season, Nkrumah and Djan introduced their team Real Republikans which would 'offer leadership and inspiration to football clubs in the country'.⁴⁰² To their dismay, the other teams each had to give the Republikans their two best players. Kotoko, forced to let go of Baba Yara and Dogo Moro, threatened to abandon the league, prompting the administrators in Accra to replace the Porcupine Warriors with

another team. Kotoko finally gave in. Almost instantly, Kotoko and Republikans became enemies. Controversy ensued when Hearts played Republikans in the final league round.⁴⁰³ Although Akyeampong most likely favoured Kotoko, his recollection is revealing nonetheless:

But the match I will always remember was the last day of the season when Accra Hearts of Oak who were only a point behind Kotoko played against Ghana Republikans. Before the match, rumours floated round that both Clubs had agreed in advance that Accra Hearts of Oak should win the match to enable them to become the League champions instead of Kotoko – Republikans' traditional enemies. I went to the Accra Sports Stadium to watch the game and arrived just before the start. It was the funniest match I have seen in my life. From the point of view of soccer quality the game was a complete let down. Neither team could strike form. In the end, Hearts won and the two points enabled them to finish up with 44 points, as against Kotoko's 43 points.⁴⁰⁴

Bediako argues that this was perhaps Ghana's first-ever match-fixing scandal.⁴⁰⁵

On 1 July 1960, a Central Organization of Sports (COS) was formed with Ohene Djan as its first Director of Sports. Several fights between Kotoko and the COS would break out in the years to come. Towards the end of the 1962/63 season, Kotoko officials accused the Director of Sports of favouring Republikans and decided to finish the league on a 'non-scoring basis'.⁴⁰⁶ Real Republikans won the National League that season,⁴⁰⁷ but Ohene Djan denied having had any bias towards the Swedru-based club.⁴⁰⁸ The feud between Kotoko and Republikans continued, with the former accusing the latter of receiving help from Ohene Djan, even though Kotoko became league champion in 1964 and 1965.

Ghana's political climate exacerbated the controversy between Kotoko and Republikans. First, Nkrumah had installed a one-party system with his own Convention People's Party (CPP) at the helm. Republikans, nicknamed Osagyefo's Own Club, were perceived to be attached to Nkrumah's party. His main opposition came from the Ashanti Region in the person of J.B. Danquah, who unsuccessfully ran for president in 1960, and Kofi Abrefa Busia, who was prime minister between 1969 and 1972. Both men were involved in the opposition party National Liberation Movement (NLM, later renamed the United Party) and were said to be closely attached to Kotoko. Second, the cocoa crisis prior to Ghana's independence caused mutual distrust between the government in Accra and the opposition in Kumasi.⁴⁰⁹ Nkrumah himself saw the unrest as a 'struggle between a modern democratic government and the feudal power of traditional chiefs trying to protect the old order'.⁴¹⁰

When Nkrumah was overthrown in a *coup d'état* in 1966, Republikans was disbanded and the Black Stars' performances slumped, thereby ending Nkrumah's experiment in mixing football and politics.⁴¹¹ The opposition between Accra and Kumasi nevertheless remained visible in the rivalry between Hearts and Kotoko. As of today, the hegemony of both teams is unparalleled. Hearts and Kotoko have divided the vast majority of league titles amongst each other

between 1958 and 2010.⁴¹² Ghanaians say that one is either Hearts or Kotoko, which applies to everyone including journalists and referees (see chapter 8). Similarly, the country is split in two in terms of support for the NDC and the NPP. Although sympathisers of both clubs and parties can be found throughout the country, there is a correlation between Accra-Hearts of Oak-NDC and Kumasi-Asante Kotoko-NPP.⁴¹³

It is worth noting that officials and supporters on both sides tend to downplay or even deny the links between their clubs and the parties. Indeed, whoever speaks to the people around Hearts or Kotoko will hear them cite examples of NDC Big Men who were involved in Kotoko and NPP Big Men who were members of Hearts' management team. For instance, Dr. Nyaho Tamakloe, who is a member of the NPP, was chairman of Hearts in the 1980s. Another example is P.V. Obeng, a former minister of Rawlings, who acted as chairman of Kotoko's Board of Directors. 'It's not true that Hearts is NDC,' said Edmund Palmer, secretary of the National Chapters Committee. 'There's this idea that because the club and the ministers are based in Accra, they turn around to favour Hearts. But that's just a perception.'

Kojo Fianoo, CEO of AshantiGold FC, provided an explanation of how an NPP Big Man can become CEO of Hearts, despite the club's connections to the NDC party. He told me the following story in April 2009, a few months after NDC candidate Mills had won the presidential elections:

A couple of months ago I was to go to Hearts of Oak as the new Chief Executive Officer. Two people were interviewed and from the reports I was on top. Now I happen to be an NPP man. During the interview they asked me a question: "How do you see Hearts in the political dispensation?" I told them that Hearts has lost a lot of influence under NPP. When NPP came into power, nobody from Hearts could go to work and show their face. What Hearts wanted to do was this. If NPP had won the elections, Hearts would have appointed me as the CEO of the club to add some cloud of NPP to Hearts. But if NDC had won, they would have picked the other guy because the winner takes all. So when NPP lost, I told people I lost the job. And that's what happened.

Fianoo's case illustrates how an NPP member is able to become CEO of Hearts and it also signals the perception among Ghanaians of the necessity to always have a link with those in power. Moreover, his case presupposes the view that Hearts will reap the benefits if the NDC is in power and, vice versa, that Kotoko is at an advantage if the NPP controls the government. I will deal with this perception later on.

The idea that Hearts is linked to the NDC and Kotoko to the NPP has its roots in the tumultuous political events of the 1980s. After Nkrumah was deposed as president, successive military regimes ruled Ghana between 1966 and 1981. Then a Flight Lieutenant named Jerry Rawlings staged a *coup d'état* on 31 December 1981 and installed the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC). Rawlings soon made it clear that Hearts was the government club by wearing

Hearts' rainbow colours during Hearts vs Kotoko matches. Although matches between the two clubs were already tense, it can be argued that Rawlings made it worse. One match in Accra in 1989 became infamous when Kotoko team captain Sarfo Gyamfi refused to shake hands with the president. Kotoko loyalists opposed the fact that the match was organised to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the 4 June Revolution. Kotoko won the match on penalties.

Growing opposition to Rawlings' military rule, particularly by those who adhered to the Danquah-Busia tradition, forced the government to adopt a National Commission on Democracy. This finally led to the first presidential elections since 1979. Rawlings founded the NDC in 1992; the NPP was founded in the same year as well. On 3 November 1992, Rawlings won the presidential elections with 58.3 percent of the votes against 30.4 percent for NPP candidate Albert Adu Boahen. Since the NPP boycotted the parliamentary elections less than two months later, the NDC managed to collect 189 out of 200 seats. Rawlings and the NDC went on to win the presidential and parliamentary elections in 1996 as well.

Several powerful NDC politicians became part of Hearts's upper echelons. First of all, (P)NDC Big Men such as Ato Ahwoi, E.M. Commodore Mensah, Bright Akwetey and John Evans Atta Mills have all been involved in the affairs of Hearts.⁴¹⁴ One newspaper article suggests that Ahwoi, Akwetey and Mills were three of the five Big Men who effectively owned the club between 1994 and 2005.⁴¹⁵ Ato Ahwoi and E.M. Commodore Mensah, both of whom acted as PNDC Secretary under Rawlings, have been chairman of the Board of Directors. Hannah Tetteh, Harry Sawyerr, Aanaa Ennin, Thomas Okine and other NDC Big Men and Women also hold/held positions. Similarly, a number of NPP politicians took up positions in Kotoko's management. George Adusei Poku was a management member and a strong NPP supporter. The same goes for Afrifa Yamoah Ponkoh, who was an NPP member at the time he acted as management member. Another NPP politician, Kennedy Agyepong, was a Board member.

The link between football and politics surfaced again during the elections in 2000. Harry Zakkour (NDC) and Herbert Mensah (NPP) had become the CEOs of Hearts and Kotoko, respectively. The main presidential candidates were John Evans Atta Mills, formerly of Hearts, and John Kofi Agyekum Kufuor, formerly of Kotoko. Politics were introduced when Hearts refused a donation from Kufuor but accepted one from Mills instead. Mills' defeat at the hands of Kufuor, however, was unexpected in the light of recent football events. First, Hearts had thrashed Kotoko 4-0 in Accra in March 2000. Second, Hearts had reached the CAF Champions League final, which was played over two legs during the presidential elections.

Coincidentally, the 2004 elections were held at a time when both Hearts and Kotoko made it to the CAF Confederation Cup final, which was subsequently postponed because of 'political tension'.⁴¹⁶ On 4 December, a rally was organised at Hearts' training ground in Accra. NDC candidate Mills and Rawlings addressed the crowd, urging them to refrain from violence and stating that the NDC would win. Kufuor, however, was re-elected. Early in 2005, when Hearts won the Confederation Cup title by beating Kotoko, the trophy was presented to Kufuor. 'I am proud and happy to receive a second trophy from Hearts,' he said, continuing in a seemingly joking fashion: 'In 2001 you presented the Super Cup to me. This shows that perhaps there is some hidden relationships between the Club and President Kufuor, who is proving to be the lucky President to Hearts.'⁴¹⁷ Hearts went on to refuse a gift (a new team bus) from the president.

Finally, the 2008 elections pitted Mills against NPP candidate Nana Akufo-Addo. The first round was inconclusive, as neither of the two candidates gained a majority of votes. There were fears of violence leading up to the second round on 28 December after chaos had struck Kenya in the aftermath of the 2007 elections. Mills subsequently won the second round with the narrowest margin possible. A little while later, Hearts travelled to Kumasi and beat Kotoko 1-2 (see above). Not only was the victory linked to the elections, an investigation into the casualties revealed that too many spectators had been allowed into the Baba Yara Stadium. Sylvester Asare Owusu, CEO of Kotoko, was found guilty of illegally helping supporters gain entrance; he was banned for five years from all football-related activities. Asare Owusu went on to blame the NDC government and the new NDC Minister of Sports. 'Most members of the NDC are supporters of the Accra Hearts of Oak who just want to destroy Kotoko,' he said.⁴¹⁸

It is evident that the elections that pitted the NDC against the NPP had some sort of relationship with events happening between Hearts and Kotoko. One issue that needs to be addressed is whether an NDC government favours Hearts and, vice versa, whether the ruling NPP supports Kotoko. Fridy and Brobbey argue that that is indeed the perception in Ghana:

Thus, for a Kotoko supporter, the extremist fan/conspiracy theorist would suggest that the CPP government, and later those led by Rawlings, were against them and more favourable to the establishment clubs based in the country's capital city, particularly the Republikans and Hearts. (...) For a Hearts fan, the conspiracy theory would be that the NPP government and its earlier incarnations in the Danquah-Busia tradition and Ghana's Akan business and political establishment are firmly in the camp of Kumasi Asante Kotoko and, therefore, do not want to see Hearts succeed.⁴¹⁹

But is that really the case? Is there any evidence that leads such conspiracy theories to have any merit? When taking a look at the Ghana Premier League, one is inclined to deny the link between the (P)NDC government and successes of Hearts and, vice versa, between the NPP government and successes of Kotoko.

League results actually suggest the opposite is true. During Rawlings' rule, Hearts was subdued by Kotoko (9 titles for Kotoko to 6 titles for Hearts). During Kufuor's rule, Kotoko performed worse than Hearts (6 titles for Hearts to 2 titles for Kotoko). Results in continental competitions do not overly clearly reveal a connection either.⁴²⁰

Hearts vs Kotoko results, however, suggest that politics does seem to have some sort of influence. Put differently, there appears to be a correlation between successes of Hearts and the NDC being in power. Prior to 1983, Kotoko had won more Hearts vs Kotoko matches; afterwards Hearts took the lead,⁴²¹ a change of luck that coincided with Rawlings coming into power. The period between 1998 and 2001 in particular – during which Hearts beat Kotoko four times out of six – gave way to conspiracy theories. These theories were fed by the fact that former Hearts player E.T. Mensah acted as NDC Minister of Sports. Herbert Mensah, CEO of Kotoko, accused him of politicising the game. 'We have had situations where referees have told us that they have been contracted by E.T. Mensah to ensure that the Cup (...) is an NDC Cup and should be won by Hearts at all cost,' he said.⁴²²

Another subject of inquiry is the perceived link between Accra/Greater Accra Region and the NDC and Kumasi/Ashanti Region and the NPP. When looking at the parliamentary elections in 1996, 2000, 2004 and 2008, the data suggests that these connections, albeit with a few exceptions, do exist. First of all, the massive support for the NPP in the Ashanti Region can be easily distilled from voting patterns.⁴²³ Support for the NDC in the Greater Accra Region is less straightforward. In fact, the NPP won more seats than the NDC in this Hearts stronghold during the 2000 and 2004 elections.⁴²⁴ Other voting patterns suggest that the NDC is widely supported in the North Region,⁴²⁵ which coincides with Hearts being very popular among Northerners.⁴²⁶ Similarly, the NPP commonly enjoys more support than the NDC in the Brong-Ahafo Region,⁴²⁷ an area whose inhabitants are said to be related to the Ashanti.

Overall, it is safe to state that the links between Hearts-NDC and Kotoko-NPP are real. Put differently, both clubs possess social capital that can be readily converted into political gain. Granted, there is a lot of support for Kotoko in the Greater Accra Region (an NDC stronghold) and, vice versa, for Hearts in the Ashanti Region (dominated by NPP sympathisers).⁴²⁸ What is nevertheless true is that both clubs attract different sets of Big Men – with Kotoko relying on 'members of Kumasi's traditional and business elite' and Hearts on 'Accra-based businessmen and political leaders' who tend to support the NPP and NDC, respectively.⁴²⁹ Also, the hiring of management members is (often) linked to the candidates' political affiliations. For instance, some supporters opposed the ap-

pointment of P.V. Obeng as CEO of Kotoko because he had ‘helped Rawlings and his NDC cronies’.⁴³⁰

PWD Bamenda and the Anglophone problem

Nji Pius sighs. It is dark in his house in Bamenda’s Old Town. As a former supporter of PWD Bamenda, Pius initially refuses to talk about the club. ‘I was once asked to become an official,’ he says. ‘But I declined. I was a mechanic and I had already accepted a few players in my house. I knew I would have no more time to do anything except running the club. Football consumes everything so I turned them down.’ But then he recalls the Abakwa Boys’ glory days and the tricks that were pulled by the Big Men from Yaoundé. ‘PWD Bamenda is in Third Division now. What has football brought to this region? Does it build roads or schools? No! The Francophones took over the league and the national team. They won. They can keep their football.’

Cameroon’s dual (or rather triple) colonial heritage has had a lasting effect on the post-independent nation-state. Between 1884 and 1916 the country, known as Kamerun, was colonised by the Germans. Following Germany’s defeat in World War I the territory became a United Nations League of Nations mandate under British and French rule. Britain’s area was a strip of land bordering Nigeria, called The Cameroons, which covered almost ten percent of present-day Cameroon. The French controlled an area called Cameroun, which took up most of the territory and which was home to around 80 percent of the population. Soon after the country’s independence in 1960, the peoples of The Cameroons were presented with two options: One, to reunite with Cameroun or, two, to integrate into Nigeria. It was decided to form a two-state federation; on 1 October 1961, both territories merged into the Federal Republic of Cameroon.

The federation consisted of an Anglophone West Cameroon and a Francophone East Cameroun. When the Anglophone elite headed by prime minister John Ngu Foncha decided to join the Francophones, their hopes and expectations of equality and power sharing in the new set-up were soon dashed, as Konings and Nyamnjoh argue:

Contrary to expectations, this did not provide for the equal partnership of both parties, let alone for the preservation of the cultural heritage and identity of each, but turned out to be merely a transitory phase to the total integration of the anglophone region into a strong centralized, unitary state. Gradually, this created an anglophone consciousness: The feeling of being ‘marginalised’, ‘exploited’, and ‘assimilated’ by the francophone-dominated state, and even by the francophone population as a whole.⁴³¹

The problems had already started at the Fouban Conference in July 1961 where the Anglophones did not have much bargaining power. More importantly, the

Anglophones were effectively asked to *join* the already existing Republic of Cameroon.⁴³²

Football in those days was separated as well with the Anglophones and the Francophones both organising their own leagues. However, clubs on both sides did meet in the annual Cup of Cameroon competition. Several Anglophone teams reached the final of this competition in the 1960s – P&T Social Club Buea in 1964, CDC Victoria United in 1965, PWD Bamenda in 1967 and Prisons Buea in 1968.⁴³³ These finals were all lost to Francophone opponents and especially the final in 1968 between Oryx Douala and Prisons Buea still lives on in memory. On this day, Prisons captain Joseph Ewunkem urged his teammates to leave the field to protest the alleged biased decisions made by the referee. Oryx Douala eventually won the match 2-1.

The unification of West and East Cameroon was finalised on 20 May 1972 (Unification Day) which to Anglophones signalled the definite take-over of their territory by the Francophones.⁴³⁴ Many Anglophones have since called for a return to federalism and some have even advocated a secession from Francophone Cameroon by merging with neighbouring Nigeria. Anglophone pressure groups have also appealed to the United Nations to reverse the decisions made in 1961 and 1972. Much has been written about the so-called Anglophone problem,⁴³⁵ which refers to a relatively powerless minority (Anglophones) being dominated by a far more powerful majority (Francophones), operating mainly from the capital Yaoundé. The complaints of the Anglophones are well summed up by Konings and Nyamnjoh:

They started to resent their region's loss of autonomy and the allegedly subordinate position of the Anglophone minority in the unitary state. Their numerous grievances were mainly of a political, economic, and cultural nature: Notably their under-representation and inferior rôle in national decision-making councils; the neglect of their region's infrastructure and the rape and drain of its rich economic resources, especially oil, by successive francophone régimes; and the attempts at 'frenchification'.⁴³⁶

Whoever talks to supporters in the Anglophone zone – as I did in Bamenda and Buea – will notice that the words *cheating* and *Francophones* go hand in hand. Throughout the 1970s, 80s and 90s, only one Anglophone team managed to reach the final of the Cup of Cameroon. As we will see below, PWD Bamenda went on to lose the match. In 2000, Kumbo Strikers became the first Anglophone team to win the Cup of Cameroon trophy after which, according to the Anglophone scholar Walter G. Nkwi, 'the cup "spoke and understood" the English language'.⁴³⁷ The fact that Mount Cameroon FC repeated this feat in 2002 was far less important for Anglophones because of the club's Bamileke identity. More significantly, Tiko United has so far been the only Anglophone team to win the Elite One league (in 2009, see below).

Anglophones felt and still feel that the Francophone-dominated FECAFOOT and Francophone-owned clubs obstructed the progress of their teams. Some referees, such as Louis Atangana, were said to be biased against the Anglophone teams.⁴³⁸ ‘Atangana always cheated us,’ said Ben Bola, who played for PWD Bamenda in the 1970s and 80s. ‘He was a Francophone. Sometimes he would say: “I know your next match and you can bet I will officiate that match.” How could he know? FECAFOOT assigned him to handle PWD matches.’ Ben Bola recalled how Anglophones were cheated in other departments as well. ‘Once I was voted Man of the Match but they pulled some tricks and named (former Francophone footballer) Théophile Abega instead. They did the same thing with Anglophones who became top scorer.’

Although other Anglophone clubs are also said to have been victimised by the Francophones, PWD Bamenda truly seems to have been at the heart of the Anglophone struggle against Francophone domination, particularly in the 1970s and 80s. The Big Men in Yaoundé were thought to have obstructed the Bamenda-based club any which way they could.⁴³⁹ In fact, one match in 1979 is still perceived as the key moment in the history of PWD Bamenda – and perhaps to some extent of Anglophones as a whole. In that year, PWD reached the final of the Cup of Cameroon and found its opponent to be the Bassa-owned team Dynamo Douala. Finally, Dynamo Douala beat PWD Bamenda 3-1 in a controversial match which infuriates Anglophones to the present day.

Anglophones state that P-Ton-Ton was one of Cameroon’s strongest teams in the late 1970s.⁴⁴⁰ Famous squad members included goalkeeper Agwa, Ngo Franklin, Nji Sunday and Ben Bola. ‘Even Thomas Nkono, who was Canon’s goalkeeper, feared us,’ said Ni John Fru Ndi, former president of PWD Bamenda. ‘He especially feared our attacker, Franklin. Nkono would go to him and say: “Please don’t disgrace me.” And Franklin would reply: “I will only score two goals.” If it were not for all the cheating, PWD was better than Canon and Tonnerre.’ PWD Bamenda also had a large following. ‘PWD was very popular in the 1970s,’ said Fru Ndi. ‘At one point PWD was the most popular team in Cameroon.’ In the run-up to the final, PWD Bamenda had beaten both Tonnerre and Canon Yaoundé, and had demolished l’Etoile Filante 7-0. To Anglophones, these facts made losing the final all the more suspicious.

As usual, president Ahmadou Ahidjo watched the final at the stadium in Yaoundé. Immediately after presenting the trophy to Dynamo Douala, Ahidjo reportedly ordered an investigation. It was discovered that a PWD defender named Epesse was bribed by Minister of Sports Felix Tonye Mbock, who happened to be a Bassa. Indeed, supporters in Bamenda remember how Epesse directly caused one or more of the Dynamo goals.⁴⁴¹ This is what supporter Cleopas told me:

Epesse did it because he was a Bassa himself and because he needed the money. He went to the minister and to the officials of Dynamo and told them how PWD operated. He told them how PWD prepared themselves for the finals, at which hotel they stayed, everything. Supporters of Dynamo even travelled to Bamenda to get soil from the training ground at the stadium. We know this because they were arrested for that.

‘Dynamo resorted to psychological warfare,’ said Fru Ndi. ‘They disturbed us on the road. The police detained us because they said there was something wrong with our vehicle.’ But, as Fru Ndi explained, that was not the only thing Dynamo Douala, with the help of the Minister of Sports, did:

They poisoned the boys. This famous match, this is where we saw fetishism and occultism in practice. There was an investigation and they found out that Dynamo played a dubious role with our food. They poisoned the food of our players. They put something inside our food which made them so tired. They couldn’t run.

We didn’t have a lot of money in those days. Normally I could feed a team of fourteen to sixteen players. But we didn’t have the type of supporters then who could cook for all the players. That’s why we had to resort to eating out. We were not as mobile as today where we would have women who could cook the food and bring it to us. We were in a strange area and we had to take the food from someone else. When you have four or five people who are doing the cooking, they can approach one of them. It can still be done today with this degree of poverty. People can be bought with money.

The Minister of Sports was later fired by Ahidjo who was said to have been annoyed by the favouritism to the Douala-based team.

Anglophones say that Biya’s ascendancy to the presidency in 1982 made life more difficult, football included. ‘The club presidents from Yaoundé always thought that they were better than us,’ said Fru Ndi. ‘They saw us as villagers. When they came to Bamenda they treated us with disdain.’ He claimed that the clubs from Yaoundé had a financial advantage over the Anglophone clubs. ‘These club presidents were all ministers and they financed the clubs from government monies,’ he said. ‘They embezzled state money. Sometimes a minister would give out contracts worth 100 million CFA francs (€150,000) only when the contractor was willing to put 20 percent aside for the club.’ Fru Ndi added that it was ‘rare to see Anglophone ministers in those days. So we couldn’t make use of state money.’

There were numerous violent encounters on and off the field during the 1980s. Similar to what I wrote with regard to Bamileke teams, matches between Anglophone teams and those from Yaoundé, particularly Tonnerre, were said to have left the Anglophones with bitter feelings. This is how Justice Mbuh describes it:

In many of the first division encounters between the *Abakwa Boys* and Tonnerre Yaoundé, it was and still is common for the games to end in total confusion, as the crowd find it unbearable, ends up disrupting plays when discrimination becomes too intolerable. It was almost common place for there to be tensions between these teams whenever they met, simply because, before then, Tonnerre would have been close to or being the favorite to win the national Championship, but which without a home and away win over most Anglophone

Photo 5.2 President Eteki Charles of Tiko United is standing near the Mungo river. In 2007, supporters rolled out a red carpet over the bridge (left) to celebrate their team's promotion to the top league



teams, they would hardly make it. The Anglophone teams were thus prime targets for either elimination or point distribution to the Yaoundé and Douala based teams that almost always topped the national league, most of the times with conspicuous ease.⁴⁴²

A PWD Bamenda vs Tonnerre Yaoundé match in 1984 degenerated into chaos when the Anglophones thought the referee was biased. ‘During the fight that ensued, the army and police jumped in,’ Mbuh writes. ‘They made the big mistake of beating everyone, at random. So there was general pandemonium. (...) It was like a war zone.’⁴⁴³ An angry mob went on to burn down the Bamenda Mobile Wing Police Barracks. ‘They shot one person that day,’ said supporter Nji Pius. ‘The gendarmes were Ewondo. I never went to the stadium again.’ Supporters in Bamenda regularly mentioned police brutality. Fru Ndi recalled a match between Federal Fouban and PWD Bamenda:

The field in Fouban had no inner perimeter. They had put gendarmes and policemen all around the field of play, intimidating us and our players. They even intimidated us on the way to the stadium by setting up road blocks from Bamenda to Bafoussam. And they were armed in combat uniforms! The gendarmes gave the referee a free hand to cheat us. When our supporters protested the police would throw teargas into the crowd.

One reason for the violence during matches involving PWD Bamenda and the Yaoundé teams was that the Anglophones were Biya’s main opponents. This was

due to the founding of the SDF at Fru Ndi's residence in Bamenda. Set on Saturday 26 May 1990, the authorities tried to stop the launch of the party. All rallies were banned, markets and bars were closed and security forces were deployed from Yaoundé. 'At 11 p.m. on May 25, 1990, Bamenda was a town under siege; a town in an undeclared state of emergency; a town ready for confrontation with armed members of security forces and unarmed civilians,' wrote Jerome F. Gwellem.⁴⁴⁴ When thousands of SDF supporters occupied the City Chemist Roundabout the following day, chanting "Suffer Don Finish" (our suffering is over), security forces opened fire. Six people were killed.

In December 1990, the National Assembly legalised the forming of both political parties and media outlets. A student demonstration at the University of Yaoundé was nevertheless brutally suppressed, leaving at least six students dead. The government responded by stating that no deaths had been reported, which led the term *Zéro Morts* to enter the Anglophone lexicon. This, and Biya's refusal to organise a National Conference, caused Cameroonians to resort to a civil disobedience campaign (known as Operation Ghost Town) in May 1991. The campaign quickly spread to towns throughout the country and lasted until January 1992. A rally in Bamenda on 2 October 1992 led the government to deploy military forces, including a helicopter, which left two people dead and several wounded.⁴⁴⁵

The parliamentary elections in March 1992 were boycotted by 35 of the 69 parties, including the SDF. When asked why he refused to take part, Fru Ndi answered that parliament was 'a rubber stamp' with 'no powers'.⁴⁴⁶ As a group, the Anglophones had become the object of scorn from high-profile Francophones.⁴⁴⁷ The presidential elections were set on 11 October 1992, with Fru Ndi being Biya's main competitor. When the government publicised the voting results, Biya was elected president with 39.9 percent of the votes to 35.9 percent for Fru Ndi. Observers reported numerous irregularities, after which the opposition spoke of the "stolen elections". Biya declared a state of emergency in Bamenda and placed Fru Ndi under house arrest.

It was in this political climate that PWD Bamenda had to play its last match of the 1992 season against Colombe Sangmélina, a team from Biya's home town. The match was scheduled to take place in Bamenda but had to be taken elsewhere due to political unrest. Kuper writes that PWD 'had had trouble training before the match, as the state of emergency forbade gatherings of more than three people in the North-West'.⁴⁴⁸ 'This match was played without spectators,' said supporter Nji Pius. 'PWD and Colombe needed a win because they were both in the relegation zone. Colombe beat PWD 1-0 and we were relegated.' When Kuper asked whether the match had been played fairly, the answer was that

nobody knew what had transpired. Finally, four teams were stuck at the bottom of the league table and FECAFOOT established the final ranking:

I am not sure which system they chose. All I know is that the relevant committee voted on the matter, and PWD and Diamant Yaoundé were relegated. What is clear is that since a vote had to be held, the correct method of computing the table was plainly in doubt, and secondly, that the final table thus produced was predictable.⁴⁴⁹

Indeed, PWD and Diamant belonged to Biya's most prominent opponents, the Anglophones and Bamileke, respectively.

PWD Bamenda did not "recover" from the 1992 elections and, for that matter, neither did the Northwest Region. Fru Ndi went on to boycott the 1997 elections, leading Biya to be re-elected with 92.6 percent of the votes. PWD Bamenda promoted to the top league again in 1994, only to be relegated four years later. The Bamenda-based club again promoted in 2002, this time with the help of businessman Issa Bongam, who led the team to third place in 2003. Things went astray when players revolted over non-payments of salaries and bonuses. Bongam fled the country due to accusations of embezzlement of public funds and PWD Bamenda relegated at the end of the 2004 season. These days the team lingers on in the Third Division. Chairman Eric Mukala bemoaned the lack of financial assistance from the Northwest elite:

Nobody wants to invest in the club. This is the only real club from the Northwest Region but the elite is pulling its hands off the team. Look at John Fru Ndi. He has been the club president for so many years but now he's in politics and he doesn't care about the club anymore. Is that how you show affection for the club? The problem with PWD is that there's no name. What can people benefit from sponsoring it? Nothing! Only when this team is in Division One you see so many businessmen and politicians donating money to the team: 100,000 francs here, one million francs there. They use the club for political purposes. Now they won't even give you five francs. I sent out letters to prominent people in the Northwest begging them for money, but they don't respond.

Practice sessions still draw dozens of supporters to the Municipal Stadium, indicating that PWD Bamenda has not lost its popularity. 'That's part of the problem,' said Mukala. 'These supporters don't contribute any money but when you lose matches they want to burn down your house.' Augustine Iche Ozomena and others agreed with this statement, having had first-hand experiences with irate supporters. The supporters are reportedly so violent that no Big Man dares to take up the running of the club. There have been plenty of rumours though. 'We heard that there is a Bamileke businessman who wants to join forces with a Nigerian to sponsor the club,' said supporter Cleopas. 'There have been Bamileke in our management before. It's quite common. We're all brothers. Some management members even supported the CPDM. We could use a cloud of CPDM which is why we would allow CPDM politicians to run our team.'

Mentioning the CPDM brings us to the other side of the Anglophone problem, one that leads to the town of Tiko. While PWD Bamenda's failures are most

likely due to its perceived connections to the SDF, Tiko United's recent successes may partly be a result of its closeness to the CPDM. It is first of all important to note that Biya adheres to a policy of divide-and-rule to maintain his power base.⁴⁵⁰ Nyamnjoh argues that his tactics of 'strife and conflict and the struggle for power are thus tactfully relegated to the regions, while the president, like a master juggler, plays the regional or ethnic elites off against one another'.⁴⁵¹ The Anglophones are a case in point. Ahidjo divided the Anglophone zone into the Northwest and Southwest Regions, and both he and Biya have capitalised on the differences between the inhabitants of both regions.⁴⁵²

The Northwest-Southwest divide and the tendency of Southwest elites to favour the CPDM appears to have had an impact on football. Tiko United (whose history briefly surfaced in chapter 2) is based in Fako, one of six divisions in the Southwest Region. In 2007, the team established promotion to the top league. Two years later, Tiko United became the first Anglophone club to win the championship title. Early in 2010, I visited Tiko and Limbe to ask the question that was on many people's minds. What was Tiko United's secret?⁴⁵³ The experience and financial strength of club president Eteki Charles were cited as well as the fact that Fako consisted of a close community. These plausible explanations notwithstanding, it turned out that the members of the Southwest elite who were sponsoring Tiko United had one thing in common.

On Tuesday 23 October 2007, the players and officials of Tiko United were welcomed at the Mungo river which demarcates the Francophone-Anglophone border. 'We had just qualified for the Elite One league,' said Eteki Charles. 'They rolled out a red carpet over the bridge. We all walked over the carpet in the presence of thousands of supporters.' To be sure, the Mungo bridge is a significant Anglophone landmark. When in 1995 a delegation of the Southern Cameroons National Council (SCNC) returned home from a visit to the United Nations headquarters to protest Francophone domination, rites were performed at the Mungo river.⁴⁵⁴ Indeed, Anglophone teams are referred to as being located "West of the Mungo".

When Tiko United won the league title in 2009, Eteki Charles received 'congratulations from many club presidents'. Many Cameroonians wondered how Tiko United pulled it off. After all, Tiko is quite a small and impoverished town and the club is not backed by the Big Men in Yaoundé in the same way as Canon. Although the inhabitants of Tiko are known to generously support the club – for instance, sellers at the main market voluntarily and sometimes obligatory donate money – it is nevertheless not perceived to be a wealthy club. One widely given explanation for the club's success is the unity of the peoples of the Southwest Region in general and Fako division in particular. Zé, who spiritually handled Tiko United on several occasions, made the following statement:

The main reason for their success is togetherness. The majority of the players have been there for several years now so they know each other and there is a good team spirit. Another reason is that the entire Southwest is behind the team, both morally and financially. Eteki Charles Dikonge is a provincial delegate and uses government money to sponsor the team. Also, the chief of Buea, Endeley, and the CDC general manager, Njalla Quan, and even the governor of the Southwest are helping the team financially. Coincidentally, all these good Samaritans belong to the CPDM party.

Indeed, several members of the Southwest elite financially support the team since its promotion, the majority of whom are also members of the CPDM.⁴⁵⁵

The fact that members of the Southwest elite donate money to a top league club in their area is hardly unique. What is significant is that most of them are CPDM barons. Those in charge of Tiko United did not talk openly about this connection but it is evident that there is unease with Northwesterners and the SDF among the Southwest elite. At one point, Eteki Charles lashed out at Ni John Fru Ndi. 'We all think he made a mistake by not participating in the 1997 elections,' he said. 'I myself – I'm into politics as well. I'm with CPDM. I was chosen president of CPDM in Fako 4 in 2007. The opposition is quarrelling with CPDM from the outside. We can be quarrelling, but from the inside.' It is rumoured that the support of the Southwest elite for the CPDM was rewarded with the league title.

In sum, there is a strong link between football and politics in Africa. Big Men, mostly businessmen, use the game as a stepping stone to a political career and, vice versa, politicians are involved in the affairs of both clubs and national teams. Clubs may be connected to political parties (as in the case of Hearts and Kotoko) and/or are linked to minorities (as in the case of PWD Bamenda). Community-based clubs in particular, already endowed with symbolic capital, also possess social capital that can be converted into political connections. A football map arises when one considers the geography of clubs that belong to powerful ethno-political groups as opposed to clubs that belong to ethno-political minorities. In short, we have so far seen how wealthy Big Men convert economic capital into symbolic and/or social capital through football. Our next step is to see how Big Men convert economic capital into more economic capital.

The football business

'I've been cheated three times,' he says. 'But I would do it again if I got the chance.' Ashu lives in a small room in a suburb of Yaoundé. 'It takes me 45 minutes to get to the city centre,' he tells me, 'but our training ground is close to my house.' He used to be captain of a Second Division team in Buea, but left when he got into an argument with the new coach. He later joined a Second Division team led by famed Cameroonian coach Jules Nyongha. His goal is to earn a transfer abroad.

A few years ago, Ashu sought the help of a friend who worked at CRTV, the government-owned radio and television network, and paid him money to assemble a DVD. 'That's what most players do,' he explains. 'You post it on the web or you send it to a club abroad.' This was the first time he was cheated. 'One gendarme came to see me and said that his sister had contacts with a Belgian club. He needed 300,000 francs (€450) to fix everything. He also asked for my video clip. Then he disappeared.'

Some time later, Ashu agreed to a new deal. The vice president of an Elite One league club told him he would arrange a test match abroad. 'He asked for 600,000 francs (€900),' Ashu says. 'Later on I heard that another player had given him one million francs (€1,500). So the vice president sent him instead.' That money is gone too. The third time he lost 1.2 million CFA francs (€1,800). 'I met this guy through a friend,' he says, 'who told me he had contacts. When I gave him the money he disappeared. There are good guys and there are cheats. It's all a matter of trust.'

Today, Ashu is practising with his new team, Saint Paul Warriors. 'We're officially based in Ebolowa but we're all living in Yaoundé,' he says. Jules Nyongha, who has coached the national team on several occasions, leads the training session. Afterwards, Ashu explains the goals of the club owners. 'They're not interested in gaining promotion,' he says. 'One owner is a FIFA-

licensed agent, another is a Cameroonian businessman. They have a lot of contacts in France and Italy. Our goal is to play at tournaments in Europe to show what we can do.'

The business side of football

Football in Africa has always been a Big Man's hobby. One took up the presidency of a club or the task of running the FA simply for the love of the game. Of course, they did not ignore the game's symbolic and social capital either. However, a new motivation for sponsoring and running the game has emerged over the last two decades or so, one that is closely related to the forces of globalisation. As more money is poured into football, some Big Men now see their involvement as a business opportunity. Although the professionalisation and commercialisation of the game in Africa has so far done little for grassroots development, it certainly has increased a Big Man's chances of converting economic capital into more economic capital. Indeed, the football business has given rise to a new type of Big Man: The football entrepreneur.

Professionalisation and commercialisation

Hakeem's appearances at the 2008 African Cup of Nations were characterised by a mixture of traditionalism and commercialism. Carrying livestock into the Ohene Djan Stadium, the self-proclaimed *jujuman* performed traditionally-looking rituals prior to the tournament's opening match. 'With feathers of a chicken or fowl firmly clenched between his teeth, and with live chickens dangling in his hands, Hakeem would go into a trance, accompanied by gory dance steps and signals of slaughtering,' wrote one Nigerian reporter.⁴⁵⁶ He held two chickens in one hand and a fowl in the other, signifying that Ghana would beat Guinea 2-1. I usually saw the so-called Chicken Man wearing a green robe with cowry shells around his neck. At one point, I noticed he had a keen eye for business: He had painted MTN's yellow logo on his chest.

Telecommunications company MTN is a prominent sponsor of African football, having patronised the 2006 and 2008 African Cup of Nations as well the 2010 World Cup, and still patronising the CAF Champions League as well as leagues and clubs. Moreover, MTN has organised the CAF Awards and a TV programme called the African Soccer Show. 'Football is a common global language,' the company states. 'MTN is about delivering communication services, and our sponsorship of football on the continent is a natural extension of this commitment.'⁴⁵⁷ Elsewhere the company states that as long 'as our customers continue to have football fever, we will remain passionately involved with the beautiful game'.⁴⁵⁸ As Africa was 'the world's fastest growing telecoms market' by 2011,⁴⁵⁹ providers cash in on the game's popularity.

In terms of commercialisation, Africa has come from far. When national leagues were set up after independence, there was hardly any sponsorship. Clubs and leagues were funded mostly by governments and businessmen. The company CEOs who set up teams in Ghana in the 1970s and 80s were mainly avid football fans who strove to increase production among the workers. In 2003 Cameroonians complained to me about companies failing to see advertising opportunities in football. Where were the billboards inside the stadiums? Whatever happened to jersey sponsoring? Naturally, several companies had taken an interest in sponsoring football, for instance Guinness (“Believe in Greatness”) and Export (“Official sponsor of Cameroonian football”). Yet this could barely be regarded as a comprehensive effort to turn football into business.

This lack of business acumen was also visible at a continental level. In an article published in 1998, journalists Osasu Obayiwana and Anver Versi argue that Africa’s football administrators ‘did not know how to handle’ the game’s increased popularity since the early 1990s:

The way most African national soccer associations were run can be compared to amateur soccer clubs in the rest of the world. The governments allocated a small amount of money for international competitions and placed political appointees to head the associations. They did not invest, except in a few instances such as Morocco and Tunisia, in playing fields, or training facilities. The football associations became top-heavy with officials who understood neither soccer, the modern African player nor the commercial value of international football. Many associations became arrogant and dictatorial. They imagined that officials were more important than players and the performance of the team on the field.⁴⁶⁰

The same journalists went on to make the following statement with regard to CAF:

The Confederation of African Football when it started was a collection of antiquated officials with antiquated ideas – hopelessly inadequate to deal with the business side of football. During one African Nations Cup tournament in Morocco [in 1988], CAF officials seemed to be doing their utmost to discourage press coverage of the tournament! The more sophisticated Moroccan hosts however, were doing their best to give the tournament the widest coverage. Confusion ensued.⁴⁶¹

These things still happen today. Members of the press were quite unhappy with the treatment they received at the 2008 African Cup of Nations. Some of them felt that the organisers were discouraging them from publicising the event. Matches at Africa’s most prestigious tournament are still commonly watched by small groups of spectators. Lousy advertising, difficulties in obtaining visa, (relatively) expensive tickets and the complicated ways to purchase them in advance are cited as reasons.⁴⁶²

Still, something has changed from the 1990s and arguably even from the 1980s onwards. The advent of the professionalisation and commercialisation in European football as well as FIFA’s successful ways of bringing in high-profile sponsors turned the game into a multibillion dollar enterprise. This led Obayi-

uwana and Versi to wonder whether Africa was ‘getting a fair slice of this lucrative cake’.⁴⁶³ When we take a look at CAF’s sponsorship deals in recent times, the answer is affirmative. Alegi argues that broadcasting rights provide the biggest source of income:

The television revolution established the dominance, if not the legitimacy, of commercial football in Africa. In addition to selling broadcasting rights to its competitions, CAF also signed lucrative sponsorship deals with transnational corporations. Coca-Cola, for instance, was named official sponsor of the finals in South Africa in 1996 and in Burkina Faso in 1998. Cellular phone manufacturer Nokia took over the role in 2004. South African companies also entered the market. Most notably, between 2002 and 2004 MTN (...) acquired naming rights to both the Champions League and the Nations Cup. The latter deal was reportedly worth \$12 million through 2008.⁴⁶⁴

Orange and Globacom are major investors as well. In 2011 the French sports agency Sportfive paid \$137 million for the marketing and broadcasting rights of six CAF competitions, including the African Cup of Nations and the Champions League. The deal is said to last till 2017.⁴⁶⁵

I have stated elsewhere that the commercialisation of football is most developed in South Africa (chapter 2). Merryman Kunene argues that since the early 1990s the football ‘industry’ was ‘rapidly developing into a multimillion rand sport’.⁴⁶⁶ Professionalising the game meant restructuring South African football analogous to the English league system. First, a new Premier Soccer League (PSL) was founded in 1996 which, as Paul Darby and Eirik Solberg state, ‘laid the foundations for the multimillion Rand business and heavily commercialized entity that professional soccer in South Africa is today’.⁴⁶⁷ Second, league administration was now governed by a semi-autonomous body, also called the PSL. Its task is to ‘concern itself with all matters governing professional soccer’; its aim is to provide the game ‘with better media coverage and much-improved revenue through strong sponsorship deals’.⁴⁶⁸ This set-up led to increased sponsorship deals, as Scarlett Cornelissen writes:

Corporate linkages and sponsorship of South African clubs by some of the country’s largest corporations have increased significantly over the years. Spanning diverse sectors such as finance (ABSA, First National Bank and Metropolitan), travel and hospitality (Avis; SAA; Southern Sun), sport apparel (Adidas), telecommunications (Vodacom), beverages (Castle Lager and Coca Cola), energy (Sasol), and automobiles (Daimler), these corporations have become key players in the marketing and promotion of South African football. In all, corporate sponsorships rose to R5bn (approximately US\$500m; currency conversion March 2009) in 2008.⁴⁶⁹

In 2011 the PSL signed a new deal with SuperSport worth \$277 million to broadcast Premier League matches, which placed the PSL among the ten most valuable leagues in the world.⁴⁷⁰ Football and business are indeed a tandem in South Africa, which was exemplified when eleven million voters chose the

starting line-up of an “SMS derby” between Orlando Pirates and Kaizer Chiefs in July 2011.⁴⁷¹

A similar pattern emerged elsewhere on the continent, albeit evidently without the financial prowess that characterises South African football. Countries like Ghana and Nigeria implemented the English league system even before the South Africans did. For instance, the Nigeria Premier League was inaugurated in 1990; the Ghana Premier League three years later. Other countries followed suit with the Tanzanian Premier League in 1997 and the Kenya Premier League in 2003. The Cameroonian league system changed into a professional set-up only by 2007 when MTN stepped in as league sponsor. These days the (MTN) Elite One and Elite Two leagues are run in a commercial fashion, at least on paper.

Ghana professionalised its league system at the behest of the then Minister of Sports, E.T. Mensah, who assembled all stakeholders in the coastal town of Winneba. ‘There was an outcry for football to move on,’ said Joe Aggrey, the former Deputy Minister of Sports. ‘We needed to introduce certain elements of professionalism in the game. The whole idea was to make football to be organised better.’ ‘Until that point we had the First Division and the Second Division,’ said Kwame Ntow-Fiako, who became an administrator in the new set-up. ‘Two committees were installed to propose modalities for the registration of professional clubs and to set up guidelines for the new structure. We held a series of workshops at Winneba. Then, in November, a Congress with 90 delegates was held for two days at the British Council in Accra. That’s where we implemented the Winneba Declaration.’ The First Division officially became the Premier League, which began the 1993/94 season with 12 clubs.

Professionals needed to come in and take over. ‘We wanted to lift football to a higher level so that we could gradually become like Europe,’ Aggrey said. ‘The idea was that clubs should become limited liability companies so that club ownership would not lie with one man but with a Board of Directors who had all put their money into the club.’ ‘The clubs in the Premier League had to register as companies as was written down in the 1963 Companies Code,’ said Ashford Tetteh-Oku, Hearts of Oak’s general secretary. ‘We had to write down the names of the directors and the number of shares that they owned.’ However, Aggrey told me that the implementation of the Winneba Declaration did not go as well as anticipated:

Everybody was enthusiastic about it. But how to get the clubs to do what the stakeholders at Winneba wanted? That was a problem. It was difficult to get people to understand the benefits of the things that were being introduced. It all took so long because people were not prepared to accept change. The idea behind Winneba was very good but the implementation of the declaration was disturbed with problems at all levels. The problem was that it was not a law. It was only a declaration. It had no legal backing.

We will return to this issue in the next chapter.

In line with South Africa's PSL, another outcome of the Winneba Declaration was the formation of the Professional League Board (PLB). 'The PLB was brought in to oversee the professional league,' said Joe Aggrey, who acted as one of its seven initial members. 'The idea was that the FA had other things to do so we needed a body that would take the responsibility of running the league. The PLB was to register the clubs, register the players, draw up the rules and regulations of the league, appoint referees, and so on.' Another task of the PLB was to find sponsors for the Premier League. 'At first we had an amateur league,' said Tetteh-Oku. 'There was no sponsorship, there was no money. In 1993 football became business. ABC, Pharma – each year we had a new sponsor for the Premier League.'⁴⁷²

In reality, league sponsorship was a lot less rosy. The very first Premier League season went without a sponsor altogether. The Ministry of Sports offered the clubs a compensation package which, as Bediako writes, 'turned out to be peanuts, as gate takings continued to dwindle because of poor patronage'.⁴⁷³ It was announced in 1994 that the league would be called the IKAM Premier League. IKAM, an Accra-based printer company, stated that they had never signed a contract with the FA.⁴⁷⁴ Even though companies did sponsor the Premier League in successive years, club officials complained that the league money could not sustain their teams. The Nigerian company Globacom became sponsor of the Premier League in 2008 and invested \$3 million in its first season alone. Reports in 2010 indicated that the company had failed to pay its sponsorship fees.⁴⁷⁵ Similar problems plagued other leagues.

The battle for broadcasting rights has equally brought turmoil in Africa's leagues. In 2007 the GFA signed a three-year deal worth \$3 million with Gateway Broadcast Services (known as GTV). The same company also signed deals with the top leagues in Tanzania and Uganda. GTV went into liquidation in 2009, citing 'the current financial and global crisis' as the reason for its demise.⁴⁷⁶ Optimum Media Prime (OMP) took over the broadcasting rights in Ghana for a sum of 1.7 million cedi (€800,000) until 2011.⁴⁷⁷ Another player in the television market is the South African company SuperSport. Aside from sponsoring South Africa's top league, SuperSport signed a deal with the Zambian FA for \$2.7 million in 2007. After the liquidation of GTV, SuperSport reportedly took over some of its competitor's portfolio.⁴⁷⁸

The problem of companies sponsoring leagues and purchasing broadcasting rights is that they tend to be unreliable with regard to their contractual agreements with FAs. Moreover, club officials have for years complained that league sponsorship does not trickle down to the clubs. In 2003 Ghanaian clubs officials announced a plan to take over the Premier League from the GFA and PLB, claiming that they would do a better job of managing the league.⁴⁷⁹ Similarly,

Cameroonian club officials have on occasion protested the fact that FECAFOOT did not pay out sponsorship fees.⁴⁸⁰ Nigeria's top clubs have staged boycotts as well. This occurred, for example, in 2004 when clubs were in financial straits. 'The pro-League Board promised to pay the money but nothing has happened,' said the chairman of the Premier League Clubs Association.⁴⁸¹

Similar problems have plagued Africa's continental competitions. The Cameroonian government used to sponsor clubs in the Cup of Champions Clubs and other competitions. These days club presidents complain about lack of government support. Canon Yaoundé, Mount Cameroon FC and Coton Sport Garoua were the country's representatives in CAF competitions in 2003. Officials of both Canon and Mount Cameroon complained about the government support of €23,000 and €5,800, respectively. 'It's not even enough to buy out (sic) flight tickets to Sudan which cost £23,000,' Canon's secretary-general stated. Calvin Foining, president of Mount Cameroon, called the money 'peanuts'.⁴⁸² Indeed, each year various clubs pull out of the preliminary stages of both Confederation Cup and Champions League because they cannot afford to pay for tickets and accommodation.

Clubs have nevertheless enjoyed private sponsorships over the last years. In 2000 Cintra Yaoundé was reportedly Cameroon's first club to receive sponsorship from a foreign (Spanish) company. When the contract was abrogated two years later, the company had already invested \$500,000. City rivals Canon signed a deal worth \$200,000 with the Belgian club Lokeren in 2001.⁴⁸³ King Faisal was reportedly Ghana's first Premier League club to obtain a sponsorship deal (with Nokia). Real Tamale United has been sponsored by Dutch agro-company Wienco for years. It was evident during my fieldwork that Hearts and Kotoko received sponsorship from telecommunications companies. When I told Kotoko coach Isaac "Opeelee" Boateng my phone number, he said: '027? That's very good. You're using the phone of our sponsor, TiGO. Calling from TiGO to TiGO is cheap. We all own a TiGO phone.'

In general, the professionalisation and commercialisation of the game has not helped clubs much, especially those in Africa's lower divisions. Indeed, finding a title sponsor for Ghana's Division One League (DOL) has proven to be difficult. 'At our Congress in 1998 at the Bay View Hotel, I proposed that a small fraction of the (Premier League) sponsorship be set aside to help in running the DOL (...),' explained DOL chairman Kwame Ntow-Fiako. 'Some premiership clubs kicked against it and said if you want the money come and play in the premiership. Some of those clubs were relegated just the following year and soon began to appreciate the harsh conditions of the DOL terrain.'⁴⁸⁴ In 2005 South Africa's PSL clubs each received R320,000 (€32,300) a month from league sponsorship;

First Division clubs, in contrast, only received R30,000 (3,000).⁴⁸⁵ Relegation to a lower division is, in the words of Kunene, a ‘financial disaster’.⁴⁸⁶

Yet even top clubs suffer from what in most African countries can rightfully be regarded as semi-professional leagues at best. Many clubs in Ghana and Cameroon do not own training grounds; some teams practice on primary school fields or university campuses. Even if they do own training grounds, the pitches are typically sandy, dusty and full of holes. One may think that the situation in Botswana (which in 2012 participated at the African Cup of Nations for the first time) is not typical of the continent at large, but it actually is. It was reported that only one out of 16 Premier League clubs owned proper training facilities; the other 15 clubs practiced at ‘desert-like training grounds’. One coach claimed that it hindered progress because of his players’ inability to ‘reach their desired technical levels’.⁴⁸⁷

The ones who suffer most from Africa’s semi-professional leagues are the players. Monthly salaries are generally low. Cameroon’s richest club Coton Sport Garoua does not pay its players more than €400 each. The majority of the players of Mount Cameroon FC had to make do with monthly salaries of 50,000 to 100,000 CFA francs (€75 – €150). Ghana’s best paid player in 2009, Kotoko’s Jordan Opoku, was paid 400 cedi (€200) a month. Hassle over non-payments of salaries and bonuses is common throughout Africa. Contracts do not mean much. Health insurance and other benefits are generally not included. The *Kotoko Express* ran a story about a goalkeeper who had been limping on the sideline for two years, unable to afford a surgery costing \$6,000. Finally, a charity match was organised to raise funds.⁴⁸⁸

In sum, the professionalisation and commercialisation has not fully materialised in Africa as of yet. Even in South Africa ‘the PSL may benefit from the presence of domestic multinationals that constitute a source of capital, and it is in size and profitability more advanced than most other African leagues, the degree of professionalisation within the league is low when compared to the successful clubs in Europe’.⁴⁸⁹ Significantly, Ghana’s Professional League Board was renamed the Premier League Board in 2008. Although nobody gave a formal reason for this decision, Bediako argues that ‘there appears to be nothing professional about the Ghana league’:

The participating clubs and the players themselves would agree that the tag professional prefixing the league is just the name. We need not even go far to compare ourselves to the practitioners in Europe, but just look north to our fellow Africans and the contrast is clear. Apart from the blatant show of indiscipline at times by both players and officials who show utter disregard for rules and regulations of the competition, we never seem to have a clear-cut programme going and meet deadlines. (...) In sum, I agree perfectly well that we drop the tag ‘professional’ until we are able to act as such.⁴⁹⁰

We will look at some of the causes in the next chapter.

The football entrepreneur

The story above does not necessarily mean that the football business is just a fancy phrase. For some Big Men it really exists. Although many clubs have not benefited from the game's professionalisation and commercialisation, there certainly is a business side to football in Africa. Recall how CAF signed multi-million dollar sponsorship deals for its competitions and tournaments. Indeed, CAF has over the years been transformed from an amateur organisation to a prosperous enterprise. In 2002 CAF moved its headquarters to a new modern building in a town called 6 October City, on the outskirts of Cairo.⁴⁹¹ A few years later, in 2006, the organisation recorded an annual income of \$12.3 million.⁴⁹² Such figures make it increasingly interesting for Big Men to come and be part of football management.

FAs in Africa earn money from various sponsorships. As of 2005, the mining corporation AngloGold agreed to annually invest \$3 million in Ghana's national team. The Ghana Commercial Bank, Guinness and several other companies sponsor the Black Stars as well. Telecommunications company Orange was Cameroon's main sponsor for the 2006 World Cup and the 2004 and 2006 African Cup of Nations.⁴⁹³ Nike, Puma and Adidas also invest in African football. Puma signed its first sponsorship deal in Africa in 1997. By 2011 the German company sponsored more than a dozen African national teams.⁴⁹⁴ For instance, Puma closed a three-year deal worth \$12 million in 2005 to become Ghana's national team jersey sponsor. A new four-year deal worth \$25 million was signed in 2008.⁴⁹⁵

FIFA financially assists FAs in Africa as well. Apart from its *Goal* programme and *Win in Africa with Africa* project,⁴⁹⁶ FIFA also pays out millions of dollars to Africa's national teams that participate in international tournaments. Let me provide the example of Ghana's participation in the 2010 World Cup. The GFA received €675,000 in advance to prepare for the tournament. For reaching the quarter finals, another \$14 million was transferred to the FA's accounts. Finally, an extra \$300,000 was handed out as a share in World Cup profits.⁴⁹⁷ The GFA also collected money from participating in the African Cup of Nations, the U17 and U20 World Cups, the CHAN tournament and various regional tournaments.

Football administrators in Africa have benefited from these increased flows of money in terms of lifestyle. The status and prestige that they enjoy (see chapter 4) is accompanied by the financial benefits of running the game. There are meetings, conferences, award ceremonies, friendly matches, tournaments and other events that call for their attendance – and they tend to do so in style. For example, CAF president Issa Hayatou and the other members of the Executive Committee conducted meetings at a five-star hotel in Khartoum (Sudan) in February 2011. They had earlier (during the African Cup of Nations in 2010)

occupied rooms in a five-star hotel in Luanda (Angola). Football administrators throughout Africa tend to travel first-class, stay in upscale accommodation and take generous daily allowances.⁴⁹⁸

The question is how Big Men can profit from these cash flows. First of all, and as was stated above, being a football administrator in itself implies all sorts of (financial) benefits. Second, FA officials cut deals with sponsors and receive bonuses in the process. Third, hosts of international tournaments need to develop large-scale infrastructures. FA officials, members of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC), the Minister of Sports and other stakeholders are close to the many business deals that are made in this respect. When it was decided that South Africa would host the 2010 World Cup, contracts worth millions of dollars went to companies that were specialised in building airports, highways, railways, stadiums and other facilities. To some extent, the Big Men who broker such deals could be regarded as football entrepreneurs.

Seen this way, football entrepreneurs are people who occupy positions at the top of the food chain. They are, in other words, owners and presidents of the biggest clubs and/or are top FA officials. The commercialisation of football in South Africa has led the game to be increasingly dominated by ‘a handful of moguls’ who control both the top clubs and the game’s administrative side. A notable example is Irvin Khoza, nicknamed the “Iron Duke”, who became the owner of Orlando Pirates:

Yet he was but one of a number of African entrepreneurs who, in one of the few fields of economic enterprise left open to them under the restrictions of apartheid, used football as an avenue to accumulation and wealth. Other individuals who emerged to similarly dominate their clubs were Jabu Phakathi of Amazulu, Melika Madlala of Golden Arrows, David Chabeli of Moroka Swallows, and not least Jomo Sono, who purchased Highlands Park, a historically-white club based in Johannesburg’s northern suburbs in 1983, and renamed it Jomo Cosmos. Yet none was to become so prominent as Kaizer Motaung, who, drawing inspiration from the clubs he had played for in the US (particularly Atlanta Chiefs), used his own capital to found his own club in Soweto.⁴⁹⁹

These Big Men work closely with those who control SAFA and the PSL (and in many cases, they *are* the ones who occupy positions within these bodies). Famous – or rather, notorious – administrators who profited from the commercialisation of the game include Solomon “Stix” Morewa and Abdul Bhamjee.

A new breed of football entrepreneurs seems to have emerged in Africa. Some Big Men have taken a novel approach to club management. The Nigerian club Enyimba FC is a good example. Orji Uzor Kalu, mentioned in chapter 5, took a personal interest in the club when he became governor of Abia State in 1999. Enyimba has since been transformed into a corporate business model. That, at least, is how the club presents itself on its website. ‘Enyimba has become a brand, well equipped to become part of the broader entertainment industry in ways consistent with its development strategy, and any advertising partnership

with one of Africa's best known and most popular soccer brand will enable you achieve significant economic results, increase profitability and maximize shareholders value,' it reads.⁵⁰⁰

The football entrepreneur is not a new phenomenon. As Alegi writes in respect to South Africa, as early as the 1920s the 'presence of thousands of black spectators at weekend matches across the country made the game increasingly attractive to private manufacturers, retailers, and African entrepreneurs'.⁵⁰¹ Alegi cites the career of Henry Ngwenya who, as president of Durban's Football Association (DDAFA), introduced admission fees for matches and used the money to buy a bus, hire a coach and organise tours. In short, he 'used his considerable influence, visibility, and access to association funds to build a powerful client-ship network which he directed with growing authoritarianism' and through which he became a powerful football entrepreneur.⁵⁰²

What may distinguish men like Ngwenya from modern-day football entrepreneurs is the idea that a club itself is a business object. I have described how Jamil Maraby's company Global Media Alliance purchased a majority of shares of Sekondi Eleven Wise in 2007 (chapter 3). His goal, he said, was to make the club part of their corporate business. 'We want to build a brand,' he explained.

Photo 6.1 Hundreds of players show up at a gravel field behind a church in Bamenda for a recruitment period of top league club Yong Sports Academy



‘We want to become the biggest brand in Ghana. Eleven Wise will turn 90 this year (in 2009). We want to bring the team back to the glory days. We’ve been out of the system for ten years so it will take time. But we’ll make it.’ Maraby was pleased with the club’s massive support. ‘It was a dream come true. The supporters who come to the stadium are not even a quarter of those that could come. But the potential is there.’

Maraby’s ultimate goal was to link the image of the club to that of the company. ‘We want to mix business with entertainment,’ he told me. ‘We already own a lot of companies that are into entertainment. We have our radio station Happy FM, we have the Silverbird Cinema, we have the Lifestyle Shop. We’re also starting a television series with a South African company.’ Eleven Wise was meant to be the cherry on the cake. ‘Everything comes together with the club because there’s nothing that portrays the company in the way Eleven Wise does,’ Maraby explained. ‘Everybody will talk about Eleven Wise and think about Global Media Alliance.’ One obstacle – promotion to the top league – had already been overcome. ‘We bought the shares and managed to get to the Premier League in one season,’ said Maraby. ‘Now we need to win prizes.’

Solid infrastructure and modern facilities are essential in this regard. Eleven Wise started playing its home matches at the modern Essipong Stadium on the outskirts of town. The stadium is beneficial to Maraby’s aspirations in several respects. First, spectators who occupy this 20,000-seater stadium can watch the match in a seat under a roof, two features that are absent in many other league centres. Second, Premier League matches are broadcast (live) from the four new stadiums in Accra, Kumasi, Tamale and Sekondi. This would imply visibility for Eleven Wise and, hence, Global Media Alliance. ‘If you don’t play your matches in these stadiums, they won’t tape your game,’ Maraby explained. ‘If your match is broadcasted, it will also be shown outside the country. This means that you can market your players.’

Another requirement is to make the team attractive for fans to watch matches. ‘The current lack of supporters coming to stadiums in Ghana is a problem,’ said Maraby. ‘That’s why there are certain things we need to do. My plan is to do what the Americans are doing. You have to get cheerleaders, you need giveaways that come with the tickets, you need free popcorn for the kids.’ The CEO proved to have some knowledge of marketing. ‘You know cotton candy? It wouldn’t cost us much to supply everybody in the stadium with cotton candy. We could say: “Wear our red and white jerseys and take your cotton candy for free!”’ Violence is a matter of concern. ‘There’s always trouble here,’ Maraby admitted. ‘We need to calm down the supporters. We need entertainment. We need to make the game like a Sunday activity.’

Sekondi Eleven Wise is not the only community-based club where sports and business have come together. In fact, Gamba All Blacks was Ghana's first Premier League club to be taken over by a foreign party. A Japanese businessman named Toshihiro Iwasa bought 70 percent of the club's shares in 2008.⁵⁰³ Gamba All Blacks, nicknamed the Black Magicians, had already promoted to the Premier League by the time Iwasa stepped in. Iwasa's Ghanaian-based company Gamba Tours became the club's sponsor. The Japanese businessman then announced the construction of a sports complex near the club's home town Swedru, consisting of an 18,000-seater stadium, three training pitches, a gym, a club house, hostels, classrooms and tennis courts. 'My vision is to make All Blacks a model club in Ghana,' he said.⁵⁰⁴

Another development in African football is television networks either buying themselves into or completely taking over clubs. The Ghanaian television network Metro TV acquired a majority of shares of a club named Zaytuna FC through its parent company, Optimum Media Prime (OMP). OMP originally planned to take over a club named Kade Hotspurs but went for Zaytuna when the latter promoted to the Premier League at the expense of the former. Founded in 1997 by businessman Alhaji Franko Lamptey under the name Stay Cool Professionals, Zaytuna FC had two earlier stints in Ghana's top league. In 2007, Lamptey agreed on a partnership with OMP. He remained president of the club; Alhaji Tallal Fattal, CEO of Metro TV, became Zaytuna's new CEO.

The purchase was Metro TV's attempt to increase its visibility in the Premier League. The network also bought the rights to broadcast Premier League matches and it introduced a reality show called the MTN Soccer Academy (see below). Metro TV thus created a whole business strategy around Ghana's most popular sport. Indeed, it was stated that OMP 'with their expertise in management, media and public relations will market, promote and advertise as well as syndicate sponsorships to launch Zaytuna United credibly in the premiership and generally work towards the improvement of the game of football in Ghana'.⁵⁰⁵ When Zaytuna relegated at the end of its first season in the Premier League, OMP and Metro TV turned to another freshly promoted club, St. Mirren (which also relegated after only one season).

The involvement of Metro TV and OMP signals a mixing between football and the world of entertainment. In 2008 former Ghanaian international Ebo Mends came up with the idea to launch a reality show called the Ghana Goal Hunt. The show's winner – the best striker – would earn a two-week trial at a Norwegian club. MTN launched the aforementioned Soccer Academy Reality Show in 2007. Its synopsis was quite simple: A handful of players would stay together for a certain period of time during which TV viewers would send text messages in support of their favourite resident. The player with the least amount

of votes had to leave the premises. The show's fourth edition featured players from several countries, including Togo and Nigeria. The winner earned a two-bedroom apartment and a trial period at SuperSport United.

An example of the merger between a television network and a football club is, in fact, SuperSport United. A company named M-Net took over Pretoria City FC in 1994 and renamed it SuperSport United. The chairman of M-Net, Khulu Sibiya, doubled as the chairman of the club. According to the club's website, the purchase had a dual purpose:

1. M-Net wanted to become involved with local soccer, not necessarily only through television rights, but by buying a struggling team which they could build into one of the better teams in the country. The future of decoder purchases lies with the emerging market and soccer is beyond doubt the most popular sport in South Africa – so the creation of strong brand awareness within soccer made sense to the long term goals of M-Net.
2. To qualify for the CAF competition in Africa within three years (and as often as possible thereafter) and therefore use the team as a marketing tool for the SuperSport Television Channel that broadcasts sport into Africa.⁵⁰⁶

A more prominent case of the merger between football and business in Africa is hardly conceivable. SuperSport United is now one of South Africa's top four clubs.

The commoditisation of the player

The remainder of this chapter deals with a particular kind of economic capital, namely the football player. The global transfer market is a potentially lucrative source of income for a Big Man. Many of them have set up private clubs, generally one-man shows with matching academies, with the aim of unearthing talented players and selling them for a handsome profit. Those who are engaged in buying and selling players may very well be regarded as true football entrepreneurs. On the one hand, the trade is said to resemble neo-colonial trends of extracting Africa's finest resources. On the other hand, poverty makes players to look for a future abroad. Businessmen, politicians and former footballers, among others, create the (economic) infrastructures and (social) networks to make that happen.

Africa and the muscle drain

'When we played the final of the Cup of Champions Clubs in 1983 we played because we loved the game,' recalled former Kotoko player Ernest Appau. 'We beat Al-Ahly 1-0 that day. One club official came to see us after the match. He handed each of us an envelope of 5,000 old cedi (€). We didn't complain. We were just proud to play for Kotoko.' Playing for one's club was considered a matter of pride. 'Do you know how much they offered me when I joined PWD Bamenda in 1979?' former player Nji Sunday asked rhetorically. 'They gave me

1,000 CFA francs (€1.5). I really wanted to play and as a son of the soil you couldn't ask for much money anyway.'

Times have changed. I met one player in Buea in 2003 who had become league top scorer a few seasons earlier. His Italian manager had arranged test matches in Europe. 'The man cheated me,' he said. 'He made me sign a contract and sent me to all those places. But no club took me and he kept the money.' He has refused to play in Cameroon since. 'The level of play here is too low. I don't want to play for whatever token of money they give me. I just want to go out.' This attitude can be observed throughout the country. 'Players have no affiliation to their clubs anymore,' president Eteki Charles of Tiko United told me in 2010. 'We're now preparing to go to Burundi for a Champions League match but four of my players have disappeared. I know their managers took them abroad for trials. The players didn't even inform us.'

The players' estrangement and lack of responsibility towards clubs and the desire to "go outside" is a familiar problem throughout Africa. The legendary coach C.K. Gyamfi said in 2008 that the mentality of Ghana's national team players leaves a lot to be desired. 'The players that I worked with played for the love of the game and were totally committed to playing for their country,' he said. 'Today's players don't know the value of the national jersey but my players were prepared to die for their country. Obviously, not all football players are motivated by money but there are many who only think about money instead of the jersey they're wearing and what it means.'⁵⁰⁷

The desire to go abroad is understandable. The dream of playing in front of thousands of spectators in modern stadiums for handsome weekly salaries is simply too hard to resist. Even the case of the modestly well-to-do Kalle Sone, who played for Vitesse Arnhem in the Dutch *Eredivisie*, proves that Europe is the place to be. I was in his native town Buea when Sone returned during the summer break. He drove his car around town, handed out gifts (mainly boots and jerseys) and was acknowledged as a sort of Big Man. Similarly, supporters in Bafoussam said that when Geremi Njitap visited his native town in 2009 he looked up a car washer. The old man had supported the Cameroonian international when he was still a young boy. Njitap handed him 500,000 CFA francs (€760). 'He had never seen so much money,' one supporter remarked.

As the professionalisation of the game in Africa has not significantly improved the prospects of a financially rewarding career, it is no wonder that the continent's fragile economies are cited as the main cause of the so-called muscle drain. Darby and Solberg state that 'due to the broader levels of poverty that exist in Ghana, coupled with a weak football infrastructure which offers extremely limited economic opportunities, those players with the necessary talent see their futures outside of Ghana'.⁵⁰⁸ Elsewhere, Darby sums up the issue quite nicely:

In Africa's two primary player exporting 'zones', North Africa and those coastal nations in the sub-Saharan west of the continent, there are only a few clubs such as Al Ahly and Arab Contractors in Egypt and Esperance in Tunisia that have the professional infrastructure and financial resources to pay players the sorts of salaries that might encourage them to remain at home. The domestic club game elsewhere in the continent but particularly in sub-Saharan Africa has been undermined by extreme poverty, political instability, poor administration, corruption, limited state investment and government interferences.⁵⁰⁹

Cameroon is no exception. When I lived in Buea in 2003 my football friend Essomba looked after a young teammate who went by the name of Veron. Seven years later, Essomba slept on the floor of a friend's shop. Veron, on the other hand, signed a new, lucrative contract at Ajax Amsterdam under his real name Eyong Enoh.

There is a fair amount of academic research on the exodus of African players to countries outside the continent.⁵¹⁰ According to Pierre Lanfranchi and Matthew Taylor, the trade goes back to at least the 1920s and 30s when South Africans and North Africans were active in the English and French leagues, respectively.⁵¹¹ The movement of players followed patterns of colonisation in the sense that many players who left their own country ended up in the motherland. Africa's most significant colonisers – France, England, Portugal and Belgium – all dealt with the influx of African players in their own way. As I stated in chapter 2, England and France employed different colonial policies, which can be summarised as indirect rule and assimilation, respectively. Belgium and Portugal more or less followed France's policy.

Arthur Wharton was black Africa's first footballer in the English league. He played for Preston North End and Sheffield United, among other clubs, in the 1880s and 90s. The Ghanaian's initial journey to England had nothing to do with football. Like many others Africans, Wharton came to Europe to pursue an academic career. This was also true for the Egyptians who moved to England in the first decade of the twentieth century. These 'student-footballers', as Lanfranchi and Taylor call them, wanted to 'further their education or learn a trade'.⁵¹² While white South Africans travelled to England for football-related purposes from the 1920s onwards, it took black South Africans three decades longer to get there.⁵¹³ Nigerians too went to England to play from the 1950s onwards.

The French policy of assimilation or *Frenchification* was visible in the football domain. Algerians and Moroccans were among the first to play in the French leagues in the 1930s. The prominence of North Africans in France increased after World War II. A total of 117 Algerians, Moroccans and Tunisians played in the French professional league between 1945 and 1962; 12 of them played for the national team.⁵¹⁴ The influx of players from West Africa started in the 1950s. Ivory Coast and Cameroon were major suppliers, and so were Benin, Togo and Senegal. As Alegi states, football migrants from West Africa were not only

cheap labour, a prohibition by French clubs to attract foreign players also made it logical for them to look at the colonial territories.⁵¹⁵

African players moved to Portugal from the 1950s onwards and a decade later the numbers almost equalled those of the French colonies.⁵¹⁶ In concordance to colonial ties, the majority of these players came from Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde.⁵¹⁷ Portugal's most famous African-born player is Eusebio da Silva. Born in Mozambique, the Black Panther moved to Benfica in 1961 for a sum of £7,500. He also became a Portuguese citizen. Although these players were caught between their native and their adopted countries, most of them were financially better off in Portugal. For instance, Fernando Freitas' career in Portugal 'had brought him wealth and fame in both Africa and Europe. With the money he made from football, he was able to buy a house and secure his future, buying a hair-dressing salon run by his wife.'⁵¹⁸

Finally, Belgium imported African players – most of them from Belgian Congo – from the late 1950s onwards. And although several players from other parts of Africa (Nigeria in particular) found their way to Belgium in the 1980s, the traditional route from Congo to Belgium remained an important one. Belgium became known for a new form of trade as it increasingly turned into a transit terminal to Europe's richer leagues. This is how Lanfranchi and Taylor put it:

Belgian football provided an early indication of the changing attitudes of European clubs towards the African market. Diversifying their recruitment, clubs began to contract professionals from hitherto untapped nations such as Sierra Leone and Zambia. The reasons for this were purely economic. As with the Danes in the late 1970s and the Eastern Europeans in the late 1990s, Belgian clubs have considered young foreign players as an investment, to be bought cheaply (with the help of agents whose activities were recognized much earlier here than in the rest of the continent) and sold abroad for a significant profit.⁵¹⁹

Three Belgian journalists indeed describe how African players commonly first go to play in Belgium before signing contracts at clubs elsewhere in Europe.⁵²⁰

Although the trade in African players has quite a long history, it is said to have accelerated from the 1980s and 90s onwards. Africa has indeed turned into a major player on the transfer market. Europe remains a popular destination. Between 1994/95 and 2004/05, the recruitment of non-European players by Europe's top clubs in the top leagues more than doubled.⁵²¹ They came from three zones: Europe, Latin America and West Africa. Although Latin Americans come in first in terms of migration to Europe, Africans lie a good second.⁵²² In the 2002/03 season, 1,156 players from Africa played in 78 leagues in 52 UEFA countries, which added up to a total of 19.6 percent of all players.⁵²³ The former colonial powers are prominent beneficiaries of Africa's talented players, although Italy's and Germany's imports are also relatively high.⁵²⁴

An increasing number of African players are transferred to Eastern Europe these days. They also find themselves playing for clubs in the Middle East or

South East Asia. Another development is that African players are transferred to clubs in either Northern Africa or South Africa. Indeed, South Africa has become a popular destination since the end of apartheid in the early 1990s. As Cornelissen and Solberg state, club officials ‘cast their recruitment nets wide, and while immediate neighbours such as Zimbabwe, Namibia, Malawi and Zambia yield a large number of foreign footballers into South Africa, many players from Cameroon, Uganda, the Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo also play in South African clubs’.⁵²⁵ Like Belgium, South Africa serves as a through-way to the wealthy leagues in Europe.

The exodus is concentrated around a select number of countries. Bale argues that Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Morocco and Angola were responsible for more than half of the entire movement of African players to Europe in 1999. Nigerians constituted almost 16 percent of total output, followed by Cameroon (close to 11 percent) and Ghana (slightly under 10 percent). Numbers six to nine were the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Algeria, respectively.⁵²⁶ It is worth noting that many of the African players in Europe today were actually born there. It reveals a complicating factor in the story of migration in the sense that African players constitute such a ‘mixed, heterogeneous group’.⁵²⁷ This is, for example, the case with the Belgian-born player Romelu Lukaku whose father is a former Congolese international.

It is argued that the trade in African players can be understood through notions of neo-colonialism and exploitation. Andre Gunter Frank’s theory of underdevelopment and Immanuel Wallerstein’s world system theory have received specific attention in this regard.⁵²⁸ Drawing upon these theories, Magee and Sugden developed a model of football migration with Europe as core, Latin America as semi-periphery and Africa as periphery.⁵²⁹ As Lanfranchi and Taylor note, ‘football mirrors the neo-colonial trends in which raw materials are traded without genuine investment in infrastructure and training’.⁵³⁰ One aspect that contributes to the ideas of neo-colonialism and exploitation is that African players are still regarded as cheap labour.⁵³¹ Poli nevertheless urges to go beyond world system theory towards a ‘connectionist approach’ (see below).⁵³²

One visible result of the ‘increasing numbers of scouts, agents, and talent speculators who recognized in the trade of African football labor an opportunity for personal financial gain’ is the proliferation of football academies on the continent.⁵³³ Darby, Akindes and Kirwin list four types of academies: Those that are run by local clubs or FAs; those that are run by a European club in collaboration with a local partner; those are run by individuals or corporations; and those that are of a ‘non-affiliated, improvised’ and often illegal nature.⁵³⁴ There are thousands of academies in Africa; Ivory Coast’s former capital Abidjan alone reportedly boasts of 450 academies.⁵³⁵ Although some academies combine

football with education, Darby, Akindes and Kirwin point out that the main goal of any academy is to transfer players:

There is little question that European clubs that enter into partnerships with African academies or, as in the case of Ajax, buy controlling stakes in African clubs are essentially creating nurseries that allow them to reserve African talent until it can be legally transferred to Europe. This arrangement may be more favorable than the previous system of talented players being transferred to Europe at a very young age because it allows African youths to remain within their country of origin and family networks for longer and hence reduces the psychological and cultural problems associated with adjusting to foreign climates. However, the ultimate objective of these academies is to export African talent, thus strengthening European football at the expense of the African game.⁵³⁶

Indeed, the Feyenoord Academy in Ghana enrolls its players in various classes but the academy's main aim is to 'deliver players to Feyenoord in the Netherlands', as director Karel Brokken told me in 2009.⁵³⁷

The fourth type of academy especially gives rise to the view of African players being exploited. As Darby, Akindes and Kirwin state, 'these private, non-affiliated academies expose young Africans to the greed of noncertified agents who are able to acquire recruits cheaply and convince them to sign exploitative contracts if they are successful during their trials'.⁵³⁸ Although academies normally have to be registered, journalist Dan McDougall claims that this type of academy is generally of an illegal kind:

Many are run by the roadside; most have no proper training facilities. With biblical names such as 'Sons of Moses' and 'Lovers of Christ', each will have its own tatty bibs or T-shirts to distinguish it from the others. At the children's side, egging them on to run, pass, think quicker, will be a legion of unlicensed agents and coaches. Ninety per cent of the academies we visited in Accra and Abidjan (...) were run by local men with limited experience of the game. Most described themselves as former footballers; but none was able to produce proof of his career. They are intent on finding one thing only: The next Essien or Didier Drogba. The next multi-million-pound golden ticket.⁵³⁹

The players are not the only ones who suffer from those who run these academies. As their families commonly provide the funds that are asked for, it is the whole family that suffers.

In fact, agents have a rather negative reputation. The story of Nii Odartey Lamptey is telling in this respect.⁵⁴⁰ The Italian agent Domenico Ricci's role in the transfer of underage Ghanaian players in the early 1990s is said to have triggered a trade in '*baby-calciatore*' or 'soccer children'.⁵⁴¹ Broere and Van der Drift list cases whereby players sign contracts that are very lucrative for their agents.⁵⁴² As many players are illiterate, they do not always understand the content of such contracts. 'I went to Cairo with three teammates,' one Ghanaian player told me. 'We went there for trials and afterwards the Egyptians presented us with contracts. These contracts were written in Egyptian so we couldn't understand a single word. I refused to sign and returned to Ghana but my teammates

were too eager to play for a big club, so that they all signed the contract. They were forced to work for some agents for many years.’

A related aspect is that the image of the successful African player in Europe is to some extent false. This image is fed by the fact that most media direct their attention to Africa’s most famous players, thereby creating ‘the myth of football as a means of upward social mobility’.⁵⁴³ Unfortunately, many Africans play in Europe’s lower and financially less rewarding leagues, and they are susceptible to discrimination in terms of salaries and longevity of contracts.⁵⁴⁴ Some of them end up living in the streets of Europe’s major cities and are simply too embarrassed to go home. As Emmanuel Maradas argues, for ‘every Aruna Dindane who makes the leap from ASEC (Mimomas) to Anderlecht in the Belgian top division, there are thousands of others investing millions of hours of practice – time that could be spent on school work or learning another trade – without even reaching the first hurdle’.⁵⁴⁵

Although there is evidence that the trade could to some extent be regarded as a form of plunder, human trafficking or slave trade,⁵⁴⁶ I think that the push factors are just as great as the pull factors.⁵⁴⁷ Three arguments underscore this premise. First, Africans want to leave Africa as much as clubs in Europe want to employ them. In fact, the exodus is part of a broader migration of Africans to non-African countries.⁵⁴⁸ Cameroonians call those who leave the country for Europe or the United States *bushfallers*; they migrate to earn money and return home as wealthy individuals. Football has over the years become a respectable route to wealth, often even more so than via a formal education, as Nantang Jua argues with regard to Cameroon:

This is clearly borne out in *Just for Fun*, a program broadcast by Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV). In one of its short sketches, a woman returns from the farm with a football for her son. In the ensuing dialogue she urges the son, who was doing his homework in mathematics, to play football so as to earn a lot of money. “Don’t you see Kameni, Njitap? ... Since when did the Bamilekes (...) start playing football? Don’t you see that Kameni has even constructed a house for his mother. Where do you think that he had the money from?”⁵⁴⁹

A second argument that focuses as much on push as well as pull factors is the fact that Africans themselves are involved in the trade as well. This makes the idea that Europeans plunder Africa not less probable but it does point out that it may be a one-sided approach. In adopting his connectionist approach, Poli suggests that the transfer of players is facilitated by various actors who together constitute an international network. He argues that world system theory may be a sound analytical framework for understanding the macro-economic logics behind the trade, but that the connectionist approach explains the ways in which players are transferred.⁵⁵⁰ Recently, Darby has begun to apply Klein’s analysis of the so-

called Global Commodity Chain (GCC) in baseball to the migration of Ghanaian footballers.⁵⁵¹

The view that only European scouts and agents recruit and transfer players is not true. African coaches, businessmen, politicians and former footballers assist at different levels of the trade. Ashu once told me that players tend to enjoy sponsorship from wealthy benefactors in the early stages of their career. When I met him again in 2010, he explained that he was financially supported by a businessman from Douala. 'The deal is that when I become famous I cannot forget about him,' he said. I have referred to such sponsors as Godfathers elsewhere.⁵⁵² Recently, the Qataris have indulged themselves in the trade through the so-called Aspire Academy. African coaches, agents, club officials and businessmen screen hundreds of thousands of players each year, of whom only a handful are admitted into the academy.⁵⁵³

African journalists also operate as agents. 'It's mostly the top journalists from the top media outlets who are involved,' said one club CEO in Ghana. 'They all have their boys.' 'It's very easy,' explained the Ghanaian journalist Nana Kwasi Agyeman, who doubles as manager of both players and coaches. 'I travel to every corner to watch matches. I just pick out the talented ones from the press stand.' Although Agyeman admitted that he did not yet sign a first-class deal, he stated that the business could potentially be lucrative. 'I get fifteen percent of every aspect in the transaction,' he told me. 'I'm now working on a deal involving a German coach for Hearts of Oak. His signing fee should be around \$80,000 to \$100,000 which means I will take about \$15,000. I will also take fifteen percent of his salary.'

A third argument in favour of including both push and pull factors is that Africa's football administrators appear not to do much to slow down the trade. Moreover, they are often involved in the trade themselves. There was a time where Africa's leaders tried to minimise player migration to Europe. As Poli argues, the post-independence period brought forth a phase in which 'African states set up national team squads and adopted protectionist policies to hold on to the best players'.⁵⁵⁴ It happened in Zaire under president Mobutu Sese Seko, in Marxist Mozambique and even in Mali, which forced Salif Keita to flee to Liberia and from there to France. However, the 1980s witnessed a shift in policy from, as Dietschy and Poli state, an 'endogenous' to an 'exogenous' strategy.⁵⁵⁵ Mozambique lifted its ban in 1987 when a flow of footballers to South Africa had made the ban untenable.⁵⁵⁶

Top administrators from around the world have spoken out against the movement of players from developing to developed regions. 'After the flight of brains Africa is confronted with the muscle exodus,' CAF president Issa Hayatou said in 1998. 'The rich countries import the raw material – talent – and they often

send to the continent their less valuable technicians (coaches). The inequality of the exchange terms is indisputable.⁵⁵⁷ FIFA president Sepp Blatter once called the trend by European clubs to go ‘shopping’ in developing countries ‘unhealthy, if not despicable’. ‘Europe’s leading clubs conduct themselves increasingly as neo-colonialists who don’t give a damn about heritage and culture, but engage in social and economic rape by robbing the developing world of its best players,’ he said.⁵⁵⁸

Yet today’s realities seem to make such rhetoric somewhat meaningless. For one thing, it is claimed that clubs in Europe circumvent FIFA’s new regulations with regard to underage players by directly investing in academies in Africa.⁵⁵⁹ Moreover, CAF appears to be incapable of reversing the trend. Issa Hayatou has said that his organisation is effectively powerless by stating that FAs are responsible for implementing rules and regulations.⁵⁶⁰ Although some FAs have taken measures in this respect, it is evidently not enough to halt the exodus. In fact, FA officials in Africa have been caught conspiring with club officials and agents in transferring players out of their respective countries. They also use national teams and international tournaments for these purposes (see chapters 7 and 9).

Grooming and quick-win methods

These days a number of clubs are founded for business reasons. Ashu’s club Saint Paul Warriors is one example. Rainbow FC is another. This club from Bamenda was set up by an American FIFA-licensed agent in collaboration with an African Big Man. ‘We want to establish promotion to the Elite One league,’ the coach told me. ‘The goal is to act on a platform on which we can showcase our players. A player’s value increases when he plays at a very high level. So it’s in the top league that a player can get a good resume.’ Where Saint Paul Warriors aspires to sell players by staying in a lower league, Rainbow FC wants to do so from Cameroon’s top league. Big Men who own clubs each have their own strategies which partially depend on their financial strength.

I argue that there are at least two methods by which a Big Man is theoretically able to make money out of selling players, namely the method of grooming and the quick-win method. The discussion below is limited to clubs and academies in Ghana and Cameroon that I have personally visited. Since these two countries, together with Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Senegal, are Africa’s biggest exporters,⁵⁶¹ the picture may be somewhat different in countries that are less prominently entangled in the global transfer market. In any case, for the first method – that of grooming – we will focus our attention on a Premier League club in the Dansoman area of Accra, Ghana.

If one needs to mention a famous football entrepreneur in Ghanaian football, one would be wise to remember the name Sly Tetteh. Together with his business partner Felix Ansong, the late Alhaji Ibrahim Sly Tetteh founded a club named Liberty Professionals in 1997 and transformed it into one of Ghana's power-houses. It is said that Liberty Professionals has brought a scientific approach to the game. Although Tetteh tended to stay away from the limelight, his dreams and ambitions were no secret. As a football entrepreneur *par excellence*, Tetteh reportedly made a lot of money on the global transfer market by selling, among others, John Paintsil, Sulley Muntari, Asamoah Gyan and Michael Essien. Exemplary of his success was the fact that five members of the Black Stars squad at the 2006 World Cup were former Liberty players.

Tetteh's method was to find talented players, groom them and then sell them. 'There are many clubs that have failed because of poor recruitment policies, always going for quick-fix transfers,' he said. 'But at Liberty, we believe in scouting and developing our own players from a very young age.'⁵⁶² Tetteh enjoyed a lot of contacts abroad through which he was able to send his players on trials. Another advantage is that Liberty Professionals boasts of all the facilities one needs to train footballers. At one point, Tetteh expanded his empire by opening academies in Togo and Kenya. In short, the Big Man possessed all three forms of capital: Economic (to set up a club/academy), social (to sell players through contacts) and symbolic (for being a famous football entrepreneur and Godfather of several members of the Black Stars).

It appears that only a few Big Men have (so far) been able to rival Sly Tetteh in terms of success. Most clubs in Sub-Saharan Africa have rudimentary infrastructures and underdeveloped youth programmes. A notable exception is Roger Ouegnin, a Ivorian lawyer who, as president of ASEC Mimomas, co-founded the club's successful academy. Famous former pupils include Salomon Kalou, Kolo Touré and Aruna Dindane. Ouegnin is known as an eccentric, shrewd businessman who operates in a similar vein as Tetteh. He once received the CAF Merit Order of Achievement for developing youth football in Africa. The legality of the links between ASEC Mimomas and the Belgian club Beveren has nevertheless been questioned.⁵⁶³

There are a few Big Men in Cameroon who could modestly rival Tetteh's empire. Gilbert Kadji, whose father founded the beverage company UCB, set up the Kadji Sports Academy (KSA) after the 1994 World Cup. Famous graduates such as Eric Djemba-Djemba, Carlos Kameni, Stephane Mbia Etoundi and Samuel Eto'o Fils used to practice at the academy's training grounds along the road between Douala and Tiko. Kadji took over a Swiss club named FC Sion in 1999 as part of an attempt to transfer his players to Europe. (He is currently no longer the club's owner.) Poli argues that in transferring players Kadji was

assisted by members of the Cameroonian Diaspora in France. By 2008 more than forty academy players had found their way to Europe.⁵⁶⁴

I visited the premises early in 2010. The complex – consisting of gravel and grass pitches, a tennis court, a basketball field, dormitories, a restaurant and bar, and a go-cart race track – evidently had seen better days. The whole area looked neglected and my football friend Essomba confirmed that Kadji had recently lost some of his interest in the academy. ‘There are about 150 pupils living on the premises,’ said one coach, who worked there on a permanent basis. ‘Each player pays tuition for one year but very talented players are allowed in for free. Eto’o was one of those players who was scouted by Kadji and brought to the academy.’ Charging tuition fees is quite common in this type of football business.

Less than an hour’s drive from KSA on the road to Buea lies the Mount Cameroon Sports Complex. Owned by the aforementioned businessman and parliamentarian Calvin Foinding, the academy at first was only part of the Big Man’s larger project: Elite One league club Mount Cameroon FC. Ever since the team relegated and practically ceased to exist, Foinding is said to have set his eyes on developing his academy. A visit in 2003 already showed the largesse of the terrain. Joseph Ewunkem, former captain of Prisons Buea, gave me a tour past the dormitories, training pitches, basketball field, auditorium and bar/restaurant. Some moderately known players such as Atem Valentine and Eyong Enoh played in Buea before signing contracts elsewhere.

A prominent figure in the Cameroonian football business is Henry Njalla Quan, who is mostly known for being the general director of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC). Although he acted as president of community-based club Victoria United for several years, these days he is primarily involved in sponsoring his private clubs, ACADA Sports FC and the Njalla Quan Sports Academy (NQSA). I met Njalla Quan at the academy’s headquarters in Limbe. In response to the question why he sponsored football in the first place, he used the rhetoric heard so many times before from fellow Big Men. ‘First, we want to give young people something to do in this part of the country where there are few leisure activities,’ he said. ‘Second, we are grooming young players so that they will be ready to play for the big clubs or even the national team. Third, we want to improve the level of our local football.’

In the club’s magazine *ACADA news*, Njalla Quan added that he is ‘determined to put top quality athletes into the market (and) shape the under privileged children into people who can help their families tomorrow’.⁵⁶⁵ His words, and those of other Big Men, resemble what Darby concludes with regard to the motivations of the Big Men who have set up in academies in Africa:

Photo 6.2 Businessman Yong Francis has ordered workers to turn a bush area near Nkwen into an academy ground, featuring two training pitches and dormitories



It has been suggested that the establishment of [football academies] make a positive contribution to the development of African football and the lives of those aspiring footballers who pass through the academy system. This hypothesis espoused by those involved in academies as managers, directors, owners, or partners typically argues that these facilities provide proper training and a coordinated and systematic approach to youth player development and in doing so contributes to the game at both local and international levels. Beyond the impact of academies on football it is also suggested that some contribute to the broader development of African society through the provision of academic and vocational training that “students” might otherwise not receive.⁵⁶⁶

I believe that at least part of these Big Men’s motivation is to give something back to their communities (remember what I wrote about Big Men seeing their involvement in the game as an obligation, see chapter 4). Having said that, I do think that football entrepreneurs consider their clubs/academies as businesses first.

Another case comes from Bamenda where businessman Yong Francis founded Yong Sports Academy (YOSA). Yong, who once began a typewriting school but who now owns four public schools, was in the process of setting up an academy by the time I met him in late 2009 (the name Yong Sports Academy may suggest

otherwise but the club originally did not feature an academy). Yong drove me to a huge plot of land in Nkwen. Dormitories, a kitchen, toilets, a water tower and other facilities were already in place. Work was underway to clear the area for the construction of two pitches. It seemed likely that Yong started his academy to teach youngsters the game of football in the same way his schools train students in various disciplines. The Big Man, however, made it clear that he wanted to make a profit. He was still looking for contacts abroad.

The method of grooming is used by famous former footballers as well. Salif Keita, Abedi Pele, Anthony Yeboah and others have set up clubs and/or academies after ending their professional careers. An interesting case study is Marcel Desailly, the robust French defender of Ghanaian descent, who completed his Lizzy's Sports Complex on the outskirts of Accra in 2011. When I visited the premises earlier that year, I observed three grass pitches, a swimming pool, hotel rooms and several other facilities. Everything looked state of the art. 'I'm not like the other guys who fund their academies all by themselves,' he said. 'They depend on selling players to maintain their academies. That's not a viable business. I'm working with partners to commercialise this place. That's how you make it sustainable.'

According to Desailly, selling players was not his primary objective. 'I want to offer young people the chance to do sports,' he said. 'Trading players is not the first goal. I want to keep young players in Ghana until they are eighteen. This way they are close to their families, they can eat the food they are used to.' One remark by the former defender indicated that selling players and making money was his goal after all. 'I want to groom players for the big clubs in Europe,' he said. His plan was to put players up at his property, groom them in their own habitat and then transfer them. As opposed to Yong Francis, Desailly does not lack relevant contacts in Europe. Famous former footballers commonly have a wide network in international football circles.

It appears that an increasing number of Big Men understand the potentials of grooming players, which effectively entails turning players into marketable products. However, it is not true that just about anyone is able to make use of the method of grooming. First of all, most clubs in Africa, specifically those in Sub-Saharan Africa, lack the facilities to implement this method. Second, initial investments to start an academy tend to run into the thousands or even hundreds of thousands of dollars. It has to be noted, though, that the distinction between a club and an academy is usually a fine line. KSA, NQSA and Feyenoord Fetteh are generally known as academies, yet all of them had a team participating in the top league at one point in time. Vice versa, YOSA and Mount Cameroon FC started out as clubs but are now evolving into academies.

The second way for a Big Man to make money out of selling players is through what I call the quick-win method. For a prominent example, we need to take a look at a club in Ghana's Volta Region. Founded by businessman Victor Akpene Ahiakpor, Heart of Lions has been quite successful in the Premier League. The club's main success lies elsewhere, namely in the buying and selling of players. 'Victor is a football enthusiast,' said Alex Aboagye, the club's chief scout. 'He's originally from the Volta Region and decided to form his own team there. He named the club Heart of Lions because we fight like lions.' I asked the scout whether he sees similarities between his club and Liberty Professionals. 'Definitely,' he answered. 'Liberty is a role model for us. We look at their accomplishments and try to emulate their success. Victor is just like Sly. They are both self-made businessmen who want to make a mark in football.'

There is indeed a similarity between Heart of Lions and Liberty Professionals. Both clubs came up suddenly to the Premier League and went on to rival Hearts and Kotoko. Heart of Lions ended up in the top four on several occasions. 'Victor Ahiakpor is called the Abramovich of Ghana football,' said sports journalist Emmanuel Prempeh.⁵⁶⁷ 'He managed to take the team from nowhere on the road to success. He has put a lot of money into his club.' There is, however, one major difference between the two clubs. While Tetteh groomed young players for years on end, Ahiakpor instead picks them when they are all ready for a major transfer. The quick-win method thus implies bringing in big players, making them part of a winning team for a few seasons, and then selling them for a profit.

Victor Akpene Ahiakpor is said to be quite successful in the quick-win method. Heart of Lions players such as Haminu Dramai, Eric Bekoe, Osei Banahene and Obed Ansah earned transfers to clubs in Ghana or abroad. This method's ingredients are a keen eye for talent and making sure the players act on a platform on which they are visible to scouts. One example is Dominic Adiyiah who started out as a pupil of the Feyenoord Academy. He later earned a transfer to Heart of Lions and was soon a nominee in the category Most Valuable Player of the Season. A call-up for Ghana's U20 national team announced the young player's international breakthrough. Adiyiah was first transferred to a Norwegian club and then to AC Milan. Quite a few Heart of Lions players made it to one of Ghana's national teams, including the Black Stars.

It could be stated that all clubs make use of the quick-win method. After all, it is in the nature of clubs to buy and sell players. The community-based clubs in particular are still considered to be the vehicles through which players leave the country or continent. A typical route for a young Ghanaian player who plays for a mediocre Premier League or a lower league club is to be picked up by Hearts or Kotoko before earning a transfer abroad. Similarly, for a long time the clubs from Cameroon's largest cities – Douala and Yaoundé – were seen as the biggest ex-

porters of players. These days, however, clubs like Heart of Lions are challenging the community-based clubs as the main gateways to a career abroad. Several private clubs in Ghana own better facilities and employ better youth programmes than some of the biggest community-based clubs.

A proponent of the quick-win method in Cameroon is businessman Dieudonné Kamdem, a Bamileke who used to own two Elite One league clubs. Kamdem started out as president of Fovu Baham, a West Region-based club known for its training schemes and professional set-up.⁵⁶⁸ In 2002 Kamdem founded his private club Les Astres in Douala. The team has performed quite well since. Also, several players were transferred to clubs abroad, among whom Lucien Owona-Ndong who went to Paris Saint-Germain after playing in Douala for two seasons. More significantly, Les Astres has been one of Cameroon's few clubs to have delivered players for the Indomitable Lions in recent years. Both Kamdem and Ahiakpor thus make sure their players get selected for one of their country's national teams.

The status of these football entrepreneurs became visible when two of them passed away. Alhaji Mohammed Musah, popularly known as Alhaji Bimbo, owned the Ghanaian First Division club Maamobi Midtjylland FC. He sold many players, for example Prince Tagoe, Kweku Essien, Razak Pimpong and Isaac Vorsah. At one point, Alhaji Bimbo also acted as a member of the Black Satellites Management Committee. When he died in August 2007, ministers, parliamentarians, footballers and administrators paid their respects at the burial ground. 'If life were to be a commodity, we would have contributed to save Bimbo,' said GFA president Kwesi Nyantakyi at the funeral.⁵⁶⁹ When Sly Tetteh unexpectedly died during a friendly match in Cape Coast on 3 September 2011, hundreds of dignitaries attended his funeral. 'It's a sad day,' said Nyantakyi. 'We have lost an inspiration, a role model, colleague and friend.'⁵⁷⁰

It may seem as if the football business is a guaranteed way to get money in the bank. This, however, is a false assumption. As is the case with Big Men who get involved in football for political purposes, those who engage in the football business do not always succeed in what they had set out to accomplish. For example, both Jamil Maraby and Toshihiro Iwasa were quite positive about turning their community-based clubs into profitable businesses. Yet both Sekondi Eleven Wise and Gamba All Blacks relegated within two years after the Big Men's take-overs. This finally led Maraby and his company to resell their shares to the Sekondihene. It would be safe to state that neither Maraby nor Iwasa was given enough time to start making a profit.

I have stated elsewhere that one-man shows such as Liberty Professionals and Kessben FC are reasonably unpopular among the wider population, resulting in low gate proceeds (chapter 3). Founding and funding a private club (or academy)

solely to make money through selling players or through club branding is thus not without certain risks. The Big Man will have to make huge investments without having the guarantee that he will reap the benefits. Somewhat ironically, it was Jamil Maraby himself who argued that the football business can be a very risky business indeed:

This business depends on chance. You never know whether you can make a profit out of it. That's why you see a lot of businessmen owning a club in the First Division. Maintaining a team there is not too expensive. They may spend ten percent of their income on the club so it doesn't cost them too much. But, like I said, it's a chance. It's a lottery. Everybody does the lottery. Everybody lives off hope. One day these businessmen think they can come to the Premier League and make money through the selling of players.

His words were echoed by Emmanuel Kyeremeh, owner of Tema Youth and Bechem Chelsea, who stated that football 'is business. If you do it well you will recover money and move into the profit zone. If you don't do it well it can even affect you.'⁵⁷¹

Journalist Nana Kwasi Agyeman, who doubles as manager of coaches and players, agreed that it is a risky business. 'You need to scout players and pick the good ones,' he told me. 'The next step is to take care of the player who's under your wing. Most clubs don't give them a regular salary, boots and jerseys. That's where you come in. So it's an investment, and an investment is never without risk.' The coach of Rainbow FC in Bamenda told me a similar story. 'You may need to invest about 600,000 francs (€900) in a player,' he said. 'But by the time he's ready to be sold, he may be worth 10 million francs (€15,000).' In short, the football business is a potentially lucrative yet uncertain business, capable of increasing and diminishing one's economic capital.

I know of cases where Big Men either lost their investments or were on the verge of losing them. Alhaji Karim Grunsah, the Muslim businessman who financed King Faisal for decades, found his team being relegated at the end of the 2010/11 season (which means a loss of income). Another example is businessman Kwabena Kesse, founder of Kessben FC, who reportedly was partly involved in football to sell players. He evidently discovered that maintaining a squad required economic capital. At one point, I learned that Kesse planned to construct a sports complex. In 2010, however, he reportedly sold his club to another businessman for a sum of \$600,000. It was claimed that the club was in debt.⁵⁷²

Let me summarise this chapter before we move on to the next part. The professionalisation and commercialisation of football worldwide has, albeit on a relatively modest scale, increasingly led various companies to sponsor the African game. This has lured Big Men who act as football entrepreneurs and who see their involvement as a business opportunity. Some Big Men take a majority interest in a club for branding purposes. Other Big Men found and finance clubs in

order to sell players, either through the method of grooming or the quick-win method. In short, Big Men in football convert economic capital into more economic capital. The football business, nevertheless, is a risk in the sense that getting a return on the investment is not guaranteed.

We will now move on to the second part of this dissertation, which deals with the consequences of Big Men's attempts at converting capital. In this respect, Big Men employ tactics and strategies that sometimes go against FIFA's Fair Play Code. Recall the idea that winning has no value if achieved in a dishonest way. However, quite the opposite appears to be the case: Winning is to be preferred above anything else, even if the victory was achieved by cheating. Our first point of inquiry is the (bureaucratic) organisation of clubs and FAs. This is where we turn to issues dealing with power play, boardroom struggles, mismanagement and accountability.

Power play, mismanagement and accountability

When his secretary hands him the file on PWD Bamenda, chairman Eric Mukala sighs. The file contains one piece of paper, revealing notes of a meeting some years back. ‘The club doesn’t really have an office,’ the lawyer states. ‘Most files are kept by the businessmen who used to be president of the club.’ One of them, Augustine Iche Ozoemena, holds office near the Municipal Stadium. The office is practically empty.

Until recently, clubs in Cameroon were not obliged to maintain secretariats.⁵⁷³ ‘For example, (...) mighty Canon Yaoundé did not have any permanent address,’ wrote journalist Martin Etonge in 2003. ‘That was the situation with many clubs. No post box, no telephone. So-called presidents had the clubs in their houses or suitcases as they live with the times.’⁵⁷⁴ Having an office does not necessarily mean anything. At the club’s secretariat, Eteki Charles advises me to meet up with a former management member, Nana Hamza. ‘He’s Tiko United’s walking encyclopaedia,’ he explains.

Premier League clubs in Ghana are obliged to own secretariats. Hearts of Oak’s secretariat contains offices, a conference room and a gift shop. Asante Kotoko’s secretariat, located near Santasi Circle, was a gift from the Asantehene. The club’s management members are typically businessmen who spend their time elsewhere. Even though Sekondi Hasaacas maintains a secretariat in Takoradi, CEO Ben Nab Eyson has effectively run the club from his house(s) over the past two decades.

One-man shows typically own better offices than their community-based counterparts. Kessben FC’s headquarters at Liberty House in Kumasi featured separate offices for the secretary, the coach and the directors. The president of Heart of Lions built a clubhouse and a secretariat in an Accra suburb. The leather couches, the mahogany desks and the flat screen televisions exhume wealth.

Football entrepreneur Henry Njalla Quan built an office in Limbe. A secretary answers the phone.

The Big Man as boss

Recall the statement that clubs are organised analogous to companies *on paper* but run through a system of patronage *in reality* (chapter 3). This chapter deals with the way football in Africa is run in reality. Ask a Ghanaian how the game is organised in his country and his answer will feature many references to Europe and England in particular. He will say that clubs in Ghana are organised and run the same way as their counterparts in England, namely as corporate entities with a CEO at the helm. He will state that clubs need to float shares on the stock exchange, for that is how the English do it. He will also point out that the leagues in Ghana are set up professionally and that companies pay money to broadcast Premier League matches.

In theory, he is right. But he is also very wrong. The professionally organised league systems and club structures are nothing but a façade that hide the reality of Big Men running the game in a personal capacity through patron-client networks. In other words, the official power structures with checks and balances obscure day-to-day power relations. A CEO, for example, is not always one of the most influential people in a club. To determine a club's most powerful individual(s), one must go and find its main financier(s). 'In general, for the man in the street, the leader of the club is the person who occupies the foremost position within the club,' one Cameroonian journalist wrote in 2004. 'Notably, the president or any other major financier.'⁵⁷⁵

Power within one-man shows is clear-cut. The most powerful individual of Heart of Lions, King Faisal and Yong Sports Academy (YOSA) is its founder, owner and president which, in all three cases, is the same person. A president is nevertheless obliged to appoint a CEO. When I spoke to King Faisal's CEO Vincent Sowah Odotei, he said he strove to make the club more professional. 'Mr. (Alhaji) Grunzah used to interfere with my work, but now we've come to a mutual understanding,' he said. 'I have also succeeded in separating the finances of the owner from the finances of the club.' Odotei's words were an example of wishful thinking. Several informants – coaches, club officials, journalists – told me that Grunzah interfered with every aspect of the club. 'We all know Odotei cannot make important decisions,' one of them said.

The position of CEO reveals a contradiction within the organisation of clubs. Since a CEO normally does not spend his own money but receives a salary, he should not expect to be making important decisions. In a one-man show, a CEO is the president's subordinate. The situation at community-based clubs is more complicated. Some CEOs – for instance Hearts' Harry Zakkour and Kotoko's

Herbert Mensah – have become famous for spending their money. The same goes for CEO Ben Nab Eyison of Sekondi Hasaacas. However, Eyison acts as president and CEO at the same time and so renders the club’s professional set-up meaningless. In other cases, it is doubtful whether the CEO financially contributes. When Odotei was CEO of Hearts, supporters wondered why someone who contributed so little should have so much power.

We know that so many clubs in Africa depend on the Big Man as a wealthy benefactor, which makes the link between money and power all the more significant. Members of the Board of Directors and the Council of Patrons were usually promoted after having served the club for many years on end, both in terms of finances and leadership. There are nevertheless also directors and patrons who are said to have made only minimal financial contributions. Harry Zakkour told me that the ‘patrons are a problem because they don’t finance the club’. ‘The patrons feel they own the club but they only contributed 10,000 cedi (€5,000) when they assumed their positions,’ he said. ‘How can you make decisions when your own money is not involved?’

In Ghana, the Winneba Declaration proposed certain modalities for qualified officials to come in and run clubs and FAs in a professional manner (see chapter 6). Things went astray as soon as these plans had to be implemented because it was here that the Big Men who had been running these clubs all along realised they would lose their positions. In other words, if clubs were to be run professionally, it meant that certain Big Men needed to step aside and make way for these “professionals”. Recall Joe Aggrey, the former Deputy Minister of Sports, saying that ‘certain power brokers’ were not prepared to accept change and that the declaration was not a law (chapter 6). He went on to make the following statement:

The clubs needed to float shares so that the supporters could become part owners. That has never happened [by 2009]. All the supporters do is go to the game and pay their tickets at the gates. In most clubs, especially the one-man clubs, the ones who controlled them didn’t want to release their hold of the club. Kotoko is still fully owned by Otumfuo. It has been very difficult to convince the Asantehene that other people would come in and take over the club. That’s the situation we’re in today.

The professional set-up of clubs as proposed in the Winneba Declaration never fully materialised. For instance, the limited liability company “Hearts of Oak Sporting Club Limited” came into being on 3 February 1994 when 100 million shares of no value were issued to five individuals.⁵⁷⁶ One of them later took other management members to court, thereby preventing the club from holding its annual Congress until the year 2005.⁵⁷⁷ This meant that the supporters of the club were unable to elect new directors and management members. Since then, Hearts has predominantly been run by Interim Management Committees (IMCs). IMC members are drawn from a circle of Big Men, some of whom were involved in

Hearts prior to the professionalisation in 1993. Similarly, the Asantehene Opoku Ware II suspended the Kotoko constitution shortly before he passed away in 1999. At Kotoko too, IMCs are a normal phenomenon.

These days clubs in Ghana and Cameroon are not professionally run. To me, there are six interconnected reasons why this is true. First, Big Men typically hire family members and friends, people from their ancestral areas or employees from their own companies as management members. The vice president of Heart of Lions is the president's brother. The vice-chairman of Kessben FC is the president's personal friend. 'We're close friends,' he told me. 'When the team promoted he asked me to become part of the club.' The vice president of Mount Cameroon FC is also a director of one of the president's companies. Some of YOSA's management members work at the president's schools. Since club and FA positions often have political connotations (see chapter 5), Big Men also tend to hire political affiliates for certain positions.

Second, as most people are hired by a Big Man, they tend to work under his influence. The aforementioned position of CEO is a good example. Kotoko's management members are selected by the Asantehene and so only report to him (see further below). A club's professional hierarchy therefore does not mean much, especially within one-man shows. Since the directors of Kessben FC were hired by president Kwabena Kesse, it does not matter which one is superior to the other. They all listen to the Big Man. This is true for coaches as well. 'It's not the CEO who hired me,' said Bashir Hayford. 'The owner (Mr. Kesse) wanted me and hired me. As much as I respect the administrators in the club, I owe allegiance to the owner who gave me this job. They're also working for the owner. Everybody's working for the owner.'

Third, club officials may be professionals in certain areas of expertise but not in football management. Big Men are not excluded. The fact that the president of a one-man show is almost always a businessman does not guarantee that he will run the club as successfully as his company. 'The people who are appointed by the Asantehene to run Kotoko are not selected based on their performance,' said Joe Aggrey. 'That doesn't matter. It's based on friendships. They are sports enthusiasts.' Most club officials consider their involvement in football more as a part-time hobby than a full-time job. As Aggrey concluded, the problem 'lies with those people who have the money but who don't know how to run a club'.

The same applies to FA officials. In Cameroon, the composition of FECA-FOOT's top administration seems to be not so much predicated on qualifications and experience but on economic and political connections. This is what the authors of a report on football management in Africa wrote in 2010:

All the members of the executive committee of Fecafoot are businessmen, except the President, Iya Mohammed, who is General Manager of a state corporation (SODECOTON), Vice President John Ndeh, who is General Manager of the Northwest Development

Authority – popularly known by its French acronym MIDENO – and the Secretary General Tombi à Roko, a civil servant. All others are real estate owners, sports good manufacturers' agents, lawyers (who organize player transfers), transport and hotel contractors, and public relations agents.⁵⁷⁸

These Big Men have personal motives for taking up positions in football administration. It does not mean that they are necessarily the right people for the job.

Fourth, club (and FA) officials are randomly assigned to certain positions. At Hearts, Frank Nelson was responsible for administration but it was not clear why he was the most qualified person for the job. Several of Kotoko's management members are former footballers with no management experience who all of a sudden become Director of Operations or Director of Public Relations. This point (again) leads to the view that positions in the professional set-up of clubs actually have little meaning. The individual who takes up one position could easily have been asked to take up another position altogether. In short, it is not the position that matters, it is the person who occupies it. The directors for administrative and legal affairs may be exceptions because these positions are normally taken by accountants and lawyers, respectively.

Fifth, club (and FA) officials tend to interfere with each others' duties. I sometimes asked myself why Helena Cobbina, as Director of Finance and Administration, would always travel along with Kotoko for away matches. It made me wonder whether she understood that she was not the Director of Operations. 'They (Board members) all sit on someone else's chair,' said *Kotoko Express*-reporter David Kyei. 'After a while problems start because his colleague will say that he's been crossing his domain.' The Public Relations Officer in particular has to share his job with his fellow officials. Indeed, club and FA officials typically behave as PROs in the sense that they all speak their minds in public. One Board member would say x on radio while a management member would say y in a newspaper.

Sixth, club (and FA) officials tend to occupy different positions within the same organisation over a longer period of time. This is a common phenomenon within community-based clubs such as Hearts and Kotoko. When the Asantehene chose Sylvester Asare Owusu as CEO in 2006, he already knew what to expect. After all, the businessman had taken up the same position in 2003. 'I've been a management member at least seven times,' Helena Cobbina told me. She fulfilled several roles, none of which seemed to relate to her work as a police officer. 'The same group of people have managed (Hearts) for decades,' said Odotei. 'This person is in charge for five years and then gives it to the next person. We call that the musical chairs. The club has been run by IMCs for donkey's years.' To be sure, he was referring to the same people who obstructed the implementation of the Winneba Declaration.

The professional nature of clubs is mostly absent in terms of contracts which, in turn, is partly related to “lesser” club officials, coaches, players and ground personnel being so dependent on Big Men. Footballer Essomba once told me that his club Mount Cameroon FC was ‘an amateur club’. ‘If I received my salary every 25th, 26th or 27th of the month, then yes, I would consider it to be a professional club. But we never get our salaries on time. Sometimes we have to wait for months to get some money.’ There are stories of presidents who refused to pay when the team was not performing well. One coach told me that the president of a Ghanaian one-man show had an opportunistic approach in respect to salaries and bonuses. ‘The president thinks that if they (the players) don’t deserve it he’s not going to pay,’ he said.

Let us now focus on broader issues with regard to hierarchy and power. Bar the Minister of Sports, the most powerful position in football administration is that of FA president/chairman. In general, the Big Man is all-powerful and he demands unquestioned obedience. For an understanding of this phenomenon we must go back to colonial times. The British institutionalised the colonial regime and created a gap between the elite and everyone else in the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Robert Price describes the consequences of that policy thus:

Those in authority were not held responsible or accountable to the public at large, and were thus left free to behave in an arbitrary and domineering manner towards those they ruled. The mere occupation of an official position gave to the colonial administrator the right to demand unquestionable obedience and deference from Africans, whatever their social status, economic wherewithal, or educational attainment.⁵⁷⁹

The relationship between European officialdom and the African population was that of a master tutoring his children who were to show respect and obedience in return. Price argues that this pattern of role expectation between the powerful and the powerless was copied by the African elites who came to rule the country after independence.

The result is what Price has labelled the Big-Man Small-Boy Syndrome. Although his analysis is related to Ghana and to formal bureaucratic settings, it is applicable to other parts of Africa and to wider societal settings as well. It is common to hear Ghanaians speak about others as *big men* or *small boys*. These terms ‘represent an institutionalized pattern of expected behavior between individuals of unequal status that is highly authoritarian in nature’:

Big Men are those of social weight, worth, and responsibility; while small boys are, like children, insignificant social actors, of little consequence in the affairs of the community. Big Men are expected to make decisions, give orders, and look after the material well-being of their social inferiors. In turn, small boys are expected to exhibit unquestioning obedience and obsequious public deference towards big men.⁵⁸⁰

The status of a Big Man depends on his ability to show off his wealth – also through his physique – and on his generosity towards inferiors. Another visible

aspect of his status is that a Big Man refrains from doing manual labour; instead he ‘issues commands, normally from a seated position, while subordinates do the running’.⁵⁸¹

The way the Big Man and the Small Boy play out their roles in public confirms their positions and social standings. The unequal status between Big Men and Small Boys depends on five dimensions: Formal institutional positions, wealth, education, occupation and age.⁵⁸² In the old days, age denoted authority (hence the term elders). “Big Man” and “Small Boy” do not refer to age or maturity but to hierarchies of authority. The best way to distinguish a Big Man from a Small Boy is by looking at someone’s position (which is why a senior civil servant can be younger than his subordinate) or by taking into account the context within which two individuals meet. Yong Francis, president of YOSA, gave up his seat to president Henri Claude Mvondo Mbédé of Canon Yaoundé at the stadium in Bamenda in 2009. ‘He’s my big brother,’ Yong said, explaining that his colleague used to be one of Biya’s ministers.

The relationship between a Big Man and lesser men goes further than merely being a matter of employees obeying their boss. Let us start out with an example as provided by Ebou Daniel and reprinted by Paul Nugent:

Naturally, at staff meetings, nobody speaks till the big man does, his contribution at once becoming the consensus. This story is told of a National Serviceman in a public corporation who was given the draft of a memorandum in the big man’s own handwriting to look at, who did not know his duty was to offer praise; far from commending the draft, he dared to pencil in an amendment! He had his discharge coming, the Serviceman, but not before the show-down in the Board Room, where summoned to explain his conduct, the Serviceman appeared to be doing very well indeed, pressing home all his several points, carrying the Board until Thunder boomed ‘SIT DOWN, you small boy!’⁵⁸³

Such behaviour is typical within the football setting as well. The Big Man who owns a one-man show does not expect to be interrupted, corrected or contradicted by an inferior (meaning everybody else). I earlier made reference to the difficulty of working as a CEO at King Faisal. Coach Steven Polack told me the following story:

King Faisal is a one-man show. Alhaji [Grunсах] is a one-man show. When there’s a meeting it’s a one-man show. It’s not when I’m in the meeting because I ventilate my opinion. But all the others just agree with him. We would be standing outside and one manager could agree with me on something. But when we go inside and I bring it up – I’m thinking we’ve already talked about it and he has agreed. No chance. This manager is just sitting there like he’s never heard it before. Because they’re all afraid to lose their breadline. But why are they there? Why do you have Board members if they cannot give input and output of what we are talking about? The one who puts in the money just got all the say. I think most clubs are like that. They are controlled by one man. He does what he likes, he can say what he likes. And nobody will say anything about it.

Photo 7.1 Coach Herbert Addo (left on the bench) watches a practice session at Asante Kotoko's training ground near the military barracks in Kumasi



The consequence of the Big-Man Small-Boy Syndrome is that the Big Man does not tolerate criticism. Combine this with the fact that club officials tend to interfere with other people's duties, thinking that Big Men are always superior to lesser men, and one stumbles upon one of African football's most typical drawbacks. I am referring to Big Men influencing team recruitment and team selection. First of all, the recruitment is commonly not done by a technical director (a position that most clubs lack in the first place) or a coach but by a Big Man. Yong Francis once invited me to observe a recruitment period. While the coach was leading a practice session, Mr. Yong said 'I'll take him and him,' and then we left. In 2011, Hearts formed a Recruitment Committee including five Big Men and one coach.⁵⁸⁴

Generally speaking, a coach in Africa does not have a free hand in the sense that he is not allowed to work independently and make his own decisions. This is how spiritual adviser Zé, who has had years of experience as a coach, explained the situation:

We have coaches who work under the influence of the executives, so there's no democracy. They have to take instructions from the club executives. The club president tells him: "I spend my money so you will do what I say." Let's say that the president sends a player to the coach. Will the coach say no to that player? No! He cannot do that. But within professional

clubs, it's not only one person who spends his money. This is why the lack of sponsorship is killing us because most clubs belong to one man.⁵⁸⁵

Big Men typically behave as if they are qualified coaches. Zé told me a story about a striker in Cameroon who came back from an injury. 'You could see he had not been training well so the coach put him on the bench,' he explained. 'The president forced the coach to include him. The president is not a technician. They felt that this striker could turn water into wine at any time, but it's not true.'

The problem of club officials interfering with the coach's job is most markedly strong in respect to African coaches. A local coach almost by definition has to acknowledge the club president and other officials as superiors. He will thus find it difficult to refuse orders (or, to put it more mildly, requests) that come from above. Also, as Zé's statement made clear, the coach is paid by the club president, making it even more difficult to ignore the boss's suggestions. The Ghanaian coach Bashir Hayford admitted that local coaches, in contrast to expatriate coaches, cannot work independently because of the Big-Man Small-Boy Syndrome:

It's not that they [the white coaches] are better than us but we are so compromising. A white coach will not allow anybody to interfere but the black coaches are more considerate. They know the chairman and will not say no to him. The white coaches don't listen to him. That's what happened to [the Belgian coach Maurice] Cooreman [at Kotoko]. He did it his own way and they sacked him and said he didn't listen to them. The issue is that they don't compromise and we compromise because of our background. If an elder talks to you, you have to listen. Your boss will say this or that and you will say okay. You cannot say: "No, no, no!" But the white coaches say no.

The pressure is heightened by the fact that club officials blame the coach for not listening to their advice. 'If you stand by your decisions, they say that you don't respect management,' said coach Hayford. 'When you lose, they say that you refused to listen to them.' Hayford explained that losing a match means getting a call from upstairs:

The first person to call you is the CEO. "Come to my house and explain why you lost." You have to do that. He doesn't understand why you lost so you have to explain it to him. "Why did you field these people and not these people?" All the pressure is coming from the management. In Europe it's not like that. Everything is in the hands of the coach. Nobody asks you why this player is not playing. In Africa, in Ghana, the management members have their interest in the boys in the sense that they brought them. They like their players to play. If they don't play, they will ask you why.

But foreign coaches too will find the power and influences of Big Men hard to deal with. At first, Kosta Papic was hailed as a great coach who would be given a free hand. Eleven months later, Hearts' Board and management members alike criticised his coaching tactics and stubbornness and fired him. The Serbian claimed that his dismissal was related to his 'persistent refusal for some Hearts gurus to interfere with his work':

When I arrived to handle Hearts, the management and all the people gave me assurances that such a situation wasn't going to happen but along the lines they started to interfere with my job which I resisted. It was always sad how some club members wanted some particular players to play some specific matches even when they were not on form. I made sure they did not have their way and this to me could have influenced their decision to sack me because I heard rumours out there that I never listened to advice from them. That is never true because I gave them all the respect but with interferences I said no.⁵⁸⁶

Papic's words were confirmed by Board member Harry Zakkour. When Hearts lost 0-1 to Kotoko in 2009 (which finally led to Papic's lay-off), Zakkour publicly stated that 'we lost the game from the bench. The coach doesn't want to listen to anybody and does things his own way and this is one of the reasons why we lost.'⁵⁸⁷

Big Men, factions and power struggles

I have described the organisation of football as being run by Big Men who resort to patronage politics to maintain power. As power in Africa is perceived to be indivisible, Big Men do not like to share it.⁵⁸⁸ In the past, one-party states were the norm on the continent. Nowadays, presidents make sure their political party completely dominates the political arena. Elections are a formalised method to crush rivals, as Nyamnjoh's description of a sketch by the Cameroonian comedian Tchop Tchop testifies:

'Elections,' the victors in his sketch claim, 'are like a football match where you must prepare your players physically and psychologically. You can consult the Pygmy witchdoctor, corrupt the referee, or motivate (bribe) your opponents. ... You organize your elections knowing full well that you are going to win them. You have yourself to blame for not having known what to do.'⁵⁸⁹

So what happens when several Big Men all fight for power? As each Big Man relies on his own supporters to ward off competitors, power struggles often end up in infighting within the management ranks. This results in clubs and FAs succumbing to chaos and, sometimes, falling into disarray.

I have earlier discussed the various ways in which Big Men beget certain positions in the football domain (chapter 3). Some of them, such as Eteki Charles Dikonge, were asked to become president of a club. This is especially true in situations where clubs are in financial difficulties and Big Men are needed to come in to provide sponsorship. In most cases, club and FA positions are very popular, causing Big Men to compete against one another. This competition is streamlined through elections at the Congress. A Big Man needs to build up support for himself to collect enough votes. In the discourse of network analysis, a Big Man needs to form a faction which, as Jeremy Boissevain argues, is 'an exclusive coalition of persons (followers) recruited personally according to structurally diverse principles by or on behalf of a person in conflict with another

person or persons within the same social unity over honour and/or control over resources'.⁵⁹⁰

Before Frank Nelson Nwokolo became a management of Hearts of Oak, he was part of a faction (the Chapter) which consisted of about 100 supporters. The members of the Chapter may select one candidate from amongst their midst who they think to be potential management material. Members of different Chapters will each come forward with a candidate who will compete at the Congress. The overall goal of the candidate is to represent his faction at the club's highest level or, as H.U.E. Thoden van Velzen argues, to create a 'common fund':

The most important feature of an interest coalition or faction is a common fund of resources and honour. Its backbone is an *exchange circuit*, the particular system of paths through which goods and services circulate among members of the coalition. If this flow-system is asymmetrical (hierarchical), the common fund is controlled by only a small proportion of coalition members (the core). Other coalition members, the followers, hope to benefit through the channels of transactional linkage.⁵⁹¹

The big community-based clubs typically consist of several factions, some of which serve their own interests rather than the general good of the club. Frank Nelson commands the loyalty of a section of the club's supporters but he will never enjoy everybody's support because there are plenty of supporters who back other Big Men. These clubs thus suffer from innate friction within the management ranks.

Big Men spend time and money on campaigning and lobbying. It appears that incumbents normally have the advantage over newcomers, as they control the channels and resources through which to influence either supporters or fellow administrators. One case came up when GFA president Kwesi Nyantakyi announced his desire to become a member of the CAF Executive Committee. One month before the Congress in February 2011, Nyantakyi invited 20 FA presidents to attend an opening ceremony of a kitchen and a canteen at the Prampram School of Excellence, which formed part of FIFA's *Goal* programme. The *Graphic Sports* understood Nyantakyi's motivations and stated that 'the invitation thrown to officials of 20 other football federations in Africa, we dare say, was an over-kill and largely unnecessary'.⁵⁹²

Not everyone shared this criticism. One journalist praised Nyantakyi for engaging in international football politics. 'For me, the significance of last week's inauguration goes beyond the mere commission of a Kitchen and Canteen Complex,' he wrote. 'Let no lazy mind over-simplify the issue. The fact that 20 Africa FA Presidents (...) would abandon their heavy schedule to partake in the ceremony should offer you an idea of the significance of the occasion.'⁵⁹³ He then made the following statement:

Lobbying constitutes a major part in all elections. It is absolutely legitimate. Last week's ceremony therefore provided a fertile platform for the [sic] Kwesi Nyantakyi to canvas for

votes for the upcoming elections. Indeed, his Excellency the vice-President John Dramani Mahama who graced the occasion minced no words when he appealed to the various FA Presidents to endorse Nyantakyi's candidature.⁵⁹⁴

During a visit to Ghana early in 2011, I saw how delegation members of the Liberian FA forgot their heavy schedules at the poolside of Accra's top-rated La Palm Royal Beach Hotel. Several FA presidents publicly pledged their support for Nyantakyi who went on to win the seat by claiming 34 out of 53 votes.

Getting elected is often a combination of campaigning and forging the relevant political alliances. Big Men aspiring to become Hearts or Kotoko directors stand a better chance if they belong to the NDC or NPP. A Transparency International report not only highlighted the link between Kenyan Football Federation (KFF) elections and politics but also the way Big Men manage to stay in office:

(...) KFF elections are always more of a political process than a simple headhunt for capable managers to help the game grow. It is those with political guile are cunning and have money to buy their way around who get into KFF office. Such people will be voted in along with their line-up which usually just comprises hangers-on and sycophants. After being elected into office, the conspiracy continues. Because many of the members of the national executive committee owe their allegiance to the chairman, none of them dare blow the whistles.⁵⁹⁵

Such "hangers-on" and "sycophants" can be explained within the framework of the Big-Man Small-Boy Syndrome. Indeed, the obedience and deference to the Big Man may very well be regarded as sycophancy on the part of lower-ranked officials.

Since Big Men rely on factions, it is clear that supporters play a large role in the quest for power. There exist an antagonistic relationship between Big Men and supporters. After all, the supporters can catapult Big Men into positions of power but they can also vote them out of office. Supporters have more tools at their disposal to show the Big Men where power lies. First, they can stop attending matches, which affects the club's financial base. Second, supporters can stage protests, either peacefully or violently. Both Hearts and Kotoko supporters have on occasion taken their grievances towards the directors and management members to the streets. They organise marches to the training ground, secretariat or stadium, and present petitions to a patron or director (in the case of Hearts) or the Asantehene (Kotoko).

A third way for supporters to exert influence is to become violent. 'It can be dangerous to be a Board member or CEO,' said Alhaji Fawaz Zowk, a Hearts of Oak Board member. 'I have been beaten dozens of times. If you win they will carry you on their shoulders. If you lose they will beat you. Sometimes I had to hire bodyguards to protect me.' Supporters tend to employ all three methods simultaneously. At one point, a group of Hearts supporters objected to Vincent Sowah Odotei being the club's CEO. 'Last year (in 2008) we ended up in the

number eight position,' said Edmund Palmer. 'We were dying. So the supporters said: "The CEO is not running the club well and he should leave." But he was not leaving so we had to chase him out of the stadium.' Finally, the Council of Patrons instructed the Board of Directors to sack Odotei.

On their part, Big Men maintain positions of power through the "blame game". In case of a loss, club officials blame it on biased refereeing or the dubious tactics of the opponent team. Moreover, they blame everything on other club officials. Probably most important, however, is the Big Men's habit of blaming the coach. After all, the coach is the ideal scapegoat because he is the prime person responsible for team performance and thus the supporters' foremost target. And although club officials usually tell the coach what to do in private, they tend to wash their hands of the affair in public. 'A coach loses three matches and is fired,' one coach in Ghana told me. 'He will ask the management: "How can you fire me? I listened to you and I did what you told me." And the director would answer: "But you're the coach. You're responsible."'"

Once a Big Man is voted into office he commonly turns the club or the FA into a one-man show, meaning that he regards the organisation as his personal property. There are stories of club and FA presidents who turned into dictators overnight. In 2008, the Cameroonian musician Petit Pays was asked to become president of community-based club Caiman Douala. He was later sent away on account of running the club in an autocratic manner.⁵⁹⁶ In 2010 several Executive Committee members accused the president of Benin's FA of being a dictator.⁵⁹⁷ It is rather common to find Big Men and their factions challenging the ruling Big Men for the way they run the affairs of the club or FA. I wish to highlight four types of power struggles.

The first type of power struggle occurs between Big Men who are part of the same club, particularly the community-based clubs. Sometimes the struggle is one between sons of the soil and strangers (chapter 4). Sometimes club officials all want to become president or CEO (see case study below). Sometimes club officials come in conflict with those who founded the club. When Antoine Essomba Eyenga became president of Tonnerre Yaoundé in the 1990s, he attempted to turn the club into a business. However, the team's performance deteriorated and the founder's family started a campaign to get the club back. These struggles finally led Tonnerre to relegate with some blaming black magic as the cause.⁵⁹⁸ Similarly, the reign of former footballer Théophile Abega as president of Canon 'has been dogged by negative publicity and plots by rival factions at the club, bent on ending his tenure'.⁵⁹⁹ Both Tonnerre and Canon Yaoundé have underperformed for years due to infighting.

Power struggles within the management ranks of community-based clubs are often a result of Big Men being accused of mismanagement. The Tanzanian club

Yanga plunged into chaos in the 1970s when the Zairian coach accused his management of embezzling funds that were intended for match preparation. These allegations were directed at one of the club's founders, Magara Tabu Mangara. Two rival camps emerged, one led by Mangara, the other by the secretary-general, David Mwambungu. This is where the trouble became worse, as Tsuruta writes:

A series of revelations over alleged financial scandals fuelled a growing rift between the two factions. The tension reached a peak in late September after Mwambungu and his aides appointed a new chairman, declaring the suspension of 22 prominent members including Mangara and Shiraz, leading to violent clashes between the rival factions. As the pro-Mangara faction gathered around the former headquarters of Mafia Street, Kariakoo, Mwambungu and the anti-Mangara camp congregated at Yanga's new stadium. They marched to the old headquarters, where they clashed with supporters of Mangara, throwing stones and exchanging harsh words, until the unrest was quelled by police armed with tear-gas.⁶⁰⁰

As Tsuruta concludes, these 'intra-club disputes' were a result of 'money-related scandals, combined with the struggle for power over these nationally popular clubs'.⁶⁰¹

A second type of power struggle occurs between the Big Men within the FAs. This happened with the Togolese FA in the new millennium, when several Big Men – Rock Gnassingbé, Tata Avlessi and Gabriel Ameyi in particular – struggled to gain control over the position of president. FA president Gnassingbé had to make way after the national team's disastrous World Cup campaign in 2006. Avlessi was elected president but later a rift erupted between him and his vice president Ameyi. Then, surprisingly, Gnassingbé was voted back in office in 2008. He, however, soon had to make way for an interim management team. In 2010 Ameyi was elected president. Several FAs have fallen into disarray because factions fiercely fought to gain power.

A third type of power struggle is the one between top FA officials and those who run league boards. In Ghana, the GFA runs football in general whereas the Premier League Board (PLB) runs the league. At one point, the GFA and the PLB clashed over a proposed friendly between the English club Everton and Kotoko. While the GFA confirmed the date, the PLB scheduled a league round and refused to change the fixtures. This led Kotoko's PRO to 'wonder why after sanctioning and endorsing the game, the same association will turn round and inform officials of Everton that we will not be available on the said date'.⁶⁰² The *Kotoko Express* alleged that the 'cancellation of the game was a result of nothing more than a senseless show of power by assigns of the PLB who think they now wield more power than the GFA'.⁶⁰³

A fourth type of power struggle is the one between FA officials and the government. FIFA's demand for autonomy of FAs brings forth a few problems. First, governments in Africa typically own their countries' sports infrastructures.

For example, the Cameroonian government appoints directors who control the stadiums on its behalf. Second, several governments still effectively own football in general and national teams in particular. This is, for example, laid down in Nigeria's Government Decree 101. Cameroon's Ministry of Sports is officially in control of the Indomitable Lions. Third, governments still invest a lot of money in the game. Keeping the adage of "whoever pays the piper plays the tune" in mind, these governments feel that they have a right to interfere.

The ownership, control and funding of football by governments has put them at odds with FAs especially when national team coaches need to be hired. Sierra Leone's Minister of Sports hired a coach without the FA's consent in 2011, arguing that he was the one paying for him. The same argument has been put forward in Cameroon. In 2007 FECAFOOT solicited for a new national team coach on its website. A commission set up by both FECAFOOT and the Ministry of Sports and Physical Education (MINSEP) narrowed the 70+ applicants down to a shortlist with German coach Horst Köppel clearly as the favourite. When Köppel declared that he had reached an agreement with FECAFOOT, the Minister of Sports had already signed an agreement with another German coach, namely Otto Pfister.

The infighting has led several clubs and FAs to be run in a haphazard manner. Although some FA officials manage to hang on to their positions through football politics, many FAs are characterised by a rapid succession of administrations. As I will argue later on as well, Big Men who run clubs and FAs do not only tend to focus on short-term interests, they would not be given the chance to implement long-term strategies anyway. As an example, the GFA has had no less than 25 chairmen/presidents from its inception in 1960 until the year 2011.⁶⁰⁴ Nigeria's FA has had a little over 30 Big Men at the helm between 1960 and 2011, many of whom stayed only one year in that position.⁶⁰⁵ The same applies to Ministers of Sport.⁶⁰⁶

Case study: Big Men vs Asantehene

The supporters of Asante Kotoko already know the outcome of today's proceedings. The Okyeame's golden staff, called the *poma*, is visible for all to see. Each of his many staffs stands for a different Ashanti proverb. This one depicts a man and a tree, which signifies the proverb "If one man alone scrapes bark, it falls". It means that only cooperation leads to success. The Okyeame (or Chief Linguist), who is the King's spokesperson, interpreted recent events well. Kotoko's management members, lined up in front of the Asantehene and his advisers, realise their time has come. But until they are relieved of their duty, they are entitled to speak their minds. That is the King's tradition and the supporters are preparing themselves for a long afternoon.

It is Saturday 16 May 2009. Several hundred supporters have flocked to the Manhyia palace in the centre of Kumasi for the ‘big family meeting’.⁶⁰⁷ Many of them occupy positions within Kotoko’s Circle groups. My translator today, Kwaku Anor, is the Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Ashanti Regional Circles Council. Today’s public hearing will take place in the area where the King normally resides over court cases. The plastic chairs near the Asantehene’s seat have all been taken by prominent supporters. Everybody rises when Otumfuo Osei Tutu II enters the court with his following. When his Okyeame speaks he uses no microphone, and supporters rush forward to catch his words. Soldiers armed with guns and bats restore the peace. I am stuck in the crowd, with Anor close to my left ear.

Sylvester Asare Owusu’s eyes are fixed to the ground. The Kotoko CEO is standing about three meters from the King, who sits on his throne under an umbrella. On Asare Owusu’s left stands Jerry Asare, Director of Operations, followed by George Amoako, Director of Finance and Administration, and Kwame Baah-Nuako, Director of Communications. Kwame Boafo, Director of Legal Affairs, will join us as soon as he has taken care of an urgent matter elsewhere. Otumfuo asks his CEO to give an account of what happened recently. When Asare Owusu says that things are not as bad as they may seem, he is interrupted by the King. ‘Every week someone pays me a visit and tells me: “Sire, they have lost again!” And now you are telling me that everything is fine?’

Otumfuo appointed the current management team in late 2006 amidst unrest within the club. The position of CEO in particular was highly contested. Jerry Asare, a representative from Accra, openly vied for the position on radio in the latter part of 2005. Other names popped up in the media around that time as well, George Amoako and Sylvester Asare Owusu among them. In October 2006, the King picked five Big Men to lead his club and chose Sylvester Asare Owusu as the chairman of the management team. However, the fact that Asare Owusu was labelled as CEO was opposed by the other members who stated that they had been appointed as equals in terms of power.

Trouble loomed barely five months after their instalment as Asare Owusu had to counter rumours about an alleged divisiveness among the management ranks. In April 2007, the Supporters Union issued a statement, exposing internal conflicts and the management’s ‘immaturity to solve problems’.⁶⁰⁸ Soon afterwards, supporters organised a rally in Kumasi and petitioned the Asantehene to sack Jerry Asare. ‘Mr. Asare continues to betray members of the management and even make public, issues discussed at meetings which are supposed to be secret,’ my current translator, Kwaku Anor, told *GNA Sports*.⁶⁰⁹ A meeting between the management team and the King solved all differences, Kwame Baah-Nuako told the press in December 2008. ‘We are now more united than ever before and hope

to work in collaboration with all other stakeholders to foster the development and progress of the club,' he said.⁶¹⁰

Today's public hearing is a direct result of the team's abysmal performances in the current 2008/09 season. After losing to Hearts of Oak in Kumasi in February 2009, Kotoko's fortunes quickly left them. The Porcupine Warriors lost several matches both at home and away and also bowed out of the preliminary stages of the CAF Champions League. Coach Isaac "Opee" Boateng came under increased threats and needed protection from irate supporters on several occasions. He resigned immediately after his team drew 1-1 against Kessben FC at the Baba Yara Stadium on Sunday 11 May. By the time the Asantehene called for the public hearing six days later, Kotoko was in eighth position on the league table. Prolongation of the Premier League title seemed further away than ever, and internal struggles were cited as the main cause.

A visit to the club's secretariat on Wednesday 15 April already indicated that there were problems on the horizon. James Dampranie, a former player and now working as Welfare Officer, made the following remark:

The CEO and the other management members all have their own interests. Everybody wants to be the boss because whoever is the boss will be loved by the supporters. They also have their own players in the team. Sylvester has his players, George has his players. They all make sure that their investments are taken care off. They are trying to sell their players abroad for big money. The supporters are now split in two. There are those who support Sylvester and those who want to get rid of him. The supporters wanted to stage a protest rally today to express their anger and frustration. But the Asantehene didn't give his permission because he doesn't want anybody to disturb his tenth anniversary. So there was no protest. I've heard that the King will dismiss the management members and form a new team within a few days. He already knows those who will replace them.

Dampranie's words proved to be prophetic. So did Kwaku Anor's. I spoke with him on 5 May about the current crisis within the club. This is what he said:

The current management team is not united. The reason is that they are all handpicked by Otumfuo, the Spiritual Leader and Life Patron of the club. So the members feel that they are only accountable to the Asantehene himself. They think they owe only allegiance to him and not to the CEO of the club, who is Sylvester Asare Owusu. Normally the CEO is the one who runs the management team, but in this case they don't listen to him. Let's say the Director of Operations is in charge of team affairs. He has to take control over all the issues leading up to the match. But he doesn't report anything to the CEO – he feels his only responsibility is to report to Otumfuo. So Sylvester doesn't get any information about what's going on. There's no unity. Even though they say that they are friends, we can see it's not true. They're fighting over the radio and in the newspapers.

I already heard something similar from Kwame Baah-Nuako in 2008. He told me that since he was personally appointed by the Asantehene, he would only report to the King himself. Combine this with some of the management members aspiring to become the CEO and one can imagine Asare Owusu's limited authoritative powers.

The sun is at its peak when Otumfuo charges his management team to explain themselves. Sylvester Asare Owusu takes the opportunity to blame Jerry Asare. ‘Jerry lives in Accra,’ Anor translates. ‘He has the responsibility to make sure the matches are being prepared well. But since he’s not in Kumasi, we’re not communicating and he’s not functioning well.’ Jerry Asare rebuffs Asare Owusu’s claims. ‘Sylvester’s problem is that he wants to do everything himself. I’m not given the chance to take up my tasks.’ The third person in line, George Amoako, says he feels like the middle man. ‘My role has been to mediate between my friend the CEO and the other management members. Sylvester is not on good terms with the others.’ ‘There’s no mutual understanding between us,’ Kwame Baah-Nuako states. ‘Since Otumfuo has appointed us, we haven’t even met five times with all the members. I propose that this team is dissolved.’

The technical staff, the players, members of the Circles, Kotoko Ladies and the association of old players (AKOPA) are all allowed to express their views. Coach Isaac “Opeelee” Boateng is visibly relieved to finally be able to address the Asantehene. ‘The problem is that there’s no cooperation between the management members and you can see how that affects the playing body,’ he says. ‘My players all have their own management members to whom they owe allegiance and to whom they feel accountable. That’s why the playing body is divided. And that’s why we’re losing matches.’ Opeelee’s words are confirmed by the players. ‘There’s no cooperation among us,’ says captain Godfried Yeboah. ‘If we had a meeting and someone would mention a management member, he would be informed right away and call me.’

It is now the Asantehene’s turn to reflect on the crisis within the club. Osei Tutu II traditionally settles disputes in his capacity as occupant of the Golden Stool and president of the Kumasi Traditional Council. He thus listens to his advisers first:

When the King presides as head of Asanteman Council, comprising the Kumasi chiefs and all the paramount chiefs, all chiefs present are allowed to express their opinions on issues. Formerly, it was the leaders of the groups who spoke on behalf of their colleagues but Otumfuo Osei Tutu II now insists that any paramount chief in the group can express his idea if he wants. So, in the Right Wing, Mamponhene, the leader, will express his view, followed by the Adansehene, the Offinsohene, the Edwesohene, the Asokorehene, and other chiefs in the division. In the Left Wing division, the Esumegyahene will speak, followed by the Kwamanhene, Kumawuhene, Agogohene and other chiefs of that wing.⁶¹¹

Approximately ten chiefs are present today, and they all accuse the management members of shaming the King. Then the Asantehene gives his verdict. ‘I’m very disappointed,’ Anor translates. ‘In 2006, when I asked you if you were up to the task, you answered yes. If you’re not able to unite, it means you cannot work as a team. It’s therefore not necessary for you to continue working. I’m not firing

you, you have sacked yourselves.’ A new management team is presented on the spot.

The *Kotoko Express* applauds the Asantehene’s decision, welcomes the new management team and speaks of the ‘dawn of a new era’.⁶¹² ‘Nana was very disappointed when the management team said they were divided,’ Kwaku Anor tells me a few days after the public hearing. ‘He was angry and he even shouted at Asare Owusu. Nana made a wise decision to sack them. They have put their own interests before that of the club.’ However, it cannot have escaped Anor’s and the other supporters’ attention that history keeps on repeating itself. Anor admits as much:

We the supporters are getting tired of the managers. Even the King doesn’t understand. He always asks a few capable men to take over the affairs of the club and as soon as they’re in charge they start fighting amongst each other. They all want to be the boss. It also happened four years ago when Kwabena Kesse, Osei Kwame and Alhaji Njie were managing the team. Some of them resigned, others were sacked.

Indeed, the life cycles of several management teams and IMCs have been cut short by infighting among its members. Reports from 2005 indicate that Board member Kwabena Kesse eyed the position of CEO, causing friction among several Big Men.⁶¹³ In the same year, IMC member Afrifa Yamoah Ponkoh resigned, apparently after complaining on radio about a disagreement with the other members.⁶¹⁴

The installation of a six-member IMC after the public hearing promised to be an improvement. One thing remained the same: All members were appointed by the Asantehene. Reverend Osei Kofi told the *Kotoko Express* that he was selected after a meeting with the Asantehene.⁶¹⁵ Luckily, the management members chose Alhaji Njie, a former player and management member, as the new chairman (or CEO), which gave the impression that his position was acknowledged by the entire management team. One year later, Osei Kofi accused fellow members of spending money on juju, followed by the threat to sue his colleagues.⁶¹⁶ After the Asantehene installed a new Board of Directors in May 2010, its chairman announced a new IMC but did not immediately appoint a new CEO. Several crises have plagued the club since.

Incompetence, mismanagement and corruption

Our discussion has so far mainly focused on Big Men who invest economic capital to become a club official. However, what happens when Big Men become part of football administration without having had to invest capital of their own? Many top FA officials control funds that were provided from outside sources (see chapter 6). This is where we stumble upon one of African football’s most typical woes, namely mismanagement and corruption. It is said that many football

administrators get involved in the game to reap its financial benefits. First, let us start with a rather unfortunate quality of football administrators, namely incompetence. For one thing, it proves that many of them were not (s)elected because of skills or expertise.

‘An African nation that is not at war,’ journalist Kuper once remarked, ‘and that can afford to enter the World Cup, and that remembers to do so (sic), and that completes its schedule, turning up at every match with at least eleven able-bodied men, has already outdone most of its competitors and has a fair chance of reaching the finals.’⁶¹⁷ This statement from 1994, albeit exaggerated, still holds true. Ghanaians castigated the GFA in 2008 when they found out their national team did not feature in the qualification round of the CHAN tournament. It was rumoured that someone had forgotten to send in the registration forms. Fortunately, CAF decided to include Ghana and nine other countries that had all missed the registration deadline. Senegalese FA officials were less fortunate when they forgot to register for the 1990 World Cup.⁶¹⁸

Both club and FA officials – many of whom were selected based on friendships or politics – tend to make the silliest mistakes. Goldblatt, who refers to these mistakes as an ‘administrative weakness’, provides us with a few examples:

In 1996 shortage of funds saw the Cameroonian team arrive in Johannesburg only two days before their first game in the Cup of Nations. That gave the team two days to acclimatize to the thin air of the high veldt. They didn’t and one of the pre-tournament favourites was out of the group stages. When Zimbabwe played El Salvador in a warm-up game for the 2004 Cup of Nations, the following day’s papers found that not a single member of the Central Americans’ squad had ever played for any of the national senior or junior teams before and that the side appeared to have been cobbled together by the kit manufacturers who had promised Zimbabwe the game. They managed a 0-0 draw.⁶¹⁹

To prepare for the 2000 African Cup of Nations, Zambia travelled to Ghana and Ivory Coast to play a couple of friendly matches. Upon arrival, they discovered that their FA had forgotten to inform the hosts, and to avoid embarrassment a few matches with local teams were organised.⁶²⁰ In August 2009, the Zambians arranged a friendly with Ghana in London but then forgot to get visa for the players. As a result, three Zambian students in England were called up to make up numbers. Soon afterwards, Zambia’s FA had to cancel a training camp after its sponsor was informed too late.

Nigerian FA officials make mistakes as well. After a training camp in London in the run-up to the 2010 World Cup was cancelled, more trouble loomed for the NFF when news came out that its pre-booked hotel in Durban was noisy and mosquito-infested. Nigeria’s Sports Minister told NFF officials that they had to look for accommodation elsewhere. The cancellation of the hotel cost the NFF the sum of \$125,000.⁶²¹ The Nigerian newspaper *Daily Independent* took the opportunity to vilify the NFF officials:

Photo 7.2 In April 2009, the Otumfuo Challenge Cup and other festivities were organised in honour of the current Asantehene's ten year anniversary on the throne



The episode highlighted the managerial ineptitude (to choose a polite term) that has, over the years, become the hallmark of the NFF. As usual, such incompetence goes along the characteristic whiff of untoward, corrupt practices. In a more sensible climate some of the top officials of the NFF would have by now accepted responsibility and, as it were, fallen on their own swords. Sadly, that sort of action rarely takes place here. There has, on the contrary, been a lot of buck-passing and trading of blame. What is obvious is that without anyone being held accountable, the matter will soon be swept under the carpet. No lessons will have been learnt, no new procedures put in place to avoid a repetition of the embarrassing incident. For the NFF crowd, this is all very convenient and self-serving.⁶²²

Such mistakes are arguably caused by a combination of incompetence and short-term thinking. Nigerians refer to these factors as the Fire Brigade Approach. 'Simply put it means that in Nigeria, people (...) always wait until the last minute before they take action on something that they should have done a long, long time ago,' wrote the Nigerian blogger Aderounmu. 'In the end, we always try to do things when it is almost (too) late. We rally round, try a few urgent steps and we end up messing up the job.'⁶²³ Africa's leagues suffer from the incompetence on the part of club and FA officials. One can never tell when a league season commences or, for that matter, ends. Ghana's Premier League, for

example, is plagued by endless cancellations and postponements.⁶²⁴ Coach Steven Polack made the following comment about league fixtures in 2009:

The fixtures showed that we played on the 11th, the 15th, the 18th and the 29th. That's the work of the GFA. I told them: "Excuse me, but the Black Stars are playing on the 29th so when are we playing?" They told me the 29th. I said: "I just told you the Black Stars are playing." This is the GFA! They don't even know when the Black Stars are playing. Now they called me and said: "Oh, it's the 25th." They probably realised it because I said something. It's quite simple, really. You tell one guy to do the fixtures. And not just one day but the whole season. So you have to check the FIFA website. There you'll find all the World Cup dates, the friendlies, and so on. Then you go to the CAF website and see what dates are the CAF dates. And you put our league around those dates.

Indeed, GFA officials consistently fail to check the international football calendar.

These cancellations and postponements negatively affect both leagues and clubs. Club officials in Ghana were told that the CHAN tournament in 2009 would halt the league for three to four weeks. It later turned out to be more than seven weeks. 'I can wake up in the morning and get a phone call that a game is cancelled,' said Polack. First, clubs suffer because salaries need to be paid out even though no money comes in from gate proceeds. Second, leagues suffer because sponsors find these continuous cancellations bad for business. This is true for publicity as well. It is difficult to advertise matches when nobody is sure if (and where) they will take place. For example, it took me five hours to travel from Kumasi to Accra by bus on Saturday 6 June 2009. I wanted to watch Ghana's biggest match (Hearts vs Kotoko) on Sunday. As soon as I arrived in Accra, I was told that the match had been postponed. Apparently, the GFA officials had failed to realise that the Black Stars also played that weekend.

There is also the habit among FA officials to change the rules as they see fit, which leads to conspiracy theories. In 2009 the GFA announced that all the matches in the 27th league round would be played simultaneously so as to avoid matches of convenience (see chapter 8). First, however, the PLB changed the venue of the encounter between Liberty Professionals and Asante Kotoko three times within a couple of days. Kotoko sympathisers 'read meaning' into this flip-flopping behaviour and accused the PLB of wanting 'to thwart the team's efforts in the ongoing league'.⁶²⁵ This change of venues caused another match to be postponed until later in the evening which rendered useless the plan of having all matches kick off at the same time.

Incompetent behaviour also influences the performances of national teams. 'Even if you give us 10 years to prepare, it will be the same because up till now many of these (African) countries don't recognise professionalism in their preparation,' said Amos Adamu, a former FIFA Executive Committee member, during the 2010 World Cup. 'One of the problems we must get right here in Africa is that we need to plan ahead.'⁶²⁶ Preparations for major tournaments commonly do

not go as planned simply because there was no plan in the first place. During the 2000 African Cup of Nations, Togo's coach Gotlieb Goeller resigned his post, blaming the FA president for the team's poor preparations. 'On the day I left, I was fighting with my (...) president,' he said. 'He does nothing and has no idea of what the players need. I asked, where are the vitamins and the minerals, where are the carbohydrate drinks? They said "Oh we forgot" and I became mad because we only have a few days' recovery between games.'⁶²⁷

Issues of incompetence also surround the hiring of coaches. Even after being coach of South Africa's national team for months, Carlos Alberto Parreira still had no valid working permit. Early in 2007, a government spokesperson said that SAFA had submitted the papers only that very week (the Brazilian was appointed in August 2006). The Belgian coach Tom Saintfiet was expelled from Zimbabwe by immigration authorities while preparing the national team for a World Cup qualifier in 2010. FA officials had forgotten to apply for a work permit. More serious is the fact that football administrators tend to replace their national team coaches at the last possible minute. Especially when an African coach manages to qualify his country for a major tournament, he is commonly fired in favour of an expatriate coach. It is claimed that FA officials, ministers and the like want to score politically for having acquired a reasonably well-known foreigner whom they claim will deliver the title.

This kind of short-term thinking has proven to have an adverse effect on the performance of national teams. Sven-Göran Eriksson signed a lucrative contract with the Ivorian FA a few months before the 2010 World Cup. With no experience in coaching African teams, Eriksson met his squad at a training camp in Switzerland on the eve of the tournament. 'The time is short, yes,' admitted the Swede.⁶²⁸ Otto Pfister, a veteran when it comes to coaching African teams, has occasionally been called up to replace African coaches. He replaced Stephen Keshi as coach of Togo at the 2006 World Cup while the Nigerian was responsible for qualification in the first place. The following year Pfister led the Indomitable Lions at the 2008 African Cup of Nations. In both cases, the German had less than three months to prepare his players.

Powerful Africans also have irrational expectations of their coaches' capabilities. 'The country expects the title win – without yielding a goal,' coach Berti Vogts said after the 2008 African Cup of Nations.⁶²⁹ He failed to lead the Nigerians to the final and was dismissed. His successor Lars Lägerback faced a bigger challenge prior to the 2010 World Cup. 'This is a call to national duty and I expect the Eagles to prepare well and win this trophy,' president Goodluck Jonathan said. 'That will be a birthday gift for our country and set the stage for a golden jubilee celebration of our independence as a nation.'⁶³⁰ Nigeria did not win the World Cup and Lägerback was dismissed. When I first talked to the

Namibian national team coach in 2008, Arie Schans told me that the powerful men in the country did not expect anything of him. Later on they wanted him to qualify for the 2010 World Cup. He found this a mission impossible and left.

Most criticism is directed not so much at incompetence but at mismanagement and corruption. African countries are generally ranked low on Transparency International's annual Corruption Perceptions Index which, to be sure, is not a positive thing in this respect.⁶³¹ 'In France, you might expect that for every \$100 coming into football, \$10 might disappear. In Africa, for every \$100 coming into football, \$90 disappears!' said Joseph-Antoine Bell, a former Cameroonian goalkeeper.⁶³² Similar words were used by George Weah. 'Our officials are too selfish. Everything is money. They use us, the players, to get money, to steal the money,' he once said.⁶³³ As McHenry argues with regard to Tanzania, 'football appears to have succeeded (...) in providing individuals with an opportunity to acquire personal wealth and status (...)'.⁶³⁴

One aspect that increases corruption is that Africans still largely rely on cash. 'In Africa nobody trusts cheques anyway,' said Kalusha Bwalya. 'We expect to be paid in cash.'⁶³⁵ A former senior administrator told a British journalist that in Africa the federations are run 'with cash'. 'There are no cheques, no bank transfers,' he said. 'They only use cash. Even when they pay the players it is in cash. They do this willingly because they know that it's too transparent to use other methods. (...) It's easy that way to rob it.'⁶³⁶ I have come to know the cash side myself. I once entered a bank with YOSA's team manager, who carried a bag containing the gate proceeds from the last match, totalling 1.8 million CFA francs (€3,000). In 2001 a Ghanaian Sports Minister lost a suitcase filled with \$46,000 en route to Sudan; \$236,000 was stolen from the Nigerian FA's headquarters in 2009 with police suspecting an inside job.⁶³⁷

I have heard stories of money disappearing in private pockets in every conceivable situation. Coaches tend to ask players for money if they want to feature in the line-up. Players share a percentage of their signing fees with those doing the recruitment. Club officials are known to have pocketed club funds. One way to do this is by selling the club's players, another is to ask the club's Big Man for money to hire a jujuman. He will pay the jujuman a portion of that amount and pocket the rest. Jujumen too are known to rob clubs and FAs of their money. Players cheat as well, for instance by signing up at two clubs at the same time, thus doubling their signing fees.

The game offers a plethora of possibilities for Big Men to mismanage funds. Fraud with gate takings is a typical example, and it is not a recent phenomenon. Football entrepreneur Henry Ngwenya, mentioned in chapter 6, used his position as president of a regional FA to enrich himself. Alegi describes his methods as follows:

Football notoriety benefited Ngwenya in economic terms. Located near Somtseu Ground in the central business district, his restaurant flourished. The president was not only a popular host, he also awarded himself catering contracts for the provision of meals to visiting teams and delegations – a lucrative deal that produced nearly £700 in net profit one year. Ngwenya's hand-picked gate attendants defrauded the association by deliberately, and consistently, failing to document tickets sales. After matches, these men delivered cash to the president who, instead of depositing the funds into the DDAFA bank account, stuffed the cash into envelopes, which he sealed and locked in his office desk drawer together with the treasurer's financial records.⁶³⁸

Matches tend to generate less money because tickets sellers, stadium directors and/or FA officials either pocket gate proceeds or let in friends for free. One FECAFOOT president was once sent to prison for illegally selling 3,000 World Cup tickets. In March 2009, 19 fans died and 132 people were injured in a stampede at a stadium in Ivory Coast. An investigation revealed that the chairman of the Match Commission had printed thousands of extra tickets. He was sentenced to six months in prison.

Corruption also occurs with regard to league sponsorships, TV deals and FIFA funds. The Cameroonian journalist Jean-Lambert Nang worked as general manager of FECAFOOT for a period of six months in 2007. After being fired, he wrote a book, albeit with a personal undertone, in which he described FECAFOOT's top officials' involvement in several illegalities.⁶³⁹ Nang's investigations into what he called the "haunted house" led to a state-funded audit which, in turn, led to the indictment of four FECAFOOT administrators. The court documents, obtained by journalists from an organisation called FAIR, showed that FECAFOOT officials overpaid themselves for services rendered and that 'vice president David Mayebi received regular payments from sports manufacturer Puma into his personal bank account'.⁶⁴⁰

The same FAIR reporters also discovered that Amos Adamu, the then president of the Nigerian FA, 'ruled over a situation in which Nigerian football clubs were able to access only about 10% of the \$7 million yearly donated to them by their sponsor, Globalcom (sic). The rest has stayed with the officials on the board of the Nigeria Premier League.'⁶⁴¹ With regard to Ivory Coast, the same reporters spoke to insiders who 'pointed out mismanagement at all levels of the FIF':

Local soccer clubs for example, haven't seen any of the FCFA 800 million (US \$1.6 million) per year that was habitually donated to them by the Ivorian Petrol Refinery company Société Ivoirienne de Raffinage, SIR, through [president Jacques] Anouma's FIF. Since nobody knew of these donations, nobody complained, until 2007, when the SIR itself found out that national clubs had not seen any of it. A letter written by the SIR, announcing the suspension of the yearly donation until further notice fell into the hands of one of the clubs' presidents, after which it was made public. In response to the ensuing criticism, FIF director Anouma argued that "that money was not supposed to the clubs anyway", without explaining where it, then, went.⁶⁴²

Both Amos Adamu and Jacques Anouma were part of FIFA's Executive Committee.

Mismanagement and corruption are an important reason why league sponsorships and other funds tend not to trickle down. A lot of funds from corporations and FIFA are earmarked for grassroots development yet Africa's football infrastructures have deteriorated over the years. More worryingly, several FAs managed to become indebted. SAFA had a budget deficit of more than \$8 million in the early 2000s which, as journalist Mark Gleeson asserts, was a result of 'regular first-class overseas travel for top executives and the employment of family members, friends and neighbours'.⁶⁴³ In 2006 SAFA announced it had reduced its debts from \$12.5 million to \$1.6 million, largely thanks to a FIFA grant.⁶⁴⁴ When the officials of Kenya's KFF were expelled in 2006, they had left the accounts with \$320,000 in debt.⁶⁴⁵ There have been reports of lower-level employees at various FAs who have gone without pay for months.⁶⁴⁶

Several organisations and individuals have criticised Kenya's FA officials. A report by the African Centre for Open Government (AfriCOG) lists three KFF administrations that were sacked for mismanagement and corruption since the 1960s.⁶⁴⁷ A case study by Transparency International indicates the number may be higher. 'The history of KFF is punctuated by claims of corruption, abuse of office and financial mismanagement,' a TI-Kenya newsletter states.⁶⁴⁸ Bob Munro, founder of the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MUSA), specifically accused the Maina Kariuki-led administration between 2000 and 2004 of mismanaging gate takings and FIFA funds. He went on to make the following statement at a conference in 2005:

During 2000-04 Kariuki presided over a culture of corruption which crippled Kenyan football. It also spread like a cancer from the national to local levels. While national KFF officials looted the national KFF and FIFA funds, many local KFF officials pocketed the KFF share of gate receipts from the matches in their areas. In a corrupt bargain the national officials overlooked the theft of KFF gate receipt deductions by local officials while they in turn overlooked the embezzlement of KFF and FIFA funds by the national officials.⁶⁴⁹

The KFF accounts were finally frozen due to non-payment of taxes.

South African football is no exception. The reign of the powerful administrator Abdul Bhamjee came to an end in 1992 when he was charged with 35 counts of theft:

One of the charges related to the negotiation of broadcasting rights for league matches with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). On behalf of the NSL Bhamjee had negotiated a contract and agreed upon a set fee for the broadcasting rights. These had been presented to the SABC Board, which had then made the money available. At the same time, a second contract, which included a considerably lower figure, had also been drawn up. This had been presented to the NSL executive, which had agreed to the terms. Bhamjee, together with a few others, had pocketed the difference.⁶⁵⁰

Bhamjee was found guilty of misappropriating hundreds of thousands of dollars and went to prison. Five years later, Sports Minister Steve Tshwete set up a Commission of Inquiry after SAFA officials had been accused of corruption. Justice Benjamin Pickard concluded that SAFA president Solomon “Stix” Morewa had sold the national team’s marketing and television rights to an Irish company. Journalist Perlman wrote how the Big Man ‘had a certain logic’ in wanting to sign the deal:

Pickard found that just before the contract was sealed, ASI boss Brian Mahon gave Morewa a R500 000 loan [100,000 dollars]. And there was more. A local company, Foodcorp, which was seeking renewal of a three-year contract with SAFA, made the president a present of a Mercedes Benz worth more than R400 000. Morewa was found to have paid himself a performance bonus R45 000 [10,000 dollars] – and then paid himself the same bonus again. And the shabbiest of all, he and other SAFA members were found to have dipped liberally into the organisation’s education trust which was meant to fund the studies of promising players.⁶⁵¹

Yet another opportunity for Big Men to embezzle funds is through international tournaments, which give rise to politically motivated investments and various business deals. For example, the Angolan authorities invested \$1 billion in building stadiums, airports, roads and hotels for the 2010 African Cup of Nations. These are huge amounts of money, especially considering the fact that the majority of Angolans live off less than two dollars a day. When the organisers of the 2009 U17 World Cup announced a €158 million budget, the Nigerian government suspected foul play and threatened to cancel the tournament unless the budget be cut by a factor four. Accusations of corruption surfaced in the run-up to the 2010 World Cup, for instance with regard to the construction of the stadium in Nelspruit. Powerful football administrators were given bonuses of \$1.2 million for their role in bringing the tournament to South Africa.

Funds to accommodate national teams at tournaments are occasionally embezzled. After the 2010 World Cup, four top NFF officials were arrested on charges of having spent €20,000 on travel costs for 47 delegates and 173 ‘friends and girlfriends’. They were also accused of having handed out 1,263 complimentary tickets to ‘associates’.⁶⁵² The Ghanaian Minister of Sports was dismissed for having illegally collected daily allowances during the CHAN tournament in 2009. He had also used public funds to take his ‘girlfriend’ along to the final.⁶⁵³ In Cameroon, media reports of a scandal dubbed *Trop Perçu* forced FECAFOOT officials to refund 235 million CFA francs (€360,000) which they had awarded themselves after the 2010 African Cup of Nations.⁶⁵⁴

Coaches and players suffer from corruption. Former international Mulamba Ndaye claimed that the hammering of Zaire by Yugoslavia (9-0) at the 1974 World Cup was caused by players realising their bonuses had disappeared. Each player was entitled to a FIFA bonus. ‘Before the first match against Scotland, we

hadn't seen any money yet,' Ndaye said. 'Sport Minister Sampassa Kaweta joined the team at the camp ground. (...) He said: "I will get the money from FIFA at the bank tomorrow. Then I'll return." But he never did. That's when we refused to play. That was two days before the match against Yugoslavia.'⁶⁵⁵ Goldblatt argues that nothing has changed since:

In Zaire, by the end of Mobutu's reign, there were no incomes of any kind paid to anyone. There was only flagrant predation. The money allocated for the team at the 1996 Cup of Nations completely disappeared only to reappear in the shape of a new villa for the team's senior administrator. The renamed Democratic Republic of Congo just made it to the 2004 Nations Cup with the help of the Egyptian FA. The squad found themselves penniless in Cairo and reduced to dormitory accommodation as the money from Kinshasa never arrived. Again the Egyptian FA stepped in to pay their hotel and flights.⁶⁵⁶

The case of Zaire in 1974 shows that embezzlement of national team funds by FA officials and other powerful individuals can have a disastrous effect on player performances. In fact, fights regularly break out between players and Big Men. According to Hill, this happened during Ghana's campaign at the 2006 World Cup:

The meetings had included almost everyone in the team, all the players and senior officials of the GFA. One of the players had stood up in the middle of the meeting and shouted at the executives, "You are not the people who deserve the money. You cannot play football. You are useless. We are the people who play the game, we deserve the money." The argument had been over the allocation of the sponsorship and FIFA money. The players had thought that they should get paid well for their efforts. The officials claimed that they wanted the bulk of the money for the future development of the game in Ghana. For the officials, unfortunately there was a high level of distrust of the soccer authorities by players. Some of the players thought that the officials simply wanted to skim the money for themselves.⁶⁵⁷

Togo's maiden World Cup appearance, also in 2006, shows the extent in which a hassle over bonuses can result in non-performance. The players went on strike on several occasions before and during the tournament, accusing FA officials of not paying out bonuses. Government officials travelled to Germany to resolve the matter but the players agreed to play only when FIFA promised them their bonuses. The Sparrow Hawks lost their three group matches. Months later, players still complained about non-payments, prompting Togo's FA to suspend some of them for indiscipline.

Transparency, accountability and FIFA

Accusations of mismanagement and corruption are exacerbated by the non-accountable way in which club and FA officials run the game. Big Men are secretive in their dealings on the one hand and well-versed in the art of rhetoric on the other. GFA president Kwesi Nyantakyi made a speech about governance, accountability and integrity at the African Football Executive Summit in 2011. 'Effective governance involves regular periodic submission of reports on

stewardship to stakeholders,' he said. 'Accountability requires the presence of internal and external procedures for auditing systems.'⁶⁵⁸ These sentences could easily have come out of a college textbook.

The question of how Big Men plan to improve accountability in practice usually remains unanswered. At the same time, African journalists have a low incentive to poke their noses into the affairs of Big Men. One Cameroonian journalist who attempted to investigate the financial dealings of CAF president Issa Hayatou was subsequently threatened and beaten up. The aforementioned FAIR reporters found out, just like I had done, that Big Men try to avoid talking to critical members of the press. 'Numerous telephone calls, emails and questionnaires addressed to those in charge of the FIF only resulted in promises for interviews,' one Ivorian journalist wrote. 'One of the contributors to this investigation went to a few such promised meetings, only to be stood up several times. He concluded that "they do not want to be disturbed".'⁶⁵⁹

Whistleblowers have suffered a much worse fate. A local government official in South Africa who had blown the whistle on cases of fraud and corruption with regard to a World Cup stadium was shot dead. Journalist Thomas Kwenaithe once spoke of the difficulties of investigative journalism in South Africa. When he was investigating the SAFA corruption scandal that led to the installation of the Pickard Commission, Kwenaithe was threatened with baseball bats, sued for thousands of dollars, and offered money to make him stop doing his job.⁶⁶⁰ The aforementioned Cameroonian journalist who wrote a book about FECAFOOT found himself discredited in the media. One of his former colleagues at CRTV made the following statement:

This book disgusts me. This is not the work of a journalist or a writer. It's the work of a spy. A spy who observes, makes notes and betrays. This is what Jean-Lambert Nang did. (...) The way he wants to condemn people is wrong. He insults people, he disrespects VIPs, so I think his approach is inappropriate. (...). One gets the feeling that he wants to get dirty, he wants to do evil.⁶⁶¹

A common way of being transparent and accountable is for clubs and FAs to present audited accounts. But although GFA regulations demand Premier League clubs to submit their accounts at the end of the season, their consistency leaves a lot to be desired. 'No club submits a full audited account at the end of the season,' said sports presenter Nana Kwaku Agyemang. 'When you propose at a meeting that a club should not be in the Premier League if it cannot submit a proper account, everybody will say yes. But afterwards nothing will happen because they're all in on it. And if clubs were expelled for not presenting accounts, there would be no club left in the Premier League.' 'Not even Hearts and Kotoko produce accounts,' said Kessben FC's Financial Director, Samuel Ellis Obir. Even if an audited account would be submitted, it would be supervised by directors who publish whatever the Big Man wants them to.

The failure by clubs in presenting audited accounts has caused quite a few problems. In 2011, a former Asante Kotoko player named Samuel Inkoom was transferred from a Swiss club to a Ukrainian club for a reported fee of €700,000. As Kotoko was entitled to ten percent of the fee, the move was welcomed by a newly installed management team. They then discovered that the file containing Inkoom's contract was apparently stolen from the club's secretariat. 'Where were all the security men at the Kotoko Secretariat?' asked journalist Yeboah. 'How come neither doors nor cabinets were broken into? An "inside job?" Whose interest is being served?'⁶⁶² Kotoko's new CEO questioned his predecessors Sylvester Asare-Owusu, Jerry Asare and Kwame Bofo, all of whom claimed either not to know anything about the deal or not to have been involved.⁶⁶³ The €70,000 transfer fee, so it seemed, was gone.

For Kotoko fans and Ghanaians in general the Inkoom saga must have felt like a *déjà vu*. An investigation in the late 1990s uncovered a plot with regard to the transfer of players. One of them involved the transfer of a former Kotoko player named Robert Boateng. In 1997 Boateng moved to a Norwegian club side for a reported fee of \$250,000. He later told a Commission of Inquiry that he had received only \$5,000. He said the transfer was facilitated by the CEO of Kotoko at the time, a Big Man named George Adusei Poku a.k.a. Georgido. When questioned, Georgido alleged that a briefcase containing Boateng's contract had been stolen. The Commission asked the then CEO of Kotoko, Herbert Mensah, to look into the matter. Mensah found out that Robert Boateng was transferred for a sum of \$800,000 and not \$250,000.

In the end, the so-called Gbadegbe Commission discovered that GFA officials and officials of several top clubs had conspired to transfer players. Worse, GFA officials (for instance, Joseph Ade Coker, Nana Sam Brew-Butler and Jones Abu Alhassan) took up positions within these clubs and misused this apparent conflict of interest. Eventually, several clubs were found guilty and ordered to repay \$784,802.⁶⁶⁴ The perpetrator, however, by and large got away with it. This is what former Deputy Minister of Sports Joe Aggrey said:

Back then there was a lot of scandal. I was the president of the SWAG and the vice president of the committee. What came out? There were a lot of people who transferred players and who could not account for the money. The money didn't go to the club, it went to them. Can you imagine that they transfer a player to a foreign club for say \$50,000, declare \$20,000 and pocket the rest? Isn't that stealing? Wouldn't you have to go to jail? But here they are walking around free! It's clear to you that something is wrong. I don't whether you read it in the newspaper? (Former GFA president) Ben Koufie came on the FMs and said that the people who are making all that noise are thieves. He said it! When they were in the FA, they stole so much money. They should have been prosecuted. It didn't happen and they are walking around.

The community-based clubs in particular suffer from this type of corruption because Big Men who pocket transfer fees deny their club an important source of

income. This is all the more worrisome when they leave office. There have been reports of club officials who sold players and kept the profits before stepping down, thereby leaving the club even more bankrupt than when they assumed office. In the early 2000s, a group of Fanti and Ashanti businessmen took over the affairs of the once mighty club side Kumasi Cornerstones with the aim of earning promotion to the Premier League. ‘They put in a lot of money but they failed,’ said CEO R.K. Morrison. ‘So they came back from their mission impossible and abandoned the club.’ ‘A lot of players were attached to management members,’ said the club’s secretary, Ekow Padson. ‘So when they left the club they sold the players and kept the money. Now we’re poorer than before.’

The problem is made worse by the fact that the economic capital a Big Man puts into a club tends to be a loan. This is how Frank Nelson Nwokolo explained it:

It’s an investment. Most of us give loans to the club. When the club has money, you get your money back. Most of us don’t take interest, that’s what it takes to be a director. I can loan the club \$50,000 and tell the club that they can repay me in five months with no interest. That’s my contribution to the club. But there’s no crime for a director to ask for interest because if I borrow from the bank I pay interest so why should this be different? There’s nothing illegal about it. Sometimes the director says: “The bank will take seven per cent so I will only take two per cent.” It’s just something to make sure that the value of my money doesn’t go down.

This is the paradox of those community-based clubs that are not self-sufficient. They depend on Big Men in order to survive, but when the wealthy benefactor leaves, these clubs find themselves even more indebted. When Herbert Mensah resigned as CEO of Asante Kotoko in 2002, it was reported that the club owed him over 5 billion old cedi (€250,000). ‘These people always claim that the club owes them money,’ said Kwaku Anor. ‘Nana told Mensah, (Kwabena) Kesse and the others to present him with an audited account. But Mensah and Kesse never handed over an account.’

FAs also suffer from a lack of transparency and accountability. It was reported in 2010 that a regional GFA office had not presented an account in nine years. Its chairman told a journalist that it was too costly to produce such an account.⁶⁶⁵ Despite efforts by club officials to get some insight into income and expenditures, Kenya’s FA officials stalled the presentation of an audited account for years in a row.⁶⁶⁶ A former secretary-general of Tanzania’s FA once acknowledged that they did not have audited accounts before 2000. ‘We used wisdom to decide the best way to spend the association’s money,’ he stated.⁶⁶⁷ When FAs do present accounts, they regularly contain inconsistencies. An audit of the GFA’s 2009/10 accounts revealed that spendings worth hundreds of thousands of dollars were not backed up by receipts.⁶⁶⁸

Governments used to be involved both in appointing FA officials and in keeping an eye on their FAs’ financial affairs. McHenry lists several cases in

which FA officials in Tanzania were sacked for corrupt practices in the 1970s and in Kenya too the government disbanded several administrations.⁶⁶⁹ Nowadays governments are cautious when it comes to interfering with football affairs. When the aforementioned discrepancies in the GFA's accounts came out, Minister of Sports Akua Sena Dansua refused to get herself involved. 'I do not want to be drawn into this matter because the GFA is an organisation on its own and its management should take ultimate responsibility for the outcome of any investigation into its operations,' she stated.⁶⁷⁰

I have earlier stated that FAs and governments still fight each other to determine who is in control of the game. But FIFA states that FAs are to run football 'independently and with no influence from third parties' and that elections or appointments of FA officials are to be regulated by 'a procedure that guarantees the complete independence of the election or appointment'.⁶⁷¹ One of FIFA's reasons was to stop dictators and military regimes from using the game for political purposes;⁶⁷² another was to prevent its funds from ending up in the wrong pockets.⁶⁷³ Yet this rule of non-interference appears to protect corrupt FA officials as they now find themselves working in an environment free from external meddling. FA officials nevertheless operate within the laws of a country. Joe Aggrey described the issue as follows:

The national teams in Ghana are almost exclusively funded by the government. So the problem is that if I put in all my money, how can you say that I should stay out? That's where the government interferes. They want to make sure that the money they bring in is spent in a proper way. I think that there should be a way for the government to invite the FA and talk quietly to accept the fact that the government should know what's happening there. For instance, it's normal for the government to appoint auditors to account for the money they give you. For that I can honestly say that you can't say that the government is interfering because it's their money!

FIFA has enforced its rule of non-interference by suspending several African countries over the years.⁶⁷⁴ FIFA tends to intervene, first, when elected FA officials are deposed by the Ministry of Sports or rival factions and, second, when governments launch investigations into their FAs. The Ghanaian authorities suffered humiliation when an Accra Human Rights Court deemed a raid by the Economic and Organised Crime Office (EOCO) into the GFA's headquarters in 2010 invalid. While EOCO said it was investigating suspicions of tax evasion, FIFA threatened to suspend the country. The court's dismissal of the raid was predicated on its assumption that the GFA was a private entity.⁶⁷⁵ Earlier that year, FIFA banned Nigeria after president Goodluck Jonathan (briefly) suspended the Super Eagles. FIFA also opposed the fact that four FA officials were arrested on the charge of embezzling funds.⁶⁷⁶

FIFA put its weight behind the re-election of FA president Ibrahim Galadima in 2005 even though Nigeria's Minister of Sports deemed the election invalid on

ground of irregularities during the voting process. The FA later solved the issue by voting Galadima out of office.⁶⁷⁷ A similar situation occurred in Zambia where former football star Kalusha Bwalya was elected FA president in 2008. He was later accused by government, FA and club officials of being involved in dubious transfers of players and of running the FA in an autocratic manner. Chaos ensued when a rival faction led by a businessman broke away with the aim of starting a parallel league. FIFA nevertheless blocked efforts to launch an investigation and reiterated its support to Bwalya, who can only be voted out of office during the next elections (scheduled for 2012).⁶⁷⁸

A comprehensive case study of the link between corrupt FA officials, a lack of accountability and FIFA's interventionist policy comes from Kenya. The trouble began with the installation of the aforementioned Maina Kariuki-led administration in 2000. Eight Premier League clubs later set up an Inter-Clubs Consultative Group (ICCG) in response to alleged malpractices of FA officials. Bob Munro, founder of one of these clubs, argues that the ICCG found it difficult to obtain the KFF's audited accounts:

KFF officials initially welcomed but then started stalling on the inspection of their accounts. On February 19, 2001 the KFF Secretary General met with the club representatives who were accompanied by auditors from Deloitte & Touche plus John Githongo, the Executive Director of Transparency International in Kenya. He confirmed the clubs had the right to inspect the KFF accounts. But after that meeting, whenever the clubs and auditors requested a date for starting their inspection, KFF officials kept inventing new excuses for delaying the inspection. Despite many later requests, the Kariuki regime repeatedly refused to allow their member clubs to inspect the KFF accounts for the next three years.⁶⁷⁹

When a copy of one of the audited accounts finally surfaced, it revealed financial irregularities with regard to gate takings and FIFA funds, among other things.⁶⁸⁰

Since the ending of the Kariuki-led administration in 2004, various Big Men have struggled to gain control over the FA. FIFA has consistently backed one man, Mohammed Hatimy, who ironically was one of the key members of the corrupt Kariuki administration. Hatimy listed a new company by the name of Football Kenya Limited (FKL) in 2008. FIFA immediately recognised the FKL as the country's official FA, thereby ignoring the hitherto official KFF which was now led by a government-backed man named Sam Nyamweya. AfriCOG questioned the legitimacy of Hatimy's takeover:

FIFA's intervention in the Kenyan crisis since 2004 raises concern; in what seems to be a case of double standards, Dr Joseph Mifsud (Malta, UEFA Executive Committee) accused the Sports Minister of being "very inconsistent since one day he supports the leaders of the KFF and the next day he does something against them." Yet, FIFA itself is guilty of such 'flip-flopping': With the Hatimy theft case yet unresolved, and a FIFA ban from football management, Hatimy registered FKL and consequently hijacked KFF functions with FIFA support in gross violation of Kenyan – and indeed, FIFA – laws.⁶⁸¹

The court of Arbitration for Sports (CAS) later ruled in favour of the FKL.

The administration of Kenyan football is still a mess, a situation that has not helped the national team. The Harambee Stars now come under the responsibility of the FKL. ‘They are no better than the KFF,’ said sports editor Elias Makori. ‘In fact, they are worse, because they are a private company comprising just three people.’⁶⁸² The prime minister of Kenya even pleaded with the FKL officials to step down. FIFA nevertheless kept on supporting the Hatimy-led administration. Paradoxically, the Premier League appeared to be doing quite well. The rebellion of top clubs against FA officials paid off. In 2003, eleven Premier League clubs turned away from the FA and created the Kenyan Premier Football Group Limited (KPFGL), later renamed the Kenyan Premier League Limited (KPL). The KPL is now reportedly one of the best run leagues in Africa.⁶⁸³

Despite the overall lack of transparency and accountability and FIFA’s interferences, several Big Men have been found guilty of corruption and have been sent to prison.⁶⁸⁴ Their imprisonment has nevertheless not solved African football’s managerial problems because, first, they often only serve a fraction of their sentence and, second, they tend to return to football administration. The Big Men who were found guilty in Ghana’s player transfer probe never went to prison. On the contrary, Joseph Ade Coker ran as a candidate for the GFA presidency in 2005, Nana Sam Brew-Butler became the chairman of a GFA Committee in 2006, and Jones Abu Alhassan was elected chairman of the Player Status Committee in 2006 (see chapter 9).

Club officials have been known to return to occupy positions in football administration as well. Recall Odotei’s statement about Hearts of Oak’s musical chairs, a process whereby Big Men alternate between influential positions over a longer period of time. It has certainly happened that supporters of both Hearts and Kotoko were (in-)directly responsible for sending away club officials. Paradoxically, Big Men have been asked to return by the same supporters who were responsible for their dismissal. Harry Zakkour had to step down as CEO of Hearts but was later elected as a board member. ‘We wanted to tap from his experience,’ explained Edmund Palmer. ‘We sometimes ask these people to come back. It’s just a warning that you don’t own the club.’

One reason why many Big Men are allowed to return to football administration is that they can still rely on their factions. A Big Man’s demise is commonly blamed on dirty political tricks by his adversaries. It has happened that when a corrupt FA official dies, he is remembered as someone who contributed to the growth of the game. An example is the death of Solomon “Stix” Morewa in 2005. ‘Mr Morewa will be remembered for his many achievements within South African football, but most specifically for the pivotal role he played in bringing South African football back to the international community,’ said CAF president

Issa Hayatou.⁶⁸⁵ Hayatou thus celebrated the life of a man who withheld thousands of dollars to the detriment of the game.

To sum up, clubs and FAs are organised professionally on paper but run by Big Men through a system of patronage in practice. Big Men who control the organisation also control the forms of capital. They do not like to share power with other Big Men, resulting in boardroom struggles in the management of clubs and FAs. We have seen how such struggles between Big Men have affected how Asante Kotoko is run. Moreover, incompetence as well as corruption on the part of FA officials negatively affects the development of the game. There is little accountability and FIFA tends to protect FA officials from investigations. Yet controlling clubs and FAs is not enough to convert capital. Big Men also need to be successful on the field of play. To this end, they sometimes break the rules of the game. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

The art of winning

No extraordinary events took place in the first half of the 2008/09 Ghana Premier League season. There were pockets of violence. Several coaches became the object of scorn – and some of them were laid off. There were also allegations of match-fixing and juju. Welbeck Abra-Appiah, chairman of the Premier League Board (PLB), was a happy man prior to the start of the second half. ‘There has been a keen competition so far and the way clubs are winning their away matches is a clear evidence of that,’ he said.⁶⁸⁶

The chairman’s statement may have sounded somewhat awkward. First, did teams win more away matches than usual? No. Out of 120 matches played in that time period, 21 were won by visiting teams. That is average if one looks at the statistics of all matches played in the first half of Premier League seasons between 2000 and 2010.⁶⁸⁷ Second, the chairman appeared to link the occurrence of a ‘keen competition’ to the winning of away matches. Why would he say that?

Steven Polack, who coached King Faisal, said that supporters ‘expect you to lose away. We don’t have many supporters who go along for away matches, so they don’t care. They think it’s normal to lose away from home.’ ‘The perception in Ghana is that when you play outside you will be cheated,’ coach Bashir Hayford said. ‘You don’t even think about those matches.’ This is also true for matches in the CAF Champions League. ‘They (the home team) frustrate you,’ said Hayford. ‘Those who win their home matches go to the semi-finals.’

The difficulty of winning away matches also means that teams are more likely to win their home matches. In a way, a home match is like a war, an election or a business deal; one needs to prepare well to maximise the chances of success. Failure is not an option as supporters regularly assault their players, coaches and club officials when the visiting team leaves town with three points. To avoid such troubles but also to earn credits, Big Men tend to do whatever it takes to guarantee victory. To this end, they sometimes break the rules of the game.

Match-fixing, hospitality and gift-giving

So far we have seen that people identify with teams based on geographical location and ethnic considerations, among other things (chapter 4). I also stated that football can to some extent be regarded as a form of tribal warfare. Indeed, we have seen how many clubs in Africa are associated with ethno-politics (chapter 5), making a team's home ground more than just a field on which to play the game. Seen this way, I assumed before I went to Ghana and Cameroon that home teams would undertake severe measures to ensure victory. This turned out to be true. In fact, the people I spoke to all acknowledged that winning at home is much more important than winning away.

Anyone who is familiar with team sports knows the principle of home advantage. The 'home-field effect favoring the home team and disadvantaging the away team' is 'reflected in evidence that teams playing at home win significantly more often than chance would dictate'.⁶⁸⁸ Richard Pollard argues that home advantage in football occurs all over the world, including Africa.⁶⁸⁹ Indeed, home advantage applies to the Ghana Premier League as well.⁶⁹⁰ Home teams tend to put the visitors into rat-infested and sometimes bewitched hotels, assemble supporters to sing and drum all night so as to deprive the visitors of their sleep, and make sure the visiting team is harassed in and around the stadium. Teams participating in the African Cup of Nations have complained about visa problems, delays at customs and missing luggage, among other things.

Although Pollard states that the causes of home advantage 'are still not well understood',⁶⁹¹ he and others have listed a number of causes including crowd support, travelling, territoriality, referee bias and rule factors.⁶⁹² I will deal with (some of) these causes along the way. Let me now present three factors that in my view contribute to home advantage in Africa. These factors are: Match-fixing, hospitality and gift-giving; *juju* and other occult forces; and intimidation and violence. Starting with match-fixing practices, it can be stated that some forms of bribery fit into the category of referee bias. Many informants maintained that the referee is "the most important man on the field"; slip him an envelope and he may be more sympathetic to one's cause. However, the referee is not the only one susceptible to bribery.

Ian Preston and Stefan Szymanski list three types of cheating in sports: Sabotage (reducing the opponent's performance), doping (improving one's own performance) and match-fixing. These types fall into two categories: *Cheating to win* and *cheating to lose*.⁶⁹³ They go on to give three different instances of match-fixing:

Match-fixing occurs either because one side 'needs' to win to the extent that it is willing to make side-payments to persuade the other side not to make effort or to persuade the referees to make biased decisions, or because players or officials stand to gain financially from

gambling on the outcome of a match. Both types of activity are specifically banned in most sports, and therefore these represent clear breaches of the rules.

Less clear is a third type of situation where a competitor, possibly in collusion with opponents, aims to produce a particular kind of result in a match (other than winning by the widest possible margin) which is convenient to them in the wider context of tournament play. This may not be explicitly prohibited within the sport, but can clearly serve to undermine the sport's credibility.⁶⁹⁴

Interestingly, Preston and Szymanski include a form of cheating that does not violate any rules. Indeed, in Africa hospitality and gift-giving are used as means to influence the outcome of a match (see below), but the rules do not prohibit such practices.

I wish to make three general points in relation to match-fixing. First, match-fixing occurs not only in football but in several other professional sports as well.⁶⁹⁵ Second, it is argued in various studies that match-fixing usually occurs when the rewards for winning are asymmetrical, meaning that victory is more important for one team than for the other.⁶⁹⁶ Also, the setup of leagues and tournaments "encourages" cheating. As Preston and Szymanski state, it is a 'contest design issue, where the structure of the competition creates perverse incentives in certain matches'.⁶⁹⁷ Third, match-fixing in sports is not as easy as one might think. With regard to football, Declan Hill explains the steps a "corruptor" needs to undertake, including gaining access, brokering a deal, the (non-)performance and the payment.⁶⁹⁸

There are several types of matches in Africa that are susceptible to match-fixing: City or regional derbies, tournament matches, end-of-season matches. One could argue that when the stakes are high the chances of money passing hands increases significantly. It is also a matter of what Preston and Szymanski called a "contest design issue". Cup matches are sudden-death type of matches, meaning that a single match determines whether a team progresses to the next level. The same is true for end-of-season matches where one match can determine who will win the championship and who will be relegated. Moreover, both Ghana and Cameroon hold tournaments (called Middle League and Interpools, respectively) whereby a select number of teams struggle to gain access to the top league. This is where teams will do everything to beat their opponents.

The aforementioned issue of asymmetry dictates that winning a match may be more important for one team than for the other. First, home teams generally have more incentives to win than away teams. For home teams victory is essential, for away teams losing is almost expected. Coach Steven Polack told me the following story:

We [King Faisal] played an away match against AshantiGold in Obuasi and won 0-1. We drew the following home match 1-1. The supporters said: "It's not good not to win at home." I asked: "If we had lost the game in Obuasi and won this one at home, would you be happy?"

They said yes. I said: “So you’re happy with three points and I’m happy with four points.” But they didn’t understand. That’s the mentality of the supporters.

‘There is now overwhelming evidence that referee decisions favor the home team,’ Pollard states.⁶⁹⁹ In Africa, several factors contribute to a referee’s bias towards the home team: Bribery, hospitality, intimidation, violence. All of these factors will receive due attention. Coach Steven Polack agreed that referees are biased:

It’s because they get paid, don’t they? Club officials go to their hotel and pay them. We played a game at Wa against All Stars. At half time the score was 0-0. I heard that the referee went to their changing room and told the club officials: “Tell your players to get into the penalty area if they want a penalty.” He told them to fall over. And then he gave a penalty. It was laughable. Can it be more obvious? The penalty he gave was so diabolic. This here is the edge of the penalty area. One of our players kicks the ball out of the box. I see it as a good clearance. Our player turns to look where the ball is going and touches one of their players. He falls over and it’s a penalty. We lost the match 1-0.

Second, some teams have more incentives to win end-of-season matches than others. This is true when a match is played between a team capable of clinching the league title and a team that stands to earn nothing no matter the outcome. Hearts and Kotoko, for instance, both occupied the top spot at the end of the 2008/09 Premier League season. Hearts travelled to Berekum to play Arsenal in their second-to-last league match while Kotoko visited Obuasi for a match against AshantiGold. Reports indicated that Hearts first delayed the match for twenty minutes and that the referee also delayed the match by pretending to have loose bowels. It seemed that Hearts wanted the Kotoko match to end first. When Hearts was leading 1-0 and everybody at Berekum learned that Kotoko had lost their match, the referee awarded Arsenal a penalty. For Hearts a draw was enough to win the championship.⁷⁰⁰ The point is that Hearts played a team (Arsenal) that had nothing to gain while Kotoko played a team (AshantiGold) that was on the brink of relegation. AshantiGold thus did everything to ensure victory.⁷⁰¹

By far the most suspicious matches are end-of-season matches involving teams that struggle to avoid relegation. ‘Most of the matches are reasonably fair and square until it gets to a point where relegation comes in,’ said Mr. X, an informant whom I will introduce later on. ‘So it’s in the second part of the season that you’ll see strange things happening.’ As journalist Bediako states, ‘the interesting phenomenon is that you only get surprise results mostly involving relegation threatened clubs and it is always towards the end of the competition’.⁷⁰² The Ghana Premier League has indeed had ‘a rather bad reputation’ in this respect.⁷⁰³ Cameroonian supporters too are familiar with suspicious end-of-season results.

One of Ghana's biggest-ever match-fixing scandals occurred in the final round of the 1988/89 National League season. Both Sekondi Hasaacas and B.A. United needed a win to avoid relegation. Hasaacas beat Eleven Wise 19-0 in Sekondi while B.A. United beat Man U 20-0 in Sunyani. 'Eleven Wise helped us out,' CEO Ben Nab Eyison of Hasaacas told me. 'Normally these two clubs are enemies but now the Show Boys were willing to lend us a hand. They were promised a lot of money.' The CEO explained how they kept themselves informed of what happened in Sunyani. 'There were no mobile phones so we communicated through the railway tracks. We had supporters at the railway station in Sunyani and we used Morse Code to receive the scores.' The second half turned into a 'funny match', explained the linesman at the time, Atta Baffour:

First, the goalkeeper of Eleven Wise faked an injury. He was lying on the ground and asked the referee to be replaced. But Wise had already used all their subs, so they put an outfield player between the goalposts. Eleven Wise defenders were losing the ball so clumsily and some of them were pulling the jerseys of Hasaacas players for no reason. The referee was giving a lot of cards to Wise and free kicks to Hasaacas. Before we realised it, Hasaacas scored so many goals. One player would score a goal and carry the ball back to the centre circle, only for another player to rush forward and score again. And the spectators were shouting "Goal! Goal!". Then it was 19-0. There was no news from Sunyani so people were partying, thinking that they would stay in the league. But later that evening the news came that B.A. United had outscored them.

The *Ghanaian Times* called the four teams 'gangsters' and demanded action.⁷⁰⁴ 'After the match I told the referee to write down that this was a match of convenience,' Baffour said. 'But he refused. He was later banned from officiating.'

Strange things still happen in Ghana. Real Tamale United (RTU) and Zaytuna FC were both tied at the bottom of the league table in the 2007/08 Premier League season. Coincidentally, the two teams were pitted against each other in the final league round, which instantly led to numerous speculations, as journalist Bediako testifies:

Top of the list is the match between Dansoman based Zaytuna and Real Tamale United. This is an explosive pairing and both clubs need the points like mad. Whilst the Tamale team, 11th in the league table with 35 points, need only a draw to escape relegation, Zaytuna, third from the bottom with 33 points, would have to win to make their stay in the top division a reality. You cannot have a more controversial match than this.⁷⁰⁵

The match, which ended 2-1 for RTU, could indeed aptly be called explosive. The referee was attacked by Zaytuna players after allowing a goal from RTU well into extra time. 'They played for six minutes into extra time,' said journalist Kamkam Boadu. 'Then RTU scored and the referee blew the final whistle. It was a clear offside goal.'

The stories mentioned above were reported by media outlets. Many match-fixing practices, however, never reach the public ear or become subject to investigations. This is, of course, due to the fact that those involved in match-fixing tend to keep their mouths shut. I nevertheless gained information from those with first-hand experience – players, coaches, referees, club officials and some journalists – with regard to “fixed matches”, “matches of convenience” or “uncompetitive matches” in Ghana and Cameroon. An important source was the Big Man of a top league club in Ghana. Since he told me stories of how he himself fixed matches, I will not mention his name and instead call him Mr. X. His statements were checked with other sources.

It is evident that match-fixing occurs in African football and, moreover, that it is a widespread phenomenon that goes back several decades.⁷⁰⁶ There are those who say that *all* matches are fixed in one way or the other.⁷⁰⁷ If we broaden the concept of match-fixing by including hospitality and gift-giving (see below), this assumption is probable. There are also those who say that *most* matches are fixed in one way or the other. When I asked the Cameroonian referee Nde Christopher Ade how often club officials approached him in a season, he said ‘many times’ and then told me half a dozen stories. Retired referee Ngu Fabien Neba, also from Cameroon, said: ‘I cannot deny it. Most of the times club officials will try to make contact with you.’ This is what Mr. X said:

Most matches have been fixed by bribery in one way or the other but the teams make sure that they win by reasonable figures, such as 1-0, 2-0 or 2-1. This is to make sure nobody gets suspicious. Sometimes teams really need all the goals they can get in order to avoid relegation. This is where you see teams winning by 20 or 30-0 and this is where teams get caught in playing a match of convenience.

Mr. X’s statement also gives us a clue as to the difficulty of finding out how often these practices actually occur.⁷⁰⁸

Let us take a look at match-fixing from a Big Man’s point of view. First of all, it should be noted that Big Men are by no means always involved in these practices. In many cases, however, they are indeed responsible – either personally or through intermediaries – for influencing referees or opponents. The reason for a Big Man to want to influence the outcome of a match is simple. In order to convert capital he needs to be successful, i.e. he needs to win matches. As the outcome of a match cannot be predicted beforehand, club officials are ‘searching for *certainty* in the very uncertain world’ of football.⁷⁰⁹ In other words, Big Men increase the probability of winning matches by engaging in match-fixing. Also, bribery does not come cheap and Big Men are generally the ones who are able to provide the funds.

Photo 8.1 Winning increases the chances of converting capital. An Asante Kotoko player celebrates his team's victory over arch rival Hearts of Oak



There are generally speaking three ways in which Big Men influence matches through match-fixing: Bribing/influencing referees and linesmen, bribing/influencing opponent team officials, and bribing/influencing opponent team players.⁷¹⁰ The first way is to bribe the referee, the two linesmen and preferably also the match commissioner. The first thing to do is to find out which referees are assigned to handle matches.⁷¹¹ Several referees told me that it is mostly home teams who approach them, although away teams also contact them. Let us consider the following story from Mr. X:

Let's say [his team] plays a match against Hearts of Oak. The referee is from Tema. The referee and his linesmen will arrive in [his team's town] a day before the match. We will try to make them feel at home. We'll pay for everything: Their lodgings, food, drinks. Sometimes the referee may be negotiating. He may ask: "What is it that you need? A victory? A draw?" This is where we know he's willing to accept money. But since the referee came from Tema, he will also have received officials from Hearts. The distance from Tema to Accra is twenty kilometres. They will send someone two days before the match. So they can even do it before the home team can do anything. They will tell the referee: "We're in your hands. What are you going to do?" Before they leave they may drop an envelope and say it's for transport.

When club officials figure out that the opponent team has also bribed the referee, they will want to find out how much money was involved so that they can top it.

So who approaches referees and how much money is involved? Club officials naturally like to keep their meetings with referees as secret as possible. 'We normally make sure that nobody can point fingers at the club,' Mr. X said. 'The referee also wants to have as few witnesses as possible. This is why we send supporters to his hotel to see whether he needs anything. Sometimes it's our Public Relations Officer who does it, sometimes it's the Operations Director.' The aforementioned Ghanaian linesman and referee Atta Baffour, who is presently retired, said it can be 'any person'. 'It's not always the CEO. He's the big man. All eyes are on him. So if he's involved, he will be afraid to get caught. That's why he sends other people, sometimes the coach or a friend.' Referee Nde Christopher Ade had the following story to tell:

The presidents don't call me directly. They don't want to expose themselves. They want to hide their identities because it's very dangerous. The referee can call on them and make them known. So they won't use their own phone to call you because you will see who's calling. Sometimes they will go to a phone booth and call you.

The amounts of money involved are invariably diverse, depending on the match and on the person one is talking to. One Ghanaian Premier League referee said that club officials sometimes offer referees 1,000 cedi (€500) and assistants 500 cedi (€250) each. These figures can go up significantly for important matches. One Cameroonian referee told me that he was once offered 500,000 CFA francs (€750) by a Fouban-based club. He added that the average amounts lay somewhere between 50,000 and 300,000 CFA francs (€75 to €450). In 2003,

the team manager of a top league club told me that they sometimes bribed referees one million CFA francs (€1,500).⁷¹² A police investigation in South Africa in 2004 revealed that referees were being paid bribes from \$1,500 for Premier League matches and between \$4,500 and \$6,000 for Cup matches.⁷¹³

Big and powerful clubs are thought to pay bigger bribes. ‘I used to work at Okwawu United,’ said Kojo Fianoo, CEO of AshantiGold, ‘and we all had the idea that AshantiGold was heavily involved in influencing referees. That was the perception that most of us had in those days, when they were called the Third Force and were challenging the Big Two.’ Similarly, it is claimed that Cameroon’s top club Coton Sport Garoua keeps prominent referees on the pay-roll. These perceptions are, of course, fed by the fact that these clubs win lots of trophies and are, at least theoretically, financially able to bribe referees. Mr. X offered another reason, one from a referee’s point of view. ‘The bigger the building the more the windows,’ he said, implying that big teams are forced to pay more money because they have more means. He continued:

Some of these clubs are so big that they’ve become brands. That means that everybody knows they’re rich. Let’s say I’m driving a Volkswagen Beetle. People will say that I must be a poor man. If I’m driving a Mercedes Benz, I must be a rich man. So if you go to the repair man to fix the Mercedes, it will cost you a lot of money. But if you go there with a Beetle, you will pay only half.

Mr. X said that there are three types of referees in Ghana – a classification that probably extends to other parts of Africa as well. The first type is the one that has proven himself to be incorruptible. Several coaches, club officials and referees stated that there are only ‘a few’ of them in Ghana. This, of course, is merely a perception, albeit from individuals with experience in the world of football. Referees commonly present themselves as incorruptible and instead blame club officials for wanting to bribe them. This was well put by the Cameroonian referee Divine Evehe who pleaded with club officials to stop offering bribes. ‘Please stop calling us on the eve of your games,’ he said during a meeting with stakeholders in 2006. ‘If you stop making proposals and attempts to corrupt referees, we shall be impartial. Leave us alone.’⁷¹⁴

The story changes when we consider the second type of referee, namely the one who has proven to be corruptible. In 2002, the Cameroonian referee Bernard Fokouo, who was fired by FECAFOOT for being corrupt, publicly stated that referees take bribes. ‘The (referees) corps is very sick and can’t operate impartially because its hands are tied,’ he said.⁷¹⁵ Mr. X said that this type of referee can be sub-divided into those that wait for club officials to approach them and those that are actively seeking to receive bribes. The referees that actively try to receive bribes are ‘players’ or ‘businessmen’, he said. ‘They want to negotiate: “How much is this match worth to you?”’ I once visited a lower league club in

Ghana hours before they were scheduled to play a match. At one point, the coach said: ‘The referee’s already here. He’s waiting for his money.’

The third type of referee is the one who is a fan of or otherwise emotionally attached to a specific club. In Ghana, many referees will be either a Hearts or a Kotoko fan. ‘They receive less money from these clubs when they are a fan,’ Mr. X said. ‘They will only receive some money for transport and they will say: “You can give me whatever comes from your heart.”’ This is another reason why supporters commonly think that the big clubs have the upper hand against lesser opponents. Aside from the fact that these clubs are thought to pay referees bigger bribes, they are also thought to receive help from referees who are admirers. Of course, not all referees are fans. ‘When the referee is not a fan it’s business as usual,’ said Mr. X. However, whether the referee is corruptible, incorruptible or a fan, he will always find himself under suspicion.⁷¹⁶

The football authorities employ several methods in trying to minimise bribing the referees. First, referees generally do not officiate matches in their own regions.⁷¹⁷ Second, referees are accompanied by a match commissioner who files a report of his own. Already in 2003, however, I heard that club officials solve that problem by giving the match commissioner (or delegate) his share.⁷¹⁸ Third, sometimes secret observers are sent to stadiums to check on the referee. In 2005, Tanzania’s FA started hiring secret match inspectors to curb bribery.⁷¹⁹ Earlier still, in 2002, FECAFOOT decided to appoint undercover match inspectors.⁷²⁰ The authorities in Ghana also send independent observers (retired referees) who ‘come in as spies’, as referee Atta Baffour explained. ‘The idea is good. But they abuse the system. The referee, linesmen, commissioner and inspector all work together and share the money.’

The second way for Big Men to arrange a fixed match is to approach the officials of the other team. This is where people say they played a match of convenience, meaning that one team will play softly to give the other team the chance to win. Let us start with a story involving Hearts and Kotoko in the latter part of 2005. One Kotoko management member told journalists that he was in possession of a tape recording which proved that Hearts of Oak and Heart of Lions had conspired to play a match of convenience.⁷²¹ Hearts officials retaliated by suing Kotoko for defamation and by claiming that the Porcupine Warriors had played a match of convenience themselves – against Real Tamale United (RTU). In fact, RTU supporters had issued a statement claiming that their own management had given the match to Kotoko.⁷²²

Mr. X said that deals with officials of opponent teams are based on money and/or friendships. ‘It depends on the fixtures at the end of the season,’ he said:

It’s all about life at the top and life at the bottom. There are teams who fight their battles at the top of the league table and teams who fight their battles at the bottom. The teams in the middle are there to help. They cannot win the title and they cannot go on relegation. So for

them it's big business. The teams who need assistance have two options. One is to bribe the referees. The other is to go to the opponent team and strike a deal so that they play softly. The last option is the lesser evil because it's more expensive to bribe referees.

While most teams at the top are reasonably wealthy, most teams at the bottom often suffer from a lack of money. In either case, Mr. X said, friendships can be of great use. 'Sometimes you play against a friend who can do something to help you,' he said. 'This friend can even make another team play softly. Then one day you'll be playing softly against your friend's opponent. But if I give away a match, I ask the other team to pay my players' match bonuses.' Mr. X called such deals a 'favour for a favour'. 'As club president you always have to ask yourself: What if I'm going to end up in a situation like them? So why don't I do this team a favour? They may return the favour later.' I will return to the issue of friendships and favours in the next chapter.

Let us see how a match of convenience works. Mr. X told me the following story:

Last season we played a match against [team x] here in [location]. I had other businesses to attend to so I couldn't make it. So I called [the president of team x] and said: "My brother, there is this important assignment I have to do. But I'm also playing against you. If we lose, we will go on relegation." He said: "Don't worry. All you have to do is arrange accommodation for my team and I will assure you I will bring a second-string team. I'm not charging you anything." And he kept his word. So I went and travelled. Now, the agreement was that we should win by a one goal difference only. But unfortunately, my players were driven and wanted to win. They beat [team x] [by a three goal margin]. But the way we scored was no proof of a fixed match. It was just that their team was reduced in strength. People were calling the GFA to investigate but we made sure that it was a competitive match. On returning I called the man and said: "I'm very grateful." He said: "No worries. In football we're friends."

This case proves, first, that match-fixing does not necessarily involve money and, second, that not everyone within the club is always aware of such deals. The coach, for instance, told me the president did not tell him anything; he resigned when he found out.

Mr. X then told me another story involving the same Big Man:

I remember one time when he was the CEO of [team y] and in his time we were playing [team y] in [location]. He called and said he wanted to meet me. I replied: "One week before the match? No! If anyone sees us, people might think I want to fix the match. It's dangerous so I don't want to come to [home base of team y] and I don't want you to come to [his own home base]. Let's meet midway." I talked to my management and said that this guy wanted to meet up with us. We went and he came with 100 million old cedi (€5,000). I said: "I can take your money and we play the match. But [team y] is stronger, so you will probably beat us so why should I take money? Let's play and if your team wins on merit, no problem." I don't see myself standing before the players and tell them to play softly. No, I would never do that. So I told him the truth and he pleaded with me. He didn't believe me. We played and he beat us 2-1. And can you believe it? He sent the 100 million cedi to us. He told me to take it for Christmas.

For one thing, this story shows that meetings between Big Men are secret affairs. Another aspect is that it is usually better to deal with the top officials personally, namely the president or CEO. 'It's always better to talk to the CEO,' Mr. X said, 'but that's not always how it happens. In my case, they usually find someone close to me. They would say to him: "Talk to your friend. We've got so much to offer him."'

When clubs conspire to play a match of convenience they can either include the referee in the plot or leave him out of it. 'Sometimes representatives of both teams first consult each other and then go to the referee,' said Mr. X. 'They will explain the situation to make it credible. Then they will try to make a deal. One of the two teams will pay the referee. But sometimes the teams leave the referee out. That means nobody wants to pay the referee.' If the referee is kept out of the deal, how can he find out whether the teams play a match of convenience? 'You can tell when the two teams are not playing up to standard,' said referee Atta Baffour. The Ghanaian Premier League referee Reginald Lathbridge gave me a simple piece of advice. 'You can easily spot a match of convenience,' he said. 'All you have to do is look at the league table.'

The third way for Big Men to fix a match is to approach the players of the opponent team. Recall, for instance, the PWD Bamenda defender Epesse who was bribed by Dynamo Douala and/or the Minister of Sports in the 1979 Cup of Cameroon final. In 2003, footballer Ashu told me how some of his teammates threw a match of which they knew it would have no consequences for the team.⁷²³ 'In the past people used to infiltrate by calling our players,' said AshantiGold CEO Kojo Fianoo. 'But we've made sure they cannot be reached anymore. Our players now stay in barracks inside the stadium before the match. When they enter the barracks, we take away their mobile phones.' Also, secret camps are common in Ghana (and not only there), although secret is a relative concept as teams' whereabouts are more often than not common knowledge.⁷²⁴

It is generally not easy for club officials to either avoid opponents from bribing their players or to find out that it actually happened. Players who have been bribed will be very careful on the field of play. Also, since it is highly unlikely that the entire team is bribed, it is difficult to spot which ones have money in their pockets. 'You can never bribe the whole team,' Mr. X said. 'Never! You can only bribe a few players. It's mostly goalkeepers and defenders who can cause penalties. So for me these are the areas I look at.'⁷²⁵ Even experienced club officials cannot prevent infiltration of their teams. Recall Mr. X's story of the CEO who offered him 100 million old cedi to throw the match. He refused by saying that he thought the other team would beat his team anyway. That, Mr. X said, was not the end of the story:

He couldn't get to me so he decided to bribe players in my team – especially the ones who would fall prey to him. He needed players with [name of ethnic group] inclination, people who would be sympathetic to the [name of ethnic group] cause. We had some boys in our team [who come from the same region as team y] and they managed to infiltrate. The goalkeeper and the central defenders were [name of ethnic group]. We were leading 1-0 and then their goals were caused by collisions between the goalkeeper and the central defender. That's how we doubted them. We put them on the transfer list.

A similar story was given to me by Tiko United's president Eteki Charles. In the final round of the 2008/09 season, Sable Batie surprisingly beat Tiko United, which by that time had already been declared champions, and so saved itself from relegation. Eteki said he was unaware his players would throw the match:

Becoming the league champion was not as beautiful as I hoped. First of all, we already knew it four days to the end of the season. We then played the final match against Sable Batie. It was a disgrace. We lost 5-1. I wasn't there but later on I heard that our players were simply handing over the ball. I sacked the coach and some of the players. I cannot prove it but I know for sure that they sold the match. Sable was going for relegation and the FECAFOOT from Yaoundé did everything to save them. The vice president comes from the West Region so they made a deal. Our coach was also from Yaoundé.

I have stated earlier that match-fixing or otherwise influencing matches does not necessarily involve money. This is true with regard to hospitality. It is custom throughout Africa to welcome strangers into the community, to give them shelter, and to provide them with food and drinks. In football, everyone is effectively a stranger as teams travel to remote corners of the country. 'We're all journey-men,' said Kojo Fianoo. 'We're always on the move. That's the nature of our profession.' So when a referee arrives in town, he will be treated as a guest and experience the hospitality rule, which is a concerted effort of the community at large. Mr. X explained it as follows:

We will send someone to the referee a few days prior to the match to give him money for transport and lodging. Sometimes the referee will arrive in town early enough, expecting to receive a special treatment. We will pay for his accommodation, his meals, his drinks. Some teams are even prepared to use their female supporters as bait. You may call for a young and beautiful girl and tell her to go to the referee's hotel and see whether he's feeling lonely. Sometimes she takes him to see tourist spots in town. Sometimes she will spend the night in the referee's hotel room. When you don't have a conscience, it's very difficult to resist.

Sources claimed, as was the case with bribery, that the Director of Operations – and in some cases the Public Relations Officer (PRO) – is responsible for hospitality.

Hospitality is certainly not limited to Africa. Officials of clubs in Europe also court referees by offering them female companionship.⁷²⁶ The same is true for a practice that is closely related to hospitality, namely gift-giving. Sugden and Tomlinson argue that there is a 'gift culture' in the world of sports.⁷²⁷ I have heard similar stories. 'The Director of Operations will come and see you,' said a Ghanaian referee. 'He will say: "This match is very important. We want you to

be fair and we don't want to influence you. We only want to give you this package to show you our appreciation.” It appears that hospitality and gift-giving are normal procedure. ‘These things happen every time you officiate a match,’ the aforementioned Ghanaian referee said. ‘They always come and tell you that they will pay for food and lodging,’ one Cameroonian referee explained. ‘They will also give you all sorts of presents.’

The following story by retired referee Atta Baffour indicates, first, that the practice is not new and, second, that some gifts tend to be bigger than others:

I once had to officiate a match between Great Olympics and B.A. United in Sunyani. On Friday I was working when some people from B.A. came up to me. They said: “Sunday is going to be a very serious affair so you have to help us.” They tried to give me 100,000 old cedi but I rejected it. The next day they came again and tried to give me 10,000 old cedi. They told me it was for transport but we all knew it wasn't for transport.

On Saturday night I had to attend a funeral and a friend came to see me. He directed me to the chairman of Olympics who was there with two Europeans. Olympics was trying to get sponsors from Europe and really needed to win the match. We went outside to their car. They opened the trunk and inside I saw a colour television set. This was a big thing because in those days TVs were mostly black and white. They said I should take it as a gift. I refused. It turned out my friend was also a friend of the chairman of Olympics.

Then we had to play the match. I was careful not to give one team the advantage over the other because then they would think I was favouring the other. Olympic scored first but B.A. equalised. After the match Olympics claimed I robbed them. B.A. too claimed I robbed them. If two teams think you robbed them it means you did a good job.

This story confirms once again that both teams will approach the referee and that they have their ways of contacting him.

Hospitality and gift-giving create a serious problem for referees, not in the least because they find it difficult to say no. Referees who accept these influences enter into a relationship that, in the words of Marcel Mauss, is far from ‘free and disinterested’.⁷²⁸ ‘If you take the gifts,’ said referee Lathbridge, ‘you're in trouble. A gift may only be a gift but we consider it a bribe nonetheless. When you accept the gift, you sign a contract. You have to do whatever the giver wants you to do.’ He continued:

It's a normal human thing that if I come to a village where I'm being treated with respect, that I will want to return the favour. After such a good treatment you will just want to help them. One way of doing that is by giving the home team that extra advantage they need to win the match. If you don't help out, you will be considered an ill guest which is equal to insulting them. It's like accepting the kindness and gifts of the population, have drinks with them in the evening, then wake up in the morning, eat their food and leave without leaving something behind. Let me put it another way. Let's say the man who accommodated you wakes up in the morning and finds out you slept with his youngest daughter. That's how insulting it is to them.

Hospitality and gifts are sometimes provided by Big Men such as government officials or traditional rulers, which makes refusing such “friendliness” all the more difficult.⁷²⁹ Also, referees who do say no are commonly accused by the

approaching party of already having accepted a bribe from the other team.⁷³⁰ Apart from these arguments, referees have every reason to accept it because they are generally underpaid.⁷³¹

The question whether hospitality and gift-giving should be regarded as bribery is complicated by the practice of presenting gifts *after* the match. One case concerned a match in Ghana's Premier League in 2000. Oheneba Charles, then a director of Kwaebibirem United, was accused of bribing the referee before a home match against Asante Kotoko. The Disciplinary Committee found no evidence, yet discovered by interviewing the people involved, that Kwaebibirem's team manager had given the referee 500,000 old cedi (€25, but at the time it was worth more than it sounds now) after the match. In fact, officials of Kwaebibirem United were in the habit of presenting referees with gifts after each home match, regardless of the outcome. The Disciplinary Committee was told that such post-match gift-giving was quite normal.⁷³²

Indeed, referees and officials alike have told me that offering post-match gifts or packages, as some referees called it, is normal practice. 'We call that a bribe in disguise,' said referee Lathbridge, 'because you have not been influenced before the match so we cannot consider it a bribe. It's completely normal. In fact, refusing to accept the package is considered rude.' He continued:

Almost all the home teams give packages. When you leave the stadium, someone will stop you and direct you to his car. The package will be there in the boot. Sometimes after the match they will offer to fill up the tank of your car. The reason is that they want to become friends with you. Next time you officiate one of their matches you will think about the friendliness they have gave you.

Referee Nde Christopher Ade was also familiar with post-match gifts. 'These packages sometimes include money,' he said. 'They offer you 50,000 or 100,000 CFA francs.' He was aware of the motivation behind this practice. 'It means they want to influence you for the next match,' he said. 'I sometimes ask them: "Why do you only give me these items during the season? Why not during the summer break?" So I see this gift-giving as throwing corn to the birds, persuading you to come into their net.'

Referee Lathbridge explained that in Ghana the contents of these post-match packages differ from region to region. In the north, he said, referees get 'cow meat, cow legs for making soup, and sometimes even chopped cow head'. 'They will have smoked the head,' he added. 'It's very nice! Sometimes they present you with sandals made of cow leather.' In the Brong-Ahafo Region, they give referees 'yams, cassava and plantains'. What about the Volta Region? 'I don't usually go there, but from what I've heard from my colleagues is that they give you dried fish and yams.' What about Accra, Cape Coast and Sekondi-Takoradi? 'The Central and Western Regions are the coastal areas,' he explained, 'so they

give you fresh and dried fish and sometimes also coconuts.’ Lathbridge argued that one item is regularly included in most packages:

The only thing that all teams do equally, is that they give you replica jerseys. They will say: “You can use this for your training sessions.” This is even done at an international level. We went to officiate a match in Burkina Faso and we had to make a short stop in Abidjan. There we unexpectedly met an official of ASEC Mimomas. He didn’t know that we would be landing in his town so he quickly left and came back with four sets of replica jerseys. He said: “We’re all playing the same game and we never know where we will meet again.” He meant that you never know if we, as FIFA referees, would be officiating a match involving ASEC Mimomas in the future. So he was trying to establish a friendship. We went on to officiate the match in Burkina Faso and after the match they presented us with four boxes of cow meat and replica jerseys.

Replica jerseys are usually handed out by officials who claim they are merely providing the visitors with souvenirs. In the same way as hospitality, calling gifts souvenirs is also a way of avoiding repercussions.⁷³³

The advantage of giving gifts *after* the match is that club officials are able to argue that no one was influenced *before* and *during* the match. This issue was explored after a World Cup qualifier between arch rivals Nigeria and Ghana in 2001. I have to note that this match was crucial for Nigeria who could still qualify; Ghana, on the other hand, was already eliminated. It was reported that after the match the governor of the State that hosted the match had given the Ghanaians \$25,000. When Ghana lost the match 3-0 and the news came out, there was an outcry over the question whether this should be regarded a gift or a bribe. GFA chairman Ben Koufie maintained it was a gift. ‘I initially refused the money because of the rumours and suspicions of bribery surrounding the fixture,’ he said. ‘But I changed my mind after the Nigerian governor said that it is part of their tradition to extend hospitality with such a donation.’⁷³⁴

Nigerian FA officials also held the view that it was merely a gift to confirm the diplomatic relations between the two countries. One NFF official stated that ‘it is a common thing in Africa to give gifts to visitors when they are about to go. In the olden days, our forefathers gave yam tubers, goats, cowries and so on. So if the Governor of Rivers State in his magnanimity decides to give a visiting team some money after a game, he is keeping to the culture of his people.’⁷³⁵ NFF spokesman Austin Mgbolu called the allegations of bribery ‘ridiculous and absurd’:

We didn’t offer any financial inducement to the Ghanaians. It was the Rivers State governor Peter Odili who gave both the Super Eagles and the Ghanaians money in a gesture of goodwill because the match was played in the city he oversees. What governor Odili did was to merely cement the cordial relationship and spirit of unity between our two countries. So it’s wrong and unfair for anyone to capitalise on this and smear the image of Nigerian football.⁷³⁶

The *Ghanaian Chronicle* nevertheless ran an editorial, stating that the ‘thin line between a gift and a bribe’ is determined by ‘the context within which the offer is made’, and concluded that in this case the gift should have been rejected.⁷³⁷

The power of juju

If it seems that Big Men already have a lot on their minds, one probably has not heard anything about witchcraft, sorcery and magic in football. Called juju in West Africa and muti in Southern Africa, these spiritual practices occur all over the continent with striking similarities. Rituals are performed so as to give one team the upper hand over the other. By controlling the field, the dressing rooms and the entire stadium, home teams are commonly at an advantage in this spiritual battle. Although Big Men are definitely not the only ones involved in hiring spiritualists, they are typically the ones who give the orders and provide the money. Football administrators have in recent years tried to ban juju from Africa’s football fields. From all indications, however, juju remains an important aspect of a match in Africa.

Recall Preston’s and Szymanski’s classification of cheating: Sabotage, doping and match-fixing. It could be argued that juju and other occult forces fall into the first two categories. Indeed, one of the most common statements about juju is that the practice is aimed at reducing the performance of the opponent team (sabotage). However, it is also claimed that some of the ingredients in juju rituals can be regarded as performance-enhancing substances (doping). ‘I have a big concern and I confess that,’ said FIFA Medical Committee chairman Michel D’Hooghe prior to the start of the 2010 World Cup. ‘We were learning a lot about the traditional African medicines (at a conference) and we are not sure what all of these products contain.’ He suspected some products may ‘deliver stimulation and diuretic activity’.⁷³⁸

I will start by giving an example of juju at the African Cup of Nations. The opening match between Ghana and Guinea gave a good insight into the spiritual warfare in African football – if only the average spectator knew about the things that happened behind the scenes. On Sunday 20 January, both teams took to the field under the watchful eyes of 40,000 ordinary fans and hundreds of dignitaries. All was well, except for the fact that the Guinean players spat water onto the pitch. ‘There was a lot of chaos,’ a man named Nuru told me later. ‘That’s why nobody saw them spitting the water on the field. They had hidden the water inside their mouths. Luckily, we anticipated their tricks.’ What he meant was that Ghana had found an antidote to Guinea’s alleged holy water.

The following afternoon, I sat down with Nuru, his friends Hudu and Pollo, and a Dutch journalist on the far side of the Ohene Djan Stadium.⁷³⁹ Apparently, the three men stood in between *malams* (Islamic witchdoctors) and Ghana’s

national team. They were, in other words, the FA's middlemen. On Saturday they visited six malams in the suburbs of Accra who ordered them to get different kinds of juju for Sunday's opening match. Nuru told me that he went to a horse track at four A.M. to get the urine of a pregnant merry. 'It had to be done very early in the morning,' he said. 'I caught the urine in a plastic bottle.' Nuru gave the bottle to his friend Pollo and then went to a cemetery to bury something (he later said that it was a seed of some kind).

Meanwhile, Pollo rushed to the hotel of the Guinean delegation. 'I first sprinkled the urine in a circle around the hotel,' he explained. 'Then I went inside to sprinkle it on the chairs and tables in the dining room.' By that time, Hudu had taken up position inside the Ohene Djan Stadium. After some time he spotted movement on the field of play. 'There were four dwarfs who each went to a corner of the field,' he told me. 'The dwarfs were invisible so it was easy for them to sneak past the guards. But I saw them. I didn't do anything. I just watched what they were up to.' Later that night, when the dwarfs had left, Nuru and Pollo joined Hudu at the stadium. They sprinkled the urine on each of the four corners of the field. Now everything was set for the big showdown.

On match day, at five P.M., the referees and the players stepped onto the pitch. Not coincidentally, the Ghanaian players wore immaculate white jerseys. The Dutch journalist told me how he sat in a taxi with Nuru and his friends a day earlier. 'Pollo received a phone call,' he said. 'When he hung up he said: "Tomorrow's going to be a white day!"' Nuru, Hudu and Pollo had taken their seats on the stand, fully dressed in white robes. At halftime, the score was still 0-0. 'Did you see how many chances we had?' Nuru asked me on Monday. 'The Guineans blocked the goal with their water.' The three men then called their malams who advised them to pray and chant. In the second half, both teams scored a goal. 'Now we were directing our prayers towards the goalpost,' Nuru said. 'We were trying to force a goal.' It worked. Sulley Muntari scored the decisive goal in the dying minutes of the match.

Holy water, horse urine, dwarfs – juju or muti comes in different guises. Juju is also known under many names. Some call it witchcraft or sorcery, others prefer gris-gris, wak, voodoo, fetishism, black or white magic, Satan's work or African electronics. In Ghana the practice is generally known as Ways & Means. The practitioners have different names as well, sometimes depending on the region from which they hail, sometimes depending on the type of juju they perform. Some would say witchdoctor while others would rather speak of a féticheur, nganga, marabout or spiritual adviser.⁷⁴⁰ 'In Ivory Coast I had a staff of fetishists,' French coach Philippe Troussier told a couple of Belgian journalists. 'They called themselves *les mécaniciens*.'⁷⁴¹

Some countries, particularly those in West Africa, are known to be especially knowledgeable in juju. 'Benin is the birthplace of voodoo,' a Liberian sports journalist told me, 'and therefore we consider it Africa's number one country in terms of juju.' Indeed, when the Ugandan national team travelled to Benin for a World Cup qualifier in 2008, it was written that 'the Cranes will confront a nation so deeply entrenched in its practice of juju that it considers it a national religion'.⁷⁴² Benin went on to beat the visitors 4-1. 'The atmosphere in the stadium was weird,' Uganda's goalkeeper Dennis Onyango recalled afterwards. 'There were so many witchdoctors around the turf, the stadium was extremely windy, with thunderstorms and yet there wasn't rain. These are no excuses but just shocking facts.'⁷⁴³

The 2010 World Cup in South Africa triggered journalists from around the world to focus on muti or juju in African football. One journalist learned that '80 per cent of South Africans patronise traditional healers', especially in relation to events where the outcome is uncertain.⁷⁴⁴ Leseth, referring to witchcraft (juju) in Tanzanian football, argues that the practice 'rationalizes the element of unpredictability in football'.⁷⁴⁵ Indeed, good and bad luck are commonly explained through the discourse of juju. When Asante Kotoko lost several matches in the 2008/09 season, it was said that someone had blocked the team. The *Kotoko Express* reported that the club was contacted by people claiming to know about its 'problems and the antidote to it'.⁷⁴⁶ There are reported cases whereby teams have been blocked by angry jujumen.⁷⁴⁷

Juju is generally perceived as a spiritual fight above the heads of the players. Ancestors play a major role. Thomas Q. Reefe argues that in Africa there is a connection between games, gods and gambling. The outcome of contests are a 'matter of doubt', he writes. 'The future is uncertain without the intervention of the ancestors and their supernatural powers. Sensible people do not risk precious things without first seeking the assistance of the forces that influence or predict the future.'⁷⁴⁸ He continues:

The knowledge that competition among men is the mirror of combat between supernatural forces has endured from the precolonial era to postindependence. It is a fact accepted by one group living on the Zaire River upstream from Kinshasa that each team in a soccer match starts out with a preordained number of goals. In the days preceding the match, team magicians do battle with medicine and supernatural force to steal the opponent's points and to defend their own. Actual play is the public enactment of what the magician's combat has already determined.⁷⁴⁹

This leads us to the question that if matches are determined by supernatural forces, why bother hiring coaches and have players practice every day? The answer is that juju and practice sessions are seen as complementary elements of match preparation,⁷⁵⁰ with juju also being regarded as having a strong psycho-

logical impact.⁷⁵¹ It is nevertheless claimed that juju hinders the development of the game.⁷⁵²

It is difficult to explain the system of juju. From all indications it is an amalgamation of traditional beliefs in ancestors, gods and spirits. Several players, coaches and club officials have all admitted to not really knowing how juju works or why they need to perform certain rituals.⁷⁵³ To me, juju can be perceived as a game within the game of football, especially because an important aspect is to find out the juju of the opponent team. This information is essential because it gives one's team the chance to look for the right anti-juju. One type of juju thus needs to be countered by another. In Cameroon, there are spirits such as dwarfs and mermaids which can be distracted with bananas and coconuts, respectively. Salt and urine are ideal anti-juju ingredients.⁷⁵⁴

The idea that juju needs to be countered means that both the home team and the visitors have to be alert at all times. The opponent is supposed to be kept in the dark so that they will not be able to produce anti-juju. The problem is that juju can be performed or accommodated by just about anyone. Therefore it is common to see people looking suspicious at anyone who is either a stranger or a known sympathiser of a rival team. In other words, everyone is either a potential spy or a potential carrier of juju. The Ghanaian photojournalist David Kyei told me an interesting story:

Everybody knows that I work for the *Kotoko Express* so they think I'm not an independent journalist. I'm always in trouble in two places: Berekum and Obuasi. The supporters in Berekum think that I'm Kotoko's lucky charm. In the old days, back in 2002 and 2003, Kotoko would beat Arsenal's in their own house. The supporters realised that every time their team lost, I was on the pitch taking photographs. So they started harassing me. They would take away my bag because they thought I was hiding something inside. The same thing happens in Obuasi. You know, these people [of AshantiGold] like juju too much. For several years now they won't allow me to enter the inner perimeter to take photographs. They will refuse me even though I have a press card. Every time I go to Obuasi, they send these big supporters to come and guard me. I cannot do anything without them following me.

I experienced similar scepticism in Obuasi when supporters of the visiting team almost attacked me for photographing their team bus.⁷⁵⁵

Overall, juju is more prominently employed in those matches that are also prone to match-fixing practices: Derbies, tournament matches, end-of-season matches. Home teams are said to be spiritually dominant over visiting teams. Informants say that the "proof" lies in home advantage statistics. Similarly, they argue that the host nation of the African Cup of Nations is more likely to claim the title than chance would suggest. From 1957 until 2010, 11 out of 25 finals (44 percent) were won by the host nation. Moreover, the host reached the final no less than 14 times. The reason is that playing on one's home turf is supposed to give the home team extra spiritual strength (see chapter 4, see also further

Photo 8.2 Coaches C.K. Akonnor and Nii Lamptey of Eleven Wise give instructions during a home match against Asante Kotoko at the Essipong Stadium in Sekondi. Their white shirts signal victory



below). ‘Nobody can beat you in your own house,’ Nuru said. ‘When it’s in our house we’re spiritually much stronger.’ Little wonder, then, that so many Africans thought South Africa or another African team would win the 2010 World Cup.⁷⁵⁶

Juju also explains why big teams are more likely to beat lesser opponents. ‘What do the jujumen want?’ journalist Kamkam Boadu asked me rhetorically. ‘They all do it for the money. So if you are the richest club, you also have the jujumen. Also, most players dream about playing for Hearts and Kotoko. The same goes for these jujumen. Even if they want to make money, they also just want to be attached to these clubs.’ It also explains why some of the relatively lesser teams are so hard to beat. One mediocre team in Cameroon, Dynamo Douala, was feared throughout the country. For one thing, Dynamo was seen as being specialised in rainmaking, which would result in victory on the field of play. Moreover, the team was (and still is) owned and controlled by the Bassa who are perceived to be well-versed in the art of black magic.

There are those who claim that juju is, in the words of Patrick Royer, ‘a remnant of obsolete beliefs’.⁷⁵⁷ Put differently, juju is said to fade away due to modernising forces in Africa. However, the anthropologist Peter Geschiere argues that the opposite is true: Witchcraft, sorcery and magic thrive in modern African life.⁷⁵⁸ It is also said that Africa’s national teams are less inclined to employ juju because most players are Christians or Muslims. Moreover, most of them play at Europe’s biggest clubs and therefore cannot be bothered with juju anymore. But, first, players need not be involved in juju rituals and, second, juju easily mixes with other religions.⁷⁵⁹ One only needs to refer to the Nigerian pastor T.B. Joshua who is said to spiritually assist the national teams of both Nigeria and Ghana.⁷⁶⁰

Some of Africa’s top football administrators argue that juju gives the game a bad reputation, which is why they try to stop the practice. Milan Vesely writes that the ‘issue is bedeviling many football clubs across Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda. Incidents have reached epidemic proportions and many national soccer bodies are clamping down on (juju).’⁷⁶¹ In 2003, Tanzania’s top clubs Yanga and Simba were both fined \$500 after performing juju rituals.⁷⁶² CAF even threatened to arrest witchdoctors at the 2002 African Cup of Nations, fearing the practice would enhance Africa’s Third World image.⁷⁶³ ‘We are no more willing to see witch doctors on the pitch than cannibals at the concession stands,’ said a CAF spokesperson.⁷⁶⁴ Ghana’s three helpers laughed such statements away. ‘The president of CAF knows his own country uses juju,’ Nuru said. ‘So what’s he going to do about it?’

Let us now focus on Big Men and other club officials of whom many are said to be involved in juju. I will begin with a story of the matches between Hearts

and Kotoko in the 2008/09 season. Before each encounter, officials of both teams challenged each other over the airwaves and in newspapers. First, Sabahn Quaye, for long Hearts' team manager, publicly prophesied his team's victory prior to the match in February 2009. Several informants told me that he went on radio to challenge his opponent to call his bluff. His counterpart at Kotoko, Sarfo Gyamfi, however, stayed silent. Hearts did indeed beat Kotoko 1-2 in Kumasi. A few months later it was Kotoko's turn. Gyamfi, a former player of Kotoko and occasionally part of its management team, declared on *radio trottoir* that his team would beat Hearts 0-1. And so it happened.

Whoever takes care of the juju depends on the individuals who make up the club's management or technical staff at any given time. Quaye and Gyamfi were said to be Hearts' and Kotoko's spiritual experts, respectively, and their public statements were interpreted from a spiritual angle. Gyamfi is popularly known as Black President, a nickname that refers to black magic. Kotoko also had a supporter named Ali Maradona, who became a management member in 2010, and who looked after the team's juju. Supporters are thus actively involved in these spiritual affairs. The team manager of a Cameroonian top league club once claimed he was in charge of juju affairs. Some time later, it was the coach who visited his native village before each match. A witchdoctor allegedly lived there who provided the coach with the necessary spiritual powers.

We have seen how national teams are spiritually prepared as well. Sometimes the Minister of Sports will bring in spiritual advisers or will order others to do so. In some cases, that job is fulfilled by a team manager, an assistant-coach, a supporter or an FA official. The latter was true in the case of Nuru, Hudu and Pollo. First of all, they were quite familiar with the Black Stars delegation. I witnessed how the three men walked around the lobby of Accra's Fiesta Royal Hotel greeting players, coaches and administrators. They clearly knew everybody and everybody knew them. At first, Nuru, Hudu and Pollo claimed that they worked on a voluntary basis. 'We never ask for a reward,' Nuru said. 'But the people around the team give us money to pay for the jujumen. Sometimes we get compensation ourselves.'⁷⁶⁵ They later revealed to be in contact with a GFA official. 'We cannot tell you who he is,' said Nuru. 'He's our secret middleman. Nobody can accuse Ghana because officially they're not involved.'

In terms of juju, Big Men can be categorised in those who believe and actively encourage it, those who do not believe but who accommodate the practice anyway, and those who do not believe and actively discourage it. Although most of them will never admit that they believe in juju and hire spiritualists, several Big Men – club presidents and FA officials alike – are strong believers and act accordingly. 'Most club presidents will never show anyone that they are involved,' said spiritual adviser Zé:

They have their way of making sure nobody finds out. To give you an example, I went with Victoria United to the interpools somewhere in the 1990s. The club president was very much into juju. He gave us money before the start of the tournament and told us to do whatever we needed to do. He said: “The money is there. Just make sure you win. And if you win, don’t tell me anything. I don’t want to know how you did it.” The president wrote down the expenses under “miscellaneous”. He gave us enough money for us to know that we could spend it on magic and motivation for the referees.

The idea that many Big Men fall into the first two categories makes sense when one considers the fact that juju is expensive. As Leseth argues with regard to Tanzania, juju in football is ‘big business’.⁷⁶⁶ She writes: ‘*Waganga* (witch-doctors) have enriched themselves enormously through the “wages” they receive from leaders of the various clubs’.⁷⁶⁷ Zé told me that matches in Cameroon are typically prepared for 200,000 to 300,000 CFA francs (€300 to €450). ‘Some jujumen are hired for the whole season,’ he explained. ‘They give you five million CFA francs (€7,500) if you give them the championship.’ Big Men are thus needed to provide financial support.

There are also Big Men who say they do not believe in juju but still go along with it. They simply do not want to deal with angry supporters. ‘I know it exists,’ Mr. X said. ‘I usually give the supporters some money so that they can look for these native doctors. Most of them strongly believe in it. If I refuse to allow juju and we lose the match, they will come after me.’ In the 2008/09 season, Kotoko supporters bemoaned their club officials’ unwillingness to spend money on juju. ‘This management does not want to give us money for spiritual assistance,’ Kwaku Anor told me. ‘Some people complained about it during the stakeholders meeting at Manhyia Palace.’ A new management team seemed to have got the message. One management member claimed that the club had spent 90,000 cedi (€45,000) on juju in the 2009/10 season.⁷⁶⁸

Finally, there are Big Men who do not believe in juju and who do not want to see spiritualists near the team. This means that others have to do it behind the president’s back. Ni John Fru Ndi, former president of PWD Bamenda, stated in chapter 3 that he opposed juju. Eteki Charles is another example. ‘Magic was my biggest challenge,’ the president of Tiko United said. ‘I had to convince everybody that there is no magic in football. So now we only pray before the match. If you as a player come with us you have to become a soldier of God.’ Even though such Big Men do not approve of juju, they are still up against those within the club who are prone to employ spiritualists. ‘Eteki does not like juju,’ spiritual adviser Zé told me. ‘But I know that when the team became league champion there was magic involved. The coach, the supporters and the Diaspora in Ireland all contributed to the hiring of spiritual advisers.’

Club officials regularly get involved in juju rituals and are commonly asked to follow rules. Failure to abide by such rules is often cited as a reason why a team

loses a match. One common rule is to stay away from women. Zé said that women ‘spoil magic’. Put differently, women are bad luck. Players are certainly not allowed to sleep with girls for then the juju will lose its power. Daimon describes how Henriette Rushwaya, the then female chairman of the Zimbabwean FA, was prevented from attending a Champions League match because she was thought to be a bad omen.⁷⁶⁹ Aside from being a male-dominated sport, this could be an explanation for the general absence of female club officials and football administrators. However, women who occupy top positions in football are sometimes held in high esteem.

Many Big Men and/or other club officials are thus personally involved in juju practices and are quite busy with it. Since they typically assume the opponent team will have prepared the match, they are almost obligated to engage in such activities as well. The most important thing to do is to find spiritual advisers who can counter the opponent team’s juju and who know how to strengthen the client’s team. Although most juju is prepared far away from players and pitches, one can observe some of the reactions to these spiritual beliefs before and during matches. Let us focus on three match “components” where juju is commonly employed: Going to a camp (including travelling), making use of the facilities inside the stadium, and playing the match.

The first component is going to a camp, meaning that the squad stays together the night before the match (see chapter 4). This is where home teams have the advantage over away teams for the simple reason that their accommodation is most likely safe and secure. Typical camp grounds are academy complexes, clubhouses, hotels or even the club president’s house. The Zambian journalist Ridgeway Liwena provides us with an account of a player named Lasky Mwandu who played for Roan United decades ago:

Whilst at Roan, it was the club rule that we gathered at the chairman’s house on every Saturday evening, before the match the next day. All the officials and players selected to play in the Sunday match met at this house and drank “munkoyo” (a traditional non-intoxicating opaque sweet beer) prepared by the chairman’s wife. While there, we sang songs of unity and received instructions such as not to have sex with our wives or girlfriends. (...) On the day of the match we would be at the chairman’s house again a few hours before kick-off. There would be a dish containing herbs, roots and other objects submerged in water. Each player was expected to wash his face and hands from the dish. Thereafter, cigars containing African herbs and other powdered stuff were lit for us and we all smoked.⁷⁷⁰

Away teams, on the other hand, need to find safe accommodation to avoid harassment from the home team. Earlier I mentioned secret camps, intended to prevent opponents from bribing players. As hotels, buses and training grounds can be spoiled (because of juju), secret camp grounds are necessary to prevent such bewitchment.

Away teams also face the problem of travelling. Fatigue on the part of the visiting team is cited as a potential reason for home advantage.⁷⁷¹ In many parts

of Africa, travelling appears to negatively influence team performance.⁷⁷² Distances can be enormous and are best abridged by air yet, few teams have the financial resources to do so. Rainy seasons and war-torn areas add to travel anxieties.⁷⁷³ Religious beliefs regarding certain regions make travelling even more complicated. The Ghanaian coach Isaac “Opee” Boateng, who claims that ‘there are a lot of superstitions that surround (team travels)’, wrote the following story:

For example, teams that travel to a region that shares border with Togo have the fear that if they cross a certain river they will lose. No one wants to sleep in any hotel in the town for fear of losing, hence most teams choose to sleep in the regional capital to travel that far on hills for over one hour thirty minutes on a match day. (...)

Still on team travels, clubs travelling to a town of a premiership side which is yet to lose at home in the last five years, decided to abandon a particular roundabout in the city to avoid ill-luck. Teams which believe this has (sic) only one other option to get to the stadium. (...)

There is also this belief among certain clubs to pacify the gods with a sheep or any other animal in a particular river before entering Brong Ahafo Region, i.e. when coming from the south. Once, two teams went to Sunyani to play a game. Team A sacrificed a sheep in that river. When Team B arrived to perform theirs, they saw some young boys in the town grilling meat and the boys came to tell Team B that the meat on fire was that of Team A’s sacrifice in the river.⁷⁷⁴

Such beliefs force club officials to take appropriate measures.

The second component of a match is the moment where both teams make use of the stadium facilities. Here too, the home team will have the spiritual advantage. Recall how teams employ animistic powers (chapter 4). Fields and stadiums, of course, are built on ancestral lands which, as Royer argues, intensifies home advantage:

Playing away always seems to put the visiting team at a disadvantage, however talented they are. The ground at Bobo Dioulasso [a city in Burkina Faso], although built like all football stadiums as a public space, is above all home to the local team and to the local spectators. This home advantage is compounded by the predominance of the power of local occult forces over those of the visitors. The physical and social environments are under the control of the hosts in the same way that spirit powers and shrines associated with a village territory are perpetuated and controlled by its inhabitants.⁷⁷⁵

There is another reason why visiting teams fear the home team’s venue. A common juju ritual is the burying of concoctions inside the stadium premises, preferably on the pitch. One Cameroonian writer wrote a hilarious yet quite serious story of a goalkeeper who dug up the ‘already decomposing carcass of a black sheep’ in his penalty area. Upon removing the carcass, the opponent suddenly ‘lacked the confidence, coordination and combination they had exhibited during the earlier half’.⁷⁷⁶ Footballer Essomba once told me that concoctions usually include animal parts, such as fowl, goats and cows. Kumbo Strikers, a team from Cameroon’s Northwest Region, used to bury cats:

We had one strong man who was working with the team manager. The man came to the field and wrote down the names of all the players in the first-division teams. Then he put the

medicine and the paper in the mouths of a white cat and a black cat. He buried the cats under the field very deep. We the players were not there. We would only be there on the eve of the day when we are going to play a match. We just come and surround the centre and pray and leave.⁷⁷⁷

The effects of such concoctions on the players of the opposing team are fatigue, dizziness, confusion, heaviness, weakness, slowness, and so on.

The burying of concoctions leads club officials to take at least two measures. First, they guard the stadium to prevent visiting teams from either burying something or removing the home team's juju. One Cameroonian club president hired supporters to light torches at night to chase away visitors. Away teams are also denied entry for practice purposes. Arie Schans, at the time Namibia's national team coach, told me that the Ghanaian hosts prevented him from practising at the Ohene Djan Stadium during the 2008 African Cup of Nations. 'They came up with all sorts of excuses but the bottom line was that we didn't get permission,' he said. The Nigerians had a similar experience. 'I've lived here for many years and it's obvious – they don't want us to use the stadium because they want time to lay down all their juju,' one Nigerian supporter said.⁷⁷⁸

Second, visiting teams generally receive orders from their spiritual advisers to avoid coming into contact with potential concoctions. If the alleged concoction is buried near the entrance or on the path leading to the pitch, players are advised to take an alternative route. I witnessed how team buses drive straight through the main gate, only to stop right next to the pitch. Players are occasionally ordered to jump the fence or the stadium walls. It is equally possible to observe players walking backwards to the field of play, or supporters carrying players on their shoulders. It has to be noted, though, that jumping the fence and taking alternative routes are against the rules, at least in Ghana and Cameroon, and most likely elsewhere as well.⁷⁷⁹

While visiting teams obviously have a lot to think about, there is yet another obstacle they need to overcome. I am referring to dressing rooms. It is unlikely to witness visiting teams enter a strange – and thus suspect – dressing room. In Cameroon, I observed how they rather endured the scorching heat for an hour. Liwena provides us with an example of a Cup match in Zambia in 1993. The visitors (Roan United) were on the road, unaware of the fact that they were followed by reporters. They 'drove their bus a few kilometres out of town towards the Kasumbalesa border with Zaire':

The reporters found the bus parked by the roadside while the players were in the bush changing into their uniforms. Immediately they realised they had been discovered and photographer Charles Mumba was taking pictures, some of them scampered behind thickets. But the rest were unmoved and continued with their business. From the bush "dressing-rooms" [sic], Roan trooped straight into the Konkola Stadium and played an exciting 2-2 draw match.⁷⁸⁰

In Ghana's Western Region, coach Isaac "Opeelee" Boateng wrote, there is 'this belief that a particular dressing room has been cursed, so whoever goes there loses, and because of that, away teams refuse to dress there'.⁷⁸¹ He is referring to a dressing room located inside the Essipong Stadium in Sekondi, a venue where away teams are consistently heckled. 'It's always the officials and supporters of Eleven Wise who are harassing the away teams,' said Mr. X. On Sunday 24 May 2009, when Asante Kotoko travelled to Sekondi to take on Eleven Wise, I witnessed the harassment first-hand. The following story is derived from what I wrote in my diary:

When Kotoko plays an away match, it's always a big deal for the home team. This time the match is especially tense, because Eleven Wise beat Kotoko in Kumasi earlier this season. The Asantehene recently installed a new management team and now they're all here. This is a do-or-die match for Kotoko. The match is shown on Metro TV.

Around four P.M. the team bus of Eleven Wise arrives at the gate with the usual noise that comes with it. Half an hour ago something happened. One man sprinkled a liquid from a plastic Voltic bottle on the stairway that gives access to the stadium's main entrance. Now the bus stops in front of the entrance. The players jump straight onto the stairway, clearly trying not to touch the ground. Supporters are frantically held back.

When Kotoko's team bus arrives there is a delay at the gate. A colon of black SUVs arrives at the scene. Out step Kotoko's new management team: Opoku Afriyie, Opoku Nti, Alhaji Nji, Helena Cobbina. The bus now drives through the gate and stops in front of the stairway. One guy, who is part of Kotoko's entourage, also sprinkles a liquid from the top of the stairway to the front door of the bus. The players do not touch the ground either. They're all on flip-flops and jump straight onto the stairway. Home team security is trying to prevent them from entering the stadium. Helena Cobbina, a physically impressive woman, pushes them as she tries to protect her players.

Once inside the problems continue. Match commissioner Kweku Ampim-Darko later tells me that there was a mix-up with the keys to the dressing rooms. 'Away teams are normally assigned to a specific dressing room,' he says. 'But when Kotoko tried to unlock the door, they found out that they were given the wrong key. Then they saw that Eleven Wise had occupied the dressing room that was reserved for them. Kotoko refused to enter the other dressing room.'

The Kotoko players put on their jerseys in the central hallway before stepping onto the pitch. Two-thirds of the seats in the stadium are taken, many of them by Kotoko supporters, but the home supporters make the most noise.

The coaches of Eleven Wise, former players C.K. Akonnor and Nii Lamptey, are standing in front of their dug-out. They both wear white shirts. Rather than being a fashion statement, it is a spiritual gesture signalling victory.

It's halftime. The players of Eleven Wise disappear into their dressing room. Those of Kotoko still refuse to enter the other dressing room and sit on the ground in the central hallway. Kotoko's new coach Herbert Addo is giving them instructions.

It's time for the second half. Late into the match, Kotoko scores the decisive goal. The final score is 1-2.

There's unrest in the central hallway. The CEO of Eleven Wise enters his team's dressing room. When he comes out again, he is harassed and beaten by the supporters of his own team. 'He ran into my dressing room,' the match commissioner later reveals, 'and he was weeping.' The CEO later tells me that the supporters thought he sold the match. Meanwhile, the Kotoko players immediately enter the team bus and leave town.

When I ask the match commissioner about the dressing room, he says there's nothing he can do. 'A dressing room is a dressing room,' he says. 'We don't know why Eleven Wise did it. We told them it's not how it's supposed to be. But there are no FIFA rules against it and Kotoko never lodged a complaint. Maybe that was because they won.'

I ask a former director of Eleven Wise about the dressing room. 'When you enter that dressing room,' he says, 'you'll see blood stains on the wall.'

This match between two of the country's most popular community-based teams thus generated intimidation, juju and bribery allegations. Club officials on both sides were actively involved in making sure their team would win.

The third component of a match is, not surprisingly, the match itself. Goalkeepers regularly keep suspicious objects in their goalposts. As said earlier, players urinate on the pitch to counter juju; they also throw salt (or rocks or coins) in the opponent team's goalpost. Players typically refuse to shake each other's hands during the pre-match line-up. These manifestations of juju aside, we need to go back to what is known in Ghana as the pre-match meeting. This is where basic issues are resolved, for instance checking player licences and squad jerseys, and handing out keys to dressing rooms. This is, in short, the time and place where juju practices can be avoided. The problem is that teams tend to stay away from the pre-match meeting.

A first example of juju during match time is teams entering the pitch wearing the same jersey colour. When jerseys clash, the visiting team has to go and change.⁷⁸² Jersey clashes usually lead to delays,⁷⁸³ and they are commonly a result of one team failing to attend the pre-match meeting. 'Some teams refuse to come to the pre-match meeting because they don't want the opponent to see their jerseys,' said Mr. X. 'They fear that someone might do something with that information.' But why do teams deliberately wear the same colour jerseys in the first place? 'Some spiritualists know the outcome of the match,' Mr. X said. 'Someone might say: "Today red is not the colour." That means you must change jerseys.' It is not always easy to find a new set of jerseys at the eleventh hour, as Mr. X explained:

Last season we played a match against [a certain Premier League team]. In that match we didn't wear the prescribed jerseys. So our opponent filed a protest. You need to understand that each player has two sets of jerseys with a specific number on the back. These are the jerseys that we need to present to the GFA at the start of the season. Now we're going for a match with a team of sixteen players. All these players need a new set of jerseys. So you need to find a tailor who can fabricate jerseys and affix all the numbers to the back. The problem was that our tailor had travelled out of town. We couldn't get the jerseys on time.

It happens that the jersey numbers are sewn on so badly that they fall off during play.

A second example of juju during the match has to do with timing. 'Sometimes the spiritualist will tell you to go to the field early,' said Mr. X. 'Sometimes he will tell you to come late. Let the opponent come to the field first.' Also, teams

sometimes leave their eleventh player on the bench. ‘Bamboutous Mbouda brought it to the Elite One league in the 1990s,’ said Zé with regard to Cameroon. ‘Their spiritual adviser tells them that they cannot win if they are the last ones to step onto the field. So that’s why they leave one player behind.’ In Ghana, Wa All Stars is said to be specialised in such practices. ‘I’ve seen something similar in Kumasi,’ said referee Lathbridge. ‘RTU (Real Tamale United) started the match with ten players. Kotoko then did the same thing.’ What does Lathbridge do when that happens?

They’re not breaking any laws. The rules dictate that you cannot play a match if one team has less than eight players in the field. So if a team starts out with ten players, it’s allowed. I wouldn’t call this an incident. I wouldn’t worry about it. There are no laws in Ghana football that prohibit teams from fielding one player less on the pitch. So when you fill in your report afterwards, you’ll just mention the facts, which means that both teams started the match with ten players each. Nobody at the FA will ask you for an explanation because it’s not considered to be an offence.

FECAFOOT does not have any rules and regulations that prohibit teams from starting a match with ten players either.

A last example is the habit of preparing match balls. When Kotoko played Dawu Youngstars in the late 1990s, Kotoko supporters claimed that the opponent used “juju balls” and deflated them. This reportedly almost resulted in a fight between the chairman of Dawu and the CEO of Kotoko.⁷⁸⁴ Nguini lists several cases of prepared balls in Cameroon in the 1980s and 90s.⁷⁸⁵ The effects of such balls are diverse: Players may fail to get a grip on the ball or they may become hallucinogenic (seeing, for instance, animals instead of the ball). When the other team realises that juju balls are being employed, their supporters will spoil the match by deflating them. Sometimes the spiritual adviser will order the team to deflate all the balls inside the stadium. Nowadays, teams who so spoil matches lose the match by forfeiture.

Intimidation, violence and no-go areas

A prominent aspect of African football is the level of violence on and off the field of play. Universally labelled as hooliganism, such football-related violence is made worse due to mismanagement, poor infrastructure and minimal security measures. Intimidation and violence are related to the level of identification with clubs and national teams. In a sense, the fierce defending of one’s territory makes hooliganism in football to resemble conventional warfare. Whereas match-fixing and juju are more directly orchestrated by the Big Men themselves, intimidation and violence are mostly the result of actions by diehard supporters. Relative lawlessness gives the home team the opportunity to exploit home advantage to the fullest.

We have so far dealt with referee bias, territoriality and travelling. Referee bias occurs, among other things, when he accepts a bribe. Referee bias and territoriality are present in the sense that referees receive hospitality and gifts from the population. Territoriality also occurs in a spiritual sense, namely through the idea that the home team is assisted by occult forces that reside in the team's home area. Travelling appears to have some sort of effect to the extent that visiting teams oftentimes play a match after a long journey. Now it is time to focus on a combination of referee bias, territoriality and the impact of home crowds to determine home advantage in Africa. Taking Preston's and Szymanski's classification into consideration, it may be argued that intimidation and violence are forms of sabotage. After all, the physical and/or mental performance of the visiting team may be reduced.

I have occasionally come across violence during my fieldwork. One experience occurred during a match between AshantiGold and Kotoko in Obuasi on 12 July 2009. At this point in time, AshantiGold was on the brink of relegation and badly needed the three points. Kotoko, on the other hand, still had the chance to become league champions and was equally motivated in taking the points home. As usual, trouble started when Kotoko's team bus tried to gain entrance to the stadium. Armed police officers as well as home team security and Kotoko bodyguards pushed the several dozen AshantiGold supporters away from the bus. When I took pictures of the chaos from a balcony behind the stadium, home team supporters tried to block my view. 'You should concentrate on football,' one of them said. 'There's nothing to see here.'

The 20,000-seater Len Clay Stadium was practically filled to capacity. Since the atmosphere was incredibly hostile, I decided not to enter the inner perimeter to take pictures. None of the Ghanaian journalists went onto the pitch, and *Kotoko Express*-reporter David Kyei was indeed hassled by a couple of impressively built AshantiGold sympathisers. The stadium erupted when the players entered the field through a tunnel. The trouble started after a Kotoko player scored the opening goal in the first half. As the newspaper *Africa Sports* later bombastically reported, 'the stadium degenerated into a mass of anarchy and chaos, Lucifer releasing his angels from hell':

Fans of Ashantigold began a frightening bout of stonethrowing towards the Kotoko fans who reacted instantly, throwing back the stones at the Ashgold fans. In the ensuing confusion, a police officer was hit by a stone as he bled profusely. Incensed by the terrible attack on their officer, the policemen on duty started firing live ammunition into the air. When that failed to serve as a potent deterrent, the police fired tear gas to restore sanity. That failed to calm nerves as irate Ashgold fans attacked whoever they perceived as a Kotoko disciple.⁷⁸⁶

When a cloud of teargas approached our section, we all climbed over a fence and ran towards the exit near the VIP section.

While I escaped the chaos and confusion unharmed, this could not be said of some of Kotoko's supporters and management members. One supporter, a former Kotoko player named Yaw Serbeh, was stripped naked after being suspected of carrying juju. Kotoko's juju *afficionado* Sarfo Gyamfi was 'severely brutalised' and 'assaulted like an armed robber'; and Kotoko's PRO Nana Godbless had to be 'rushed to the hospital and was still on admission at the time the team was leaving (for) Kumasi'.⁷⁸⁷ When play resumed, AshantiGold scored two goals in quick succession (one through a penalty). The match ended in a 2-1 victory for the home team. Although a biased medium, the *Kotoko Express* had a point when concluding that the referee 'virtually officiated in a manner that would save lives at the packed stadium'.⁷⁸⁸

Intimidating and violent acts are widespread in African football. Journalist Hawkey gives the example of the final of the 2000 African Cup of Nations between host Nigeria and Cameroon. The visitors had 'become anxious to the point of paranoia about how far their hosts would go to win the match. The Indomitable Lions' squad had had lunch, sitting on the floor, crammed into the home of their ambassador in Lagos, urged at late notice not to eat hotel food in case it was poisoned. They had been taunted at the hotel into the early hours by noisy Lagosians.'⁷⁸⁹ When Hearts of Oak had beaten Union Douala 1-0 in the first leg of the 1979 Cup of Champions Clubs final, the Ghanaians travelled to Cameroon for the return match. It was 'an ordeal as they (56 Hearts supporters) had to be guarded by armed soldiers when the Cameroonian spectators started to throw missiles'.⁷⁹⁰ Union finally won after a penalty series.

Violence occasionally leads to loss of life. One could easily make an extensive list of football-related deaths⁷⁹¹ but I will limit myself to two of Africa's worst tragedies (I will deal with a third one later on): The stadium disasters in Ghana and South Africa in 2001. On May 9, 126 supporters died during a Hearts vs Kotoko match at the Accra Stadium. Hearts was leading 2-1 with only five minutes on the clock when Kotoko supporters started throwing plastic chairs and bottles. A study of the disaster found that police officers were not only busy watching the match but also aggravated the situation by firing teargas into a 10,000-strong crowd at the Ade Coker stand:

The damp staircase smelt death. A thick cloud of teargas – most likely *CS Teargas*, that usually burns the skin, tightens the lungs and makes breathing difficult and blinds those exposed to it – was trapped within; and the stampede and pile-up set the stage for a gory scene. 126 people died in those tunnels. "Some died of suffocation," said Brigadier Twum, "but the majority of them seem to have been killed by being crushed."⁷⁹²

A commission pointed fingers at the police force but no one was sentenced to prison.⁷⁹³ However, the firing of teargas into a violent crowd has a long history, sometimes with fatal consequences, and no adequate measures have been implemented since.⁷⁹⁴

One month earlier, on 11 April 2001, South Africa's biggest football disaster occurred during a Chiefs vs Pirates derby at the Ellis Park Stadium. While the players were kicking the ball around, 43 fans died and 158 were injured due to 'overcrowding, an ill-timed announcement that the stadium was full, the use of teargas, and unruly spectator behaviour'.⁷⁹⁵ The final report of a Commission of Inquiry identified causes and suggested new legislation, but its analysis focused on 'microscopic details' and failed to point fingers at the ones thought to be responsible.⁷⁹⁶ The underlying causes nevertheless resembled those of the Orkney football disaster ten years earlier:

At the Orkney disaster in January 1991, 40 people were either trampled or stabbed to death in the pandemonium and fighting that broke out at the 'friendly' match in the Oppenheimer Stadium. Armed spectators were allowed into the grounds and rival supporters were allowed to congregate on the same grandstand with no adequate barriers separating them. There were only 35 security guards to control a crowd of 20,000 and no police were on standby. When fighting broke out among hundreds of the spectators after the Chiefs scored a disputed goal, thousands of people stampeded towards the gates. A locked gate and blocked passages contributed to the deaths as the stadium was overcrowded and medical help was unavailable.⁷⁹⁷

The later assessment that the disaster was caused by 'inadequate infrastructure, management and security' also applies to other parts of Africa.⁷⁹⁸ Having researched a stampede during a World Cup qualifier between Zimbabwe and South Africa in 2000, F.D. Madzimbamuto concludes that the authorities fail to learn from past disasters.⁷⁹⁹

Although unsafe league centres in Africa allow room for hooliganism, it does not explain why intimidation and violence occur in the first place. The most direct instigators of violence are actions by players and referees on the field of play. Two factors in particular raise the level of aggression: Referee bias and juju. Let us consider the following statement by Armstrong about football in Liberia:

Fan disorder always seemed to involve the supporters of the big two teams [Mighty Barolle and Invincible Eleven], if not with each other then with fans of the smaller teams. But nobody I spoke with was ever aware of a "hooligan" problem, and the fixtures were not occasions for chants and fights bound up in ethnic and socio-political antagonisms. Disorders tended to arise as a consequence of disputed refereeing decisions or cheating by players. In such instances, games have been abandoned after assaults on match officials.⁸⁰⁰

Indeed, most of the violence I observed was directed at the referee. A common image in Ghanaian football is the referee and linesmen being escorted off the pitch by policemen in battle uniforms. Referees are on occasion beaten to death.

Juju practices also lead to violence. The 13 deaths during a match in DR Congo in 2008 were a result of a stampede caused by juju. 'It started at half-time when the keeper of Nyuki removed stuff from his jerseys and threw it into the net of their opponents,' one eyewitness said. 'Socozaki players caught him and

started beating him after alleging that he had tried to throw witchcraft in their net. His Nyuki teammates intervened and a fight broke out between the two sides.⁸⁰¹ One police officer then shot teargas into the crowd. A match in Cameroon's top league in 2003 got out of hand when home team supporters suspected the visiting team's goalkeeper of hiding a strange object (a bottle of water) inside his goalpost. When one supporter snatched the bottle away, a general pandemonium ensued in which the same supporter allegedly died.⁸⁰²

Supporters know that if the opponent team resorts to bribery or juju, their team may lose the match. Any act that goes against the wishes of the home crowd may lead to violence. That was the case at the Cairo International Stadium in April 2011 during a CAF Champions League match between Zamalek and Tunisia's Club Africain. When the referee disallowed a much-needed goal for Zamalek, home team supporters invaded the pitch and attacked both the referee and the Tunisian players. It was a painful reminder of an earlier incident in 2007 when Cairo hosted the CAF Champions League final between home team Al-Ahly and Etoile du Sahel. Immediately after Al-Ahly lost the match 1-3, supporters started throwing objects onto the pitch. Journalist Farayi Mungazi called it 'Al-Ahly's night of shame':

Granted, football matches involving Egyptian and Tunisian teams are always a flammable mix, and there was always a chance that defeat for Al Ahly in their own backyard would see an ugly end to the game. But to see some Egyptian journalists who were sitting in the press area with the rest of us also hurling objects at Etoile players was particularly disgraceful. What was even more shocking was that a thick line of stewards and police officers just stood by watching, doing absolutely nothing to stop the wave of flying objects. Worse still, bottled drinks are officially banned from the stadium but they were clearly in abundance as Al Ahly's quest for a sixth Champions League title dissolved into a night of utter shame. It all made a mockery of the airport-like security scanners fans faced before being allowed into the stadium.⁸⁰³

Related to the failure to accept defeat is the assumption, uttered by several informants in both Ghana and Cameroon, that most supporters are simply not conversant with the basic rules of the game. 'In football you can win, draw and lose,' said one coach in Ghana. 'But some supporters only want to see their team win. If anything else happens, they immediately become violent.' The expatriate coach Steven Polack called for supporters to be 'educated' on the rules:

When you lose the supporters want to kill everybody. What's that all about? I remember one home game where we drew 1-1. When I was walking towards the gate, one man said: "Don't go out there. There are 60 to 70 people waiting for you and they're really pissed off." I thought of my two children so I went back in. The next day I heard they wanted to lynch me. They were angry with me because we didn't score more goals. I went on radio and said: "I hope the supporters are listening because we must have been at a different match. We had eight chances and six of them should have been goals. Is that the fault of the coach? We're just having trouble finding a real goal scorer." Then one supporter phoned in and said that it's true and that they couldn't blame the coach. So you see, I educated them on the radio.

Photo 8.3 A match between Eleven Wise and Asante Kotoko at the Essipong Stadium in Sekondi ends in a victory for the visitors. Immediately afterwards, armed police officers escort the referee and his linesmen off the pitch



Next match at home we drew 1-1. I walked out of the gate. The supporters said: “It’s not your fault.” Then they went after the players instead.

Alcohol is a quite serious problem as well. The availability of cheap strong liquor near league venues results in supporters getting heavily intoxicated. As Alegi writes with regard to South Africa, alcohol ‘often acted as a catalyst for disorder’.⁸⁰⁴

Globally, hooliganism is seen as ‘a complex and many-sided phenomenon’.⁸⁰⁵ With regard to Africa, Igbinoia lists a number of causes, among which the aforementioned ‘bad officiating’ and the use of ‘charms’ but also the loss of national pride, ethnic insensibility and political convictions.⁸⁰⁶ Similarly, Martin relates violence to ‘social identity, political animosity, unemployment and economic deprivation, high stakes in gambling, drunkenness, the ‘rebellion’ of youth and the unemployed, inexperienced referees and ‘lack of leadership’ on the part of sports organizers’.⁸⁰⁷ Burnett argues that football matches in South Africa ‘present a public stage where men “fight” for their prestige and that of their team, finding temporary relief from anxiety through physical violence and alcohol abuse without considering the consequences in the quest for excitement and

temporary “empowerment””.⁸⁰⁸ Theories about masculinity and violence are put forward in a book about gender and football in Africa.⁸⁰⁹

Fan cultures in Africa are often perceived to be an expression of a happy-go-lucky attitude, including lots of singing and chanting, vigorous dancing rituals, the beating on drums and the blowing on vuvuzelas. As Alegi writes, in the early days ‘the games were spectacles, feasts, and popular entertainment all wrapped into one’.⁸¹⁰ However, the sudden outbursts of violence are bewildering. This is all the more strange because the concept of organised supporter groups who find pleasure in beating each other up is rather uncommon in Africa. Lately, however, there are reports of such groups (so-called Ultras) in Egypt and Tunisia.⁸¹¹ I have not heard of similar groups in Ghana and Cameroon – in fact, supporters of Hearts and Kotoko sit side by side during the fiercely contested interregional derby – but it does seem that Ultras and the related inter-fan fighting phenomenon are on the increase in Africa.

Mentioning the Ultras leads us to a third football tragedy which happened on 1 February 2012 in Port Said (Egypt). After a match between rivals Al-Masry and Al-Ahly, which ended 3-1 for the home team, Al-Masry supporters invaded the pitch and attacked players and supporters of the visiting team, killing 74 people. It was suspected that the violence had been planned beforehand. Several members of Al-Ahly’s Ultras had protested Hosni Mubarak’s regime at Tahrir Square in 2011. In fact, they had reportedly been a major factor in the Arab Spring revolution in the first place. As it turned out, many supporters of Al-Masry were Mubarak sympathisers and it was claimed they were bent on taking revenge. Many Egyptians later protested the inadequate response by the security forces inside the stadium.⁸¹²

It is indeed argued that hooliganism in African football is closely related to ethnic and political realities. I have described how ethnic and political animosities caused violence to occur during matches in Cameroon (chapter 5). On the island of Mauritius, too, such violence is generally related to ethnic strife:

Since 1982, most of the teams that have played in the Premier League have been regionally-based, but, nevertheless, rivalries between Sunrise, Scouts, Cadets and Fire Brigade have only intensified, perhaps mirroring wider ethnic tensions throughout the island. There have been a catalogue of incidents – at least twenty-three cases of violence between 1985 and 1999 – including assaults on rival fans, damage to stadia, battles with the police, assaults on referees, players and officials, and pitch invasions.⁸¹³

The fact that ethno-politics plays a role in African football is partly the reason why intimidation and violence is more common during the types of matches as described earlier. As the prospect of relegation is unbearable, home crowds resort to violence to prevent such things from happening. Derbies are typically very violent affairs because of the strong ethno-political connotations during such encounters.

Ethnic and political factors also increase violence in a more sinister way. In the days of Idi Amin, violence in stadiums in Uganda was often government-sanctioned. Express FC was the people's club, it had no affiliation to the government; Simba, on the other hand, was the team of the army. 'Whenever Simba played, Amin's army officers were waving their rifles on the stand,' writes journalist Edwin Schoon. 'They drove to the stadium in full-armoured jeeps, to intimidate their opponents.'⁸¹⁴ In his book on Amin's rule, the then minister Henry Kyemba writes how he was in charge of culture, including sports. It is his only reference to football but a revealing one nonetheless:

I had to ensure that football matches between army teams and civilians were properly controlled, otherwise the bitterness towards the army tended to erupt into open violence. One particular club, the Express (since banned by Amin), was nicknamed the "Club of the Dead" because so many of its officials and supporters had been murdered. In any Army-Express match the army team had to win. If it lost, the crowd would be in for a beating for being "anti-army".⁸¹⁵

When Express FC defeated Simba in a match in 1977, supporters and officials of Express FC were arrested and tortured at Makindye prison.⁸¹⁶

The ethnic and political factors occasionally lead violence to expand beyond the confines of the stadium. I have already given the example of a match between Foudre Akonolinga and Aigle Royal Menoua in Cameroon (chapter 5). Another example is a 1993 Cup of Champions Clubs match between ASEC Mimomas and Asante Kotoko in Abidjan. There were reports that Kotoko's delegation was abused abroad, which led to retaliation from Kotoko fans. This, in turn, led to the killing of several Ghanaians in Ivory Coast.⁸¹⁷ Another case concerns the "football war" between Cameroon and Gabon in May 1981. When players of a Gabonese team were molested in Douala, angry mobs in Libreville and Port-Gentil attacked Cameroonians. By May 28, 6,000 Cameroonians were repatriated by planes sent by the government in Yaoundé.⁸¹⁸

Let us return to the topic at hand, namely home advantage. Home crowds evidently have an effect on team performance. Drawing on Tuan's ideas about topophilia and topophobia,⁸¹⁹ Bale argues that a stadium either evokes a sense of love or affection (topophilia) or a sense of fear or anxiety (topophobia).⁸²⁰ On the one hand, he states, stadiums can be viewed as sacred places or symbolic homes.⁸²¹ This is how Desmond Morris describes the mood at a home ground:

At the heart of each Soccer Tribe lies its great temple, the stadium. So strong is its magic that, for a tribesman to approach it, even on a day when no match is being played, creates a strange feeling of mounting excitement and anticipation. Although it is deserted he can sense the buzz of the crowd and hear again the roar of the fans as the ball hits the back of the enemy net. To a devoted tribesman it is a holy place, with a significance that it is hard for an outsider to appreciate.⁸²²

On the other hand, Giulianotti argues, topophobia 'will strike spectators as they anticipate visiting grounds where the home team is commonly successful, or

where the fans have notorious reputations'.⁸²³ This, to be sure, will not only have an impact on supporters of the visiting team, but also on the players and officials of the visitors and, perhaps even more so, on the referee. The old Kaladan and Gyandu Parks in Ghana were dreaded by visiting teams for the very intimidating atmosphere. The same can be said of the Rufaro Stadium in Harare, as Daimon observes:

For example, in Harare's Rufaro Stadium, which is the home of Dynamos FC, Zimbabwe's most popular team but arguably with the most violent supporters, there is an area popularly known as the 'Vietnam' stand. The name 'Vietnam' is a metaphor for the brutality of the Vietnam War of the 1960s. So this section of Rufaro Stadium represents a war zone, solely preserved for Dynamos. Paradoxically, the name 'Rufaro' denotes happiness or joy. Most hooligans who include rouges and criminals are found in this area. Any non-Dynamos fans (...) who trespass into this territory, are violently mobbed and ejected.⁸²⁴

In most cases, home crowds throughout Africa vastly outnumber those of the visitors. Intimidation and harassment begins when the visiting team spends the night in a hotel and worsens hours before the start of the match.

The biggest community-based clubs may not escape the sense of topophobia but they certainly do not feel it as much as lesser clubs do. The main reason is that these clubs normally have a huge following, which means that the ratio of home team supporters versus visiting team supporters is likely to be tilted in favour of the latter group. In 2009, I watched a match between Kessben FC and Asante Kotoko at the stadium in Abrankese. It seemed that only a handful of supporters were favouring the home team; the majority of spectators were wearing Kotoko's red colours and waving the Kotoko flag. The atmosphere was very intimidating and the referee was severely pressurised to be biased in favour of the Porcupine Warriors. 'The supporters of the big clubs will chant war songs,' said Mr. X. 'There are so many of them that you will feel their presence. They make it look as if you are the stranger in your own backyard.'

As said, topophilia and topophobia are related to home advantage. In reviewing the literature, Pollard lists three factors that are significant in this respect: Crowd effects, familiarity and territoriality. To start with the latter, territoriality in football indicates that people 'respond to a real or perceived invasion of their home territory' which makes it 'reasonable to suppose this might be a factor in home advantage'. Familiarity implies that home teams perform 'at a familiar stadium in familiar conditions amid familiar surroundings, all of which should provide an advantage', especially when the pitch has an unusual size or surface. Finally, supporters are an obvious reason for the existence of home advantage although, as Pollard argues, 'the precise way in which crowd support has an effect has been difficult to pinpoint'.⁸²⁵

Although intimidation and violence perpetrated against the visiting team also contributes to home advantage, it is the referee who is the most likely candidate

to be influenced by the home crowd. We already know that referee bias is one of the main reasons why home advantage exists. The referee may favour one team over the other because he has been bribed. He may, however, also favour one team – commonly the home team – because he finds himself severely threatened.⁸²⁶ ‘The supporters are a big problem,’ said referee Atta Baffour. ‘There’s not much security. They can slap you. That’s why some referees are not performing well. If there were more policemen you wouldn’t have to fear. You would be leaving the field as a hero.’ Is there anything a referee can do about that? ‘If you think your life may be in danger,’ Baffour said, ‘you call in sick. The only thing you can say to save your life is that you are sick.’

We have already come across quite a few cases where referees were physically manhandled by the home crowd. Let us consider the following story by Ghanaian referee Reginald Lathbridge at a time he was still officiating in the First Division. ‘This division is a very hot place,’ he said. ‘Those clubs are all eager to join the Premier League. They always blame the referee if something bad happens, especially when you don’t favour the home team.’ He continued:

A few years back I acted as linesman during a match between a team from Bogoso and one from Swedru. One Bogoso player scored a goal from the free kick. But he was in an offside position so I raised the flag and the goal was disallowed. There was no inner perimeter around the field. The supporters were standing behind me, holding canes and umbrellas, because it was raining that day. Most of them had been taking our local drink, *Akpeteshi*. They were whipping me with their canes and umbrellas. The police came in and made sure that sanity prevailed. But the home team was leading by 3-0 so I couldn’t understand why they were so hostile.

In the second half there was this Rasta man who was playing on my side of the field. He was the left back of the Bogoso team. Then the team from Swedru scored a goal through the Rasta player’s side. They scored a second goal the same way. And then the equaliser came. The supporters behind me were charging on me but I said that it looked as if the Rasta player was bribed. Some of them believed me. But when the match ended in a 3-3 draw, others attacked me and we had to run out of the stadium. Finally, we ended up in a woman’s kitchen. The police came and took us to safety.

The strange part of this story is that the supporters of the home team harassed the linesman even when their team was in the lead.

Big Men too sometimes resort to violence. First of all, there are club officials who abhor violence and who in no way would contribute to it.⁸²⁷ Having said that, some Big Men have a reputation of being hotheads. A former CEO of Berekum Arsenal was described by *Kotoko Express*-journalist David Kyei as a ‘loose cannon’. He once ‘threatened to bus over fifty supporters of his club side to Accra to demand the release of the disciplinary committee ruling on their case against Tema Youth,’ Kyei wrote.⁸²⁸ The Arsenal CEO did not escape a ban, and neither has Alhaji Grunsah, the owner of King Faisal, who has on occasion assaulted referees and security personnel. Antoine Essomba Eyenga and Théo-

phile Abega, presidents of Tonnerre and Canon Yaoundé respectively, have received bans for abusing referees and security personnel.⁸²⁹

Although violence certainly is not absent in Africa's newly built modern stadiums, there are nevertheless several less appealing football temples that have such a bad reputation that they are regarded as no-go areas. Most venues, especially those in the villages, can hardly be labelled stadiums at all. Players in Cameroon complained about having to play on pitches without inner perimeters. 'There are always players who ask the coach to be left out of the squad,' Ashu told me. 'When you're about to step onto the pitch, supporters will start beating you.' The majority of venues in Cameroon's and, more generally, Africa's lower-level leagues could be regarded as no-go areas. Indeed, Ghana's First Division league is regarded as extremely intimidating and violent. However, even some of Africa's top leagues have such no-go areas.

Whereas intimidating and violent acts occur at many league centres on a somewhat regular basis, no-go areas are characterised by the fact that such hooliganism pops up every time a team visits the town for a match. In Cameroon, Tiko, Kumba and Bamenda were for long considered no-go areas. Tiko has had a terrible reputation when it comes to violence. Former Tiko United secretary Daf Obenge told me the following story:

If you play well and beat us, then fine. But don't cheat us! There are radicals in Tiko, just like the hooligans in England. We don't want the match delegate and the referees to cheat us. The referee may take money but he has to be very careful. The money may cost him his life. I remember a match in 1983. I was still a young boy. Tiko United first played a match in Kumba against PWD Kumba, a really big team in those days. PWD beat us. Tiko supporters destroyed many vehicles, burned tyres. But there are also a lot of hooligans in Kumba. Then they played the return match in Tiko. When we beat PWD, their supporters became violent. They also destroyed vehicles. They were throwing stones and deflated car tyres. They even caused one wall of the stadium to collapse.

The towns mentioned above all a lack of decent infrastructure.

In Ghana, towns such as Berekum, Swedru, Kpandu, Tamale, Sekondi and Obuasi have for long been synonymous with intimidation and violence. Tamale truly has had a terrible reputation. Referee Kwame Nsiah Boafo instead opted for matches in the Brong-Ahafo Region which, to him, were 'the worst'. 'The understanding of the game among the supporters there is minimal. When you do anything that is bad for the home team, they'll come after you.' Berekum, a small town in the Brong-Ahafo Region, is arguably Ghana's foremost no-go area. The intimidation and violence perpetrated by the population in Berekum certainly has had an impact on the performances of visiting teams. 'You will play there and you will lose,' coach Bashir Hayford bluntly stated. 'You can call Chelsea (from England) to play there but they will also lose.'

Home advantage statistics of Berekum Arsenals have been phenomenal. Taking data of seven successive Premier League seasons (2001-2008) and inter-

pretending home advantage as *not* losing at home, then Arsenal has had a home success rate between 80 and 100 percent. The team even recorded a 100 percent win/draw rate at the Golden City Park between 2005 and 2008. In contrast, Arsenal's away record, in this case meaning a win or draw, was 20 to 33 percent between 2001 and 2008. Players, coaches, Big Men and referees all cite the intimidating atmosphere as the main reason for Arsenal's home record. Journalist Kamkam Boadu called Berekum a 'Lion's Den':

The supporters there are very hostile. Sometimes away teams don't even use their team buses to go to the stadium. They feel the supporters will damage the bus, breaking the glass and so on. The last time a team won there was Kotoko. That was in 2003. The CEO of Kotoko went there with about 100 soldiers. He wrote to the armed forces saying that that place is a no-go area. He said it wasn't safe for his players. So that's how they managed to get that result.

The figure of 100 soldiers may be exaggerated but the point is clear enough. 'One reason for our success was that the pitch in Berekum is not good,' admitted Arsenal's former coach Ernest Appau. 'Another reason is that the stadium is entirely filled with home supporters. Visitors would come to play in our stadium, knowing that they would lose or maybe, if they were lucky, draw.'

No-go areas are not only characterised by the fact that the intimidation and violence is a concerted effort by the population at large but also that it is directed at *everybody* who comes to town. Referees certainly do not escape the violent behaviour of the home crowd – which is, in fact, in sharp contrast to the hospitality rule. Referee Lathbridge told me that even management members of Berekum Arsenal would 'harass' the referee. 'One day the CEO of Arsenal came to me and said: "I cannot protect you. I don't know what our supporters will do." That alone is a very big threat. It means your life is in danger.' He then told me the following story:

I officiated a match between Berekum Arsenal and Hearts of Oak. The trouble already started before the match. The CEO and coach of Arsenal started talking on air that the Referees Appointment Committee had appointed Ga referees to cheat Arsenal. I live in Kumasi but I'm originally from Accra so that's why they say I'm a Ga.

When we went to the stadium for the pre-match ceremony, the supporters were shouting: "You've come to cheat us. We'll kill you if you don't let us win!" I laughed. "Oh you are laughing huh? You just laugh and go!" At halftime the score was 0-0. We were coming out from the inner perimeter to the gate. The supporters insulted us, intimidated us. They wanted to put fear in us. Sometimes they'll even jump over the perimeter to harass you. At the end of the second half, in the 89th minute, Berekum Arsenal scored 1-0. When we were coming off the field, the supporters cried: "Today you were lucky! If we wouldn't have won, we would have gotten to your mother."

His story once again proves that intimidation often starts days before the actual match.

Players, coaches and officials of visiting teams are also heckled and occasionally physically assaulted. Coach Bashir Hayford has the following story to tell in relation to Berekum Arsenal:

Sometimes they made an attempt to slap me but so far they couldn't get to me. But one time the Arsenal's masseur took a bag full of ice cubes and used it to hit one of our players. He was running onto the pitch to help one of his players when he saw our player standing there and intentionally hit him. This player was my striker. The boy started bleeding. What are you going to do? He was our key player. He wasn't there again for the return match.

Finally, even journalists, photographers and cameramen are routinely intimidated and sometimes beaten up.⁸³⁰ Presenting one's PLB-approved accreditation at the stadium in Berekum does not guarantee a reporter access to the inner perimeter or, for that matter, to the stadium at all. 'If you take a video camera to Berekum they will break it,' explained coach Hayford. 'Metro TV doesn't even bring cameras along anymore. No! They know their cameras will be smacked.'

The situation in these no-go areas is made worse due to the biased security forces. Several referees complained that the policemen and security staff in Berekum who were supposed to protect them instead overly exhibited support for the home team. 'Sometimes security intimidates you,' said referee Lathbridge. 'They will come to you and say: "You have to help our team because we're only in small numbers and we cannot do anything to protect you."' Journalist Kamkam Boadu explained that most of the security men are based in Berekum. 'It's a small town,' he said. 'Even if security is not from the area, they can only try to restrain the supporters. And when they arrest someone you will see him walking out of the police station in no time.'

The idea that no-go areas influence the outcome of matches became evident when the number of such places in Ghana went down due to the 2008 African Cup of Nations. Real Tamale United's (RTU) previous home ground, the Kaladan Park, was one of the foremost no-go areas. Ever since RTU started playing in the new Tamale Stadium, the team has consistently underperformed in the Premier League, barely escaping relegation on several occasions. Coach Bashir Hayford explained the situation:

The Kaladan Park was a very bad place. The pitch was a barren ground, there was no grass. You weren't allowed to train there so they would surely beat you. Whatever you do, they would win. But now they have a good stadium and that's a problem to them. Everybody – Hearts, Kotoko, Heart of Lion, Kessben FC – beat them in their own stadium. It's bad luck for them. Why? Because they cannot intimidate you any longer. The supporters cannot harass you outside, they cannot harass you on the pitch. And the pitch is now a lot better so we don't have to lose there anymore.

If a referee officiated a match in Tamale in the past, referee Atta Baffour claimed, he was 'going to hell'. 'But now some teams go there and they win,' he said.

All of this has led some clubs, including RTU and Hasaacas, to request the GFA and PLB to change their home venue. The Accra-based club Tudu Mighty Jets requested to change to an inferior venue in Akosombo, an hour's drive from the capital. Bechem Chelsea asked the PLB to change their home ground to

Berekum. In an editorial in *Hearts News*, Hearts sympathisers wondered why these clubs would decline making use of modern facilities. Hearts claimed that the ‘decision by some clubs to change venues is that they are seeking opportunities to exploit the weaknesses in such venues, intimidate their opponents and use other negative means to win their matches at home’.⁸³¹ Although I do not know the exact motives behind these changes of venues, it can indeed be argued that these clubs feared a loss of home advantage.

In sum, Big Men need to win matches in order to successfully convert capital through football. They can either leave it to chance or increase the probability of victory by cheating, i.e. by breaking the rules of the game. We have focused on three deliberate attempts at influencing matches, namely match-fixing, hospitality and gift-giving; juju and other occult forces; and intimidation and violence. These factors increase home advantage, meaning that home teams beat the visitors more often than chance would dictate. It is generally understood that end-of-season matches are more influenced by “outside” forces than other types of matches. This insight leads us to the next and final chapter. It is here that I discuss the impact of Big Men’s attempts at converting capital in entire leagues and international tournaments.

Friendships, networks and the search for profit

‘We need three home wins and two away wins,’ says Mr. X. ‘That should put us in the safe zone.’ I just made the observation that his club would most likely be relegated. ‘Maybe,’ he replies. ‘But it’s all about networking. I know a lot of people and I’ve planned ahead. We need to collect at least 15 points.’ Mr. X sounds confident. So far he has managed to avert catastrophe each and every year.

It is two months before the end of the season. We sit face to face in his favourite, air-conditioned room, discussing the remaining eleven matches. Mr. X says nothing about the first three matches. The opponent in the fourth match is a one-man show. ‘I know the president well,’ he says. ‘I saved him once. We’ll arrange something.’ Mr. X is silent about match number five, which takes place in a no-go area. Match number six is a home match. ‘This president is unreliable so I cannot count on this one,’ he says.

The opponent in match number seven is a fierce rival. ‘Me and some of the older officials have a history together. I will get a result there.’ About match number eight, a home match, Mr. X says: ‘We may treat the referee well.’ Match number nine is an away match against a top team. ‘We’ll certainly get some points,’ he says. The tenth match is a home match against one of Ghana’s biggest teams. ‘We’re going to win this one.’ The team has to travel far for the last match. ‘I know the man so there’s no problem here.’

The first match takes place on the day we have our talk. The vice president calls in to say they lost. Mr. X’s predictions of the next ten matches turn out to be quite interesting. Luck is on his side in two home matches (numbers two and eight) that were not part of his plan. Both matches are won. The same goes for the away match against the team in the no-go area (number five) and the home

match against the team whose club president was an ‘unreliable person’ (number six). Both matches end in a draw.

Now let us focus on the three home and two away matches which were part of Mr. X’s plan. His forecasts were 80% accurate.⁸³² The home match against the club president who owed our Big Man a favour (number four) ends in victory; the same goes for the fierce rival (number seven). Victories are also recorded in the last two matches. Overall, Mr. X collects twenty points in eleven matches. When confronted with these results he smiles and says: ‘I told you I knew how to avoid relegation.’

Friendships and the promotion/relegation struggle

In most cases (but not all, as we will see further below), playing in the top league is the *raison d’être* for a club. Matches that determine promotion and relegation are thus fiercely contested. There is, as we know, so much more at stake than a mere ticket for the top league. We have discussed these motivations at length so I will refrain from repeating myself. One comment from Mr. X, however, cannot be withheld:

There is sponsorship for all clubs in the Premier League but as soon as you go down you’re in trouble. You will find it very hard to come back again because there’s no money from gate takings and there’s no sponsorship. You can compare football in the First Division to black and white television. There’s only colour television when you’re in the Premier League. We call the First Division the Wilderness. I myself used to call it Siberia. It’s a place you don’t want to be. So we the clubs do not only try to get into the Premier League, we also want to stay there. It’s a matter of life and death. Staying in the league is about life itself! That’s why you sometimes have to go to the referee or the other team. I like to call it buying life.

As Hill states, the ‘cost of relegation and the subsequent loss of sponsors and television rights is an important consideration for internal corruptors’.⁸³³

Earning promotion and avoiding relegation are two important goals in a Big Man’s career. As Mr. X said earlier, ‘it all depends on the fixtures at the end of the season’. ‘It’s a matter of mathematical calculations,’ he added. Journalist Kamkam Boadu agreed. ‘If teams can win their home matches and maybe a few matches away, they can sustain themselves in the league,’ he told me. We have seen how many *individual* matches are influenced by match-fixing, juju and intimidation. Now I would like to take it a step further by examining leagues and tournaments *as a whole*. Seen this way, promotion and relegation are sometimes decided by what informants told me are “invisible hands” or “higher powers”. Indeed, there are generally speaking three ways in Big Men can earn promotion and avoid relegation: Friendships and favours, conflicts of interest, and the power of Big Men.

Remember the statement that the referee is “the most important man on the field” (chapter 8). Hill’s research, however, leads to another suggestion. Corrupt

referees have in fact the lowest success rate (78.9%) as compared to corrupt players (83.1%) and corrupt 'team administration' (90.5%).⁸³⁴ In other words, a Big Man who fixes a match by approaching officials of the opponent team stands the greatest chance of winning the match. Although these statistics were not derived from research in Africa, they do correlate with what Mr. X has told me, namely that bribing referees or players is unreliable. Instead, he preferred to establish relationships with rival club officials. In Mr. X's words, he liked to deal with club officials 'face to face'. 'I rely on friendships,' he said. 'And it's not always about money. It's about trust and respect.'

It is indeed a matter of trust. Hill argues that 'corruptors *need* trust'; 'the more times corruptors can successfully fix matches between themselves, the more they trust each other. The more they trust each other, the more matches they can fix.'⁸³⁵ Some Big Men, and Mr. X claims he is one of them, are said to have a reputation of being trustworthy in this department. According to Mr. X, one can never completely rely on referees. For one thing, a referee may already have been bribed by the other team with a higher amount of money. One Ghanaian journalist told me the following story: 'A while ago Alhaji Grunsah (owner of King Faisal) said: "You don't get a receipt for bribery, so how do you know if you get your money's worth?"' This is why favours based on friendships are to be preferred, especially when there is no money involved.

As said, the first way for a club to gain promotion and avoid relegation is to establish friendships. The issue of friendships and favours briefly surfaced in relation to club officials trying to fix matches (chapter 8). Friendships between clubs may evolve for different reasons. For instance, a friendship exists between Sekondi Hasaacas and Liberty Professionals because Sly Tetteh, founder and owner of Liberty, is a former Hasaacas player. Hasaacas and Hearts of Oak are old friends as well. 'Hearts is a senior club to Hasaacas,' said Ben Nab Eyison, CEO of Hasaacas. 'When they were constructing the Takoradi harbour in 1925, most workers came from Accra. And the former CEO of Hasaacas, E.A. Nartey, used to be a Hearts official. Hearts sees Hasaacas as a woman who was taken from the rib of a man.' Eleven Wise also had a relationship with Hearts before experiencing a fall-out in the 1990s.⁸³⁶

In Ghana, the issue of friendships can best be explained through the country's two biggest clubs. The perception among Ghanaians is that Hearts of Oak maintains several friendships while Asante Kotoko does not. Whereas Hearts (partly) depends on friends to win the championship, Kotoko (partly) depends on its financial strength. The difference was well summarised by Kojo Fianoo, CEO of AshantiGold FC:

Hearts will give a team one point if that's what it takes for that team to survive. At the time where Hearts has accumulated points and they are safe, they're prepared to help clubs. But Kotoko is not like that. There was a club named Dawu Youngstars who were also in the

Premier League. The owner of the club was a [former] director of Kotoko. Dawu was going into relegation, went to Kumasi and was beaten 4-0 by Kotoko [It was actually worse as Dawu was beaten 1-4 at home]. Do you think that if Kotoko can win the league the other teams will give the points to Kotoko? No, they won't give it. They rather give it to Hearts. So Hearts has a lot of friends and Kotoko has a lot of enemies.

In short, as Fianoo argued, Hearts is a club that 'compromises on certain occasions'. 'They accommodate,' he said, 'but Kotoko doesn't do that. So you need to know how to approach these two clubs. Hearts will sometimes bite you but at the same time they will be blowing hot and cold. Kotoko blows hot. That's the difference.'

Hearts' tendency to accommodate is said to have its origin in the club's history and location. It was stated that the club was founded in Accra's Ussher Town district by members of the Ga, an ethnic group known for its openness to strangers (chapter 4). Indeed, the century-old influx of immigrants from other parts of Ghana and neighbouring countries led the Ga to become 'so accustomed to the presence of immigrants that they expressed the desire for more to join them'.⁸³⁷ 'Those who control Hearts are very diplomatic,' said Kojo Fianoo. An advantage of Hearts is the club's location; each Premier League season features several clubs from the Greater Accra Region. 'Hearts has many clubs around them so they don't have to travel far to pick up the points,' said Fianoo. 'There are more clubs from around Accra than from around Kumasi. That's also because Hearts helps clubs from their area to earn promotion.'

Kotoko's attitude of blowing hot is said to be linked to the Ashanti's aggressive and warlike past. In contrast to Hearts, Kotoko is especially aggressive towards clubs in the Ashanti Region. Officials of Kumasi Cornerstones blame the team's relegation in 1992 and again in 1995 on their city rival's behaviour. 'Kotoko is really powerful and they don't want to see other teams in the region,' said the club's CEO. Adansiman, Obuasi's community-based team, also discovered Kotoko's nature when they were beaten 0-3 at home in 2002 and were later relegated. Kojo Fianoo explained the issue:

The attitude of the Ashanti man is to dominate and to make noise. The attitude of Kotoko is that they should always dominate. We [AshantiGold] always tell them that in terms of professionalism we are ahead of them so that brings some level of rivalry. Kotoko fights us both for the league title and for regional dominance. They think they are the biggest team in the Ashanti Region. They have the same problem with King Faisal. They think that all the clubs in the Ashanti Region should be subordinate to them.

Mr. X stated that Kotoko does not give favours to anyone, except B.A. United (a team from the Brong-Ahafo Region, recently renamed Brong Ahafo Stars). 'It's only with B.A. that Kotoko would give away a match for free,' said Mr. X.

Friendships between clubs by and large depend on the Big Men who run them. One of the reasons why Hearts has so many friends is that several of its management members left to form clubs elsewhere. It is claimed that warm con-

nections still exist between those Big Men and Hearts. In contrast, when former Kotoko management members formed private clubs, they immediately became the Porcupine Warriors' fiercest enemies. Since friendships – and the favours that come out of it – commonly depend on individual Big Men, relationships between clubs are not static and tend to change over time. This is best explained through a story as told by Mr. X, whose club maintained historical relationships with some Big Men of another club:

At one point I needed all the points I could get. So I turned to [one particular team]. But they were split in two. Some of the management members were new and they wanted to prove a point. They said: “No, we cannot do it. We don't have a relationship with [Mr. X's team].” But the elders in the club knew about our relationship and said: “We don't want them to go on relegation.” So rather than talking to the management team, the elders instead used some players with sympathy for [Mr. X's team]. These were the players who helped us out. They secured the win. The management team was furious. They had promised to give the players match bonuses but now they didn't.

It even happens that the Big Men of sworn enemies help each other out when it comes to relegation issues. While the supporters of both teams hurl insults at one another, their management members may have struck a deal beforehand. This situation is not as outrageous as it sounds. After all, supporter rivalries go back decades but management members come and go, and some of them may have been friends before they started leading rival clubs.

There are known friendships between clubs in Cameroon as well. The stories I heard are indications of friendships between Bamileke-owned clubs. One rumour has it that the Bamileke club presidents who were also Members of Parliament (MPs) made bets during meetings at the National Assembly. They would attend parliamentary sessions while discussing their teams' performances. It was here that a Bamileke Big Man would throw a match or request a colleague to play softly. It is an appealing thought, yet we can leave it by saying that I heard it “through the grapevine”. Less vague is the perception among Cameroonians that the presidents of Mount Cameroon FC and Racing Bafoussam maintained friendships (see further below).

A second way for club officials to gain promotion and avoid relegation is to conspire with FA officials. In 2009, for example, an official of a Nigerian Division One league club complained about a ‘cartel’ between three clubs aimed at obstructing his team from gaining promotion to the top league. The ‘conspiracy’, he claimed, was put in place with the help of NFF officials. ‘Busssdor, in their desperation to gain promotion,’ he said, ‘have secured the services of the other two clubs in the south-eastern region, as well as the consent of some officials of the Nigeria Football Federation working in the league department of the body, to manipulate fixtures, and the results of matches yet to be played.’⁸³⁸ Allegations

like these commonly lack proof, but it should be noted that there are many conspiracies involving teams that form “cartels”.⁸³⁹

More solid are the stories that surround those Big Men who are simultaneously club and FA officials. In both Ghana and Cameroon, it is quite common for top FA officials to have interests in clubs. We have, in fact, discussed earlier that one cannot be elected into a top position within the FA if one does not occupy a position within a club. This is what we have referred to as the principle of “football being run by football people” (see chapters 3 and 7). Big Men are often accused of wearing two hats at the same time, leading to conflicts of interest. GFA president Kwesi Nyantakyi, for example, owns a club in the Upper West Region, Wa All Stars. The perception is that GFA chairmen or presidents have made sure their teams benefited from their position.⁸⁴⁰

Big Men who have influences within the FA sometimes make use of the league setup itself. The leagues in several if not all African countries occasionally change in terms of structure and size. At the end of the 1997/98 Premier League season, Ashanti Goldfields found itself in the relegation zone. Several sources claimed that it was the famous CEO Sam Jonah himself who made sure the club did not relegate. ‘He cleverly used the system so that Goldfields could stay in the league,’ said Mr. X. At that point in time, when the Premier League consisted of 14 clubs, Jonah appealed to the GFA to increase the size of the league. This is how Kojo Fianoo explained it:

I was in GHALCA at the time and I spoke on behalf of Goldfields. What happened was that he [Sam Jonah] only took advantage of the situation that was prevailing at that time. Back in 1993, the stakeholders at the Winneba Conference signed a protocol, which was part of the Winneba Declaration, which stated that the league should be increased from 12 to 16 clubs. So Jonah saw that loophole, he saw that the league was supposed to increase. He went to the GFA and said: “Look, this is what the law is saying. We should increase the number of clubs in the league from 14 to 16.” It was just his presence and his ability to get that law implemented. Let’s say I have an amnesty and then I commit a crime and have to go to jail. I will just refer to that amnesty. It’s my ability to know the law and to refer to the law. It had nothing to do with Sam Jonah. He might have sensitised some people to support something that was already there.

The Ghanaian top league has expanded and contracted on several occasions. Sometimes the GFA is accused of favouring certain clubs (when the league expanded), sometimes the GFA is accused of conspiring against certain clubs (when the league contracted).⁸⁴¹

A similar situation occurred prior to the start of the 2010/11 season. Three of Ghana’s biggest community-based clubs – Great Olympics, Sekondi Eleven Wise and Sekondi Hasaacas – had all been relegated. Then, suddenly, talks were underway to expand the Premier League from 16 to 20 clubs. In the months leading up to an Extraordinary Congress in which GFA members were expected to vote either for or against the expansion, one club official went on air to accuse

the chairmen of the ten regional FAs of having been bribed. They allegedly each took 1,000 cedi (€500) from a management member of one of the three relegated clubs who wanted to buy their votes.⁸⁴² This accusation was taken seriously because rumours had been going around for weeks claiming that some Big Men were planning to save the three clubs. In the end, however, members at the Congress rejected the proposal.

A third way for a club to gain promotion and avoid relegation is to have powerful Big Men as sympathisers. Sam Jonah certainly was such a person, but I am referring to Big Men who neither occupy a position within a club nor within the FA. From all indications these things happen all over Africa. ‘One time a member of the Central Committee of the Presidency called me and told me that I should favour one team,’ a referee in Cameroon told me. We will nevertheless again limit the discussion to Ghana and, in this case, to Real Tamale United (RTU). It is claimed that Big Men within both the Kufuor and Mills administrations saved the club from relegation. The brothers John Dramani and Alhaji Aliu Mahama, who both acted as vice president and who had both been involved in the affairs of RTU, were mentioned in particular.

One story concerned a match in the final round of the 2007/08 season, in which RTU beat Zaytuna FC and so managed to stay in the Premier League (see chapter 8). Zaytuna officials claimed that the vice president had had a hand in their relegation. ‘After the match, a vehicle with a State Protocol Department registration number plate picked referee Tagoe up. We believe the car is coming from the vice-president’s office,’ said the chairman of Zaytuna. There was, he argued, a political motivation in supporting Real Tamale United. ‘If you hear comments like people saying that if RTU are relegated, they will not vote for the ruling NPP during December’s elections, then it is worrying.’⁸⁴³ Journalist Kamkam Boadu was aware of the story:

It’s a big rumour but all of us believe it. The match between Zaytuna and RTU was a do-or-die match. If one team would lose the match, they would be relegated. So there was a lot of drama. It was a very big match and RTU won. Two seasons before this match, RTU was playing AshGold in Obuasi. There were only two matches to go and RTU needed a draw in Obuasi. AshGold had a chance to get into the Top Four [a tournament in between league seasons] but they gave RTU the draw. It was a match of convenience. It was decided because of a phone call. If the vice president is on the line, what can you do?

One Premier League referee, whose name I will not reveal, told me about a match between RTU and Liberty Professionals in the last stages of one particular league season. At this point in time, both RTU and Liberty desperately needed the points to avoid relegation. This referee officiated the match because, as he stated, ‘some referees like myself are known to be strong enough to handle these tough matches’:

Photo 9.1 Big teams such as Hearts and Kotoko are thought to receive favour upon favour. Kotoko players watch their team win an away match against Bechem Chelsea at the stadium in Sunyani



Before the match I received phone calls from certain men. You know, there are a lot of powerful men in Tamale. They're mostly Muslims there. Some of these men have major influence in the GFA. I'm not only talking about (M.N.D.) Jawula but also about a guy named (name of person). He's not officially part of the club but he's one of those people who work on the ground, if you know what I mean. Every club has influence in the GFA but RTU just has a little more influence. So these men asked me to be fair and to think about RTU's situation. They needed a referee who could bring them the result that was needed. There's also this political aspect. Tamale is an NPP area so people say: "We don't want to lose twice this year to NDC. You have to save our team."

The match ended in a draw which, as the referee said, was 'enough to keep both teams in the league'.

Apart from politics playing a role in saving RTU from relegation, there had been economic considerations as well. 'RTU almost went down last season,' Mr. X. told me early in 2008. 'But the club couldn't go down because of the stadium. The GFA didn't want it and the vice president didn't want it. So they pulled some strings to make some teams play softly.' As host of the 2008 African Cup of Nations, Ghana had built new stadiums in four cities, including Tamale. RTU's relegation was expected to have a disastrous effect on the future of the Tamale Stadium. Lower league teams hardly draw supporters to the field of play and RTU is, in fact, the only Northern-based team capable of attracting thousands of spectators. Without RTU playing Premier League matches every week,

the Tamale Stadium was thought to turn into a white elephant. Economic rationale thus dictated that RTU's relegation would have a negative impact on the stadium and the league in general.⁸⁴⁴ RTU nevertheless finally relegated in 2011.

Fortune, failure and the spiritual factor

Apart from friendships and favours, the promotion/relegation battle is sometimes related to a Big Man's involvement in spiritual practices. Big Men in Africa are commonly suspected of having a link with the spiritual world. In fact, a perceived possession of spiritual powers partly legitimises their positions in the first place.⁸⁴⁵ Three cases are presented below. One case deals with the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the other two with what we have broadly termed as juju. Two Big Men (Lupepe, Damase) are wealthy, powerful individuals who formed private clubs and who were directly responsible for their teams' misfortunes. The other Big Man (Parma) acted as CEO and therefore was a lot less powerful. His case is different in the sense that it was not only the "lesser" Big Man but also the supporters who caused the team's demise.

The first case deals with the profoundly religious owner of Zimbabwean club side AmaZulu,⁸⁴⁶ Delma Lupepe. A wealthy businessman and a leading member of Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party, Lupepe took AmaZulu to the Premier League in 1997. As Zimbabwe's richest and most professional club, AmaZulu clinched the league title in 2003. Its home ground was Bulawayo, which is also home to the country's oldest club, Highlanders FC. As a typical one-man show, AmaZulu completely relied on the generosity of its president. Indeed, the club was referred to as "The House that Delma Lupepe Built",⁸⁴⁷ which is significant because the religious controversy can solely be attributed to the beliefs and actions of the Big Man himself.

Lupepe is a member of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, a religious movement that regards the seventh day of the week as a day of rest. As a result, Lupepe refuses to have his team play on Saturday.⁸⁴⁸ The Big Man reportedly came to an understanding with Wellington Nyatanga, the chairman of the Premier Soccer League (PSL), and Wyatt Mporu, the vice-chairman of the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA). These two men, incidentally also Seventh-Day Adventists, gave their word that AmaZulu's matches would only be played on Sundays. This verbal agreement, however, was not shared by other members of the PSL.⁸⁴⁹ AmaZulu was ordered to play a Cup match on a Saturday in 2001, which led Lupepe to pull his team out of the competition. AmaZulu was again scheduled to play on a Saturday in 2003 but the Bulawayo High Court ruled that Lupepe's religious beliefs had to be respected.

Things took a wrong turn when AmaZulu had to play Motor Action in August 2004. A letter to Motor Action to plea for a change of date fell on deaf ears. 'We

find it strange that on the strength of your religion you perhaps believe in juju as you failed to enter through the designated point last year and again failed to assist when our colours clashed,' replied the president of Motor Action, referring to a match during which AmaZulu allegedly resorted to juju. 'There are numerous reasons that have been factored to play our home matches on Saturdays as you are well aware that we are continuously on the road apart from the Harare matches. One turn certainly deserves another but in this instance we regret to you that your request is rejected.'⁸⁵⁰

Lupepe, again, brought the case to the Bulawayo High Court which, again, ruled in his favour. If Motor Action wanted to play the match on Saturday, the match would have to start after 6 P.M. However, on match day, at 6.30 P.M. sharp, the referee called off the match because of poor lighting. The Disciplinary Committee ruled that AmaZulu had forfeited the match and fined the club. The Appeals Committee overturned this decision and ordered a replay.⁸⁵¹ In May 2005, the saga ended with the intervention of an Arbitration Tribunal. The question was whether the club could call upon Section 19 of Zimbabwe's Constitution which refers, among other things, to freedom of thought. It was ruled that AmaZulu, as an independent legal entity, should be separated from the club's officials. Lupepe's beliefs were therefore not attributable to the club.⁸⁵²

In October 2005, AmaZulu again failed to show up for a league match against Motor Action, causing the team to lose the match by forfeiture. More significantly, AmaZulu was expelled from the Premier League. 'AmaZulu's conduct threatens the survival of the league in many ways,' the PSL stated. 'It brings chaos. It diminishes the chances of the league attracting meaningful sponsorship. One would have been lenient had Amazulu been a first offender. It is not. It is a habitual offender.'⁸⁵³ 'I will never confuse my priorities. God comes first in my life and I will not bend to accommodate the voice of men,' said Lupepe in his defence. 'I abide by the Bible and I can never be part of an organization that thinks the ten commandments are not valid. I would rather be expelled from this league than be expelled from heaven.'⁸⁵⁴

ZIFA, however, overturned the PSL verdict and allowed AmaZulu back into the Premier League. 'I did not see sense in expelling AmaZulu or making them forfeit points simply because some clubs insisted on playing their matches on Saturdays,' ZIFA chairman Rafik Khan said.⁸⁵⁵ When club side Sundowns refused to change a fixture against AmaZulu on a Saturday, Lupepe uttered his displeasure. 'There are some people out to get AmaZulu,' he said. 'These people want to settle old scores.' He went on to make a rather odd point: 'It is unfortunate that religion has been sucked into this. The disagreements have nothing to do with religion.'⁸⁵⁶ AmaZulu forfeited their Saturday fixtures and relegated at the end of the 2005 season.

AmaZulu's plea not to play on Saturdays contained a few inconsistencies. First, the team played several matches on Sabbath Day in its maiden season in the Premier League. It was only in their second season that Lupepe ordered the team not to play on Saturdays. Second, AmaZulu was accused of practicing juju, which led other clubs to wonder to which religion Lupepe adhered to: Witchcraft or Protestantism? Third, Lupepe was accused of wanting preferential treatment. This was aptly voiced by a pastor of a Pentecostal Church in Harare: 'We used to ask for our games to be played on Saturdays, as Sunday is our day for church and for God. But sometimes it didn't work out and we had to play on Sundays, as, although we're Christians, we had to join the league on their terms, not on ours.'⁸⁵⁷

The second case involves the Ghanaian Premier League club Tema Youth, whose home ground is located east of Accra. In 2005 businessman Emmanuel Kyeremeh bought a Division One club in collaboration with two other men – Wilfred Osei Kwaku "Parma" and Samuel Williams – and renamed it Tema Youth. Although Kyeremeh effectively owns the club, he leaves the day-to-day management affairs to his CEO, Wilfred Osei.⁸⁵⁸ In the same year, Tema Youth earned a promotion to the Premier League. The team's stint in the top league was relatively brief as Tema Youth relegated at the end of the 2008/09 season. While the official explanation of the relegation was a deduction of points due to the fielding of an unqualified player, the main cause must be sought in a combination of juju and violence.

The trouble began when FIFA and the GFA constructed a synthetic pitch at the Tema Stadium. In January 2008, FIFA president Sepp Blatter inaugurated the synthetic pitch (sometimes called artificial pitch or *astro-turf*) in front of African and European dignitaries. The other Premier League clubs soon realised that Tema Youth enjoyed an advantage for being the only team playing on an artificial pitch. They thus demanded to be able to practice at the Tema Stadium the day before a league match. If they filed a written request, the Premier League Board (PLB) decided, then they would be allowed entry. This did not augur well with Tema Youth officials and supporters, as journalist Kwaitoo writes, 'suspected their opponents of planting strange objects on the field and therefore decided to take the law into their own hands to curb it'.⁸⁵⁹ Whoever attempted to enter the stadium was violently chased away.

In December 2008, officials of King Faisal lodged a complaint after their 2-1 defeat in Tema. The affair became a serious matter when Wa All Stars lodged a complaint as well after a league match in Tema in January 2009. Before the Disciplinary Committee could decide on Tema Youth's fate, the National Sports Council (NSC) stepped in and temporarily closed down the Tema Stadium. The ban was lifted a little while later. Violence popped up again in March during a

match between Tema Youth and Hearts of Oak. In June, the *Graphic Sports* complained about the ‘veiled threats’ that were directed at the newspaper’s ‘lady reporter’ who covered a match between Tema Youth and Berekum Arsenal.⁸⁶⁰

The real trouble began days before the final league round on Sunday 19 July 2009. Although Tema Youth had collected 40 points and were above the relegation zone, there were disciplinary cases pending against the club. First, those around the team were accused of molesting a referee during a league match. Second, two clubs had filed a complaint against Tema Youth for fielding an unqualified player named Emmanuel Clottey, who had signed a contract at Tema Youth halfway through the 2008/09 season. The player had been loaned out by Great Olympics who claimed that his signing at Tema Youth had been done without their consent. The Disciplinary Committee found Tema Youth guilty of fielding an unqualified player and handed a six point deduction, which plunged the team into the relegation zone. After several hapless attempts to overturn the decision, Tema Youth gave up and went to play in the First Division.⁸⁶¹

Wilfred Osei “Parma” alleged that the relegation was predicated on personal motives. He argued that Emmanuel Clottey had been wrongfully deemed an unqualified player. He said that the authorities misinterpreted the clause which was used to disqualify Clottey. The player, not the club, should have been punished, he said. ‘The GFA system is now being controlled by invisible “hands” with the financial clout that is unprecedented in the annals of Ghana football, to the extent that the rules and regulations are being twisted with impunity to ensure that Tema Youth is relegated at all cost,’ he concluded.⁸⁶² The CEO also alleged that his team was used as a scapegoat in order to save AshantiGold and Sekondi Eleven Wise from relegation. ‘There is a miscarriage of justice as Tema Youth is being offered on the altar for some clubs that have performed abysmally in the course of the year to remain in the Premiership and Tema Youth relegated for financial expediency,’ Osei stated.⁸⁶³

Finally, Wilfred Osei referred to the idea that the club was punished for the continuous crowd disturbances at the Tema Stadium. As Tema has been known as a no-go area for years, the general idea was that the GFA and the PLB must have felt ill at ease with all the violence and mayhem. And everybody knew that the violence increased after the construction of the synthetic pitch, which in turn was related to beliefs in burying concoctions on the field of play. ‘Tema Youth is the bogey club for some people and must go on relegation,’ the CEO of Tema Youth said, before asking a rhetorical question: ‘Tema Youth has been gotten rid off in such a rude manner, which club would be next?’⁸⁶⁴

The third case is probably the most remarkable and the one that relies mostly on rumours. Omgba Damase, whose name surfaced in chapter 5, is a controversial figure in Cameroon. He is not only a millionaire who made his money in

the arms trade but also a long-time friend of president Biya. Damase kept close relations to the government, even though his role was unclear as he never took up a formal position. Journalist Kuper went so far as to label him the power behind Biya's presidency.⁸⁶⁵ The Big Man was involved in the management of Tonnerre Yaoundé in the 1980s. After having a disagreement with other management members, Damase and a few allies left the club and went on to form Olympic Mvolyé (OM) in Mbalmayo, a town south of Yaoundé.⁸⁶⁶ Although a Big Man named Philippe Mbarga Mboa acted as club president, it was an open secret that Damase pulled the strings.

Today, OM is still regarded as the country's most bizarre club. The club won the Cup of Cameroon twice (in 1992 and 1994) but failed to promote to the top league for five straight seasons (1990-1995). There were three main reasons why Cameroonians found this quite unbelievable. First, OM was the country's richest and most professional club. Some of its players – Stephen Tataw, Victor N'Dip, Hans Agbo – were part of the squad that participated in the 1994 World Cup. Ashu, a former player of the team, told me that some of his teammates received monthly salaries up to 650,000 CFA francs (€1,000).⁸⁶⁷ Second, OM had a reputation of being the country's most corrupt club. One notorious case concerned the bribing of referee Christophe Tomota during the semi-final of the 1993 Cup of Cameroon between OM and Léopard Douala (see below). Third, OM was managed by powerful individuals and one club official acted as treasurer of FECAFOOT, which guaranteed a connection with the authorities.

OM thus had all the requirements to be very successful, which prompted Charles Nguini to compare the club to the proverbial 'child born with a silver spoon in his mouth'.⁸⁶⁸ Since the team's failures were considered to be inexplicable, it was no surprise that Cameroonians looked to the spiritual world in search for answers. Most rumours concentrated on the unorthodox way in which the club was linked to Mbalmayo. Damase had no connection to the area yet chose his club to be based there. It was said that other teams in the area had angrily taken away OM's luck. One of these teams, Espoir Dzeng, even filed a complaint in 1990, accusing OM of illegally entering the divisional league.⁸⁶⁹ Others claimed that Damase had failed to perform traditional libation to appease the ancestors in Mbalmayo.

There was yet another spiritual explanation for OM's woes and here too, Mbalmayo was pinpointed as the principle cause. It was footballer Ashu who provided me with this account. In 1996, he signed a contract worth 2.8 million CFA francs (€4,200) to go and play for OM. Although his account is of a personal nature, it does confirm the view that Damase was to blame for the team's failures. This is Ashu's story of the 1996 interpools (in which both finalists qualify for the top league):

When Damase formed Olympic Mvolyé he went to the elders in Mbalmayo. He told them that he wanted his team to be based there. In exchange he promised them a new stadium. In 1996 the team qualified for the interpools which were held in Ngaoundéré and Bertoua. This time the president knew there was something wrong. Since he never constructed the stadium, he realised the elders had put a spell on the team.

Two weeks before the tournament he brought in an old Catholic priest to assist in casting out the spell. For three days and three nights we had to stay on a basketball court on a compound in Yaoundé. Breakfast consisted of bread and sardines. The priest lit an open fire in the compound. We all had to meditate, sing, dance and read scriptures from the Bible. We carried bags of salt and performed benediction. The meditation was to see where the tie of the team was located. On the second night the priest and one of his followers went to the club's training ground. They dug something up, sprayed it with salt and threw it in the open fire. While digging it up, the follower was severely beaten.

The priest said he now knew what he had to do. To remove the spell he had to go to the Nyong river [near Mbalmayo]. While the priest went to the river with his followers on the third night, we had to perform long prayers. He knew what had tied the team for so long. It was a turtle. A dead turtle with the size of about 40 to 50 centimetres. The priest made prayers before he could take the turtle out of the water. This time again one follower was beaten by evil spirits. The follower later died from his injuries.

The priest brought the turtle back to the compound and said that he brought Olympic Mvolyé back to the players. We could now see the turtle. Somebody had attached a big padlock of about 10 centimetres around the turtle's tail. A smaller padlock was attached around his neck. The locks were rusty because they had been in the water for years. The priest used three bags of salt to unlock the padlocks. The priest then called for the president-general to see the inside of the turtle. He showed many items: Hair belonging to former players, names of players written on a piece of paper, coins, earrings, jerseys, flags. Some of the players whose names were inside were now playing in Europe but they were always sick or injured. The priest destroyed everything and blessed the players.

The priest announced that he would control the whole show during the interpools. He ordered the players to put down any magic that they might have brought from the village. I had magic on me but I did not say anything. There was a herbalist in [name of Ashu's village] who gave me some powdered stuff. The priest told us to leave early the next morning. He did not join us. He said he would come when things were getting rough.

We travelled to Bertoua. We played well in the first two matches. During this time I had dreams about meeting the priest in mysterious places. I dreamt of fights in the river, fires burning and corpses being buried. Before the semi-finals [against Union Abong-Mbang] the coach came to see me. He told me that I had to give him 50,000 francs (€75) to secure my place in the team. I refused. Meanwhile the priest had joined us at the training camp. With him came the body of the follower who had died from the evil spirits' beatings. At five o'clock in the morning of the semi-finals we all had to walk past the dead body. Before the match the priest blessed us. The coach did not select me so I followed the priest to the popular stand. He had a button in his hand to control the referees. He also had a black stick in his hand to deviate balls from the goalpost.

The match began. Every time the ball threatened to enter between the goal posts, the priest deviated it by using his black stick. The other team scored a clean goal but the referee disallowed it. It was the priest controlling the referee. Then the referee awarded a penalty to us. Serious fights broke out. Gendarmes threw teargas into the public. The match was postponed. I ran straight to the hotel. My teammates were protected by the gendarmes and then brought to the police station. Before the match the priest had told us that we could not win this match so he used confusion to end the match. Three days later the match was awarded to us because the supporters of the opponent team had started the riots.

I went to visit my mother in the village. The herbalist was there as well. He told my mother everything that had happened. He said that somebody was sacrificed to get the team

into the First Division. He said it was the follower of the priest. He also said that I was supposed to be sacrificed. I was saved because I refused to give money to the coach.

Three issues need clarification. First, a tarred road from Yaoundé to Mbalmayo might have been a better investment. Ashu nevertheless maintained that Damase had promised the elders a stadium.⁸⁷⁰ Second, Ashu initially mentioned the name of Damase before speaking of the president(-general). It was not clear who was present when the priest brought the turtle to the compound, which could have been acting president Mbarga Mboa. Third, stories of sacrifices are common. Marc-Vivien Foé's death in 2003 is one example.⁸⁷¹ Canon Yaoundé allegedly sacrificed albinos in the 1970s. The story surfaced when albinos were said to mysteriously disappear from Nkoldongo *quartier*.

Networks and Big Man politics

The influences of Big Men on leagues and tournaments are not always *only* related to friendships, favours and spiritual practices. In fact, it is claimed that it goes much further than that. Networks consisting of powerful club and FA officials are said to be responsible for manipulating leagues and tournaments on practically all levels. This is why several informants in both Ghana and Cameroon have compared football networks to mafia circles.⁸⁷² Alhaji Karim Grunsah, owner and president of King Faisal, is one of them. 'There's no honesty in Ghana football,' he shouted one afternoon in 2008. Grunsah was livid when I asked him what he thought of those who ran football in his country. This is what he said at the GFA headquarters in Accra:

The FA denies people their rights. They are favouring specific clubs, they are favouring their friends. They are respecting their friends more than the Bible of Ghana Football. Football is like the mafia. They can push people up and they can push people down. The FA is the heart of football in this country. It's where they make and break clubs. I've been in football since 1967 and I will be around for a long time to come. But these FA people come and go and they cheat.

Although Grunsah is known as an *enfant terrible*, which often results in his words taken with a grain of salt, he is not the only one who criticises the football authorities. 'I always say that when you enter the Premier League you enter muddy waters,' said Alhaji Fawaz Zowk, a Board member of Hearts. 'You cannot mess around with these GFA people. They make things personal. They'll get you one way or the other.'

A few days before interviewing Alhaji Grunsah, I came across Mr. X at the FA's headquarters. He had just attended a meeting about a case he brought before the Player Status Committee. Mr. X claimed that Kotoko had illegally lured one of his players away. Yet although the Committee fined Kotoko, it also allowed the club to keep the player. 'They're stealing my bread,' Mr. X said. 'I'm referring the case to the Appeals Committee but it's difficult. The big clubs

usually get the benefit of the doubt.’ Mr. X regularly attends GFA meetings. Big Men had better show their faces at the GFA, he argued. ‘You never know who you meet who might be of use. Here, everybody knows everybody and you need friends in all departments.’ Mr. X is also a member of one of Ghana’s national teams. ‘You should always try to get a position in the GFA or in a committee. That’s the only way to get some level of influence.’

It turned out that Mr. X maintained friendships with FA officials. I once attended one of his team’s home matches. He told me to meet up with an FA official afterwards. This person had borrowed one of Mr. X’s cars and drove me to the latter’s house. ‘(Name of Mr. X) is a very good friend of mine,’ he said. ‘I always stay at his place when I’m in town.’ Later that evening Mr. X played the generous host – handing out drinks to everyone present – which could be regarded as a form of hospitality. I nevertheless saw their friendship as pertaining to a conflict of interest. The administrator had occupied positions at the GFA for over thirty years and he was bound to come into contact with cases that related to Mr. X’s club. It could be regarded as a Big Man maintaining patron-client ties. The administrator’s friendship to Mr. X benefited him in some ways while Mr. X could call in the administrator’s help once he needed it.

The existence of networks is the reason why Africa’s biggest and most popular (community-based) clubs are thought to receive favour upon favour. Most if not all of the top leagues consist of two, three or four clubs around which the entire system revolves. Sticking to Ghana’s two top clubs, there are at least two reasons for the occurrence of such power structures, namely economic rationale and elite networks. The economic rationale is self-evident. As most fans in Ghana either support Hearts or Kotoko, these clubs’ successes are intimately linked to the popularity of the Premier League. A relegation of Hearts or Kotoko would have a negative influence on attendance rates, and sponsors would likely lose interest. ‘The FA president gets more money in salary from the GFA than he gets from his regular job,’ said Kojo Fianoo. ‘He knows that the FA depends on the gate fees generated by Hearts and Kotoko.’

A relegation of Hearts or Kotoko is purely hypothetical anyway. Both clubs have extensive networks and their tentacles reach deep into the political domain (see chapter 5). ‘You don’t dare mess with them,’ said Mr. X. ‘They have people in very high places.’ Moreover, Hearts and Kotoko enjoy permanent representation in several GFA committees. ‘They always have representation just because they are Hearts and Kotoko,’ said Kojo Fianoo. ‘They think that if these clubs are kept out of the FA, they can create problems. If Kotoko would decide to boycott the league – well, they have a big support base.’ All of this leads to the view that Hearts and Kotoko are “untouchables”. ‘You can see how that affects their performance,’ said Mr. X. ‘They may win the Premier League because of their con-

nections. But they keep on losing at a continental level. That tells you how much they rely on people in high places.’

Vice versa, clubs that belong to ethno-political opposition groups commonly complain about harassment by the authorities. At least, that is what Anglophone supporters of PWD Bamenda told me with regard to FECAFOOT (see chapter 5), an FA that has not had an Anglophone chairman/president in its entire existence.⁸⁷³ I assembled several complaints whereby FECAFOOT allegedly tried to influence PWD Bamenda’s matches. Feelings of being *structurally* cheated were caused by (1) occasional bans from playing at home ground, (2) the admonishing of seemingly random and unusually harsh sanctions and fines, (3) harassment from security personnel and gendarmeries who belong to rival ethnic groups, (4) the appointment of referees who favour Francophone teams, (5) the practice of taking the gate proceeds back to Yaoundé, and (6) the deliberate relegation due to inexplicable point reduction.⁸⁷⁴

As said, the view of powerful networks operating as “invisible hands” or the “mafia” is related to complaints that some clubs receive help in all departments while other clubs are obstructed in everything they do. To be sure, the existence of such networks has also been reported in countries in, for example, Southern and Eastern Europe and South East Asia.⁸⁷⁵ From an African perspective, I will label such networks as Big Man politics, primarily because of their close relations to money, politics and power. The practices involved in Big Man politics can be summarised by the view that Big Men manipulate the workings of FA committees responsible for running the league. ‘We don’t play football on merit,’ said Grunzah. ‘We play the league based on names and faces.’ Let us take a closer look at two GFA committees, namely the Referees Appointment Committee and the Player Status Committee.

The importance of the Referees Appointment Committee should not be underestimated. Earlier I stated that friendships between clubs are said to be a more reliable method of match-fixing than bribing the referee. But what happens when a group of referees favours particular teams throughout the league season? It should be noted that this is exactly what Luciano Moggi did so that Juventus could pick up league titles in the Italian *Serie A*.⁸⁷⁶ Mr. X earlier claimed that referees in Ghana admire either Hearts or Kotoko and therefore tend to be sympathetic towards these teams (chapter 8). As referees have a variety of methods to influence a match (by giving yellow or red cards, granting penalties and raising the offside flag), they are sometimes thought to be responsible for a team’s success or failure during a league season.

One can imagine Big Men wanting to have a say in who officiates their matches.⁸⁷⁷ I will limit myself to the complaints made by Ghanaians in relation to teams that are owned and controlled by FA officials. During my research in

2009, Wa All Stars, owned by GFA president Kwesi Nyantakyi, was the number one suspect. Kojo Fianoo, CEO of AshantiGold, had the following story to tell:

The last time we went to Wa to play All Stars, there was no match commissioner. That means the referee can do whatever he likes. The referee gave them a penalty. They scored and mounted pressure on us. Then all of a sudden all the footballs vanished from the stadium. There was only one ball left. When the ball was kicked out, we had to wait and wait for it to return. When we complained, they finally picked some balls from the All Stars bench. If I had done that, we would be punished! There was no match commissioner to report to, there was no independent observer. When All Stars plays away, they will make sure to give them a very strong referee who will attempt to cheat you.

Referee Reginald Lathbridge admitted that the connection between the club and the FA president influenced the behaviour of referees:

When you are chosen to officiate a match involving Wa All Stars, you have already been influenced before the match even started because this is the team of the president of the FA. Unless you don't consider the match as such, you will be influenced. The same thing is true during the African Cup of Nations. The president of CAF is a Cameroonian so maybe a lot of referees will favour Cameroon. Also, to become a FIFA referee you have to be endorsed by the Referees Association of Ghana. We're talking about the Referees Appointment Committee. These people send a name to the FA for them to endorse someone as a FIFA referee. So it's a human institution to favour Wa All Stars.

Wa All Stars is not the only team rumoured to receive favours. All the teams whose management members occupy an FA position are thought to enjoy such favours. 'Referees think that if they favour these teams, maybe they will become a FIFA referee,' said Kojo Fianoo. 'So maybe it's not direct, but referees favour these teams to be recognised and promoted.' In a similar vein, Kwabena Kesse appointed GFA spokesperson Randy Abbey as Director of Communications. 'Kessben FC is checked by Abbey,' journalist Kamkam Boadu told me in 2009. 'That signifies a lot of influence. Referees are afraid of those people.' There is, however, a flipside to this story. 'Some referees may have wanted to become FIFA referees but were never selected,' Fianoo explained. 'So as soon as you leave office, they will show you where power lies.' So if an FA official is relieved of duty, his team is said to fall out of favour and relegate.

The Player Status Committee is another important body. A player's official status determines which club legally owns him. As was the case with Tema Youth, several clubs have suffered point deduction after fielding a player without the proper documentation. Here too, it is rumoured that cases are handled by Big Men who have a reason for favouring one team over the other. Jones Abu Alhassan, the man who was implicated in the Gbadegbe probe (chapter 7), was elected chairman of the Player Status Committee in 2006. He has been accused of conflicts of interest on several occasions. Journalist Kamkam Boadu described the feeling as follows:

People often complain about the Player Status Committee because it is chaired by Jones Abu Alhassan, who is also the Board Chairman of RTU. They feel that he is not the right person.

They believe that there is a conflict of interest. A lot of clubs complain that when he deals with issues that relate to RTU he is always biased. Alhaji Grunsah also said something like that last season. He had players who came from RTU. These players went to the Player Status Committee to see whether they were free or whether they still had a contract to fulfil. The evidence pointed to the fact that they were free agents. But the Committee decided that they should return to RTU. So people are asking why he is allowed to handle these cases when he himself is clearly involved?

It is difficult to determine whether he indeed resorted to favouritism but the point is that FA officials should avoid handling cases that involve their own teams.

Kojo Fianoo told me a story about a famous case in Ghana, namely the Atem Valentine saga. Atem Valentine was the captain of Mount Cameroon FC at the time I was researching the Buea-based team in 2003. He then earned a transfer to AshantiGold and started playing in the Premier League from the 2003/04 season onwards. 'At the end of the season we lost a lot of points,' said Fianoo. 'We used Atem but it was later decided that he didn't have a valid work permit. So they deducted 12 points from previous matches. We almost relegated.' He then made the following statement:

The system wasn't fair to Goldfields. The way they deducted the points wasn't fair. Let's say you're coming to Ghana to work. You're getting your documents. If you can get an officer to do that for you, then you're okay. If there's a problem with your documentation, who should be blamed? You or the officer? If the GFA receives your documentation and endorses your registration, and you then use the GFA's documentation to play, why should you be punished for using the GFA registration?

Fianoo alleged that powerful men in the GFA attempted to obstruct AshantiGold by exploiting the confusion surrounding Atem Valentine's paperwork:

In the FA it all depends on the personalities who are there. I may be on the GFA Emergency Committee which handles the day-to-day running of football. Let's say I have to play a match against another team. Then I realise there's a problem with the registration of one of their players. I then take advantage of my position at the Emergency Committee to get the points. That's what happened. At that time the vice president of the GFA was also the president of Great Olympics. Incidentally, the immigration officer who did Atem's documentation happened to be an official of Olympics. So after we played and beat Olympics, he went to Olympics and told them that he saw a loophole. "Go on and exploit it." The vice president used his position at the FA to say that Atem did not have a work permit. When AshGold played against Dawu Youngstars, they also used the Olympics precedent to take the points away from us.

It should be noted that clubs protesting the fielding of unqualified players is common throughout the continent. (CAF even went as far as to throw title holders TP Mazembe out of the CAF Champions League in 2011 for fielding an unqualified player.)

Let us now focus on the workings of two of the FA's most important judicial bodies, namely the Disciplinary Committee and the Appeals Committee. The Big Men who run these bodies deal with cases involving unqualified players, jujū, violence and bribery. 'The FA is not reliable,' said Mr. X. 'The judicial arm

looks at names so you have to be very diplomatic.’ Indeed, it regularly happens that these committees are accused of favouritism. This is where we return to the problem of conflicts of interest, and former Deputy Sports Minister Joe Aggrey explained it as follows:

That’s the problem today of football people running the FA. Almost all of the people there are attached to clubs because that’s the reason why they got there in the first place. So the whole system is so messy. The idea is that people don’t trust the FA people who also run clubs because there will be a conflict of interest. For instance, if your club and the chairman’s club are in dispute over an issue, people have the perception that the chance that the committee who has to decide over that particular issue will favour his club is very high. Even if he has a very good case against you, there will be suspicion towards him. So that’s the danger of having the football people also running the FA. But you know, that’s how FIFA wants it. Even if these people do not own clubs, then at least they will support one club or the other. That’s the nature of football people. They will always favour one team and there’s nothing you can do about it.

We should not underestimate the importance of decisions made by the Disciplinary and Appeals Committee because they have the power to deduct points and thus make sure teams are relegated.

Conflicts of interests are said to be especially visible in respect to match-fixing allegations. The biggest problem with bribery is finding actual proof of foul play. ‘It’s very difficult to prove matches of convenience,’ said Kwame Ntow-Fiako, chairman of the Division One League Board (DOL). ‘You need witnesses who can testify.’ Even when evidence is provided, it can easily be interpreted differently by different people. There is, in other words, room for the subjective interpretation of testimonies and other pieces of evidence. This is where Big Man politics comes into play, which is why so many club officials do not trust the football authorities’ judicial arm. Even though one could feel some sort of sympathy for FA officials because of the many cases of match-fixing, juju, violence and other illegalities that fall onto their desk, their decisions should also be looked upon with a bit of scepticism.

South Africans are familiar with Big Man politics, especially ever since the police investigated match-fixing practices in 2004. More than 30 referees and club officials were brought before court.⁸⁷⁸ Journalist Gleeson concluded that ‘only three (referees) were eventually fined and handed suspended prison sentences for their part in fixing a lower league match’. The investigation had turned into an ‘embarrassment’ and it was speculated that it ‘collapsed because it also involved some of the biggest names in South Africa’.⁸⁷⁹ The same thing had happened in the late 1990s when the Motimele Commission investigated match-fixing practices; and it happened again with the Semenya Commission in 2010.⁸⁸⁰ Not only did reports disappear in drawers,⁸⁸¹ hardly any club official was ultimately punished.⁸⁸² This led journalist Thomas Kwenaito to state that these inquiries are ‘a total waste of time and resources’.⁸⁸³

Photo 9.2 Teams belonging to ethno-political minorities, such as PWD Bamenda, are said to be obstructed by the powers that be



Big Man politics can also be found in Ghana. Two matches in the final round of the Middle League in 2007 resulted in ‘cricket score lines’.⁸⁸⁴ Great Mariners beat Tudu Mighty Jets 29-0 while Nania FC beat Okwawu United 31-0. This was enough to grant Nania FC, a club owned by football legend Abedi “Pele” Ayew

alias the Maestro, a ticket to the Premier League. However, the GFA Disciplinary Committee banned Abedi Pele and other officials, and demoted all clubs to the Third Division.⁸⁸⁵ The Maestro then published a letter in which he denied the charges,⁸⁸⁶ after which the Appeals Committee dropped the charges against him. I think the main reason why the authorities discarded the evidence is because of Abedi Pele's status in Ghana. At that time, he was involved in two upcoming tournaments, the 2008 African Cup of Nations and the 2010 World Cup. His conviction would have tainted the image of African football and his role as World Cup ambassador would have been compromised.⁸⁸⁷

Finally, Cameroonians are familiar with Big Man politics as well. The overall perception is one of FECAFOOT subjectively interpreting the rules of the game based on friendships, favours and politics. One case concerned the aforementioned Tomota Affair, in which Tomota Christophe stood accused of biased refereeing in the semi-final of the 1993 Cup of Cameroon. Tomota himself stated that the Olympic Mvolyé coach paid him 200,000 CFA francs (€300) that was said to have come from OM's president, Philippe Mbarga Mboa.⁸⁸⁸ 'The referee in question has made a written confession and was disbarred,' said Charles Nguini, who wrote a book about FECAFOOT's judicial cases, to *La Nouvelle Expression*. 'The corruptor, meanwhile, has never been sanctioned (...).'⁸⁸⁹ Indeed, while Tomota was banned for life, OM's president Mbarga Mboa later became Minister of Youth and Sports.

An examination of two cases – in 2006 and 2007 – will shed more light on the issue of perceived bias on the part of the authorities. In September 2006, Racing Bafoussam was defeated 0-1 by Mount Cameroon FC in the final league round. Racing, a team that by then was already relegated, allegedly gave away the match to Mount Cameroon FC, a team that badly needed the point to escape a similar fate. A third team that did relegate, Impôts FC, filed a protest. The Disciplinary Committee found evidence that Mount Cameroon had offered Racing two million CFA francs (€3,000) at Calving Foining's hotel in Bandjoun, and demoted the club to the Third Division with immediate effect.⁸⁹⁰ Surprisingly, the Appeals Committee discarded the decision barely six days later and Mount Cameroon was reinstated in the Elite One league.⁸⁹¹

The Appeals Committee's ruling raised a few eyebrows because it was thought, firstly, that there was evidence of match-fixing and, secondly, that Mount Cameroon was a habitual offender. Several Anglophones told me they linked the Committee's U-turn on ethno-politics. This is what Cleopas, supporter of PWD Bamenda, said:

After the [first] verdict the management of Mount Cameroon went on radio to accuse FECAFOOT of being biased. They said that the Francophone FECAFOOT deliberately dropped Mount Cameroon out of the elite league. The management then said that the Anglophones would start their own league, the Southern Cameroons Football League. That's what scared

FECAFOOT but it scared the prime minister even more. [The Anglophone prime minister] Inoni gave FECAFOOT a warning and Mount Cameroon returned to the elite league. He foresaw that a breakaway would be disastrous for the unity of football in Cameroon so he had to intervene personally.

Nguini, who filed the forms on behalf of Impôts at the time, somewhat cryptically relates to the Mount Cameroon affair by stating that ‘it is an area where money, politics and blackmail have forged all sorts of agreements on the back of the game. Everybody knows what happened.’⁸⁹²

An infamous match-fixing case took place in September 2007, which involved the Bamileke-owned team Bamboutos Mbouda and an “envelope”. Home team Bamboutos had to beat Federal Noun in order to stay in the top league. Deep into the second half, when the score was 2-2, the Bamboutos team captain called for the Federal captain and handed him an envelope. The Federal captain, in turn, made a mistake which led to the third and decisive goal for Bamboutos.⁸⁹³ The Disciplinary Committee demoted Bamboutos to the Third Division, which was later confirmed by the Appeals Committee.⁸⁹⁴ ‘For once FECAFOOT applied its own texts,’ Nguini argued. ‘The penalty may seem harsh but it was taken by the competent legal authorities on the subject, based on facts reported by match officials.’⁸⁹⁵

Not everybody agreed with Nguini’s assessment. Spiritual adviser Zé, who worked for several Bamileke-owned clubs, told me that the decision was politically motivated:

Many people saw the bribery – because it happened right there in the field – but nobody stepped forward to testify against the team. That’s why I said it was politically motivated because FECAFOOT punished the team without any substantial evidence or witnesses. The thing is that Bamboutos is known throughout the country as a very rough team. So FECAFOOT was looking for a reason to relegate the team and took the opportunity to demote Bamboutos. Last year they made it up to the people in Mbouda by renovating the stadium. The new stadium was done by MTN and presented to the people this year. So to make up for the relegation they made this nice and modern stadium in Mbouda, a town that now no longer has First Division football.

Probably the main point of criticism is that FECAFOOT was perceived to judge similar-looking match-fixing cases with different standards. This is what upset Bonaventure Djonkep, a former footballer who turned coach:

We should at some point decide to hit and punish or we’ll go around in circles forever. It is unfortunate that those who now watch with great detail the case of Bamboutos looked the other way when a president like Essomba Eyenga (of Tonnerre Yaoundé) declared on national television that it was he who made Coton Sport Garoua the champion of Cameroon because he took money from Coton. When a man like that says something this serious, nothing happens. (...) Bamboutos now finds itself in a situation that Tonnerre and Coton Sport should have been in yesterday. Why punish Bamboutos today when we did not condemn Coton Sport and Tonnerre? Why punish Bamboutos when we did not sanction Mount Cameroon and Racing?⁸⁹⁶

The story of Bamboutos Mbouda took a twist when prominent inhabitants of Mbouda appealed to high-profile political figures to review their case. In fact, the Bamboutos elite resorted to playing the politics card. They directed their grievances at the prime minister's office, arguing that the demotion of the club would have an adverse effect on the support for Biya's CPDM party. 'Bamboutos is for the region what the Indomitable Lions are for Cameroon,' one Mbouda inhabitant argued. 'The confirmation of this decision (to demote the team) would be a *coup de grâce* on CPDM's political successes in the Bamboutos department since 2002.' Prominent inhabitants signed a petition asking politicians to reverse the 'injustice' perpetrated on their team.⁸⁹⁷

Prime minister Ephraim Inoni and Minister of Sports Augustin Edjoa both responded to the pleas of the Mbouda elite. Minister Edjoa reportedly organised a stakeholders meeting in which he urged FECAFOOT to review their decision so as to keep the 'social peace'. He later demanded Bamboutos to be reinstated in the Elite One league.⁸⁹⁸ Prime minister Inoni allegedly went a step further by allowing the Mbouda inhabitants to take the matter to a court of law. It was rumoured that the general secretary to the prime minister's office was involved because he originates from the Bamboutos department. In November 2007, a lawyer representing Bamboutos filed a case at the Mfoundi High Court in Yaoundé. Eight months later, the court rehabilitated Bamboutos and ordered FECAFOOT to pay a symbolic fine of one CFA franc.⁸⁹⁹ FECAFOOT did not give in and refused Bamboutos permission to re-enter the Elite One league.

Taking the football authorities to a civil court is unusual, not in the least because FIFA rules state that filing a case with 'ordinary courts of law is prohibited unless specifically provided for in the FIFA regulations'.⁹⁰⁰ The fact that this rule is occasionally violated in Africa implies that there is limited faith in the objectivity of the football authorities. With regard to Ghana, Bediako lists several football cases that were brought before civil courts between 1967 and 1995.⁹⁰¹ The situation does not seem to have improved in recent years, prompting former Deputy Minister of Sports Joe Aggrey to say that 'football is played in the court room'. 'The problem is that when clubs get banned for match-fixing they go to court,' said former Kotoko management member Kwame Baah-Nuako. Court cases have delayed Ghana's leagues on several occasions which, in turn, caused the cancellation of the FA Cup between 2000 and 2010.⁹⁰²

The overall consequence of seeking the court of law is that FAs may be increasingly intimidated into allowing match-fixing to go unpunished. After all, a single person can resort to legal means and disrupt the game for months on end. This was the point made by journalist and former football administrator Bediako:

The fear of fixed matches towards the end of the premier national football league continues to haunt the football authorities and since you need top class intelligence work to establish guilt in these circumstances everybody seems to have given up. The purists always cite the

example in Italy (the *Calciopoli* scandal in 2006) where the axe fell heavily on certain top clubs who were found guilty of match fixing. Some world famous clubs were demoted and some fined heavily. Can we do this in Ghana? That is the question. It is almost impossible. Even the ordinary man in the street will tell you that in Ghana's current over exaggerated democratic atmosphere it would be unthinkable to take such measures as the clubs would quickly rush to the law courts and a whole national football programme could grind to a halt.⁹⁰³

All in all, the game in Africa is influenced by Big Man politics to the extent that league systems are occasionally interrupted and, more worryingly, distorted.

Player selection, age cheats and tournaments

There is one last issue we need to address before moving on to the conclusion. This is where money, politics and power all come together to distort the nature of the game. I am referring to the practice whereby international tournaments and competitions are used for either political purposes or as a means to sell players. This paragraph thus deals with what I wrote in chapters 5 and 6, namely that Big Men tend to get involved in football for personal gain, i.e. to convert and increase economic and/or social capital. I argue, firstly, that Big Men manipulate the selection procedures of players for the various national teams and, secondly, that club and FA officials resort to the practice of age cheats.

As said earlier, earning promotion and avoiding relegation are important issues in a Big Man's life. In fact, the *raison d'être* of most teams is to compete in the top league and to pick up titles. Let us now focus on those teams whose goals are no longer congruent with the competitive nature of the game. This does not sit well with FIFA's official policies. 'Winning is the object of playing any game,' says Fair Play Code rule 2. 'Never set out to lose. If you do not play to win, you are cheating your opponents, deceiving those who are watching, and also fooling yourself.'⁹⁰⁴ Although the Big Men who feature in the story below are also interested in winning titles if the opportunity arises, their main objective goes beyond the concept of winning on the field of play. These football entrepreneurs want to win in the football business.

Recall how Jamil Maraby, the former CEO of Sekondi Eleven Wise, claimed (in chapter 6) that the football business is a chance and that Big Men often set up clubs in the lower leagues to avoid the risk of losing too much money. Indeed, several clubs in Ghana's First and Second Division and in Cameroon's Elite Two league and Third Division are owned by football entrepreneurs – Big Men who merely set up a club to sell players. They are content with the fact that their teams operate in a lower league because there they save money while they are still able to dream of that "one million dollar ticket". These clubs are typically one-man shows and lack the support which would make it interesting – even necessary – to vie for promotion and titles.

Some clubs that are owned by football entrepreneurs are nevertheless active in the top leagues. Sly Tetteh's Liberty Professionals and Victor Akpene Ahiakpor's Heart of Lions are two prominent examples. Indeed, both clubs at one point in time tried to lay claim to the prestigious title of Third Force, meaning the club that would break the hegemony of Hearts and Kotoko in the way Ashanti Goldfields did in the 1990s. It is alleged that both clubs would have rightfully laid claim to this title if Tetteh and Ahiakpor aspired to challenge Ghana's two top clubs. But they did not, and they still do not. 'Someone like Sly Tetteh is not interested in collecting silverware,' Mr. X told me two years before Tetteh passed away. 'He's more interested in the business of marketing and selling players.'

This is why one-man shows owned by football entrepreneurs will always have one major problem. Those running such teams simply cannot create a strong and unified squad over a longer period of time. 'Heart of Lions transfers at least four to five of its best players each year,' journalist Emmanuel Prempeh told me. 'So each year the coach has to start all over again. If it wasn't for all the transfers, Lions would have been champion by now.' Heart of Lions ended up as runner-up in the Premier League in 2005 and qualified for the CAF Champions League. Ahiakpor then decided to pull his team out of the competition. 'We had some financial difficulties,' Alex Aboagye, the club's chief scout, explained. 'When we pulled out, CAF suspended us for three years.' The loss of key players in between seasons played a role as well. 'We felt we couldn't compete at a continental level at that point in time,' said Aboagye.

The story does not end here. Recall how several of Sly Tetteh's pupils featured in Ghana's national team that participated at the 2006 World Cup. A few months before the start of the tournament, former GFA president Ade Coker accused Tetteh of influencing the Black Stars selection procedure. Naturally, Tetteh denied the allegations and, to his credit, I will refer to the Gbadegbe Commission which implicated Coker in the player transfer scam (chapter 7). Coker's accusation nevertheless forms part of a conspiracy theory, namely that Big Men manipulate the selection procedures of the various national teams. Sly Tetteh certainly had a motive for doing so. He and other football entrepreneurs want their players to receive a call-up for one of the national teams for scouting purposes. Moreover, club and FA officials have been found guilty of conspiring to sell players abroad.

As stated earlier, Big Men influence selection procedures at clubs (chapter 7). Clearly there are political and ethnic motives to do so. Ivory Coast's former national team coach Vahid Halilhodzic claimed that 'politicians are interfering in absolutely everything, especially football. The reasons are obvious, football is very popular, particularly at national level, and some marginal political char-

acters are using football to collect political points.’⁹⁰⁵ Peter Schnittger, who coached Cameroon in the 1970s, had a similar story to tell. ‘At that time, the national team was mainly made up of players from around Yaoundé,’ he said. ‘That was inevitable as the Yaoundé clubs were the best teams at the time. Once we had done very well in the Nations Cup tournament and had reached the semi-finals, the new Minister came up to me and said “Peter, Cameroon have played really well, but remember you also have some Bamileke players you could use.” It was indirect pressure on me to change the team (...).’⁹⁰⁶

The selection procedure surrounding the Indomitable Lions is indeed partly based upon ethno-political considerations. The Anglophones are a case in point. ‘Anglophone players were selected for the national team in the 1970s and 1980s,’ said PWD Bamenda supporter Nji Pius. ‘At the World Cup in 1990 we had an Anglophone captain, Stephen Tataw. But now the coaches don’t tour the country anymore. They receive a list and the names on it belong to players from Douala and Yaoundé.’ Ben Bola, a former PWD Bamenda player, said that Anglophone players found it difficult to earn a call-up, even in the old days. ‘You only stood a chance if you played for one of the Yaoundé teams,’ he said. ‘Anglophones don’t get support from politicians who can lobby for them. It’s rare to see a Lion from the Anglophone zone.’

I have earlier stated that local coaches in particular are susceptible to Big Man influences (chapter 7). ‘It’s an ethnic problem and an authority problem, because the local coach can be influenced by the atmosphere around a team,’ said Philippe Troussier, who coached several clubs and national teams in Africa.⁹⁰⁷ In Cameroon, it is thought that local coaches favour players from their own ancestral area. This is a reason why expatriate coaches are so often preferred. A foreign coach, as Troussier rightfully observed, ‘doesn’t know if player x comes from north, south, east or west of the country. So, the foreign coach can be presented as a neutral man, who doesn’t have a favourite tribe or region. He just picks the best 11 players, wherever they come from.’⁹⁰⁸ There are also other reasons for choosing expatriate coaches over local ones, which are related to respect and to corruption.⁹⁰⁹

The political motivations aside, another reason for manipulating team selection is money. I interviewed a coach of a Ghanaian Premier League club prior to the start of the African Nations Championship (CHAN) in 2009. I was sitting with him and a Ghanaian journalist in an establishment in Kumasi. When the journalist briefly left the table, the coach leaned over to me. ‘I don’t know him so I don’t want him to hear this,’ he whispered. ‘There’s one national team coach who got paid 5,000 cedi (€2,500) to take three boys along and he took them. Some of these players shouldn’t even be there but we all know why they’re

there.’ I asked him if he was referring to the CHAN tournament in this case. He nodded and then continued the story:

The chairman of a club here in Ghana gave him 5,000 cedi in cash – just like that ... *smack!* – to take these three players into the squad. I sometimes get mixed up. Why is he on that team? Why is he there? Oh wake up! It’s because someone is paying. It’s not on merit. What is the criterion for that player to be there? He’s been away for three months due to injury, he had one game and now he’s into the squad. They think that when he’s in the national team they’re going to get noticed by someone from Holland or England and then one man will make big money.

Similar stories have since popped up in the Ghanaian press.⁹¹⁰

There are broadly speaking two types of coaches in this respect. The first type uses his position in the sense that he only selects certain players if they are willing to pay. The second type is susceptible to bribery and influences by Big Men; he selects players based on the power of the Big Men behind them. The difference may be quite small – after all, both types of coaches normally earn money – but in the second case he is not the initiator. He may even have to share his money with others. Mr. X claimed that members of national team committees sometimes get involved in deals. ‘In my position as a member of the (name of national team) Committee there are temptations,’ he said. ‘I mean, people come with envelopes and say: “Take this money and let my player play.” When you take money from them, your head is on the chopping board. I’m not saying I’m a saint, it’s easy to succumb to these pressures.’

A picture emerges of national teams consisting of a group of well-known players who were selected based on merit and a group of relatively unknown players who were selected because of manipulations. The first group is essential for the coach in the sense that they are there to win the match. They play for some of the world’s top clubs and their inclusion in the squad goes without saying. The second group is important to the coach in another respect, namely as a means to complement his salary. They normally still play either at home or at clubs in mediocre leagues abroad. In other words, they need someone to push them into the squad. Put in economic jargon, this group consists of marketable players whose goal in the national team is to earn a lucrative contract. ‘It’s very simple,’ the Cameroonian agent Fernand Taninche told me:

What every player wants is to be called up for the national team. Every player wants to have an international cap written on his resume, even if you’ve only played one or two matches. International caps enhance a player’s market value. He will probably be able to get a better contract from a bigger club or he can negotiate with his employer to improve his contract. So it’s very important to get yourself into the national team, even if you’re only on the reserve bench.

‘Our system is corrupt,’ former Ghanaian international Godwin Attram told a Dutch journalist. ‘It is the best players who are selected, but if you want to be in the first 10 to 20, you have to be interesting in terms of trade.’⁹¹¹

It is not only local coaches who are involved in selecting marketable players. Dutchman Clemens Westerhof admitted to having traded players when he was coach of the Nigerian Super Eagles. Former international Viktor Akpedia told Belgian journalists that a link did exist between transfers and national team selection. 'Whoever didn't trust his transfer in the hands of Westerhof wasn't selected for the national team,' he said. 'One time Westerhof invited me to his home in Lagos. He suggested we should work together; if I allowed him to trade me, he would select me for the national team.'⁹¹² Similarly, it is claimed in Cameroon that national team players who sit on the bench are there to spice up their resume. 'The regular squad members are the familiar names, Kameni, Song, Eto'o,' agent Taninche said. 'The others are there because someone paid money. The money is well spent because they will earn huge contracts.'

The Serbian coach Milovan Rajevac, coach of the Black Stars between August 2008 and September 2010, was accused of selecting players only if they joined Virtus International, a football management agency run by former footballer Goran Milovanovic.⁹¹³ The agency kept several Ghanaian internationals under contract in 2010, among whom Samuel Inkoom, Prince Tagoe, Jonathan Quartey and Emmanuel Agyemang Badu.⁹¹⁴ During my fieldwork in 2009 there were rumours about players who were first selected for the CHAN tournament before receiving a call-up for the senior national team. One of them, a client of Virtus International, was then transferred to a club in Europe. In short, Rajevac, at the time a Virtus client,⁹¹⁵ was said to have acted as a frontrunner of the agency.⁹¹⁶ These rumours continued when the Serbian Goran Stevanovic succeeded Rajevac as Black Stars coach.

The danger of selecting players based on ethno-political or financial considerations is that teams may lose their strength. It is often claimed of Africa's national teams that their potential is wasted by football administrators who put their own interests above that of the competitive nature of the game. We have seen how some one-man shows were not founded for competitive purposes, i.e. to win titles. Instead, these one-man shows are mainly used as gateways to transfer players. The same story applies to (some of) Africa's national teams. Indeed, various international youth tournaments but also a tournament such as CHAN are regarded as platforms through which to sell players. Mr. X made a telling remark in this respect. 'I have always said that at any given time in Ghana, from the highest level that is the Black Stars to the lowest level, it is not necessarily the best team that is presented to the public,' he told me.

But the story does not end here either. A certain economic logic in football dictates that young footballers are more valuable than older ones. Young players are also eligible to play for Africa's junior national teams through which, as we now know, they tend to find it easier to earn contracts. As a result, it is said that

FA officials, club officials, government officials, agents, coaches and players all conspire to lower players' ages. The political reasoning behind these so-called age cheats aside,⁹¹⁷ I want to focus on the economic rationale. Ashu, for example, still wants to play in Europe, even though he passed the age of thirty a while ago. He has what is known as a football age as opposed to a real age. Ashu's football age was about five years below his real age in 2003. When we met again in 2010, he was ten years younger.

Let us first consider two cases. In late 2009, Dominic Adiyiah (introduced in chapter 6) earned a transfer to Italian giants AC Milan. How did he manage to do so? The answer is that he was the star player at the just ended U20 World Cup, in which the young Ghanaian and his fellow Black Satellites won the title. Moreover, Adiyiah was crowned both as top scorer and best player of the tournament. Born on 29 November 1989, Adiyiah was 19 years old at the time. One Dutch reporter, who lived in Ghana for years and who investigated the matter, claimed that Adiyiah (then spelled Adiyah) already played for Feyenoord Fetteh in the 2004 Premier League season. If true, he would have been a 14-year old playing in the top league, which is unlikely. When he moved to Norway in 2008, it was reported that he was 22 years old. Again, if true, a 23-year-old played at an U20 World Cup.⁹¹⁸

As captain of the Golden Eaglets in 2009, Fortune Chukwudi led Nigeria to second place at the U17 World Cup. Chukwudi was later accused of being eight years above the age of 17. Former Nigerian international Adokiye Amiesimaka stated that Chukwudi played for Sharks FC in the 2002/03 Premier League season. Back then he was 18 years old, said Amiesimaka, who was chairman of Sharks at the time.⁹¹⁹ Despite the negative publicity, Chukwudi was transferred to South African club SuperSport United, evidently as a result of his performances at the U17 World Cup. I have to add that instead of being praised for uncovering a potential age cheat, Amiesimaka was vilified by the media for being unpat-riotic. It proves the (understandable) sensitivity surrounding such allegations.

From all indications age cheats are rampant in African football. Top officials have admitted the practice in public. Examples include the late Nigerian Minister of Sports Steven Ibn Akiga and the Ghanaian Deputy Minister of Sport Joe Aggrey. 'We have for a while now been fielding players far above the ages for some international age group competitions,' Akiga said. 'This has not helped our football and as such we must now fight against these age cheats.'⁹²⁰ A ZIFA official called age cheats a 'cancer that's been rife for some time'.⁹²¹ 'By all accounts the size and facial maturity of the supposed under-20s makes a mockery of a supposed age group event,' writes journalist Gleeson. 'I hope it is an exaggeration but for too long now, age cheating has been the scourge of the African

game, creating false realities and expectations and leaving an air of suspicion over every African footballer who goes to play overseas.⁹²²

There are anecdotes about U20 players who first drop their wives and three kids at a hotel before driving on to the training grounds, or about U17 players who are forbidden to take off their shirts out of fear for exposing an abundance of chest hair. One story concerns the career of Tobie Mimboe Bayard, a Cameroonian player who according to Hawkey had ‘Peter Pan paperwork’ and according to Ricci ‘never has a birthday’.⁹²³ ‘Mimboe Bayard belongs to the creative school, one of those who change their passports according to season and opportunity,’ Ricci continues. ‘At the 1996 African Cup of Nations, he turned up with a document which, under Date of Birth, read June 30, 1964. After the disappointing performance of the Indomitable Lions and consequent difficulties in finding a contract abroad, he decided to tweak his passport – Date of Birth June 30, 1970.’⁹²⁴ He later changed the date again, this time to 1974.

In Africa, birth certificates are far from reliable and not seldom absent. It proves that we should not always cry “foul play” whenever a player looks older than his age suggests. On the other hand, it is often quite easy to get a hold of a fake ID. As the Nigerian journalist Onmonya writes, one only needs to ‘walk into any immigration office in Nigeria today, forge documents at the nearby business centre, change your name, place of birth, date of birth, pay seven to ten thousand naira (...) and within hours you have completed the whole process of getting an international passport’.⁹²⁵ Several age fraud methods were uncovered when Cameroon banned players for this reason.⁹²⁶ However, Ashu claimed that FECA-FOOT officials helped him in acquiring IDs with his “football age”. His real ID, he said, was ‘burned’ by the officials in Yaoundé.

As of 2003, FIFA uses MRI bone technology to determine age fraud. It was thereafter estimated that 35 percent of all players at the 2003, 2005 and 2007 editions of the U17 World Cup were overage. ‘In the past, over-age players have been wrongly entered into various youth competitions, often benefiting from an unfair advantage due to their greater physical maturity compared to players of the proper age,’ a FIFA statement read.⁹²⁷ It should be noted that countries in Latin America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Asia also have a reputation for this kind of foul play. In any case, the MRI scans are nowadays said to be 99 percent accurate. ‘MRI of the wrist is a simple, reliable, valid and non-invasive method of age determination in young male football players,’ said the Head of FIFA’s medical research team. ‘We can identify overage players at under-17 competitions at no risk to the individual.’⁹²⁸

The use of MRI bone technology turned into an embarrassment for Nigeria’s FA officials in the run-up to the U17 World Cup in 2009. Prior to the tournament, NFF president Sani Lulu ordered the U17 squad to undergo an age test

which resulted in 15 out of 38 players being dropped for failing to pass the test. ‘The decision was taken because the NFF was concerned with the preservation of Nigeria’s good image,’ said a spokesperson.⁹²⁹ When FIFA determined that all teams had to undergo a FIFA-supervised age test, Sani Lulu refused to comply. It was understood that Lulu feared that many more players would be deemed ineligible. Instead, Lulu planned to invite the players’ parents who would ‘put the nation’s interest first by letting us know how old their sons are’.⁹³⁰ His statements irked the Nigerian Minister of Sports.⁹³¹

What are the consequences of age cheats? First, the combination of selecting marketable players and age cheats gives rise to the idea that economic squads dominate such tournaments. Second, this short-term practice is said to obstruct the long-term development of youth football in Africa because actual young players are denied the chance of gaining international experience. When the majority of Zimbabwe’s youth players disappeared after having received a call-up for an MRI scan prior to the African Youth Championship in 2009, an anonymous ZIFA official called it ‘a sad day for Zimbabwean football’. ‘What this means is that we’ve been investing in the wrong people for years,’ he said. ‘By faking age you deprive the genuinely young players of their deserved opportunities.’⁹³²

Third, youth squads are conduits through which players gain access to the senior squads. But, as Gleeson observes, ‘Ghana and Nigeria have a bevy of world titles at under-20 and under-17 level but have never kicked onto a World Cup triumph’.⁹³³ Indeed, the successes of Africa’s youth teams do not appear to be followed by successes at a senior level. Fourth, players who cheat tend to reach their peak at the “football age” of 25 to 30. When 31-year-old Samuel Kuffour signed a contract at Ajax, journalists congratulated Ajax officials with their purchase of a 40-year-old.⁹³⁴ Kuffour played only 33 minutes in Amsterdam. One Nigerian journalist compared the players of Portugal and Nigeria who played at the 1989 World Youth Championship. ‘While Luis Figo is still playing active football,’ he wrote in 2007, ‘most of our players who played in that tournament in 1989 have retired and become grandpas.’⁹³⁵

I doubt whether age cheats will soon be a practice of the past. To be sure, African teams have been banned for fielding overage players. Already in 1989, FIFA banned Nigeria for two years; CAF disqualified Niger from participating in the African Youth Championship in 2009. The question is whether banning is a structural solution. We have seen how FIFA conducts MRI scans prior to youth tournaments, and CAF is following suit.⁹³⁶ But although MRI is helpful at the U17 level, it is said to be mostly useless at the U20 level. Journalist Gleeson states that ‘bone development stops within a year or two (after the age of 17) and by the time players are aged 20 it is impossible to make an accurate determina-

tion with the same test. So it is used by FIFA and CAF for under-17 events, and has uncovered much cheating as well and serves as a top class deterrent, but the under-20 championships are still a cheating free-for-all.⁹³⁷

The difficulty of combating age cheats is that everybody seems to have a motive for maintaining the status quo. 'CAF have never investigated any of the frequent age cheating claims that cross their desk,' Gleeson argues. 'Instead they have wrung their hands in indifference claiming they cannot be seen to be questioning the validity of a document (passport) issued by a sovereign country. Football officials (...) still have a lily-livered approach to cheats and a tolerance that serves only to encourage them.'⁹³⁸ There have been exceptions, for instance the Kenyan Minister of Sports Najib Balala who withdrew the national U17 team from the African Youth Championships in 2003, stating that two players were overage. He was backed by his Tanzanian colleague who subsequently showed his displeasure when FIFA threatened to ban Kenya for government interference.⁹³⁹

I want to address one last issue before we go to the conclusion of this dissertation. Gambling syndicates appear to manipulate international tournaments and competitions involving African teams. As both Reeve and Alegi argue, gambling in sports has a long history in Africa.⁹⁴⁰ In South Africa and Uganda, gambling in sports is now quite a lucrative business.⁹⁴¹ Several matches involving African teams have come under scrutiny. In 2008, Namibia and Benin were alleged to have been approached to fix their matches at the African Cup of Nations.⁹⁴² Nigerian players allegedly confessed to having been susceptible to corruption at the 2010 World Cup.⁹⁴³ Hill recorded testimonies with regard to the allegations that Ghana's national team was contacted by Asian fixers.⁹⁴⁴ Also, a large number of gamblers correctly predicted the occurrence of a fifth goal during a friendly match between Nigeria and Argentina in 2011.⁹⁴⁵

Zimbabwe's Asia tour in December 2009 is linked to gambling syndicates. An investigation revealed that Zimbabwean players had been offered money to lose matches against Syria (in Kuala Lumpur) and Thailand. 'Raja (the agent) had come to our dressing room before kick-off and told us to lose to Thailand by 1-0,' captain Method Mwanjali told the investigators. 'We were handsomely paid \$1,000 (...) for losing.'⁹⁴⁶ In February 2012, 80 players were excluded from national team selection after being accused of fixing matches for gambling purposes. Around the same time, a court ruled that the then CEO of the Zimbabwean FA, Henrietta Rushwaya, should stand trial on charges of match-fixing.⁹⁴⁷ Overall, it appears that football administrators deliberately send their national teams on tours to earn money from syndicates.

In sum, this chapter dealt with the impact of Big Men's attempts at converting capital on leagues and international tournaments as a whole. First, Big Men in-

fluence promotion/relegation struggles through friendships and favours, with spiritual factors also playing a role. It is said that powerful networks comprising top club and FA officials distort leagues to the benefits of some clubs and the detriment of others. I have also argued that there are influences on the activities of various FA committees, particularly with regard to the judicial aspects of running leagues. Some people have called such influences “invisible hands” or “higher powers”; I have labelled them Big Man politics. Second, Big Men also manipulate international tournaments in order to convert capital. Interfering in selection procedures and age cheat practices are prominent examples of this.

Conclusion

At the outset I stated that the performances of Africa's national teams at international senior tournaments leave a lot to be desired. The main cause lies in the way the African game is organised, financed and managed. I have focused on the actions and motivations of club officials and to a lesser extent those who run FAs and FA Committees. Club and FA officials, however, are more often than not interchangeable as club officials tend to occupy positions within the wider football bureaucracy. In running the game, these club and FA officials – whom I have labelled Big Men – tend to put their own interests above that of the game. This, in turn, has had an adverse effect on the development of football in Africa.

I have approached these Big Men's personal interests from the angle of Pierre Bourdieu's forms of capital, i.e. symbolic, social and economic capital. Football offers opportunities for individuals as well as groups to convert and accumulate capital. At one end of the spectrum there are the community-based clubs. Generally speaking, these clubs are widely supported and very popular, which means that they own all forms of capital. On the other end of the spectrum are one-man shows. These clubs are often relatively rich in economic capital but less so in terms of symbolic and social capital. Big Men wishing to convert capital thus typically (want to) become attached to community-based clubs. From a Big Man's point of view, Africa's national teams offer opportunities to convert all three forms of capital.

Football is a means by which Big Men are able to enhance their status, prestige and popularity. In other words, their involvement in the game can lead to an accumulation of symbolic capital for themselves and the wider community. This is mainly due to the game's massive appeal, whether based on ethnic, nationalistic or other sentiments. Football is also a vehicle through which Big Men can acquire social capital and, by implication, political capital. Big Men use the game as a stepping stone to a political career and, vice versa, politicians are involved in

clubs and national teams. In many cases, clubs maintain connections with political parties. Finally, Big Men are able to increase their economic capital through football either by setting up clubs as businesses or by getting involved in the international player transfer market.

These Big Men's attempts at converting and accumulating capital has affected the game in Africa in no small way. First of all, football in Africa is organised, financed and managed by Big Men who resort to patronage politics to gain and maintain power. As widespread poverty is a reality in the majority of countries on the continent, clubs by and large depend on the economic capital brought in by businessmen and other wealthy benefactors. In turn, these Big Men regard clubs as their personal property in the sense that they act as the organisation's sole power broker. In hiring staff, they tend to overlook relevant qualifications and experience in favour of kinship, friendships and political affiliations. These Big Men also resist attempts at professionalising the game for fear of losing power.

As a result, clubs and leagues in Africa are stuck in a vicious circle. Clubs are run by Big Men in an ad-hoc, semi-amateur fashion which makes it difficult to attract sponsorships. Most top league teams do not own proper training facilities and cannot afford to pay players decent wages. Practically every footballer therefore tries to earn a contract at a club outside the continent. The exodus of players to Europe and elsewhere causes Africa's top leagues to be bereft of the most talented players. Fans increasingly turn their backs on their countries' leagues and instead watch European football on television. Empty stadiums lead to dwindling gate proceeds and also scare away sponsors. Most clubs therefore cannot sustain themselves and depend on Big Men for survival, at which point the circle starts all over again.

The situation is made worse by incompetent and corrupt FA officials. Several leagues in Africa are sponsored by companies in various fields. League money nevertheless does not appear to adequately trickle down to the clubs. From all indications it seems that a lot of money disappears into the pockets of the Big Men who run FAs and League Boards. This is most visible with regard to the deplorable state of Africa's football infrastructures. Also, many top FA officials owe their positions to personal and political connections. As a result, leagues are more often than not run in an amateur fashion. One notable example includes the continuous cancellations of league matches due to failure on the part of FA officials to create decent fixtures. This is why companies often think twice before taking up sponsorship.

Another obstacle to the development of football in Africa is the fact that matches are often played dishonestly. Big Men influence matches in order to be able to convert forms of capital. Football is about winning titles and trophies. In

Africa, winning a match, league or tournament often literally means a victory in the political domain. As a consequence, Big Men often fix matches, employ spiritualists for juju rituals, and encourage home crowds to harass and/or beat up referees and opponents. In fact, match-fixing and juju practices even increase violence. Again, one notices a vicious circle as such illegal practices decrease the popularity of the game among ordinary fans and sponsors alike. Less money comes in, which negatively affects the development of infrastructures and the level of security.

Leagues as a whole are also influenced by the phenomenon of Big Man politics, which is predicated on a combination of prestige, politics and power. It means that certain clubs receive favours while other clubs are harassed and obstructed by the football authorities. This is evident when it comes to the application of rules and regulations regarding promotion and relegation. Some teams fix matches and resort to violence and get away with it. Moreover, these teams hardly ever find themselves in the relegation zone because they maintain connections with (politically) powerful people. Other teams complain about being consistently heckled throughout the league season. Here too, Big Man politics negatively influences the overall popularity and credibility of domestic leagues.

I have painted a picture of powerful elites who use football to enrich themselves in various ways. They are businessmen, company directors, politicians, civil servants, traditional rulers and former footballers, among others. Granted, many of these Big Men (and a few Big Women) love the game and get involved partly because they feel obliged to their communities, partly because they feel honoured to do so. Many of them really want to win titles and trophies in an honest way. In Kenya, several top clubs even broke away from an FA they perceived to be corrupt and biased. In Ghana and Cameroon, I have met several club officials who wanted nothing but the “powers that be” to disappear. One Ghanaian sports presenter and former club official told me that he and others were ‘waiting for some powerful people to die’.

The powerful Big Men in football nevertheless find themselves protected from different sides. First, they tend to form networks of like-minded Big Men in football. Anyone who crosses their path finds himself in some sort of trouble. ‘You do not mess with these people,’ one club official in Ghana told me. Whistleblowers are normally threatened or, less commonly, molested or killed. Second, these Big Men commonly rely on support from powerful politicians who, in turn, often do not hesitate to intervene in football affairs. Third, those who occupy top positions in the football bureaucracy commonly receive protection from FIFA. This is because FIFA forbids outside, i.e. political meddling in

football affairs in terms of hiring/firing officials and investigating the football authorities.

FIFA still adheres to the belief that football is played in a parallel world where politics and commerce do not influence the game. In this world, FA officials always act “for the good of the game”. FAs, including the ones in Africa, are only accountable to FIFA. In practice, FA officials seem to be accountable to no one but themselves. In Africa, transparency and accountability have little meaning as FA officials tend not to disclose their actions to the public. Governments in Africa nevertheless still make large financial contributions to their national teams. Any attempt at finding out how that money is spent, however, is followed by threats from FIFA to ban the country from international football. In a way, FIFA helps incompetent and corrupt FA officials to remain in positions of power.

On the one hand, FIFA’s attempts to keep politics out of football should be applauded. On the other hand, FIFA itself does not seem overly inclined to check what FAs are up to. It is also worrying to see that the idea that football should be run by “football people” leads to conflicts of interests. Positions within FAs, FA Committees and League Boards are often taken by club officials who have vested interests in their own clubs. An investigation in Ghana in the late 1990s uncovered a network of club and FA officials who conspired to sell players abroad and keep percentages of the transfer fees. They were able to do this because the CEOs of the clubs simultaneously took up positions within the relevant FA Committees, which made it easy to forge transfer certificates.

Football in Africa is heavily mixed up with money, politics and power. These influences have had a negative impact on leagues and national teams. Most importantly, Big Men tend to give preference to short-term personal gain rather than long-term benefits for the game itself. This is evident in the numerous fights within the management teams of clubs as well as the top levels of FAs and Ministries of Sports. Big Men all want to be the top official of the organisation in order to control the forms of capital. Boardroom struggles within clubs and FAs tend to obstruct the smooth running of the game in Africa. This is especially visible in national teams. FA officials and government representatives always seem to disagree about the question who really owns these national teams.

As symbolic capital *par excellence*, national teams are a playground for businessmen, politicians, military leaders and even presidents aspiring to become popular. Typical drawbacks in this respect are that everyone tends to intervene in the selection of national team players and the hiring/firing of national team coaches. In selecting players, ethno-politics occasionally plays a more important role than performance. The hiring of national team coaches is commonly predicated on short-term (political) gain. Relatively well-known foreign coaches are hired months before the start of a major international tournament, thereby leaving

them with little preparation time. Big Men fire these coaches for not living up to unrealistic expectations. In several cases, even reaching the semi-finals of the African Cup of Nations results in a lay-off.

The manner in which Big Men prepare national teams for major international tournaments is characterised by incompetence, mismanagement and short-term thinking. Friendly matches and pre-tournament training camps often do not go as planned due to lack of organisational skills or corruption. For one thing, arrangements are commonly made at the last possible minute. Also, Big Men generally put their own interests above that of the team. Accommodating FA officials, government representatives, business associates as well as their families and friends takes up a large portion of the overall budget. It regularly happens that match bonuses vanish into thin air, resulting in strikes and non-performance on the part of national team players.

Apart from symbolic and social capital, the quest for economic capital also has an impact on leagues and tournaments. This is particularly true in relation to the international player transfer market. Africa's talented players are regarded as commodities that can be sold for a handsome profit. As a consequence, Big Men want to be part of the managements of community-based clubs with the aim of getting close to the players. They influence team selection and undermine the authority of the coach. There are many one-man shows in Africa whose owners generally do not vie for titles and trophies. Instead, their main goal is to sell players. Their desire to make money often supersedes the welfare and well-being of the players.

National teams commonly include marketable players who were selected to increase their chances of earning lucrative contracts. Their inclusion is influenced by the power of certain Big Men who either pay or pressurise the coach. Big Men, coaches, agents and players alike also resort to age cheats, meaning that a player's official age is lowered so as to increase his market value. These things happen especially in relation to international youth tournaments. As a result of these attempts to accumulate economic capital, national teams do not necessarily consist of a country's very best players. Moreover, youth squads tend to be comprised of overage players, thereby decreasing the progression of players from the youth level to the senior level. Finally, reports indicate that FA officials in Africa work under the influence of (Asian) gambling syndicates.

Big Men generally do not appear to work to the benefit and development of football in Africa. On the contrary, football serves to satisfy the (short-term) needs of those who run it. It is evident that the game offers Big Men many opportunities to convert symbolic, social and economic capital. There are thus plenty of incentives for Big Men not to play according to the rules. There are also plenty of motives for Big Men not to disclose their activities. This lack of transparency

prevents outsiders from finding out what actually transpires at the boardroom level of clubs and FAs. As long as these Big Men are not held accountable by anyone but themselves, it is difficult to see football in Africa progressing in the near future.

Notes

- ¹ BBC Sport, "How TP Mazembe's success boosts its wartorn country," April 18, 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/8628192.stm>.
- ² Steve Bloomfield, *Africa United: How football explains Africa*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2010, 154.
- ³ The Guardian Blog, "The question: Is African football progressing?," January 17, 2012, http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/blog/2012/jan/17/the-question-is-african-football-progressing?CMP=tw_t_gu.
- ⁴ Arnold Pannenberg, *How to win a football match in Cameroon: An anthropological study of Africa's most popular sport*. Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2008.
- ⁵ Paul Nchoji Nkwi & Bea Vidacs, "Football: Politics and power in Cameroon". In: *Entering the field: New perspectives on World Football*, ed., Gary Armstrong & Richard Giulianotti. Oxford: Berg, 1997, 127.
- ⁶ Richard Giulianotti, *Football: A sociology of the global Game*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999, xii.
- ⁷ Quoted in Andrea Borghini & Andrea Baldini, "On the logic of soccer patronage," *Soccer & Society* 12, no. 5 (2011): 569.
- ⁸ William Arens, "The great American football ritual," *Natural History* 84 (1975): 81.
- ⁹ See C.L.R. James, *Beyond a boundary*. London: Stanley Paul, 1983 [1963]); Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures*. London: Fontana Press, 1973, 41 2-53. See also Joseph A. Maguire, *Global sport: Identities, societies, civilizations*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990. Football-related examples include Janet Lever, *Soccer madness*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983; Stephen Wagg, ed., *Giving the game away: Football, politics & culture on five continents*. London: Leicester University Press, 1995; Simon Kuper, *Football against the enemy*. London: Phoenix, 1996 (1994); Gerry P.T. Finn & Richard Giulianotti, eds, *Football culture: Local contests, global visions*. London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000; Franklin Foer, *How football explains the world: An unlikely theory of globalization*. London: Arrow Books, 2005 (2004).
- ¹⁰ Jeremy MacClancy, ed., *Sport, identity and ethnicity*. Oxford: Berg, 1996, 4, emphasis in original.
- ¹¹ See for example Grant Jarvie & Joseph Maguire, *Sport and leisure in social thought*. London: Routledge, 1994; Richard Giulianotti, ed., *Sport and modern social theorists*. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004; Richard Giulianotti, *Sport: A critical sociology*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005; Grant Jarvie, *Sport, culture and society: An introduction*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- ¹² Giulianotti, *Sport: A critical sociology*, 154.
- ¹³ Alan Tomlinson, "Pierre Bourdieu & the sociological study of sport: Habitus, capital and field." In: Giulianotti, *Sport and modern social theorists*, 167.
- ¹⁴ Richard Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*. London: Routledge, 2002 (1992), 85.
- ¹⁵ Christopher Cushion & Robyn L. Jones, "Power, discourse, and symbolic violence in professional youth soccer: The case of Albion football club," *Sociology of Sport Journal* 23 (2006): 144.
- ¹⁶ Helmut K. Anheier, Jurgen Gerhards & Frank P. Romo, "Forms of capital and social structure in cultural fields: Examining Bourdieu's social topography," *American Journal of Sociology* 100, no. 4 (1995): 862.
- ¹⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*. London: Routledge, 1984.
- ¹⁸ Wouter Van Beek, "Cultural models of power in Africa." In: *Land, law and politics in Africa: Mediating conflict and reshaping the state*, ed., Jan Abbink & Mirjam de Bruijn. Leiden: Brill, 2011, 29.
- ¹⁹ Pierre Bourdieu & Richard Nice, "The production of belief: Contribution to an economy of symbolic goods," *Media, Culture and Society* 2 (1980): 262.
- ²⁰ Anheier, Gerhards & Romo, "Forms of capital," 862.
- ²¹ Van Beek, "Cultural models," 27.
- ²² Pierre Bourdieu, *The logic of practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990, 121.
- ²³ Walter E.A. van Beek, "The paradoxical world of sport." In: *The fascinating world of draughts: 50 years world draught federation*, ed., Walter E.A. van Beek & Ada Dorgelo. Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 1997, 160.
- ²⁴ Ibid., 159.
- ²⁵ John Sugden & Alan Tomlinson, eds, *Power games: A critical sociology of sport*. London: Routledge, 2002, 3.

- 26 David Yallop, *How they stole the game*. London: Poetic Publishing, 1999, 11-12.
- 27 See for instance Marshall William Fishwick, *Great awakenings: Popular religion and popular culture*. New York: The Haworth Press, 1995, 113-22; Tim Delaney & Tim Madigan, *The sociology of sport: An introduction*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, 2009, 259-77.
- 28 Christian Bromberger, "'Allez l'O.M., Forza Juve': The passion for football in Marseille and Turin." In: *The passion and the fashion: Football fandom in the new Europe*, ed., Steve Redhead. Aldershot: Avebury, 1993, 133.
- 29 Desmond Morris, *The Soccer Tribe*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1981, 15.
- 30 See for instance Armstrong's & Giulianotti's collection of articles dealing with rivalry in football. Gary Armstrong & Richard Giulianotti, eds, *Fear and loathing in world football*. Oxford: Berg, 2001.
- 31 See for example Richard Giulianotti & John Williams, eds, *Game without frontiers: Football, identity and modernity*. Aldershot: Arena, 1994; MacClancy, *Sport, identity and ethnicity*; Gary Armstrong & Richard Giulianotti, eds, *Football cultures and identities*. London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1999.
- 32 See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006 (1981); Eric John Hobsbawn, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 143.
- 33 Abner Cohen, *Custom and politics in urban Africa: A study of Hausa migrants in Yoruba towns*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969, 4.
- 34 André Ntonfo, *Football et politique du football au Cameroun*. Yaoundé: Editions du Crac, 1994, 55-74.
- 35 Giulianotti, *Sport: A critical sociology*, 178.
- 36 I will present the literature at a later stage (chapter 8).
- 37 Pierre Bourdieu & Loïc J.D. Wacquant, *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, 119.
- 38 Pierre Bourdieu, "The forms of capital," In: *Handbook for theory and research for the sociology of education*, ed., John G. Richardson, trans. Richard Nice. New York: Greenwood, 1986, 249.
- 39 For instance, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) once founded an exclusive group called The Club of which the membership is limited to presidents, prime ministers, kings, queens, princes, princesses, sheiks, maharajas, dukes, barons and captains of industry. Indeed, Olympic gatherings are 'a constant and glittering round of first-class travel, five-star hotels, champagne receptions, extravagant banquets, mountains of gifts and lavish entertainments'. See Vyv Simson & Andrew Jennings, *Dishonored games: Corruption, money and greed at the Olympics*. New York: S.P.I. Books, 1992, 12.
- 40 Daniel Gordon, "Match 64". Hargitay & Hargitay Pictures in Motion/Passion Pictures, 2011.
- 41 FATF/OECD Report, "Money laundering through the football sector," 2009, 7-8.
- 42 Ghana: see Kevin S. Fridy & Victor Brobbey, "Win the match and vote for me: The politicisation of Ghana's Accra Hearts of Oak and Kumasi Asante Kotoko football clubs," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 47, No. 1 (2009): 19-39; Tanzania: see Hamad S. Ndee, "Sport as a political tool: Tanzania and the Liberation of Africa," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 22, No. 4 (2005): 671-88.
- 43 See Lever, *Soccer madness*, 59-69; see Gary Armstrong & Jon P. Mitchell, *Global and local football: Politics and Europeanisation on the fringes of the EU*. New York: Routledge, 2008: 52-92, 108-43.
- 44 Bourdieu, "The forms of capital," 243.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 252.
- 46 Thorstein Veblen, *The theory of the leisure class*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007 (1899), 49-69.
- 47 Andrew B. Trigg, "Veblen, Bourdieu, and conspicuous consumption," *Journal of Economic Issues* XXXV, no. 1 (2001): 101.
- 48 Horst Dassler has been instrumental in the commercialisation of sports and he worked closely together with both Havelange and former IOC president Samaranch. He received all the top sports administrators at his headquarters in Landersheim, France, and famously kept files on all of them. Dassler paid athletes to wear Adidas' three stripes and sponsored national teams. See Barbara Smit, *Pitch invasion: Adidas, Puma and the making of modern sport*. London: Penguin Books, 2007 (2006).

- ⁴⁹ John Sugden & Alan Tomlinson, *Badfellas: FIFA family at war*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2003, 67-8.
- ⁵⁰ David Conn, *The football business: The modern football classic*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2001 (1997).
- ⁵¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian meditations*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000, 153.
- ⁵² Giulianotti, *Sport: A critical sociology*, 158.
- ⁵³ "FIFA Fair Play Code," approved on 28 June 2005.
- ⁵⁴ For recent events regarding FIFA, see reports on the website of The Guardian, <http://www.guardian.co.uk>. For earlier events, see Andrew Jennings, *Foul! The secret world of FIFA: Bribes, vote rigging and ticket scandals*. London: HarperSport, 2007 (2006); see also Yallop, *How they stole the game*.
- ⁵⁵ Bourdieu, "The forms of capital," 251.
- ⁵⁶ Yallop, *How they stole the game*, 22.
- ⁵⁷ Sugden and Tomlinson, *Badfellas*, 153.
- ⁵⁸ See Transparency International Report, "Safe hands: Building integrity and transparency at FIFA," August 17, 2011, 2.
- ⁵⁹ Johan Huizinga, *Homo ludens: A study of the play-element in culture*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1955, 8.
- ⁶⁰ Roger Caillois & Meyer Barash, *Man, play and games*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2001, 6.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ⁶² Van Beek, "The paradoxical world of sport," 157.
- ⁶³ Alan Guttman, *From ritual to record: The nature of modern sports*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978, 15-55.
- ⁶⁴ FIFA, "Laws of the game 2011/2012."
- ⁶⁵ Guttman, *From ritual to record*, 14.
- ⁶⁶ Kendall Blanchard, *The anthropology of sport: An introduction. A revised edition*. Westport: Bergin & Garvey, 1995, xvi.
- ⁶⁷ Quoted in D. Stanley Eitzen, ed., *Sport in contemporary society: An anthology, seventh edition*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2005, 225.
- ⁶⁸ Mark Duggan & Steven D. Levitt, "Winning isn't everything: Corruption in Sumo wrestling." *The American Economic Review* 92, no. 5 (2002): 1594-1605.
- ⁶⁹ Ian Preston & Stefan Szymanski, "Cheating in contests," *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 19, no. 4 (2003): 621.
- ⁷⁰ John W. Loy, Gerald S. Kenyon & Barry D. McPherson, *Sport, culture, and society: A reader on the sociology of sport*. Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1981, 30.
- ⁷¹ See Ghanafa.org, "FA makes new appointments," April 11, 2006, <http://www.ghanafa.org/news/200604/819.php>; see also Ghanaweb.com, "Nyantakyi heads Black Stars Management Committee," August 31, 2011, <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=217553>.
- ⁷² Jennings, *Foul!*; Yallop, *How they stole the game*.
- ⁷³ Examples include Silvio Berlusconi (AC Milan), Bernard Tapié (Olympique Marseille), Zeljko "Arkan" Raznatovic (FK Obilic), Jesus Gil y Gil (Atlético Madrid) and Ramzan Kadyrov (Terek Grosny). For more examples, see a list provided by the website Goal as well as Foer who spoke of club officials in Brazil as *cartolas*, or scoundrels. See Goal.com, "Top 10 Controversial Club Chairmen & Owners," May 13, 2010, <http://www.goal.com/en/news/2377/top-10/2010/05/13/1922879/top-10-controversial-club-chairmen-owners>. See also Foer, *How football explains the world*, 113.
- ⁷⁴ Club officials, the zoologist Desmond Morris argues, are 'often viewed as something of a joke'; he quotes one manager who said that the 'only important decision any director has got to take is the appointment of the right man to conduct the affairs of the club'. Morris, *The soccer tribe*, 218.
- ⁷⁵ In 1988, when the Netherlands had won the European Cup, footballer Ruud Gullit coined a new term for administrators. Irritated by their dominant presence, Gullit referred to them as *bobos*, which in Suriname means dummy or duffer. The term's neutral definition in the Dutch lexicon is official or administrator in sports yet nowadays bobo signifies a narcissistic personality who steals the spotlight away from the athletes.
- ⁷⁶ Sugden & Tomlinson, *Badfellas*, 62-63.
- ⁷⁷ Armstrong & Mitchell, *Global and local football*, 69.

- ⁷⁸ See for example Amir Ben-Porat, "The Commodification of football in Israel." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 33, no. 3 (1998): 269-76; Cem Emrence, "From elite circles to power networks: Turkish soccer clubs in a global age, 1903-2005," *Soccer & Society* 11, no. 3 (2010): 242-52; Vic Duke & Liz Crolley, "Fútbol, politicians and the people: Populism and politics in Argentina," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 18, no. 3 (2001): 93-116; Jim Riordan, "Football: Nation, city and the dream. Playing the game for Russia, money and power," *Soccer & Society* 8, no. 4 (2007): 545-60.
- ⁷⁹ Jean-Pascal Daloz, "'Big Men' in Sub-Saharan Africa: How elites accumulate positions and resources," *Comparative Sociology* 2, no. 1 (2003): 271.
- ⁸⁰ See Marshall D. Sahlins, "Poor man, rich man, Big-Man, chief: Political types in Melanesia and Polynesia." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 5, no. 3 (1963): 285-303.
- ⁸¹ Martin A. van Bakel, Renée R. Hagesteijn & Pieter van der Velde, eds, *Private politics: A multi-disciplinary approach to 'Big-Man' systems*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986, 4.
- ⁸² Jean-François Bayart, *The state in Africa: The politics of the Belly, second edition*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009 (1989), 69.
- ⁸³ Bayart, *The state in Africa*.
- ⁸⁴ Max Weber, *Economy and society: An outline of interpretive sociology*, ed., Guenther Roth & Claus Wittich. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978 (1968), 1028-29.
- ⁸⁵ Patrick Chabal & Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa works: Disorder as political instrument*. Oxford: James Currey, 1999, 16.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.
- ⁸⁷ A vivid description of the president as Big Man can be found in Harden's work. See Blaine Harden, *Africa: Dispatches from a fragile continent*. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1993 (1990), 217-18.
- ⁸⁸ Martin Meredith, *The state of Africa: A history of fifty years of independence*. London: Free Press, 2005, 378-79.
- ⁸⁹ These are: The Prince, the autocrat, the prophet and the tyrant. See Robert H. Jackson & Carl G. Rosberg, *Personal rule in Black Africa: Prince, autocrat, prophet, tyrant*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982, 77-82.
- ⁹⁰ Robert H. Jackson & Carl G. Rosberg, "Personal rule: Theory and practice in Africa," *Comparative Politics* 16, no. 4 (1984): 421.
- ⁹¹ For instance, Lentz refers to a paramount chief, a mine captain and a politician in Ghana as "big men". Carola Lentz, "The chief, the mine captain and the politician: Legitimizing power in northern Ghana," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 68, no. 1 (1998): 46-67; see also Daloz, "'Big Men' in Sub-Saharan Africa."
- ⁹² Duke & Crolley, "Fútbol, politicians and the people," 104-05.
- ⁹³ Robert Price, "Politics and culture in contemporary Ghana: The Big-Man Small-Boy syndrome," *Journal of African Studies* 1, no. 2 (1973): 175.
- ⁹⁴ See Jennings, *Foul!*.
- ⁹⁵ See Conn, *The football business*; see Tom Bower, *Broken Dreams: The definitive exposé of British football corruption*. London: Pocket Books, 2007 (2003).
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iya-mohamed.html.
- 203 In 2009, the Asantehene responded to this rumour by stating that 'At no point in time have I been
linked to Hearts of Oak. In fact, until I became Asantehene, I had very little knowledge about
football.' See "Otumfuo: I'm not a Phobian," *Graphic Sports*, August 11, 2009, retrieved from
204 <http://sports.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/200908/33853.php>.
- 205 Quote taken from "The constitution of Asante Kotoko sporting club," signed April 23, 1988 by
Otumfuo Opoku Ware II.
- 206 See Tado Oumarou & Pierre Chazaud, *Football, religion et politique en Afrique: Sociologie du*
football Africain. Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010, 197-238.
- 207 Bandjoun is claimed to be home to a large number of billionaires. At the time of writing,
businessman Fotso Victor was regarded as the town's richest man. 'Whoever becomes successful as
president of Stade,' a former coach of Stade Bandjoun said, 'will always have the fear that Fotso
Victor will take over the club. It's a tradition that the richest man can always step in.' No rich man
took up the presidency and Stade relegated to a lower division.
- 208 Camfoot.com, "Valentine Molulu: 'Clubs should be allowed to own their own stadiums and
facilities'," July 13, 2004,
209 <http://www.camfoot.com/a-la-une/valentine-molulu-clubs-should-be,4912.html>.
- 210 At a meeting in 1990, supporters and officials of West Region-based club Panthère Bangangté voted
to change the club's name to Panthère Nde. Bangangté refers to the town where the club is based,
while Nde is the division of which Bangangté is the foremost town. Federal Fouban, also from the
West Region, changed its name to Federal Noun. Other examples are Bamboutos Mbouda and Aigle
Royal Menoua.
- 211 Amara, "Between globalization and local 'modernity'," 11-12.
- 212 Sam Jonah was an ardent football fan. He always took his regular seat at the stadium and on
occasion he would travel with the team for away matches. 'If I had to choose my favourite team of
all times, it would be Goldfields in the 1990s,' said Herbert Addo, who was the team's coach during
most of the 1997 Champions League campaign. 'We had the best players. Many of them were
selected for the national team. In those days everybody wanted to play for the team. Salaries and
bonuses were high, and they were paid on time.'
- 213 Ayowa Afrifa Taylor, *Sam Jonah and the remaking of Ashanti*. Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers,
2006, 126.
- 214 This is what Kojo Fianoo said about the role of Jonah: 'Companies like Shell and Mobil were
fighting to do business with the mines. The best way to please Sam Jonah was to find some money
for the club. So Mobil gave Ashanti Goldfields \$500,000, Shell also gave \$500,000. If you didn't do
those things, you would end up losing your contracts. By giving money to the club these companies
were creating goodwill.'
- 215 Taylor, *Sam Jonah and the remaking of Ashanti*, 126.
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- 218 Akotex, Prestea Mines Stars, Voradep, Dumas, Juantex, GIHOC, Complex Stars, SS1974 and
Tarkwa Gold Star, among others, practically vanished along the way. A few company clubs, such as
KUMAPIM Stars, Roadmasters, Power FC and GHAPOHA Readers, survived in the 1980s and
1990s but were never really successful.
- 219 There are exceptions though. The Ethiopian Premier League, for instance, mostly consisted of
company clubs in the 2010/11 season. Examples are Muger Cement, Metehera Sugar, Ethiopian
Insurance, Harrar Beer Bottle FC, Banks SC and Ethiopian Coffee. The fact that these club all bear
the names of their sponsors goes back, as was stated in chapter 2, to the time in which the
government promoted Marxism. Even the popular and traditional club Saint George FC was forced
to take on the name Addis Abeba Beer Club for a while.
- 220 Piet Konings, "Privatization and ethno-regional protest in Cameroon." *Afrika Spectrum* 38, no. 1
(2003): 7.
- 221 One example is Fogape Yaoundé, sponsored by a credit fund, that ran into financial difficulties.
Another example is Prévoyance Yaoundé, owned by the *Caisse Nationale de Prévoyance Sociale*.

- In 1990, Prévoyance won the Cup of Cameroon. When the sponsor fell on hard time and the general director was sent to prison, the club went on relegation.
- 218 It was argued in chapter 2 that the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) stopped sponsoring football from the 1980s onwards. The now defunct P&T Social Club of Buea and the Power Cam of Victoria were also sponsored by companies. Elec Sport Limbe, sponsored by electricity company AES SONEL, was eventually cut off from the company's funds. Two extra reasons are given for the demise of company clubs in Cameroon's Anglophone region. First, it is said that the managers misused these clubs' funds. Second, companies in the Anglophone zone have increasingly been run by Francophone managers. The Francophones, of course, did not want to invest in Anglophone clubs, or so the story goes.
- 219 See Anthony Clayton, "Sport and African soldiers: The military diffusion of western sport throughout Sub-Saharan Africa." In: Baker & Mangan, *Sport in Africa*, 128-29.
- 220 Schoon, *De macht van de bal*, 139.
- 221 Fair, "Kickin' it," 237.
- 222 Ibid., 238.
- 223 Sharkey, *Living with colonialism*, 38.
- 224 Tadasu Tsuruta, "Simba or Yanga? Football and urbanization in Dar es Salaam." In: *Dar es Salaam: Histories from an Emerging African Metropolis*, ed., James R. Brennan, Andrew Burton & Yusuf Lawi. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, 2007, 200.
- 225 Boer, "A story of heroes," 66.
- 226 See Lisa A. Lindsay, "Trade unions and football clubs: Gender and the 'modern' public sphere in colonial Southwestern Nigeria." In: *Leisure in urban Africa*, ed., Paul Tiyambe Zeleza and Cassandra Rachel Veney. Trenton: Africa World Press, 2003, 117-20.
- 227 Camfoot.com, "Prisons Buea: Going down the drain?," March 18, 2003, http://www.camfoot.com/?page=forum&id_article=1249.
- 228 Goldblatt, *The ball is round*, 883.
- 229 Examples are Enyimba FC (Abia State), Bayelsa United, Bayelsa Queen (Bayelsa State), Shooting Stars, Crown FC (Oyo State), Kaduna United (Kaduna State), Wikki Tourists (Bauchi State), Heartland FC (Imo State), Sunshine Stars (Ondo State) and Sharks FC (River State).
- 230 Pot, "Kotoko vrs K. Faisal." *Kotoko Express*, July 17-20, 2009.
- 231 Akpabot, *Football in Nigeria*, 32.
- 232 Quotes with regard to the constitutions of Hearts of Oak and Asante Kotoko in the rest of this section are taken from "Constitution of Accra Hearts of Oak Sporting Club Arrangement of Chapter and Articles," signed August 2, 1990; and "The Constitution of Asante Kotoko Sporting Club," signed April 23, 1988 by Otumfuo Opoku Ware II.
- 233 One interesting example to prove these constitutions were not created overnight cannot be withheld. In 1937, two years after Asante Kotoko was founded, the administrators introduced a set of regulations. First, the team was to meet once a week on Saturdays. Second, the team captain and the coach would select the players who would feature in the line-up. Third, once selected, a player could not refuse to play. Fourth, the administrators were to meet once a month and had to pay a monthly fee. Fifth, the minutes of the meetings should be kept secret. Sixth, players were not allowed to take jerseys home; these should be sent to the house of the club president instead. Seventh, players who failed to listen to the team captain during the match risked being fined or suspended. Eighth, new members were to pay one shilling as an entrance fee. These and other rules gradually evolved into the present constitution of Asante Kotoko. See Akyeampong, *Fabulous Asante Kotoko*, 19.
- 234 At Hearts and Kotoko, there are official organs for both the old players and the female supporters. First, members of the old players' association always take up one or more formal positions. In fact, it is quite common to see former players acting as members of Board of Directors or management committees. Indeed, a typical club in Africa produces at least a few famous players who, after having retired from playing football themselves, tend to influence the running of the club. Also, as many supporters of both Hearts and Kotoko are female, members of the Hearts Ladies and the Kotoko Ladies, too, occupy management positions.
- 235 Claude Adolf Mundi, popularly known as the *Makossa* musician Petit Pays, was asked by 'the elites and natives of Akwa' to become the president of Caiman Douala in 2009. A General Assembly was organised on 27 September in Douala's Akwa *quartier* and presided over by the traditional ruler Dine Dika Akwa III and other traditional authorities in the Littoral Region. Petit Pays was presented

- as the new leader of the club and, as tradition dictates, was the first to make a reported donation of two million CFA francs (€3,000). The total amount raised at the Congress was close to ten million CFA francs (€15,000). See Camfoot.com, "'Petit Pays' takes over Caiman FC of Douala," September 18, 2009, <http://www.camfoot.com/?petit-pays-takes-over-caiman-fc-of,10835.html>; see also Jacques Eric Andjick, "Caiman de Douala: un comité directeur pour accompagner Petit-Pays," *Quotidien Mutations*, September 29, 2009, <http://www.quotidienmutations.info/septembre/1254093958.php>.
- 236 Such a Congress is typically held prior to the start of the season, in which case the expected costs of maintaining the team are made public. When PWD Bamenda organised a huge fund-raising Congress in 2005, they budgeted the participation in the Elite Two league and Cup of Cameroon competition at 133 million CFA francs (€200,000). To be sure, this is not the actual money a club has in the bank but an estimate of how much is necessary to maintain the team. Prominent individuals, among whom the well-known tea magnate Alhaji Baba Ahmadou Danpullo, donated amounts of one million CFA francs (€1,500) each. In the end, an amount of 16.5 million CFA francs (€25,000) was raised by Big Men and ordinary supporters. See Choves Loh, "PWD Bamenda overhauls executive," *Cameroon Tribune*, April 5, 2005, retrieved from <http://allafrica.com/stories/200504050179.html>.
- 237 For instance, Panthère Ndé prepared to face Les Astres in the final of the 2009 Cup of Cameroon by raising around eight million CFA francs (€12,000) at a Congress. Congresses are commonly held when clubs battle for promotion during specially organised tournaments, such as the interpools (Cameroon) or middle league (Ghana). Tiko United held a Congress near the end of the 2008/09 season. With only five matches to play Tiko had a chance to become the first Anglophone club ever to win the Elite One league. An amount of 14.5 million CFA francs (€22,000) was raised to help the team stay ahead of Coton Sport Garoua. See Innocent Mbunwe, "Tiko United raises FCFA 14.5M," *The Post*, March 17, 2009, retrieved from <http://www.camfoot.com/championnat/tiko-united-raises-fcfa-14-5m,10297.html>.
- 238 One supporter in Cameroon called the Congress a 'market for beggars'. 'I don't like beggars,' he added. Others have claimed that the money raised is usually "peanuts" and in extreme cases no money is made at all. 'I remember renting a Congress hall that cost me 100,000 CFA francs,' said Augustine Iche Ozoemena, the former president of PWD Bamenda. 'We raised a total of 50,000 to 60,000 francs. That will tell you that we actually lost money.'
- 239 "Editorial: Time to take advantage of MTN deal," *Hearts News*, May 12, 2009.
- 240 Newspaper reports in 2005 indicated that Hearts had amassed a debt of close to \$1 million. Around the same time it was said of Kotoko that its accumulated debts had risen to six million new cedi (€3 million). See "Hearts of Oak is one million dollar in debt," *Daily Graphic*, September 16, 2005, retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/SportsArchive/artikel.php?ID=90293>; see also Modernghana.com, "Kotoko owe over six billion Cedis," September 21, 2005, <http://www.modernghana.com/news/2/86635/2/kotoko-owe-over-six-billion-cedis.html>.
- 241 Naijaligue.blogspot.com, "Features: Nigerian league in N765m rubbles," January 11, 2010, accessed October 2010, <http://naijaligue.blogspot.com/2010/01/features-nigerian-league-in-n765m.html>.
- 242 Herbertmensah.wordpress.com, "You were warned," April 26, 2000, accessed October 2010, <http://herbertmensah.wordpress.com/2000/04/26/you-were-warned/>.
- 243 Let us go through the list. Asante Kotoko's CEO was a Kumasi-based businessman named Sylvester Asare Owusu. Bechem Chelsea and Tema Youth were run by a group of businessmen led by Emmanuel Kyeremeh. The chairman of Berekum Arsenal was a businessman named Alhaji Yakubu Moro. Sekondi Hasaacas was run by businessman Ben Nab Eyison. King Faisal's owner was the outspoken Muslim businessman Alhaji Karim Grunsah. The president of Heart of Lion was Accra-based businessman Victor Akpene Ahiakpor, and Kessben FC was founded/owned by one of Ghana's richest businessmen, Kwabena Kesse. The 2009 interim management of Hearts of Oak consisted of three businessmen: Frank Nelson Nwokolo, Thomas Okine and Isaac Tetteh. Liberty Professionals was owned by businessman Alhaji Ibrahim Sly Tetteh. Also, Sekondi Eleven Wise was taken over by a company named Avanti Solutions in 2007 with company director Jamil Maraby becoming the club's CEO. Finally, the Japanese businessman Toshihiro Iwasa held a majority of shares at Gamba All Blacks.
- 244 Daloz, "'Big Men' in Sub-Saharan Africa," 271.

- 245 In Ghana, there are rumours with regard to the origins of certain Big Men's wealth. For example, it is said that some presidents/owners, directors and CEOs of clubs in the Ghanaian Premier League are involved in the drug trade. They are believed to finance clubs in order to launder their ill-gotten gains. It is indeed not always clear how some Big Men in football acquired their wealth. Some of them have explained their businesses as "import-export". To be sure, Ghana is a major transfer route in the global drug trade. In August 2011, the owner of Premier League club Mighty Jets was arrested by a narcotics squad.
- 246 GFA Statutes, Article 23.1, 2006.
- 247 GFA Statutes, Article 28.8, 2006.
- 248 GFA Statutes, Article 28.9, 2006.
- 249 Camfoot.com, "FECAFOOT: Iya Mohammed redistribue les cartes," November 26, 2009, <http://www.camfoot.com/Fecafoot-Iya-Mohammed-redistribue,11088.html>.
- 250 Ghanaweb.com, "Nyantakyi heads Black Stars Management Committee," August 31, 2011, <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=217553>.
- 251 As Giulianotti observes, 'Virtually all clubs are named emblematically after a particular "place", and thus have the kind of affective tie to a specific locality that one finds in more traditional and localist societies'. Giulianotti, *Football: A sociology of the global game*, 15.
- 252 Martin, *Leisure and society in colonial Brazzaville*, 119-20.
- 253 Information retrieved from Tim Edensor & Ibrahim Koodoruth, "Football and Ethnicity in Mauritius: (Re)producing communal allegiances." In: Armstrong & Giulianotti, *Football in Africa*, 135-138.
- 254 Tsuruta, "Simba or Yanga?," 201.
- 255 Quotes taken from Alegi, *Laduma!*, 65, 67.
- 256 Cohen, *Custom and politics in urban Africa*, 4.
- 257 Bayart, *The State in Africa*, 50-51.
- 258 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 49.
- 259 Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 143.
- 260 Emelia Ennin, "Kufuor shakes stars," *Daily Guide*, January 28, 2008.
- 261 "So far, so good, says President," *Daily Graphic*, February 5, 2008.
- 262 Jeremy MacClancy, "Sport, identity and ethnicity." In: *Sport, identity and ethnicity*, ed., Jeremy MacClancy. Oxford: Berg, 1996, 3.
- 263 Ibid.
- 264 Grant Farred, "Long-distance love: Growing up a Liverpool football club fan." *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 26, no. 1 (2002): 6-24.
- 265 Richard Vokes, "Arsenal in Bugamba: The rise of English Premier League football in Uganda," *Anthropology Today* 26, no. 3 (2010): 10-15.
- 266 Ayokunle Olumuyiwa Omobowale, "Sport and European soccer fans in Nigeria," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 44, no. 6 (2009): 624-34.
- 267 Armstrong & Giulianotti, *Football in Africa*, 16.
- 268 Armstrong & Giulianotti, *Fear and loathing in World Football*, 7.
- 269 Governor Marchand of Cameroon wanted a football match in Yaoundé to celebrate French festivities on 11 November 1930. Since teams from Yaoundé had travelled to Douala to be part of the celebrations there, the governor demanded a new, indigenous team to be formed in Yaoundé to play the Douala-based team, L'Étoile Indigène. Canon Yaoundé was formed and subsequently won its first-ever match by 1-0.
- 270 Martin, *Leisure and society in Colonial Brazzaville*, 116-17.
- 271 Ian Jeffrey, "Street rivalry and patron-managers: Football in Sharpeville, 1943-1985," *African Studies* 51, no. 1 (1992): 78.
- 272 Giulianotti, *Football: A sociology of the global game*, 10.
- 273 Ossie Stuart, "The lions stir: Football in African society." In: *Giving the game away: Football, politics and culture on five continents*, ed., Stephen Wagg. London: Leicester University Press, 1995, 39.
- 274 Tsuruta, "Simba or Yanga?," 198.
- 275 Akyeampong, *Fabulous Asante Kotoko*, 36.
- 276 The derby between Canon and Tonnerre had in fact already lost of its appeal even before Tonnerre relegated in 2005. Reasons cited are the clubs' financial difficulties and lack of successes in recent years. See BBC Sport, "Cameroon derby loses its shine," August 30, 2004,

- http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/3604730.stm.
- 277 Bloomfield, *Africa United*, 19-21.
- 278 Stephen Borquaye, *The saga of Accra Hearts of Oak Sporting Club*. Accra: New Times Press, 1968, 28.
- 279 "Hearts loses Patron," *GNA*, November 26, 2007, retrieved from
http://mobile.ghanaweb.com/wap/article.php?ID=134798.
- 280 Akyeampong, *Fabulous Asante Kotoko*, 17-18.
- 281 Called *mmoatia* in the Akan language, these dwarfs live in forest areas and have various skin colours (dark, red, yellow). They are also renowned for their speed. Moreover, their feet are attached backwards to their legs and so anyone who follows their trail will walk in the opposite direction. 'A dwarf can become friends with you,' the Cameroonian witchdoctor (or spiritual adviser) Zé once told me. You can then ask them to help you win a match. A dwarf can slow the attacker down by pulling his jersey. They are very fast and strong and they don't fear anything. They only get distracted if you throw bananas on the field.'
- 282 Canon's ethnic origins are recounted in the club's official hymn. The refrain goes as follows: 'Bravo, bravo Canon/ Vive le Canon/ Et ses adherents/ Bravo Canon/ Canon est le souvenir de notre pays/ Que signifie Canon?/ Canon signifie le peuple Ewondo. See Théodore Ateba Yene, *Les dessous scandaleux du football au Cameroun de 1934 à 1989*. Presses de l'Imprimerie Nationale, 1990, 11.
- 283 In fact, Tonnerre Yaoundé was founded by the late Martin Omgba Zing, at the time a disgruntled Canon player. Zing is thus regarded as the club's founding father; his family members are said to see themselves as the club's owners.
- 284 See André Ntonfo, "Football et identité," *Présence Africaine* 158 (1998): 121.
- 285 Antoine Attikpa, "Les phénomènes de la violence dans le sport: l'Exemple du football en République du Bénin". PhD diss., University of Bordeaux II, 1990, 155; Adolphe Ogouyon, "Le Football au Pays de Vodouns: Le Cas du Bénin," *Sociétés & Représentations*, no. 7 (1998): 168.
- 286 See Yene, *Les dessous scandaleux du football au Cameroun*, 11.
- 287 See Fred Kaweesi, "Cranes foes Benin opts to change name," *New Vision*, October 9, 2008, retrieved from <http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/58/61/653858>.
- 288 In 2011, South Africa decided to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars for the rights to keep on using the nickname. The rights were owned by a company named Stanton Woodrush. See BBC Sport, "South Africa reach deal for Bafana Bafana nickname," June 24, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/13904981>.
- 289 Martin, *Leisure and society in Colonial Brazzaville*, 120.
- 290 George Orwell, "The sporting spirit," *Tribune*, December 1945, retrieved from http://orwell.ru/library/articles/spirit/english/e_spirit.
- 291 See Evans Chapanga, "An analysis of the war metaphors used in spoken commentaries of the 2004 edition of the Premier Soccer League (PSL) Matches in Zimbabwe," *Zambezia* 31, no. 1 (2004): 62-79.
- 292 See Patrick Royer, "The spirit of competition: *Wak* in Burkina Faso," *Africa* 72, no. 3 (2002): 476-78.
- 293 Aside from preparing the players for the upcoming match, camping is also meant to ensure that they refrain from activities that may negatively affect their performances.
- 294 N.A. Scotch, "Magic, Sorcery, and football among urban Zulu: A case of reinterpretation under acculturation." In: *Play, games, and sports in cultural contexts*, ed., Janet C. Harris & Roberta J. Park. Champaign: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1983, 489.
- 295 See Ntonfo, *Football et politique du football au Cameroun*, 57.
- 296 John S. Pobe & Emmanuel H. Mends, "Social change and African traditional religion," *Sociology of Religion* 38, no. 1 (1977): 9.
- 297 Royer, "The spirit of competition," 475.
- 298 Pannenberg, *How to win a football match in Cameroon*, 186.
- 299 Scotch, "Magic, sorcery, and football among urban Zulu," 488.
- 300 See Yene, *Les dessous scandaleux du football au Cameroun*, 15.
- 301 Kenbediako.com, "The western show boys," October 13, 2008, <http://www.kenbediako.com/blog1.php/the-western-show-boshe-western-show-boys>.
- 302 Akyeampong, *Fabulous Asante Kotoko*, 65.
- 303 Ibid.

- 304 Asantekotokofc.org, "Fabu Fila Launched," April 18, 2008,
 http://www.asantekotokofc.org/Newreel/2008/000408/fabu_fila.htm.
- 305 "Hearts launches "Phobia 1911"," *90 Minutes*, April 20, 2009, retrieved from
 http://mobile.ghanaweb.com/wap/article.php?ID=160843.
- 306 The refrain goes as follows: 'Arise, arose, arisen/ Be quiet and cheer us on/ We are the famous
 Hearts of Oak/ We never say die.' See "Glorious Hearts of Oak 2000," brochure published after
 Hearts' victory in the 2000 CAF Champions League, Unknown Publisher and Date, 1.
- 307 Kobby, "The porcupine to be "roasted alive"..." *Hearts News*, June 2, 2009.
- 308 Kobby, "Nothing can save the Fabulous maff! Maff now!," *Hearts News*, June 12, 2009.
- 309 Pot, No Title, *Kotoko Express*, June 16, 2009.
- 310 David Kyei, "The day the bones got rotten," *Kotoko Express*, June 17-18, 2009.
- 311 Kenbediako.com, "No More Wonders," May 31, 2008, http://www.kenbediako.com/blog1.php/no-
 more-wonders.
- 312 See Tsanga, *Le Football Camerounais*, 29.
- 313 Borquaye, *The saga of Accra Hearts of Oak Sporting Club*, 29.
- 314 See also Akyeampong, *Fabulous Asante Kotoko*, 26.
- 315 "RE: The traditional colours of Asante Kotoko," *Kotoko Express*, June 23, 2009.
- 316 Ntonfo, *Football et politique du football au Cameroun*, 211.
- 317 Footballfables.co.uk, "FF Extra - Ghana Football Admin," Accessed 20 December 2010,
 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qz3Z6-b1V5k.
- 318 For example, the majority of patrons, director and management members of Asante Kotoko are
 Ashanti. Ben Nab Eyison, CEO of Sekondi Hasaacas, is a native of the Sekondi area and belongs to
 the Fanti ethnic group. President Victor Akpene Ahiakpor of Heart of Lions is a native of Kpandu,
 the town in which the team plays its home matches. Management positions within Real Tamale
 United are commonly occupied by Muslim businessmen from the Northern Region. This list goes
 on and on, and a similar list could be made of clubs in Cameroon.
- 319 Let me explain the difference by drawing a comparison between two Bamileke-owned clubs, name-
 ly Racing Bafoussam and Union Douala. Racing is both a traditional and a community-based club;
 its home turf is Bafoussam (West Region) which is Bamileke territory. Moreover, Racing is owned
 by the community in Bafoussam. Union, on the other hand, is a community-based club but not a
 traditional club; it is owned by the community living in a Bamileke-dominated Ntonfo area in
 Douala. The Bamileke, however, are traditionally not Douala natives.
- 320 Ntonfo, *Football et politique du football au Cameroun*, 60.
- 321 See for example Francis Nyamnjoh & Michael Rowlands, "Elite associations and the politics of
 belonging in Cameroon," *Africa* 68, no. 3 (1998): 320-37; Peter Geschiere & Stephen Jackson,
 "Autochthony and the crisis of citizenship: Democratization, decentralization, and the politics of
 belonging," *African Studies Review* 49, no. 2 (2006): 1-7.
- 322 Piet Konings & Francis B. Nyamnjoh, "Construction and deconstruction: Anglophones or autoch-
 tones?," *The African Anthropologist* 7, no. 1 (2000): 6-7.
- 323 See Nantang Jua, "'Spatialization" and valorization of identities in contemporary Cameroon." In:
The leadership challenge in Africa: Cameroon under Paul Biya, ed., John Mukum Mbaku & Joseph
 Takougang. Trenton: Africa World Press, 2004, 321-24.
- 324 Andrea Borghini & Andrea Baldini examine how a Big Man's public *persona* is mirrored in the
 football sphere. In doing so, they make use of the metaphor which is a tool to 'transfer meaning
 from one sphere of discourse to another'. Taking three clubs/patrons in Italy under consideration,
 they discuss ways in which a 'metaphorical transfer (occurs) between a soccer patron and his public
persona'. They argue that 'what initially was a mere name within a mundane sphere becomes at the
 end of a mirrored process a full-fledged persona, which crucially passes through the soccer sphere'.
 See Borghini & Baldini, "On the logic of soccer patronage," 572.
- 325 Veblen, *The theory of the leisure class*, 49-69.
- 326 Daloz, "'Big Men" in Sub-Saharan Africa," 281.
- 327 Sandeau Nlomtiti, "Claude Zoundja, le diamant du football," *Le Messenger*, 2002, exact date un-
 known.
- 328 Jeffrey, "Street rivalry and patron-managers," 70.
- 329 *Ibid.*, 84.

- 330 These benefits included a seat in the VIP section (and a VIP Car Pass) with snacks and a copy of the
 match-day brochure, and an invitation to the 'end-of-year patrons dinner dance'. See advertisement,
 "The life patron of Asante Kotoko SC," *Kotoko Express*, April 29-30, 2009.
- 331 "Chairman Pee gives to technical team," *Kotoko Express*, July 7, 2009.
- 332 "Alhaji Lamin gives to Kotoko again," *Kotoko Express*, July 8-9, 2009.
- 333 They all pose together on a photo in Hearts News. See "MTN gives to Hearts," *Hearts News*, June
 2, 2009.
- 334 Désiré Manirakiza, "Football amateur au Cameroun: Entre clientélisme politique et échanges
 mutuels," *Politique Africaine* 118 (2010): 103-22.
- 335 Nlomtiti, "Claude Zoundja, le diamant du football," *Le Messager*; "Koungou, l'alpha et l'omega du
 Canon," *Le Messager*, September 1, 2002, retrieved from <http://www.camfoot.com/?presidents-de-clubs-mythiques,808.html>; Sandeau Nlomtiti, "Ongba Zing, fondateur du Tkc," *Le Messager*, 2002,
 exact date unknown.
- 336 Kenbediako.com, "Asante Kotoko Win Bragging Rights," December 7, 2008,
<http://www.kenbediako.com/blog1.php/asante-kotoko-win-bragging-rights>.
- 337 Quoted in Jeffrey, "Street rivalry and patron-managers," 84.
- 338 Daloz, "'Big Men' in Sub-Saharan Africa," 283.
- 339 Andreas Mehler, "Political discourse in football coverage – the cases of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana,"
Soccer & Society 9, no. 1 (2008): 100.
- 340 Armstrong, "Life, death, and the biscuit," 197.
- 341 An example is Isaac "Opee" Boateng who, as coach of Asante Kotoko, was one of Kumasi's most
 well-known inhabitants in 2009. When we were driving in his car one day, he stated that he could
 'drive on the other side of the road' or 'make a U-turn here', because no police officer would dare
 touch him. When asked why they had chosen their career paths, referees consistently answered that
 they wanted to become FIFA referees. Being a referee certainly improved Kwame Nsiah Bofo's
 social standing. 'I feel proud to be a referee,' he told me, 'because through refereeing I've come to
 know so many people like lawyers, doctors and so on. When I go to the hospital, they all know me
 as a referee. They will give me priority. When I go to the bank, I will be the first one in line.' Lastly,
 Abdul Aziz, the chairman of Hearts of Oak's legendary Chapter "0", has become quite a famous
 supporter in Ghana.
- 342 Footballfables.co.uk, "FF Extra - Ghana Football Admin."
- 343 Nguini-Effa's imprisonment was a result of a state-funded anti-corruption programme called
Opération Epervier (Operation Sparrowhawk). Critics say the programme is a witch-hunt against
 those who oppose president Paul Biya's rule.
- 344 Zakkour won the Chairman of the Year award for his accomplishments in 2000. He also earned
 himself the nickname Millennium Chairman.
- 345 In 1977, Hearts lost the final to Guinea's Hafía Conakry; two years later, Hearts was defeated by
 Cameroon's Union Douala on penalties. In 2000, nothing was left to chance in the run-up to the
 second leg of the final against Espérance Tunis. Zakkour promised each player a \$25,000 winning
 bonus. Hearts scored three goals in the dying minutes of a tumultuous match.
- 346 "Harry Zakkour to quit Hearts," *GNA*, September 28, 2001, retrieved from
<http://www.modernghana.com/news2/17127/2/harry-zakkour-to-quit-hearts.html>.
- 347 "Harry Zakuor (sic) prepares for life in politics," *Think Ghana*, January 23, 2009, retrieved from
<http://www.thinkghana.com/tools/printnews/news.php?contentid=26114>.
- 348 "Minister imposes Harry Zakkour on NDC," *Today*, December 18, 2009, retrieved from
<http://elections.peacefonline.com/politics/200912/34841.php>.
- 349 "Harry Zakour [sic] wins for NDC," *Daily Guide*, December 21, 2009, retrieved from
<http://elections.peacefonline.com/politics/200912/35057.php>.
- 350 Baker, "Political games," 290.
- 351 Paul Darby, *Africa, football and FIFA: Politics, colonialism and resistance*. London: Frank Cass,
 2002, 35.
- 352 Terence Monnington, "The politics of black African sport." In: *The politics of sport*, ed., Lincoln
 Allison. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986, 159.
- 353 Quoted in Monnington, "The Politics of Black African Sport," 166.
- 354 BBC Sport, "Words of warning," October 11, 2005,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/4331456.stm>.

- 355 For a discussion on the use of metaphors of the family and the father, see Michael G. Schatzberg, *Political legitimacy in middle Africa: Father, family, food*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001, 8-19.
- 356 To be sure, such promises are commonly made prior to a high-profile tournament. A recent example includes a promise made by the son of the longstanding president Teodoro Obiang Nguema of oil-rich Equatorial Guinea prior to the start of the 2012 African Cup of Nations. The son promised the national team players a collective \$1 million bonus if they beat Libya in the opening match (they did). He later presented a cheque to the team captain during a press conference. See BBC Sport, "Eq Guinea squad to earn US\$1m for Libya win," January 18, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/16613341>; BBC Sport, "Equatorial Guinea squad receive million-dollar bonus," January 24, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/16709557>.
- 357 Delavil Lekunze, *The hidden power in African football*. Bedfordshire: Authors Online Ltd, 2006, 42.
- 358 Peterkins Manyong, "Biya The Political Maradona," *The Post*, May 7, 2007, http://www.postnewsline.com/2007/05/biya_the_politi.html.
- 359 Monnington, "The politics of black African sports," 171. A similar point is made by Baller & Saavedra who state that the outcome of the utilisation by presidents and political parties of football is unpredictable. See Susann Baller & Martha Saavedra, "La politique du football en Afrique: mobilisations et trajectoires," *Politique Africaine* 118 (2010): 10.
- 360 By August 1991, 37 of the 47 senior préfets, 75 percent of the directors and general managers of parastatals and 22 of the 38 high-ranking bureaucrats all had Beti roots. See Joseph Takougang, "The demise of Biya's new deal in Cameroon, 1982-1992." In: Mbaku & Takougang, *The leadership challenge in Africa*, 91-101.
- 361 Nkwi & Vidacs, "Football: Politics and power in Cameroon," 130.
- 362 Victor Julius Ngoh, "Biya and the transition to democracy." In: Mbaku & Takougang, *The leadership challenge in Africa*, 435.
- 363 Bea Vidacs, "Through the prism of sports: Why should Africanists study sports?" *Afrika Spectrum* 41, no. 3 (2006): 339.
- 364 Ntonfo, *Football et politique du football au Cameroun*, 214.
- 365 Vidacs, "Through the prism of sports," 341.
- 366 Bea Vidacs, "Football in Cameroon: A vehicle for the expansion and contraction of identity." In: Finn & Giulianotti, *Football Culture*, 109.
- 367 Leocadia Bongben, "Voetbal als een politiek wapen in Kameroen," *De Volkskrant*, November 10, 2009.
- 368 Camfoot.com, "Paul Le Guen à Yaoundé," July 26, 2009, <http://www.camfoot.com/en-vedette/paul-le-guen-a-yaounde,10664.html>.
- 369 Elias Ntungwe Ngalame & Neveil Numvi, "Biya gets new code name," *Eden Newspaper*, February 3-8, 2010.
- 370 For more information about the links between football, ethnicity and politics (including the MDC) in Zimbabwe, see Praise Zenenga, "Visualizing politics in African sport: Political and cultural constructions in Zimbabwean soccer," *Soccer & Society* 13, no. 2 (2012): 250-63.
- 371 Ndee, "Modern sport in independent Tanzania," 93-94.
- 372 Tsuruta, "Simba or Yanga?," 203-04.
- 373 Ndee, "Modern sport in independent Tanzania," 95-96.
- 374 These cases are discussed in the following publications. Ndee, "Modern sport in independent Tanzania," 89-113; Ndee, "Sport as a political tool," 678; Tsuruta, "Simba or Yanga?," 198-212; Dean E. McHenry Jr, "The use of sports in policy implementation: The case of Tanzania," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 18, no. 2 (1980): 237-56.
- 375 Fridy & Brobbey, "Win the match and vote for me," 34.
- 376 Njororai, "Colonial legacy, minorities and association football in Kenya," 868.
- 377 *Ibid.*, 874.
- 378 Peter Geschiere, "Kinship, witchcraft, and the moral economy of ethnicity: Contrasts from Southern and Western Cameroon." In: *Ethnicity in Africa: Roots, meanings and implications*, ed., Louise de la Gorgendière, Kenneth King & Sarah Vaughan. Edinburgh: Centre of African Studies, 1996, 167-68.
- 379 Naturally, the opposition harbours a strong resentment towards the CPDM, as is clear from the party's nickname, Chop People Dem Money.

- 380 Louis-Marie Ongoum, "Etre arbitre de football au Cameroun: Une expérience douloureuse," *Mots*
Pluriel, no. 6 (1998), <http://motspluriels.arts.uwa.edu.au/MP698lmo.html>.
- 381 On the other hand, the prestigious Cup of Cameroon was consistently won by the Yaoundé clubs.
 When Tonnerre and Racing were pitted against each other in the 1991 Cup final, Tonnerre beat the
 Bamileke team 1-0.
- 382 Antoine Socpa, *Démocratisation et autochtonie au Cameroun: Trajectoires régionales divergentes*.
 Münster: Lit Verlag, 2003, 29.
- 383 See Jean-Baptiste Onana, "Cameroun: Le Sport contre les ethnies," *Outre-Terre* 3, no. 8 (2004): 69-
 77, <http://www.cairn.info/revue-outre-terre-2004-3-page-69.htm>; Ntonfo, *Football et politique du*
football au Cameroun, 209-23.
- 384 It has to be noted that FECAFOOT had officially approved the final league table a few days earlier,
 in which Foudre's relegation was confirmed. Inhabitants of Akonolinga accused Aigle Royal for
 having bribed their opponent in the last league round which was the direct cause of Foudre's
 relegation and Aigle Royal's maintenance in the Elite One league. The story goes as follows. Aigle
 Royal played its last match against Lion Ngoma. When the latter team did not show up, Aigle Royal
 received three points and escaped relegation. Foudre supporters went on to suspect Aigle Royal of
 having bribed Lion Ngoma, a team that was already relegated-bound.
- 385 Gefominyen.com, "Football, ethnic identity and nationhood: Beti against Bamileke violence after a
 Cameroon Cup Game," July 23, 2008, <http://www.gefominyen.com/2008/07/football-ethnic.html>.
- 386 Cameroon-info.net, "Violences à Akonolinga: Deux Morts!," July 17, 2008, [http://www.cameroon-
 info.net/stories/0,23151,@,violences-a-akonolinga-deux-morts.html](http://www.cameroon-

 info.net/stories/0,23151,@,violences-a-akonolinga-deux-morts.html).
- 387 See Alegi, *African soccerescapes*, 37-42.
- 388 BBC News, "Nigeria's strangled football industry," July 6, 2010,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10524059>.
- 389 Thisissport.info, "Over W. Cup mess, MPs tell Minister 'Resign! Resign!'," July 2, 2010,
<http://thisissport.info/2010/07/mps-tell-sport-minister-resign-resign-over-w-cup-failure/>.
- 390 Parliamentary Debates Official Report, "Congratulatory Messages (Black Stars)," February 2, 2010.
- 391 Clignet and Stark, "Modernisation and Football in Cameroun," 419.
- 392 In fact, half of the 16 top league clubs during my fieldwork in 2003 were associated with the
 Bamileke. These clubs were Bamboutos Mbouda, Mount Cameroon, Unisport Bafang, Fovu
 Baham, Union Douala, Racing Bafoussam, Sable Batie and Stade Bandjoun.
- 393 The general idea is that the Big Man's home region will immediately profit from his position.
 Hansen argues that Cameroonians believe that 'if you had a Minister from your own province, your
 province would progress and develop rapidly', although adding that that was not always the reality.
 'When your brother is in heaven, you can never go to hell,' a Cameroonian once told me, implying
 that tribesmen will always help each other out. Thus a club president who becomes a parliamenta-
 rian will first of all invest in his own region. See Ketil Fred Hansen, "The Politics of Personal
 Relations: Beyond Neopatrimonial Practices in Northern Cameroon," *Africa* 73, no. 2 (2003): 211.
- 394 See for instance Francis B. Nyamnjoh, *Africa's media, democracy and the politics of belonging*.
 Pretoria: UNISA Press, 2005, 117; Milton Krieger, *Cameroon's Social Democratic Front: Its*
history & prospects as an opposition political party (1990-2011). Mankon: Langaa, 2008, 91; Piet
 Konings, *The politics of neoliberal reforms in Africa: State and civil society in Cameroon*. Mankon:
 Langaa, 2011, 51.
- 395 Jeffrey, "Street rivalry and patron-managers," 82-89.
- 396 AfriCOG Report, "Foul play! The crisis of football management in Kenya," July 2010, 16.
- 397 "Football politics is "tougher" than party politics - Ade Coker," *GNA*, March 30, 2010, retrieved
 from [http://www.ghananewsagency.org/details/Politics/Football-politics-is-tougher-than-party-
 politics/?ci=2&ai=14043](http://www.ghananewsagency.org/details/Politics/Football-politics-is-tougher-than-party-

 politics/?ci=2&ai=14043).
- 398 Jeffrey, "Street rivalry and patron-managers," 86.
- 399 This is actually also how Ghanaians call the biggest match in their football calendar (the one be-
 tween Hearts and Kotoko).
- 400 Akwei's first national league in 1957 precipitated the animosity between Accra and Kumasi. A total
 of 14 clubs, including five from the Ashanti Region, were to take part. Kotoko and the other Ashanti
 clubs boycotted the league. The Ashanti clubs received a lot of support from other clubs and in the
 end only Hearts and Eleven Wise stayed in the league.
- 401 The National League consisted of eight clubs: Hearts of Oak and Great Olympics (Accra), Asante
 Kotoko and Cornerstones (Kumasi), Mysterious Dwarfs and Venomous Vipers (Cape Coast), and

Eleven Wise and Hasaacas (Sekondi). The first three league titles were won by Hearts, Kotoko and Eleven Wise, respectively.

402 Akyeampong, *Fabulous Asante Kotoko*, 109.

403 Real Republikans played on a non-scoring basis and thus could not win the league.

404 Akyeampong, *Fabulous Asante Kotoko*, 91.

405 Bediako, *The national soccer league of Ghana*, 14.

406 Akyeampong, *Fabulous Asante Kotoko*, 97-98.

407 The next season of 1962/63 saw yet another controversy, again related to Nkrumah's and Ohene Djan's pet club. Sekondi Hasaacas had a great player amongst its ranks. Ohene Djan tried to lure this player, Liberian-born and Ghanaian-bred Modibo Toe, away from the Giants of the West to incorporate him into his own team, the Real Republikans. Hasaacas, obviously not amused, decided to suspend the player in order to prevent Ohene Djan from being able to take him away. The enraged Sports Minister subsequently dropped Hasaacas from the National League and replaced it with another Sekondi-based team, Ghana Independence. After that, 'Ohene Djan annulled the suspension of Modibo Toe "in the national interest" and transferred him to Republikans' With the help of the famous dribbler, Republikans won the league for the first and only time. See Bediako, *The national soccer league of Ghana*, 16.

408 Akyeampong, *Fabulous Asante Kotoko*, 99.

409 The British colonial authorities had earlier formed the Cocoa Marketing Board (CMB) to guarantee cocoa farmers a fixed price for their product. One problem of concern was that the CMB became notorious for corruption and mismanagement, and it was claimed that CPP members used the public funds for private gain. Another problem popped up when Nkrumah fixed the price of cocoa for a period of four years at a much lower level than that of the world market. Cocoa farmers and businessmen in the Ashanti Region, where half the country's cocoa crops were located, were furious and became violent.

410 Meredith, *The state of Africa*, 25.

411 Nkrumah's interests in football failed in another respect as well, namely with his proposal to create a continental competition called the Club of Champions Cup. Unfortunately, Real Republikans failed to win the inaugural edition in 1964, held in Ghana, as Nkrumah's team was beaten by the eventual winners Oryx Douala. Asante Kotoko did reach the final of the Cup (in 1967) where they were pitted against TP Englebert (now TP Mazembe). As no winner emerged from the first two legs, a third match was organised and the CAF provided the Accra-based administrators with the details concerning time and venue. Yet somehow the administrators did not inform Kotoko. As a result, Kotoko never showed up and lost the final by default.

412 It should be noted that the dominance of Hearts and Kotoko appears to be waning, which is exemplified by the fact that other teams have won the Premier League in recent times (Aduana Stars in 2010, Bechem Chelsea in 2011).

413 See the survey performed by Fridy & Brobbey, "Win the match and vote for me," 29-36.

414 Yet another example of the link between Hearts and the NDC came up when Hearts' general secretary, Ashford Tetteh-Oku, handed me a commemorative brochure published after Hearts' triumph in the 2000 CAF Champions League. Congratulatory messages by NDC Big Men such as Jerry Rawlings, John Evans Atta Mills, E.T. Mensah, Harry Zakkour & E.M. Commodore-Mensah, among others, filled the pages. See brochure "Glorious Hearts of Oak 2000."

415 "Ato Ahwoi, Atta Mills relinquish shares in Hearts," *GNA*, November 27, 2005, retrieved from <http://www.modernghana.com/news/90919/2/ato-ahwoi-atta-mills-relinquish-shares-in-hearts.html>.

416 "CAF Postpones Hearts-Kotoko Match," *Graphic Sports*, November 25, 2004, retrieved from <http://www.modernghana.com/news/2/67309/2/caf-postpones-hearts-kotoko-match.html>.

417 "Hearts presents CAF Cup to Kufuor," *GNA*, January 14, 2005, retrieved from <http://www.modernghana.com/news/2/70110/2/hearts-presents-caf-cup-to-kufuor.html>.

418 Kickoff.com, "Kotoko boss blames it on politics," April 7, 2009, <http://www.kickoff.com/news/7770/kotoko-boss-blames-it-on-politics.php>.

419 Fridy & Brobbey, "Win the match and vote for me," 25.

420 For instance, Rawlings' had been in power for two years when Asante Kotoko won the 1983 Cup of Champions Clubs. Kotoko was runner-up in the same competition in 1982 and again in 1993, in both cases with Rawlings and his (P)NDC government in power. Similarly, Kotoko failed to win the Cup Winners' Cup in 2002 and the Confederation Cup in 2004, despite the fact that the NPP were in

power. On the other hand, Hearts did win the 2000 CAF Champions League under Rawlings' rule. It must nevertheless be noted that Ghana's government is probably incapable of influencing continental competitions.

- 421 Prior to 1983, Hearts vs Kotoko matches were clearly decided in favour of Kotoko (Kotoko won 17 matches to 11 for Hearts). From 1983 until the end of the 2009/10 season, Hearts took the lead in number of victories (Hearts won 31 matches to 26 for Kotoko).
- 422 Modernghana.com, "E.T. Mensah politicized Ghana soccer - Kotoko boss," May 21, 2001, <http://www.modernghana.com/news/14224/2/et-mensah-politicized-ghana-soccer-kotoko-boss.html>.
- 423 The NPP collected 29 parliamentary seats in the Ashanti Region to 4 for the NDC in the 1996 elections; 31 to 2 in 2000; 36 to 3 in 2004; and 34 to 3 in 2008.
- 424 The NDC won 12 seats to 10 for the NPP in the Greater Accra Region during the 1996 elections. In 2000, these figures were largely reversed as the NPP scooped 16 seats to 6 for the NDC. In 2004, the NPP won 16 seats to 11 for the NDC. And, finally, in 2008 the figures were reversed again with the NDC collecting 18 seats to 9 for the NPP.
- 425 The NDC collected 18 seats from the North Region to 3 for the NPP in the 1996 elections. In 2000, the NDC again received 18 seats to 3 for the NPP; in 2004, 17 to 8; in 2008, 21 to 4.
- 426 This may be related to the view that Hearts is an "inclusive" club. 'Hearts is a club that is open to everyone,' Board member Alhaji Fawaz Zowk said. 'Ga, Fanti, Asante, Northerners, Lebanese, Nigerians - everybody is welcome at our club.' Many Northerners rather support the "open" nature of Hearts than Kotoko's Ashanti identity.
- 427 In 1996, the NDC collected 17 seats to 4 for the NPP in the Brong-Ahafo Region. This situation changed in 2000 when the NPP took 14 seats to 7 for the NDC; in 2004, the figures were 14 to 10; and in 2008, 15 to 8.
- 428 There is a common perception that Hearts draws the bulk of its support from the Ga in the Greater Accra Region and Kotoko is mostly supported by Ashanti from the Ashanti Region. Officials and supporters of both clubs have categorically denied that this is a fair representation of the geography of their support base. In fact, it is said that Hearts' biggest and most powerful Circle groups can be found in the Ashanti Region. Similarly, Kotoko's Chapter strongholds are alleged to be based in the Greater Accra Region.
- 429 It has to be noted, though, that when I performed my fieldwork in Ghana in 2009, a few Kotoko Board and management members were Accra-based businessmen. This distinction may thus be less clear-cut as presented above. Quote taken from Fridy and Brobbey, "Win the match and vote for me," 26.
- 430 "PV Obeng's appointments questioned," *Accra Mail*, April 2, 2002, retrieved from <http://www.modernghana.com/news/21558/1/pv-obengs-appointments-questioned.html>.
- 431 Piet Konings & Francis B. Nyamnjoh, "The anglophone problem in Cameroon," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 35, no. 2 (1997): 207.
- 432 In the end, Foncha 'had proposed a loose form of federalism but was eventually forced to accept a highly centralized system of government and administration'. See Konings & Nyamnjoh, "The anglophone problem in Cameroon," 209.
- 433 There is also a version of the history of the Cup of Cameroon in which Oryx Douala and Buea Red Devils were pitted against each other in the final of the 1963 edition. The match was said to have ended in a 1-1 draw and thus the Cup was not presented out to either of the two teams.
- 434 No wonder that Anglophones refer to this day as the "day of shame". I once asked footballer Essomba, who hails from the Northwest Region, to join me in watching the festivities on 20 May 2003 in Buea. 'No!' he answered, 'there's nothing to celebrate.'
- 435 I will limit myself to a selection of sources. Konings & Nyamnjoh, "The anglophone problem in Cameroon"; Piet Konings & Francis B. Nyamnjoh, *Negotiating an anglophone identity: A study of the politics of recognition and representation in Cameroon*. Leiden: Brill, 2003; Tata Simon Ngege, "The institutional roots of the "anglophone problem." In: *Cameroon: Politics and society in critical perspectives*, ed., Jean-Germain Gros. Lanham: University Press of America, 2003; Nantang Jua, "Anglophone political struggles and state responses." In: Jean-Germain Gros, *Cameroon*, 87-110; Piet Konings & Francis B. Nyamnjoh, "President Paul Biya and the "anglophone problem" in Cameroon." In: Mbaku & Tagougang, *The leadership challenge in Africa*, 191-234.
- 436 Konings & Nyamnjoh, "The anglophone problem in Cameroon," 211.

- 437 Nkwi also argues that presenting the trophy to the Anglophone prime minister was an important statement as well. See Walter Gam Nkwi, *Voicing the voiceless: Contributions to closing gaps in Cameroun history, 1958-2009*. Mankon: Langaa, 2010, 153.
- 438 Mbuh argues that ‘anti-Anglophone referees’ mishandled matches involving PWD Bamenda and several other Anglophone teams. See Justice Mbuh, *Inside contemporary Cameroun politics*. Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2005, 75.
- 439 To be frank, some of the stories I heard from PWD supporters were difficult to believe, as if time played tricks on their memories. ‘At one point PWD scored 12 times against a team from Dschang,’ supporter Cleopas told me. ‘The Francophone referee accepted only one goal and the match ended in a draw.’ Unbelievable as it may sound, this story was confirmed by former PWD striker Ben Bola, who said that the referee disregarded all those goals for no reason.
- 440 This statement may be exaggerated. Kuper argues that PWD Bamenda reached the 1979 Cup final ‘against all odds’. Indeed, the really powerful teams in the 1970s were those from Yaoundé (and Douala). However, the general point is that in those days Anglophones regarded PWD Bamenda as a team able to beat the Francophone teams which, in fact, it did en route to the final. See Kuper, *Football against the enemy*, 126.
- 441 Supporter Cleopas stated that Fon Doh Gah Gwanyin, the fon of Balikumkat and president of PWD Bamenda’s city rival CAMMARK, was furious. ‘The fon was also a fan of PWD,’ he said, ‘and he used to watch our matches. After the final he went looking for Epesse. He took out his stick 9a traditional and powerful artifact belonging to a fon0 but other players managed to take Epessi away before the fon could do harm. If he had touched Epesse with it, it would have killed him.’ The idea that Epesse sold the match is common knowledge in Cameroon today. See also Mbuh, *Inside contemporary Cameroun politics*, 74-75; see also Nkwi, *Voicing the voiceless*, 152.
- 442 Mbuh, *Inside contemporary Cameroun politics*, 75.
- 443 *Ibid.*, 76.
- 444 Jerome F. Gwellem, *Fru Ndi and the SDF revolution*. Bamenda: Unique Printers, 1996, 6.
- 445 The information in this paragraph is derived from Milton Krieger, “Cameroon’s democratic crossroads, 1990-4,” *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 32, no. 4 (1994): 610-11.
- 446 Gwellem, *Fru Ndi and the SDF revolution*, 66.
- 447 One famous remark was made by Basil Emah, a close collaborator of Biya, when he termed the Anglophones *les ennemis dans la maison* (the enemies in the house). Anglophones were also referred to as *traîtres* (traitors) and *les Biafraïses* (referring to the idea that English-speaking Cameroonians would prefer to join Nigeria).
- 448 Kuper, *Football against the enemy*, 126.
- 449 *Ibid.*, 127.
- 450 John Mukum Mbaku & Joseph Takougang, “General introduction: Biya and the promise of a better society.” In: Mbaku & Tagougang, *The leadership challenge in Africa*, 17.
- 451 Francis B. Nyamnjoh, “Cameroon: A country united by ethnic ambition and difference,” *African Affairs* 98, no. 390 (1999): 106.
- 452 See Konings & Nyamnjoh, “President Paul Biya and the “anglophone problem” in Cameroon,” 218-23.
- 453 For a detailed report (in Dutch), see Sanne Terlingen & Arnold Pannenborg, “Behekste ballen,” *NRC Weekblad*, June 12, 2010.
- 454 Konings & Nyamnjoh, “The anglophone problem in Cameroon,” 221.
- 455 Traditional rulers and mayors in Fako division are reported to have financially contributed to the club. As indicated in the text, CDC general manager Henry Njalla Quan makes annual donations of several million CFA francs. The same goes for Fako’s Senior Divisional Officer, Tiko’s Divisional Officer and the South west FECAFOOT president. Former prime minister Ephraim Inoni, a son of the soil, also regularly donated sums of money, as did his Director of Cabinet. The Southwest Governor, Louis Eyeya Zanga, also contributed to the welfare of the club. See Nkeze Mbonwoh, “Tiko United holds flame-fanning Congress,” *Cameroon Tribune*, March 19, 2009, retrieved from <http://allafrica.com/stories/200903190572.html>; see also Mbunwe, “Tiko United raises FCFA 14.5M.”
- 456 Cited in Mohammed Muniru Kassim, “Where is Hakeem – The chicken man?,” *Daily Guide*, February 27, 2008, retrieved from <http://www.modernghana.com/news/158762/1/where-is-hakeemthe-chicken-man.html>.
- 457 Mtngroup.com, “Sponsorship,” accessed January 14, 2011,

- <http://www.mtn.com/Brand/SponsorshipCSR/>.
- 458 MTN.com, "Supporting our customer's passions," accessed January 14, 2011,
<http://www.mtn.com/MTNGROUP/Sponsorship/Pages/Sponsorship-Overview.aspx>.
- 459 BBC Africa Business Report, "African apps boost business growth," May 20, 2011,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-13475609>.
- 460 Osasu Obayiuwana & Anver Versi, "The economics of football," *African Business*, June 1, 1998.
- 461 Ibid.
- 462 Poverty is indeed a major factor. The cheapest tickets for the 2008 African Cup of Nations in Ghana were between three and seven Ghana cedi. Most Ghanaians, however, would not be able to afford buying such tickets. Moreover, there are few Africans who would be able (and willing) to spend money on airplane tickets, accommodation and daily expenses only for football purposes. This is why it is common to see almost completely empty stands during African Cup of Nations matches in which the host nation does not feature.
- 463 Obayiuwana & Versi, "The economics of football."
- 464 Alegi, *African Soccerescapes*, 110.
- 465 BBC Sport, "Massive cash boost for African football," March 11, 2011,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/9421982.stm>.
- 466 Merryman Kunene, "Winning the cup but losing the plot? The troubled state of South African soccer." In: *State of the Nation, South Africa 2005-2006*, ed., Sakhela Buhlungu et al.. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2006, 374.
- 467 Darby & Solberg, "Differing trajectories," 119
- 468 Quotes taken from PSL.co.za, "Objectives" and "About the PSL,"
<http://www.psl.co.za/content.asp?id=5486>, and <http://www.psl.co.za/content.asp?id=5488>.
- 469 Scarlett Cornelissen, "Football's tsars: Proprietorship, corporatism and politics in the 2010 World Cup," *Soccer & Society* 11, no. 1-2 (2010): 133-34.
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<http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/14602941>.
- 471 BBC Sport, "Pirates pip Chiefs on penalties in SMS Soweto derby," July 29, 2011,
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/14342278>.
- 472 Indeed, the league has invariably had a new name at the start of a new season: the ABC Golden Lager Premier League, the Star Premier League, the Ghana Telecom Premier League, the Onetouch Premier League, the Glo Premier League, and so on.
- 473 Bediako, *The national soccer league of Ghana*, 98.
- 474 Ibid., 111.
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<http://www.modernghana.com/newstthread1/291753/2/>.
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<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/7861860.stm>.
- 477 "OMP gives U.S.\$600,000 for Premier League," *Ghanaian Chronicle*, October 28, 2009, retrieved from <http://sports.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/200910/36971.php>.
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<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/7869734.stm>.
- 479 BBC Sport, "Ghanaian clubs plan takeover," October 13, 2003,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/3188364.stm>.
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<http://www.fecafonline.com/?lng=1&module=media&idrub=98170&idnews=82792>; BBC Sport, "Cameroon league gets boost," March 10, 2005,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/4337967.stm>; BBC Sport, "Cash injection saves Cameroon league," April 27, 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/1954942.stm>.
- 481 BBC Sport, "Nigerian clubs demand cash," November 6, 2004,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/3988669.stm>; BBC Sport, "Cash crisis for Nigerian clubs," August 25, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/3598210.stm>.

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<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/2928685.stm>.
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http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/caf_club_competitions/1926759.stm; see also BBC
 Sport, "Top Cameroon club gets cash," March 30, 2001,
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- 486 Ibid.
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 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/14460530>.
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 Blacks to raise funds for Habib," *Kotoko Express*, June 6-8, 2009.
- 489 Scarlett Cornelissen & Eirik Solberg, "Sport mobility and circuits of power: The dynamics of
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<http://www.kenbediako.com/blog1.php/no-more-professional-league-board>.
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- 492 BBC Sport, "Caf declares record revenues," January 17, 2006,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/4620770.stm>.
- 493 BBC Sport, "Cameroon get Orange deal," June 14, 2002,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport3/worldcup2002/hi/team_pages/cameroon/newsid_2044000/2044513.stm.
- 494 See Africa.puma.com, "History," <http://africa.puma.com/#/history/>.
- 495 BBC Sport, "Puma kit deal for Ghana," October 13, 2005,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/4340150.stm>; BBC Sport, "Ghana and Puma sign
 new kit deal," January 24, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/7207214.stm>.
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 contributed \$400,000 out of a total of \$500,000 for the construction of a new GFA headquarters in
 Accra. By early 2012, FIFA had completed a total number of 143 projects in Africa through the
Goal programme. Similarly, FIFA has built synthetic pitches, among other things, through its *Win
 in Africa with Africa* project for a total amount of \$70 million. See FIFA.com, "About FIFA,"
 "Football Development," "Projects," then "Goal: Presentation and Status," "Goal Programme:
 Ghana," "Win in...Africa", <http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/footballdevelopment/projects/>.
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 "Ghana bags \$14m for reaching quarter finals," GNA, July 3, 2010, retrieved
 from <http://mobile.ghanaweb.com/wap/article.php?ID=185435>; Ghanasoccernet.com, "Ghana FA
 gets US\$300,000 cash boost from Fifa," January 28, 2011, <http://www.ghanasoccernet.com/ghana-fa-gets-us300000-cash-boost-from-fifa/>.
- 498 Let me provide the example of FECAFOOT's top officials. Allowances during domestic travels
 range from 15,000 CFA francs for employees to 50,000 CFA francs for the president. Allowances
 during international travels to the United States and Europe, among other continents, range from
 70,000 CFA francs for employees to 150,000 CFA francs for the president. Members of the executive
 committee and the general assembly take 40,000 and 30,000 CFA francs, respectively, for
 attending meetings. Naturally, first class travel and top-notch accommodation are included. See
[Fecafonline.com](http://fecafonline.com), "Financial regulations of FECAFOOT," March 10, 2007.
- 499 Kunene, "Winning the Cup but losing the plot?," 377.
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- 502 Ibid., 98.
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- 505 Sammy Heywood Okine, "OMP buys 70% of Zaytuna," *The Statesman*, October 17, 2007, retrieved
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- 508 Darby & Solberg, "Differing trajectories," 126.
- 509 Paul Darby, "African football labour migration to Portugal: Colonial and neo-colonial resource,"
Soccer & Society 8, no. 4 (2007): 500.
- 510 The available literature on the migration of footballers can be found throughout this dissertation,
 particularly in chapters 2 and 6, and in the bibliography.
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- 512 Ibid.
- 513 Ibid., 178.
- 514 Ibid., 173.
- 515 Alegi, *African Soccerscapes*, 82-83.
- 516 Lanfranchi & Taylor, *Moving with the ball*, 179-80.
- 517 Darby, "African football labour migration to Portugal," 499.
- 518 Lanfranchi & Taylor, *Moving with the ball*, 181-82.
- 519 Ibid., 183.
- 520 Jan Antonissen, Vincent Loozen & Stephan Vanfleteren, *Giganten van Afrika: De hoge vlucht van
 Nigeria's Super Eagles*. Leuven: Uitgeverij Van Halewyck, 1998.
- 521 Raffaele Poli, "Migrations and trade of African football players: Historic, geographical and Cultural
 aspects," *Afrika Spectrum* 41, no. 3 (2006): 398.
- 522 Ibid.
- 523 Ibid.
- 524 Ibid., 402.
- 525 Cornelissen & Solberg, "Sport mobility and circuits of power," 307.
- 526 Bale, "Three geographies of African footballer migration," 235.
- 527 Lanfranchi & Taylor have categorised African footballers who have migrated to Europe in five
 groups: those who start in the lower leagues and move their way up; those who did not migrate for
 football purposes alone; those who migrated for economic purposes but ended up playing profes-
 sionally; those who already played in youth teams from an early age onwards; and those who were
 born outside of Africa but nevertheless play for their country of origin. See Lanfranchi & Taylor,
Moving with the ball, 169.
- 528 Bale & Maguire were among the first to link these theories to sports migration. See Joseph Maguire
 & John Bale, "Sports labour migration in the global arena." In: *The global sports arena: Athletic
 talent migration in an interdependent world*, ed., John Bale & Joseph Maguire. London: Frank Cass,
 1994, 1-21; see also Jonathan Magee & John Sugden, "'The world at their feet': Professional foot-
 ball and international labor migration," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 26, no. 4 (2002): 427; see
 also the work by Paul Darby in the bibliography.
- 529 Magee & Sugden, "'The world at their feet'," 428.
- 530 Lanfranchi & Taylor, *Moving with the ball*, 168.
- 531 This is what Poli writes in this respect: 'While the recruitment of footballers from Latin America
 can cost more than €20 million, transfers carried out from sub-Saharan Africa rarely attain more
 than €1 million, even for the most promising players. According to official sources within the club,
 the transfer rights of the 24 players transferred abroad from 2000 to 2009 by the best Ivorian club,
 ASEC Mimosas of Abidjan, have been sold on average for €336,250. See Raffaele Poli, "African
 Migrants in Asian and European football: Hopes and Realities," *Sport in Society* 13, no. 6 (2010):
 1002.
- 532 Raffaele Poli, "Explaining the "muscle drain" of African football players: World-system theory and
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- 533 Paul Darby, "Out of Africa: The exodus of elite African football talent to Europe," *WorkingUSA* 10,
 no. 4 (2007): 450.
- 534 Darby, Akindes & Kirwin, "Football academies," 149.
- 535 Hawkey, *Feet of the chameleon*, 28.
- 536 Darby, Akindes & Kirwin, "Football academies," 155.

- 537 So far, the academy has not been very successful and Dutch club Feyenoord has reportedly sold the academy to a group of investors.
- 538 Darby, Akindes & Kirwin, "Football academies," 153.
- 539 McDougall, "The scandal of Africa's trafficked players."
- 540 See for instance "Boy wonder's lost years," *The Observer*, February 3, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/2008/feb/03/africannationscup2008.africannationscup1>.
- 541 Rodney Fort & John Fizele, *International sports economics comparisons*. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2004, 95.
- 542 Marc Broere & Roy van der Drift, *Afrika voetbal!*. Amsterdam: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen, 1997, 79-97.
- 543 Poli, "African migrants in Asian and European football," 1001; see also Poli, "Migrations and trade of African football players," 405-9.
- 544 Raffaele Poli, "Africans' status in the European football players' labour market," *Soccer & Society* 7, no. 2-3 (2006): 284-86.
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- ⁷⁰⁵ Kenbediako.com, "League could see bizarre end," July 5, 2008,
<http://www.kenbediako.com/blog1.php/league-could-see-bizarre-end>.
- ⁷⁰⁶ A few statements will suffice for now. 'It happens,' the Ghanaian referee William Agbovie said in 2009. 'Club officials will approach you and ask that you officiate in their favour.' The Ghanaian journalist Bright Kamkam Boadu told me that teams 'will do anything to win. Sometimes referees say they have been approached by clubs. Recently, a referee named Alex Quartey said that they have always had that problem. He said that during his time there were many clubs that asked him for help.' Jamal Malinzi, secretary-general of Tanzanian club side Yanga, said: 'The problem was so bad last year (in 2004). There is a team that was awarded eight penalties in six matches. Training hard for matches was becoming meaningless, because the games were being played elsewhere.' See Kickoff.com, "Referee accuses club officials of bribery," September 15, 2009,
<http://sports.myjoyonline.com/pages/news/200909/35240.php>; BBC Sport, "Tanzania clamps down on cheats," February 21, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/4283709.stm>.
- ⁷⁰⁷ The team manager of a Cameroonian top league club claimed that referees are always contacted by club officials with the aim of bribing them. There is a motive in the sense that a club official never knows whether the other team has bribed the referee or not. So to play it safe, bribing is necessary in order to make sure one does not start the match with a disadvantage.
- ⁷⁰⁸ 'It doesn't normally come out because the giver and the taker are both guilty,' said journalist Kamkam Boadu. 'If I give you the bribe and you take it, I'm as guilty as you are. So who's going to tell?' Another reason is that journalists lack the motivation to report about match-fixing cases because they would come in conflict with powerful people. Yet another reason is that most matches are not televised. Interestingly, Munro states that as soon as matches in Kenya were filmed, the level of bribery went down. See Munro, "Greed vs good governance," 1.
- ⁷⁰⁹ Declan Hill, "To fix or not to fix? How corruptors decide to fix football matches," *Global Crime* 10, no. 3 (2009): 166, emphasis in original.
- ⁷¹⁰ These ways of influencing a match coincide with those mentioned by Hill, who states that there are 'three possible groups of corruptees: the match officials, the opposing players and the opposing team administration'. See Hill, "To fix or not to fix?," 168.
- ⁷¹¹ How do club officials know which referees will handle their matches? 'Previously they published the names in the *Daily Graphic*,' said retired Ghanaian referee Atta Baffour. 'Before that they didn't do that. You would go to the meeting on Friday and they would send you a letter which match you would handle on Sunday. Now they release the names to the FM stations about three days before the match. It makes it easy for them to approach you. They will ask somebody for your number and they will call you.' The Cameroonian referee Tebo George explained that FECAFOOT will make announcements on their website at least four days prior to the match. 'The problem is that officials also go to the web,' he said.
- ⁷¹² Pannenberg, *How to win a football match in Cameroon*, 89.
- ⁷¹³ BBC Sport, "SA refs out on bail," June 22, 2004,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/3828855.stm>.
- ⁷¹⁴ BBC Sport, "Cameroon referees cry for help," July 26, 2006,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/5217910.stm>.
- ⁷¹⁵ BBC Sport, "Cameroon referees 'corrupt'," August 24, 2002,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/2214501.stm>.
- ⁷¹⁶ 'Sometimes a club president just greets you before the match,' referee Ngu Fabien Neba said. 'That's it. The supporters will already have that conception that he's paid you to help him.' But the situation is worse than that. 'When you refuse money from one club,' one Cameroonian referee said, 'the officials conclude that you accepted something from their opponents.'
- ⁷¹⁷ Match reports in Ghana commonly speak of "Tamale-based referee" or "Kumasi-based referee" to signify the home base of the centre referee. 'If team A from Accra and team B from Sekondi know that you are a referee from Kumasi, they think that you will not be biased,' said retired referee Atta Baffour. 'That's why they let the people know where the referee is from.'
- ⁷¹⁸ Pannenberg, *How to win a football match in Cameroon*, 89-90.
- ⁷¹⁹ 'We have a serious problem known as *uzalendo* (Swahili for patriotism), where a match referee conspires with a commissioner to give an unfair advantage to the home team,' said TFF's vice president, Ismail Aden Rage. 'Our match inspectors will be people of integrity. They will be writing

- independent reports that will be used to make decisions in case of any appeals.’ See BBC Sport, “Tanzania clamps down on cheats.”
- 720 BBC Sport, “Cameroon go undercover,” July 21, 2002,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/2142971.stm>.
- 721 The tape allegedly featured the voice of the president of Heart of Lions promising Hearts three points. “Hearts of Oak - Lions match was fixed - Kotoko,” *GNA*, November 14, 2005,
<http://www.modernghana.com/sports/90132/2/hearts-of-oak-lions-match-was-fixed-kotoko.html>.
- 722 “GFA refers allegation to Disciplinary Committee,” *GNA*, November 11, 2005,
<http://www.modernghana.com/news2/89974/2/gfa-refers-allegation-to-disciplinary-committee.html>.
- 723 Pannenberg, *How to win a football match in Cameroon*, 87-88.
- 724 The Kotoko squad always sets up camp at an undisclosed location which is, in fact, a hotel in Kumasi known to many supporters. In 2009, Hearts went to a secret place to prepare for the match against Kotoko. This became public when Kwame Baah-Nuako entered Hearts’ hideout - a guest-house in Accra - on the eve of the encounter. Hearts officials accused Kotoko’s Director of Communications of attempting to bribe players. Kotoko officials, however, questioned the secret nature of a guesthouse that was accessible to the general public. See “Camp invasion! Baah Nuako stands accused,” *Hearts News*, June 12, 2009; “Of secret camps and public places,” *Kotoko Express*, June 1 2-15, 2009.
- 725 Declan Hill’s informants argue that a fixer needs the help of at least five to seven players in order to successfully fix a match. The absolute minimum is three: the goalkeeper, a defender and a striker. See Hill, *The fix*, 23.
- 726 *Ibid.*, 151-71.
- 727 Sugden & Tomlinson, *Badfellas*, 217.
- 728 Marcel Mauss, *The gift: The form and reason for exchange in Archaic societies*, trans. W.D. Halls. London: Routledge, 1990 (1950), 3.
- 729 The Cameroonian referee Nde Christopher Ade told me a story about a certain match in the Northwest Region. ‘Before the match the fon of (name area) invited me to the palace,’ he said. ‘He sent for someone who informed me that he wanted to see me. I told the man that I was not informed to go and see anybody at the palace so I said no. Afterwards I heard that he was very angry. But what am I supposed to do at the palace?’ Although Nde said he did not visit the fon, it is commonly rude to refuse requests made by traditional rulers and important people.
- 730 This problem already surfaced in a previous note. ‘If you refuse to accept their hospitality and gifts,’ Lathbridge said, ‘the officials and supporters of the home team will start speculating that maybe it’s because you were approached by the other team. Whenever they start to get that idea, it becomes true in their minds. That’s when they threaten you: “We’re watching you! If you do anything funny, we will kill you!”’ This is why one has to be very ‘diplomatic’, as Lathbridge called it. ‘Never say no right way. Thank them for the gifts and ask them to hold on to them till after the match. In this case, you refused the gifts without offending anybody.’
- 731 All referees I spoke to said that they considered refereeing a “hobby” and that one needs a full-time job to be able to officiate in the first place. In many cases, referees pay for transport and accommodation up front, only to be reimbursed at a later stage. This can take months and sometimes referees are never reimbursed. In some cases, mostly in lower-level leagues, referees receive a percentage of the gate proceeds. ‘When the stadium is empty, we don’t get anything,’ one referee said. Overall, referee allowances in Africa’s domestic leagues are quite small, especially in comparison to the amounts of money used to bribe referees.
- 732 See “Disciplinary C”tee clears Oheneba Charles,” *Daily Graphic*, November 17, 2000,
<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/SportsArchive/artikel.php?ID=12046>.
- 733 Lathbridge said that this only happens when a referee goes to ‘faraway places’. ‘Sometimes you go there for the first time so they will want to show you tourist spots. Sometimes they know that you want to buy souvenirs. So they say: “No, wait! Let us bring you the souvenirs.”’
- 734 BBC Sport, “Bribery scandal or hidden agenda?,” November 9, 2001,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/1646692.stm>.
- 735 “NFA, envoy defend Gov. Odili’s gift to Black Stars,” *The Guardian Nigeria*, November 9, 2001,
<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/SportsArchive/artikel.php?ID=19397>.
- 736 See BBC Sport, “Nigeria rubbish allegations,” November 9, 2001,
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/1647621.stm>.
- 737 “Editorial: The \$25,000 ‘gift’ and unanswered questions,” *Ghanaian Chronicle*, November 8, 2001,

- 738 <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=19375>.
Quoted in "African stimulants a concern," *Associated Press*, February 21, 2010,
<http://www.sport24.co.za/Soccer/WorldCup/TournamentNews/African-stimulants-a-concern-20100221>.
- 739 The journalist introduced the three men to me. He had earlier accompanied Nuru, Hudu and Pollo to a malam in an Accra suburb. For his report (in Dutch), see Edwin Schoon, "Voodoo voetbal," *De Pers*, January 23, 2008.
- 740 Yet other terms are sangoma, inyanga, malam, medicine man, native doctor, traditional doctor, herbalist, magician, wizard, sorcerer, spiritualist, team adviser, spiritual consultant. In addition, Schatzberg describes them as wise men, counsellors, technical consultants and morale officers. See Michael G. Schatzberg, "Soccer, science, and sorcery: Causation and African football," *Afrika Spectrum* 41, no. 3 (2006): 357.
- 741 Quoted in Antonissen, Loozen & Vanfleteren, *Giganten van Afrika*, 152, my translation.
- 742 Joseph Opio, "Juju is cranes' No. 1 threat in Benin tie," *New Vision*, June 3, 2008,
<http://www.newvision.co.ug/PA/8/30/631496>.
- 743 Fred Kaweesi, "I am sorry," *New Vision*, June 11, 2008,
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200806120072.html>.
- 744 Rian Malan, "Give us magic, give us goals," *The Telegraph*, June 19, 2010,
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/football/competitions/world-cup-2010/7838564/Give-us-magic-give-us-goals.html>.
- 745 Anne Leseth, "The use of juju in football: Sport and witchcraft in Tanzania." In: Armstrong & Giulianotti, *Entering the field*, 163.
- 746 "We believe in God - Kotoko players," *Kotoko Express*, May 2 2-25, 2009.
- 747 I once described a case with regard to Tonnerre Yaoundé. 'Maybe they owe the spiritualist some money,' spiritual adviser Zé told me in respect to Tonnerre. 'To fix a team is not easy but to spoil a team is easy. That's what happens when you don't treat them well.' Another story concerns Ivory Coast's national team, the Elephants. After they made it to the final of the 1992 African Cup of Nations, they did not perform for many years on end. It later transpired that the Ivorian Minister of Sports had hired a few jujumen but never paid them. They then put a spell on the team. In April 2002, the Minister of Defense offered the jujumen money as well as bottles of gin. See Pannenberg, *How to win a football match in Cameroon*, 129; see also Paul Laity, "The Way to Win: Juju on the Field," *National Geographic*, June 2006,
<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/ngm/0606/feature1/text2.html>.
- 748 Thomas Q. Reefe, "The biggest game of all: Gambling in traditional Africa." In: Baker & Mangan, *Sport in Africa*, 62.
- 749 *Ibid.*, 63.
- 750 Footballer Ashu told me that a victory is the result of players/coach for 70 percent, which leaves 30 percent for the spiritual adviser/juju. Spiritual adviser Zé, however, said the exact opposite: 70 percent of the victory is a result of juju, the players account for 30 percent. It is nevertheless generally accepted that neither juju nor players alone can bring victory. See also Royer, "The spirit of competition," 474; Martin, *Leisure and society in Colonial Brazzaville*, 122; Scotch, "Magic, sorcery, and football among urban Zulu," 487.
- 751 For more information about the psychological impact of juju, see Pannenberg, *How to win a football match in Cameroon*, 166-68.
- 752 Juju is perceived as a mode of causality, meaning that it explains not only how things happen but, more importantly, why they happen. The idea is that matches are won through spiritual forces, not physical training. Increasingly, players and coaches who have been abroad find this stance to be ridiculous. As Schatzberg states, 'The issue is often phrased as a disagreement between those who favour contemporary scientific methods of training and those who accept that sorcery has a role to play.' See Schatzberg, "Soccer, science, and sorcery," 357.
- 753 One South African footballer remembered that he and his teammates had to climb into a 'termite hill' and bath 'naked in this stinking, oily substance'. He continued: 'I have no idea what the muti medicine in the termite hill was made of or how it was supposed to work. But after the treatment, we won all our games.' See Oliver G. Becker, "Kick the lion: Witchcraft and soccer in Africa" (Frankfurt am Main: Occasion Documentaries, 2006).
- 754 Players who urinate on the field of play, however, cannot always count on sympathy from the referee. 'We consider urinating to be unsporting behaviour,' said the Ghanaian Premier League

- referee Reginald Lathbridge. 'You cannot tell me that you couldn't wee-wee at your own house or in the dressing room. Players also perform tackles which means it's not very hygienic. So if a player urinates on the field of play, you should present him with a yellow card.'
- 755 On Sunday 4 May 2009, I arrived at the Len Clay Stadium for a match between AshantiGold and Wa All Stars. When the visitors' team bus arrived at the gate, I took a few photographs. All Stars supporters immediately surrounded me. The chairman of the supporters union demanded to see my press credentials. 'Explain why you're taking pictures!' he shouted. After a discussion, I managed to calm him down. 'We didn't know who you were,' he later said. 'We thought you may have been working for the home team.'
- 756 So why did an African team not win the World Cup? Based on the belief in juju, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Cameroon, Algeria, Ghana or South Africa would surely have been able to beat their opponents at a spiritual level? The answer is simple. Europeans and South Americans are also thought to employ jujumen. 'Peru first brought magicians to the 1982 World Cup,' Zé told me. 'Brazilians do it too. They worship stones, that's their tradition. Everything that has a name exists and people all over the world practice it. Only they have different names for it.' Nuru, the helper of the Black Stars, agreed. 'Germany, Brazil - they all do it,' he said. 'In Europe it's a modern form of juju. Brazil has the strongest juju. It's just that they won't tell you.'
- 757 Royer, "The spirit of competition," 472.
- 758 Geschiere calls it a "modernity of witchcraft". Elsewhere, Fisiy & Geschiere state that 'It is striking that the rumours and events discussed (with regard to occult forces) concern especially the more modern aspects of society: football or other sport events, national politics and often also modern forms of wealth'. See Peter Geschiere, *The modernity of witchcraft: Politics and the occult in colonial Africa*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1997; Cyprian F. Fisiy & Peter Geschiere, "Sorcery, witchcraft and accumulation: Regional variations in South and West Cameroon," *Critique of Anthropology* 11, no. 3 (1991): 251.
- 759 It is claimed that the Europeans who introduced football in Africa already practiced religious rituals so as to ensure victory. Examples include calling upon saints and angels and visiting cemeteries to bury miniature coffins with the names of the opponent team on a piece of paper. Such practices then spread among school and university teams. Some of these religious rituals are still commonly practiced in African football today under the name of juju. See Francis J. Botchway, *Juju, magic and witchcraft in African soccer: Myth or reality?* Accra: Centre for Christian Communication & Media Research, 2009), 35-47.
- 760 T.B. Joshua is the founder of the Synagogue Church of all Nations and has made millions of dollars in the process. He sometimes predicts the outcomes of football matches. T.B. Joshua was said to have "assisted" Ghana's Black Satellites in winning the 2009 U20 World Cup.
- 761 Milan Vesely, "Giving witchcraft the boot," *African Business*, December 2004, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa5327/is_304/ai_n29142216/.
- 762 BBC Sport, "Tanzania clamps down on juju."
- 763 BBC Sport, "Witchdoctors banned from Nations Cup," January 16, 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/cup_of_nations/1764864.stm.
- 764 Jonathan Wilson, "Magic of the Cup: Muti, marabouts, and witch doctors - all bad for game's image," *The Observer*, February 10, 2002, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/2002/feb/10/sport.africannationscup2002>.
- 765 Schoon, "Voodoo voetbal," my translation.
- 766 Leseth, "The use of juju in Football," 171.
- 767 Ibid.
- 768 Sportsinghana.com, "Kotoko has spent 90,000 cedi on Juju."
- 769 Anusa Daimon, "The most Beautiful game or the most gender violent sport? Exploring the interface between soccer, gender and violence in Zimbabwe." In: *Gender, sport and development in Africa: cross-cultural perspectives on patterns of representations and marginalization*, ed., Jimoh Shehu. Dakar: CODESRIA, 2010, 8.
- 770 Liwena, *The Zambian soccer scene*, 205.
- 771 It should be noted that, in the words of Pollard, 'the evidence for a travel effect disadvantaging the away team is inconclusive'. However, it appears that home advantage is stronger when the home territories of the two opposing teams are further apart. Also, research indicates that home advantage is reduced during local derbies, which could be attributed to the lack of travel time. See Pollard,

- “Home advantage in football: A current review of an unsolved suzzle,” 12; Pollard & Pollard, “Home advantage in football: A review of its existence and causes,” 32.
- 772 I have personally experienced how exhausting travelling in Africa is, having travelled with Ghanaian and Cameroonian teams on several occasions. Some of these trips took between five to seven hours, and these were not even the ones to faraway places in the country. Teams tend to travel in small buses with a contingency of players, technical staff and officials, many of whom are practically sitting on top of each other. Also, travelling by bus or boat in Africa is dangerous. Several team buses have over the years been involved in road accidents.
- 773 Football in Angola was severely hindered by armed conflict that lasted for almost three decades. Landmines and potential ambushes made travelling by road ‘extremely dangerous’. See Jamie Jackson, “Angola’s golden goals,” *The Observer*, June 11, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/2006/jun/11/worldcup2006.sport4>.
- 774 Isaac “Opeelee” Boateng, “Superstition in Premier League,” *Graphic Sports*, July 10-13, 2009.
- 775 Royer, “The spirit of competition,” 476.
- 776 Quotes taken from Ndeley Mokoso, *Man pass man and other stories*. Essex: Longman, 1987, 106-07.
- 777 Pannenberg, *How to win a football match in Cameroon*, 147-48.
- 778 The Guardian Blog, “Juju, hype and heat reign as the Black Stars target the Super Eagles,” February 2, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/sport/blog/2008/feb/03/jujuhypeandheatreignasth>.
- 779 For instance, the 2006 GFA Regulations clearly state that it is a ‘misconduct’ to use ‘an unauthorised entrance to get to the stadium or playing field’ and, similarly, for home teams to prevent ‘the away team from using the approved entrance into the stadium’. See GFA Regulations, Article 23.5 (b), 12 May 2006.
- 780 Liwena, *The Zambian soccer scene*, 204.
- 781 Boateng, “Superstition in Premier League.”
- 782 ‘In the event of a clash between the visiting team’s away strip and the home team’s strip, the former shall change to its alternative strip (...).’ GFA Regulations, Article 17 (b), 12 May 2006.
- 783 This happened, for instance, during a Hearts vs Kotoko match in 2005 when both teams appeared in the tunnel leading to the pitch wearing white jerseys. According to a league report, the match was delayed for more than an hour. See “Hearts 1 Kotoko 1,” *GNA*, October 2, 2005, <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/league/artikel.php?ID=91355>.
- 784 Ghanaweb.com, “Kotoko, Dawu draw as superstition takes centre stage,” May 10, 1999, <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=6633>.
- 785 Charles Nguini, *Le footoir Camerounais*. Yaoundé: Capel, 1996), 39-50.
- 786 “‘Hell’ in Obuasi, as Ashgold beat Kotoko 2-1,” *Africa Sports*, July 13, 2009.
- 787 Ibid.
- 788 “Ashgold thugs on rampage,” *Kotoko Express*, July 14, 2009.
- 789 Hawkey, *Feet of the chameleon*, 243-44.
- 790 Quoted in Patrick Edobor Igbinoia, “Soccer hooliganism in black Africa,” *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 29, no. 2 (1985): 138.
- 791 October 2010: A stampede during a Gor Mahia vs AFC Leopards match in Nairobi led to the deaths of seven fans. March 2009: 19 fans died and 132 people were injured at the Houphouet-Boigny Stadium in Abidjan prior to a World Cup qualifier between Ivory Coast and Malawi. September 2008: 13 fans were killed during a local match at the Matokeo Stadium in eastern DR Congo. June 2007: 12 fans died after a stampede at Zambia’s Konkola Stadium during an African Cup of Nations qualifier between the Chipolopolo and Congo. April 2001: 14 fans died during a match between TP Mazembe and FC Saint Eloi Lupopo in DR Congo.
- 792 Alex Akurgo & Camillus Abongo, *May 9 at Accra Stadium: A gripping story of a disaster that turned ordinary people into heroes*. Legon: Blue Volta Associates, 2001, 29-30.
- 793 BBC News, “Ghana officers acquitted,” July 31, 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/3113583.stm>.
- 794 In 2000 police fired teargas into the crowd during a CAF Confederations Cup match between Hearts of Oak and Espérance of Tunis at the same Accra Stadium. Vice president John Evans Atta Mills and CAF-president Issa Hayatou had to be evacuated. In 1989, four fans died at the Kumasi Stadium during a Kotoko vs Hasaacas match after a policeman fired teargas into the crowd. Teargas is still widely used to subdue hooliganism in Ghana (and Africa).

- 795 Peter Alegi, "7 'Like cows driven to a dip': The 2001 Ellis Park Stadium Disaster in South Africa," *Soccer & Society* 5, no. 2 (2004): 234.
- 796 Ibid., 238.
- 797 Cora Burnett, "The 'black cat' of South African soccer and the Chiefs-Pirates conflict." In: *Fighting fans: Football hooliganism as a world phenomenon*, ed., Eric Dunning *et al.*, Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2002, 183.
- 798 Ibid.
- 799 F.D. Madzimbamuto, "A hospital response to a soccer stadium stampede in Zimbabwe," *Emergency Medicine Journal* 20 (2003): 556-59.
- 800 Gary Armstrong, "Talking up the game: Football and the reconstruction of Liberia, West Africa," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 9, no. 4 (2002): 481.
- 801 BBC News, "Football witchcraft deaths probed," September 16, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7618215.stm>.
- 802 Pannenborg, *How to win a football match in Cameroon*, 144-45.
- 803 BBC Sport, "Al Ahly's night of shame," November 10, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/7088680.stm>.
- 804 Alegi, *Laduma!*, 52.
- 805 See Eric Dunning *et al.*, *Fighting fans: Football hooliganism as a world phenomenon*. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2002, 2.
- 806 Igbinovia, "Soccer hooliganism in black Africa," 143.
- 807 Martin, *Leisure and society in Colonial Brazzaville*, 123.
- 808 Burnett, "The 'black cat'," 178.
- 809 See Jimoh Shehu, ed., *Gender, sport and development in Africa: Cross-cultural perspectives on patterns of representations and marginalization*. Dakar: CODESRIA, 2010.
- 810 Alegi, *African Soccerescapes*, 30.
- 811 See Pitchinvasion.net, "First Person Ultra: Ultras Ahlawy, Egypt," November 27, 2007, <http://pitchinvasion.net/blog/2007/11/27/first-person-ultra-ultras-ahlawy-egypt/>; James Montague, "The world's most violent derby: Al Ahly v Zamalek," *The Guardian*, July 18, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/2008/jul/18/alahly.zamalek>; The New York Times Soccer Blog, "In Egypt and Tunisia, the Games Must Go On," April 10, 2011, <http://goal.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/04/10/in-egypt-and-tunisia-the-games-must-go-on/>.
- 812 See James M. Dorsey, "Ultra Violence," *Foreign Policy*, February 1, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/01/ultra_violence; Abdel-Rahman Hussein, "Port said football disaster exposes political vacuum left by revolution," *The Guardian*, February 2, 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/feb/02/port-said-football-disaster-revolution>; David Lynch, "Ultra violence," *The blizzard*, Issue Four, March 2012, 126-32.
- 813 Tim Edensor & Frederic Augustin, "Football, ethnicity and identity in Mauritius: Soccer in a rainbow nation." In: Armstrong & Giulianotti, *Fear and loathing in world football*, 95.
- 814 Schoon, *De macht van de bal*, 145, my translation.
- 815 Henry Kyemba, *A state of blood*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd, 1997 (1977) 106-07.
- 816 Schoon, *De macht van de bal*, 137-214.
- 817 Bediako, *The national soccer league of Ghana*, 119.
- 818 Igbinovia, "Soccer hooliganism in black Africa," 138-39; see also Michael C. Reed, "Gabon: A neo-colonial enclave of enduring French interest," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 25, no. 2 (1987): 303-04.
- 819 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A study of environmental perception, attitudes, and values*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1974.
- 820 See for instance John Bale, *Sport, space and the city*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- 821 Ibid., 64-72.
- 822 Morris, *The soccer tribe*, 38.
- 823 Giulianotti, *Football: A sociology of the global game*, 70.
- 824 Daimon, "The most beautiful fame or the most gender violent sport?," 2.
- 825 All quotes in this section come from Pollard, "Home advantage in football: A current review of an unsolved puzzle," 1 2-13.
- 826 Pitch invasions influence the performance of the referee. 'Referees are influenced because they're afraid,' said referee Atta Baffour. 'I've seen referees with only one or two teeth. Would you call that fun? Referees favour the home team because they're afraid of their lives.'

- 827 Let us briefly return to the match between AshantiGold FC and Asante Kotoko in Obuasi as described above. After home team supporters had thrown rocks and other items and the police had reacted by firing cans of teargas, the CEO of AshantiGold, Kojo Fianoo, walked onto the field, got on his knees and begged the supporters to stop their violent behaviour.
- 828 David Kyei, "Forward never, backwards ever!," *Kotoko Express*, July 17-20, 2009.
- 829 The information in this section comes from BBC Sport, "Cameroon FA bans presidents," August 11, 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/2187021.stm>; BBC Sport, "Cameroon ban Tonnerre president," January 15, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/3399993.stm>; BBC Sport, "Abega gets three-month ban," August 22, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/3588606.stm>.
- 830 'As a journalist you always have problems,' said journalist Kamkam Boadu. 'If you report everything, the supporters will hassle you. Especially in the smaller towns, where everybody knows everybody, it's difficult to work well. The reporters who live and work there are generally biased. It's mostly the journalists who are sent there from elsewhere who can do their work. But you can report about these things only once. The next time they will beat you up.'
- 831 "Editorial: PLB must halt change of home venues," *Hearts News*, February 4, 2011.
- 832 Mr. X's predictions would have been one hundred per cent correct if it had not been for an unforeseen development in the last part of the season. The top team (number nine) was halfway the league table at the time of our meeting but then suddenly came up and became a title contender. This is where the team refused to play softly and Mr. X's team was defeated.
- 833 Hill, "To fix or not to fix?," 162.
- 834 *Ibid.*, 169.
- 835 *Ibid.*, 170-71, emphasis in original.
- 836 Eleven Wise was in the relegation zone at the end of the 1995/96 season. They played their last match against Hearts. Instead of helping them out, Hearts beat their traditional friend and Eleven Wise went on to play in the First Division for more than ten years. 'Wise had to win to survive,' CEO Jamil Maraby of Eleven Wise told me. 'Hearts beat us and during the game there were riots. Eventually one of the supporters died. He was the son of the chief of the Sekondi area. We were friends, yes, but people find it difficult to forget what happened. I don't think the two clubs can be friends now. Deep down there will always be this negative feeling.'
- 837 Irene Odotei, "External influences on Ga society and culture," *Research Review* 7, no. 1-2 (1991): 70.
- 838 Femi Atoyebi, "They are attempting to fix matches again!," *This day (Nigeria)*, April 30, 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200904300057.html>.
- 839 Normally, such a deal goes as follows. Let us say there are four teams. The deal is that each team will win its home matches against the other three. In return, each team will give away its away matches against the other three. This guarantees each team nine points.
- 840 It is claimed that Wa All Stars benefits from the GFA presidency of its owner, Kwesi Nyantakyi. Also, RTU is said to have benefited from the FA presidency of M.N.D. Jawula between 1996 and 2000. Jawula has been the longstanding chairman of RTU's Board of Directors. Similarly, Mysterious Dwarfs was thought to have received help from their CEO Nana Sam Brew-Butler, who was FA president in the early 1990s. Going further back in time, Venomous Vipers is said to have profited from its president Lawton Ackah Yensu, who acted as GFA president in the early 1980s. These stories are, of course, based on rumours.
- 841 In Cameroon, a similar situation occurred after two encounters between AS Cetef and Tonnerre Yaoundé in the 2006 national interpools. Both matches were abandoned due to violence, allegedly because the supporters suspected the referee of having been bribed. FECAFOOT banned the referees but did not punish the teams. On the contrary, AS Cetef gained promotion to the Elite One league. Tonnerre Yaoundé, having missed out on promotion, received help as well. On 18 December, the FECAFOOT Executive Committee voted in favour of expanding the Elite One league from 16 to 18 teams, which guaranteed Tonnerre entry to the top league. Surprisingly, the 18-team setup was abandoned the following year. See Fred Vubem, "Charles Nguini: 'An arrangement among friends'," *Cameroon Tribune*, December 20, 2006, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200612200541.html>; Louis D. Edzimbi, "Cameroun: Forfaiture," *Cameroon Tribune*, December 20, 2006, <http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/200612200567.html>; Innocent Mbumwe, "FECAFOOT adopts 18 teams league system," *The Post*, December 22, 2006, http://www.postnewsline.com/2006/12/fecafoot_adopts.html.

- 842 See SportsInGhana.com, "RFA Chairmen bribed GH¢1000 each to back 20 club league - Takyi Arhin," July 25, 2010 <http://sportsinghana.com/?option=pleague&Itemid=4&view=103>; see also Myjoyonline.com, "Bribery scandal hits GFA," July 28, 2010, <http://www.modernghana.com/sports/286370/2/bribery-scandal-hits-gfa.html>; Samuel Ebo Kwaitoo, "Mafia group bribing delegates? - Takyi-Arhin," *Daily Graphic*, August 2, 2010, <http://www.modernghana.com/news/287266/1/mafia-group-bribing-delegates-takyi-arhin.html>.
- 843 Ghanasoccernet.com, "Our demotion was politically motivated - Zaytuna," July 12, 2008, <http://www.modernghana.com/news2/174234/2/our-demotion-was-politically-motivated-zaytuna.html>.
- 844 The same argument was made in respect to Sekondi Eleven Wise and Sekondi Hasaacas, two teams that relegated at the end of the 2009/10 season. It was claimed that these teams had to be saved to preserve the commercial future prospects of the Essipong Stadium. Yet at the end of the season it became clear that another team from within the region, namely Ebusua Mysterious Dwarfs from Cape Coast, promoted to the Premier League. Dwarfs thus took Eleven Wise's and Hasaacas' place at the Essipong Stadium, thereby guaranteeing income from gate takings.
- 845 For an interesting account of the link between religious beliefs and Africa's most powerful individuals see Ellis & Ter Haar, *Worlds of power*.
- 846 This name is most likely derived from AmaZulu, a South African-based team with strong ties to the Zulus in KwaZulu Natal. Indeed, Lupepe's club was also nicknamed Usuthu, a war cry uttered by Zulus during their struggle against the British in the nineteenth century.
- 847 The phrase refers to the late Jack Walker, a big man who controlled the English club Blackburn Rovers in the 1990s. See Charles Lambert, *The club that Jack built: Jack Walker and the rise of Blackburn Rovers*. Glasgow: Omnia Books Limited, 2001.
- 848 Lupepe also objected to participating in tournaments whose sponsors produced goods that were not in line with his religious beliefs. 'I also remember very well that our sponsor, Mr. Lupepe, was teased about accepting a cup from a cigarette firm when we won the Madison Trophy but God works in many ways and as it turned out the competition was to be scrapped,' team manager Felix Matsika once said, clearly hinting to divine intervention. AmaZulu's involvement in the league, Matsika said, was partly to spread 'Adventism'. See "Amazulu will bounce back," *The Herald*, July 28, 2005, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200507280402.html>.
- 849 See Hope Chizuzu, "AmaZulu's test of faith," *New African Soccer* 2, January 2006, 22.
- 850 Petros Kausiyo, "Mighty bulls reject AmaZulu plea to reschedule match," *The Herald*, August 5, 2004, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200408050441.html>.
- 851 See Petros Kausiyo & Mtulisi Mafa, "Judgment stirs controversy," *The Herald*, December 15, 2004, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200412150206.html>.
- 852 "Amazulu lose Sabbath case," *The Herald*, May 14, 2005, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200505160278.html>.
- 853 Augustine Hwata, "Amazulu booted out," *The Herald*, November 5, 2005, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200511070284.html>.
- 854 Chizuzu, "AmaZulu's test of faith," 20-21.
- 855 *Ibid.*, 21.
- 856 *Ibid.*, 20.
- 857 BBC Sport, "Zimbabwe bans 'religious' Amazulu," November 5, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/4410724.stm>.
- 858 Emmanuel Kyeremeh was CEO before changing his position to that of Board Chairman in October 2008. Wilfred Osei subsequently moved up from Board Secretary to CEO. Kyeremeh evidently is the true Big Man of Tema Youth.
- 859 Samuel Ebo Kwaitoo, "The ugly Tema 'ways & means'," *Graphic Sports*, March 3-5, 2009.
- 860 'Our reporter's crime, in this instance, was simply because she had exposed the unruly behaviour of fans of Youth at the said match, and for this reason, she received a barrage of threatening calls from top officials and fans of the Tema club'. See "Editorial: Shame to Wise, Tema Youth," *Graphic Sports*, June 26-29, 2009.
- 861 One supporter of Tema Youth attempted to put an injunction on the league by demanding an overturn of the GFA decisions. The Tema High Court dismissed his claim, arguing that football cases cannot be brought before a regular court, and fined the supporter 3,000 cedi. See Peacefmonline.com, "Court: GFA can hold Congress," September 24, 2009, <http://sports.peacefmonline.com/news/200909/27480.php>.

- 862 Kofi Owusu Aduonum, "Tema youth demands justice against GFA," *Ghanaian Chronicle*, August
19, 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200908200451.html>.
- 863 "Tema youth threatens to go to court of arbitration of sports," *GNA*, August 18, 2009,
864 <http://mobile.ghanaweb.com/wap/article.php?ID=167049>.
- 865 Aduonum, "Tema youth demands justice against GFA."
866 Whoever desired a ministerial position allegedly had to hand Damase £50,000. See Kuper, *Football
against the Enemy*, 128.
- 867 The name of the club referred to Damase's place of birth (Mvolyé, a neighbourhood in Yaoundé) as
868 well as to the French club Olympique Marseille (bearing the same acronym, OM).
- 869 These figures correlate with other sources. Kuper wrote that players received \$1,000 per month.
Vidacs mentioned an amount of 600,000 CFA francs or \$1,200. See Kuper, *Football against the
enemy*, 128; Bea Vidacs, "Olympic Mvolyé: The Cameroonian team that could not win." In:
Armstrong & Giulianotti, *Fear and loathing in world football*, 228.
- 870 Nguini, *Le footoir Camerounais*, 119, my translation.
- 871 Olympic Mvolyé had evidently used a loophole to gain entrance to the Third Division in the Nyong
and So'o division. There were originally only three participating teams, which is one team short to
launch a league. With Mvolyé as the fourth team the league could take off. The location was
allegedly chosen on purpose because the absence of top clubs would guarantee Mvolyé's promotion
to the Second Division. When Damase's team did indeed won the league, the runner-up Espoir
Dzeng lodged a complaint, demanding Mvolyé's victory to be nullified. It was argued that Mvolyé's
installment in the divisional league had been illegal, partly because the team effectively stayed in
Yaoundé. It was also argued that Mvolyé's officials and FECAFOOT's administrators had
conspired to sign the paperwork. Finally, the Appeals Committee dismissed the complaint. See Nguini,
Le footoir Camerounais, 119-24.
- 872 This still makes sense, not in the least because Damase's dealings with the elders were football-
related in the first place. Also, Mbalmayo is known as a place where good football is played. In the
old days, the town had a reasonable stadium but due to mismanagement the structure fell into
disarray. A promise to renovate or build a new stadium could have been welcomed by the popu-
lation in Mbalmayo. For more information on the sorry state of the Municipal Stadium in Mbal-
mayo, see Souley Onoholio, "Stade municipal de Mbalmayo: derniers décombres d'un vestige en
ruines," *Le Messager*, October 30, 2009,
<http://www.camfoot.com/?stade-municipal-de-mbalmayo,10981.html>.
- 873 Foé died during the semi-final of the 2003 Confederations Cup between Cameroon and Colombia.
His death was, among other things, attributed to FA officials having sought help from a secret
society, who in turn demanded a human sacrifice. See Pannenburg, *How to win a football match in
Cameroon*, 124-26.
- 874 In some countries in, for example Eastern Europe and South East Asia, the actual mafia is involved
875 in gambling practices and match-fixing in football. See Hill, *The fix*.
- 876 See Nkwi, "Voicing the voiceless," 160; see also Mbuh, *Inside contemporary Cameroun politics*,
347-56.
- 877 Munro lists similar tricks pulled by Kenya's football authorities, including the theft of gate receipts,
the failure to apply the rules to all clubs equally, and the arbitrary appointment and promotion of
biased referees. See Munro, "Greed vs Good Governance," 2-3.
- 878 See for example Hill, *The fix*; Kuper, *Football against the enemy*.
- 879 Luciano Moggi, the Big Man of Juventus, used favours and threats to win league titles. He main-
tained a network that included officials responsible for selecting referees. This allowed Moggi not
only to choose which referees would handle Juventus' matches but also which ones would handle
competitors. Referees who refused to comply found themselves criticised in Moggi-friendly media
outlets. See Tito Boeri & Battista Severgnini, "Match rigging and the career concerns of referees,"
Labour Economics 18, no. 3 (2011): 349-59; see also John Foot, *Winning at all costs: A scandalous
history of Italian soccer*. New York: Nation Books, 2007, 42-78, 230-71; Foer, *How football
explains the world*, 163-87.
- 880 This is also apparent because of the habit of club officials to protest the appointment of certain
referees. There are club officials who maintain that specific referees are biased against their teams.
In several cases, their protests are honoured by the football authorities and another referee will be
assigned to handle the match.

- 878 The police investigation was called Operation Dribble. By the end of the investigation, more than 30 or 40 referees and club officials (depending on the reports) had been arrested, appeared in court and were released on bail. ‘The referees are alleged to have acted as middlemen or facilitated bribes that basically influenced the outcome of matches between certain clubs,’ said a police spokesperson. ‘They would make sure that if the owner of this particular club pays X amount of money, decisions would go against the team that hasn’t paid and you’d find that legitimate goals would be ruled offside.’ See BBC Sport, “Police arrest Safa official,” July 7, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/3874179.stm>.
- 879 BBC Sport, “Anti-sleaze probe collapses,” November 1, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/4396904.stm>.
- 880 It was concluded by the Semenya Commission that ‘corruption is seemingly endemic’ in the Vodacom leagues. See CityPress.co.za, “The Semenya Commission of Inquiry: Preliminary Report (unedited),” August 28, 2010, <http://www.citypress.co.za/Sport/News/THE-Semenya-Commission-of-Enquiry-Preliminary-Report-unedited-20100829>.
- 881 See Mark Gleeson, “Netting the big fish,” *Financial Mail*, September 17, 2004, <http://secure.financialmail.co.za/04/0917/leisure/dsoccer.htm>.
- 882 See Rafora Rangongo, “90% of SA soccer refs ‘for sale,’” *Sunday Times*, August 22, 2010, <http://www.timeslive.co.za/sport/soccer/article615775.ece/90--of-SA-soccer-refs-for-sale>.
- 883 SuperSport.com, “Why do we pretend match fixing does not exist?,” August 24, 2010, http://www.supersport.com/football/blogs/mokwena-kwenaite/Why_do_we_pretend_match_fixing_does_not_exist.
- 884 “Four clubs banned & demoted,” *GNA*, April 11, 2007, <http://ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/diaspora/artikel.php?ID=122273>.
- 885 See Modernghana.com, “Four charged with match-fixing,” April 3, 2007, <http://www.modernghana.com/news2/133292/2/four-charged-with-match-fixing.html>; see also *GNA*, “Four clubs banned & demoted.”
- 886 Ghanaweb.com, “Abedi Pele responds to scandal,” April 16, 2007, <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=122504>; see also “Abedi defends 3 1-0 scoreline,” *GNA*, March 30, 2007, <http://mobile.ghanaweb.com/wap/article.php?ID=121723>.
- 887 This story is not meant to criticise Abedi Pele or the GFA, nor is it intended to judge the verdicts in the scandal. I merely want to point out that the acquittal of Abedi Pele gave rise to a lot of speculation linking it to his Big Man status and to the tournaments in which he would play a prominent PR role. See also BBC Sport, “Abedi ‘match fixing’ ban lifted,” September 25, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/7012127.stm>.
- 888 Tomota’s full confession can be read in GERDDES-Cameroon, “Corruption in Cameroon,” Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, June 1999, 108-09.
- 889 David Nouwou & Olivier Mbéllé, “Djonkep - Nguini: La corruption se nourrit de l’impunité,” *La Nouvelle Expression*, October 17, 2007, my translation, <http://www.camfoot.com/?djonkep-nguini-la-corruption-se,8728.html>.
- 890 Fecafootonline.com, Commission de Discipline, d’Ethique et de Règlement des Litiges, Decision no. 26, January 9, 2007; see also Walter Wilson Nana and Innocent Mbunwe, “FECAFOOT dumps Mount Cameroon in 3rd Division League,” *The Post*, January 12, 2007, http://www.postnewsline.com/2007/01/fecafoot_dumps_.html.
- 891 Fecafootonline.com, Commission du Recours, Decision no. 7, January 16, 2007; see also Walter Wilson Nana and Innocent Mbunwe, “Mt. Cameroon is back in D1,” *The Post*, January 19, 2007, http://www.postnewsline.com/2007/01/mt_cameroon_is_.html.
- 892 Nouwou & Mbéllé, “Djonkep - Nguini: La corruption se nourrit de l’impunité,” my translation.
- 893 See BBC Sport, “Cash handed over ‘during match,’” September 22, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/7008480.stm>; BBC Sport, “Bamboutos down,” October 6, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/7031795.stm>.
- 894 Fecafootonline.com, Commission du Recours, Decision no. 004, September 26, 2007.
- 895 Nouwou & Mbéllé, “Djonkep - Nguini: La corruption se nourrit de l’impunité,” my translation.
- 896 Ibid.
- 897 All quotes from Bertille Missi Bikoun, “L’affaire Bamboutos soumise à l’arbitrage du Premier ministre,” *Quotidien Mutations*, October 3, 2007, my translation, <http://www.quotidienmutations.info/mutations/octobre/1191398674.php>.

- 898 FECAFOOT officials allegedly rejected the minister's plea by stating that the FA operates independently from the government. See Camfoot.com, "Affaire Bamboutos: Iya Mohammed attend pour le dernier round," September 30, 2007, <http://www.camfoot.com/?affaire-bamboutos-iyamohammed,8679.html>; see also Bertille Missi Bikoun, "Bamboutos fait son culpa," *Quotidien Mutations*, October 4, 2007, <http://www.cameroon-info.net/stories/0,20655,@,football-bamboutos-fait-son-mea-culpa.html>.
- 899 For the last couple of statements, see Camfoot.com, "Affaire Bamboutos,,"; see also Frédéric Bounou, "Tribunal: Bamboutos de Mbouda obtient gain de cause," *Le Messager*, July 29, 2008, <http://www.cameroon-info.net/stories/0,23244,@,tribunal-bamboutos-de-mbouda-obtient-gain-de-cause.html>.
- 900 See FIFA Statutes, Article 64(2) and (3), August 2010 edition.
- 901 Bediako, *The national soccer league of Ghana*, 26, 44, 49, 53, 60, 74.
- 902 Different people have regularly sued the GFA and FA committees and bodies for various reasons, but mostly in relation to promotion and relegation struggles. In 2002 and again in 2007, football in Ghana was postponed for more than five months.
- 903 Kenbediako.com, "The fixed matches puzzle."
- 904 "FIFA Fair Play Code."
- 905 Jonathan Wilson, "World Cup 2010: Why the Ivory Coast have little chance of glory," *The Guardian*, June 8, 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/blog/2010/jun/08/vahid-halilhodzic-ivory-coast>.
- 906 Hawkey, *Feet of the chameleon*, 151-52.
- 907 Ibid., 46.
- 908 Ibid.
- 909 Local coaches are said to lack the respect of star players. This also influences the selection procedure because the local coach will not deny a star player (himself a Big Man of sorts) a place in the squad, even if he is injured or otherwise incapable of performing well. Also, local coaches are said to be more corruptible than expatriate coaches. This is partly because they earn only a fraction of what a foreign coach normally earns. In one case Kwesi Appiah, the assistant-coach of Ghana's national team, requested a salary raise in 2008. While Appiah demanded a \$6,000 monthly salary, the GFA and the Ministry of Sports offered him \$3,000 instead. Ghanaians were furious to learn that the previous assistant-coach, the French coach Hervé Renard, was paid \$10,000 a month. More significantly, head coach Milovan Rajevac not only received \$45,000 a month, even his interpreter from Serbia earned more money than Appiah. The *Ghanaian Chronicle* accused the GFA of disrespecting coaches with a 'black skin'. See "Editorial: Kwasi Appiah deserves better," *Ghanaian Chronicle*, October 3, 2008, <http://www.modernghana.com/news/184775/1/kwasi-appiah-deserves-better.html>.
- 910 First, one Ghanaian player accused Ghana's U20 national team coach Sellas Tetteh of taking bribes from players. Tetteh went on to win the U20 World Cup in 2009 and the corruption charges were dropped. Second, a goalkeeper of Ghana's Black Queens accused coach Anthony Edusei of adhering to the "pay if you want to play" selection procedure. It is unclear whether the GFA has taken measures against the coach, and the goalkeeper later denied having made the allegations. See Ghanasoccernet.com, "Yartey makes bribery allegation against Ghana U-20 coach," September 15, 2009, <http://www.modernghana.com/news/238573/2/yartey-makes-bribery-allegation-against-ghana-u-20.html>; Ghanasoccernet.com, "Ghana FA to investigate coach Edusei over bribery claims," May 5, 2011, <http://www.ghanasoccernet.com/ghana-fa-to-investigate-coach-edusei-over-bribery-claims/>.
- 911 Willem Vissers, *Voetbal is liefde*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij L.J. Veen, 2010, 141, my translation.
- 912 Antonissen, Loozen & Vanfleteren, *Giganten van Afrika*, 40.
- 913 Rajevac was, in fact, a client of Virtus, which meant that the agency was responsible for getting him professional contracts at clubs or national teams. See Virtus-international.com, "Clients," accessed May 12, 2011, <http://www.virtus-international.com/clients.php>; see also "Black Stars coach in transfer scam," *The Ghanaian Journal*, November 19, 2009, <http://www.modernghana.com/sports/250244/2/black-stars-coach-in-transfer-scam.html>.
- 914 See Virtus-international.com, "Clients," accessed May 12, 2010.
- 915 Ibid.
- 916 See Christopher Opoku, "Milovan Rajevac: Inside story of how Ghana coach quit black stars," *Graphic Sports*, September 10, 2010.

- 917 Big Men have political motives for wanting to field older players during high-profile youth tournaments. African countries have performed exceptionally well at such tournaments. Youth tournaments may not enjoy quite the same status as the senior tournaments, they do mean a lot in Africa. Big Men flock to the stands to bask in the glory and make friends in high places. Neither should one underestimate the appeal of millions of dollars in prize money.
- 918 One of his informants went further than that. 'He's now 27 years old and plays somewhere in Norway,' he said in 2009. 'And now he's in the U20 selection. It's a shame I don't have a copy of his passport anymore, now he has a new passport of course.' See Blikopghana.wordpress.com, "Leeftijdsbedrog, het hele verhaal," October 29, 2009, my translation, <http://blikopghana.wordpress.com/2009/10/29/leeftijdsbedrog-het-hele-verhaal/>; Michiel Schoo, "Dominic Adiyiah: tiener of twintiger?," *De Pers*, November 12, 2009; Michiel Schoo, "Een Afrikaans leugentje om bestwil," *NRC Handelsblad*, September 5-6, 2009.
- 919 Goal.com, "Nigeria U-17 captain Fortune Chukwudi is 25 - former Nigeria international Adokiye Amiesimaka," November 5, 2009, <http://www.goal.com/en-us/news/84/africa/2009/11/05/1606913/adokiye-amiesimaka-nigeria-u-17-captain-fortune-chukwudi-is>.
- 920 See Filippo Maria Ricci, *Elephants, lions & eagles: A journey through African football*. London: WSC Books Ltd, 2008 (2006), 74-75.
- 921 BBC Sport, "Zimbabwe official admits age abuse," November 8, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/3993839.stm>.
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- 924 Ricci, *Elephants, lions & eagles*, 72.
- 925 Nigerianvillagesquare.com, "Overage Syndrome in Nigerian Football," April 11, 2007, <http://www.nigeriavillagesquare.com/articles/george-onmonya/overage-syndrome-in-nigerian-football.html>.
- 926 In 2006, FECAFOT banned two division one players for cheating with ages. In both cases, the player had changed his name and fabricated a new date of birth. One of them, Mvondo Nna, was born on 21 November 1980; later he became known as Mvondo Olivier, born on 21 November 1989. See BBC Sport, "Cameroon bans local age cheats," March 8, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/4787270.stm>.
- 927 BBC Sport, "FIFA to use wrist-scan age tests," October 23, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/internationals/8323257.stm>.
- 928 FIFA.com, "Caught by the wrists," October 22, 2009, <http://www.fifa.com/aboutfifa/footballdevelopment/medical/news/newsid=1121679/index.html>.
- 929 BBC Sport, "Nigeria drops players after scans," August 26, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/8223125.stm>.
- 930 Goal.com, "Nigeria invite parents to verify players' ages," September 14, 2009, <http://www.goal.com/en/news/89/africa/2009/09/14/1499899/nigeria-invite-parents-to-verify-players-ages>.
- 931 BBC Sport, "Nigeria rejects FIFA age scans," September 16, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/8259652.stm>.
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- 940 Reefe, "The biggest game of all," 47-78; Alegi, *Laduma!*, 131.

- ⁹⁴¹ South Africa: see [Gamblingsa.com](http://www.gamblingsa.com), "Sports betting in South Africa," Unknown Date, <http://www.gamblingsa.com/stories/gsa-sports-betting-in-south-africa.html>; Uganda: see Phionah Kesaasi, "Sports gambling takes Kampala by storm," *East African Business Week*, February 25, 2008, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200802251318.html>.
- ⁹⁴² See BBC Sport, "Benin coach claims 'fix' approach," January 24, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/7207903.stm>; BBC Sport, "Namibia approached to 'fix match'," January 26, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/7210993.stm>.
- ⁹⁴³ BBC Newsnight, "Fifa was warned of Nigeria World Cup match-fixing fears," July 10, 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/8805137.stm>.
- ⁹⁴⁴ Even at the World Cup in 1991 when we won the Under-17 World Cup,' GFA president Kwesi Nyantakyi told Hill, 'there were gamblers around, offering a lot of money to the team to throw their match.' Team captain Stephen Appiah said that one 'guy' approached him during the 2004 Olympics in Athens and offered him \$200,000 to let in the first goal. See Hill, *The fix*, 268, 274.
- ⁹⁴⁵ "Fifa investigates Nigeria v Argentina over irregular betting patterns," *The Guardian*, June 4, 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/2011/jun/04/nigeria-argentina-fifa-betting-patterns>.
- ⁹⁴⁶ BBC Sport, "Fifa asks for action in Zimbabwe match-fixing scandal," October 20, 2010, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/9110878.stm>.
- ⁹⁴⁷ See BBC Sport, "Zimbabwe exclude 80 players for alleged match-fixing," February 1, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/16839521>; see also BBC Sport, "Former Zimbabwe FA CEO Rushwaya to stand trial," February 7, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/16928996>.

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Newspapers, magazines, websites

I have used a variety of articles published in newspapers, for instance:

UK	The Guardian, The Observer, The Telegraph, The Independent.
Netherlands	De Pers, De Volkskrant, NRC Handelsblad.
Ghana	Ghanaian Chronicle, Daily Graphic, Graphic Sports, Hearts News, Kotoko Express, Africa Sports, 90 Minutes.
Cameroon	The Post, Cameroon Tribune, Le Messager, La Nouvelle Expression, Quotidien Mutations.
Zimbabwe	The Herald.
Uganda	New Vision.
South Africa	Sunday Times.

I have also used a variety of website articles, for instance:

UK	The Guardian Blog, BBC Sport.
International	Goal.com, FIFA.com.
Africa	Cafonline.com, MTN.com.
Ghana	Ghanaweb.com, Modernghana.com, Ghanafa.org, Myjoyonline.com, Kenbediako.com.
Cameroon	Fecafootonline.com, Camfoot.com.

Several magazines were used, for instance:

African Soccer, New African Soccer, African Business, NewAfrican, CAF News, When Saturday Comes, The Blizzard.

These and many other sources, including the links to websites, can be found in the endnotes.

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