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### The 2010 FIFA World Cup and women's experiences In Fan Parks

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# The 2010 FIFA World Cup and women's experiences in Fan Parks

Urmilla Bob and Kamilla Swart

## abstract

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The existing body of research on mega-events has so far focused on wider economic impacts, with little attention being given to the social impacts of large sporting events on visitors and local residents. Specifically gender issues are neglected in relation to the FIFA World Cups since it is often assumed that these events are male dominant, both in terms of participants and spectators. However, Manzenreiter and Horne (2002) indicate the growing interest among women in soccer as both participants and attendees. In South Africa a significant proportion of attendees at both stadiums and Fan Parks were women. Fan Parks in particular were introduced in the 2006 German World Cup and have emerged as key spaces for residents and tourists to experience the event outside the stadiums. During the World Cup, visitors to the host cities (non-locals) were interviewed at Fan Parks and Stadium Precincts in Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. A purposive, systematic sampling approach was adopted and interviews were conducted on all match days. Eight hundred and thirty three (833) women were interviewed at the Fan Parks in these cities. The analysis also draws on observations made by the authors at the Fan Parks. This *Article* presents the experiences, perceptions and concerns of these female respondents in relation to the World Cup and Fan Parks.

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## keywords

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Women, Fan Parks, 2010 FIFA World Cup, experiences, perceptions

## Introduction

South Africa's hosting of the 2010 Fédération of International Football Association (FIFA) World Cup heralded the country's full participation in professional and organised sport at the highest levels. The fact that this was Africa's first mega-event also increased the spotlight on whether South Africa would be able to successfully host

the event and whether the promise of an African World Cup could be achieved. The Bureau for Economic Research (2010:3) indicates that that the 2010 World Cup:

*was a logistical success, much enjoyed by hosts and guests alike and favourably received by the world's media.*

There are several studies that focus on sport and development generally and the FIFA World Cup more specifically. However, there is a dearth of studies that focus specifically on women's involvement in sports and in relation to sport mega-events. The FIFA World Cup in particular is regarded as the largest single sport spectacle in the world. It is the display of male soccer at its best and until recently, had a largely male spectatorship. However, several studies (Bob *et al*, 2009; Manzenreiter and Horne, 2002; Tanaka, 2004) have illustrated the increased participation among females in soccer as a sport and the massive interest among females in relation to viewership and spectatorship.

### **Several studies have illustrated the increased participation among females in soccer as a sport and the massive interest among females in relation to viewership and spectatorship**

This *Article* is intended to provide an examination of women's experiences and perceptions of Fan Parks and the 2010 FIFA World Cup more generally. It draws on observations made by the authors who were in the field during the entire period of the World Cup and questionnaire survey responses from female attendees at three Fan Parks (Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth) during the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Fan Parks in particular were established during the World Cup to create spaces for more fans of the sport to experience the event, interact with other fans and have an opportunity to be part of Africa's largest party/festival. The examination of women's experiences and perceptions is accomplished by firstly examining the socio-demographic profiles of females who visited Fan Parks. Their perceptions in relation to the World Cup generally and Fan Parks more specifically are then discussed. Additionally, images and representations of women in the Fan Parks are gleaned from observation. Although the focus is on women respondents, where appropriate, comparisons are made with male responses.

The next two sections provide a brief overview

of relevant literature that examines women's interest in soccer and Fan Parks in the context of the FIFA World Cup. It is important to note that there is a scarcity in research in both these aspects. Specifically, in relation to women's interest in soccer this is a growing research field. However, when compared to the significant amount of research on soccer, the focus on women and gender issues is relatively insignificant. The main focus of research on women and soccer tends to be in relation to sport injuries and on gender discrimination in relation to women's participation in soccer. The economic, social and political aspects are neglected. Research on Fan Parks is almost non-existent which is unsurprising given that Fan Parks is a new aspect of the FIFA World Cup.

### **Women's interest in soccer**

Bob *et al* (2009) assert that the significance of soccer in South Africa extends beyond the social appeal of the game, and relates to the way in which its development was closely interwoven with aspects of racial polarisation and ideology which characterised twentieth century South Africa. Makgoba (2006:2) states that:

*with more than two million active players and more than 54% of the national population following football, this sport is the most popular and widely practised sport in South Africa, ranking in levels of participation and active support far above other major sports such as rugby, cricket or athletics.*

Despite this phenomenal increase in interest and participation in the game of soccer in South Africa, there are very few studies that unpack the gender dimensions of Africa's most popular sport. This neglect in research is also discernible globally.

The promotion of women's involvement in soccer, both as participants and spectators, is largely based on the assumption that this will contribute to women's empowerment and address the largely

masculine orientation of sport generally and the game of soccer in particular (Bob *et al*, 2009). However, this is not without its inherent problems given the dominance of patriarchy in society and prevalent gender inequalities. For example, while both men and women play soccer at league level the FIFA World Cup refers to and is trademarked as the men's World Cup. Bob *et al* (2009) indicate that another disconcerting trend is the focus of big business on lucrative, profit-making teams. Kunene (2006) argues that this is an outcome of the trend towards commercialisation and the game's growing attraction for large-scale capital. However, it also reinforces gender inequalities in soccer since all the major teams that leverage sponsorships and investments are male. It is important to note that commercialisation and globalisation is strongly related in the context of professional and highly competitive, business-orientated sports such as soccer. For example, the best players in Africa often play in the more lucrative European Leagues or South Africa's Premier Soccer League (PSL). In terms of the latter, Cornelissen and Solberg (2007) argue that the PSL and even some of South Africa's lower order divisions are nonetheless attractive to many players based elsewhere in the continent, who are drawn by the prospects of higher salaries, international coverage of the PSL's competitions and the possibility to display their talents to wider audiences, and the relative political stability in South Africa.

In South Africa, Pelak (2005) states that as is the case elsewhere in the world, women's soccer has been the historic stepchild of national soccer. Bob *et al* (2009) indicate that there is in excess of 50 000 female soccer players in South Africa. Saavedra (2003) asserts that a new, national women's league was established and the national team is rated among the best in Africa. Bob *et al* (2009) state that despite the lack of support from SAFA, sponsors and the media broadcasters, Banyana Banyana (the nickname for the national women's team) has consistently performed well in international competitions; their performances have



*Fanparks were held in all host cities*

indeed overshadowed that of the national men's team. Alegi (2007) states that the South African Football Association (SAFA), which is affiliated to FIFA and has the primary role of overseeing and enforcing adherence to FIFA regulations, has remained reluctant to provide financial assistance to women's soccer. This is supported by Kunene (2006) who indicated that the majority of SAFA's limited efforts to develop soccer are devoted to the male game. Alegi (2007) further argues that this is a factor which certainly does not bode well for the future development of women's soccer. Soccer, as is most sport generally, certainly remains male-dominated as illustrated by Adams *et al* (2005). As Edwards (2002 in Manzenreiter and Horne, 2002:16) states:

*the world of competitive sport is naturally and irreversibly first and foremost the domain of male and natural masculinity.*

### **Fan Parks and the 2010 FIFA World Cup**

Fan Parks are relatively new phenomena in relation to the FIFA World Cup and officially started in 2006 during Germany's hosting of the event. It is important to note that one of the key approaches that Germany adopted was to promote the 'feelgood factor' and create spaces for Germans

to interact. Maennig (2007) states that the inflated economic impacts in relation to increased turnover in the retail trade, overnight accommodation, receipts from tourism and effects on employment was of little value and may even be incorrect in relation to the 2006 German World Cup. He states that of more significance are other measurable effects such as the novelty effect of the stadiums, the improved image for Germany and the feelgood effect for the population. These effects were enhanced by the Fan Parks which became a central feature of the German World Cup.

During the 2010 World Cup official Fan Parks were located in all nine host cities. Additionally, there were several dedicated Public Viewing Areas mainly in townships and rural locations to enhance access among disadvantaged communities to experience the game and be part of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Fan parks were enclosed areas where all 64 matches (irrespective of

### **That the majority of Fan Park attendees were host city locals close to 80%**

in which stadium they were being held) were televised live on big screens. Additionally, a range of different forms of entertainment and activities were provided which included DJs, stalls (mainly food and beverages) and live shows. Furthermore, FIFA sponsors (such as Coca Cola and MTN) had planned activities, promotions and hospitality areas. Entrance to all Fan Parks were free but limited, that is, for safety and security reasons mainly each Fan Park had limitations on the number of people who could be accommodated.

While the main reason commonly advocated for official 2010 FIFA World Cup Fan Parks is to increase participation and provide an experience as close to watching the games live as possible, Fan Parks certainly reflect the commercialisation of soccer and the World Cup. The Fan Parks are managed under

strict FIFA regulations and control.

The media and researchers reflected a range of concerns in relation to South Africa hosting the World Cup and the Fan parks prior to the event. These included fan violence linked to alcohol consumption and human trafficking and prostitution (linked closely to vulnerability to HIV/AIDS). Bird and Donaldson (2009) specifically highlighted the need to manage sex workers and sex tourism during the World Cup. Richter *et al* (2010) underscored the importance of planning during the World Cup to promote public health in relation to sex work given the HIV pandemic in southern Africa.

### **Methodology**

Face-to-face interviews were undertaken in three official Fan Parks: Grand Parade (Cape Town), Beachfront (Durban) and St Georges Park Stadium (Port Elizabeth). A purposive, systematic sampling approach was undertaken. Visitors (both domestic and foreign) were targeted since one of the main aims of this larger research endeavour<sup>1</sup> was to undertake a top-down national economic impact assessment of the World Cup. It was important to note that the majority of Fan Park attendees were host city locals (close to 80%). However, there were no noticeable differences between visitors and locals who were at the Fan Parks. During the data collection process, generally one could only establish that the attendee was a local when approached to interview the individual. Thus, the data collected from interviews with the visitors reveals trends and experiences relevant to understanding women's interests and concerns at Fan Parks<sup>2</sup>.

In total, 8 541 interviews were conducted, 5 278 in stadium precincts and 3 263 in Fan Parks. This was a deliberate sampling distribution since more interviews were undertaken in the stadium precincts (targeting individuals who attended matches in the stadiums). A significant proportion of the respondents were females (2 018 – 23.6%). Out of this, 833 (41.3%) were interviewed in Fan Parks. Results from this group

is presented and analysed in this *Article* in relation to key aspects of interest. It is important to note that the vast majority of respondents interviewed at the stadium precinct (91.6%) indicated that they visited or planned to visit a Fan Park. This indicates that Fan Parks were extremely popular among visitors during the World Cup. The study also draws on observation by the authors who visited the Fan Parks on all days when it was operational.

### Data analysis

This section presents and analyses the data gathered via the interviews and field observations. The socio-demographic profile of the respondents is presented followed by an examination of Fan Park and World Cup experiences and perceptions. Purchasing behaviour of the respondents as well as images and representations of women in the Fan Parks are also discussed in this section.

### Socio-demographic profile

Most female respondents (63.1%) were foreign visitors mainly from England (9.8%), Germany (8.9%), the United States of America (8.3%) and Netherlands (5.4%) followed by South African tourists who were mainly from Gauteng (9.4%), KwaZulu-Natal (9.2%), Western Cape (7.7%) and Eastern Cape (6.2%). These are the main domestic and foreign tourist source markets. Slightly more male respondents (78.8%) were foreigners but the country trends were similar to the females. In relation to South Africans, the results also indicate that most women were from the provinces in which the Fan Parks were located. There were very few women (3.6%) from other African countries compared to male respondents (11.9%), which suggests that for African women, their ability to visit host cities and Fan Parks were limited, possibly due to financial impediments.

The average age of the female respondents was 32.9 years (slightly lower than the male average of 34.2 years) and ranged from 18 to 74 years. Most respondents were between the

ages of 20 to 29 years (42.7%), 30 to 39 years (29%) and 40 to 49 years (16.7%). In terms of highest level of education attained, most respondents had completed secondary schooling (12.8%), certificates/diplomas (23.8%), undergraduate degrees (30.5%) and postgraduate degrees (20.5%). This higher level of schooling is unsurprising since the respondents were domestic and foreign tourists. Educated people (who generally have access to disposable incomes) tend to travel and this is certainly the case of women visitors to the Fan Parks as well. More than half of the female respondents (55.6%) earned an average monthly income of R36 080.45 which ranged from R250 to R1 491 000. The average income among the male respondents was higher (R44 402.98). The results show that women visitors to the host cities and the Fan Parks were from different age, nationality and income groups.

### Fan Park and World Cup experiences and perceptions

On average, the women watched 1.26 matches (ranging from 0-4 matches) at the Fan Park on the day of the interview (Table 1). The average number of games watched by the male respondents was 2.1. This shows that generally women came specifically to watch a particular game, to watch the team that they supported. However, 17% of the respondents stated that they did not watch a match but came, as one respondent stated, specifically to "experience the atmosphere". The main reasons forwarded for visiting the Fan Park were to be part of the experience/atmosphere, watch the match 'live' on a big screen, socialise with other fans, be part of South Africa and support their team. The 'feelgood effect' identified by Maennig (2007) was clearly noticeable in the Fan Parks among the women respondents. The main reason forwarded by the male respondents was to watch the game. This illustrates that female attendees at the Fan Parks were interested more in the social

interaction aspects than male respondents who focused more on the game itself.

The social atmosphere at the Fan Parks was clearly noticeable with most respondents (72.3%) coming to the Fan Parks in groups of between 3-5 persons. The groups were generally made up of family and/or friends. The group size was significantly higher than for women who were interviewed at the stadiums (the group sizes were generally between 1-3 persons). Of course, cost in terms of purchasing/accessing tickets was a main limitation in terms of the number of people who could attend a game at the stadiums. It was also observed that female groups were larger than male groups and most female groups included men as well.

Twala (2010) presented a report based on visits to three Fan Parks and Public Viewing Areas (Soul Tsotesti, Orange Farm and Cape Town Grand Parade) which she targeted because it was speculated that trafficking would be high since people will be focusing on the games and traffickers will have an opportunity to lure young girls and women. She observed that the Fan Parks were well policed with visible and large numbers of officers on duty. This was certainly the authors' observations as well in Cape Town and Durban. Twala (2010) raises concerns pertaining to unsupervised children, alcohol consumption, and untenable working conditions for women in relation to securing childcare as well as long and irregular hours. Her concerns are valid since problems

experienced in the Fan Parks under study related to lost children and alcohol consumption. However, in the Fan Parks there were efforts to tag children as they came in so that parents/adults could be contacted. Twala (2010) found that there was generally a positive atmosphere with most visitors being excited. She also states that young women in particular enjoyed the opportunity of watching games live in the Fan Parks as the privileged few do in the stadiums. Women she spoke to also enjoyed the opportunity to socialise with others. This was certainly the experience in Cape Town, Durban and Port Elizabeth. The atmosphere was celebratory and fun with people dressed in soccer gear (the prevalence of Bafana Bafana colours and South African flags were indicative of local, South African supporters). The constant sounds of the vuvuzelas and music as well as the waving of thousands of South African flags also assisted in creating a party atmosphere. However, we observed people passed out (overconsumption of alcohol) and lecherous behaviour of males towards generally younger females. This was extremely disconcerting, especially when the females themselves were inebriated and did not appear to have full control over their faculties.

All Fan Parks had controlled and limited entrances. This increased the security within the Fan Parks but also limited the number of people who could enter. On several occasions there were problems with unruly crowds outside the Fan Parks when they were closed. This was a repeated problem during the games when major teams were playing since the Fan Parks had a capacity of 20 000 – 30 000 which is relatively small given the huge interest in the event.

Most female respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements that they felt confident that the event was successfully hosted by South Africa/host city, they were satisfied with the level of service received during the event and they were aware of more tourism facilities

**Table 1: Number of matches watched on day of interview in Fan Park (n=833)**

	Percentage
0	17
1	49.3
2	26.7
3	4.6
4	2.4

X = 1.26

in the area as a result of attending the event (Table 2). This was similar to male responses. The responses show that women Fan Park attendees were satisfied with the event and the 2010 FIFA World Cup generally. The level of satisfaction was also reflected in that 82.4% of the respondents indicated that they would advise friends, relatives or colleagues to visit the host city and/or South Africa. Only 2 respondents stated that they will not, with the rest responding possibly.

Most respondents (both male and female) strongly disagreed, disagreed or indicated neutral with the statement that the World Cup/Fan Park caused no traffic congestion in the local area, suggesting that they experienced traffic congestion during the event. Furthermore, respondents strongly disagreed, disagreed or indicated neutral with the statement that the World Cup/ Fan Park has led to increased crime in the local area. This suggests that most women in Fan Parks did not experience crime and/or feel unsafe during the World Cup and in the Fan Parks. However, several respondents raised concerns relating to crime and safety in South Africa more generally with a South African respondent specifically stating:

*I have never felt safer. However, I can't help wondering if this is a show for foreigners? Surely if we can have security presence during the World Cup at this scale we can have it all the time.*

Most female respondents also strongly disagreed, disagreed or indicated neutral with the statement that the World Cup increases pollution. This was different from male respondents who generally agreed with this statement. This indicates that female respondents did not associate this mega-event with pollution while male respondents did. Schmied *et al* (2007) indicate that large-scale sporting events such as the World Cup leave a massive carbon footprint and generate significant waste. In terms of the former, this is particularly important in relation to the 2010 FIFA World Cup with South Africa being a long haul destination and, therefore, the carbon footprint in relation to air travel alone is important to consider.

Ebrahim (2006) asserts that critical observers have contended that current World Cup strategies undermine, rather than foster grassroots soccer. This sentiment was not supported by

**Table 2: Extent to which respondents agreed or disagreed with statements pertaining to the World Cup/Fan Parks (n=833)**

STATEMENT	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Agree Strongly
I feel confident that this event has been successfully hosted in South Africa/host city	1.6	3.7	7.5	32.8	54.4
I am satisfied with the level of service I have received during the event	1.4	4.1	9.6	38.8	46.1
I am more aware of tourism facilities in the area due to attending the event	1.9	9	19.3	42.1	27.6
The World Cup/Fan Park caused/is causing no traffic congestion in the local area	7	24.4	33.7	22.6	12.4
The World Cup/Fan Park leads/has led to increased crime in the local area	11	29.9	42.9	12	4.2
The World Cup increases pollution (for example, air pollution, waste etc.)	8.4	27.9	38.5	20.2	5



the respondents. Most believed that the World Cup has improved soccer in South Africa and contributes to grassroots development of the sport. However, this study failed to ascertain whether female soccer will improve given the discrimination currently experienced as discussed earlier.

The South African respondents were particularly impressed with the improvements in the infrastructure and services provided. Several women commented on the improved toilet facilities, an aspect not emphasised by the male respondents. Furthermore, in Durban a few women (including the researcher) were impressed with the locations of the toilet facilities with one of the main ones being in close proximity to the police offices. However, of concern during the night games in particular was that police officers themselves were inebriated and this again raises concerns regarding safety at these events.

Table 3 shows that the main activities that the respondents took part in during their stay in South Africa (foreign tourists) and in host cities (domestic tourists) during their travel were shopping (55.1%), visiting beaches (52.6%), food and wine (42%), nightlife (39.5%) and visiting natural attractions (37.2%). The activities were typical of tourists generally and there were no significant differences between male and female respondents.

All the foreign respondents (both male and female) indicated that the FIFA World Cup was important or very important in their decision to travel to South Africa. This indicates that women like men were avid soccer supporters. Most travelled with family members and/or friends who were also supporters of the World Cup. Furthermore, 20.2% of the respondents stated that they attended previous FIFA World Cup/s with an average of 1.3 ranging from 1 to 4 previous World Cups attended. This again indicates that a sizeable proportion of women are avid followers of the FIFA World Cup. A significant proportion of the respondents (20.7%) had visited South Africa

**Table 3: Main activities respondents took part in during their stay in South Africa and/ or host city (n=833): Multiple responses – yes responses only**

	<b>Percentage</b>
Shopping	55.1
Visiting natural attractions	37.2
Medical/health	2.6
Nightlife	39.5
Theme parks	20.3
Visited a casino	13.3
Business	5.3
Social (visiting friends and relatives)	19.4
Beaches	52.6
Cultural/heritage	22.3
Competed in sport	13.1
Food and wine	42
Attended sport other than 2010 World Cup	8.9
Adventure	16.3
Other	2.5

before with most (61.5%) visiting South Africa 1-2 times. It is interesting to note that for the majority of the women (79.3%) this was their first visit to South Africa and the main reason offered was the 2010 World Cup.

Some of the respondents (10.7%) stated that they visited or planned to visit another country in Africa during the World Cup. This suggests that there was some interest in travelling on the African continent which was deemed to be an important aspect of promoting the event as an African World Cup.

### **Purchasing behaviour**

Most of the respondents (66.6% for females and 89.7% for males) had purchased at least one ticket for a match that they attended or planned to attend. While significantly more males purchased tickets, a sizeable proportion of women attended or planned to attend matches. This

indicates their interest in experiencing the event. Furthermore, the results show that contrary to popular perceptions regarding Fan Parks as alternative spaces for those who could not afford to purchase a ticket, these areas were visited by both locals and tourists, as well as by those who purchased tickets. In fact, some women who had already attended a match in a stadium stated that the Fan Parks were better and more fun. One respondent stated:

*watching a match in a stadium is a once in a lifetime opportunity but the Fan Parks is where the party never stops and you can interact with people from all over the world.*

It is interesting to note that a significant proportion of the women (53.8%) stated that they personally purchased tickets, mainly from official ticketing agencies, which shows that women took their own initiative to ensure that they secured a match ticket. The rest of the tickets were generally purchased by male family members or friends. This suggests that males are becoming more accustomed to females wanting to attend matches.

Table 4 shows that most women spent money during the World Cup with the main expenditure items being merchandise/2010 fan-related items (71.7%) and World Cup tickets (71.3%). The highest expenditure items were transportation (R6 506.14) and accommodation (R6 506.14). The main expenditure items at the Fan Parks were food and drink (87.8% of the respondents with an average of R326.38), travel expenses (28.7% of the respondents with an average of R99.08) and merchandise/fan-related items (21.4% of the respondents with an average of R161.22).

Women generally spent as much as men in the Fan Parks and during the World Cup generally. This indicates that women have emerged as a key market in relation to leveraging economic income from this mega-event. What was also noticeable during the World Cup was the

proliferation of paraphernalia that targeted females, for example, female t-shirts of teams. Clearly, the team franchises and FIFA has responded to the growing interest among females in relation to soccer generally and the World Cup in particular. However, of concern from a gender perspective is the extent to which women benefit economically from the World Cup. The main economic benefits are realised by the construction and hospitality (especially formal hotels) sectors which remain male-dominated. Furthermore, at the Fan Parks it was observed that most of the stallholder owners and/or employees were male. This trend indicates the contradictory evidence that while women have been increasingly enticed to spend at matches as well as in support of the game and specific teams, they rarely benefit from the numerous economic opportunities associated with soccer and the hosting of the World Cup. This again reinforces the gender inequalities associated with sport and mega-events. Seguino (2005:24) states:

*Some kinds of inequality under some conditions are a stimulus to growth, while other types of inequality, again under certain conditions, reduce the rate of growth.*

Gender inequalities are certainly at play in relation to women contributing to the economic gains associated with the World Cup but not reaping the economic benefits. Although women's interest has certainly increased over the years and this has had an impact on spend patterns at these events, it is imperative that research examines to what extent can women benefit from large-scale and mega-events which are increasingly being used as key drivers to promote development and, as was the case in South Africa, transformation. Massive public investments underpinned the hosting of the 2010 World Cup but it is unclear who mainly benefitted directly from the event. As indicated by Kunene, (2006) there is clear evidence of the commercialisation of the game.

**Table 4: Proportion of women who spent money on different aspects and average among spent during the World Cup (n=833)**

	Percentage who spent	Average amount spent
World Cup tickets	71.3	R3 603.41
Merchandise/2010 fan-related articles	71.7	R1 486.31
Shopping	65.2	R2 406.99
Transportation, including airfares and travel within South Africa	68.4	R7 405.41
Accommodation	60.4	R6 506.14
Others (entertainment, visits to attractions)	57.7	R1 815.63

**Images and representations of women in the Fan Parks**

Women were as much fans as the men visiting the Fan Parks. There wore a range of soccer fan wear including t-shirts, jackets, scarves, tattoos, etc. They clearly displayed their team preferences. Of concern during the games was the way in which some women were dressed during days when extremely cold weather was experienced. Several females continued to dress scantily despite the freezing cold. This deliberate choice of accentuating the female body among some female fans was also found during the Korea/ Japan World Cup. Tanaka (2004:54) indicates how females deliberately transformed their skirts into ‘micro-mini style’ and chose smaller size shirts because they believed that this made their bodies look “sharper and good looking”.

More local women also tended to support teams (noticeable from clothing they wore), such as Brazil and Spain, where the soccer players were deemed to be good looking. This reinforces the notion women’s interest in soccer and the World Cup is superficial, fixating on the male physique, and that they lack a nuanced understanding and knowledge of the ‘beautiful game’. This stereotype of women soccer fans is extremely problematic. For example, Tanaka (2004) found that female soccer fans during the Japan/Korea World Cup

were extremely knowledgeable about soccer and specific teams. However, they refrained from talking about soccer in public and especially among males largely because they have internalised their gender roles as fans in relation to the game. As Tanaka (2004:54) states, women:

*are placed in a discursive, practical and gendered hierarchical relation, which prioritises a particular mode of spectatorship in soccer games.*

It is important to note that the foreign visitors almost always wore clothes that reflected the country that they were from and supported.

What was also noticeable were the scantily clad women either promoting sponsored products or on stage as part of the entertainment activities. Thus, the marketing of products in the Fan Parks were generally geared towards responding to the male gaze. Thus, the Fan Parks reinforced the objectification of women which is often associated with professional and competitive male sports, most notably the presence of cheerleaders at matches.

**Conclusion**

The World Cup euphoria and fun was experienced in the Fan Parks by women of all races, income levels and nationalities. The concept of Fan Parks was well received in South Africa among women visitors

who generally enjoyed the experience. Even those with match tickets visited the Fan Parks and did so on more than one occasion. The party atmosphere created during the event was appealing to women. The results reveal that the women enjoyed the 'emotional experience' of the event and celebration of South Africa. Furthermore, they generally felt that the event was well organised. They raised concerns pertaining to safety and who benefitted from South Africa's hosting of the event.

Despite the excitement and enjoyment experienced in the Fan Parks, patriarchy was evident in various aspects. The most obvious were in relation to the images of women pertaining to the entertainment provided and their dress choices. Women's involvement in organised soccer, managed under FIFA, reinforces gender inequalities and stereotypes. It also reinforces images of women in relation to physical, sexualised attributes rather than as equals (as players, spectators and spenders) in the game and business of soccer. This was clearly discernible in the Fan Parks.

It is imperative that women's soccer be supported and that women spectators who are increasing in numbers are particularly encouraged to support female players together with SAFA, the government and sponsors. Supporting women's soccer requires significant and sustained resources to ensure effectiveness and long-term sustainability. This study supports Bob *et al's* (2009) assertion that it is the responsibility of SAFA to have a National Soccer Policy that identifies priority areas (in relation to increasing women's participation and reducing gender discrimination), defines activities, leverages the necessary resources, and articulates a clear and workable implementation strategy. Clearly women are extremely supportive of the sport of soccer and it is imperative that soccer supports women as well.

### Footnotes

- 1 The broader research endeavour entailed a national economic impact assessment and was undertaken by a network of national and international academics as well as the City of Cape Town and Tourism KwaZulu-Natal. For

the Cape Town survey, the City of Cape Town and the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) collaborated. A near standard questionnaire was used and this data was extracted for this paper.

- 2 The City of Cape Town is acknowledged for permission to use data extracted from the City of Cape Town 2010 Research.

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