

This article was downloaded by: [115.85.25.194]

On: 01 April 2015, At: 00:46

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Agenda: Empowering women for gender equity

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/ragn20>

Nature and effects of women's participation in sporting decision-making structures in the context of the 2010 FIFA World Cup

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Published online: 03 May 2011.

To cite this article: Newman Wadesango PhD in Educational Management , Severino Machingambi Doctoral Degree Studies , Gladys Ashu Masters degree in Peace Studies and International Relations & Regis Chireshe DEd (Psychology of Education), MSc (Educational Psychology), BSc Hons Pysch (2010) Nature and effects of women's participation in sporting decision-making structures in the context of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, Agenda: Empowering women for gender equity, 24:85, 62-75

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10130950.2010.9676324>

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Nature and effects of women's participation in sporting decision-making structures in the context of the 2010 FIFA World Cup

Newman Wadesango, Severino Machingambi, Gladys Ashu and Regis Chireshe

abstract

This *Article* examines the nature of women's participation in the sport decision-making structures including the 2010 FIFA World Cup organising structures. It also discusses the perceived effects of their participation in leadership positions in sports. It is based on secondary data collected through review of studies, policy documents and reports. Conclusions drawn from the review indicate that women are still not recognised in sport administration. The study concludes that non-participation of women in critical sporting decision-making structures has negative effects on the advancement of gender equality and women's economic empowerment. The study challenges governments to have transparent criteria for decision-making positions in sports and to ensure that the selecting bodies have a gender-balanced composition.

keywords

sport, gender equality, decision-making, participation, 2010 FIFA World cup

Introduction

The representation of women has been increasing in many areas of the work force. However, the number of women in the highest leadership roles in almost all occupational areas is not increasing in proportion to their overall numbers in the work force (Catalyst, 2006). The *Article* reports on literature that seeks to explain the absence of women from sporting decision-making structures, particularly during the 2010 FIFA World

Cup. Theoretical explanations for gender prejudice that is presently an impediment to women's participation in sports are discussed. A brief presentation of the development of women in sport in South African is then offered. The *Article* concludes by presenting reasons to support women's full participation in sports administration and discusses the participation benefits for sports in general and for women in particular. It looks at the international human rights instruments

that support women's full participation in public life and particularly sports, that exist to give effect to transformation of sports from a male-dominated preserve to one which is inclusive of women and men, in participation in sports, and its management and administration.

Women's participation in sports administration

According to the United Nations (2007), women's history of participation in sport is marked by gender discrimination which is fuelled by continuing stereotypes of women's physical abilities and social roles. Heilman (2001) views the role of women in sport, as in so many other societal situations, as having been very mixed. While there has been a marked increase in the number of women participants in recent years, the role of women as top-level administrators has not always effectively increased to the same degree (Coakley, 2001; Connell, 1995; Gogol, 2002; Lovett & Lowry, 1994). It is argued that the sports hierarchy is still a dominantly male domain.

A brief survey on women and men in sports reflects that in several studies on sports women are shown to be barely represented in administration, as officials, or coaches. While these are not representative or universal, it demonstrates an international trend. Goslin (2006:5) states that in the corporate sphere, women only represent 19.8% of executive management positions while in sport, negligibly more, 23% of women are in top level management positions. She further states that, women are mostly present in larger numbers than their male counterparts mainly as personal assistants, event organisers, administrators, receptionists and cleaners.

The women and progress report (African Women & Sport Association, 2002) that was presented at the International Working Group on Women and Sport shows insignificant representation of women in administrative positions in Africa. As a result of this report a

Commission on Women in Sport was created in August 2001 to address, among other issues, equity in sport in Africa. According to the report:

- Benin: only 21% of women were on the Executive Board of the National Olympic Committee.
- Congo: Female representation within the executive bodies was only 10%.
- Eritrea: Eritrea had some women representatives on Executive Boards, and many women in key positions in regional sport committees, up to and including the presidency level.
- Mali: only 22% of decision-making positions were occupied by women.
- Swaziland: only 29 of the total 108 Executive Positions (23%) in the 21 registered sports Associations were being held by women.
- South Africa: only 2 of the 9 members of the National Olympic Committee of South Africa (NOCSA) executive were women (African Women & Sport Association, 2002).

Looking at the situation internationally, Lapchick (2006:87) in assessing sports and gender representation in America points out that "women are under-represented in leadership areas in professional sport". Corroborating this trend, the 2007-2008 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I-A Racial and Gender Demographics Study (TIDES), examined gender representation in higher education leadership and reported that while 16 (13.3%) of the university presidents were women, of the 120 sports directors in NCAA Division IA who oversee football, only six were women (5%) (Masengale, 2009).

Looking at Europe, the United Nations (2007) notes the under-representation of women on the executive boards of sporting federations, the Olympics Committee and as coaches. For example, in the Czech Republic 8% of the executive boards of sports federations are women. Only three

women have ever been members of the executive board of the Czech Olympic Committee in its 105 year history and only 21% of elite athletes are coached by women (Kari & Knoire, 2005 cited by United Nations, 2007). Looking at the example of coaches at community level sport in Canada, the UN study notes that less than 5% of the coaches in community level softball, hockey and soccer are women (Canada Sports News online cited by United Nations, 2007).

With the increased participation of women in sport, it would seem that this trend in participation would be translated into a golden opportunity for women to advance in sporting careers as coaches and administrators. Yet, while the opportunity for such career advancement would seem available, women remain under-represented, particularly in key leadership positions

When women take on stereotyped masculine characteristics such as engaging in a traditionally male-dominated activity like playing sport, gendered boundaries have been crossed

The next section looks to theoretical explanations for the reasons why women are not equally represented in sports structures. This study used three inter-related theoretical frameworks to understand the disproportionate number of men found at the organisational level within the male-dominated sport domain, such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup and more broadly in sports administration.

Theoretical Framework

The reason for unequal representation of women in leadership positions in society has been attributed to labour market discrimination. The over-dominance of men in sports organisation is explained in three ways: firstly, by the theory of hegemonic masculinity (Whisenant, 2003); secondly, by the theory of homologous reproduction (Lovett & Lowry, 1994), and thirdly, by gender discrimination and prejudice in the form of homophobia (Connell, 1995).

Hegemonic masculinity is said to exist when the attributes of masculinity are viewed as superior to femininity and holding more power, reinforces the dominant ideology and gender inequalities (Masengale, 2009). It is argued that sport cultures tend to affirm male dominance. As a theory, homologous reproduction proposes that a dominant group within an organisation will work to "carefully guard power and privilege" (Masengale, 2009: 46) by systematically reproducing themselves in their own image. This systematic reproduction is accomplished by men in leadership roles hiring and promoting other men (Masengale, 2009). The practice of homologous reproduction has been documented in the employment of coaches at both the interscholastic and intercollegiate levels (Lovett & Lowry, 1994). The literature suggests that homologous reproduction is an important underlying variable that contributes to the continued under-representation of female leaders in sport (Masengale, 2009).

Another reason proposed for discrimination that limits women's representation in sports is homophobia, the irrational fear and/or intolerance of homosexuality (Rotella & Murray, 1991). Heilman (2001) describes how this fear contributes to continuous institutionalisation of sexism, blatant discrimination and prejudice against women. Pringle (2005) has listed lesbian fear as a significant factor contributing to women's difficulty in attaining leadership positions in sports. Masengale (2009) additionally lists sexual orientation as a notable factor in the under-representation of women in coaching.

The assumption behind the homophobic argument is that when women take on stereotyped masculine characteristics such as engaging in a traditionally male-dominated activity like playing sport, gendered boundaries have been crossed. The logic therefore follows that this activity, when played by women, challenges heterosexuality and therefore signifies lesbianism (Rotella & Murray, 1991) Thus, women footballers who have strayed into a traditional male terrain consistently experience this negative labelling.

Like women's teams in other countries, men have been an integral part of South African women's soccer from the early days. However, despite South Africa having a vibrant women's football national team that has an impressive record of winning regional and international tournaments, the female footballers are battling to find a meaningful place in the sporting arena (Richardson, 2001). This, to a large extent is largely manifested by the fact that players in Banyana Banyana are not paid as well as their counterparts in Bafana Bafana, nor do they get the same media attention as the men's team. As observed by Mills and Engh (2010:65), one female player complained last year as follows, "We perform well, we come back with trophies of tournaments, and then ... we don't get recognised for it".

Further, the demand by SAFA administrators that Banyana Banyana team members attend etiquette classes and wear skirts when traveling, restricts their already diminished opportunities in sports. Mills and Engh (2010) cite one official who told *City Press* in 2005 that Banyana Banyana need to learn how to be ladies. Thus, the twin effect of lack of support from male-dominated institutions such as SAFA and the widespread stereotype that women who play football are 'masculine' acts as barriers to women participating in sport.

FIFA: an example of hegemonic masculinity

Masengale (2009) states that sport, as a hegemonic social institution, naturalises men's power and privilege over women. As Kane and Disch (1993) elaborate, 'sport has been so tied with males that athletics and masculinity have almost become synonymous'. In the same vein, Coakley (2001) and Fink (2008) cogently point out that sport has long been associated with men and masculinity in nearly every society in the world. With regards to the 2010 FIFA World Cup, this was clearly evident not only in the playing field, but also in the coaching and administrative arenas of the game.

The International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) is the international governing body of association football. It is mostly responsible for the organisation and governance of football's major international tournaments. At the apex of the FIFA executive, is a president who is assisted by eight vice-presidents. These work together with 15 other members who are appointed by the confederations and associations. There are six confederations recognised by FIFA which oversee the game in the different continents and regions of the world. The confederations are the umbrella organisations of the national football associations on each continent. These raise the profile of football by staging their own competitions at club and international level. The association members make up the Congress which is FIFA's supreme

Sport has been so tied with males that athletics and masculinity have almost become synonymous

legislative body. The continental confederations are provided for in FIFA's statutes. National associations claim membership to both FIFA and the confederation in which their nation is geographically resident (Sugden, 1998). This brings the total membership of the FIFA executive to 24. The gender breakdown of this executive shows all the 24 members are male. This exclusively male membership, while it clearly does not promote equity and equality in sports participation between the sexes, also serves to create the impression that women do not possess the competencies to manage sports.

The hegemonic culture was further manifested at the level of the FIFA 2010 World Cup Organising Committee South Africa. The Organising committee was structured such that the various participants in football and operational activities associated with football were represented on the board of the Local Organising Committee (LOC). The board

of the LOC comprised representatives of SAFA, government officials, the corporate world, the Confederation of African Football and prominent local soccer administrators. At the helm of the local committee was a male chief executive officer who was assisted in his functions by eight chief officers each being in charge of a specialist management area such as security, communications, marketing, transport and logistics, Internet Technology (IT), finance, and competitions. What was glaringly conspicuous about this committee was that all of its membership was male save for the chief operations officer who was the exception as the only woman. The gender composition of the two committees is an example of men's exercise of exclusive control of sport. Women's chance of participating in sports leadership had diminished beyond acceptable levels. (K Hassan, 4th August, "FIFA World Cup 2010 and Women Empowerment", *Daily Dispatch*).

The exclusion of women from representation can therefore be seen to be wider than soccer itself but as political, social and economic

On the eve of the 2010 FIFA World Cup kickoff, the single most indelible impression of the 'beautiful game' was its overwhelming "maleness" (K Hassan, 4th August, "FIFA World Cup 2010 and Women Empowerment", *Daily Dispatch*). While FIFA President Sepp Blatter used the platform to state "it is part of our social responsibility to use our competitions to raise awareness of the pressing social issues of the day" (B Norris, 3 June 2010, "Great Publicity at the heavy hands of FIFA S.A.", *Daily Dispatch*) the gender equality of women and the game was the least of concerns. From the overwhelming "maleness" there was a corresponding presentation of women as wives and girlfriends according to Hassan, a South African journalist covering the Game. This was a great triumph for the supporters of a traditional patriarchal society. It is argued that society as a whole, and

women in particular, emerged as the casualties against the long record of subjugation in politics, now adversely affecting the participation of women in sports, and vice versa.

The FIFA World Cup, it can be argued, is not only a 'Game', it is an international event which requires legal agreements, diversion of public spending into infrastructure and stadiums, host city by-laws, the closure of schools and even special courts. The exclusion of women from representation can therefore be seen to be wider than soccer itself but as political, social and economic. The 'Game', as an example of hegemonic masculinity, makes of the country a vast playing field which is the sole domain of men. The positioning of the 2010 FIFA World Cup hosted by South Africa is in sharp contrast to the Women's FIFA World Cup which takes place in relative obscurity as an international event.

The preparations for the upcoming FIFA World Cup Women's Game tournament to be held in Germany in 2011 are supervised by the Women's World Cup 2011 Organising Committee which is made up of 15 members. Women are the majority with 13 members, with the chair and deputy chair both men (fifa.com, 2010). While the tournament is hardly in the international headlines and could be said to be on the periphery, what it does demonstrate is that women are not only involved in the administration of the Women's game, they are competent to do so.

In the next two sections the reasons for women's lack of participation in sports administration are explored, looking at the gender roles of women and the South African history of sport and women's development.

Patriarchy and gender roles

Dixon and Bruening (2007) in their discussion of managing coaching and family responsibilities, argue that just like any other institution within a patriarchal culture, sport conspires to trivialise and hinder women's efforts in their struggle

to realise their full potential. Their argument suggests that the problem of women's limited space for participation and unequal representation in sport cannot be adequately addressed by limiting attention to the institution of sport per se. Instead, efforts to redress the gender imbalances in sport should also be directed at the broader society. Gogol (2002) writing about the issues of women coaches argues that the exercise by women of their constitutional rights to equality is frequently in conflict with traditional values.

The problem of female subordination and near absence, in sports decision-making structures in general and FIFA World Cup organising structures in particular, can be understood in terms of the patriarchal attitude typical of African countries (B Norris, 3rd June 2010, "Great Publicity at the heavy hands of FIFA, S.A", *Daily Dispatch*) Coakley (2001), who explores the relationship between sexism and the culture of sport in America, however maintains that boys and girls learn that male-only sports are a fundamental and 'natural' male initiation rite. This would suggest that the way that male sport is understood as an exclusive male preserve is not only African. A challenge to these practices and the culture of sport therefore need to take place more widely in society. Gogol (2002:65) in discussion of women coaches concurs that:

only if the equal participation of women is woven into the overall cause of progress can development have its full impact.

The United Nations (2007) give positive examples of efforts being made to involve women in decision-making in sport in Kenya and Zambia that show that the effort to involve women in sport in Africa is possible and replicable in other countries. In Kenya, a football and peer-led health education project for rural girls has trained girl referees to officiate at matches during the project's annual tournaments. Zambia has started a Go Sisters project which aims

to empower girls through sport by training them to become peer leaders, offering them scholarships and involving them in decision making.

It is argued that policymakers and development planners should recognise the gender inequities in sport and introduce programmes to ensure women's fullest involvement, from participation in sports to representation in sports structures and policy-making bodies.

In addition to cultural and social stereotypes there are other practical constraints that account for women's under-representation in sporting structures. For instance, the timing and choice of venues for sports meetings as well as their publicity need to be handled with sensitivity so that the gender roles and responsibilities that determine women's concerns and interests are taken into

A football and peer-led health education project for rural girls has trained girl referees to officiate at matches

account (Pringle, 2005). Meetings are usually held during evening times, in venues far removed from homes, thereby conflicting with women's views about personal safety and family obligations (Deal and Stevenson, 1998). Furthermore, male sporting activities tend to be given overwhelming attention in terms of publicity, access to facilities and funding compared with female sports. This has the cumulative effect that sport management has largely remained in the hands of men with women effectively confined to the household or private sphere (Masengale, 2009).

The media also plays an important role in perpetuating the under-representation of women in sporting structures. Huggins and Randell (2007) state that women in sport receive lower levels of media coverage and the media subjects them to both sexist and derogatory language, while the United Nations (2007) note that women's sport is not only marginalised in the media but usually

presented in a style that reflects and reinforces gender stereotypes. During the 2010 World Cup, the media depicted women predominantly as cheer leaders, wives and general supporters of the big game in spite of their enjoyment and participation in the game (C Beningfield, 6th August 2010, "Women's Involvement with Soccer as part of the Emancipation Process", *Daily Dispatch*).

While women have made significant inroads into playing soccer, their participation as managers or as officials in sport is negligible.¹ The recently held FIFA 2010 World Cup games in South Africa did not involve women in leadership or administration roles, either locally or at the international level. Rather, it is argued that gender discrimination as illustrated by the theory of hegemonic masculinity, saw gender inequalities reinforced and women relegated to the private sphere.

Development of women's sport in South Africa

In trying to account for the absence of women in critical decision-making structures of sport, it is useful to examine the question from a broader perspective. We find in pre-1994 South Africa administrative law was under the sovereignty of a parliament that largely excluded women. A weak administrative law which controlled national bodies of sports administration meant there was little judicial review. Thus the connection between politics and sport is evident. In 1971 the South African government under B Vorster began drafting a new sporting policy that would be adopted in its final draft in 1976 under the tutelage of Minister of Sport Piet Koornhof (Desai, 2010). According to Fink (2008) while the shift in policy was being portrayed internationally as a radical change in policy, in practice the logic of apartheid was preserved in that each racial group was allowed to develop its own separate sporting relations with the proviso that the white administered sporting bodies remained in overall control. Even FIFA had to suspend South Africa and everywhere there

were calls for transformation.

Women's position in this situation was reduced to extreme insignificance. However, with the adoption of the new Constitution No 108 of 1996, there was a shift in the law. The inclusion of a Bill of Rights in Chapter 2 influenced the application of Administrative Law in practice (Lapchik, 2006). This also meant an improvement in women's participation in sport. As Desai (2010) notes, the popularity of soccer among women grew exponentially with the democratisation of South Africa, with many black women joining existing teams in larger numbers and starting new teams. However, these efforts were met with opposition – ideological, financial, and institutional. Many parents refused permission for their girls to play soccer, fearing that the girls would be scorned or become "tomboys", reflecting that gender role stereotypes influence women's participation in sex-typed sports (Desai, 2010).

Despite South Africa's transition to a democratic state, in the arena of gender and sport many of the pre-1994 tensions still exist. Contradictions abound. Transformation in sports discourse is, save in rare instances, gender-blind. Women as sports playing citizens do not really exist except peripherally. In South Africa, women occupy less than 5% of the administrative positions in sports (K Hassan, 4 August, "FIFA World Cup 2010 and Women Empowerment", *Daily Dispatch*).

Dixon and Bruening (2007) argue that in spite of the restructuring of sport in South Africa, limited resources and effort is being put into the development of women's sport. Not surprisingly, women's participation and involvement in the 2010 World Cup Local Organising Committee was minimal despite their expertise as soccer players.

Women in South Africa have been playing club soccer for decades, albeit on a disjointed and local basis. There are currently more than 300 women's soccer clubs in the South Africa Football Association's (SAFA) 25 regions with a pool of about 50 000 players (Desai, 2010).

However there is a relative paucity of support, financial and otherwise, for Banyana Banyana, the national South African women's soccer team even though they have acquitted themselves on the soccer field more successfully than the men's national team, Bafana Bafana. Take for example the Confederation of Southern African Football Associations (COSAFA) women's tournament that was hosted by Zambia from August 21-26, 2010, Banyana Banyana beat Namibia 3-1 in the final:

completing their campaign without a defeat and scoring seven goals in the semi-final and final of the tournament. Banyana Banyana's victory was an island of success for a South African football fraternity that had been plagued by a plethora of failures on the international football scene (R Sharuko, 29 August, "Banyana Banyana Prevail", *The Sunday Times*).

According to Miller and Haugaa (2010) Banyana Banyana also won the COSAFA championship in 2002 and the Southern African Zone-6 Games in 2006. In 2003 and 2007, they were runners-up in the All Africa Games.

Post-apartheid sports structures continue to replicate what are termed 'old-boy' networks keeping control of soccer male-dominated. It is argued that in spite of the transition to democracy, homologous reproduction can be seen to be operating and labour market inequalities, discriminatory cultural and sport practices contribute to the perpetuation of sport as a male preserve. There is an abundance of evidence that the positive benefits of equal participation in sport and sports policy-making for women far exceeds their exclusion, and in the next section these are outlined.

Effects of women's participation in sports administration

The under-representation of women in decision-making positions in the areas of art, culture,

sports, the media, education, religion and the law have prevented women from having a significant impact on many key institutions (Catalyst, 2006).

Benefits to sport

If women were well represented in the leadership and decision-making of all sport and sport-related organisations, they would contribute to the development of policies and programmes and design structures which would increase the number of women coaches, advisers, decision-makers, officials and administrators at all levels. The developed policies, structures and mechanisms would:

- ensure that all women and girls have opportunities to participate in sport in a safe and supportive environment which preserves the rights, dignity and respect of individuals;
- increase the involvement of women in sports at all levels and in all functions and roles;
- ensure that the knowledge, experiences and values of women contribute to the development of sport, and;
- promote the recognition of women's involvement in sport as a contribution to public life, community development and in building a healthy nation (Connell, 1995; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Expanded talent base

Acoster and Carpenter (2004), supporting this position, assert that if women take up leadership positions in sport they would address the issue of how to accelerate the process of change that would redress the imbalances in their participation and involvement in sport. This would increase the involvement of women in sport at all levels and in all functions and roles. The United Nations (2007) states further that the contribution of women in leadership positions can bring diversity and alternative approaches and expand the talent base in areas such as management, coaching and sport journalism.

Benefits to women

Fink (2008) argues that women's experiences, value and attitudes can enrich, enhance and develop sport. Similarly, the participation of women in sports administration can enrich, enhance and develop women's lives (Gogol, 2002). Cunningham and Sagas (2002) concur with Gogol (2002) in that, if women take up leadership roles in sports, they would develop a sporting culture that enables and values the full involvement of other women in every aspect of sport.

Gender difference

Research demonstrates that girls and boys approach sport from markedly different perspectives (Heilman, 2001). For this reason, Acosta and Carpenter (2004) are of the view that if women take up top leadership positions in sport, they would ensure that an equitable range of opportunities and learning experiences, which accommodate the values, attitudes and aspirations of girls, is incorporated in programmes to develop physical fitness and the basic sport skills of young girls.

Women's participation in sport may also go a long way to remove gender stereotype and negative attitudes associated with sport

Women's participation in sport administration would provide and promote activities which meet women's needs and aspirations. These same sentiments are echoed by Coakley (2001) who reasons that the participation of women in sport leadership would ensure that competition opportunities, rewards incentives, recognition, sponsorship, promotion and other forms of support are provided fairly and equitably to both women and men.

Challenge gender stereotypes

Contributing to the same debate, Fink (2008) is of the view that involvement of women in sports

leadership would ensure that support is available for sports women and women's programmes. Women's participation in sport may also go a long way to remove gender stereotypes, and negative attitudes associated with sport. Thus, participation of women in sport challenges gender stereotypes and discrimination and can become a vehicle for the promotion of gender equity and the empowerment of women (United Nations, 2007).

Improve quality of life

It will break the "old boys club" linked to male dominance in sport and bring about gender equality and introduce diversity as alternative voices would be available in areas ranging from sport administration, coaching, refereeing to media reporting or sport journalism. The United Nations (2007) believes that more women in leadership and decision-making positions means more role models and mentors which results in the encouragement of more women to participate at all levels of sport. Women's participation in decision-making positions also improves their health, quality of life and develops important skills such as leadership, teamwork, goal setting and negotiation.

It is widely held that throughout all countries from the least developed to the more advanced, that women face the brunt of poverty and marginalisation and at the same time, have little influence on the socio-economic and political processes and institutions that shaped their lives (Chireshe, 2010). This silence and invisibility does not only hinder women's access to decision-making and agenda-setting processes but also deprives them of the basic human rights guaranteed in both local and international treaties and conventions. In the next section the human rights instruments that relate to women's human rights to equality, to participation in sport and women's quotas for representation on sport bodies, and the participation of women in public life are discussed.

International human rights instruments supporting women's full participation in sports

A number of international and regional instruments have been adopted to ensure that the violation of the rights of women and girl children by traditional and cultural practices is recognised and receive the required attention by the international community and individual states.

Culture and tradition

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (UDHR) provides in Article 27 that everybody has the right to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and share in scientific advancement and its benefits (UNICEF, 2007). This is repeated in similar words in Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966 and Article 17(2) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted in 1981 (SADC, 2005). The preamble of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) emphasises the need to discourage practices that are not consistent with the obligations and duties contained in the Charter. In 2001, The UN General Assembly passed a resolution to the effect that states had a responsibility of developing policies and programmes that outlaw traditional or customary practices affecting women and girls (Rembe, Chabaya & Wadesango, 2009).

In addition, Article 5 (a) of the Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which South Africa has ratified, calls on state parties to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women and to eliminate prejudices and practices which perpetuate discrimination on the basis of sex. Implicitly, governments that ratified this Convention undertook to act against practices that promote discrimination in their countries. Article 2 of the Child Rights Convention (CRC) has urged states to prohibit gender discrimination and recognise the principle of equality (UNICEF, 2003).

Women and sports

In 1995 the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport called for, amongst other things, equality in society and sport; sport facilities that meet the needs of women; an increase in the number of women coaches and advisers and decision-makers in sport (International Working Group on Women and Sport, 1994). In 2000, the International Olympic Committee together with the United Nations, governments, and international organisations adopted a resolution that, amongst other things, committed to meeting the goal of 20% of women represented in decision-making by 2005 and increasing scholarships and training for women athletes, coaches and other officials (International Olympic Committee, 2000). However, in 2010 it needs to be established if the 20% goal has been met by signatory countries. A further question is whether the 20% quota accorded to women is adequate against the fact that they represent 50% of the population and that both women and men's competitions are held.

The International Olympic Committee's Charter adopted in 2004 also encourages and supports the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures with a view to implement the principle of equality between men and women (International Olympic Committee, 2004). Moreover, the United Nations Fourth Conference on Women at Beijing in 1995 also saw the need for the integration of women in leadership positions in all spheres of life and what became known as the Beijing Platform for Action Critical Area 7 dealing with women in power and decision-making clearly states that:

women have demonstrated considerable leadership in community and informal organisations, as well as in public office. However, socialisation and negative stereotyping of women and men, including stereotyping through the media, reinforces the tendency for political decision-making to remain the domain of men (Catalyst, 2006;25)

The Beijing Platform for Action aims to address the inequality in power that exists between men and women. It urges governments, private sector, civil society including non-governmental organisations and the international community to take action to:

- (i) ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in, power structures and decision-making, and
- (ii) increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

In addition, Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which deals with "gender equality and women's empowerment" has a critical role in the achievement of the MDGs (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). This Goal came up because of the recognition of women's right to participate equally with men at all levels of decision-making in public life.

It is disheartening that, despite the claims by governments to promote gender equality in line with the international instruments discussed above: the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW, the MDGs, and the Olympic Committee Charter, that women continue to be under-represented in many spheres of decision-making and processes.

Conclusion

This *Article* has sought to explain the absence of women from representation in sports structures and in particular in reference to the FIFA World Cup Games. It has argued that the FIFA World Cup is an example of hegemonic masculinity in which existing forms of gender inequality have been reinforced and where women's marginalisation and subordination is evident. Women's exclusion can also be seen to be a result of the unacceptable and pervasive gender discrimination that women who play soccer experience, as a result of the homophobic attitudes that need to be challenged. Labour market practices that serve to perpetuate male-control of sport, were discussed under the theory of homologous reproduction to explain

the contradictions of post-apartheid sport where women's sport is under-represented in sport structures and also under-resourced. Lastly it has been demonstrated that the benefits to women, sports and public life of women's fullest participation in policy-making, administration, and coaching far outweigh women's exclusion. Human Rights Instruments have given expression to the need for both women's equal participation in policy-making and their right to choose to participate in sports and culture.

The overwhelming "maleness" portrayed on the eve of the 2010 FIFA World Cup kickoff does not only serve to naturalise and legitimates men's power and privilege but also creates negative social stereotypes about women's incompetence in sport and the ideology of male supremacy in sport. Lack of female coaches, administrators, referees and judges for instance, can promote the stereotypical belief that women do not possess the competence and leadership abilities necessary for holding such positions. This may act as a stumbling block for all those females who may want to penetrate the domain of sports management. This scenario has a negative impact on the marketing and funding of women sports.

As a traditional social institution involved in human development through sport, FIFA and Local Organising Committees should cultivate the advancement of women in soccer, and call for their inclusion in the dynamics of policy planning, coordination and implementation. Women in the host countries need to ensure their voices are heard to prevent their marginalisation and that women are included in the national planning. At the same time governments need to be challenged to have transparent criteria for decision-making positions in sports to ensure that the selecting bodies have a gender-balanced composition.

The question of course must be posed as to how open FIFA is to change, given its international corporate structure, composition and hegemonic culture. FIFA has signed a declaration at its

Extraordinary Congress held in Buenos Aires in 2001 condemning discrimination of all forms, however, with an emphasis only on race. Now is the time for FIFA to recognise, that to play fair it needs to reject both racism and sexism.

This *Article* could not consider women's involvement and representation in all sporting activities, or survey policies that pertain to women in sport. It is clear that much more research is needed before the problem of discrimination in sport that women experience can be tackled. However, given the economic, social and political investments involved in the hosting of mega-sporting events such as the World Cup and Olympics, gender equality should be put on the agenda. It is concluded that feminists need to stake their claim to those spaces where patriarchy, race, class, sexual orientation and other bases of discrimination will have no home.

In doing so they must "Remember all our women over many fighting years, Remember all our women for their triumphs, and for their tears" (From Women's Day Song). Men and the media should also play a critical role in the mainstreaming of gender in sport. Successful participation in sports by women enhances their health, wellness, quality of life and such skills as teambuilding, goal setting, leadership, tolerance and negotiation.

Footnotes

- 1 A notable exception was the first UEFA Cup Game to be refereed by a woman, Nicole Petignant, in 2003 (Connell, 1995).

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