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The Beautiful Game? Football, Power, Identities, and Development in Zimbabwe

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Declaration - Plagiarism

I Lyton Ncube declare that:

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Signed ………………………………………Date: 30 September 2014.
Acknowledgements

The ball is in the nets! The referee is pointing at the centre, signaling it’s a goal. Indeed we have scored a crucial and superb goal. The terraces are in jubilation, celebrating this fabulous moment which came as a result of team work. We have won as a team.

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Glory is to the Almighty God!
Dedication

Mum you have always been a source of inspiration and encouragement. This thesis is for you. I further dedicate this thesis to my dearest beloved son Tinevimbo Lyton Jnr and muzuku (nephew) Tadiwanashe Shammah Mashora.
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Acronyms

CAF-Confederation of African Football
FIFA-Federation de International Football Association
GNU-Government of National Unity
GPA-Global Political Agreement
MDC-Movement for Democratic Change
PSL-Premier Soccer League
SRC-Sport Recreation Commission
ZANU PF-Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZAPU-Zimbabwe African People’s Union
ZIFA-Zimbabwe Football Association
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Abstract

Football is the most followed sport in Zimbabwe as elsewhere across the globe. It has been asserted that due to football’s popularity and emotional nature, the game occupies an important but equally complex and controversial place in the cultural, religious, political, economic and entertainment lives of millions of the continent’s powerful and powerless, and rich and poor (Pannenborg, 2010). Pele, Brazilian footballer star, dubbed football the world’s most ‘beautiful’ game. However, football’s presumed ‘beauty’ is yet to be subjected to rigorous academic interrogation specifically in Zimbabwe largely because the study of the discourse of popular sport is still in its infancy. This thesis follows up on Fletcher’s (2012), assertion that researching sport is not, and should not be restricted to sport but should be seen to open up wider avenues of enquiry into everyday life. Theoretically, deploying the Foucauldian discourse and neo Gramscian approach which views popular culture (including football) as a formative site for the play of power, where identities are negotiated and contested in people’s everyday lives, the thesis explores the discourse and ‘politics of football’ in post-independence Zimbabwe. Of particular importance to the study is to ascertain exactly how football is intricately intertwined with national discourses specifically power, identities and development in Zimbabwe. The study utilises a qualitative research approach specifically an interpretive prism. Principal research methods for the study include ethnography/ participant observation in football stadia during Premier Soccer League matches specifically involving Dynamos FC, Highlanders FC as well as the Warriors. In-depth semi-structured interviews were also conducted with purposively selected informants such as football supporters, administrators, sponsors, footballers, sports journalists and government officials in an attempt to make ‘thick description’ of Zimbabwean football cultures in the context of society and politics. Findings indicate that football is more than a game in Zimbabwe as elsewhere. In essence, the often glorified ‘beautiful’ game is far from being a pure and ‘beautiful’ activity but rather a ‘complex’ process of expressing, contesting and negotiating political, economic, cultural and social realities.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Edson Arantes do Nascimento popularly known as Pele, Brazil’s football legend and arguably the world’s greatest footballer of all time, described football as the world’s most ‘beautiful’ game (Stapleton, 2001; Daimon, 2010). Pele’s assertion creates an impression that football is a non problematic sport which only has an aesthetic dimension (Daimon, 2010). The presumed ‘beauty’ masks the fact that football is a charged political and ideological structure where power and identity battles are fought both on the surface and through subtexts (Pannenborg, 2010).

Football matches are deeply emotional, recreational, cultural and political events for footballers and supporters (The Social Issues Research Centre, 2008). They also make economic gains (and losses) for nations, corporations and investors, and are the source of attention-grabbing headline stories. In spite of the glorified ‘beauty’ football is also plagued by match-fixing scandals, corruption, racism, tribalism, corporate takeovers, ownership wrangles, nepotism, violence and hooliganism, and tragedies in stadia, among a host of other ‘uglinesses’ (Pannenborg, 2010).

These ‘realities’ often framed and mediated by the lens of both the mass and new media make football a highly contested space. The 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, for instance, also reflected the highs and lows of football, from ‘uniting’ all Africa under the banner of ‘Africa United’ and briefly ‘uniting’ South Africans of all races and ethnicity under the banner of the Rainbow Nation, to recriminations about financial losses (Cottle, 2011); from the ‘beautiful’ tiki-taka one-touch passing football of the eventual champions Spain to the ‘ugly’ handball by Luis Suarez in the Uruguay-Ghana quarterfinal match.

Football’s ‘beauty’ has not been significantly academically interrogated, specifically in Zimbabwe. Fletcher [2012 “These Whites Never Come to Our Game, What do They Know about our Soccer? Soccer Fandom, Race and the Rainbow Nation in South Africa”, asserts that researching sport is not, and should not be restricted to sport but should be seen to open up wider avenues of enquiry into everyday life. The thesis thus examines complex relationships and interdependencies that surround the ‘beautiful’ game in modern day Zimbabwe, relating the discourse of football in Zimbabwe to specific social, cultural, political and economic contexts and landscapes in the country.
Of particular interest to the study are three intersecting issues surrounding the game of football in Zimbabwe: power, identity, and development. All three issues historically impact on the everyday lives of ordinary Zimbabweans. Critically, the study argues that power, identity and development converge on the football pitch centripetally before fanning out from it centrifugally. This study is an exploration of this critical centripetal-centrifugal exchange and convergence of discourses. It is the further view of this study that the ensuing convergence makes the pitch an important meeting-place (and departing place) and collision point of a diversity of topical discourses that shape what ordinary Zimbabweans talk about and do not talk about, what they aspire to and what they fear, love and hate. Focus is on post independence Zimbabwe where reference is made to issues dating back from 1980 when the Zimbabwean nation was born up to 2014. The choice of such a long period is necessitated largely by the scarcity of systematic studies on football in post independence Zimbabwe. The main research question investigated by this study is: how is football intertwined with discourses of power, identities and development in Zimbabwe?

**Background to the Study**

Football’s origins are highly debated in the academic field. Cooke (2010) states that, “the history of football is a captivating and complex story. It has been filled with beauty, controversy and tragedy; moments of great joy and great sadness, life changing euphoria and heart breaking disappointment. And then with every new season, a new page is turned and a new story is written” (Cooke, 2010:1). Earliest powerful civilisations such as Egypt, Rome, Greece, China and England claim to have invented football (Green, 1954; Chipande, 2009; Cooke, 2010; McKinley, 2011). Forerunners to the modern game were recorded as early as 2500 BC. Apparently, most cultures and civilisations seem to have played some kind of proto-football

1 The word ‘ordinary’ people is a controversial term especially in post colonial studies. In this study, ‘ordinary’ people are at times referred to as ‘subalterns’. The term ‘subaltern’ was first coined by the Italian Neo Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci who used it to refer to the proletariats or the marginalised classes in society (Mallon, 1994; Spivak, 2006; Ghosh, 2012). Guha (1982) has asserted that the people/subalterns are those social groups who fall outside the category of those who qualify to be called ‘elites’ (Guha, 1982:4).
which involved the kicking of a ball between different groups of players (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1999; Cooke, 2010). Various artefacts found in Egyptian tombs signify the existence of ball games as early as 2500 BC. Though these games have nothing in common with modern football, there might not have been any football as we know it without their existence (Chipande, 2009).

There are also suggestions that football descended first from a military manual in the Han Dynasty period in China during the second and third centuries (255BC-220 AD) (McKinley, 2011:13). People played a game of ball called ‘Tsu Chu’ (kick the ball) on the imperial birth days (Young, 1968). In this game, the main goal was to drive an animal skin ball through holes in a net, stretched between two poles. Subsequent forms included the Japanese game of Kemari which began during the sixth century, as well as the Greek game of Episkyros (also known as phaindina) and the Roman Harpastum (McKinley, 2011:13). Harpastum is mentioned frequently in classical literature, where it is often referred to as a “very rough and brutal game” (Green, 1954; Chipande, 2009).

The development of modern football however, is largely credited to the British. Modern football is said to have been a form of folk football that developed in the English public schools during the middle of the 18th century (Green, 1954; Cooke, 2010; McKinley, 2011).On Monday October 26 1863 representatives of football clubs such as Kensington school, Crusaders, Forest, Barnes, Black heath school and many others convened at the Free Manson’s tavern along Great Queen street London and formed a Football Association (FA) (Young, 1968; Chipande, 2009). Guttmann (1994) has asserted that the formation of the Football Association marked the beginning of the development of modern football. It is this British football structure that has been replicated across the globe in running football across the globe. From England, football diffused to different parts of the world through English men who went to work and to study abroad and most importantly, through imperial conquest and colonialism (Tenga, 2000; Darby, 2000).

It has been asserted that the development of football in Africa is encoded with all the complexity of the continent’s colonial experience (Alegi, 2010). Like many other colonial imports, football in Africa was a European invention (Alegi, 2002). The first documented game of football on the continent was played in South Africa in 1862, a year before soccer’s official rules were codified (Alegi, 2010). The British military, traders and the missionaries played in this first recorded
football match in Africa. These emissaries of the empire also popularised the game at their outposts throughout Africa. The game spread very quickly through mission schools, military stations and in settlements along the ever-advancing railroad lines (Alegi, 2010).

In Zimbabwe, the location of this study, the development of football followed colonisation. Giulianoti (2004) argues that the first players of football in Zimbabwe were a small group of Europeans called the Pioneer Column, who occupied and from 1890 began to colonise Zimbabwe under the leadership of Cecil John Rhodes’ British South Africa Company (BSAC). By the end of 1900 football had established itself as a popular sport as testified by several sports clubs that had been founded in emerging towns (Giulianotti, 2004). The game remains the most popular sport in post colonial Africa; Zimbabwe included (Chiweshe, 2011; Ncube, 2014).

Due to football’s continued popularity, there have been observations in some quarters that sport has gradually ‘overtaken’ Christianity as the most popular ‘religion’ of the day (Robertson, 2004). Like many African countries where football is the ‘number one sport’, Zimbabwe can aptly be described as a ‘football loving nation’. This study defines football loving nations as nations where the majority of populations support football. Though football is popular in Zimbabwe, it is very difficult to come up with correct statistics about the actual number of football supporters in the country since no one has ever conducted a study to actually ascertain football fandom patterns in the country. However, Dynamos FC, one of the country’s most well-known teams, claims that it has a support base of around seven million supporters (Sharuko, 2014), which, if it were true, would account for more than half of Zimbabwe’s entire population of 13.5 million. Highlanders FC and CAPS United FC also command a huge following in Zimbabwe, thus testifying to how popular the sport is in the country. Due to football’s national popularity, the government and corporate world\(^2\) have maintained a keen interest in the sport by sponsoring certain teams and tournaments.

Due to its mass popularity and emotional nature, football occupies an important, complex and controversial place in the cultural, religious, political, economic and entertainment lives of

\(^2\) Mining institutions such as BancABC, Mbada Diamonds, Mimosa Platinum and Delta Beverages Company (a subsidiary of South African Breweries the current official sponsor of the PSL through their Castle Lager brand) have invested in the ‘beautiful’ game.
millions of the continent’s powerful and powerless, and rich and poor (Pannenborg, 2010). The theoretical departure for this study is the active recasting of the Foucauldian discourse and neo-Gramscian approach which views popular culture (including football) as a terrain of ideological struggle and formative site for the play of power, where identities are negotiated and contested in people’s everyday lives. This study explores the discourse and ‘politics of football’ in Zimbabwe, or the role that football plays in the everyday lives of Zimbabweans, with a focus on the nature of its influence on power, identities and development in the country in the post-independence period. In this study the term ‘discourse of football’ is used to refer to the systems of thoughts, ideas, images and other symbolic practices that shape, frame and surround the game of football in Zimbabwe.

The study examines the complex relationships and interdependencies that surround the ‘beautiful’ game in Zimbabwe. It has been asserted that football in Africa is not limited to scoring goals on the pitch but also in politics, power struggles, cultural formations and economic matters (Siriwat, 2012; Pannenborg, 2010; Lin and Nai, 2008). This research is in agreement with the above cited works that football, among other sports, is used by the state and economically powerful as a tool for coercion and social control. Building on the works of these scholars, the research extends the analysis to Zimbabwe, and uses the Zimbabwean case to pursue an argument that football is far from being a ‘beautiful’ activity but rather a ‘complex’ process of expressing, contesting and negotiating political, economic, cultural and social realities. In essence through situating the study of football within the broader socio-cultural context in which football games are played, the thesis unpacks how ‘other’ goals are being, and have been, scored.

The systematic academic study of the discourse of popular sports, and football specifically, is still emerging globally (Pannenborg, 2010). Even less work has been done on football in Africa and virtually nothing on Zimbabwe. This study intends to critically sign-post the practical and theoretical importance of studying the discourse of popular sports in general and that of football in particular.
Objectives of the Study

The study explores how broader national discourses in Zimbabwe such as power, identity, and development are reflected and refracted by the ‘discourse of football.’ The study further investigates the specific ways in which ordinary Zimbabweans have (or have not) shaped and been shaped by appropriated popular culture (football), and how they have appropriated football and been appropriated by it. The organising motifs are power, identities and development. The specific objectives of this study are to:

- Explore the relationship between football and power in Zimbabwe.
- Examine how football in Zimbabwe shapes and is shaped by people’s social identities.
- Explore how football in Zimbabwe reflects and refracts discourses of development.

Research questions

In pursuance of the study’s objectives, the research asks the following specific questions:

- How is football used by the state and economically ‘powerful’ as a tool for social control in modern Zimbabwe?
- How is football used by ‘subaltern’ identities/communities to speak back to power in Zimbabwe?
- How are ethnic, racial, gender and political identities among others, negotiated, contested and performed within the discourse of football in Zimbabwe?
- In what way does Zimbabwean football mirror different development paradigms?
Justification of the study

Sport is both an international and local phenomenon which is important for politicians, world leaders and even academics (Siriwat, 2002). Football is not only a multimillion financial phenomenon; but also a social phenomenon, which affects millions of lives. Played almost everywhere, in the centre of huge modern cities and in isolated rural villages, football (or soccer) is the most followed sport in Africa and possibly the most popular cultural activity on our planet (Alegi, 2010).

Few academics across the globe have taken sports and football seriously. Usually football and sport analyses tend to be left for the front covers of sport magazines concentrating mainly on the economic, physical and performance attributes of the game. Horne and Manzenreiter (2006:16) argue that “It is surprising that the sociological and social scientific study of sport… was still seen as something as a joke by mainstream sociology until recently”. Fletcher (2012) contends that this treatment of sport as ‘fun’ has hamstrung academic enquiries on the subject.

Africa has not been an exception on the slow development of sport studies (Pannenborg, 2010). Sport sociologist Vidacs (2006:331) has argued that, “despite football animating the lives of millions of people in Africa, until recently the Social Sciences have paid little attention to these activities on the continent”. The output of academic studies on football in Africa has not reflected the game’s popularity and relevance on the continent. While football has captured the attention of many humanists and social scientists in Europe, North America and Australasia starting in the 1970s, African universities including Africa have been relatively slow in joining this trend (Alegi and Bolsmann, 2010; Pannenborg, 2010).

In general, intellectuals in African universities and elsewhere appear to have taken a long time to recognise the need for football (and sport in general) to be studied on its own merits and for its potential utility in social analysis (Alegi and Bolsmann, 2010: 3). The slow development of academic studies on sport or football in particular has been attributed to the fact that both conservative and progressive scholars tend to despise football (and sports) research as superficial and banal. The former would dismiss it as the embodiment of ‘un-academic low culture’ while
the latter denigrate it as an ‘opium of the masses’, that distracts from engaging with truly pressing concerns such as poverty and class struggle, environmental issues, gender equality among others (Alegi and Bolsman, 2010).

In South Africa, Alegi and Bolsmann’s study represented the first academic monograph on football in the country (Alegi and Bolsmann 2010: 4). The turn of the 21st century has seen a steady but important stream of scholarship on African football that includes Darby, 2002; Armstrong and Giulianotti, 2004 (Alegi and Bolsmann, 2010). Pannenborg’s (2010) study of money, politics and power in African football and Fletcher’s (2012) exploration of fandom, race and racial discourse in South African football are important pioneering sign-posts. The Federation de International Football Association (FIFA) 2010 World Cup in South Africa also accelerated the growth of football scholarship in the country and on the continent in general as academics interrogated ‘development discourses’ associated with the mega event. One of these critical texts includes Eddie Cottle’s (2011) edited text, ‘South Africa FIFA 2010 World Cup, A legacy for who?’

It also worth noting that post modernist discourses and contemporary scholarship in general, unproblematically acknowledges the place of cultural texts such football, cinema and music as sites of knowledge on the architecture of power and identity and communication. This research, undertaken in the Centre for Communication, Media and Society, thus acknowledges the status of the football stadium and the cultures that develop within it as not only a source of information but also an alternative medium for expressing various discourses at any given moment.

Finally, it is essential for any country claiming to have a football culture to also have a history of that culture (Alegi, 2004:1). Zimbabwe likes to believe that it possesses a unique soccer culture and an abiding passion for football. However, prior to this point little is known about the roots of the game in the country especially in post independence period. This silence or general unavailability of academic literature on football in Zimbabwe contextualised against the game’s popularity for individuals, institutions and the public, make this study both overdue and necessary.
Research Methodology: A qualitative approach to the study of Zimbabwean football discourse

This study is largely qualitative in nature. The qualitative research approach mainly emphasises words than quantification in collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2012). The approach predominantly emphasises an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research, in which emphasis is placed in the generation of theories (Corner, 1996; Bryman, 2012). In this kind of research scholars acknowledge that their findings depend on how the work is interpreted and may not be particularly valid to researchers steeped in the objectivity of positivistic research. This approach acknowledges the limitations of enquiry and does not aspire to all know (Ruddock, 2001; Bryman, 2012).

The qualitative approach involves taking people’s subjective experiences seriously as the essence of what is real for them, making sense of the people’s experiences by interacting with them and carefully listening to what they say. Thus the approach mainly relies on first-hand accounts and detailed description and analysis (Bryman, 2012). It is important that the study ‘tell it as it is’ as Geertz (1973) emphasizes regarding the need to understand from the local’s point of view. The study seeks to qualitatively understand how the discourse of football is interpreted, feeds and shapes other broader national discourses of development, identities and power in Zimbabwe. The study which is positioned in Cultural Studies field utilises an interpretive approach in gathering and discussing the findings of the study.

Locating the study in Cultural Studies terrain

This qualitative research study on Zimbabwean football discourse is theoretically and methodologically positioned in the ‘contentious’ field of Cultural Studies. Sardar and Loon

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Sadar and Loon (1998) argue that Cultural Studies is an exciting and ‘hot’ field of study
(1998) state that Cultural Studies does not have clearly defined boundaries the way disciplines such as Sociology and Physics have.

The Jamaican born British Cultural Studies scholar Stuart Hall has asserted that Cultural Studies is a “discursive formation in Foucauldian sense. It has no simple origins but has many histories and legacies” (Hall, 1999:97). Hall states that the field emerged out of the 1950s disintegration of classical Marxism in its suppositions that the economic base has a determining effect on the cultural superstructure. Importantly, the field developed out of different methodologies and theoretical positions, all of them in contention (Hall, 1999:99). Thus in Hall’s words, “Cultural Studies is a theoretical noise” (Hall, 1999:99).

Cultural Studies freely borrows from Social Sciences disciplines and all branches of humanities and the arts appropriating theories and methodologies from fields such as Sociology, Anthropology and Linguistics. This makes Cultural Studies an “anti-discipline” a mode of enquiry that does not subscribe to the straight jacket of institutionalised disciplines” (Sadar and Loon, 1998:9). This thesis also strongly benefits from the Cultural Studies approach. It utilises theoretical standpoints such as the Foucauldian discourse and the neo-Gramscian approach to hegemony and popular culture which are central in Cultural Studies debates. Research methods in particular ethnography, in-depth interviews, critical discourse analysis and semiotic analysis which trace their origins from Anthropology and Literary Studies respectively are deployed to explore what the researcher assumes to be a ‘contentious’ relationship between the ‘beautiful’ game in Zimbabwe and discourses of power, identity and development.

Sadar and Loon (1998) further argue that the development of Cultural Studies particularly in the 1960s is a result of the efforts of the now defunct Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham. Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, Edward Palmer Thompson and Stuart Hall some of the central figures at the centre, popularised the field. These scholars coming from a working class background dismissed the Arnoldian, Leavisites and Frankfurt views on culture and the ‘people’ (Kellner, 1995; Barker; 2008). They reconsidered and democratised the terrain of audiences and culture leading to a more realistic conception of popular culture. Earlier Cultural Studies scholars had approached culture from an elitist perspective, demarcating it into ‘high and mass/low’ binaries (Storey, 1999; Barker, 2008). Williams (1981) dismissed such definitions arguing that culture is the ordinary. As argued by
Benkwitz and Molnar (2012), these scholars “sociologically considered popular culture (from the mass media to sport fandom to dance crazes) on academic and intellectual agenda from which it had been excluded due to the preceding elitist assumptions regarding what culture is or should be” (Benkwitz and Molnar, 2012:480). In essence, Hoggart and colleagues valorised the experiences and practices of the ‘ordinary’ people aiming to legitimise their ‘everyday’ experiences and lived reality (Benkwitz and Molnar, 2012). It is the intention of this thesis to also understand the every day and ordinary aspects of Zimbabweans’ interaction and meanings derived from football. Benkwitz and Monar (2012) have argued that everyday aspects of our lives need to be sociologically studied and understood.

Cultural Studies aims to examine its subject matter in terms of cultural practices and their relation to power (Sadar and Loon, 1998:9). The intention is to expose power relationships and examine how these relationships influence and shape cultural practices. Football studies can unproblematically be located in the Cultural Studies discourse since football is popular culture. The Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci (1971) argues that culture is one of the key sites where struggle for hegemony takes place. It is the arena of popular culture that the issues of ‘moral and intellectual leadership’ are resolved (Sadar and Loon, 1998). Football, ‘ordinary’ as it might appear, has become a central sphere for ideological and hegemonic contestations across the world, Zimbabwe included.

In spite of popular culture occupying a central place in Cultural Studies, the interests of Cultural Studies go beyond popular culture. Cultural Studies also aims to understand and capture the creative potential of people’s lived worlds, such as working class (Hoggart, 1958). As asserted by Saukko (2003) the trademark of the Cultural Studies approach to empirical research has been an interest in the interplay between lived experience, texts or discourses and the social context. Ordinary people are at the heart of Cultural Studies. This thesis in the Cultural Studies field has an interest in activities of ‘ordinary’ people in Zimbabwe in an effort to understand how they relate football to national discourses particularly power, identity and development. However, Cultural Studies is not confined to one aspect, but straddles across other variables to suit its purpose (Hall, 1999). This thesis therefore, extends the analysis of discourses from ‘ordinary’ Zimbabweans to the elites to understand how elites appropriate the ‘ordinary’ people’s game-football to deploy and manage hegemony. The thesis therefore ties the top down and bottom up
approach to understand power contestations between the elites and the ordinary through the
discourse of football in Zimbabwe.

There are concerns that sport spectatorship is one of the under theorised areas in the sociology of
sport particularly football despite it being dubbed ‘the people’s game’ (Malcom, Jones and
Waddington, 2007). It is argued that academic literature on football previously tended to focus
on ‘exceptional fans’, particularly hooligans. Majority or ‘ordinary’ every day football
supporters have been neglected by sport sociologists (Malcom, Jones and Waddington, 2007;
Benkwitz and Molnar, 2012). The founding fathers of Cultural Studies-Hoggart and colleagues
valorised the experiences and realities of the ‘ordinary’ and alternative groups in societies.
Cultural studies therefore, has great influence on sport particularly football fandom studies.
Focusing on the everyday experiences of ordinary fans helps to give clarity on previously
neglected aspects of everyday fans’ experience for example football fan rivalries, as they are
examined in-depth (Benkwitz and Molnar, 2012).

There has been a significant improvement however, in Cultural Studies as sport sociologists have
developed keen interest in the ‘everyday fans’ and their experiences. The ethnographic approach
of this thesis is a result of the need not to only understand experiences and social identities of
‘exceptional’ football supporters but experiences of the everyday people. The thesis finds it
necessary to unpack underlying factors and unique cultural properties which shape social
identities in football fandom.

Ethnography has become one of the central methods employed in Cultural Studies especially
when studying how football supporters make meaning of a particular phenomenon in their
natural set ups. The development of ethnography in the sociology of football is attributed to Peter
Marsh (Benkwitz and Molnar, 2012). It is argued that in light of economically reductive Marxist
scholars assertion in the 1970s that hooliganism in football was a result of bourgeoisification of
football which alienated traditional working class fans, Peter Marsh adopted an ethnographic
approach to get an insight on the subject (Benkwitz and Molnar, 2012). The study has become
formative in the development of football fan research, as employing ethnographic approach is
increasingly common when studying fans. Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti while
focusing on the United Kingdom football fandom have also positively contributed to the
development of football ethnography (Bryman, 2012).
On the African continent sport sociologists including Arnold Pannenborg have also utilised the same research approach to understand football fandom and rituals in Cameroon and Ghana. In South Africa Marc Fletcher also employed the ethnographic method to explore racial identity politics in South Africa’s football fandom, contradicting discourses of the ‘rainbow nation’. Such important preceding football ethnographies provide inspiration and guidance to this football ethnography in Zimbabwe. However, ethnographic studies in Cultural Studies require problematising the position of the researcher via critical reflexivity (Willig, 2001).

**Self reflexivity-researcher’s supporter identity**

Self reflexivity is important for ethnographic research in which the involvement of the researcher in the society and culture of those being studied is particularly close (Davies, 2008). Reflexivity is the process through which a researcher recognises, examines and understands how his or her own social background and assumptions can influence the research process and outcome (Hesse Biber and Leavy, 2002:141). Reflexivity then assists readers to explore ways in which a researchers’ involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999: 228).

It is crucial to note that this researcher is a product of the same society and structures as much as the researched. The researcher has been a passionate Dynamos FC supporter from a young age and has been attending Dynamos/Highlanders FC matches as a supporter to cheer his favourite team. However, this thesis presented the researcher with a challenge to [re]negotiate his identity from a supporter to a researcher. Dynamos FC supporters shifted from being colleagues to become the ‘other’ and subjects of research. It is critical to also note that the researcher had also to minimise bias as much as possible particularly towards Highlanders FC given that they are Dynamos FC’s biggest rivals in Zimbabwe. Such biases could have prejudiced this football ethnography. The researcher’s beliefs, background and feelings are therefore part of the process of knowledge construction in this football ethnography.
Ethnography of Zimbabwean football

The researcher made use of a contextually specific ethnography of football supporters in mainly in Zimbabwe’s three major cities of Harare, Bulawayo and Gweru as well as other small towns such as Zvishavane. Focus was on how Zimbabwean football supporters/fans, specifically those from Dynamos FC, Highlanders FC and the Warriors relate football to broader national discourses specifically power, identities and development. Sport sociologist Giulianotti (2002) has argued that terms ‘supporter’ and ‘fan’, though often used interchangeably, do not mean the same. According to Giulianotti (2002), supporters are spectators ‘culturally contracted’ to the club such that the team becomes a totemic community identity. Furthermore, supporters actively participate in the life of the club. Fans, on the other hand, have a strong bond for their team, can buy replica shirts and other merchandise for their favourite club, but often remain dislocated from the match day experience and community identity. Frequently, fans watch their team on television or listen on radio (Giulianotti, 2002). Nevertheless, this study consciously uses the terms ‘supporter’ and ‘fan’ interchangeably. The use of the term interchangeably is also compounded by the fact that Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC as well as the Warriors do not have up to date records or formally registered structures of their supporters. The researcher therefore mainly focused on those who ‘regularly’ attended matches at stadia during the period of research. Thus they were ethnographically studied.

Anthropologist Bea Vidacs (2006) has asserted that ethnography is needed to avoid treatment of football as a phenomenon existing ‘apart from the larger society in which it (is) embedded (and) thus making it rather thin and irrelevant for an understanding of social, cultural and historical processes.

The literal meaning of the word ethnography is “writing culture” (Hesse Biber and Leavy, 2002:230). The term ethnography is used to refer “both to a particular form of research and its eventual written product” (Davies, 2008:4). Silverman (2011) argues that ethnography involves using multiple methods of data gathering, like observation, interviews, collection of documents, pictures, audio-visual material as well as representation of artefacts (Silverman, 2011:113). Barker (2008) contends that ethnography traces its origins from Anthropology and seeks detailed
holistic description and analysis of cultures based on intensive field work (Barker, 2008:32). Ethnographers ‘go inside’ the social worlds of the inhabitants of their research setting, ‘hanging out’ and observing, listening to what is said, asking questions and recording the ongoing social life of its members for an extended period of time (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983:2; Davies, 2008:4). The intention would be to produce what Geertz (1973) described as ‘thick descriptions’. This would include the unspoken and taken for granted assumptions that operate within cultural life. Hesse Biber and Leavy (2002) submit that ‘thick descriptions’ refers to detailed descriptions the researcher can remember using his/her senses about exactly what took place in the research setting (Hesse Biber and Leavy, 2002:272). Observations through ethnography are connected to the wider social processes. Morley (1992) states that ethnographic Cultural Studies is centred on the qualitative exploration of values and meanings in the context of a ‘whole way of life’, exploring questions about cultures, life worlds and identities in naturalised domains (Morley 1992:186). The intention would be to get an in-depth understanding of how individuals in different cultures and subcultures make sense of their lived reality.

Social researchers often debate on the relationship between ethnography and participant observation. However, Bryman (2012) states that participant observation/ethnography can be used interchangeably though ethnography is much more accepted because ‘participant observation’ implies just observation, in spite of the fact that participant observers do more than simply observe but also use interviews to collect data (Bryman, 2012:424). Bryman (2012) further asserts that participant observation is usually taken as the archetypal form of research employed by ethnographers. It is more properly conceived of as a research strategy than unitary research method in that it is always made up of a variety of methods (Bryman, 2012). In its classic term, participant observation consists of a single researcher spending an extended period of time usually at least one year, living among people he or she is studying, participating in the daily lives in order to gain as complete an understanding as possible of cultural meanings and social structures of the group and how these are interrelated (Spradley, 1980; Hammersely et al, 2007; Bryman 2012). In this study therefore, the terms ‘ethnography’ and ‘participant’ observation are interchangeably used, though ethnography is the most preferred term since it refers to both the method of data collection and the end product of the research.
Participant observation was the principal research method utilised by the study. Participation in addition to mere observation is important as it offers an organic way of ‘learning culture’ through immersing in a socio-cultural context (Spradley, 1980). This study is not a longitudinal study but spans up to a period of two years. Preliminary work for the study in stadia and other key research sites started in July 2012 while the actual data collection started in March 2013 up to May 2014.

The researcher was a spectator to 30 purposively selected football matches that featured at least one of Zimbabwe’s two biggest football teams, Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC at the following stadia: Rufaro Stadium, National Sports Stadium (both in Harare), Babourfields Stadium (Bulawayo), Maglas Stadium and Mandava Stadium (both in Zvishavane). Some of the matches attended involving Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC were knock out tournaments such as Mbada Diamonds Cup, Bob Super Cup, Banc ABC Cup, Defence Forces Cup, Unity Day Cup and Independence Cup among others. Out of these 30 matches observed, nine of them included ‘clashes’ between Dynamos and Highlanders themselves. Four of these matches were played at Babourfields stadium (Bulawayo) while three were played at Rufaro Stadium (Harare) and the remaining two at the National Sports Stadium (Harare). The researcher also participated and observed six matches that involved Zimbabwe men’s senior national football team—the Warriors playing against Egypt, Mozambique, Mauritius, Botswana, Zambia and Tanzania from the period February 2013- June 2014.

Giulianotti (2004) contends that a stadium is a cauldron of emotion where the researcher experiences ecstatic moments. During the period of observation at football stadia, significant attention was particularly paid to purposively selected songs, chants, slogans and folk ditties sung by supporters. Debates, controversies and discussions ensuing amongst supporters were also noted. Participation, in addition to observation, functioned as an organic way of ‘learning culture’ through immersing in a socio-cultural context (Spradley, 1980).

Even the non-verbal cues such as gestures and other symbols were also of particular interest to the researcher as he sought to make a connection to the people’s whole way of life. A Samsung HMX-Q20 Full HD Digital Camcorder was used to capture activities in the forms of either video or audio recordings depending on what participants agreed to. At times the researcher used his
mobile phone to record conversations or would just use a notebook and pen to record notes where participants expressed discomfort over being filmed or recorded. The filmed or audio recorded products became an important source of data which were later subjected to interpretive, critical discourse and semiotic analyses. They assisted the researcher in reclaiming experiences, bringing back memories or contributing to the written field notes. The camera is also useful to researchers in ethnographic studies as it gives the researcher access to misheard or unseen events (Ruby 2000: 54). Visual methods also increase the immediacy of understanding (Davies, 2008). The researcher also at times concentrated in other activities and discussions taking place in public transport like kombis and buses by football fans on their way to and from matches relating them to their ‘everyday’ experiences.

The researcher would rotate periods to go and watch Dynamos and Highlanders. On a day dedicated to studying Dynamos supporters, the researcher would put on a Dynamos supporters replica jersey. The same ‘ritual’ was religiously adhered to when studying Highlanders supporters. The researcher would dress and perform like a Highlanders supporter. Even on a day when the Warriors were playing, the researcher would also dress in ‘national team’ colours and participate in the stadium supporter rituals. This created a ‘bond’ between the researcher and the researched as ‘trust’ developed and in the end they could open up on issues the researcher sought to get clarity on during interviews. However there were times, for instance on 27 October 2013 and 16 March 2014 during Dynamos/Highlanders matches at Babourfieds and Rufaro stadiums respectively, the researcher spent the first half of the match among Dynamos supporters and joined Highlanders supporters in the second half. The intention was to observe and understand the atmosphere and people’s ‘realities’ at such given moments. On such occasions the researcher would carry both concerned teams’ supporter replica jerseys to ensure he remained ‘correctly’ dressed in the respective research setting.

Ethnographic interviews were also conducted with purposively selected football fans in stadia and outside to get clarification on salient issues. Hesse Biber and Leavy (2006) submit that in-depth interviews are a common method used to collect data in qualitative studies using individuals as point of departure for the research process. In-depth interviews are premised on the assumption that individuals have unique and important knowledge about the social world which can be shared through verbal communication (Hesse Biber and Leavy, 2006:119). In
essence, in-depth interviews are employed when researchers look for patterns that emerge from ‘thick descriptions’ of social life recounted by their participants (Hesse Biber and Leavy, 2006:119). It has also been argued that in-depth interviews are also a vital way of accessing subjugated voices and getting at subjugated knowledge. Interviewing offer researchers access to people’s ideas, thoughts and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher. Those who have been marginalised in society may have hidden experiences and knowledge that have been excluded from our understanding of social reality (Hesse Biber and Leavy, 2002:123). This research also attempted to bring out voices of ‘ordinary’ people as the assumption was that their experiences and knowledge on the connection between football, power, identity and development discourses in modern day Zimbabwe is critical.

The sampling frame included approximately 30 football supporters. The researcher found this number manageable and easy to handle. Moreover, interviews with participants did not exceed this number since the researcher had reached saturation point (Bryman, 2012). These participants were engaged in informal conversations on the subject under investigation by the researcher at stadia and outside. However of these 16 were interviewed in-depth using semi-structured questions in order to facilitate the acquisition of a thick description. Nine supporters were from Highlanders while seven were from Dynamos. These supporters also represented the Warriors/national football team supporters. Of the 16, only three participants were females while the rest were male, a factor which reflects on the almost exclusive masculinity of Zimbabwe’s football fandom. These respondents were purposively selected and voluntarily participated in the study.

Hammersley (1995) warn that the problem of obtaining access to the data one needs looms large in ethnography. This pioneering football ethnography proved not to be entirely ‘smooth’. Basing on his prior knowledge as a football fan, the researcher had counted on a straight-forward data collection process. Though football stadia might appear to be ‘public’ settings which anyone can access at any given moment, there are also gatekeepers at such arenas hence permission has to be sought. At any research site there are ‘formal’ and ‘informal gatekeepers. Formal gatekeepers are the ones who grant a researcher permission to enter the research site if formal permission is needed. Informal gatekeepers are people who hold key positions in the setting and their influence on others in the setting determines the researcher’s level of access (Hesse Biber and Leavy, 2002:271).
In this case, ZIFA the football controlling board in Zimbabwe, were the ‘formal’ gatekeepers so official permission to conduct research in the stadia was obtained from them. However, other ‘informal gatekeepers’ also lay on the researcher’s way. Both Dynamos and Highlanders supporters’ groups are characterised by informal hierarchies of power. There are some influential figures among supporters who have the ability to influence perceptions of their fellows towards a ‘stranger’ in their camps.

While the researcher had some difficulties in accessing the Highlanders supporters community, Dynamos supporters quickly welcomed the researcher into their community. This was not difficult to explain. As highlighted earlier, the researcher is a relatively well known Dynamos supporter who is not only familiarised to the ‘Dynamos fan culture’, ‘rituals’, songs and dances such as the currently popular ‘Zorai Butter’ (spread margarine) and ‘Gumbura Dance’, but had also established a wide network of contacts and socialised with the participants on several occasions prior to the study. A level of trust and empathy already existed between the researcher and the ‘blue-half’ participants. Although there is currently no statistical research to support this, the general view is that Dynamos supporters are predominantly Shona speaking. Shona is the researcher’s mother tongue. These collective factors made communication easier.

However, as argued by Hammersley (1995) that informal gatekeepers may at times attempt to exercise some degree of surveillance and control either by blocking off certain lines of enquiry or by shepherding the field worker in one direction or another, the researcher at one time found himself in such a dilemma. Some ‘influential’ Dynamos FC supporters particularly at Vietnam stand attempted to ‘patronise’ and choose participants for the researcher. These participants had fallen in love with the Samsung HMX-Q20 Full HD Digital Camcorder such that they felt ‘jealousy’ each time the researcher moved around to other possible research sites. Rather, they wanted the camera to film themselves and their friends. The researcher had to often find ways of

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4 Zorai butter dance was introduced by Zimbabwean Sungura musician Alick Macheso. It became Dynamos FC as well as the Warriors team’s ‘official’ goal celebration style from 2009 until early 2014. However from February 2014 following the much publicized arrest, trial and conviction of ‘prophet’ Robert Martin Gumbura founder of the Independent End Time Message church or rape charges, Dynamos FC supporters now claim that they ‘gumbura’ (rape) other teams. ‘Gumbura dance’ has become the Dynamos FC players and fans ‘official’ celebration style.

5 Vietnam stand is located on the Eastern side of Rufaro Stadium. The stand accommodates fans who view themselves as more ‘Dynamos’ than others. Vietnam stand is a no go area for non-Dynamos supporters in a match involving Dynamos and any other team (Mangezvo, 2005)
stamping authority on the direction of the research process albeit without antagonising and eventually losing his key contacts.

Researching Highlanders FC supporters was much more difficult compared to Dynamos FC supporters. Highlanders FC supporters are predominantly Ndebele speakers. A language barrier therefore posed a hindrance to the researcher from the onset. As it happened, Highlanders supporters were always on the alert for Shona-speaking (or at least non-Ndebele speaking) ‘intruders’ who invade their Ndebele-only terraces especially the Soweto stand⁶ at Babourfields stadium. Granted, the researcher can speak and understand a range of basic to proficient Ndebele. His accent, however, is not ‘naturally’ Ndebele. Such an accent betrayed the researcher more than once, at one point leading to near-violent scenes that included ejection from seats and confiscation of camera equipment. This rejection happened despite the researcher taking care to don black and white Highlanders regalia as camouflage.

Hall (1997) has asserted that identities are characterised by inclusions and exclusions. Accent, and more generally language, served as a locus for the exclusion of the researcher. Language served to mark the inclusion of the researcher amongst Dynamos FC fans, and to exclude him from Highlanders FC fans. As noted, the researcher had to resort, firstly, to camouflage and later to employing Ndebele research assistants. The situation was worsened by the researcher’s poor knowledge of the so-called ‘Soweto culture’⁷ of the Babourfields terraces. The ethnographic period also coincided with the period of the rise of ‘tabloid press’ in Zimbabwe (particularly B Metro and H Metro tabloid newspapers based in Bulawayo and Harare respectively). The researcher’s Samsung HMX-Q20 Full HD Digital Camcorder for collecting data made several informants suspicious that the researcher could be a spying journalist soliciting for ‘scoops’. Eventually, a data collection method that included minimal friction was arrived at. The researcher initiated snowball-type ‘thick description’ which meant following up on introductions by his friends and sports journalists in Bulawayo to the ‘informal gatekeepers’ (see Bryman, 2012; Giulianotti, 1995) at the Soweto stand of the Babourfields stadium as a way not only of ‘currying favour’ but also of subtly embedding himself in the ‘Soweto culture’. It was necessary

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⁶ Soweto stand is located at the Western side of Babourfields stadium. The stand houses predominantly Highlanders fans who believe that they are ‘more Highlanders’ than other fans. There is an unwritten rule at Soweto that only Highlanders fans are allowed when the team is playing (Mangezvo, 2005).

⁷ Songs and dances
to blend in and to take on a new identity that approximated to Bosso\(^8\) ‘culture’. Over two years, contacts with ‘Die hard’ Highlanders supporters grew to a point where some of the supporters literally assisted the researcher to interview other “die-hards”. Initially the sampling technique had been purposive but it ended up snowballing as the participants referred and organised interviews on his behalf. This data collection episode led the researcher, among other things, to new insights about how layered the identity of a Zimbabwean tends to be. To survive, or to get what they want and desire, many Zimbabweans slip and slide in and out of identities. Such slip-and-slide identities are formed on the go, improvised to suit a variety of contexts.

The researcher rotated periods to go and watch Dynamos and Highlanders matches. For Dynamos matches, the researcher wore Dynamos blue colours. The blue colours signalled that the researcher was a Dynamos supporter. Neutral colours were also acceptable in the Dynamos stands. Though Dynamos supporters in Harare seemed relatively less aggressive compared to Highlanders supporters at Babourfields, the researcher nevertheless refrained from wearing Highlanders colours while sitting in the Vietnam stand. Any fan wearing black and white Bosso colours in the Vietnam stand becomes a target of insults and, at the worst of times, beatings. What became clear was that colour was a signifier of fan identity. Wearing blue and white or black and white became a source of inclusion or exclusion. Failure to wear the right colours in the right place could result in ejection, insults or beatings.

The colour-swapping also took place at all Dynamos and Highlanders games that the researcher attended. As noted, this was meant to create a ‘bond’ between the researcher and the researched as a way of soliciting ‘thick’ data. The researcher participated in the singing and dancing on the terraces but restrained himself from getting involved in violent activities such as hurling insults, ejecting rival supporters or meting out beatings. As a Dynamos supporter, the researcher was often tempted to join in the banter and singing out of loyalty to the club. Indeed, the identity of the researcher often overlapped between the two poles of supporter and researcher. Ultimately, the researcher learnt to occupy a position in-between these two poles. The occupation of these two poles allowed for the ‘thickest’ description. Neutrality and impartiality was replaced by reflection, reflexivity and self-reflexive research practice \textit{in situ}. The observation and

\(^8\) Bosso is a nick name for Highlanders FC.
interviewing routine continued until the researcher had reached saturation point (see Bryman, 2012).

This refers to a point in the research where nothing new is found in the setting and the researcher may even lose his/her perspective if he/she stays in the setting any longer (Hesse Biber and Leavy, 2002:272; Bryman, 2012). In other words, at this point no new ideas are or can be generated.

**Interviews and observations beyond the terraces**

The study went beyond the terraces and also examined the pitch and the boardroom in an attempt to understand how football relates to broader national discourses particularly power, identities and development in Zimbabwe.

The researcher also sought to integrate voices of other important stakeholders in football. The researcher therefore purposively subdivided key informants into three categories - the boardroom (administrators), pitch (footballers) and terraces (supporters/fans) for manageability purposes. The terraces category was constituted by purposively selected Dynamos FC, Highlanders FC and Warriors supporters as noted earlier. The boardroom consisted of purposively sampled football administrators from the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) and the Premier Soccer League (PSL) teams, sports journalists and representatives from the corporate world. These people are either directly or indirectly involved in the management of football.

The researcher interviewed five purposively selected football administrators from the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) (former and current members of the ZIFA board as well as the secretariat), two from the Premier Soccer League (PSL) board (current and former members of the executive), three from Dynamos (one current and two former members) and two from Highlanders football club (one current member of the executive and a former member). The population sample also extended to the Sport Recreation Commission (SRC) which is the government arm in sport. One respondent, the Director of the Commission, was interviewed.
Two other participants were drawn from the corporate world-Banc ABC and Delta Beverages involved in football sponsorship in Zimbabwe.

The media are crucial members of boardroom ‘politics’ in Zimbabwe and elsewhere. The researcher interviewed seven veteran sports journalists drawn from both the electronic as well as the print media in Zimbabwe. While purposive sampling was the principal sampling technique for this study, the researcher also resorted to snowball sampling. This was made necessary by the fact that the researcher initially had specific targeted respondents from the onset. However, some of these interviewed respondents would suggest and actually facilitate interviews with other key participants. In other circumstances, targeted informants declined to participate in the study for various reasons but would suggest other potential informants.

Besides interviews the research also benefited from archival research on newspaper and policy documents as the researcher sought to get clarity on some historical facts concerning football administration in Zimbabwe. Policy documents from organizations such as ZIFA and PSL were analysed. Magazine and newspaper sport stories particularly from, the state owned daily newspaper, The Herald also assisted the researcher with secondary data where primary data was difficult to obtain. The Herald became a crucial reference point for the researcher due to the fact that the newspaper’s sport coverage in Zimbabwe is next to none (ZAMPS, 2013). There are voices of some personalities particularly government ministers or directors and corporate world particularly Mbada Diamonds which the researcher wanted to capture on specific issues of interest to the thesis. However, accessing some of these people was not as easy as the researcher had anticipated at the beginning of this study. However, the availability of their views in either newspapers or magazines made this research feasible.

These interviews also extended to the pitch. The pitch category was constituted by purposively selected current and former footballers who have either played for Dynamos, Highlanders and the Warriors. The researcher interviewed 12 footballers (current and former) footballers. These footballers include those who played the game in Southern Rhodesia, the first decade after independence, in the 1990s and in the post 2000 period. The idea was to make sure that each and every epoch is fairly represented in an attempt to get an insight on power, identity and development discourses intertwined with football that prevailed at those various epochs.
Foucault (1980) has argued that discourses undergo renewal and transformation at different historical moments.

Football coaches/managers are also important members when discussing the pitch discourse. The researcher therefore interviewed five Premier Soccer League coaches who have coached Dynamos FC, Highlanders FC as well as the Warriors. Two PSL referees were also interviewed. It is crucial to note that due to the sensitivity of some of the issues explored by the study; most of the participants were assigned pseudo names except on circumstances where participants agreed to use their real names.

Analysis and Discussion of findings

The researcher coming from a Media studies background utilised an informal type of analysis that borrows from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and semiotics. The research thus does not use a linguistically inclined CDA that is commonly used by researcher from the English discipline. Critical Discourse Analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2007:108; Mazid, 2008). Thus the typical vocabulary of many scholars in CDA will feature such notions as ‘power’, ‘dominance’, ‘hegemony’, ‘ideology’, ‘class’, ‘gender’, ‘discrimination’, ‘interests’, reproduction, institutions, social structure and social order’, besides the more familiar discourse analytical notions (van Dijk, 2007).

Some of the tenets of CDA can be found, in Critical theory of the Frankfurt School before the Second World War (van Dijk, 2007; Bryman, 2012). Its current focus on language and discourse was initiated by the ‘critical linguistics’ that emerged (mostly in the UK and Australia) at the end of the 1970s (Wodak, 1997). However, Sebeok (2000:108) defines semiotics as the “study of the exchange of any messages whatever and of the systems of signs which underlie them, the key concept of semiotics remaining the sign”. A sign is anything that signifies or has meaning(s) within a certain code and a given context (Hall, 1997). This technique is traced from literary studies and is rich in unbundling meaning hidden in texts.
It has been asserted that within the broad thread of CDA, a semiotic sub strand has developed out paying attention to the visual/non verbal dimensions in discourse (Mazid, 2008). Traditional CDA with a bias on the ‘linguistic’- analysis fails to capture the non-verbal meanings in texts and the interactions of the verbal within the non verbal therein (Mazid, 2008:435). A semio-linguistic version of critical discourse analysis can do this and much more.

This discursive-semiotic, version of CDA is necessary in the analysis of non verbal texts in Cultural Studies. The football pitch and society at large could be understood as a semiotic site where symbolic contests take place in people’s everyday lives. A critical perspective assisted thesis in capturing such contests. The interaction between semio-linguistic features, verbal and non verbal and the socio-political and economic discourses raised in discussions around football, made a combination of CDA and semiotic analysis necessary in this football ethnography.

It is important to note that while conversations during interviews, utterances and songs sung by the supporters were subjected to critical discourse analysis, the same method could not account for other non-verbal aspects such as facial expressions, symbols, atmosphere and many other signs that were obtained in the research settings. Mazid (2008:434) has argued that critical discourse analysis and semiotic analysis can successfully be used to complement each other during research. Semiotic analysis therefore accounted for signs/texts that could not be accounted for by critical discourse analysis.

As highlighted earlier the researcher also had other visual data captured by the camera during ethnography. While CDA analysis could deduce meaning from the audio texts and discourses articulated by participants, semiotic analysis was handy in analysing images and symbols produced and [re]produced which were of importance to the people’s everyday lives in connection to discourses of power, identity and development as they were reflected and refracted in the football discourse.

Finally, an inductive approach was employed to discuss the interpreted data. The process of induction involves drawing generalisable inferences out of the observations (Bryman, 2012). These findings are interpreted and discussed in the context of the Foucauldian approach on discourse, power and knowledge and the neo-Gramscian approach to popular culture to assist the
researcher’s own localised theory that explains how power, identities and development are intertwined in football in post-independence Zimbabwe.

**Delimitation of the study**

The study is limited to an exploration of the intricate relationship between football, power, identities and development in post-independence Zimbabwe. Considering that this researcher comes from a Media Studies background, it would have been interesting to do a systematic content analysis to understand the role of the Zimbabwean press in mediating discourses of power, identity and development in football. The media in Zimbabwe (and, indeed, all over the globe,) are responsible for framing and mediating sport to the people. The researcher however, felt that the media on their own may constitute a completely separate study on how the themes of power, identities, and development are mediated. However, the study incorporated voices of sports journalists through interviews to get clarity on issues under exploration. Where relevant, of course, the study also makes reference to newspapers to get insight on some facts. The media are therefore critical sources of information/literature to this thesis given that the discourse of sport is still academically under researched in modern day Zimbabwe. The researcher employed a partial archival search to glean insights from football’s past, especially in colonial Zimbabwe and the early decades after independence. This research was conducted at the Zimbabwe National Archives and media houses specifically the Zimpapers. Where relevant, use was also made of relevant press cuttings especially from sports pages from magazines such as *Parade* and *Moto* and *Gemazo*, radio and television broadcasts, blog reports, and online comments and discussion forums, among others.

The thesis attempts to trace and elaborate on some historical issues particularly power struggles as well as ethnic and regional conflicts in main stream football administration institutions such as the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) dating back from 1980, which marked the birth of the Zimbabwean nation. The (colonial) politics of Southern Rhodesia appear to constitute a

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9 The Zimbabwe Newspapers (Zimpapers) stable is publicly owned but government controlled through the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services. The stable publishes daily newspapers such as *The Herald*, *The Chronicle* and weeklies *The Sunday Mail*, *The Sunday News* as well as tabloids *H Metro* and *B Metro*. 
separate study. Nevertheless, the pre-1980 state of affairs is at times referred to as it forms an important part of the contextual background. Two Premier Soccer League teams in the form of Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC, as well as the Warriors were the key sites of investigation, though all football teams and institutions in Zimbabwe were relevant to some extent.

**Limitations of the Study**

Academic literature in the area of football is still at the nascent of stages in Zimbabwe. Little to nothing in terms of systematic studies currently exists. Firstly, the responsibility of pioneering such a huge and complex area of study constituted a constant test. Constant attention was given to feasibility issues, specifically ensuring that the study is broad enough to capture all the salient issues without however becoming too wide to be manageable. Secondly, the sparseness of secondary literature in Zimbabwe meant that the present study was virtually carried out in a scholarly vacuum. Little of my findings can be replicated or corroborated against other Zimbabwe-specific studies. The closest studies to my own are located in South Africa. The other limitation to the study is the sensitivity of the area. Discussing football in Zimbabwe divides as much as it unites. Hence data collection was at times a challenge in certain contexts such as rival stadiums and in boardrooms where power struggles occur or have occurred. The researcher however, had a flexible plan which ensured that most data was obtained with minimum ethical risks.

**Thesis Structure**

This thesis is organised in seven chapters. Chapter One is the introduction to the study and it contextualizes the problem under investigation providing rationale for the study of football discourse in modern day Zimbabwe. The Chapter also explicates on methodology of the study providing a detailed discussion of the ethnographic approach adopted by the researcher in trying to theorise football and the ‘everyday’ in Zimbabwe. Chapter Two reviews literature related to the study, making an attempt to locate this football ethnography in the context of previous
researches across the globe, Africa as well as Zimbabwe. The chapter organizes literature thematically. The broader themes are as follows: Football and Power; Football and Identities; and Football and Development. Chapter Three continues the discussion discussing the Theoretical Framework of the study. The Foucauldian discourse is discussed in relation to other closely related concepts such as the Gramscian hegemony and popular culture.

From Chapter four, the thesis then presents and discusses empirical data gathered through the research process. Chapter four is the first of the three data presentation and findings chapters. Its theme is ‘The Boardroom’. In this chapter data gathered from the football administrators, sports journalists and the corporate world is presented and discussed. Chapter five is the second of the three data presentation and findings chapters and has the theme ‘The Pitch’. In this chapter, views from the football players, former football players, coaches and match officials (referees) are integrated and discussed. Chapter six is the final data presentation and findings chapter. Its theme is ‘The terraces’. Under this theme, data elicited from the fans through ethnography/participant observation in football stadiums and formal and informal interviews is presented. The final chapter is Chapter Seven, which threads together the research findings.

**A note on terminology**

**Discourse:** In most cases discourse is used as a linguistic concept, referring to passages of writing speech (Hall, 1997). However, the concept is looked at from a Foucauldian perspective. By ‘discourse’ Foucault references a group of statements which produce a language for talking about a way of representing knowledge about a particular historical moment (Foucault, 1972). This thesis uses football discourse to explore the nexus of sport, power, identity and development.

**Football/Soccer:** Though a number of scholars have made an attempt to make a distinction between football and soccer (Dunning, 1994; Giulianotti and Robertson, 2007), this research consistently uses the two terms interchangeably. Even in Zimbabwe the location of this study, the terms are also unproblematically interchangeably used. The thesis hereby understands football or soccer as a game played by two teams of eleven players in a rectangular pitch, falling
within the jurisdiction of the Federation de International Football Association (FIFA). Since the theoretical departure of this study is Foucauldian discourse, football is treated as a type of ‘discourse’ with its own sets of power relations, ‘truths’ and contradictions.

**Power:** Power is often understood as the ability to influence people’s behaviour without resistance. At times it is also used to mean authority. Foucauldian and Gramscian analyses of discourse and power however, challenge the conventional thinking that power is uni-linear - wielded by people or groups by way of ‘episodic’ or ‘sovereign’ acts of domination or coercion. Foucault viewed power as transcending politics as it is practiced in everyday life (Gaventa, 2003). Cultural Studies theorists generally agree on the concept of power to the discipline. For most Cultural Studies writers, power is regarded as pervading every level of social relationships. Power is not simply the glue that holds the social together, or the coercive force which subordinates one set of people to another, though it is certainly this. It is also understood in terms of processes that generate and enable any form of social action, relationship or order. In this sense, power while certainly constraining, is also enabling (Barker, 2008:10). Cultural Studies has commonly understood popular culture to be the ground on which this consent is won or lost (Barker, 2008: 10). In essence the thesis treats football as popular culture, a site for the manifestation and contestations of multi-dimensional aspects of power.

**Identity:** Identity means ‘one-ness’ or ‘sameness’ (Gripsrud, 2002:5). Identities are also characterised by differences and hostility. As Hall (1997:16) argues, “every identity is exclusion and an act of power”. The essentialist or primordialist approach to studying identities views identities as inborn and static (Appiah, 1992, Storey 1999; Madianou, 2002). However this is rejected by Cultural Studies and Post Modernist scholars who believe identities are always in a state of flux (Kellner, 1995). These contesting discourses in identity politics are explored by the study as it unpacks how football is predicated by ‘complex’ identity politics in Zimbabwe ranging from ethnicity, gender, religious as well as political identities.

**Development:** Development is a contested terrain whose definition justifiably tends to vary from society to society and from time to time (Hettne, 1990). In the 1950s and 1960s development meant mere economic growth and the progress of nations was measured in terms of their gross national product (Rist, 1999). However, development today also aims at providing opportunities and empowering the most marginalized people to have control over their lives (Melkote and
Steeves, 2001). In the context of this study development is explored from an empowerment point of view.

**Conclusion**

There is a significant growth on the body of literature exploring sport and football in particular on the African continent. Cultural Studies scholars are making efforts to illustrate how sport lens can be used to examine societal problems. This chapter has located the place of this Zimbabwean football ethnography, in relation to existing theoretical debates in the area. The chapter has attempted to provide rationale for the necessity of studying the popular football discourse in modern Zimbabwe. The next chapter, reviews literature related to the study.
Chapter 2: Literature review

This section explores how football relates to discourses of power, identity and development across the globe. The line of argument in this study is that football as a ‘discourse’ largely mirrors other national discourses such as power, identity and development. In this literature review, global, continental and local studies are examined.

The ‘beautiful’ game and power: a global perspective

There is a voluminous body of literature that analyses ways in which football relates to political power discourses, featuring in the expression of varying forms of nationalism around the world (Ben-Porat, 2001; Foer, 2004; Domingos, 2007; Lin, Lee and Nai, 2008; Manzenreiter, 2008; Bloomfield, 2010; Menary, 2010). Despite its ordinariness, football is potentially one of the most charged political and ideological structures where power struggles are fought both on the surface and through subtexts (Pannenborg, 2010). Noam Chomsky observes that sport is one of the main instruments of hegemony, arguing that the ruling class is able to subjugate the minds of the citizens through the use of popular sports discourse (Chomsky, 1988).

State involvement in sport has been evidenced in many countries throughout history. For instance, the government of the city states in ancient Greece used sport to enhance fitness of the citizens for war and also to demonstrate their superiority over other city states (Lin, et al, 2008). In the early part of the Roman era, sport was used to maintain soldiers’ fitness for military duty (Lin, et al, 2008). Today in an even more direct and overt fashion in many countries, sport is used as a form of political propaganda to gain prestige and support for the regime in power and its particular social system (Lin, et al, 2008; McKinley, 2011). Thus soccer can become the interstitial space where political struggles are played out (Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011).

From the early development of the game, football was dominated by working class social relations but because of its power and popularity across the world, it has rapidly become colonised by government and politicians “seeking another dimension to their public faces” (McKinley, 2011:17). Due to its power, scholars like Kortzanov (2012) view football as a public opinion management tool utilised by governments or those in power across the globe. Cases have
been cited around the globe where football has been manipulated and used as a propaganda tool to retain power. During the period of the Second World War, football occupied a central role in European politics (Benoit, 2008). Franco, Hitler and Mussolini, leaders of the Fascist regimes of Spain, Germany and Italy respectively manipulated football for propaganda purposes in an attempt to win the hearts and minds of the masses (Foer, 2004; Benoit, 2008).

Even in Socialist countries football’s ‘beauty’ was also used in the same capacity. Stalin in the Soviet Union, reportedly used football to distract people from political injustices they suffered and also attempted to make them feel patriotic despite the fact that he subjected them to brutal conditions of rule (Eagleton, 1990; Benoit, 2008). Similarly, football was regulated and ‘politicized’ for 40 years by the communist government in Bulgaria. The aim was to unite people’s identity with a communist ideology through the Bulgarian Communist Party (Kotzarnov, 2012). The whole structure of the Bulgarian football league was restructured. Names were changed for instance Atletic Slava 23 changed to ‘Chavdar’ in 1944. “The name ‘Chavdar’ is associated with the guerrilla brigade, an anti-fascist movement organised by the Bulgarian Communist party from 1941-1944” (Kotzarnov, 2012:39).

In spite of the fact that sport is mainly manipulated by authorities to gain political capital, it has also been observed that the same discourse of sport is also used to challenge authority (Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011). Sport can be a ‘liberator’ in oppressed societies (Contomilachos, 2010). Football stadia, in particular are cited as the ideal place where power can be challenged and rational debates on governance issues can still take place. Sport sociologist Simiyu Njororai argues that “the soccer stadium is a vital medium for expressing dissent and displeasure against the political class, administrative control and power” (Simiyu Njororai, 2009: 874). There is limited restriction on people to express their views (Nauright, 1997; Foer, 2004).

In that similar capacity, football teams and stadia are also viewed as temples for various versions of nationalism at any given historical epoch (Ben-Porat, 2001). Sport thus provides space for political opposition, especially for citizens of repressive regimes. In Korea, during the Japanese colonial occupation (1910-1945), the formation of sports groups was among the ways through which the Koreans could organise themselves against Japanese cultural and political hegemony and encourage independence from the Japanese (Lin, et al, 2008). During the Spanish civil war in the 1930s, which saw Franco ascending to power, Barcelona football club’s politically left
leaning president Josep Sunyol was murdered by the Falangistas (the Nationalist military movement) (Foer, 2004; Bloomfield, 2010). From this particular point, Spanish football became a symbolic forum for the political ideologies of the day (Foer, 2004; Bloomfield, 2010). Barcelona therefore became the symbol of progressive politics which resisted the oppression of the dictatorial Madrid-based government (Foer, 2004; Bloomfield, 2010). With the banning of the Catalan, Gallego (Galician) and Euskera (Basque) languages by Franco’s Fascist regime, “Barcelona’s Nou camp stadium and clubs Athletic Bilbao and Real Sociedad were the only venues where people could express their cultural pride without winding up in jail” (Foer, 2004:4). Thus the stadium is not only a platform for the counter-hegemonic struggle of the subordinate groups but it is also a platform where the ‘other’ get the opportunity to speak back. In essence it is the platform where those located or relegated to the epistemic margins of discourse come into being.

Sport sociologists have also explored the interface between sport and power discourses on the African continent from colonial to post colonial times (Nauright, 1997; Dejonghe, 2001; Simiyu Njororai, 2009; Mangan, 2010; Pannenborg, 2010, 2012). It is argued that sport or football in particular have mixed in ‘complex’ ways dating back to the days when the game was introduced on the African continent (Nauright, 1997; Stapleton, 2001; Darby, 2002; Alegi, 2004; Pannenborg, 2010; Zenenga, 2012). As argued by Chipande (2009) in the nineteenth century Europe exported not just its imperial politics, goods, ideas, and social norms but also its sport to the rest of the world. Muponde and Muchemwa (2011), also contend that the history of sport in colonial Africa attests to its ideological use by the colonial power to ‘civilise’ the ‘native’.

The first documented game of football on the African continent was played by British military, traders and missionaries in South Africa in 1862, a year before soccer’s official rules were codified (Alegi, 2010). Imperialists were behind the development of football in Africa (Stuart, 1995; Darby, 2000, 2002, 2007; Stapleton, 2001; Alegi, 2010). Early Christian missionaries, whose historical role in the colonisation of Africa continues to spark debate (see Chikowero, 2008), are implicated in grafting the early shoots of the game of football in Africa. Missionaries were sent to colonial Africa to be agents of ‘social change’, meant to bring so-called light and
improve and morally ‘civilise’ Africans (Darby, 2000). It is argued that missionaries recognised the power of sport in assimilating Africans to Western culture, and, above all, to convert Africans to Christianity. It was the missionaries who advocated for the incorporation of physical education and modern sport into the school curriculum on the basis of inculcating in the minds of African children the values of physical fitness, health and social discipline (Mangan, 1987; Darby, 20002). Colonialism therefore laid foundation for the diffusion of modern day sports especially football in Africa (Chipande, 2009). Seen through a Gramscian lens, sport or football was meant to pave the way for political domination (Walvin, 1975). The Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci in his Theory of Hegemony, submits that cultural domination paves way for political domination (Gramsci, 1970).

Interestingly, football, a discourse deployed by the colonial powers to protect their hegemony and win consensual rule of the majority Africans, ended up as an alternative public sphere that allowed counter hegemonic forces against colonial rule (Stuart, 1995; Alegi, 2010). Due to the political and economic conditions which remained oppressive in colonial Africa, the established sports clubs and soccer teams originally envisaged as a mechanism of social control soon became the focus for political confrontation (Darby, 2002). As Alegi (2010: 22) puts it, “while European colonisers intended for sport to prop up their self proclaimed ‘civilising mission’ in Africa, they unwittingly created new opportunities for various forms of African resistance, not only against social inequalities within African communities”. Football teams on the East African island of Zanzibar enabled Swahili speaking Muslim men to sharpen their nationalist consciousness and challenge colonial authority Alegi (2010). Football or sport in general played an important role in the liberation of Africa, a fact which until recently academic historians have tended to neglect (Alegi, 2010).

The game represented an African vehicle of expressing indigenous aspirations for emancipation and harnessing resentment toward the exploitative and oppressive conditions (Alegi, 2010). Africans chanted protest songs, symbols and gestures mocking colonial authority in football stadia (Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011). “From the post war periods onwards, soccer at different times, became an embodiment of the political aspirations of the African people” (Stuart, 1995:19). Football became more than just a sport, but a conduit for articulating African nationalist discourses.
African nationalist movements also forged connections with popular football teams, players and fans (Stuart, 1995; Zenenga, 2012). Stadiums and club houses became arenas in which workers, intellectuals, business owners, and the unemployed challenged colonial power and expressed a shared commitment to racial equality and self determination (Alegi, 2010). For instance the name of Egypt’s Al Ahly, the most successful football club in Africa, means ‘National’ in Arabic, with its red insignia came to symbolise patriotic resistance to British rule in the 1920s when the Europeans were excluded from the club (Alegi, 2010; Bloomfield, 2010). In another case in Brazzaville in the 1930s, French authorities imposed a rule requiring Africans to play football barefooted. However though most players could not afford football boots, they resented colonial prescription hence older players reportedly quit the game while many younger ones moved to the mission league (Alegi, 2010).

In apartheid South Africa, in Transvaal and Natal townships, football provided a platform for Africans to publicly demonstrate their position in society (Nauright, 1997:66). It is also argued that visits by foreign teams provided black South Africans with the opportunity to voice their support for the visitors against the racially assembled South African team (Nauright, 1997; Novak, 2012). This popularity of the game in townships also worked in favour of African political leaders to address mass audiences without the necessity of seeking police clearance which would rarely be granted (Nauright, 1997).

The relationship between football and power in colonial Africa reproduced itself in post-colonial Africa (Alegi, 2010; Pannenborg, 2010). Politicians and governments in post colonial Africa have appropriated football as an instrument to control the people (Pannenborg, 2012). Former Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah is said to have used the country’s national football team, The Black Stars, as a vehicle through which to spread nationalistic and Pan Africanist worldviews (Pannenborg, 2010). The triumph of the team at the 1963 and 1965 Africa Cup of Nations finals was in fact linked to Nkrumah’s presence and support while its dismal performances afterwards were attributed by some to the coup that deposed him in 1966 (Alegi, 2010; Pannenborg, 2010). Cameroon’s former President Paul Biya who had a reputation of consistently rigging elections since 1982 to stay in power, is said to have capitalised on the successes of the national football team by attaching the logo of a lion to his party (Pannenborg, 2012:140).
Soon after gaining independence, most African governments built new football stadia in their countries as this directly linked them to nation building as evidenced by names of the stadiums, for instance Independence stadium in Accra, National stadium in Lagos and the like (Alegi, 2010). These stadiums quickly became almost sacred ground for the creation of and performance of national identities (Alegi, 2010:55). It is plausible to argue that stadiums became and until to date remain temples of nationalism. Even Nelson Mandela the first president of a democratic South Africa, just like Kwame Nkrumah and others before him, turned to sport to build a new and inclusive sense of ‘South African-ness’ (Nauright, 1997; Alegi, 2010).

In his doctoral study of football in Cameroon and Ghana, Arnold Pannenborg (2012) notes the involvement of wealthy businesspeople and politicians in the running and control of the game. He argues that in post-colonial Africa football has become an important platform for politicians who want to make it into political offices. Bloomfield (2010) concurs and reinforces the same argument noting that in countries like Kenya football is not just seen as a way of making money but a route to political power. For instance, Kenneth Matiba, Chairman of the Kenyan Football Federation (KFF), in the 1970s had used this platform to become a prominent politician, standing against Daniel Arap Moi in the 1992 elections. Even a number of Members of Parliament representatives elected in 1992 elections in Kenya had also been deeply involved in football administration, using sport as a support base to further their political ambitions (Bloomfield, 2010). Such a scenario is also prominent in Nigeria where most football clubs are owned by politicians (Bloomfield, 2010). Most recently in Liberia George Weah, arguably the greatest football player to emerge in that country, attempted to manipulate his football fame and went on to contest the presidential elections in 2005 (Bloomfield, 2010). Football has therefore become one of the platforms used to gain political capital by politicians in Africa.

Interestingly, just like what happened during the colonial era, football discourse has also been appropriated by the ruled classes to challenge the status quo (Alegi, 2010; Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011). It is compelling to argue, basing on traces of historical evidence, that there is a nexus between football and power across the globe. The African continent is no exception. In Africa, it was initially the Europeans’ desire to naturalise colonialism which actually resulted in football being exported to the ‘third world’ countries including Africa. This study concurs that
the story of colonialism’s material and ideological exports to Africa and Zimbabwe in particular is incomplete without mentioning football. A huge gap however still exist on elaborating how football and power have related both in colonial and post colonial times. Appiah (1992) says the attainment of independence by African nations does not mean the end of colonialism; the colonial is far from being dead. The study hopes to explore whether the relationship between football and power in colonial Africa (Zimbabwe in particular) went on to reproduce itself after independence.

**Southern Rhodesia to Zimbabwe: interface between football and power**

While studies on sport and power in Africa and other parts of the world have gained momentum, in Zimbabwe sports studies are still at infancy stages (Ncube, McCracken and Engh, 2013; Ncube, 2014). There have been few preliminary examinations on sport and power particularly football and nationalism albeit with a huge bias towards the colonial politics of Southern Rhodesia -later Zimbabwe (Stuart, 1995; Stapleton, 2001; Ranger, 2010; Alegi, 2010). These studies explore how the discourse of sport was used by the colonial authorities to exercise power over the African population while at the same time providing an entry point for African resistance (Stuart, 1995; Stapleton, 2001; Ranger, 2010; Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011).

The development of football in Southern Rhodesia, the colonial predecessor to modern Zimbabwe, followed the same trajectory as that of the other colonial hegemony projects in Africa (Stapleton, 2001; Alegi, 2010; Ranger, 2010). Giulianiotti (2004) states that first players of football in Zimbabwe were the Pioneer Column, the small group of Europeans who entered what is now Zimbabwe in 1890. The Pioneer Column occupied and set in motion the colonisation of Zimbabwe under the sponsorship and expansionist policy of Cecil John Rhodes’s British South Africa Company (BSAC) in 1890 (Beach, 1984; Phimister, 1988). By the end of 1900 there were several sports clubs that had been funded in emerging towns as a result of establishing competitions in football and other team sports such as cricket and rugby (Giulianotti, 2004).

The contribution of the military in the development of football in Southern Rhodesia also needs to be underscored. Timothy Stapleton contends that Zimbabwean football as an institution was
founded and built through the “unlikely vehicle of the colonial African police and soldiers in the colonial army” (Stapleton, 2001:108). For example the African police had a football team Black Mambas FC, while Black Rhinos FC was for the soldiers and Chapungu for the Airforce. To date these three football clubs are still playing in Zimbabwe’s Premier Soccer League. Importantly, both the soldiers and police also played a major role in popularising other organised sports such as athletics and boxing in the country (Stapleton, 2001). Just like in other parts of colonial Africa, sport in Southern Rhodesia was a tool for the social control of the black African population (Novak, 2012). British colonisers viewed sport as a ‘civilising’ device to teach important lessons of hygiene and fitness in a manner strictly controlled by the white state (Stapleton, 2001, Alegi, 2010).

The Europeans were eager to monitor and control African sport (Stapleton, 2001). The desire to control African sport is probably exhibited by the intervention in boxing which had quickly spread through black populations in Southern Rhodesia. However, fearing that boxing was an aggressive and dangerously subversive of the colonial regime, municipal and provincial governments began taking over boxing leagues (Novak, 2012).

Moreover, the outbreak of civil disorders in Bulawayo in 1929 forced the colonial administration to opt for a more direct system of rule in Southern Rhodesia (Darby, 2002; Ranger, 2010). It was therefore decided that, among other things, state investment in and promotion of sport represented the best means of social control in the industrial cities in Southern Rhodesia (Darby, 2002). As part of the policy of social control, the colonial administration set up the African welfare society which began to administer sports particularly football (Darby, 2002; Ranger, 2010). This institution facilitated the formation of many teams in Salisbury (now Harare). By 1938 there were nineteen township teams in two divisions under the colonial auspices (Giulianotti, 2004).

However, this European attempt to control African football sparked protests in Bulawayo in 1947-1948 (Ranger, 2010). The African’s football boycott in Bulawayo lasted longer than the general strike in the city, and was victorious in preserving African control (Giulianotti, 2004). Among the leaders of the protests were political activists like Benjamin Burombo, founder of the British African National Voice Association and a member of Mashonaland Football Club and Sipambaniso Manyoba, captain of Matabele Highlanders (Stapleton, 2001; Alegi 2010:23).
This struggle to control football between the colonial authorities and the ordinary people, illustrates the point Darby (2000) makes that the colonised appropriated soccer and invested it with political aspirations and the very subversions the colonisers had intended to be contaminated by football. Stuart (1995) contends that a football club was during the colonial period one of the very few African run organisations that would be tolerated by the local authorities. Other structures such as ethnic or cultural societies, political parties, trade unions were banned or controlled (Stuart, 1995; Dejonghe, 2001).

Southern Rhodesia therefore is no exception when it comes to how African football also became a crucial site where colonial authority was seriously challenged. Sport and football in particular was appropriated, adapted, hybridised and indigenised to serve local cultural, political and spiritual needs of the subaltern groups (Zenenga, 2012:252). Stuart further points out, “Soccer became an ideal tool with which to turn mass support from the majority of the population and African political leaders were not slow to exploit soccer in this way” (Stuart, 1995:34). Zimbabwean football teams such as Dynamos and Highlanders are singled for their role in fighting for the African nationalist cause (Stuart, 1995; Alegi, 2010; Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011 and Zenenga 2012). The teams became the alternative platform to evade the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) in Southern Rhodesia. The law was meant to counter nationalist movements and meetings as it made it illegal for people to be in groups of more than six at any given time (Saunders, 1999).

Africans took advantage of the stadia freedom to sing songs and perform traditional dances which raised political consciousness while at the same time mocking colonial authority (Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011). African footballers were given nicknames loaded with messages that touched on the current affairs of the colony as well as the aspirations of the oppressed communities and this language and symbols went undetected by the colonial authorities (Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011).

Football studies in contemporary Zimbabwe have also explored how the Robert Mugabe led Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and Morgan Tsvangirai led Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) parties have appropriated and deployed football
discourses to win consent (Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011; Zengenga, 2012; Willems, 2013; Ncube, 2014). It has been argued that that Robert Mugabe’s ZANU PF’s regime from independence was alert about the dangers posed by the football discourse in providing opposition groups a platform to subvert power, the way it had happened during Ian Douglas Smith’s Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) (1965-1980) period (Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011). The two scholars however, submit that Mugabe did not invest much in football as a way of managing people specifically during the first and second decades of independence (1980-2000) since he did not see immediate dividends that would accrue from active engagement with a national team (the Warriors) which perpetually lost. It is argued however that Mugabe later made attempts to infiltrate football administration as testified by the fact that his nephew Leo Mugabe became the Zimbabwe Football Association’s chairman from 1993-2003 (Bloomfield, 2010; Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011; Ncube, 2014).

Football from independence to date has become a major feature of commemorating important national days on Zimbabwe’s calendar such as Heroes Day, Independence Day, Defence Forces Day and Unity Day (Zenenga, 2012; Willems, 2013). However, ZANU PF despite manipulating football discourse to control the ‘masses’ also finds itself in the predicament of being challenged through football, a platform it once successfully used to subvert the colonial dispensation (Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011; Zenenga, 2012; Ncube, 2014). This time, ZANU PF’s main political rival Movement for Democratic Change led by Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T) has consistently appropriated football symbols, metaphors and images such as whistles and the red card to mock Mugabe leadership during its election campaigns (Zenenga, 2012; Ncube, 2014).

The analyses of Alegi (2004, 2010), Stapleton (2001), Darby (2000, 2002) (Giulianotti 2004) and (Muponde and Muchemwa 2011) among others, strongly illustrate how football and power could be intertwined given the right political situation in a country. Their strength lies in the ability to trace and problematise this relationship from the earliest days when football was exported during and after the scramble and partition of Africa. There is consensus among these scholars that football was used by the Europeans in Africa as an instrument to naturalise colonialism. Moreover, the scholars further agree on the fact that the police and army, missionaries and schools were also key in the diffusion of what today is often and uncritically referred to as the “world’s most beautiful game”. These scholars acknowledge and appreciate the fact that football
discourse was also appropriated by the colonised and exploited Africans to resist and challenge power in most parts of Africa including Southern Rhodesia. This shows that the subalterns or Africans were not led by the nose but also liked and utilised sport for their emancipation.

Systematic analyses that problematise the relationship between politics or rather power and football in the post-1980 period in Zimbabwe have been few and far between. Important beginnings have been made by Stuart (1995), Bloomfield (2010), Muponde and Muchemwa (2011), Zenenga (2012), Willems (2013) and Ncube (2014). While this emerging literature is to be welcomed, however, many gaps still remain. Outside of these tentative forays, the study of football in Zimbabwe remains a virgin area of scholarship. This thesis differs from these reviewed works in the sense that it critically explores and problematises how football relates to the discourses of power, identities and development in post-independence Zimbabwe based on empirical ‘on ground’ evidence gathered through ethnographic methods such as participant observation in football stadia and interviews with football players, administrators and the fans. This is unlike most of the studies on football and power in post-independence Zimbabwe which are theoretically based papers.

This study reinforces the assertion that football and sports in general deserve a place in our theoretical and academic interpretations of society, power and development. Football can be used to analyse society in theoretically exciting and conceptually surprising ways. Having explored how football relates to power, the section below discusses how football is also intertwined with various discourses of identity.

**Sport and the performance of ethnic and racial identities**

Sport is an arena for the manifestation of inter-cultural struggle in the reproduction of boundary demarcations on the basis of factors such as ethnicity, race or religion (Ben-Porat, 2001:24; Brown, Crabble and Mellor, 2008; Simiya Njororayi, 2009). Football clubs particularly those constituted along ethnic lines are not just used to express identity but respective ethnic groups’ desire for social recognition in society (Ben-Porat, 2001).
Football shapes social identities in various countries where it functions as a bridge between different ethnic communities (Ben-Porat, 2001). The game also has a reputation of being used as an instrument of protest for maintaining a particular ethnic/racial or even religious identity (Ben-Porat, 2001; Foer, 2004; Simiyu Njororai, 2009). At times football clubs with an ethnic affiliation are vibrant ways of maintaining a voluntary seclusion which keeps the ethnic group together (Ben-Porat, 2001). In Scotland Catholics have been accused of using Celtics football club to participate in an act of sectarianism and so has been said about the Catalan people who use Barcelona FC in Spain to engage in such an activity (Ben-Porat, 2001; Foer, 2004). In Africa, Kenya in particular, Luhya and Luo ‘minority’ ethnic groups use their football teams AFC Leopards and Gor Mahia respectively to express their ethnic identities while also maintaining their ‘autonomy’ (Simiya Njororai, 2009; Waliaula, 2012). This phenomenon is however, yet to be explored by Zimbabwean academics despite the likely occurrence of such a phenomenon given the presence of ethnic tensions in contemporary Zimbabwe (see Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009, 2010; Mhlanga, 2013).

There is a body of literature across the globe highlighting a complex interface between football and racial/ethnic discourses and how these often mix (Ben-Porat, 2001; Foer, 2004; Simiyu Njororai, 2009; Waliaula, 2012). For instance in Germany, Neo Nazis and the rightwing extremists at times use the internet to spread their racist attitudes inside and outside football stadiums (Balestri, 2002). The problem of racism in German football can be traced from 1989 after the reunification when extreme right groups gained prominence (Giulianotti, 1999; Kassimeris, 2009). It is further argued that by the late 1980s, a hybrid of xenophobia, hypernationalism and anti-communism had begun to grow and targets were non white foreign contract workers from countries such as Mozambique and Angola (Kassimeris, 2009: 763).

The problem of racism in African football is a legacy of the colonial system (Nauright, 1997; Alegi, 2010; Novak, 2012). In the Congo for instance, during colonial rule, White owned teams enjoyed access to adequate playing facilities built with African taxes, a privilege not afforded to colonial subjects (Alegi, 2010). This racism also manifested itself in stadia where Whites occupied the more expensive and more comfortable grandstand seats, while ordinary Congolese paid to watch the matches while standing (Alegi 2010:4).
In apartheid South Africa, by the 1930s ‘national’ football tournaments for different racial groups took place. These included the Currie Cup for whites (established in 1892), the Sam China Cup for Indians (1903), Moroka-Baloyi Cup for Africans (1932) and the Stuttaford Cup for Coloureds (1933) (Nauright, 1997; Alegi, 2010:25). In other words before the Nationalist party came to power in 1948 South African sport was officially racially structured. One of the notable incidents foregrounding racial schism in football was during the first Africa Cup of Nations tournament in 1956 when South Africa was disqualified from participation because of its apartheid policies (Nauright, 1997; Stapleton, 2001; Ndlovu, 2010).

It could be argued that ethnic and racial politics in South Africa football has even continued even in the official post apartheid period (Ndlovu, 2010). Fletcher’s (2012) study reveals sharp class and racial discourses in South African fandom. He argues that football in South Africa is more racially and ethnically diverse than generally acknowledged. Fletcher (2012) also argues that South African elites framed the country’s successful bid to host the 2010 FIFA World cup in terms of nation building, evoking imagery of South African unity. However a pre-season tournament in 2008 featuring the two PSL teams of South Africa, Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates and Manchester United of England, revealed racial hostilities which contradicted the notion of South Africa as a ‘rainbow nation’ (Fletcher, 2012). Hence apartheid identities continue to manifest themselves in the South African sporting arena.

In Southern Rhodesia sport was not specifically segregated by law as in South Africa, with its apartheid laws, but discrimination in sport took place in less overt ways, as sport was a sphere of contested control for a long period in Rhodesia and then the UDI period (Novak, 2012). Even hunting was a racialised sport in Southern Rhodesia and other countries such as Kenya and South Africa (Novak, 2012). Strict game and gun laws as well as expensive licence fees which to date remain highly discriminatory denied black Africans the same hunting privileges as to those offered to the whites. While settlers could be ‘hunters’, black Africans were ‘poachers’ (Novak, 2012). Terence Ranger further argues that sport in Southern Rhodesia there were certain sporting activities exclusively for whites such as cricket and rugby, where Africans were mere spectators or adjuncts (Ranger, 2010). However, when Africans began learning and mastering European sports “more overt and stricter control was required to maintain racial distance through sport” (Ranger, 2010:135). It is also argued that in Southern Rhodesia, efforts made by Africans to join
the White controlled Southern Rhodesia Football Association (SRFA) were turned down. This rejection was mainly based on racial grounds as the Whites felt it would be a mockery to their ‘supremacy’ to allow Blacks to join their association (Darby, 2002; Novak, 2012).

Crucially, the racial and ethnic influence went on to inform the formation of football teams in Africa (Alegi, 2010; Novak 2012). The social historian Peter Alegi argues that in colonial Africa European mine managers encouraged African employees to form ethnic football teams as a way to boost production and as an inexpensive means of social control (Alegi, 2010:19). He makes particular mention of Mombasa (Kenya) as one of the colonial cities where football teams were organised along ethnic lines, leading to a situation in which crossing ‘ethnic boundaries’ was treated as a treasonous act (Alegi, 2010). The same was true with Zambia and the Belgian Copper belt, where football and ethnicity were intimately connected. For example; the Lions were linked to Lozi workers, the Elephants to Bemba, and the Tigers to Ngoni and Chewa (Chipande, 2009; Alegi, 2010:19). Mamdani (1996) asserts that this form of indirect rule (divide and rule) policy was one of the key tools by which the colonial state regulated and mediated ethnic difference, thus also institutionalising a form of social control that endured into the postcolonial period.

In Southern Rhodesia football discourse also became divisive along ethnic lines, as the sport occupied a central role in maintaining and protecting the interests of the colonial state. This is testified by the fact that the development of the game in the country followed an ethnic pattern (Ranger, 2010). Highlanders, Zimbabwe’s oldest team, was formed on ethnic grounds. The team was founded in 1926 as Lion Football Club in Bulawayo by Albert and Rhodes, the grand children of King Lobengula (Stuart, 1995, Ranger 2010). The notion of Ndebele royalty was at the heart of a team that at once became associated with Ndebele royal-identity and ‘superior’ football (Ranger 2010). The team was renamed Matabele Highlanders in 1937 and later Highlanders (Giulianotti, 2004; Ranger, 2010; Zenenga, 2012).

Highlanders players and supporters wear the black and white jersey, in recognition of the Ndebele ethnic group’s history, culture and identity (Zenenga, 2012). Black and white colours are associated with the military and royalty in the traditional Ndebele culture (Ranger, 2010; Zenenga, 2012). Historically, the most prestigious Zulu and Ndebele regiments were famous for
wearing black and white animal skins with matching cowhide shields. Under the Zulu King Shaka’s command and later Mzilikazi and Lobengula of the Ndebele kingdom, the elite black and white regiments were notorious for raiding cattle from neighbouring groups, chieftains and kingdoms. This earned them the name ‘Amahlola nyama’ meaning those who eat meat only (Zenenga, 2012). This is the name and image that King Lobengula’s two sons might have had in mind when they formed Lions Football Club (Zenenga, 2012). It can be argued that at the time when Highlanders was formed Ndebele ethnic pride was under threat from European encroachment, so forming a football team was one platform to express and preserve their ethnic and cultural identity (Ncube, 2014).

Other teams formed on ethnic racial grounds in Southern Rhodesia were Mashonaland United now (formed 1936 in Bulawayo) now Zimbabwe Saints, so as to give a sense of belonging to the ‘Shona’ community who felt excluded from Highlanders since it gave an impression of a ‘Ndebele’ only team. And the now defunct Arcadia United which was exclusively for the Coloureds (and occasionally some whites) in Southern Rhodesia (Sasa, 2012).

The presence of ethnic discourse in Zimbabwean football up to date is acknowledged by scholars. Stuart (1995:45) contends support of football teams especially Dynamos and Highlanders is “akin to ethnic allegiance”. This argument is also supported by Mxolisi Ncube and Mkhululi Chimoio (2012) in The Zimbabwean newspaper submit that Highlanders and Dynamos are symbols of the tribal divide in Zimbabwean football. “When Highlanders win the championship, Ndebeles …get all the bragging rights and even refer to the clubs founding days spearheaded by King Lobengula’s grandsons. The Shona speaking part of the country does the same when Dynamos wins the league…” (Ncube and Chimoio, 2012:32).

While there has been substantial scholarship on the interface between ethnicity and football in Africa, studies on the linkages between cultural/ethnic identities and fandom in contemporary Zimbabwe are scarce. Important beginnings in the area have been made by Stuart (1995) and Zenenga (2012). Significant studies that explore ethnic/racial conflicts within the context of Zimbabwean national identity politics and cultural context (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2003, 2009; Chiiumbu, 2004; Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007) are silent on sport discourse. This
makes the current study necessary as it extends the analysis of ethnic tensions in Zimbabwe to the discourse of football. The extensive study of mundane behaviours and more subtle expressions of football identity as experienced by Zimbabweans in their everyday lives is virtually absent.

It is in everyday life that football culture is primarily perpetuated, expressed and experienced (Stone, 2007). Football has been described as a ‘mock battle’ between the representatives of two communities (Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1988:240), as a realm in which communal honour is defended and identity inclusively and exclusively (re)constructed (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 2001). This explains why sport sociologists Armstrong and Giulianotti assert that “the game [football] provided a ready background for the expression of deeper social and cultural antagonisms that were existent anywhere on earth.’ (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 2001:1).

This thesis offers a theoretical formulation of the embedded position of football as a part of the fabric of people’s everyday lives. Using Dynamos, Highlanders football clubs as well as the Warriors, the thesis attempts to lucidly give clarity on how football culture affects social identities in Zimbabwe. This thesis presents critical and rare primary data grounded on empiricism accentuated by the author’s familiarity with the Zimbabwean history. Some of the existing discourses analysed in the African context lack this insight as researchers who are largely ‘Western’ lack the cultural context in which these discourses are located.

**Masculine and feminine discourses: a gendered game?**

Sport sociologists concur that sport is largely a hegemonic masculine enterprise, reinforcing gender distinctions and unequal power relations and in which female participants often put their femininity at risk (Birrell and Cole, 1994; Hong, 2003; Mean, 2001). In such circumstances, female involvement in sport is often regarded as a transgression of the ‘natural’ order (Saavedra, 2005; Pelak, 2006). Alegi argues that the FIFA-sponsored 383 page *Le Football en Afrique* (2008) devotes just one paragraph to the women’s football. At a continental level, in Africa, CAF organised the first official African Women’s Championship in Nigeria in 1998 with strong
encouragement from FIFA and corporate sponsors (Alegi, 2010:123). Generally women’s football has been met with scepticism, neglect and sometimes outright hostility.

Over the years women have been excluded from many sports and physical activities, including being combat members of armed forces, on the premise that they risk medical harm and physical trauma (Mccrone, 1988; Vertinsky, 1994). In some circles women have been excluded from participating in sport as a way of protecting their virginity as there have been fears that certain physical activities may damage the hymen (Pfitser, 2000). In parts of the Middle East, women participation in sport is apparently hindered by religious conservatism (Brookes, 2002; Foer, 2004). There is a suggestion that football and sports are deemed by some to be “harem-forbidden” (Klein, 2007) while some religious clerics deem football as immoral and regard women taking part in the sport as incongruous with the teachings of Allah (Contomichalos, 2010).

However, following the August 2009 recognition of female boxing as an Olympic sport, boxing has become one of the many sports Muslim women are now partaking; enabling them to recreate or rewrite certain gender boundary lines (Contomichalos, 2010). In Iran, the Islamic revolution in 1979 discouraged women from partaking in sport. It also saw a ban on women attending major sporting events as spectators. However when the football team won a match that qualified them to play at the World Cup in 1979 “ a group of young women went on the offensive in Tehran when they broke into the stadium which security forces had assigned for men only (Foer, 2004; Fozooni, 2007). From Fozooni’s (2007) point of view, the forced entry into the stadium by women could be seen as an expression of their desire for freedom and a fight against patriarchy.

Male dominance has also been noted in sport fandom (The Social Issues Research Centre, 2008). Sport is largely a masculine hegemonic enterprise, in which the world of the fan is organised around typically male oriented social spaces-pubs, bars and large-scale sports arenas. In such spaces, men are permitted to express their emotions and passions. Having women present, it is felt, can inhibit this sometimes unmanly behaviour (The Social Issues Research Centre, 2008). This explains why sport is viewed as one of the last few strongholds where men can still assert their dominance and supremacy over women (Hong, 2003; Mean, 2001). The
game allows an opportunity for the “legitimate expression of hyper-masculinity” through various fandom activities which reinforce men’s power over women (Gosling, 2007:253; Harris, 2007).

Traditional values and traits associated with male sports such as physical contact, violence and aggression, are considered by many to be male traits (Caudwell, 1999; Cox and Thompson, 2000). It is against this background that achieving success in sport reinforces and promotes masculinity, whereas for women achieving success in sport is often considered as having rejected feminine values (Stirling and Schulz, 2011). In Zimbabwe such women like Mavis Gumbo, Susan Chibizhe and Henrietta Rushwaya who have assumed influential roles in football either by leading the Women’s league, seating on the ZIFA board or heading the game’s secretariat have interchangeably been called ‘Iron Lady(ies) of football’ by the press as their role is somewhat viewed as a challenge to masculinity rather than complimentary to national development.

Women and girls have struggled against sexism, misogyny and stereotypes, through football stadium music (Sever, 2005). These stadium activities are meant to [re]produce feminine and masculine identities found at homes in the stadium. The female body is actually a site of contestation on the terraces as most songs and ‘rituals’ commodify and objectify the female body. To the football fans, the act of scoring goals against the opposing team is interpreted as ‘penetrating’ the woman (Harris, 2007). This implies any losing team is ascribed a feminine identity while the winning team assumes a masculine identity. This explains why Edensor and Augustin have asserted that “football fan cultures are saturated with communal identifications and sectarian antagonisms towards other teams…Fans’ songs celebrate their team along with wider communal virtues, and occasionally direct racist chants against opposing teams and their supporters” (Edensor and Augustin, 2001:97-98).

Studies on gender identity discourses in sport fandom largely focus on Europe and Asia. Little has been written on Africa (Saavedra, 2003) and virtually nothing on Zimbabwe despite sport and football in particular being one of those cultural institutions where discourses of masculinity and femininity manifest in people’s everyday lives. Importantly available literature on football and gender in Africa has largely ignored women football. A huge gap therefore exists in understanding how football in modern day Zimbabwe relates to gender identity discourses. This
thesis therefore attempts to fill this huge academic void on the discourses of gender and sport. Preliminary examinations have been made on the subject (Daimon, 2010; Chikafa, 2014). These scholars argue that despite the progress Zimbabwe has made in attaining equal access for both sexes in such areas as education, employment, health and business among others the sports arena still remains a restricted space for female participation due to strong cultural and traditional practices, (Manyonganise, 2010; Chikafa, 2014).

Daimon (2010) submits that dominant patriarchal ideology locates women’s roles in the domestic sphere thus their participation is viewed as a challenge to male control of the public domain. Thus Zimbabwe’s stadia have become arenas for the display of machismo resulting in most Zimbabwean women preferring not to attend these stadia (Daimon, 2010:2). Daimon further cites Dynamos and Highlanders football clubs as having male hooligans who tend to sexually harass and molest women in stadia during matches. Women are portrayed as evil and wicked elements which bring bad luck in soccer (Daimon, 2010). Such discourses are meant to discriminate and exclude women since they are viewed as ‘fake’ fans that have little or no knowledge about the game. Despite correctly observing the prevalence of gendered discourses in Zimbabwe’s football fandom, Daimon (2010) however, does not attempt to make a connection of these discourses to the rivalry between Dynamos and Highlanders as well as the Warriors. This thesis therefore extends the analysis of this phenomenon; highlighting how ideologically charged football is in modern day Zimbabwe. The section below explores how football relates to the discourses of development.

**Sport, development and nation building: a critical perspective**

Sport in general and football in particular, has become one of the vital instruments used to achieve development goals across the globe (Alegi, 2010; USAID, n.d). Football is used in socially strategic issues such as the promotion of health, prevention of diseases, strengthening child and youth development and education, gender issues, creating global partnerships, employment, encouraging conflict resolution and social inclusion and discouraging enmity, exclusion and all forms of discrimination. Sport is also instrumental in the fight against racism,
racial discrimination, xenophobia and other related forms of bigotry and intolerance (Chalkley and Essex, 1999; Belhova et al, 2011).

There is a growing understanding that sport does not compete with other priorities but can actually be a means for addressing them (Siriwat, 2002). Sport has therefore become crucial in the development discourse of various countries across the globe. Almost every government around the world commits financial and public resources to sporting infrastructure because of sport’s perceived benefits to improving health, preventing crime and promoting employment (Siriwat, 2002). Football has thus become important in the ideology of free-market capitalism and has become intimately intertwined with development ideologies, especially as they are driven by Bretton-Woods-style institutions such as FIFA (Kortzanov, 2012).

The importance of sport to national development discourse has been emphasised in European and American countries. Football in particular has become a global industry worth billions of dollars in these countries (Belhova et al, 2011; Kortzanov, 2012). About two million people are employed in the sports economy in the 15 member countries of the European Union. This is 1.3% of the overall European Union employment. In the UK, the contribution of the sports economy to GDP is currently estimated at more than 2%. As a comparison, this is three times as high as the current contribution of agriculture to GDP in U.K (Das Gupta, n.d; Lin, Lee and Nai, 2008). This research, employing the Foucauldian discourse hopes to provide a holistic complex analysis of development paradigms associated with sport, which have become commonly dominated by the free-market capitalism ideology.

Despite limited studies on sport and development on the African continent, football significantly contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of some African countries (Darby, 2007; Alegi, 2010; Pannenborg, 2010; Kortzanov, 2012). This thesis is of the contention that while there is evidence of growth on literature that deals with sport and development on the African continent, the Zimbabwean voice is notably absent in this ongoing scholarly conversation. Little to nothing has been explored in contemporary Zimbabwe. A huge gap exists on sport and development studies despite that Zimbabwe’s media system, politicians and ‘ordinary’ Zimbabweans acknowledge the contribution of sport especially football to economic
development. This thesis building on an already established body of knowledge on football and development in Africa, hopes to break the discourse of silence on the subject in Zimbabwe.

It has also been argued that sport has become central in developing diplomatic relations between countries (Redeker, 2008; Pannenborg, 2010). Siriwat (2002) has argued that throughout history, different political regimes have relied on sport as a legitimate tool for diplomacy (Siriwat, 2002). There are significant cited cases of countries such as Japan, Korea and China, which have used football at different phases to negotiate and manage international relations (Manzenreiter, 2008). Sporting iconic stars have become ambassadors who market their countries at the international arena (Pannenborg, 2010). Football star Didier Drogba of Ivory Coast, is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) ambassador (Pannenborg, 2010).

Sport has also become the primary medium through which nations are re-imagined (Giulianotti, 1999). Modern nation states have lost the collective belonging for real human communities and networks and have been replaced by imagined communities\(^\text{10}\) (see Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawn, 1990). Sports such as football have helped in creating and sustaining these imagined communities (Giulianotti, 1999). There are also studies across the globe which emphasise the importance of sport in social cohesion (Foer, 2004; Bloomfield, 2010; Pannenborg, 2010; Rookwood and Palmer, 2011). Sport brings individuals and communities together, highlighting commonalities and bridging cultural or ethnic divides (Coalter, 2007). Sporting activities like football provide a stronger sense of belonging than religion, social class, ethnic background or political affiliations (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 2004, 2004). Such sentiments underscore how football is regarded as a central institution in unifying the nation in today’s world.

In Europe, Germany is cited an example which testifies football’s power in uniting the nation as witnessed after the Second World War (post-1945) (Gethard, 2006; Lin et al, 2008). In the United Kingdom, the football teams of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have arguably done more to keep alive the notion of a nation in all four ‘countries’ than the politicians (Menary, 2010:253). In Northern Cyprus, football has become part of a new political settlement

\(^{10}\) The concept of ‘imagined communities’ espouses that all communities larger than primordial villages of face to face contact are imagined, and even the largest imagined community has finite and elastic boundaries (Anderson, 1983).
for the divided Mediterranean island (Menary, 2010:253). On the African continent, the contribution of football in nation building and bringing peace in war torn countries has also been acknowledged (Bloomfield, 2010; Pannenborg, 2010).

Liberia and Ivory Coast are cited as examples where football successfully contributed to national healing (Bloomfield, 2010; Pannenborg, 2010; Rookwood and Palmer, 2011). It has been asserted that when Liberia’s Lone Stars played an international match, the rival factions laid down their guns and sat side by side in the stadium (Bloomfield, 2010). In Ivory Coast Didier Drogba11 organised a match in the rebel dominated city of Bouake and pleaded with his countrymen to stop fighting (Bloomfield, 2010; Pannenborg, 2010; Rookwood and Palmer, 2011).

This emphasised contribution of football in nation building has not been explored in contemporary Zimbabwe. Scholars while focusing on the colonial politics of Southern Rhodesia explored how football united Africans to challenge and mock colonial rule (Stuart, 1995; Stapleton, 2001; Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011; Zenenga, 2012). There are also few works that have looked at how football is used in celebrating national events (Willems, 2013; Ncube, 2014). However, the contribution or potential of the game to nation building is yet to be systematically interrogated in contemporary Zimbabwe. This study employs the Foucauldian discourse to engage with this development discourse in the game of football in Zimbabwe.

The limitations of sport in nation building and development have also been acknowledged across the world including in Africa (Ben-Porat, 2001; Pannenborg, 2010). Sport particularly football is at times characterised by manifestation of different racial, ethnic and religious differences (Holt, 2000; Foer, 2004). As Foer asserts “football defends the virtues of old fashioned nationalism to an extent that even globalisation has failed to erode ancient hatreds in football’s great rivalries, the game provides a platform for tribalism to manifest thus threatening national/ social cohesion” (Foer, 2004:5). These ethnic or tribal conflicts provide fertile land for germination and blossoming of violence and hooliganism in football stadia. Holt contends “Sport does not create the conditions for war but it does maintain the possibility of these conditions…” (Holt 2000:88). Violence is a well documented phenomenon across the globe (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 2004; 11 Former captain of Ivory Coast national football team and Cheslea FC striker
A number of ethnographic studies have been carried to understand this phenomenon and its implications to nation building (Armstrong and Giulianoti, 2004; Foer, 2004; Oakley 2007).

There are also studies which have explored the prevalence of violence in African football especially in countries like Ghana and Cameroon (Pannenborg, 2010). It is argued that two of Africa’s worst stadium disasters as a result of violence occurred in 2001 in South Africa—and Ghana and many people lost their lives (Pannenborg, 2010). Preliminary studies on Zimbabwean football also indicate that violence is one of the aspects that puts football’s presumed ‘beauty’ under scrutiny (Daimon, 2010; Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011; Zenenga, 2012). The most notable incident of violence in Zimbabwean football resulted into the death of 13 people at the National Sports Stadium (Harare) on 9 July 2000 during a FIFA World Cup qualifying match between Zimbabwe and South Africa (Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011). While this pioneering body of work on the phenomenon is appreciated, more systematic studies are still needed on the subject. Through ethnographic methods such as participant observation and in-depth interviews with selected football fans, footballers and administrators in Zimbabwe, the thesis brings a rare insight needed on African studies. Not only causes of violence in the game are explored but an often taken for granted relationship between football and nation building in Zimbabwe is problematised in a sophisticated academic approach based on empirical data.

Academic studies in Africa and elsewhere also point to the fact that despite football’s potential and unproblematically glorified contribution to national development this is far from being realised due to corruption (Pannenborg, 2010; Cottle, 2011). In Africa just like in other parts of the world, some elites abuse football to enrich themselves at the expense of national or human development (McKinley, 2011). It is argued that significant funds are annually invested into African football by corporate organisations in mining, agriculture, oil and gas, beverages and also by international sports companies such as Adidas and Puma and by television sport networks on the continent (Pannenborg 2010). Other funds come through from other types of sponsorships and FIFA development projects (Jennings, 2007). However, most of these funds which will be aimed at developing the grassroots are diverted for something else (Panneborg, 2010).
Pannenborg (2010) mentions former Cameroonian goalkeeper Joseph Antoine Bell who remarked that 90 out of 100 dollars in football disappear into private pockets (Pannenborg, 2010). It is however argued that African governments claim that they cannot investigate malpractices within Football Associations, for fear of FIFA’s rule that governments are not allowed to intervene in football-related affairs (Pannenborg, 2010; Cottle, 2011).

Regardless of these complex issues of the prevalence of corruption in African football which undermine economic and human development in a way, research on the subject is still at nascent stages in Zimbabwe. Social and Cultural Studies have slowly taken football seriously. This thesis thus uses sport lens to explore national discourses such as development in modern day Zimbabwe.

‘Muscle drain’ and ‘development’ discourses in Africa

The professionalization and commercialization of football has resulted in player migration across the globe (Poli, 2006; Darby, 2007; Alegi, 2010; Otiz, 2012). European leagues such as the English Premiership, Spanish La Liga, Germany Bundesliga, Italian Series A league and French Ligue 1 constitute the epicentre of international football migration, with these leagues attracting talent from various parts of the world due to competitive salaries offered in these leagues (Poli, 2006; Cornelissen and Solberg, 2007; Darby, 2007; Alegi, 2010; Otiz, 2012).

South American countries such as Brazil, Mexico and Argentina are some of the leading countries when it comes to exporting football talent to Europe (Foer, 2004). Exporting talent has therefore become a billion dollar industry for most of these countries (Foer, 2004). Africa is no exception when it comes to exportation of playing talent to Europe (Darby, 2007; Alegi, 2010). African players have continued to migrate to Europe and other parts of the world such as Asia in search of ‘greener pastures’, (Darby, 2007; Alegi, 2010; Bloomfield, 2010).

This ‘mass movement’ of African players to Asia, the Middle East, the US and Europe has often courted debate in academic circles (Darby, 2007; Alegi, 2010). Between 1996 and 2000 the
number of Africans playing in European professional leagues increased from about 350 to more than 1000 (Alegi, 2010:279). It is argued that European players usually demand high transfer rates from clubs. Therefore, the availability of African players in large numbers has created a much cheaper alternative source of labour (Das Gupta, n.d). African footballers are said to allow European clubs recruiters to make substantial financial savings through a form of wage dumping (Poli, 2006).

Such perspectives have prompted other academics to assert that while Africa might be economically benefiting from the transfer of footballers to foreign leagues, its labour is to some extent being exploited (Darby, 2007). This continued player movement from Africa to Europe and other parts of the world is therefore blamed for neo-colonial exploitation and impoverishment of African football (Cornelissen and Solberg, 2007; Darby, 2007). In other words colonial capitalism where imperial powers once used colonies as reliable sources of crops and minerals for processing in Europe has reinvented itself through sport (Poli, 2006; Darby, 2007; Alegi 2010). Darby (2007) cites countries such as Portugal which constantly ‘extract’ football talent from its former colonies such as Mozambique. According to Darby, this has become part of a wider process of underdevelopment of African football (Darby, 2007).

Football academies in Africa have been blamed for promoting extensive exportation of African labour to European leagues (Darby, Akindes and Kirwin, 2007). These academies and schools of excellence are said to be an extension of a broader neo-imperialist exploitation of the developing world by the developed world (Poli, 2006; Darby, Akindes and Kirwin, 2007). These three cited scholars further contend that European football clubs, scouts and player agents collaborate to ensure that players, refined in Africa through the academies are exported for the European football market and sold on at a hugely inflated value primarily for the benefit of European interests (Darby, Akindes and Kirwin, 2007).

Sport sociologists have also raised concerns over the status of African players in the European football players’ labour market (Poli, 2006; Platts and Smith, 2010). African players are said to suffer various forms of discrimination. For instance in the labour market they find it difficult to be accommodated anywhere in huge numbers because of the existence of quotas limiting the
presence of non-communitarian players in European clubs (Poli, 2006). Moreover, African footballers are at times influenced to sign short-term contracts allowing European clubs to separate themselves easily from players if they do not find satisfaction with them (Poli, 2006; Darby, 2007). Poli (2006) further argues that at times African players find themselves in a dilemma of their contractual obligations being met by employers. For example Timothée Atouba (Cameroonian footballer), who, while playing for Neuchâtel Xamax football club of Switzerland was threatened by club officials and agents with deportation after complaining about his outstanding signing on fees (Poli, 2006: 286). In essence, most clubs in the lower divisions which cannot afford to pay competitive salaries, rely on African labour in Europe (Poli, 2006). The commodification of African players is also reflected by the fact that they are often transferred with the intention to be re-transferred to a bigger club in order to make a profit (Poli, 2006).

While most scholarly work on African football migration mainly focus on the movement of players to Europe, Asia and other parts of the world criticizing it as an element of neo-colonial exploitation (Poli, 2006; Darby, 2007; Alegi, 2010) however, of late African players are flooding the South African Premier Soccer League (Darby, 2007; Darby and Solberg, 2010). Over the past decade, South Africa has emerged as an important alternative destination for many of Africa’s departing footballers (Cornelissen and Solberg, 2007). South Africa has a well sponsored league which ranks among the top ten richest leagues in the world (Cornelissen and Solberg, 2007; Alegi, 2010). Zimbabwe perennially exports football talent to neighbouring countries. The Southern African country also has footballers playing in countries like Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, and Vietnam among others. While academics in Africa particularly Ghana, Cameroon, Senegal and South Africa such as Darby (2007), Alegi (2010) and Pannenborg (2010) have explored the issue of player movement in relation to development discourse, virtually nothing has been written on Zimbabwe.

It appears Zimbabwean academics are yet to engage with the implications of player movement to the Zimbabwean economy and to the footballers themselves. It is necessary to understand the implications of this player exodus on the development of football at grassroot level and even on the Premier Soccer League and national teams as well as to the economic fortunes at macro
level. This thesis anchored in Cultural Studies hopes to qualitatively capture ‘marginal and rare voices’ on such issues—of football supporters, footballers and officials who are involved in these processes. Pioneering works in Africa (Darby, 2007) on player migration do not include voices of the above mentioned stakeholders despite their significance on the subject.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed how the discourse of football is closely related to other broader discourses. These include power, gender, identities and development. Global and continental cases have been cited to demonstrate this argument. It is clear from the reviewed literature that the systematic study of the discourse of popular sport and football in particular is developing at a snail pace, especially in post-independence Zimbabwe which makes this study necessary. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the study which is the Foucauldian discourse, power and popular culture in relation to football.
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the study’s theoretical framework. The works of the French post-structuralist thinker Michel Foucault on discourse, power and knowledge are recast in a discussion which hopes to illustrate how football relates to multiple national discourses specifically power, identity and development in Zimbabwe. Howarth (2002) states that Foucault’s (1972, 1978, 1980) genealogical account of political discourse cannot be taken as a free standing approach either as a theoretical or methodological tool in exploring a phenomenon. The thesis therefore appeals to the post Marxist concepts of hegemony and ideology on popular culture to complement the Foucauldian approach. This approach views popular culture as a formative site for the play of power, where identities are negotiated and contested in people’s everyday lives (Storey, 2001; Ncube, 2014). The study argues that when supplemented by a Neo-Gramscian conception of popular culture, Foucault’s work yields a fruitful approach to the analysis of football as a site for centripetal-centrifugal convergence of power, identity and development discourses in contemporary Zimbabwe.

Exploring Zimbabwean football discourse through Foucauldian lens

In theorising and analysing what the researcher assumes to be a complex relationship obtainable between the game of football and broader national discourses specifically power, identities and development in the contemporary Zimbabwean society, the thesis deploys Foucault’s ideas on discourse, power and knowledge. Despite Foucault being silent on the discourse of sport in his works, his discourse theory has been significantly used by sport sociologists (Hargreaves, 1986; Markula and Pringle, 2006; Cox, 2011; Kassing, 2014; Ncube, 2014) in an attempt to examine broader workings of power that are at play in the multiple realms of sport in contemporary societies. Kassing (2014) states that the growth of works that utilize Foucauldian discourse theory in sport sociology can be read as a confirmation that if utilised, insights can be gained that football is more than just a sport.
‘Discourse’ is a term that some have tended to dismiss as useless intellectual jargon (Whisnant, n.d). In linguistic circles, discourse implies passages of connected writing speech (Fairclough, 1995; Hall, 1997). Foucault however, studied not language but discourse as a system of representation (Hall, 1997). Discourse refers to the rules and practices that produce meaningful statements and regulate discourse in different historical periods (Foucault, 1972). Hall (1997) asserts that by discourse Foucault meant a group of statements which produce a language for talking about – a way of representing knowledge about a particular historical moment. Foucault’s discourse describes the particular kind of language which specialised knowledge has to conform to in order to be regarded as true (Foucault, 1980). In other words, discourse is about the production of knowledge and power through language (Hall, 1997).

This study appeals to the Foucauldian insight to explore how the game of football in Zimbabwe is intertwined with discourses of power, identity and development. The intention is to use football as a focal entry point to understanding contemporary Zimbabwe. In his theory of discourse, Foucault’s (1973) investigations are intended to develop an understanding of the specific ways in which processes of discipline, policing, co-option, normalisation, and the deployment of power have taken place within the field of certain fundamental experiences (madness, illness, knowledge in the human sciences, crime, sexuality and so on) (Escobar, 1983). The thesis hopes in the same capacity to give clarity on how the football space has been and continues to be co-opted by mainstream authorities and used to ‘normalise’ power or exercise domination over ‘ordinary’ Zimbabweans.

In every society the production discourse is controlled organised and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures (Foucault, 1972, 1980). According to Escobar (1983) Foucault’s aim is to study the specificity of the production of discourses and discursive practices in Western society. Foucault asserts that:

Discourses have systematic structures and they should be studied archaeologically (that is by identifying the different elements of which they are composed, and the system of relations by which these elements form wholes) and genealogically (this is concerned with the effective formation of discourse by non discursive practices, such as socio economic factors, institution administrative requirements and the like (Escobar, 1983:311).
The thesis critically seeks to understand the convergence and divergence of power, identity and development discourses within the discourses of football. Their formation and relationship to the broader socio-political and economic environment is of importance. It has been noted that the weakness of the traditional archaeological approach to studying discourses is that archaeologists assume the role of a detached observer who simply describes discourses and treats them as autonomous rule-governed practices (Howarth, 2002).

Foucault’s genealogical approach differs from traditional histories in that he sought out subjugated knowledges (Cox, 2011). In this case knowledge established by this enquiry into Zimbabwean football discourse can be categorised as subjugated knowledge. Academic studies on the discourse of football are still growing in Zimbabwe (Ncube, 2014). Despite the game being connected with critical national discourses such as power, identity and development, Cultural Studies scholars in Zimbabwe have been slow in recognizing and giving sport discourse the special place it deserves. Consequently, it has remained subjugated knowledge. Foucault asserts that a critical examination of hidden knowledge uncovers a “historical knowledge of struggles” (Foucault, 1980: 83). Cox (2011) also submits that Foucault’s genealogy also aims to exude that social phenomena are not teleological processes of history but processes of contingency, chance and even mistakes.

Foucault’s genealogical approach calls for the researcher to be ‘internal’ to the practices he/ she is investigating so as to draw attention to the way in which dominant discourses conceal the emergence and effects of the practices they sustain (Howarth 2002). The researcher deployed an ethnographic approach to studying football in Zimbabwe. The overall aim was to develop a richer understanding on how football as a discourse is implicated with other multiple discourses such as power, identity and development. The researcher purposively adopted an insider position (football ethnography) in order to anticipate experiential and interpretive reality by being embedded amongst the subjects under study. Such reflexive ethnographic embeddedness helped to offer a richer ‘thick description’ of the relationship between football and discourses of power, identities and development than, for instance, conventional sociological analyses. While doing this ethnography (as explained in the methodology section in the first chapter), purposively
selected footballers, administrators and football supporters assisted the researcher to gain access to what Foucault (1980: 83) described as ‘local memories’.

The genealogical approach further emphasises that discourses are examined through exploring their historical emergence and development (Foucault 1980:117). It is the historical approach to the exploration of emergence of discourses which, in point of fact, motivated this study to take a historical approach to studying the convergence of discourses of power, identity and development in the game of football in modern-day Zimbabwe. Moreover, concern is also with the centrality of power and domination in the constitution of discourses, identities and institutions (Howarth 2000, 2002). Hence, this study explores and demonstrates a deeper understanding of the-systemic layers and structures embedded within the discourse of football in post-independence Zimbabwe refuting the proposition that football is a ‘beautiful’ game and secondly, just a game. It is necessary for the study to identify different elements with which the three broad discourses under study are composed and transformed. “It is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together” (Foucault, 1979:100).

Hall (1997) argues that Foucault also focuses on the relationship between knowledge and power, and how power operated within what he called an institutional apparatus and technologies (techniques). Foucault saw knowledge as always inextricably enmeshed with relations of power. That is, power was always being applied to the regulation of conduct in practice. According to Foucault (1978), one of the major foundations of power is truth; the knowledge of that truth (that is, its invention and confirmation) becomes a major mechanism for the legitimation of the hegemonic forms of power within a given system (Escobar 1983). Discourse, hence, seeks its legitimacy in a carefully controlled truth (Escobar 1983). Foucault (1980) recognises that some people have more power to make particular ideas appear to be ‘truth’ and ‘natural’. In this sense, discourse is viewed as a form of violence in the way it imposes its linguistic order on the world: knowledge has to conform to its paradigms in order to be recognized as legitimate (Hall, 1997:72). For Foucault, discourse defines and produces the objects of our knowledge and thus governs the way that a topic can be meaningfully talked and reasoned about. In other words discourse is a way of representing reality/truth. This thesis settled for Foucault’s analysis as the researcher is confident that it enables people to understand language, discourses and practices.
that take place in a football context and produce certain ‘truths’. In this case it is important to understand how Zimbabwean football produces knowledge about Zimbabweans’ conceptualisations of power, identity and development issues. The Foucauldian discourse was found also relevant in the sense that it assists in the exploration of how these ‘truths’ and narratives negotiated through football discourse become ‘normal’/ ‘natural’ and acceptable to the greater society.

This thesis therefore stretches and expands the Foucauldian formulation arguing that football in Zimbabwe can be seen indeed as a way of representing reality. More importantly, football is seen as a way of producing ‘reality’/ ‘truth’ as well as a mode of producing contestations of that same ‘reality’/ ‘truth’.

Foucault (1973) states that discourse ‘rules in’ certain ways of talking about a topic, defining an acceptable and intelligible way to talk, write, or conduct oneself and by definition, it rules out, limits and restricts other ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it. In such a context, discourse has the power and privilege to determine the ‘sayable’ and ‘thinkable’ and ‘unsayable’ and ‘unthinkable’ (Hall, 1997:445). It is therefore imperative for the thesis to establish how football discourse also regulates the discussion of other discourses such as power, identities and development in the game of football in Zimbabwe on a scale of the sayable and unsayable.

The research therefore pursues the Foucauldian approach in analysing ‘the tactical polyvalence of discourse’ (see Foucault, 1978: 100). During ethnographic work for this thesis, the researcher observed and analysed discourses which emerged in the research settings and interviews attempting to draw a link on how football relates to power, identity and development discourses in Zimbabwe. The researcher, guided by the Foucauldian philosophy, interrogates multiple elements of discourses which manifested in the research settings. Particular attention was paid to what was said and equally what was not said in a given context and time. Cox (2011) argues that while making such as enquiry, it is important for the researcher to identify speakers and discursive positions from which they speak and the institutions to which they belong. The researcher followed the same pattern while also analysing how various discourses contested in
the framework of Zimbabwean football. This helped in giving clarity on how football is enmeshed in a wider network of power relations.

For instance it is critical to reflect on how the administration of the game connects to mainstream political power discourses. How do the boardroom/football administrators discuss development issues within the discourse/framework of football? Development has become one of the prominent but contested discourses associated with football although limited studies have seriously interrogated its implications in the game in Zimbabwe. The study uses football as the lens refracting and diffracting all these other discourses. Moreover it was necessary to establish how issues of development and social identities discussed at the terraces relate to ordinary people’s everyday lives.

It can further be argued that from Foucault’s (1973) view discourses, rather than individuals, give meaning to the world (Hall, 1997:45). Discourses are political and exclusionary in nature as they discriminate regarding who can participate in process of producing knowledge to the world. In this way football as a discourse is critically explored, examining its power (or lack thereof) to govern or set parameters on how power relations, identities and development issues are discussed in. In the context of Foucault’s observation that some people have power to make their ideas natural, the study hopes to give a detailed explanation of how football as a cultural institution has been and is being deployed by the Zimbabwean government to exercise ‘moral and intellectual leadership’ (Gramsci, 1971).

Foucault (1980) contends that discourse operates in four ways: discourse creates a world; discourse generates knowledge and truth; discourse says something about the people who speak it, and; discourse is implicated with power. Discourse creates a world when it shapes people’s perceptions of the world, pulling together chains of associations that produce a meaningful understanding and organising the way we behave towards objects in the world and towards the people (Whisnant, n.d. Foucault further argues that discourse generates the world of our everyday life, becoming vital in the social construction of reality. It was imperative for the study to understand from a Foucauldian perspective how the discourse of football shapes or fails to shape Zimbabweans’ understanding of power, identity and development issues in their everyday
lives. Pannenborg (2010) warns that football in Africa is not limited to scoring goals on the pitch but also extends to the scoring of economic and political goals too.

A crucial argument to pursue is that discourse says something about people who speak it (Foucault, 1980). It can be argued that discourse communicates knowledge not only about the intended meaning of the language but also about the person speaking the discourse. Thus by analysing the discourse a speaker uses, one can tell things about the speaker’s gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class position and even more specifically the speaker’s implied relationship with the other people around him. Sexuality, ethnicity and class are different categories of identity. Since the study also focuses on identity, it is crucial to explore how issues of ethnicity, class and sexuality as identity patterns converge and influence or are influenced by football in modern day Zimbabwe. Of particular interest for this study are football fans for teams such as Dynamos FC, Highlanders FC as well as the Warriors. It is critical that the study reveals what the fans’ discourses reveal about their conceptions of self, ethnicity, class position or even political beliefs within the discourse of football.

According to Foucault (1972), medical discourses allow doctors to have authority to speak, thereby placing them in positions of power over authority (Howarth, 2002). Though Foucault (1972) is particularly interested in looking at modes of discourse that not everyone has a right to use or that require specific locations to gain authority, this becomes a vital theoretical tool of analysing the game of football in Zimbabwe. The game of football can also be compared to medical practice. The boardroom has authority to appoint and dismiss coaches. The boardroom has the power to approve/ disapprove the coach’s intention to sign or ‘release’ a player from a contract. The power of discourse in placing some people in positions of authority can also be seen on a football pitch during a match. The referee has authority over the footballers and their coaches during the duration of the match. The referee can expel players or coaches for lack of ‘sportsmanship’ and his decision is respected as ‘final’. This is almost similar to the manner in which medical doctors diagnose illnesses and their views are rarely challenged on the assumption that they are experts. They are authorised by discourse to speak or take action in a specific context. This Foucauldian systematic analysis of football events can be used to explain the organisation or deployment of power at a national level in the Zimbabwean society.
Foucault has asserted that discourse is implicated with networks of power (Foucault, 1979). This is an assertion that fits this thesis’ proposition that researching sport and football in particular in Zimbabwe opens an avenue to broader national discourses as alluded to, for instance, by Fletcher (2012). It can be argued that in his discourse theory, Foucault (1980) allows for the existence of variety discourses and positions within discourses that are to be taken by the agent (Foucault, 1980; Hall, 1997), further highlighting that discourse competes with other discourses, while contesting ideas within the same discourse can also result in change. Foucault’s theory is a relevant, analytical tool for this study of football in Zimbabwe for the reasons given above. Football read as discourse is a site of convergence, hence allowing potentiality for various discourses to emerge. Football is predicated with multiple discourses which compete in it such as power, identity and development. It is also possible that within these three mentioned discourses, other sub discourses tend to emerge and contest within its framework.

Foucault argues that discourses are multiple (Foucault, 1980), hence the presence of dominant discourses does not signify the absence of competing discourses. Foucault even further acknowledges that these discourses are not only multiple but are also complex in the sense that they undergo transformation. Discourses can also be further subdivided by the rules that govern them (Foucault, 1979). This study, therefore, appeals to the Foucauldian insight on discourse to investigate and problematise the modes of operation of the discourse of football in Zimbabwe. The study aims at finding out how football is intertwined with these multiple and complex discourses such as power, identity and development in Zimbabwe. Besides the three organising concepts, another question pursued by the thesis is: which other multiple discourses emerge in the game of football in Zimbabwe? As Foucault (1973) observes that discourses undergo transformation the study has a keen interest to understand how discourses under study (that is, power, identity and development) have also undergone transition in the history of the Zimbabwean football linking to the broader social, political and economic environment.

It can be argued that while exploring this concept of discourse, Foucault is mainly concerned with the study of power in modern society and is particularly interested in those practices by which people govern themselves and others through the establishment of domains which authorise meaning and ‘truth’ through discourse (Foucault, 1980; Escobar, 1983; Hall, 1997;
Barker 2008). For Foucault, these practices lead to the development of modes of objectification that transform human beings into subjects, and to the production of disciplinary society for the sake of welfare (Escobar, 1983). Football however cannot be unanimously viewed as a platform which can be used to pacify the people. Football rather can be viewed as a site of ideological struggle, a site where discourses, counter-discourses and more counter-discourses contest.

According to Foucault (1972), there are “three types of power: institutional power, exercised through rules and regulations, economic power, as in the class system and subjective power, in which individuals struggles against discourses organised around the self” (Howarth, 2002). Foucault (1984) understands power as both repressive and simultaneously an energising force, with unpredictable effects (Manning, 2001). In the context of football, power from the boardroom can be repressive but power from the terraces can be mobilised to liberate society. Power operates to constitute dominant discourses, whereby some assumptions shape the acceptable public discourse and appear as ‘common sense’ (Howarth, 2002; Manning, 2009). This constitution of power then creates a basis for power to operate repressively, whereby it seems natural to accept certain behaviours as ‘normal’ and ‘moral’ while policing ‘deviant’ and ‘immoral’ behaviours (Foucault, 1979). In Gramscian terms such an attempt to naturalise things as God-given is referred to as hegemony. Gramsci (1971) observes that in capitalist dispensations, the dominant classes tend to naturalise their rule/dominance and exploitation of subalterns through various cultural institutions such as the mass media, religion and schools. So in relation to the study, does it mean political authorities in Zimbabwe deploy football as an instrument to ‘naturalise’ their hegemony? The current study looks at how football is deployed as an instrument to naturalise hegemony and in some cases to challenge the status quo.

Foucault challenges essentialist models of power which view power in ‘preventive terms’, arguing that it operates in a direct and brutally repressive fashion, dispensing with polite things like culture and knowledge (Hall, 1997). Foucault further challenges the idea that power is wielded by people or groups by way of ‘episodic’ or ‘sovereign’ acts of domination or coercion, seeing it instead as dispersed and pervasive’ (Foucault, 1998:63). Importantly, Foucault explores ‘unusual’ circuits, tactics, mechanisms and effects through which power circulates, which he
referred to this as ‘meticulous rituals’ or the ‘microphysics of power. These power relations ‘go right down to the depth of society’ (Foucault, 1977:27; Taylor, 2011).

Foucault (1980) further states that the thinking that power always radiates in a single direction, from top to bottom and from a specific source –the sovereign, the ruling class and so on is heavily flawed. Rather, Foucault argues that power is not simply exerted by one dominant group over a subordinate group, but through the discourses and forms of knowledge which bind the powerful and subordinate together (Manning, 2001). Thus for Foucault, power does not function in the form of a chain but circulates (Gaventa, 2003). It is never monopolised by one centre, but is deployed and exorcised through a net like organization (Foucault, 1980: 98). Power relations therefore permeate all levels of social existence and are therefore to be found operating at every site of social life in the private spheres of the family and sexuality as much as in the public spheres of politics and the economy and the law. Thus:

Power is not only negative, repressing what it seeks to control but it is also productive. It doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but …traverses and produces things; it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be thought as productive network which runs through the whole social body (Foucault, 1980:119).

For Foucault, power is neither intentional nor fully realised, it is rather “a multiple and mobile field of force relations, wherein far reaching, but never completely stable, effects of domination are produced” (Gaventa, 2003).

Foucault’s approach to power is that it transcends politics and sees power as an everyday, socialised and embodied phenomenon (Gaventa, 2003). This study critically treats football as a form of power which has potential to induce pleasure and resistance in the Zimbabwean society but at the same time producing knowledge and having the ability to be used to control society. The study positively views the ordinary people in Zimbabwe as ready sites of active negotiation with, and contestation of, power. Moreover, the exploration of the exercise of power is not limited in the realm of mainstream political power discourses. It also extends to social aspects such as religious and gender power discourses looking at how they manifest and contest within the discourse of football.
Foucault recognises that power is not just a negative, coercive or repressive thing that forces us to do things against our wishes, but can also be necessary, productive and positive force in a society (Gaventa, 2003). The current study, in this regard, examines the extent to which football as power becomes productive in various ways. This accords with Foucault’s observation that some discourses are there to justify and naturalise the dehumanisation of some groups in society (Foucault, 1978).

In his two-pronged approach to power, Foucault (1980) not only views discourse as an instrument of power but also acknowledges that discourse can be used to seize power.

Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it…We must make an allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can both be an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it… (Foucault, 1998:100-1)

Foucault is correct to be wary of the dangers of oppositional movements becoming new sources of domination. However, he seems reluctant to contemplate the elaboration of what Gramsci (1971) calls counter hegemonic projects which can contest relations of domination, and institute a more democratic and egalitarian form of political rule (Howarth, 2002). At the same time, Foucault’s work remains adequately flexible and reflexive for purposes of problematising complex issues in contemporary society.

Benefiting from these strands of Foucauldian insight, this study critically explores how football discourse has been used to sustain political hegemony in post-independence Zimbabwe. But, as Foucault observes, there is no guarantee that discourse protects power forever as it can actually provide an entry point for resistance or hindrance to power. It is crucial for the study to explore the extent to which football has developed and empowered subaltern groups to resist various networks of power in Zimbabwe. Foucault (1980) argues that discourse is the power yet to be seized. What remains unclear however is whether subaltern groups in Zimbabwe have utilised and are utilising football to resist dominance and freely articulate their views in this twenty first
century Agora. This centripetal-centrifugal convergence and divergence of discourses of power is what this study qualitatively explores.

It has been argued that in shifting attention away from the sovereign and ‘episodic exercise of power, traditionally centred in feudal states to coerce their subjects, Foucault points to a new kind of ‘disciplinary power’ (Escobar, 1983; Gaventa, 2003) that could be observed in the administrative systems and social services that were created in the 18th century in Europe such as prisons, schools and mental hospitals. Their systems of surveillance no longer required the force of violence as people learned to discipline themselves and behave in expected ways. Such individualising techniques (in military barracks, schools, factories, and hospitals) lead to the production of a disciplinary of ‘docile bodies’ which result in the production of ‘normalised subjects’ (Escobar, 1983). Power is also deployed via soft power discourse (Foucault, 1980). The thesis contends that football can be interpreted as one of those soft power discourses where elites attempt to control people albeit through subtle means whilst they are enjoying football matches. But these soft power discourses are also used to resist domination in ‘banal’ ways. It is in these soft power discourses that capillaries of power are located (Foucault, 1980). The thesis attempts to explain some of these capillaries of power in society as they manifest in the framework of football.

While looking at how power is exercised in different fields in the capitalist system, Foucault offers another interesting perspective to power in his work on governmentality (Manning, 2001). By ‘governmentality’ Foucault implies an ensemble of “institutions, procedures, analyses…reflections…calculations and tactics” (Foucault, 1979:20) through which particular regimes administer and govern. According to Foucault, governmentality brings with it particular ways of thinking about the issues and problems for public administration to address (Foucault, 1973; Manning, 2001). Manning (2001) further states that Foucault thought governments try to come up with ways of administering the people. It is necessary to explain whether or not and how Zimbabwe fits the description of governmentality.

What also makes Foucault’s conceptualisation of power relevant to the current study is his analysis of leisure and cultural activities. Foucault (1978) argues that leisure and cultural
activities are not ‘real of freedom and authenticity’ (Thompson, 1997). Foucault’s analysis above resonates with the Frankfurt School’s two leading scholars Theodor Adorno and Marx Horkheimer (1947) in their work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* who are sceptical of leisure in capitalist dispensations and argue that leisure is one of the instruments used to depoliticise the minds of oppressed groups\(^\text{[12]}\) so that they remain docile to the system (Kellner, 1995; Storey, 1999). The Frankfurt scholars thus, argue that leisure is one of the ways through which capitalism perpetuates itself (Strinati, 1995).

Foucault (1972) proposes that discourses and practices in modern society generate in us a sense of what constitutes a natural and healthy self, so in the end people become preoccupied in activities of dieting and trying to remain fit. To reduce it to its most simple, and arguably, as a result of this preoccupation people do not worry about revolting against the capitalist system. Sport thus becomes the opium of the people replacing its spiritual predecessor. It can be argued from this view that people have been blunted or their psyche has been imperialised by capitalism through the culture industries. This, according to Foucault, is one of the ways in which people are managed. Though Foucault is silent on sport or football to be specific, it is crucial for the study to engage a Foucauldian analysis in looking at how and to what extent football as leisure and recreation has been and is being used in Zimbabwe by power as a subtle mechanism of social control.

This study narrows its focus to football as discourse, critically exploring how it relates to discourses of power, identities, and development in Zimbabwe. From the point of power, the study is interested in the contestations between the rulers and ruled who resist or acquiesce to political domination via football. Hence discourse can be a site of both power and resistance, with scope to evade, subvert or contest strategies of power (Gaventa, 2003). Foucault (1980) argues that the concept about discourse is not about whether things exist but about where meaning comes from (Hall, 1997). Most importantly Foucault (1980) argues that meaning does not occur outside relations of power and discourse (Rouse, 1994). The thesis seeks to find out the meanings Zimbabweans construct in their every day consumption of the ‘beautiful’ game in Zimbabwe in relation to power, identity and development discourses.

\(^{12}\) working class and peasants
Critics of the philosopher Foucault, also point to the fact that though Foucault has a lot to say about power, his works appears to be scrupulously Eurocentric (Manning, 2001). It is argued that Foucault’s work is largely restricted to European societies. However while acknowledging his ignorance of societies other than his own he enthusiastically encourages people to undertake similar enquiries concerning other places and cultures (Escobar, 1983). Foucault is also criticised for going too deep into discourse, a practice which some fear has the effect of encouraging his followers to neglect the influence of the material, economic and structural factors in the operation of power and knowledge. It is interesting however, to note that his works retain enough reflexivity to be applied even in post-colonial set ups in explaining power dynamics. This is why this study appeals to the Foucauldian analysis of discourse, power, and knowledge to frame a discussion of football, power, identities and development in post-independence Zimbabwe. The Foucauldian approach is, where applicable, complemented by Neo-Gramscian as well as post-colonial African theorists like Achille Mbembe (2001) who explores the banality of power in so called ‘unofficial’ cultures.

**Neo-Gramscian perspectives on popular culture**

‘Popular Culture’ is a fluid and highly contested term whose definition tends to vary and to be self contradictory (Day, 1990; Storey, 2001). Storey (2001) attributes the lack of consensus on the definition of popular culture to the fact that the term ‘culture’ has equally been a subject of debate in scholarly circles over the years. For instance as early as 1916 Mathew Arnold provides an elitist definition of culture as what has been best thought and said (Strinati, 1995). The Frankfurt School also conceptualises culture in binaries-mass and high culture while Williams (1964) from the Birmingham School rejects such approaches, arguing that culture is the ‘ordinary’ (Newbold, et al, 2002). From this perspective, it can be argued that culture remains a complicated issue characterised by different ideological positions and contestations. The discourse of football is however treated as a strand of popular culture.

Williams (1964) states that the word ‘popular; means four things which are: “something well liked by many people, inferior kinds of work, work deliberately setting out to win favour with the people and culture actually made by the people themselves.” (Storey, 2001:124). Williams
further argues that the obvious starting point in any attempt to define popular culture is simply to say it is the culture widely favoured or well-liked by the people (Storey, 2001). This study is more suited to the definition of popular culture as being culture well-liked by many people because football is the world’s most popular sport, including in Zimbabwe. Thus, the study assumes that the cultural and social world of football constitutes popular culture. Popular culture is a culture of ‘the people, for the people’ and the same can be said about this football ‘religion’ in Zimbabwe.

From a Cultural Studies perspective, inspired by Gramsci’s Hegemony Theory, ‘popular culture’ is neither an ‘authentic’ working class culture nor culture imposed by the culture industries, but what Gramsci would call a ‘compromise equilibrium’ (Gramsci, 1971:211) between the two. This view acknowledges the mixing of forces from ‘below’ and from ‘above’, both ‘commercial’ and ‘authentic’ marked by both ‘resistance’ and ‘incorporation’ (Strinati, 1995). It is apt to argue from this Gramscian perspective that football is ‘compromise equilibrium’ since the origins of the game especially in Africa cannot be separated from the desire to control the people. The same situation has prevailed in post-colonial Africa and across the globe as partly demonstrated in the literature review chapter. Football in the process however, won the admiration of subaltern groups; forces from ‘above’ and ‘below’ hence merge and contest in this form of popular culture. Elites tend to view this form of popular culture as a possible platform for exercising hegemony. Ordinary people, on the other hand, view football as a site where they can challenge or mock power. The neo-Gramscian view is critical for the study in explaining the complex nature of the game of football in Zimbabwe as it gets intertwined with discourses of power, identity and development.

In his theory of hegemony, Gramsci (1971) offers an explanation why capitalism remains dominant throughout the world regardless of the proletariat revolution predicted by Karl Marx. From his analysis, Gramsci (1971) states that capitalism relies not just on brutal enforcement in order to gain and maintain control, but it makes use of the extensive use of ideology and propaganda through culture (Kortzarnov, 2012). It is critical therefore for the study to interrogate how football as culture is and has been used to gain control of the people in post-independence Zimbabwe. Gramsci is closer to this thesis’ conceptualisation. Gramsci argues that cultural domination paves way for political domination (Strinati, 1995). For instance, General Franco of
Spain used Real Madrid Football Club as a vehicle to spread right-wing propaganda, in Africa Kwame Nkrumah used the Black Stars of Ghana to spread Pan Africanism (Foer, 2004; Bloomfield, 2010; Pannenborg, 2010). In that context, the study examines the extent to which football as ‘culture’ has been and is being used as an instrument to pave way for political domination in Zimbabwe.

Neo-Gramscian theorists such as Hall (1988), view the relationship between politics and popular culture mainly in ideological terms (Grossberg, 1992). Grossberg, further submits that it is not always the case that the connection between hegemonic politics and popular culture is constructed through consensual or ideological means. However, it also includes efforts to ‘organise’ people’s everyday life through popular formations such as football (Grossberg, 1992). This thesis’ analysis is theoretically framed by a neo Gramscian approach to hegemony and popular culture in examining mechanisms of power operating in popular formations, particularly football. Given the limited research and literature on football in Zimbabwe, these issues are investigated in the context of this Zimbabwean football ethnography.

It can further be argued that popular culture is a critical component of people’s lives and identities in societies throughout the world (Grossberg, 1997; Dolby, 2006). It is in the realm of popular culture where negotiation of race, gender, nation and other identities and the play of power take place (Dolby, 2006). Hall notes that:

> Popular culture is one of the sites where the struggle for and against a culture of the powerful engaged, it is also a stake to be won or lost in that struggle. It is the arena for consent and resistance. It is partly where hegemony arises, and where it is secured (Hall, 1981:329)

In light of the above, the thesis explores power struggles and ideological contestations (where they exist) in the discourse of football in Zimbabwe.

Hermes (2005) argues that popular culture can be viewed as a public sphere from a Habermasian perspective, where citizens can engage in an open rational public debate. From a Gramscian approach, popular culture and sport in particular is not a simple case of an imposed mass culture
that the masses mindlessly consume (Fletcher, 2012). According to Storey (1999), the introduction of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony into the field of cultural studies in the early 1970s brought about a rethinking of the politics of popular culture. It is argued that popular culture was now seen as a site for the production and reproduction of hegemony (Hall, 1978). Popular culture is hence understood as a field of struggle and negotiation between the interests of dominant groups and interests of subordinate groups: between imposition of dominant interests and the resistance of subordinate interests (Storey, 1999:149). Such a perspective on popular culture is relevant to the study in the context of the assumption that people are not passive but are active in their consumption of football as popular culture. Football fans do not consume the football culture mindlessly and passively but, rather, use it in their lives in innovative ways to express their minds (Hall, 1973; McCarthy, 1988; Willis, 1990; Dolby, 2006). Sport is therefore studied as more than just a mere leisure activity but a space in which everyday identities are negotiated and contested, especially one that opens up a wider avenue of enquiry into everyday life (Fletcher, 2012). By ‘everyday’ this refers to ‘a description of the distribution of practices across social spaces in such a way as to define the differential access that social groups have to specific forms of enactment’ (Grossberg, 1997: 11). This explains why this study tied up the bottom up and the top down approach in exploring discourses of power, identity and development in the game of football in Zimbabwe.

From a Gramscian approach, hegemony is a consequence of class conflict. However, it continually favours one side of the struggle at the expense of the other: the dominant group at the expense of the subordinate groups (Strinati, 1995:154). Gramsci (1970) argues that the concept of hegemony seems to describe a series of football games in which both sides play and only one side can win. Football matches can however end in draws and the same can be said in the political realm. For instance in 2008 in Zimbabwe ZANU PF and the MDC political party formations ended up signing the Global Political Agreement (GPA) to form a government of national unity since the contested elections of 29 June 2008 had resulted in a stalemate. The same scenario had prevailed in Kenya in 2007 when Mwai Kibaki and Raila Odinga were also forced to reach a compromise and form a government of national unity following an election stalemate. So hegemony in this sense is about power struggles as the dominant class seeks to gain legitimacy while subaltern groups will be eager to subvert the status quo.
Storey (2001) contends that a neo-Gramscian hegemony theory sees popular culture as a site of struggle between ‘resistance’ of subordinate groups in society and the forces of ‘incorporation’ operating in the interests of dominant groups in society. He further argues that looking at popular culture from a neo-Gramscian perspective tends to see it as a terrain of ideological struggle between dominant and subordinate classes (Storey, 2001). This neo-Gramscian approach is crucial for the study in examining how discourses of power, identity and development negotiate and contest in the terrain of the world’s most popular game – football. Moreover Storey (2001) says hegemony theory can be used to explain conflicts involving ethnicity, race, gender, generation and sexuality among others, since these usually engage in form of cultural struggle against the homogenising forces of incorporation of the official or dominant culture. Such an angle becomes more relevant in explaining contesting forces of identity in the game of football in Zimbabwe. Though Gramsci (1971) mentions culture as critical in hegemonic projects, he, just like Foucault (1978) becomes less helpful when it comes to developing a deeper understanding of the specific politics of the game of football. This is where Louis Althusser’s theory of ideology and ideological state apparatus becomes relevant. In this theory, Althusser (1971) explicitly states that sport is one of the cultural ideological apparatus used to control society. To some extent, Althusser fails to develop this concept further in specific terms drawing on the subject of popular sports such as football.

The thesis also appeals to post colonial theorists on popular culture in Africa such as Achille Mbembe and Wendy Willems. Mbembe (2001) like Foucault and Gramsci, states that there is no single pocket of power but rather that power is everywhere in society. Mbembe (2001) argues that power is banal. He argues that the banality of power does not simply refer to the way bureaucratic formalities or arbitrary rules have been multiplied (Mbembe 2001). Mbembe examines those elements of the obscene and the grotesque that Bakhtin (1986) claims to have located in ‘non official’ cultures but that, in fact, are intrinsic to all systems of domination and to the means by which those systems are confined or deconstructed. Mbembe (2001) argues that the obscene is a necessary element of resistance to the dominant culture. He cites the Cameroon and Togo examples where the obscene and grotesque were used to deconstruct particular regimes of violence. Under the one party state, citizens developed ways of separating words from their conventional meanings and using them in other senses. Under cover of official slogans people
sang about the ‘sudden erection’ of the ‘enormous’ and ‘rigid’ presidential phallus (Mbembe, 2001:108). Mbembe further warns that this humour must not only be taken as a form of crude and primitive culture but rather it demonstrates power contestations in societies. In 2012 people were reportedly arrested in Manicaland Province of Zimbabwe following their corruption of Mbare Chimurenga choir’s song “Nyatsoteerera unzwe kutonga” which has, as part of its lyrics, the following lines, “Nyatsoteerera unzwe kutonga. Mu office muna Bob” (Listen carefully in the (presidential) Office there is Bob (Mugabe)). The people had changed the second sentence in the sequence to ‘Mu office mune gudo’ implying (there is a baboon in the office). This is the Mbembe typical style of mocking power. The study intends to explore the possibility of the occurrence of such a phenomenon where people under the cover of football discourse use various ways to challenge state power and resist domination.

Focusing on Zimbabwe, Willems (2005) explores everyday forms of resistance in the context of the economic and political crisis that hit Zimbabwe soon after 2000. She states that in the context of the Zimbabwean crisis, in which Zimbabweans had limited access to information beyond the control of the government and in which their attempts to criticise government in public speech were criminalised, popular humour and rumour became the platforms for expressing alternative views. Willems (2005) further notes that Zimbabweans shared jokes in beer halls, commuter omnibuses, hair salons and even via the Short Messaging Service (SMS) which mocked the ZANU PF regime.

For instance, after 2000 the Zimbabwean government official definition of a hero made mention of not only those who perished during the liberation struggle (Ranger, 2004; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009) and others who survived but was extended to include those who had participated in the internationally publicised fast track land reform programme13 (Ranger, 2004). Willems (2005) however, argues that popular humour frequently challenged official definition of the ‘national’ hero. Willems (2010) is in agreement with Mbembe (2001) that popular everyday life activities may challenge the dominant discourse or even seize it. Popular culture is one of the sites where the struggle for and against a culture of the powerful is engaged, where consent and resistance

13 Third Chimurenga
can be secured (Hall, 1981:239; Storey, 2001). Such arguments are relevant as this study treats football discourse as popular culture.

**Conclusion**

This chapter makes an attempt to illustrate how the Foucauldian discourse can be deployed to discuss how football weaves with power, identity and development discourses in Zimbabwe. The Neo Gramscian approach to hegemony is also utilised to complement the Foucauldian discourse. This chapter however, argues that neither Gramsci nor Foucault explicitly make specific reference to football in their works on popular culture. Foucault is mainly interested in how the so called ‘innocent’ institutions like hospitals and prisons are used as means of social control in the capitalist system. The present study, on the other hand, critically explores how the discourses of power, identity and development are (re)negotiated in modern-day Zimbabwe especially so within the realm of football discourse.

Given that theorists like Foucault, Gramsci and Hall are writing within European contexts, some of their ideas might not be entirely applicable when it comes to explaining cultural phenomena in African societies, while others may need to be repurposed. Mbembe (2001) and Willems (2005, 2010), on the other hand, take a Gramscian-Foucauldian perspective on power in societies which acknowledges that the ruled or ordinary people have the potential to resist domination. Both of their accounts of popular culture however, are silent on the subject of football but centre on everyday life practice such as jokes and humour as forms of popular culture. This thesis however, benefits from these works in understanding how soccer intersects the web of power, identities and development discourses in modern day Zimbabwe. The next chapter titled ‘The Boardroom’ presents the first set of the findings of the study.
Chapter 4: The Boardroom

This chapter presents and discusses the ‘politics’ of football administration in modern Zimbabwe. The chapter is titled ‘The Boardroom’ because it presents the views and experiences solicited from people involved in planning, forecasting, coordinating, commanding and controlling football administration in Zimbabwe. Data presented in this chapter was largely gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews with purposively selected informants as explained in detail in the methodology section (Chapter One). Fieldwork observations by the researcher also constitute part of the findings of this football ethnography in Zimbabwe. Findings are presented in various themes which the researcher finds relevant.

ZIFA and the ‘politics’ of football administration in Zimbabwe

The management and structuring of Zimbabwean football is similar to England\(^{14}\) and other African countries such as South Africa. There are two main bodies responsible for football administration in Zimbabwe namely the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) which is an affiliate of both the Confederation of African Football (CAF) and the Federation de International Football Association (FIFA) and the Premier Soccer league (PSL) which is an affiliate of ZIFA.

ZIFA is the national football governing body. It has the mandate to ‘develop’ Zimbabwean football. The history of ZIFA dates back to May 1963 when two racially segregated associations running football in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) joined hands to form a non-racial and all embracing football body (Gwesela\(^{15}\), 2013). The management structure of ZIFA is spelt in the ZIFA constitution. The ZIFA Assembly is the supreme and legislative body of the Association. This can also be regarded as the parliament of ZIFA and it is constituted by representatives from ZIFA affiliates such as the women football league, PSL clubs, provincial chairpersons, Beach

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\(^{14}\) This can be attributed to the fact that Zimbabwe is a former British colony. England is also credited for developing and modernizing soccer around 1878 (Chipande, 2009; Alegi, 2010; Cottle, 2011) such that the structuring of their Football Association (FA) is followed by most footballing nations across the globe.

\(^{15}\) Xolisani Gwesela is the ZIFA Director of Communications
Soccer among others. The ZIFA Assembly constitutes the Electoral College\textsuperscript{16} which then votes for the ZIFA Board which is the executive body and is accountable to the Assembly\textsuperscript{17}. Before the amendment of the ZIFA constitution in November 2013 to conform to FIFA and CAF requirements, the ZIFA board used to be constituted by 13 members, seven of whom were elected by the Assembly and six from the leagues they represent. However following the mentioned amendment, the ZIFA board is now composed of eight members who include president, vice president, board member development, board member finance, board member competitions and chairpersons of the PSL and Women’s League.

The ZIFA board is headed by a president. The ZIFA constitution stipulates that for one to contest for the ZIFA board presidency, he/she is supposed to have a minimum of 5 Ordinary level subjects, five years into football administration and no criminal record (Gwesela, 2014). The tenure of office for ZIFA board members is a maximum of two continuous terms of four years\textsuperscript{18}. Cuthbert Dube is the current ZIFA board president. There is also a ZIFA secretariat headed by a Chief Executive Officer. The ZIFA CEO is a full time employee appointed by the board. Jonathan Mashingaidze is the current ZIFA Chief Executive Officer.

Being the national football governing body, ZIFA is in charge of all national football teams (for both men and women). The association is also responsible for all organised football in the country from the Area Zones, the lower divisions right up to the Premier Soccer League. For administrative purposes, these leagues are demarcated into four regions namely: ZIFA Central Region\textsuperscript{19}, ZIFA Eastern Region\textsuperscript{20}, ZIFA Northern Region\textsuperscript{21} and ZIFA Southern Region\textsuperscript{22}. ZIFA

\textsuperscript{16} Currently, the Electoral College is constituted by 58 members drawn from ZIFA affiliates. Of these, 16 come from Premier Soccer League teams, 16 from four football regions (Northern, Southern, Eastern and Central), 10 from provincial chairpersons, four from Area zones, one from Beach soccer, one Futsal soccer, two from National Association of Primary School heads (Naph), two from National Association of Secondary School heads (Nash), two from Tertiary, four from Women football league

\textsuperscript{17} Article 21 of the ZIFA constitution
\textsuperscript{18} Article 35 of the ZIFA constitution
\textsuperscript{19} Matabeleland North and Midlands provinces
\textsuperscript{20} Manicaland, Masvingo and Mashonaland East provinces
\textsuperscript{21} Harare, Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland West provinces
\textsuperscript{22} Bulawayo and Matabeleland South provinces
also supervises Beach soccer, Futsal or Five-a-side soccer as well as amateur football leagues in the country. ZIFA is also in charge of the training, deployment and welfare of Zimbabwean referees.

ZIFA’s ability to ‘develop’ football is often questioned by Zimbabweans due to perennial problems chief among them insolvency. From 2010-2014 during the first tenure of the Cuthbert Dube led ZIFA board, Cuthbert Dube reportedly used US$1 million from his coffers to keep the association afloat (Sharuko, 2013). Due to financial challenges ZIFA has often struggled to finance football competitions for the national football teams. In August 2012 ZIFA failed to raise US$35 000 to fund the under-20 Zimbabwe national team (Young Warriors) to Angola because Cuthbert Dube who usually personally funded national teams was said to be out of the country (Hwata, 2012).

ZIFA and the national football teams it manages particularly the Warriors, have little corporate support when compared to PSL clubs particularly Dynamos and Highlanders despite being the flagship of Zimbabwean football. Few organizations want to sponsor ZIFA or the national football team. There are times when government intervenes as they should naturally do to rescue ZIFA and the Warriors. For instance recently government donated US$88 000 to ZIFA to finance the Warriors’ participation at the CHAN tournament in February 2014 in South Africa (Gwesela, 2014). Interviewed respondents to the study attributed ZIFA’s lack of sound corporate sponsorship and support to stakeholders’ lack of confidence in ZIFA leadership elected over the years.

The current Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) leadership have a hostile relationship with both the state controlled and privately owned press in Zimbabwe. Cuthbert Dube the ZIFA president admitted in a ZIFA magazine that his association consistently receives negative media publicity from some journalists whom he described as “unscrupulous and prophets of doom” (Dube, 2014:2). The Zimbabwean media particularly The Herald Zimbabwe’s highest circulating

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23 Area and district zones
24 ZIFA’s debts is currently estimated to be around US$5 million (Kausiyo, 2014)
25 This however later courted controversy after media reports that Cuthbert Dube who was also the Chief Executive Officer of a parastatals organization PSMAS was earning over US$6.4 million (Chipunza, 2014).
26 http://www.herald.co.zw/more-trouble-for-zifa/
daily state controlled newspaper (ZAMPS, 2013) blame ZIFA for ‘underdeveloping’ football in Zimbabwe. *The Herald* often accuses ZIFA of maladministration, corruption and lack of transparency in football governance. The press attributes perennial continental and global under achievements\(^{27}\) of the national football teams to ZIFA’s management deficiencies. More detailed discussions of these issues shall follow in respective sections.

**The Premier Soccer league (PSL)**

The Premier Soccer League is the other key administrative body in the management structure of Zimbabwean football. The PSL is responsible for the management of the professional game. Its main objectives are to promote, organize, control and administer professional football in Zimbabwe. It also has the mandate to create conditions that allow for the development of professional football in Zimbabwe. Thus the PSL is the management body board responsible for the elite professional football league in Zimbabwe.

The history of the PSL dates back to 1962 in the then Southern Rhodesia, which was then a racially organized league known as the Southern Rhodesia National Football League (Mabika, 2013). At Independence in 1980, the Super League was formed and it was governed by the Zimbabwe Football Association. The modern Premier Soccer League however, was formed in 1993 (Sharuko, 2013). Chris Sibanda, Morrison Sifelani, Wieslaw Graboski and Victor Zvobgo are some of the football administrators who advocated for a breakaway PSL executive to be ‘independent’ from the day to day control of ZIFA (Sharuko, 2013). The birth of an autonomous PSL marked a paradigm shift in the development of Zimbabwean football in various aspects.

In essence, football evolved with the changing global times from just being ‘recreation’ or leisure to become both an industry and a profession. For most footballers in Zimbabwe’s Premier Soccer League, the game is now their source for earning a living. This is contrary to what

\(^{27}\) The Warriors for instance, have only managed to qualify for the Africa Cup of Nations twice, in 2004 and 2006 under coaches Sunday Chidzambwa and Charles Mhlauri respectively in Zimbabwe’s 34 year post independence history. The team has never qualified for the World Cup tournament.
happened from 1980 and early 1990s in the then Super League ran by the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA). Footballers were employed somewhere and would only play soccer on a part time basis. Currently, there are more than 560 registered PSL players in Zimbabwe. Every PSL team is allowed to register 35 players per season of which five should be reserved for players under the age of 20, as a way of encouraging the development of talent (Gwesela, 2014).

The management structure of the Premier Soccer League from 1993-2009, used to be constituted by a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary general, treasurer and fixtures secretary. These would be voted into office after every four years. The PSL constitution allowed any Zimbabwean citizen to contest for posts on the PSL board. However, things changed in November 2009 following the Harare declaration – a FIFA sponsored seminar that resolved to change the PSL constitution (Kausiyo, 2013). It was resolved that for one to sit on the PSL board of governors or management committee; he/she was supposed to come from a Premier Soccer League club. That change in the constitution affected people who were in the PSL administration structure like Tapiwa Matangaidze (chairperson), Godfrey Japajapa (PSL fixtures secretary, Oliver Manyawo (treasurer) and Willard Manyengavana (vice treasurer) as none of them were affiliated to PSL teams. This meant that they no longer had a place in the PSL board of governors (Kausiyo, 2013).

The PSL secretariat is headed by a Chief Executive Officer who is a full time employee. There is also a president who at times is referred to as chairman. The president is voted for after every four years and is only allowed to be in office for a maximum of two terms. Every Premier Soccer League club has a voting right. Only club presidents/ chairpersons are allowed to vote on behalf of their teams (Gwesela, 2014). Twine Phiri, the CAPS United Football Club owner is the current PSL president since 2010. Phiri was re-elected for a second term in March 2014 defeating Kenny Mubayiwa Chairperson of Dynamos Football Club executive committee. Kenny Ndebele, a former Highlanders Football Club chairman, is the current PSL Chief Executive Officer responsible for the day to day business of the league.

Sixteen teams play in Zimbabwe’s current top tier men’s football league (the PSL). These premiership clubs are currently distributed in most parts of Zimbabwe as follows: Harare28, Dynamos FC, CAPS United FC, Harare City FC

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28 Dynamos FC, CAPS United FC, Harare City FC
Bulawayo²⁹, Zvishavane³⁰, Kadoma³¹, Mutare³², Chiredzi³³, Kariba³⁴, Gweru³⁵, and Hwange³⁶. Four clubs that would have finished at the bottom of the PSL log standings are relegated at the end of the season and replaced by those that would have won league championships in the respective four ZIFA first divisions from the Central, Eastern Northern and Southern regions.

Kenny Ndebele, the Chief Executive Officer of the PSL, was quoted in The Herald newspaper welcoming the spread of teams across Zimbabwe as a positive step towards the development of football in Zimbabwe. “Football has been spread right across the country from predominantly big urban centres, to sugar plantations, to mines, military barracks and now power stations” (Chingoma, 2014:15). Over the years PSL teams have been concentrated in the major cities-Harare and Bulawayo.

The birth of the modern Premier Soccer League in 1993 also marked the commercialisation of Zimbabwean football, which has become a global trend. The commercialization of the ‘beautiful’ game was evidenced by a number of corporate organisations who signed sponsorship contracts with the PSL. Some of these companies include BP, National Foods, Tanganda among others. These organizations saw this as an opportunity to market their brands and products through football although they claim their involvement in football is aimed at merely promoting football ‘development’ in Zimbabwe.

Delta Beverages, a subsidiary of the South African breweries company, is one of these companies which have a long relationship with Zimbabwean football dating back to the early 1980s. The company is the current principal sponsor of the PSL under their Castle Lager and Chibuku brands. In 2011, Delta signed a three year sponsorship deal worth US$ 1, 8 million spread across three years which implies the sponsorship deal stretched up to 2013 (Chikamhi, 2014). However, in March 2014 the company renewed their sponsorship deal worth US$1,2 million. However, only US$700 000 is meant for the league championship as the other US$500

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²⁹ Highlanders FC, Chicken Inn FC, Howmine FC, Bantu Rovers FC
³⁰ Shabanie mine FC, FC Platinum
³¹ Black Rhinos FC
³² Buffaloes FC
³³ Triangle FC, Hippo ValleyFC
³⁴ ZPC Kariba FC
³⁵ Chapungu FC
³⁶ Hwange FC
000 is meant for the Chibuku Super Cup knockout competition (Chingoma, 2014:15). Delta is also responsible for sponsoring individual accolades such as the Soccer Star of the year, Coach of the year and Referee of the year. There are also other sponsors in Zimbabwe such as Mbada Diamonds, who sponsor the ‘richest’ knockout tournament in Zimbabwe. The Mbada Diamonds Cup is worth US$ 1 million. The winners of the cup pocket US$75 000 while the winners of the Castle larger PSL take US$70 000 (Kausiyo, 2013). Complex issues are however, notable in football sponsorship. Delta Beverages football sponsorship in Zimbabwe, is not as competitive when compared to other leagues in Africa. The same company signed a three year sponsorship deal with Spanish football club Barcelona in 2013. Through their Castle Larger brand, Castle is the official beer brand for activities Barcelona might work on in Africa. Despite Barcelona being rated as one of the most developed and richest football club on the globe, Castle Larger would have been expected to pour more resources on the less developed rather than channeling more resources on the already developed. Football sponsorship has become a way of capital accumulation for the rich while the poor remain poor.

In essence, football sponsorship has also become another way where African resources continue to be channeled to Europe whilst Africans are deprived from development opportunities likely to come from their resources. With particular reference to Castle Larger sponsorship on Barcelona, Moses Chunga one of Zimbabwe’s greatest footballers to emerge in the post independence period remarked, “Castle are doing a great job by sponsoring the league, but I think instead of partnering the likes of Barcelona it’s better they help the local teams. Messi does not even drink Castle Lager but he is benefiting from the beer we are drinking here at our own expense. We are not asking for both hands, we just need one little finger and with that one we can survive,” (Rusenga, 2014). The story of the underdevelopment of Africa can therefore be approached and viewed through football lens. Zimbabwean football teams are struggling to develop and compete at a global scale yet meaningful sponsorship is taken to Europe, while paltry sponsorship is made on the domestic league. The researcher found a paradox in the notion of developing the already ‘developed’. Our questions as researchers then become: If development develops the already developed, is it development? If development is taking money from the poor to give to the rich, is it development? If development is about the rich getting richer, what is being developed?

http://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2013/07/30/castle-lager-partners-barcelona
http://www.herald.co.zw/still-no-joy-for-chunga/
Freire (1973) has argued that development should be seen improving the lives of the suffering. This research hopes to influence the rethinking of ‘development discourses’ associated with football sponsorship.

Football sponsorship in Zimbabwe is also relatively lower when compared to the neighbouring South African Premier Soccer League. Robson Sharuko (2013) claims that Zimbabwe’s PSL has not yet grown into a money-spinning project that its founding members wanted in 1993 when they opted for a break away from ZIFA. It is imperative to note that 21 years have elapsed since the establishment of the modern PSL but it is yet to develop to the levels of the South African Premier Soccer League which was established later (Sharuko, 2013). In South Africa ABSA the principal sponsors of the PSL signed a five year deal worth R500 million in 2007\(^{39}\). There are also other corporate organizations like Multi Choice, Supersport International, Nedbank and MTN which inject a lot of funding in the South African premiership. Sharuko (2013) also states that the PSL’s failure to ‘develop’ or grow is also testified by the fact that a number of clubs have collapsed, suffocating from financial stress\(^{40}\).

Due to ‘low’ or virtually an unavailability of vibrant football sponsorship, the Zimbabwean Premier Soccer League struggles to retain its best footballers as they continuously migrate to better remunerating leagues particularly the South African Premier Soccer League. Nyakwenda (2014:14) states that currently there are 22 Zimbabwean players playing in the South African Premier Soccer League while there is also a significant number\(^{41}\) playing in the South African lower leagues. Other Zimbabwean footballers are in Botswana, Swaziland, Vietnam and Europe. In the 1990s, the Zimbabwean PSL used to attract foreign talent from countries such as Malawi, Zambia and Ghana. However, the post 2000 period, which has been described as the decade of

\(^{39}\) http://mg.co.za/article/2007-09-26-absa-becomes-main-sponsor-of-psl

\(^{40}\) The original 16 members of the domestic Premiership which was known as the National Premier Soccer League at its inception were Highlanders, CAPS United, Dynamos, Ziscosteel, ShuShine, Tanganda, Black Aces, Chapungu, Eiffel Flats, Zimbabwe Saints, Darryn T, Mhangura, Fire Batteries, Black Rhinos, Hwange and Black Mambas. Only six from the 16 are still playing in the current PSL – Highlanders, Dynamos, CAPS United, Black Rhinos, Hwange and Black Mambas. Only three, from that original cast of 16, have not been relegated from the Premiership — Highlanders, Dynamos and CAPS United. Tanganda, have collapsed and Fire Batteries, Mhangura, Darryn T, ShuShine, Eiffel Flats and Black Aces have also met the same fate (Sharuko, 2013).

\(^{41}\) The researcher could not ascertain the exact number of Zimbabwean players in foreign leagues as ZIFA has no up to date records on the subject.
crisis (Hammar and Raftopolous, 2003; Ndlovu-Gatshe ni, 2009) negatively affected football development in Zimbabwe. Corporate organisations struggled in a hyperinflationary environment, football sponsorship declined. In 2006 the PSL was unbranded until CBZ came on board in 2007 and sponsored the league until 2009. However, in 2010, the league had no principal sponsor again until Delta Beverages signed a sponsorship agreement with the PSL board in 2011 (Kausiyo, 2014).

Individually owned football clubs perennially face viability problems due to financial challenges in Zimbabwe. For instance CAPS United owned by businessman Twine Phiri (PSL) has attracted significant media coverage in recent years for failure to remunerate players on time. Of the three relegated PSL clubs in 2013 season two, were individually owned clubs- Monomotapa FC and Motor Action FC. Company owned teams; particularly Howmine\(^42\) and FC Platinum are financially stable compared to individually owned clubs. FC Platinum which is owned by Mimosa Mining Company has a reputation of being the highest paying football team in Zimbabwe. On average FC Platinum footballers pocket US$1200. Dynamos and Highlanders, Zimbabwe’s biggest football clubs respectively are said to be paying their players around US$800. However, Mashingaidze stated that there are other ‘small’ PSL teams which pay as low as US$50 per month. Such salaries are far below the poverty datum line, which currently stands at US$500 in Zimbabwe.

Clemens Dube\(^43\) a PSL administrator attributed the poor remuneration to the fact that even some ‘gamblers’ now dream of making huge fortunes out of football:

...... you find that owners of other teams are very broke and do not even own a house yet they want to own a football team and automatically the welfare of the team is really at risk...such people will be hoping that one day they will get rich through selling players and sponsorship a team might get...(Dube, 2013).

\(^{42}\) The mining community has consistently supported football development in Zimbabwe,dating back to the colonial period (Stapleton, 2001). The decade of the 1980s and 1990s mining companies provided PSL teams such as Hwange, Rio Tinto, Zisco Steel, Mhangura and Lancashire Steel playing in the PSL. To date Hwange Football club, Howmine, Shabanie Mine and FC platinum are all mining company owned teams playing in the PSL.

\(^{43}\) This is pseudo name
Community owned football clubs Dynamos and Highlanders appear to attract financial sponsorship compared to other teams. Due to their popularity, ad-hoc football sponsorship often coming in as rescue packages in Zimbabwe is largely skewed towards these two football teams. Dynamos and Highlanders have become successful brands with which corporations have sought to associate themselves. Currently Banc ABC, a banking institution is the principal sponsor of these two football clubs. In 2014 Banc ABC signed a deal worth US$ 700 000 per year with Highlanders and Dynamos separately (Zililo, 2014). Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC players’ salaries and welfare are catered for by Banc ABC. In return BancABC has the right to the front space of Dynamos and Highlanders players’ jerseys. Whenever these clubs are playing, their playing kit will be branded with the Banc ABC logo on the front space. Banc ABC shares this front space with Adidas a renowned global sporting equipment supplier which also signed a sponsorship deal with Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC in 2013. The company is currently the official supplier of playing kits for these two clubs. Another corporate organization Nyaradzo Funeral Services also signed a sponsorship deal with Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC in 2013. Under the sponsorship deal, Nyaradzo provides buses which ferry Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC supporters to matches. Though Nyaradzo later on expanded their facility to other teams like CAPS United and Black Mambas the researcher noted that the dominance and huge supporter base Dynamos and Highlanders enjoy in Zimbabwe is a key factor which assist them in attracting corporate partners. Success and strong financial support appear to have a close relationship. Dynamos have won the league championship in Zimbabwe since 2011-2014 a fact which can partly be attributed to the stability that the financial support from BancABC brought.

The little football sponsorship that is available in Zimbabwe is just concentrated mainly on knock-out tournaments with very few making a direct injection of capital into the clubs unless they are company owned. In that sense, football development discourse becomes just rhetoric and a myth. Even the government and politicians often want to associate themselves with these popular clubs and ride on their huge support bases. In March 2014 when Dynamos FC failed to raise funds to travel to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for a Champions league match, the government intervened. It has been rare for government ministers or politicians to financially assist ‘small’ clubs or even the national teams during times of need. As a result, most

44 http://www.chronicle.co.zw/bancabc-pours-700000-into-bosso/
Zimbabwean PSL teams survive on revenue from gate takings. The cheapest ticket to watch a PSL match is currently pegged at US$3. However, these PSL teams do not have the same capacity to attract huge crowds. Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC are the league’s ‘cash cows’ due to their ability to attract huge crowds. Consequently ‘smaller’ teams normally hike gate charges to US$5 (cheapest ticket) when hosting either of these football teams.

In light of the earlier mentioned examples of individually owned clubs such as Motor Action FC and Monomotapa FC which were relegated as a result of lack of funding, such a phenomenon could be partly read from a development lens where corporate capitalism devours small businesses and entrepreneurs, leaving only space for football clubs linked to corporations (albeit corporations that use the club to pay off other debts hence throwing the club into debt for example the Glazers at Man United) or billionaires. In other words, it is the survival of the fittest. In Spain only the big two (Real Madrid and Barcelona) enjoy a lion's share of TV rights, and the 'small' clubs suffer. In England, it only takes a rich ‘sugar daddy’ to raise a club from mid table mediocrity to Champions (Chelsea, Man City). Pannenborg (2012) has argued that money matters in administering football. Poor clubs that do well are referred to as “fairy tales”, meaning that they are the exception to the norm.

This corporate funding availed to men’s soccer is however not extended to women’s football. Daimon (2010) correctly described this phenomenon as ‘apartheid’ in football sponsorship. The Women’s League was established in 2012 in Zimbabwe but as of now, it has become defunct due to lack of sponsorship. The state owned diamond Mining Company Marange were the principal sponsors of the Women League in 2012 but withdrew their sponsorship in 2013. Corporate organizations have not been forthcoming to sponsor the women’s game. Even the women’s national football team, the Mighty Warriors also suffers from lack of sponsorship. On 7 March 2014 there were media reports and images of the Mighty Warriors eating small portions of sadza,45 boiled green vegetables,46 matemba47 while in camp prior to their match against

45 Zimbabwe’s staple food
46 muboora
47 kapenta fish
Bostwana due to financial constraints (Sharuko, 2014) Football is undoubtedly a masculine sport in Zimbabwe as elsewhere on the globe even though FIFA president Sepp Blatter insists that “the future of football is feminine”. Zimbabwe despite having a vibrant media system which covers sporting activities particularly football so passionately, women football is given less attention compared to men’s soccer. Grace Chingoma a female Senior Sports Reporter at The Herald also confirmed this discourse during an interview.

The media are a central boardroom player in the professional sporting world. The development and commercialization of successful international leagues such as the English Premiership was supported by television companies (Darby, 2007; Alegi, 2010) which injected capital in the game by buying television/broadcast rights. This resulted in the increase of salaries paid to footballers. In Zimbabwe, PSL clubs are yet to realize or receive significant capital from television companies which can dramatically transform the status of the league such that it can compete with neighbouring South African PSL.

In Zimbabwe, since independence, radio occupied a central role in mediating football reality to the people. The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation’s (ZBC) Radio Zimbabwe (formerly Radio 2) live soccer commentary in particular commanded a huge following in the country. Though ZBC television (ZTV) also televised matches, it was radio which people followed most. Moreover in Zimbabwe, broadcasting has been dominated by the state. Since independence only two private radio stations (Zi FM and Star FM) (licensed in 2011) have been licensed. No private or commercial television station has been licensed due to the restrictive Broadcasting Services Act of 2001 (MISA, 2010). The unavailability of commercial television in Zimbabwe has therefore deprived PSL clubs of potential revenue from media rights which could ‘develop’ football in the country.

The state owned and controlled broadcaster-ZBC has failed to pay for the rights to broadcast PSL matches in Zimbabwe. Resultantly, in 2009 the PSL board barred ZBC from televising/broadcasting PSL matches. The PSL board claims that the screening of matches on television result in low attendances of football supporters at stadia thus affecting the financial fortunes of

48 http://www.herald.co.zw/zifa-chief-under-fire-as-mighty-warriors-stand-off-over-bonuses-drags-on/
teams which largely survive on gate takings. The PSL therefore requires ZBC to purchase the broadcasting rights so that PSL clubs can subsidise their operational costs. ZBC on the other hand is facing financial challenges and has often pleaded with PSL teams to look for advertisers who then place advertisements during screening of matches. The trend around the world however, is that the TV station looks for advertisers and part of the payment for airtime or advertising space is then pocketed by the clubs.

Despite the lack of agreement between the PSL and ZBC, the PSL signed a six-year (valid until 2017) broadcast rights contract with SuperSport International (Pvt) Ltd in 2012. This agreement has resulted in Zimbabwe Premier Soccer league matches being televised live on SuperSport pay-per-view television channels throughout sub-Saharan Africa and beyond (Sharuko, 2012). Upon the signing of the sponsorship contract, Supersport paid US$400 000, to the Premier Soccer League board although the sponsorship deal is said to be worth US$1 million. This development resulted in Zimbabwe joining other African countries in the region such as South Africa, Angola, Ghana, Kenya and Uganda who are currently receiving the same facilities under Supersport International. It is hoped that when it becomes fully operational the Supersport deal would result in each of the 16 PSL clubs pocketing substantial amounts of around US$200 000 each.

Another crucial development in the administration of professional football in Zimbabwe’s Premier Soccer League has been the establishment of the Footballers Union of Zimbabwe (FUZ) to represent the ‘labour rights’ of the footballers. The union was established by former footballers Paul Gundani and Desmond Maringwa in 2008. The union is an affiliate to the International Federation of Professional Footballer which allows the union to get international support and global trends in soccer trade unionism. Just like any other workers’ unions, the Footballers Union of Zimbabwe is also registered with the Ministry of Labour, which therefore mean soccer is now being recognised by the laws of the land as a profession.

Gundani the secretary general of the union stated:

49 http://www.herald.co.zw/psl-supersport-seal-six-year-deal/
50 Paul Gundani played for Zisco steel and the Warriors in the 1990s while Desmond Maringwa played for Dynamos from 1998-2013
…we formed the union to stand up for the rights of the players because we believe without improving the remuneration of our players there is no way we are going to improve our local game. The union will also come up with resolutions to protect the interests of the players who are key to the development of the game. .. we have to come up with a standard contract and a collective bargaining agreement which will be composed of 50 percent player representative and 50 percent employer representative and this group is supposed to be mandated with coming up with minimum remunerations for players which we think is a positive development for the development of the game. We are currently engaging ZIFA that the collective bargaining body or National employment council for footballers be established in Zimbabwe (sic)…Gundani, 2013).

The establishment of FUZ to represent players’ interests is a milestone towards the development of the game of football specifically recognising the rights of players. There are a number of cases in which footballers’ contracts have been terminated either for raising concerns over poor remuneration or going on industrial action for unpaid salaries. David Kutyauripo51 is a victim of such circumstances. Kutyauripo was fired at Dynamos and joined CAPS United in 2006 after being accused of leading a revolt among the players. A few seasons later he would be released from his contract at CAPS United for the same reasons. Those who voice their concerns like Kutyauripo are viewed as ‘rebellious’ and ‘deviant’.

Players often find themselves in contractual dilemmas after signing contacts which compromise them to move in the event they get offers from other clubs. At the moment Zimbabwe has 33 registered player agents, which is the highest number in the region (Nyangwenda, 2014). Zimbabwe just like other sub Sahara African countries is affected by the HIV and Aids pandemic so FUZ is also educating players about how to conduct themselves when affected and infected by the disease. Besides educating players about contractual issues in the local Zimbabwean league, FUZ is also mandated to educate Zimbabwean players playing abroad since Zimbabwe is currently one of the countries exporting its football labour to other countries especially South Africa. Having set the context of football administration in Zimbabwe the following section explores football administration at selected PSL football clubs – Dynamos and Highlanders in particular often regarded as Zimbabwe’s most successful football teams.

51 Kutyauripo currently plays for Harare City FC. He is also a former Dynamos, CAPS United, Njube Sundowns and Warriors player and once played professional football with APOP Kinyras in Cyprus
Dynamos FC: a failed commercial venture?

The management approaches or models of Zimbabwean football clubs is yet to embrace the professional levels found in European or other successful leagues around the world. Consequently, good governance deficiencies and lack of transparency are some of the common problems affecting Zimbabwe’s PSL clubs. This section discusses management approaches and problems using Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC as case studies. Both clubs are said to be community owned.

Kenny Ndebele the PSL Chief Executive Officer stated that most Zimbabwean football clubs’ administration structures are structured in ways not compatible with the global football administration trends. It is argued that good corporate governance is difficult to attain as a result of the ways in which the game is administered in Zimbabwe (Kausiyo, 2013). The PSL Chief Executive Officer, Ndebele, cited Highlanders and Dynamos in particular as specific cases which need to change the way they conduct their management and take a business approach so that they can become profitable (Kausiyo, 2013). In this discussion, attention is given to Dynamos first while Highlanders is looked at later.

Dynamos FC were formed in 1963. Just like the story of the origins of football, there are various controversies surrounding the formation of Dynamos. Chiweshe (2011) states that a group of black players from two football clubs in the then Salisbury (now Harare), Salisbury City and Salisbury United which collapsed in 1962, grouped together at Tobacco Sales Floor in the industrial site near Harare Township and formed a football team. One of the players Necasio Murambiwa, having heard of Dynamo Kiev Football Club in Russia, suggested the name Dynamos (Chiweshe, 2011). One of the Dynamos founding ‘fathers’, Freddy Mkwesha dismissed Chiweshe’s claim that Nercasio Murambiwa suggested the name Dynamos. “…No,
the name Dynamos was suggested by a fellow we called ‘Garrincha’ who said to us there is this team called Dynamo Kiev in Russia. So why can’t we name our team Dynamos\(^{54}\) (sic)...” (Mkwesha, 2013).

Despite this contestation over who originated the name Dynamos, the ‘Russian\(^{55}\) influence’ on the naming of the club is uncontested. The naming could have to do with the club’s role in the politics of resistance (Stuart, 1995) in Southern Rhodesia. Former Dynamos footballer George Shaya\(^{56}\) stated that in Southern Rhodesia, Dynamos were viewed as ‘team of the people’ and ‘pride of African soccer’ specifically in Salisbury (Harare). Shaya further claimed that the club provided ‘ordinary’ people a chance to challenge White supremacy at the height of racial segregation.

The supporters took Dynamos as the liberation struggle movement. You could sense the tension in the terraces, especially when we played against Callies, a team which was dominated by whites... it was a political fight. To the fans Callies, a European team resembled the Rhodesian Front while Dynamos an African team represented ZANU (Shaya, 2013).

Matches that involved Dynamos became a representation of Southern Rhodesia’s socio-political and economic conflicts. Freddy Mkwesha also claimed that Dynamos was against White minority rule such that when the team played White-dominated teams, the motivation was to beat them. Mkwesha remembers:

…Dynamos were a team for the people... Dynamos had so many supporters because we were against the whites (sic). The motivation was to beat the whites in the game, because they thought they were better than us at soccer. We wanted to show them also (sic) that as Africans we were also good (Mkwesha, 2013).

\(^{54}\) Today Dynamos football club is also popularly known as ‘DeMbare’. Charles Mabika one of Zimbabwe’s talented radio and television football commentators, came up with the name in 1991.

\(^{55}\) Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU) military wing (ZIPRA) received military training in Russia (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger, 2000).

\(^{56}\) George Shaya joined Dynamos in 1964, a year after its formation. Shaya is regarded as the most successful player to emerge in Southern Rhodesia, having been crowned Soccer Star of the Year five times during his playing days. In 2007 he was the chairman of Dynamos football club.
African clubs such as Dynamos FC, Highlanders FC, Mashonaland United FC (Zimbabwe Saints) and Black Aces FC became effective alternative platforms to evade the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA). LOMA was meant to counter nationalist movements during colonial days. The law prohibited Africans to be in groups of six or seven (Saunders, 1999). Football provided a platform to bypass the law as people would go and enjoy the game whilst discussing politics. Some interviewees claimed that ZANU PF politicians used Dynamos Football Club as a platform to spread political ideologies during colonial rule. It is said Dynamos FC became ‘closely’ associated with ZANU PF nationalist discourses. Freddy Mkwesha however dismisses the ‘marriage’ between Dynamos and ZANU PF which some stated dates back to 1963 when the two institutions were formed. “…that again is wrong because it was Dynamos which was formed first before ZANU PF. It is a baseless notion. We did not have any political affiliation with ZANU PF (sic)” (Mkwesha, 2013).

Today Dynamos FC is popularly known as ‘De-Mbare’. Charles Mabika one of Zimbabwe’s renowned radio and television football commentators claimed to have come up with the name.

… It was in the 1990s when I was making a football commentary for radio one when Caps United were playing a team from Madagascar known as Dynamo Defima. I asked their team manager..Dynamo Defima what does it mean and he said Denamo is French Dynamic and Defima is ‘from Fima’ because this team came from a city called Fima… So I just had to say Dynamos formed from the suburb of Mbare to say Dynamos of Mbare so during one commentary I just came up with Dynamo Dembare just to compare them (Mabika, 2013).

Dynamos FC is the most successful football team in Zimbabwe. The Harare based team has won 21 league titles and several knockout tournaments (Sharuko, 2014) The club has produced well known footballers in post independence Zimbabwe such as Moses Chunga, David Mandigora, Clayton Munemo, Biggie Zuze, Memory Mucherahohwa, Tauya Murehwa, Vitalis Takawira, Evans Gwekwerere, Denver Mukamba, Tawanda Mparati among others. At a continental level, Dynamos reached the finals of the African Champions league in 1998. In 2008 at the height of the Zimbabwean crisis, Dynamos defied odds reached the semi-finals of the same tournament.
Due to their achievements, Dynamos are regarded as the ‘Glamour Boys’ of Zimbabwean soccer by the Zimbabwean media.

Despite Dynamos’ success, the management approach at the club has been quite problematic. Dynamos FC, though often referred as a community football club, is registered as Dynamos Football Club Private (Ltd). This implies that the team is not a ‘community’ property but a private company registered at the Registrar of Companies as non profit making organisation. Dynamos FC are poorly administered with a three-way parallel structure led by the board of directors literally involved in the running of the Harare giants (Kausiyo, 2013). Dynamos’ board of governors is composed of the founding members of the club and those who joined and played for the team by 1964. Bernard Marriot is the current Chairman of the Board of Directors and is deputised by Shaky Chitimbe. Owen Chandamale is the Director of Finance while Chris Kasiyazi is the secretary of the board. Other board members include Charles Gwatidzo, Norman Maziti, Lazarus Magwenzi, Simon Sachiti, Noel Musariyarwa, Freddy Mkwesha and Robson Rundaba.

Dynamos’ board of governors also constitute the clubs’ Electoral College which elects/appoints the club’s executive committee that runs the club. This executive committee however, runs the club on a part time basis as it is constituted by business people who spend much of their time attending to their businesses. They only meet when ‘necessary’ and take decisions. The current club executive is led by Kenny Mubayiwa, a Harare businessman. Mubayiwa is deputised by George Mandigora, a former Dynamos footballer and coach. The executive however, has no power over the running of the club as it only rubber stamps decisions made by the board. Ndebele however, stated that in accordance with the international standards and ZIFA constitution, boards should only be there for policy formulation and direction but football clubs should have full time secretariat running the clubs on a daily basis. In the new ZIFA constitution there are no more specific portfolios for board members like marketing or finance that should be done by full time staff at the secretariat. ‘FIFA have also recommended a structure for clubs which we would want our teams to follow where the daily administration is done by a full-time

58 George Shaya joined Dynamos in 1964 and thus qualifies to sit in the board of governors.
59 http://www.herald.co.zw/new-board-chairman-for-dembare/
general manager and his office staff instead of the club owner trying to do everything” (Ndebele, 2013).

However, Dynamos FC is said to have failed to unlock the potential value associated with their popular brand. Despite the executive committee being led by successful business people such as Mubayiwa, they are yet to replicate/transfer the successes of their businesses to Dynamos Football Club. The Dynamos brand has failed to go commercial so as to become profitable. Kasiyazi, the secretary of the Dynamos board conceded in February 2014 that they need to find strategies to turn Dynamos into a serious business model and generate revenue. Kasiyazi stated “…We also want to partner with strategic business organisations out there for purposes of fully utilising the Dynamos brand. In the past the thinking has been that all we do is just to play football and relying on gate takings and sponsorship,”. Resultantly, Dynamos football is frequently plagued by financial challenges.

Mismanagement of funds was also noted as a hindrance towards the growth and development of Dynamos FC. For instance in March 2014 Webster Marchera, the Dynamos treasurer, was arrested for allegedly looting $29 000 from the club at the expense of the players’ welfare. The period just after 2000 was one of the worst for Dynamos as it experienced serious financial problems, a factor which can be attributed to the suffocating Zimbabwean economy at that moment (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Due to these financial challenges Dynamos reportedly could not afford to employ a driver for their 30 seater bus. It is claimed that to ease their financial problems, Dynamos’ unlicensed goalkeeper Tendai Tanyanyiwa would drive the team to matches. Tanyanyiwa recalls:

At one time I was Dynamos goalkeeper and the driver. I remember three times where the team could have been involved in an accident and the worst was I didn't have a licence to drive. Admitting that I had no licence is not the only bad thing about it. The bus didn't have the key so paishandiswa tutambo kurimutsa (a piece of wire was needed

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60 http://www.herald.co.zw/end-of-an-era/

61 http://www.herald.co.zw/new-board-chairman-for-dembare/

62 https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/03/05/dynamos-boss-held-29-000/
to start the engine) which will lead to steering wheel lock coz there was no key. One
day raka locker pamberi pegonyeti ndipo pandakaona kuti varume vanotozhambawo
kwaaaaa (one day the bus became stationary in front of a haulage truck and Dynamos
players cried fearing death) (Tanyanyiwa, 201463)

Dynamos FC’s failed ‘development’ is also partly attributed to perennial power squabbles
involving board members. Informants to the study claimed that most of the Dynamos founding
members usually want executive members who bribe them. However, interviewed Dynamos
founding members particularly Mkwesha and Shaya refuted such claims. The current Dynamos
executive led by Kenny Mubayiwa is said to have come into office in 2010 because of the
support of Benard Mariot one of the founding fathers. It was claimed by some respondents that
Kenny Mubayiwa bought Benard Mariot a Mercedes Benz as a token of ‘appreciation’ for
assisting him to take charge of the Dynamos leadership. Both Mubayiwa and Marriot however,
could not be interviewed to get their response on these accusations.

Some interviewees who preferred anonymity highlighted that similar to what happens in the
world of mainstream politics, there is a culture of staging ‘coup’ against leadership at Dynamos
FC at any given moment. The Morrison Sifelani and Jokonia Nhekairo nasty power fight in 1990
remains a prolific one in the history of Dynamos FC. Nhekairo was the Chairperson of the
Dynamos FC executive in 1990 where he worked alongside Simeon Jamanda, Shaw Mutemanjiri
and Dominic Kambeu. Morgan Femai, a former chairperson of the Dynamos FC supporters
union stated that as club supporters they were not happy with Nhekairo’s leadership. Thus some
members of the supporters approached Morrison Sifelani (late) one of the Dynamos founding
fathers then based in Gweru to come and take over the club’s leadership from Nhekairo.
However, the arrival of Sifelani could not deter Nhekairo who remained adamant that he was the
legitimate Dynamos FC chairperson. Interviewees further stated that this lead to a split of
Dynamos FC as Nhekairo lead another faction-Dynamos United which went on to be coached by
David George with players such as Francis Shonhayi, Vitalis Takawira and Chamu Musanhu.
The other faction remained Dynamos FC under the chairmanship of Sifelani, with Sunday

63 https://www.facebook.com/va.shagare
Chidzamwa being the team coach (Sasa, 2014). It is argued that following these problems Canaan Banana former president of Zimbabwe, intervened to resolve the crisis. Banana convened a meeting at City Sports Centre to solve the Dynamos FC problem (Gwaze, 2014). However most of the people who came were sympathetic to Sifelani, a factor which influenced Nhekairo to snub the meeting. It was claimed that Banana went on to declare Sifelani the ‘legitimate’ Dynamos FC chairperson. At that moment, supporters mobilised ‘themselves’ and burnt Nhekairo’s shop at Matapi Koffman Magaba, Mbare-Harare before proceeding to Nhekairo’s residential home in Malbereign where they burnt his house (Sasa, 2014). Unfortunately, both Sifelani and Nhekairo are now late so the researcher could not ascertain their accounts on this matter. However, from what was gathered from other interviewees, it is plausible to argue that football is more than just a game.

Power struggles continue to fold at Dynamos FC even though they might not match the Sifelani/Nhekairo case. “Currently Ignatius Pamire is heading a shadow executive preparing to take over from the Kenny Mubayiwa led executive. Pamire is being backed by Simon Sachiti, one of the founding ‘fathers’ at Dynamos” (Shumba64, 2014). It was also claimed that some of the executive members even go to the extent of paying some players money to fix matches. It is said that this is done in order to create confusion so that another executive then takes over since there is no transparent transfer of power at the club. The juju discourse also surfaces in the management of the club. In October 2013, after Dynamos had gone for three matches without a win, the researcher witnessed some fans manhandling Simon Sachiti at Rufaro Stadium accusing him of ‘cursing’ the team by using juju so that his ‘shadow’ executive led by Ignatius Pamire could take over the leadership of the club. This testifies that supporters can constrain or enhance the functioning of the boardroom even though they do not have voting powers.

The organization and management system at Dynamos football club does not give the supporters considerable influence contrary to the claim that it is a community team where the governing power rests in the club supporters. Dynamos is one of the most followed football club in Zimbabwe. The team however, has no actual statistics of their followers.

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64 Pseudo name for a former Dynamos executive member from 2000-2002
In 2013 Webster Chikengezha, Dynamos’ Secretary General facilitated the registration of Dynamos Chapters. The Dynamos membership card costs US$2 while subscription fees cost US$1. Dynamos supporters however, do not participate in the assembly of governors, which is only limited to the founding members. However, during periods of financial challenges, Dynamos appeals to their supporters for donations. For instance in 2014 the club appealed to the supporters for financial supporters to fund their participation in the African Champions League.

Due to the club’s popularity, politicians also want to associate with Dynamos in an attempt to gain political mileage. Their current patron is Webster Shamhu, the ZANU PF Political Commissar. Their executive chairman Kenny Mubayiwa is also a ZANU PF politician. There are also a number of other ZANU PF politicians who have administered the club over the years. Pannenborg (2012) has argued that politicians want to associate with community owned football clubs since this bring symbolic capital. He further asserts that community-based clubs generate much more media attention than other club types. While Pannenborg (2012) was making reference to the Ghananian situation, a similar trend is obtainable in Zimbabwe. Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC receive significant media coverage compared to any other football teams in the country. Moreover, politicians want to associate with community owned football clubs such as Dynamos because of the club’s huge supporter base as it assists them in gaining social and political capital.

**Highlanders FC an icon of hope?**

Highlanders FC were founded in 1926 as Lion Club in Bulawayo by Albert and Rhodes, the grandchildren of King Lobengula (the last king of the Ndebele people). The team was renamed Matabele65 Highlanders in 1937 and later Highlanders (Giulianotti, 2004; Ranger, 2010; Zenenga, 2011).

Highlanders FC was formed at a time when the Ndebele kingdom had been destroyed following the Anglo-Ndebele war of 1893 (Beach, 1984; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2010) which officially marked

65 The name had tribal connotation and it implied the team was a ‘Ndebele only’ institution. Ndumiso Gumede told the researcher that Joshua Nkomo renamed the club Highlanders in 1975 to de-tribalise the team and give it a national flavour
the end of the rule of King Lobengula. It might be plausible to argue that since ‘Ndebele pride’ and hegemony had been subverted by European encroachment, Highlanders as a team anchored in Ndebele ‘royalty’ and culture, provided people in Bulawayo and Matabeleland provinces a platform to express and preserve their ethnic cultural identity (Ncube, 2014).

The team just like their rivals Dynamos, also has a complex history entrenched in nationalism and politics of resistance. Interviewed Highlanders FC administrators and footballers stated that during the nationalist struggles in Southern Rhodesia, the team became a critical political rallying point for political parties like ZAPU. Joshua Nkomo the founding president of ZAPU and politicians like Benjamin Burombo are singled as some of the nationalists who utilised the team to spread nationalist political ideologies. Ndumiso Gumede stated:

Highlanders is more than a football club but an institution of resistance... Nkomo was linked to this team because he knew how powerful football was as an avenue for controlling people or changing situations having been a social welfare officer himself and this worked during the struggle for the liberation of this country (Gumede, 2013).

It is also argued that workers in Bulawayo also used Highlanders FC as a platform to organise industrial action and protests against exploitative working conditions that were obtainable in Southern Rhodesia. Highlanders ‘complex’ relationship with ZAPU also continued after independence. This ‘relationship’ was however interpreted as a counter hegemonic synergy working to subvert ZANU PF’s rule.

Highlanders FC are the second most successful football club in Zimbabwe. They have managed to win seven league titles and numerous knockout trophies since their formation. The team has produced prominent footballers in modern day Zimbabwe. Names like the Ndlovu brothers Peter, Madinda, and Adam, Rahman Gumbo, Zenzo Moyo, Thulani Ncube, Mecedes ‘Rambo’ Sibanda, Gift Lunga among others were produced by the club.

Highlanders FC brand is yet to be commercially exploited to the maximum just like the Dynamos FC brand. However, power struggles commonly found at Dynamos are limited when it comes to Highlanders Football Club. Ndumiso Gumede the club’s Chief Executive Officer

Ndumiso Gumede joined Highlanders football club in 1975, he has also served as its chairman.

Bulawayo has a documented history of labour protests specifically around 1945 and 1948 (Ranger 2010).
expressed that Highlanders FC has a well defined electoral system that allows for the smooth transfer of power. Unlike at Dynamos where founding members are mainly in control, at Highlanders FC is becoming professional. On 1 June 2014 the club appointed Ndumiso Gumede their CEO, conforming to FIFA and CAF requirements that clubs should be run by a full time secretariat. Unlike at Dynamos where the board of governors run the club, Highlanders’ board of governors only play an advisory role to the executive committee running the club.

However, despite being more ‘organised’ compared to their rivals Dynamos, Highlanders FC also face perennial financial challenges. The club also regularly exports players to South Africa and other parts of the world but it appears returns from exporting labour have not assisted the club financially. Some of my interviewees highlighted that the club has not been benefiting from exporting players as a result of the nature of contracts players sign for the club. In most cases players leave as free agents while the club would have spent years developing them. In the end it is the player and player agent who benefit from player movements to the foreign leagues.

Financial hardships were also blamed on the lack of a transparent and visionary leadership that can aggressively turn the club into a profitable venture. For instance it was stated that just like Dynamos FC, the club has not been benefiting from selling club merchandise or replica jerseys. A number of individuals and companies manufacture and sell Highlanders merchandise at stadia and other convenient points. The club however, has not exploited the popularity of their brand and in the process is losing millions of potential revenue. Besides the corporate sponsorship received from Banc ABC, revenue from gate takings, Highlanders FC has no other sources of funding. Having discussed the management models of Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC, the study now looks at boardroom politics particularly at ZIFA, looking at how regionalism and ethnic differences manifests in the administration of the so called beautiful game.
The unwritten code: Northern/Southern power sharing deal?

It became apparent to the writer during field research that football administration in modern day Zimbabwe is plagued by regional and ethnic factional power struggles. These conflicts often manifest themselves in mainstream football administration bodies such as the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) and the Premier Soccer League (PSL).

As indicated earlier, Zimbabwe’s football regions are divided into Northern, Southern, Central and Eastern region. The researcher observed that the Northern and Eastern regions are predominantly occupied by Shona speaking groups who also constitute a significant percentage of the Zimbabwean population. The Southern and Central regions are however, dominantly occupied by Ndebele speaking people, who constitute the second largest ethnic group in Zimbabwe. There is a significant body of literature in Zimbabwe highlighting ethnic conflicts prevailing between Zimbabwe’s dominant ethnic groups-Shona and Ndebele (Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009, 2010; Mhlanga, 2013). This ethnic rivalry is also reflected in football administration.

The Northern and Southern regions are the chief protagonists in this regional-ethnic power play. Zimbabwe’s two principal cities Harare and Bulawayo are the critical sites of this regional and ethnic rivalry. Harare, Zimbabwe’s capital, is located in the Northern part of the country dominated by the Shona speaking people who also constitute the majority of Zimbabwe’s population that lives in Zimbabwe’s capital city-Harare (Zenenga, 2011). Bulawayo, Zimbabwe’s second largest city, geographically lies in the Southern part of Zimbabwe where the dominant ethnic group are the Ndebele speaking people who also constitute the second biggest group after the Shona in Zimbabwe (Zenenga, 2011). Not surprisingly, Zimbabwe’s most supported and successful football clubs Dynamos and Highlanders are also drawn into this web of factional regional politics with Dynamos representing the Northern region while Highlanders represent the Southern region. These regional factional power struggles often manifest ‘Shona’/‘Ndebele’ binaries. Given that the Northern part of Zimbabwe is predominantly occupied by Shona
speaking people while the Southern part is largely occupied by Ndebele speaking people, there is an essentialist impression in Zimbabwe that originating from the Northern region implies one is ‘Shona’ while hailing from the Southern part signifies being ‘Ndebele’.

From 1980 at independence, regional connotations characterised the composition of the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) board. Joyce Teurairopa Mujuru then Minister of Youth Sports and Culture appointed an interim Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) committee, to administer football in the newly born Zimbabwean nation, taking over from the John Madzima led leadership which had been administering football during the colonial period. The committee took on board members from the Northern region that included Moroni Mushambadope, Peter Nemapare, Moosa Ismael, and Clifford Chiripamberi. From the Southern region there were two representatives Douglas Mkwananzi and Ndumiso Gumede. Mushambadope from the Northern region was the President of the association while Mkwananzi from the Southern region was the Vice President. Nemapare was the Secretary General with Ismael being Fixtures Secretary. However, regional and ethnic conflicts always affected the smooth functioning of this ZIFA board. Gumede Zimbabwe Football Association board Vice President who served under the Mujuru appointed board highlighted during an interview with the researcher that regionalism and ethnic conflicts reached a boiling point in 1983 and he was ‘excluded’ from the board on tribal grounds prior to a ZIFA election. He claims that some mainstream political authorities explicitly said ‘Ndebeles’ had become too many in the ZIFA board:

I was victimised on tribal grounds in 1983 before an election at a meeting at Oasis Hotel. The selectors were coerced to get rid of one Ndebele, there were two Ndebeles at ZIFA then, myself and a guy called Douglas Mkwanazi…it was said at a meeting that there were too many Ndebeles and one was supposed to go and I had to be sacrificed and Gibson Homela was put in my place and became the committee member responsible for the Southern region (Gumede, 2013).

Despite maintaining that some of the people who pushed for his dismissal at ZIFA for being ‘Ndebele’ in 1983 are serving in the current ZANU PF cabinet, Gumede could not be drawn into

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68 Zimbabwe’s vice president from 2004-2014
69 Gumede has a long history in football administration dating back from 1978 and first decade after independence. He also served as ZIFA vice president and chairman of the Referees committee 2010-March 2014
revealing their names. The tribal and regional divisions affecting ZIFA in the first decade of independence cascaded into the 1990s and well into the new millennium. This position was confirmed by Charles Nhema
chena, the current director of the Sports and Recreation Commission (SRC). Recalling his days as a ZIFA board member in 2000, Nhema
chena said “…I was in for only nine months and quit because ZIFA was a much divided house... it was a tug of war with Rafiq Khan pulling in one direction and the late former referee based in Bulawayo pulling in the other direction...ZIFA was really divided (sic)” (Nhema
chena, 2013). Nhema
chena however, could not be drawn into revealing the name of this former late referee. All indications are that the Harare – Bulawayo question remains alive in the mainstream football administration structures in Zimbabwe.

Tellingly, the current Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) Chief Executive Officer Jonathan Mashingaidze confirmed in an interview that Zimbabwe football landscape is torn apart by regional and tribal divisions. Mashingaidze alleges that such regional overtones in the game prevented players from Dynamos and Highlanders from crossing the Shangani70 River:

In the past people would say you cannot cross the Shangani but now you say no no no shut up I will cross Shangani as long as I want to earn a living... It is a sad scourge that haunts our football and if you attend some of our matches your heart really bleeds because you then find out that some idiotic things like tribalism …people singing derogatory songs and all sorts of unprintable insults bringing in issues of Ndebele/ Shona... (Mashingaidze, 2013).

Mashingaidze expressed that this trend, though worrying, is in decline. Regional and ethnic divisions manifesting in Zimbabwean football reflect the ‘ugly’ side of the game. When Pele dubbed football the world’s most ‘beautiful’ game, he might have been wilfully blind to such issues. Problematically, the researcher noted that Ndumiso Gumede, who claims to be a victim of

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70 Shangani river is found in Zimbabwe. It starts near Gweru and goes through Midlands and Matabeleland North provinces. It is 281 kilometres away from Harare, the capital city of Zimbabwe and 92 kilometres away from Bulawayo, Zimbabwe’s second largest city. If one is travelling along the Bulawayo to Harare Highway, Shangani River demarcates the boundary between Matabeleland North and Midlands provinces.
tribal and regional fights in the 1980s, at times also – wittingly or unwittingly – demonstrates the same elements. In an interview Ishemunyoro Chingwe\textsuperscript{71} noted:

I remember on 22 December during the burial of former Zimbabwe international striker Adam Ndlovu in Bulawayo ZIFA vice president Ndumiso Gumede, in an attempt to explain how much a unifier Adam was, said “even our fellows from across the Shangani who usually see no good in us, have also come to show their respect to one of our own” – (Chingwere, 2013).

Gumede’s utterances not only implied that Adam Ndlovu belonged to the South but also that the Southern part of the country is often despised by those from the North. At Ndlovu’s burial, tribal contestations were reportedly fierce and explicit. Chingwere recalls, “Some well known Dynamos fans sang Shona songs in honour of Adam. However, the hosts\textsuperscript{72} countered with a Ndebele song ‘Nanku umhlolo uAdam alisoShona’ (here is a taboo before us, Adam is not a Shona” (Chingwere, 2013). However, while the Highlanders family attempted to exclude other ethnic groups claiming that the late footballer Ndlovu was Ndebele, the researcher established that Adam Ndlovu is in fact of Tonga ethnic origin and hails from Binga – in the Matabeleland North province of Zimbabwe.

Though not captured in the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) constitution, it appears there is an unspoken understanding stipulating that if the president of ZIFA is from the North, the vice has to be from the South and vice versa. This trend became evident from the onset in 1980 when Moroni Mushambadope (North) was the president while Douglas Mkwananzi (South) was the vice president. In 1987, the Nelson Chirwa led ZIFA board was caught up in power wrangles which prompted the then President of Zimbabwe, Canaan Banana, to intervene to restore sanity. Nelson Chirwa (from the North) became the president of ZIFA while Gumede (South) became the vice president. It remains an intriguing question whether this was by coincidence or design. Similarities can also be drawn here with Zimbabwe’s mainstream politics. The same year 1987, saw the two nationalist parties ZANU PF and PF ZAPU signing a Unity Accord to form ZANU PF in a set up where Robert Mugabe became President while Joshua Nkomo (ZAPU president) became Vice President after close to five years of fighting (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger,

\textsuperscript{71} Ishemunyoro Chingwere is a sports reporter for The Sunday Mail, the highest circulating state controlled weekly newspaper in Zimbabwe which is based in Harare.

\textsuperscript{72} Highlanders fans
From that period, it has become policy that ZANU PF provides the President and first Vice President while ZAPU provides the second Vice President. It is also important to highlight that since 1980, no body from the Southern region has ever ascended to the ZIFA presidency. This might be a reflection of national politics where the ‘Southerners’ can only become ‘vice-presidents’. However, whereas there have been many ZIFA presidents since independence, the same cannot be said in the national politics realm where only one person (Robert Mugabe) has been at the helm since independence.

The vision to maintain a balance of power at ZIFA was further reflected at ZIFA after the departure of Nelson Chirwa. Gumede revealed that Joseph Ruseke (from the North) took over the ZIFA presidency while he (Gumede) remained the vice president. The study established that even during the tenure of Leo Mugabe (1993-2003) as ZIFA president his vice president was Vincent Pamire (from the South). The same could also be said about the period when Wellington Nyatanga (from the North) became president (2006-2010), Tendai Madzorera (from the South) was his vice president. The researcher found the situation complex in the sense that despite Madzorera and Pamire ethnically being ‘Shona’ the fact that they are based in Bulawayo resulted in them being accepted as ‘legitimate’ representatives of the Southern during their respective tenures as ZIFA vice presidents.

The Cuthbert Dube led ZIFA board (2010-March 2014) also reflected the ‘complex’ power sharing matrix between the North and South. ZIFA president Cuthbert Dube is from the North while Ndumiso Gumede, the first vice president, is from the South with Kenny Marange the second vice president coming from the Eastern region. In the secretariat, the man who usually acts in ZIFA Chief Executive Officer Jonathan Mashingaidze’s absence, Brian Moyo, is from the South. Moreover, the March 2014 elections saw Cuthbert Dube retaining the presidency of the association while Omega Sibanda from the South became the vice president.

In an interview, the current Zimbabwe Football Association Chief Executive Officer, Mashingaidze, dismissed the existence of an unwritten code guiding this phenomenon.

… The ZIFA president is from the capital city for convenience sake and the vice president to balance the geo politics is from outside Harare …why should we have all seven board members from Harare? So at times we tend to debunk this bambazonke philosophy that nothing happens outside Harare, the whole idea will also be to empower and decentralise positions of influence but there is nothing regional or tribal as such but
the idea is that if the president comes from the north why can’t we look around from the south so that it doesn’t look like ZIFA is *Mashona*, or *Mazezuru*, or its the Mufakose or Dynamos cartel (Mashingaidze, 2013).

This need to manage geo-politics through decentralising administrative power mentioned by Mashingaidze is meaningful only in the context of the discourses of ‘marginalisation’ raised by people from the Southern part of Zimbabwe, Bulawayo in particular. The Southerners argue that the economy and development policies in all facets of life revolve around Harare, the Shona (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009, 2010). Vincent Pamire, a former ZIFA president in the post 2000 period, dismissed the regional-ethnic theory, stating that Harare’s dominance in football administration merely has to do with the simple fact that the majority of football teams in the country are found there. “…It’s a game of numbers, Harare is the capital city of Zimbabwe and we have most clubs there so the ZIFA chairman usually comes from there and the administration of football has mostly been done in Harare … it’s like SA where the capital city is Joburg. That is where you get the big clubs and everyone who runs SAFA…” (Pamire, 2013). However, Pamire’s comment that there is no way Bulawayo can out-do Harare when it comes to leadership posts since in most cases there is only Highlanders FC from that city playing in the Premier Soccer League still strongly reflects the regional divisions. Pamire’s assertion that the dominance of Harare is premised on its numerical superiority is contestable. The ZIFA board is voted in by members of the assembly which is the Electoral College where both the Northern and Southern regions have equal representation. It is also not correct to say that the South is usually represented by Highlanders only. In any case, it seems that the voice of the clubs in the assembly has always been on the periphery since clubs contribute 16 votes out of 58. Despite the ‘obvious’ regional and ethnic fights there are also other more complex power squabbles at mainstream football administration bodies as discussed below.

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73 Pretoria is the capital city of South Africa contrary to Pamire’s claim Jonannesburg is the capital city.
Victimisation and counter-victimisation: boardroom power plots

The Zimbabwean football boardroom can be described as a theatre for complex plots and subpower plots. Football administration bodies such as the Zimbabwe Football Association and thePremier Soccer League are at times caught up in factional fights which the researcher could notcategorise as either ethnically or regionally motivated. Some interviewees however, attributedsuch factional fights to the popularity of the game in Zimbabwe and people’s desire to use thispopularity to score political and economic goals (Sharuko, 2013). “Football is power just as inpolitics…it’s about power…Sepp Blatter (FIFA president) is even more powerful than somepoliticians and he receives red carpet welcome wherever he goes and that’s power…so peoplelike to be powerful and football presents that opportunity for somebody to be powerful…”(Sharuko, 2013). In Sharuko’s opinion, being president of the Zimbabwe Football Association orholding any other influential administrative post in the ZIFA board is a signification of power.Importantly such posts come with a lot of economic and financial rewards such as attendingFIFA congresses.

The researcher could not however, ascertain the exact benefits of being the ZIFA or PSLpresident in Zimbabwe. Some of these ‘complex’ factional fights at the Zimbabwe FootballAssociation can be traced from the early years after independence. Around 1987, the ZIFAboard, then under the leadership of Trevor Carelse-Juul was caught up in serious powerstruggles in which Job Kadengu, Trevor Carelse-Juul and a few others were the protagonists.These conflicts were beyond the ‘usual’ regional and ethnic differences. Ndumiso Gumede andPetros Kausiyo concurred that Canaan Banana, then head of state, and ZIFA patron had to oftenintervene to solve power struggles at the Zimbabwe Football Association. Gumede recalls that in1987 Banana had to preside over the election of a ZIFA board in an attempt to bring sanity afterthe Nelson Chirwa led ZIFA board had been embroiled in internal wrangles.
“…Banana went on an exercise asking people to write names of people they thought were best to lead football… I remember him saying we have a problem FIFA want legitimate elections done so I can’t impose these names …Nelson Chirwa, Julius Chifokoyo and Gumede were voted for…” (Gumede, 2013).

Such power struggles in the first decade of Zimbabwe’s independence are said to have resulted in some people with ‘weaker’ hearts quitting the system. “I remember Jonathan Kapara who succeeded Chirwa just lasted for three months … He had never seen a system that was heating up from inside like football and left resulting in Banana intervening to resolve the crisis at ZIFA” (Gumede, 2013). Kapara is now late and resultantly, the researcher could not interview him to get his side of the story over the issue raised by Gumede.

It seems that, due to the desire to control football, administrators always find ways to exclude each other. For instance in 1987 when Nelson Chirwa had been re-elected ZIFA president in an election presided over by President Canaan Banana, the ZIFA board, influenced by people like Morrison Sifelani74 went on to craft a new clause in the constitution stating that those convicted for dishonesty and criminal charges should not take leadership positions in football (Gumede, 2013). “People like Morris Sifelani knew that Nelson Chirwa had once been arrested in Malawi so they went to Malawi and retrieved records which showed that Chirwa had been arrested for stealing tyres…that was the end of Chirwa” (Gumede, 2013). It seems that the inclusion of such a clause in the ZIFA constitution was a well calculated move by ZIFA members like Morrison Sifelani to strategically exclude Chirwa from power.

Chirwa’s case uncannily mimics the demise that befell Rafiq Khan during his tenure as president of the Zimbabwe Football Association 2004. Khan was arrested in 2004 just after Zimbabwe’s return from their maiden appearance at the Africa Cup of Nations for a crime committed in 1991. It remains mysterious up to date in Zimbabwean football circles on who plotted Khan’s downfall. Respondents who preferred anonymity highlighted that Khan’s rivals in the ZIFA board who wanted the presidency of the association went to extreme lengths to uncover information that he had once stolen a car radio in 1991 and had been convicted but had not

74 Morrison Sifelani (late) is one of the founding Dynamos members and was the club’s chairman when it qualified and played in the finals of the CAF Champions league in 1998 where they lost 2-4 to Asec Mimosa of Ivory Coast.
served the jail sentence. These revelations led to Khan’s arrest and removal from ZIFA leadership.

Current and former members of the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA), suggested that Rafiq Khan was a victim of internal factional fights in the football mother body. A former secretary general of the PSL and ZIFA board member during early 2000 era Mwandibhuya Kennedy Mutepfa suggested that factional politics were responsible for Khan’s down fall.

…I have spoken to one of the guys who allege that they masterminded Rafiq’s arrest and it was an issue of factionalism in the ZIFA board… When Khan was the ZIFA president there were some guys who were not for him and I think among the guys one was a policemen or a prosecutor. They knew that Khan had a case that was outstanding and they then just brought up the issue (Mutepfa, 2013).

Mashingaidze noted:

Khan got incarcerated over flimsy allegations of theft… I would want to confirm without prejudicing anyone that there were two main camps one belonging to Khan and the other one belonged to those who then came in led by Wellington Nyatanga. So they ganged up with members of the media, supporters to remove him despite good things he had done for our football just as Cuthbert Dube is doing today…even up to date we still have camps in our football (Mashingaidze, 2013).

It is possible therefore, that Khan was a victim of a well plotted plan. In the same way that Chirwa may have fallen into a trap in 1987, Khan also found himself a victim as a result of the desire to run Zimbabwean football. Khan may also have been a victim of mainstream political struggles in ZANU PF (Mutepfa, 2013). It is argued that Rafik Khan was in the ZANU PF Harare district power hierarchy and was set to benefit from the house of assembly quota seats reserved for minority groups. It is suggested that while campaigning to be elected by President Mugabe to the post of MP for the Indian Community, Khan provoked political opponents. Former ZIFA board member Mutepfa recalls in an interview:

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75 Ethnically Rafik Khan belongs to the Indian community which is a minority group in Zimbabwe. President Mugabe constitutionally reserves parliamentary seats for the minority groups such as Indians and Coloured. After a national election Mugabe appoints member of parliaments for these constituencies.
During President Mugabe birthday Khan was interviewed by Allan Mpofu about football in Zimbabwe and he actually said ZIFA had killed football implicating Aeneas Chigwedere the then Minister of Education Sport and Culture…And yet to those who knew Chigwedere and Khan they were very close. Rafiq went on a way to explain to the nation on what were the real problems affecting the nations football. He was supposed to issue some series in The Herald. If I remember well he only released one episode and then the following week he was arrested… (Mutepfa, 2013).

The possibility exists that the tell-all articles which Khan had promised to publish in The Herald implicated some members of the government, possibly Leo Mugabe, President Mugabe’s nephew who held the ZIFA presidency from 1993-2003. By implicating Leo Mugabe, Khan would have been indirectly implicating President Mugabe in the story of the decline of Zimbabwean football. Foucault (1980) states that discourse regulates the ‘sayable’ and ‘unsayable’, Khan may have unwittingly transgressed discourse. At times, the researcher found it difficult to separate fact from fiction. Goings-on at ZIFA seemed to assume a permanent cloak-and-dagger element.

Rafik Khan, the victim morphs, in other accounts by former ZIFA board members, is cast as a bully. These former members allege that they were ousted from the association by Khan on factional grounds. Gumede who was then the Chief Executive Officer of ZIFA is one of the personalities who claim to have been victimised by Khan. “Once Khan had been elected ZIFA president, leaving his post as PSL chairman, he said he was uncomfortable working with me and Edgar Rogers replaced me …Khan thought I had been supporting people who were opposing him like Vincent Pamire and I am too close to Pamire even to this day …” (Gumede, 2013).

Factional fights which erupted during Khan’s tenure continued beyond his departure as those who were associated with him or had been against him went ahead and claimed the existence of victimisation and counter-victimisation, claiming they were victims of such machinations. For instance, the current ZIFA Chief Executive Officer, Jonathan Mashingaidze, was caught up in the crossfire during the factional fights between the Wellington Nyatanga and the Rafik Khan camps. The Nyatanga led ZIFA board tried to depose him since they associated him with the ousted Khan led board (Mashingaidze, 2013). “I had worked with Khan since 2003 so they levelled allegations against me that I had not handled the disbursement and selling of the 2006
World Cup tickets properly resulting in my suspension for a year and half” (Mashingaidze, 2013).

The Cuthbert Dube led ZIFA board in 2010 presided over the suspension of certain board members. These include Kenny Marange⁷⁶, Methembe Ndlovu⁷⁷, Patrick Hokonya⁷⁸ and Gift Banda⁷⁹. In other words three chairpersons of the ZIFA regions were suspended. The only exception is Fungai Chihuri, chairman of the Eastern region. The net result is that the ZIFA board was supposed to function with 13 board members (between 2010-March 2014) operated with only eight board members as five were on suspension. The suspension of these board members can be interpreted within the framework of power contestations at ZIFA.

Kenny Marange the ZIFA second vice president, who was suspended on allegations of participating in the Asiagate scandal⁸⁰, was acquitted by the Ethics committee led by Retired Judge, Justice Ahmed Ebrahim⁸¹. However, despite this acquittal, Marange was not reinstated to his position. In an interview, Mashingaidze argued, “Kenny Marange travelled without ZIFA permission so with or minus Asiagate scandal he stands accused of flouting ZIFA regulations” (Mashingaidze, 2013). Apparently, Marange remained ‘frozen’ out of the system as a strategy to remove him from the election race for the ZIFA presidency which was held in March 2014. The newly amended ZIFA constitution states that only those members already in the ZIFA structures may contest for posts.

There is precedence at ZIFA regarding the silencing of those perceived to be threats to the status quo. Leslie Gwindi was once banned for life from participating in football issues during the Wellington Nyatanga era (2006-2010). In 2013 prior to the March 2014 ZIFA elections, Gwindi was threatened with the same sanctions by the Cuthbert Dube led ZIFA board on accusations of bringing the game into disrepute (Gwindi, 2013). Gwindi was accused of insulting the sponsors

⁷⁶ ZIFA second vice president
⁷⁷ Board member for development
⁷⁸ Chairperson of the Central region
⁷⁹ Chairperson of the Southern region
⁸⁰ Asiagate has become a common term coined to refer to match fixing scandals that involved the Warriors and Monomotapa FC from the period 2007-2010 in Asian countries. In an interview, Sharuko claimed to have coined the term.
⁸² See http://www.herald.co.zw/gwindi-hearing-adjourned/
of the Premier Soccer league, Delta Beverages, the ZIFA board, Klaus Dieter Pagels\textsuperscript{83} and David Coltart\textsuperscript{84}. Ironically, Gwindi contested Cuthbert Dube for ZIFA presidency in 2010 and went on to contest in the March 2014 ZIFA elections after paying an admission of guilt fine. The suspicion that ZIFA’s handling of Gwindi’s case was part of a calculated strategy to eliminate him from the race may not be illogical\textsuperscript{85}.

**Government/political interference in football administration**

The Federation de International Football Association (FIFA) prohibits government interference in local football administration (Cottle, 2011). Nevertheless, governments are welcome in the game as partners for the development of the sport. Due to the power football possess, however, governments find it difficult to remain mere observers.

The researcher established that the ZANU PF government and politicians have also strategically positioned themselves in football administration from as far as the early years after independence to influence policy, albeit in subtle ways. This trend dates back to 1980 when Zimbabwe attained its independence. The then Head of State, Canaan Banana, was the patron of the Warriors until 1987. Simon Vengesayi Muzenda (late vice president) took over the post till his death in 2003. After the death of Muzenda, another Vice President Joseph Msika\textsuperscript{86} became the patron for the Warriors. John Landa Nkomo who succeeded Msika for the vice presidency also became the patron of the Warriors till his death in 2012. Pannenborg (2012) has argued that patrons officially lack power in administration but they exert power in the sense that they act as advisers and are involved in electing members of the board of directors. President Robert Mugabe\textsuperscript{87} is the current

\textsuperscript{83} Former Warriors coach of Germany origin  
\textsuperscript{84} Minister of Education Sport and Culture (2009-2013)  
\textsuperscript{85} However, contrary to Marange and Gwindi cases referred to above, the thesis established that Benedict Moyo a ZIFA board member was also fingered in the Asiagate scandal for his role in the Warriors match against Japan but he has not been suspended because he is said to be a Cuthbert Dube loyalist.  
\textsuperscript{86} Now late  
\textsuperscript{87} Despite not being a well known football fan, when the Warriors qualified for the Africa Cup of Nations tournament in 2004 for the first time since 1980, President Mugabe hosted the team at the state house. Mugabe repeated such a scenario with The Mighty Warriors in 2011 after they had won the COSAFA Cup. Recently in May
Mugabe is also the patron of the Zimbabwe cricket national team. This is a demonstration of an appreciation of the power of sport and football in particular. Should it wish to do so, government is strategically positioned to deploy its political discourses through the game. As argued by Antonio Gramsci (1971), hegemony is won via cultural institutions and sport is one of these sites.

The establishment of a Sport Recreation Commission (SRC) in 1991, replacing the then Sports Council became one of the strategies used by the government to indirectly control sport or football without violating FIFA’s laws. The composition of the management structure of the Sport Recreation Commission (SRC) reflects government’s preparedness to protect its interest through deploying loyalists. The current director of the Sport Recreation Commission, Charles Nhemachena, is a retired Lieutenant Colonel with the Zimbabwe National Army. Nhemachena confirmed the influence of mainstream politics in the administration of sport. “There is nothing that can operate outside political influence...” (Nhemachena, 2013). Nhemachena, however, argues that his appointment as director of the Sport Recreation Commission had more to do with merit than political affiliation.

2012 President Mugabe hosted African football stars at the State House who had attended former Zimbabwe national team captain Benjani Mwaruwari’s testimonial match.

The Sport Recreation Commission is the government controlling arm in sport. It was created by an Act of Parliament Chapter 25:15 of 1991 after the report on the Commission of inquiry into the organisation of Sport in Zimbabwe which was set up by President Mugabe and chaired by Tommy Ganda Sithole a renowned sport Zimbabwean administrator now at the International Olympics committee. The findings of the Commission of Inquiry resulted in the dissolving of the then Sports Council to make way for the Sports and Recreation Commission. This commission derives its mandate from the Sports and Recreation Commission Act and reports to the Government through the Ministry of Sport, Arts and Culture. The Commission is also there to facilitate for the accessibility of sport and recreation programmes to the people of Zimbabwe and to oversee the general running of sport and recreation programmes by the National Sports Associations such as Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA).

The presence of former military personnel in mainstream football administration can also be noted in the ZIFA board (2010-2014). Elliot Kasu board member finance is also a former military man-Retired Army Brigadier General. The Zimbabwe Football Trust which is responsible for fundraising activities for ZIFA is also headed by a retired military person-Retired Army Colonel Tshinga Dube.
...I applied for this position and competed with former policemen, civilians both male and female and got the job in my own right. I have got a history in sport and it’s not a secret. Not only that I am a registered public accountant being a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, I have a Master of Science degree in Resource Planning and Management from the USA, I also have an MBA, from the University of Zimbabwe and am now doing my PhD with Christ University from India so why should I not be able to get a job if I apply for it?” (Nhemachena, 2013).

Though Nhemachena stated that he was appointed director of the Sport Recreation Commission on merit, the ‘reality’ is more complex. Nhemachena’s predecessor at the commission was also a former military man – Retired Brigadier Gibson Mashingaidze, a well known ZANU PF cadre. The military is directly linked to the ruling party- ZANU PF (Chibuwe, 2013). Army Generals who include Constantine Chiwenga, Brigadier General Nyikayaramba are on record explicitly endorsing the ZANU PF government and President Robert Mugabe in particular threatening that they shall not tolerate a president without liberation war credentials90. In any case, President Robert Mugabe of ZANU PF is the Commander in Chief of the Defence forces. The army is one of the pillars of Mugabe’s power (Chibuwe, 2013)

The impression that top posts at the Zimbabwe Football Association are reserved for those with links to the ruling ZANU PF government is held by a number of respondents. It was-established that this trend became evident during the time when Leo Mugabe, nephew to President Robert Mugabe, became the ZIFA president (1993-2003). It has been suggested that Leo Mugabe made it to the helm of ZIFA because of the influence of his uncle Robert Mugabe than his football administration capabilities (Bloomfield, 2010; Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011). One of the respondents to the study Jason Mavhunga91 a sports journalist with The Herald, stated that Leo Mugabe’s tenure as ZIFA president lasted as long as it did because of the support of President Mugabe, despite widespread corruption and mismanagement. “People complained about how Leo mismanaged the game but his uncle protected him and no one could dare to challenge the president’s cousin …” (Mavhunga, 2013). Mugabe remains one of the longest serving presidents

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90 Such utterances were directed to Morgan Tsvangirai president of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) ZANUPF’s main political rivals since 2000
91 Pseudo name for a sports journalist at The Herald.
of ZIFA. His name became synonymous with ZIFA. ZIFA councillors passed a vote of no confidence in his leadership in 2003\textsuperscript{92}.

The appointment of Henrietta Rushwaya as ZIFA Chief Executive Officer of the Zimbabwe Football Association in 2007 also confirmed mainstream political interference in the administration of the game in Zimbabwe. Despite Rushwaya’s appointment being perceived as a milestone in liberating what had been traditionally a male domain, her appointment was not without controversy. Some respondents openly stated that her tenure was backed by her strong political links to ZANU PF. One respondent remarked that Henrietta Rushwaya was ‘closely’ related to Zimbabwe’s Vice-President, Joseph Msika. Moreover, Rushwaya is a well known ZANU PF cadre. Rushwaya herself has never made a secret of her political links with ZANU PF. Following her dismissal at ZIFA, Rushwaya openly declared that it was time to revive\textsuperscript{93} her political career since she had been banned from football circles by the Cuthbert Dube led ZIFA board for participating in the Asiagate scandal. Ndumiso Gumede revealed that Rushwaya not only had political but judiciary links also as evidenced by the fact that law courts acquitted her so easily in 2010 when the Cuthbert Dube board levelled corruption charges against her “Rushwaya was an all powerful CEO... the ZIFA board literary reported to her when she should be reporting to the board...” (Kausiyo, 2013).

Mwandibhuya Kennedy Mutepfa who served in the same ZIFA board with Rushwaya stated that because Rushwaya was a political appointee, some ZIFA board members lacked the guts to question some of her decisions for fear of offending her ‘political masters’. Mutepfa recalls:

At one time Henrietta fired the team manager of the Under 17 team, Austin Hakunavanhu yet the board had said that the ZIFA board member responsible for development (Mutepfa) and the ZIFA board member responsible Southern region Mr. Mandaza the two of us would be responsible for junior teams, so any appointment and firing of technical committee we were supposed to be involved. I queried Henrietta in a meeting why she had fired Hakunavanhu single handedly...there was a heated argument between me and the CEO to such an extent that the CEO cried. But the chairman,

\textsuperscript{92} There were concerns that Leo Mugabe had misused funds from the FIFA goal projects which were meant to assist football development in Zimbabwe.

\textsuperscript{93} In 2008 Rushwaya announced that she was going to contest for Gutu Senatorial constituency on a ZANU PF ticket but later on paved way for Shuvai Mahofa.
Wellington Nyatanga and the whole board instead of supporting me that what the CEO had done was wrong, they were just busy saying no it’s ok it’s over... (Mutepfa, 2013).

Though other ZIFA board members were ‘afraid’ of Rushwaya’s political muscle; he claims he challenged her because he also belongs to ZANU PF “There was no need for me to fear her because politically, I also belong to the ruling party where Rushwaya belongs...” (Mutepfa, 2013). Foucault argues that discourse has the power to authorise those who can speak and cannot speak. Mutepfa was authorised by ZANU PF discourse to challenge Rushwaya while others were silenced by the same discourse that authorised him to speak.

Following her dismissal from ZIFA in 2010, Rushwaya took away some of the property at ZIFA including office furniture, computers as well as vehicles. To date she has not returned any of the property. “Vice President John Landa Nkomo told Rushwaya to return ZIFA property but she refused... it shows how politically connected Henrietta is... you can only defy a state vice president if you are standing on some strong political background” (Kausiyo, 2013). The researcher also observed a close relationship between ZIFA elections and Zimbabwe’s national elections. It is plausible to argue that ZIFA elections can be viewed as a microcosm of the country’s broader political framework.

**ZIFA elections: a reflection of Zimbabwean national elections?**

Similarities and connections can be made between ZIFA 2010 and 2014 elections and Zimbabwe national elections particularly in the post 2000 period. Studies on Zimbabwean national elections (Waldahl, 2004; Ndlovu Gatsheni, 2009; Chibuwe, 2013) highlight that Zimbabwean national elections are often disputed and accused of lacking transparency. Robert Mugabe’s ZANU PF led government in particular, has been blamed for using ‘dirty’ tactics to win polls. Of late ZIFA and Cuthbert Dube and his secretariat have been accused of ‘rigging’ ZIFA elections.
The 2010 ZIFA board elections set precedence for ‘controversy’ on ZIFA elections. ZIFA president Cuthbert Dube is said to have won the 2010 election largely because of some ‘political forces’ behind him. The circumstances leading to the 2010 election which resulted in Cuthbert Dube being elected ZIFA president are of interest. The race for the presidency pitted Cuthbert Dube, Leslie Gwindi and Tapiwa Matangaidze. However, ‘drama’ unfolded a few days prior to the ZIFA elections. At the centre of the drama was Tapiwa Matangaidze, a former PSL chairman. Although Matangaidze was a front-runner, he suddenly and inexplicably withdrew from the race.

Matangaidze’s withdrawal from the race has never been fully accounted for. However, Thulani Machingauta, a senior sports journalist at The Chronicle revealed “… Matangaidze received orders from political authorities to withdraw and pave way for Cuthbert Dube and concentrate on mainstream politics, that’s why he went on to contest for a seat in parliament…”. This perspective is also supported by reports from some media sections which claim that Matangaidze was coerced to step down from the race for the ZIFA presidency. In a story headlined ‘Tapiwa Matangaidze threatened by Zanu PF Goons, on 23 March 2010 Radio VoP claimed:

Premier Soccer League (PSL) Tapiwa Matangaidze who was gunning for the top post at Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) pulled out at the last minute, because he was ‘constantly threatened’ by Zanu PF thugs, Radio VoP can exclusively reveal.

The story further claimed that since neighbouring South Africa were about to host the FIFA 2010 World Cup, the ZIFA post was now ‘very political’ and only a ‘ZANU PF cadre’ could win the election. According to the story, the elected individual was going to represent Zimbabwe at a

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94 Leslie Gwindi is a former Dynamos football club secretary general and currently the chairman for Harare City football club. Politically, Gwindi is linked to the ruling party ZANU PF.
95 Tapiwa Matangaidze was the Chairman of Premier Soccer League until November 2009 when things changed at the PSL board following the FIFA sponsored Harare declaration which changed the PSL constitution. The declaration made it mandatory for people in the PSL board to directly come from PSL teams. People like Matangaidze who had no club affiliation were ousted from PSL. Matangaidze then decided to contest for ZIFA presidency in 2010 facing Cuthbert Dube who was making his second attempt having lost to Wellington Nyatanga in 2006 (Kausiyo, 2013).

96 Pseudo name for a sports journalist at The Chronicle
'very high political level and platform’. This story therefore claims that Matangaidze was forced out of the race to allow a more ‘ZANU PF son’ –Cuthbert Dube. This perspective is however problematic to embrace considering that Matangaidze is a ZANU PF legislator which implies he is more ZANU PF than Dube.

One of the former ZIFA board members Prosper Shumba who claims to have been present as the Matangaidze ‘drama’ unfolded refutes the view that Matangaidze could not have been pushed out on political grounds. “I am told Matangaidze was paid around US $25 000 and withdrew from the race and I would like to believe that story. Politics can’t be an issue here because Matangaidze is ZANU-PF and more active than Dube (sic). Dube, from what I know, is not in the structures of ZANU-PF...” (Shumba, 2013). If this is correct, this then confirms the power of money in football just like what happens in most countries across the globe (Bloomfield, 2010; Pannenborg, 2010).

Petros Kausiyo refutes both views. In his view, neither politics nor vote buying were crucial. Instead, Matangaidze realised in advance that his chances of winning were slim so he decided to withdraw to save his reputation. Kausiyo further revealed that Cuthbert Dube won because he ‘traded’ for votes with the Southern region camp led by Ndumiso Gumede. “...It then meant that Gumede camp would support Dube for presidency and in return the Dube camp would support Gumede for vice presidency leaving Matangaidze exposed...” (Kausiyo, 2013). Matangaidze may have realised that he stood no chance somewhat late in the ‘game’. By the time he tried to ‘trade’ his candidature for presidency to get the vice presidency the Gumede and Dube ‘camps’ had already gone to ‘bed’. The best option therefore was to withdraw.

The March 2014 ZIFA elections and the July 31 Zimbabwean elections appear to have a more complex relation, although in a different aspect. When President Mugabe announced the date for July 31 national elections on June 30, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) led by Morgan Tsvangirai, filed a High Court application in attempt to have election dates-postponed

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98 Pseudo name for a former ZIFA board member
99 Tapiwa Matangaidze contested and won the Shurugwi South House of Assembly seat on a ZANU PF ticket during the 31 July 2013 Zimbabwe elections.
100 From this perspective, one can argue that the election ‘drama’ of the ZIFA 2010 election, mirrored FIFA and CAF politics. It is argued that this trend of ‘trading’ votes is common at CAF and FIFA elections and even at the International Olympics Committee (IOC). Moreover At FIFA President Sepp Blatter is often accused of vote buying and bribing those perceived as ‘threats’ to his re-election (Jennings, 2007).
citing irregularities in the election process. Tsvangirai claimed that electoral reforms had not been fully implemented hence the ground favoured ZANU PF to rig the elections as ‘usual’. The MDC-T described the elections as not being a ‘fair game’ but a manipulation of figures (Ncube, 2014). This arose because Mugabe had always been accused of his lack of transparency and openness regarding the manner in which elections have always been held particularly in the post-2000 period. Violence and intimidation have been cited as some of the tactics employed by ZANU PF to retain their waning hegemony in contemporary Zimbabwe (Hamar and Raftopolous, 2003; Ndlovu Gatsheni, 2009). However, the High Court threw out Tsvangirai’s application and elections were held resulting in a ZANU PF resounding victory. Tsvangirai and some sections of the international community described the election as null and void arguing that it had been ‘rigged’ as ‘usual’.

The ‘drama’ that characterised the Zimbabwean 31 July 2013 national elections can be viewed as a reflection of the March 2014 ZIFA election which sports journalists like Robson Sharuko describes as ‘controversial’. From the onset, the ZIFA board was accused of attempting to exclude low income earning members from contesting the election due to their ‘exorbitant’ electoral fees. ZIFA board presidential aspirants were initially required to pay US$10 000 though the figure was later reduced to US$5000 by the Sport and Recreation Commission. It can also be argued that even US$5 000 is a lot of money to an ‘ordinary’ Zimbabwean. This figure would imply that football administration is left to the ‘rich’ in Zimbabwe as the ‘poor’ cannot afford such figures. This trend is also obtainable in countries like Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana and England (Bloomfield, 2010; Pannenborg, 2012).

In a similar fashion where Tsvangirai filed a High court application to stop Zimbabwean elections, Saidi Sangula a former ZIFA board member and ZPC Kariba Football Club official filed a High Court application101, pleading with the court to stop the elections citing flaws102 in the ZIFA electoral process (Kausiyo, 2014:9). Sangula however, lost the case in a similar manner

101 Article 60 of the ZIFA constitution states that football matters should not be taken to law courts but referred to the Appeals committee.
102 Sangula argued that ZIFA Electoral code Article 5 (2) states that the ZIFA Electoral Committee should be made up of eight members (chairman, deputy chairman and six members) yet the current one was constituted by 11 people (Tendai Madzorera, Kennedy Sibanda, Cornelius Bwanya, Passious Masunda, Sello Nare, Musekiwa Mbanje, Elizabeth Banda, Tinojara Hove, Tichawana Nyahuma, Charles Sibanda, Ralph Maganga, Jonathan Mashingaidze (Kausiyo, 2014:9; Sharuko, 2014:12)
the MDC-T and Tsvangirai lost their appeal to stop Mugabe from conducting national elections. In a similar capacity in which the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) which runs Zimbabwean elections was accused by Tsvangirai and other opposition parties for tilting the playing field in favour of ZANU PF, the ZIFA secretariat was blamed for turning itself into a ‘commisariat’ and ‘election machine’, in an attempt to manipulate the electoral environment in favour of Cuthbert Dube (Sharuko, 2014:2). For instance it was reported that Trevor David Carelse-Juul a ZIFA presidential candidate was locked out of the ZIFA house and denied access to the Electoral Roll by the ZIFA secretariat (Chikamhi and Sizara, 2014:12). The two authors further claim two days before the election, all ZIFA provincial offices were, together with employees and officials summoned to ZIFA headquarters in an effort to take total control of the election process. Interestingly, the voters’ roll was also a contentious issue prior the July 31 2013 national elections. The MDC-T and other opposition political parties were denied access to the voters’ roll by ZEC before the 31 July 2013 elections. The researcher therefore made an impression that the ZIFA secretariat and ZEC operate in a similar manner when it comes to administering elections.

Moreover, the re-election of Cuthbert Dube as ZIFA president sparked controversy in Zimbabwe. There are allegations that the 2014 ZIFA presidential election was rigged in the sense that Dube bribed the ZIFA Electoral College. There are also claims that some members of the supporters -Friends of the Warriors, loyal to Cuthbert Dube threatened the ZIFA electorate at the voting venue announcing that blood was going to be shed in the event that Dube lost the election (Dube, 2014). Inferences can be made here with CAF and FIFA elections where personalities like Sepp Blatter have been accused of vote buying to remain in power. Not only have they been accused of vote buying but they have also been accused of ‘punishing’ those that refuse to back them. For instance Zimbabwe was ‘controversially’ stripped off the right to host the 2000 AFCON by CAF allegedly because ZIFA had backed Blatter and not Issa Hayatou for

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103 Harare
104 Some interviewed journalists claim that Cuthbert Dube bribed ZIFA councilors who voted. It is claimed that the councilors were given around US$5 000 before the poll.
105 Friends of the Warriors is a group of national team-the Warriors supporters formed in 2010 when Cuthbert Dube was elected ZIFA board president for the first time. This faction broke away from the ‘traditional’ Zimbabwe National Soccer Supporters Association headed by Eddie ‘Mboma’ Nyatanga.
106 http://www.herald.co.zw/sibanda-wants-peace/
the FIFA presidency in 1998. So does it mean that Zimbabwean elections are a reflection of the global and continental football politics?

Zimbabwean newspapers, particularly *The Herald* and some government ministers questioned the legitimacy of the outcome of the March 2014 ZIFA elections describing them as a ‘sad episode’ in Zimbabwean football administration (Dube, 2014). Professor Jonathan Moyo, the Minister of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services also questioned the ‘morality’ of the election outcome. He noted that:

…Football is beautiful not only because it is played in many beautiful ways but also because we all enjoy it and therefore we all care about how it is run and who runs it... But as we say *amhlophe* and *makorokoto* to the winners we must also be honest to realise and state without fear or favour that the outcome of these elections was indecent and defied all rationality and purpose. What exactly was endorsed by this scandalous vote? Zimbabwean soccer today is clearly in the doldrums in every respect with its administration characterised by breath taking chaos, incompetence and corruption with no precedence since our independence in 1980. The notion that the ZIFA electorate voted for continuity is shamefully revealing. Continuity of what else besides naked and embarrassing failure? ‘For the first time, ZIFA its affairs have become personalised and corrupted to the detriment of the national interest, let alone the values and ethos of the beautiful game. An example of this rot is how some elements within the ZIFA leadership have had no shame in arrogantly boasting that they have been underwriting Zifa from their own personal pockets (Murwira, 2014:1).

The researcher established that hostile views towards Cuthbert Dube’s re-election were influenced by his involvement in the ‘Salarygate’, where Dube, as the Chief Executive of Premier Medical Aid Society (PSMAS) was reportedly earning US$6.4 million per year at the expense of service delivery as mentioned earlier. More over Dube was reported to be financing ZIFA activities from his pocket from 2010-2014 (Sharuko, 2014). Some of my interviewees just like Professor Moyo questioned Dube’s ‘sincerity’ and ‘generosity’ in funding ZIFA from his own pockets. They stated that Dube was funding football to give an impression of a ‘messiah’ of Zimbabwean football whilst distracting the nation from the realities that he is one of the petty-bourgeoisie bleeding parastatals. It is also apparent here from Professor Moyo’s reaction that Dube also used money amassed from the general public to ‘buy’ re-election. Professor Moyo further remarked:
… nobody is fooled by the ZIFA circus whose corruption in terms of moral irresponsibility was exposed by the outcome of the election. The ZIFA electorate has prepared a bed full of thorns and they must now lie on that bed themselves and perhaps with the leadership it voted for. Nobody else, particularly the general public, football supporters or even sponsors, should be expected to lie on that thorny and dirty bed. The buck should stop with the indecent outcome of the scandalous election (Murwira, 2014:1)

Similarities can also be drawn from Professor Moyo’s response to the ZIFA presidential election results and Tsvangirai’s response to the outcome of the July 31 elections. The privately owned press and Tsvangirai warned Zimbabweans to brace themselves for economic trouble for ‘voting’ ZANU PF in the July 31 2013 elections as this meant ‘doom’ for the Zimbabwean economy. Similarly, Professor Moyo warned the ZIFA Electorate to brace themselves for hard times emanating from their decision to re-elect Dube as ZIFA president. There are key issues however to note from the outcome of the ZIFA election. FIFA through their Eastern and Southern African development officer Ashford Mamelodi endorsed the outcome of the ZIFA election. Andrew Langa, the Minister of Sport and Culture also endorsed the outcome of the ZIFA poll. However, Professor Jonathan Moyo a minister of Information, Media and Broadcasting questioned the legitimacy of the election. Robson Sharuko the senior sports editor of The Herald equally questioned Cuthbert Dube’s re-election. However, despite Minister Moyo and Sharuko in particular openly expressing disapproval of Dube’s re-election, they lacked the ‘power’ to reverse what has been endorsed by FIFA. The researcher was tempted to conclude that Professor Moyo and Sharuko’s reactions could have been influenced by other factors beyond the March 2014 ZIFA election. Sharuko in particular, was banned by the Cutbert Dube led ZIFA board in 2012 from participating in football activities following his alleged involvement in the Asiagate scandal, which is discussed below.

‘Darkest episode in Zimbabwean football’: The Asiagate scandal

The Warriors and Monomotapa FC were paid to participate and fix matches during dubious football tournaments in Asian countries such as Malaysia, Jordan and Thailand, during the period 2007-2010. These ‘controversial’ matches were organised by a Singaporean man called Wilson
Raj Perumal (Asiagate Report, 2012). The saga, is now infamously known as the ‘Asiagate scandal’. Former ZIFA president Vincent Pamire said, “I don’t want to even talk about that chapter. It is the worst we have come across and the worst this country has gone through I hope it comes to an end” (Pamire, 2013).

Mashingaidze, stated that Asiagate is a reflection of how corrupt the institution of football had become during the period in question. “It has been a very sad episode where individuals came into football hoping that they would fill up their pockets with ill-gotten wealth and after doing that they revert to their bases laughing all their way to the bank” (Mashingaidze, 2013).

The Cuthbert Dube led ZIFA board set up an ‘independent’ ethics committee on 24 October 2011 in terms of the ZIFA Constitution to investigate and try ‘culprits’ who participated in the scandal. Retired Supreme Court Judge Justice Ebrahim was appointed chairperson of the committee. The presence of a retired Supreme Court Judge (Justice Ebrahim) chairing the ‘independent’ ethics committee is far from being accidental. In actual fact this is a clear demonstration of how power is exercised in people’s everyday lives. The power of Judges resembles state authority in that their verdicts are rarely interrogated by the ‘ordinary’ person. The decision by the ZIFA board to include a retired Supreme Court judge, which is the most powerful court in the land, meant to authorise discourse in Foucauldian terms. Foucault (1980) states that discourse does not only define truth and knowledge but it also imposes itself as truth on the world. The verdict by the committee also imposed itself as the ‘truth’ on this matter. Justice Ahmed Ebrahim, due to his judiciary background, was authorised by discourse to define ‘truth’ in an ‘intelligible’ manner.

The manner in which the Asiagate scandal was handled reflects how footballers turn out to be mere pawns. Some officials, including ministers who on whose watch the Asiagate scandal unfolded, survived the so-called full wrath of the law. Players like Guthrie Zhokinyu, however, received life bans. Players who participated in the match-fixing received meagre amounts

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107 Robson Sharuko, Senior Sports editor of The Herald claims to have coined the term ‘Asiagate’. The first story on the Asiagate scandal was however broken by Mthulisi Mafa a former sports reporter with the state controlled The Sunday Mail newspaper.

108 Article 36.1.5 of the ZIFA Constitution states that the ZIFA Board may decide to set up ad-hoc committees if necessary at any time.
compared to the ‘architects’ of the deals – administrators. However, when the scandal came to light, it was the players who got the stiffest punishments. Power protected the boardroom.

Interestingly, the Zimbabwean constitution is silent on issues to do with match fixing. As a result those found guilty could not be prosecuted as criminals in law courts. In an interview Gumede stated “Rushwaya was charged for not reporting her movements to her superiors instead of charging her with match fixing because there is no such law for match fixing” (Gumede, 2013). The only power ZIFA could exercise was to ban Rushwaya out of football issues. However, Rushwaya went on to win the case purportedly because of her strong political links. In any case, Wellington Nyatanga the former ZIFA president changed statements in court denying that Rushwaya had done things behind her back and this worked in the former ZIFA Chief Executive Officer’s favour.

What complicates the Asia-gate scandal is the fact that it implicates some government ministers. Resultantly, the ZIFA board was limited by discourse and it could not ‘discipline’ ministers the way it did players. For instance, Walter Mzembi the Minister of Tourism and Hospitality reportedly participated in the scandal. Mwandibhuya Mutepfa one of the former ZIFA board members claims that Mzembi arranged one of the Asian trips for the Warriors and even imposed a head of delegation for the trip. It is argued that Wellington Nyatanga then ZIFA president could do nothing because the order came from the minister. Nothing however, was done to Mzembi as Mashingaidze told the researcher that ZIFA could only take action to those that fall within their jurisdiction. But the same ZIFA board made an attempt to take action against journalists such as Sharuko despite the fact that ZIFA doesn’t have jurisdiction over journalists. One might argue that ZIFA found journalists less ‘powerful’ compared to ministers. Foucault (1980) says discourse is the power to be seized. Foucault further claims that discourses regulate actions at any given moment. But it appears Foucault had not foreseen a situation where some people are not controlled by discourse even though they use it to control others. These people can transgress discourse and still get away with it. We have such people in Zimbabwe

\[109\] ZIFA board ‘banned’ Sharuko from participating in any football related activities following his alleged involvement in the Asiagate scandal.
who can have ‘sexual intercourse’ with the mother\textsuperscript{110} and still get away with it because the ‘Father’ has been emasculated. The Father’s No in such cases would be a mere scare crow. For Mzembi the threat of castration was a mere scare crow because he was authorised by a superior discourse, superior Father ZANU PF and his position as Minister of Tourism thus ZIFA and FIFA discourse were mere scare crows.

Despite the conclusion of the Asiagate scandal, match fixing could be still present in Zimbabwe. “...we still have persons who still wish to perpetuate the practice of influencing games either by trying to grease the hands of the officials or by doing some favours for those officials and it’s not a peculiar problem to Zimbabwe” (Gumede, 2013). In 2011 ZIFA had to hire South African referees to officiate matches in the Mbada Diamonds Cup after reports that some of the local match officials were being bribed by some PSL clubs. Match fixing was thus cited as one of the factors that hinders football development by turning away potential sponsors. The failure to tap football potential into national development emerged as one of the key themes in this study.

\textbf{Change without change? Football’s untapped potential in development}

Football has become one of the vital instruments used to achieve national development goals across the globe (Alegi 2010; USAID n.d). The centrality of football in economic development is unquestionable. The African Union (AU), prior to the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, encouraged its member nations to promote sport as a tool for sustainable economic development; poverty reduction, peace, solidarity and social cohesion (Belhova et al, 2011).

Some of my interviewees blamed the Zimbabwean government for not seriously considering the use of sport or football as one of the tools to achieve national development. Charles Mabika acknowledged the power and potential that football wields in development but bemoaned the government’s reluctance to utilise this potential “... I wonder why our national leaders have not partnered key stakeholders to use football for national development…” (Mabika, 2013). It can be

\textsuperscript{110} This is credited to philosopher Freud in his ‘Oedipus complex’ theory. Lacan however developed it further arguing that transgressing discourse is akin to having sexual intercourse with the mother, an act which usually attracts punishment of castration from the father.
argued that the government, political parties and policy planners in general have not prioritised sport in development. Save also expressed concern over this issue. “Why don’t we have a ministry of sport in Zimbabwe? No political party ZANU PF, MDC-T, MDC, ZAPU have a department of sport in their structures. Even in government sport is fused with the ministry of education, arts and culture…” (Save, 2013). Football remains a powerful source that any government can use to address the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. ZIFA Chief Executive Officer Mashingaidze said, “…No government can afford to ignore football because it is such a powerful vehicle that knows no boundary, can reach any part of the world, with ease” (Mashingaidze, 2013). However, despite this power of the game, the situation on the ground suggests that the government of Zimbabwe has largely ignored football. It has only thought of the game when it is convenient for them to score political goals.

Since independence, the Zimbabwean government has failed to create a stand alone sport ministry. In 1980 there was a Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture. Later on the ministry changed to Education, Sport and Culture. It is imperative to note that traditionally sport was just treated as peripheral component in education, resulting in no budget being allocated for sports development.

In 2013 the Zimbabwean government took steps towards creating a stand alone sport ministry but did not fully implement it as it became the “Ministry of Sport Arts and Culture” lead by Minister Andrew Langa. Interviewees expressed that there was need to have a pure stand alone ministry. Global football powerhouses such as Brazil, as well as Nigeria and Ghana in Africa, have stand alone sport ministries (see Foer, 2004). This might be the route Zimbabwe needs to follow to develop its sport and the nation at large.

Concern was also raised on the need for the government or political parties to partner for the development of sport as a way of developing the youth. There is concern that this stands as one of the areas which government has marginalised. Over the years the ZANU PF government has been driving their ‘Youth empowerment’ discourse but surprisingly they have neglected empowering the youth through sport. “I look at them making a lot of noise about indigenisation and empowering the youth but who plays sports? It’s the youth unless if you are an exceptional

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111 Save is a pseudo name for a Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation television sports journalist
Roger Milla\textsuperscript{112} who can go up to 40 years...The youth can be absorbed in their numbers in cricket, football, athletics, basket ball so these facilities needs to be developed...” (Kausiyo, 2013).

Unemployment is one of the major problems affecting African countries, including Zimbabwe. And football is one of the key industries which reduce unemployment levels in a country. This is why in Europe and America (see Belhova, et al, 2011) sports are increasingly important to the economy. About two million people are employed in the sports economy in the 15 member countries of the European Union. This is 1.3\% of overall European Union employment. In the United Kingdom, the contribution of the sports economy to GDP is currently estimated at more than 2\%. As a comparison, this is three times as high as the current contribution of agriculture to GDP in the United Kingdom (Das Gupta, n.d; Lin et al, 2008). Zimbabwe needs to implement projects in this direction.

Footballers such as Edward Sadomba are embarking on a number of projects, notably orphanages. George Mbwando has an ongoing Football Against AIDS programme in Hwange where from his earnings in football he has gone to adopt kids who were orphaned as a result of their parents dying from HIV and AIDS. “Surprisingly the government acknowledges such efforts coming from those footballers but do not acknowledge football’s place in national development and only want to associate with football during election campaigns” (Kausiyo, 2013). It is argued that government has a tendency of forgetting to develop the people and the game once in power.

The prevailing political situation at a given time can impact on the development of football either positively or negatively. For instance, the period of the inclusive government\textsuperscript{113} may have affected the smooth running of football in Zimbabwe. “... The GNU had its own challenges especially when it came to accessing resources. We would move from pillar to post trying to look for resources but that was because the setup was so mixed up... We became victims of the GNU politics. The other time we applied for resources, we were told at the 12\textsuperscript{th} hour that there

\textsuperscript{112} Roger Milla is a former Cameroon footballer who played at the FIFA World Cup final in 1990 at the age of 41 (Bloomfield, 2010).

\textsuperscript{113} February 2009-July 2013
were no resources. We failed to send the under 20 and under 17 teams yet we have been given an assurance that they would assist…” Mashingaidze, 2013). Football allows us to understand and discuss national discourses (Fletcher, 2012) such as development.

It appears due to the fact, that government has not done much to partner the development of football, sport development at grass roots level – schools, has not been developed so much. Sport is still being treated as a co-curricular activity. The director of the Sports and Recreation Commission, Charles Nhachena revealed “There is need to also introduce sport into the school’s curriculum so that it’s not regarded as it was in the past as an extracurricular…sport is still identified as an appendage to more than mainstream curricular …” (Nhachena, 2013). Moreover, the Sport and Recreation Commission Director underscored the need to develop a football culture at grass root level.

Brilliant Moyo\textsuperscript{114} an administrator at Dynamos Football Club emphasised the need to develop structures at grassroot level so that football can develop in Zimbabwe.

In my own view, development means you develop the skills of junior players. If it were possible, ZIFA or PSL should set up a junior football league so that players are developed from a tender age. If we do not develop young players we are not developing our football. People have the habit of saying, our national team is playing badly yet we do not have the Under-17, 20 and 23 who have played at the World Cup like what other countries are doing. That is development if we can develop our junior teams, even one, to play at the World Cup (Moyo, 2013).

This perspective was also expressed by Paul Gundani who underlined the centrality of schools in the development of football talent. He stated that if schools do not develop or nurture talent at grass roots level then the country’s national teams shall continue to suffer because unlike at club level where teams buy players, the national team cannot do that. “The likes of Peter Ndlovu, Benjamin Nkonjera might have not passed through an academy system but then the schools used to have vibrant training methods with a lot of competition which groomed talent” (Gundani, 2013).

\textsuperscript{114} Pseudo name for a Dynamos FC current executive member
So it is apparent here from what the former football players are expressing, that football development should be initiated from below not from the top. The idea to develop sport at grassroots level is in line with the alternative theory of development advocated by Paulo Freire and other Latin American thinkers. Freire (1972) states that development should be an endogenous process which starts at grassroots level. In essence, development should not follow a top down approach as emphasised by the modernisation theory of development.

The way football is being administered in modern day Zimbabwe specifically at grassroots level denotes that little has changed from the colonial period. Moyo a Dynamos administrator stated:

… If you go and see how children play football in schools that’s when you will understand what I’m talking about. Children who are in primary school play size five football you know, and the pitch they are playing upon is 100m long and the goal posts are the same ones that the big guys use. So you find we are not, we are quite lost. We are still in Rhodesia when it comes to sport development. I’m sorry to say it because what the Rhodesians were doing is what we have continued to do ... (Moyo, 2013).

Such sentiments confirm the assertions by post-colonial theorists such as Kwame Anthony Appiah and Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni. Appiah (1992) argues that the attainment of independence by African nations does not mean the end of colonialism. In fact, the colonial is far from being dead. With specific reference to Zimbabwe, James Zaffiro (2002) notes that at independence Zimbabwe became ‘pseudo heirs’ of the outgoing Rhodesian system. Though Zaffiro (2002) made this argument while analysing media broadcasting policies in Zimbabwe, this discourse can also be appropriated and used to explain the way football is being currently managed in modern day Zimbabwe.

The need for the incorporation of stakeholders at grassroot levels such as parents so that they can play their part in the development process was also underscored by informants to the study. It may be argued that parents can either enhance or constrain the development of sport at grassroot level hence they also need to be encouraged to play a part in the development process. “… If parents don’t appreciate sport they continue …like you know in the past you would say. You would have if a child was young to participate in a sport ‘Aingonzi haaende nasisi [maid would prevent him/her to participate]) (Moyo, 2013). This comes after an observation that some of the parents have not yet appreciated the role of sport in human lives. It can be argued that some
parents just like educationists are still suffering from colonial hangovers as evidenced by their
treatment of sport as a peripheral aspect in life. “… This is what we call a confused state of
affairs. We don’t know what we need. A child is talented in football you force him to go to
school. He is not happy there then what, he is gonna fail, then what? He is gonna go on the
streets, he has wasted development time …” (Moyo, 2013). The fact that in the early days
football was a sport associated with the ‘poor’ classes in society, could be the influential factor
on why some parents discourage their children to get involved in it. This was confirmed by
Moyo who noted:

I remember even our fathers did not want us to play football because they said it is for
the poor. If the sponsorship was like that which exists in other sports like cricket and
golf, it could have been a different story. We have professionals playing football; at
Dynamos we had Tauya Murehwa who was a doctor by profession. Some of the players
are actually taking care of their families better than what other professionals are doing.
Our fathers even discouraged us from taking up professions like music because they
assumed that it was for backward people (Moyo, 2013).

The development of the game therefore is still facing a challenge in modern day Zimbabwe. The
government has not partnered the development of the game to ensure development takes place
from the grass roots level as advocated by Freire (1972). Moreover, the government also
continues to ignore sport in its development initiatives despite the fact that sporting activities like
football are vital for development. The discussion below explores deeper the discourse of
‘development’ in Zimbabwean soccer. Attention is given to the contribution of corporate
organisations in development of the game.

Harnessing minerals to the people?

Mining companies are active in football sponsorship in Zimbabwe. Currently, Mbada Diamonds
and Marange Resources are some of the diamond mining companies which are actively involved
in football sponsorship. Mbada Diamonds who have been sponsoring the ‘richest\textsuperscript{115}’ football

\textsuperscript{115} Mbada Diamonds are sponsoring US$130 000 football knock out tournament which involves 16 teams in the
premier soccer league.
knock out tournament since 2011 run their motto “Harnessing Diamonds’ to the people. The same can be said about Marange Diamonds the sponsors of the Women’s football league. The companies have emphasised their desire to develop the game.

There are some who have also been interpellated (see Althusser 1971) by the discourse of Mbada Diamonds developing the game. Because companies such as Mbada Diamonds are benefiting from national resources, have a responsibility both to the nation and host communities. Admire Taderera has expressed that, “the presence of companies like Mbada Diamonds is a welcome development to the game... the diamonds they are mining is our national heritage and it is proper for them to come through and develop our national game, (sic)…” (Taderera, 2013). ‘True’ to their motto of spreading the development of the game, the Mbada Diamonds Cup matches are spread out across the country even up to remote areas of Zimbabwe where there are no premiership teams. Are the intentions behind the discourses of developing the game completely noble?

The researcher could not succeed in interviewing people from this diamond mining company as Tafadzwa Chiremba the Public Relations Officer for the organisation constantly postponed interview dates. However, on the company website the organisation claims that it is part of their social responsibility to: “Promote sport and particularly raise the bar for soccer, while at the same time giving communities around the country the opportunity to watch top flight football in their hometowns”. Moreover, at the inaugural launch of the Mbada Diamonds Cup tournament in 2011, Ignatius Mazura the company’s media consultant stated that, “This is the latest in a series of protects to plough back to local communities and what better way than to support the local football game.”

From a development perspective, while efforts to ‘plough back’ to the communities are welcome, the fact that Mbada Diamonds has not yet significantly extended a helping hand to the poor Chiyadzwa area where they are mining the diamonds raises questions. Jason Mavhunga of The Herald noted “People in Chiyadzwa area are complaining that Mbada Diamonds and Marange Diamonds are sponsoring football but are doing nothing to develop the lives of people

116 Admire Taderera is the General Manager of Star FM, a Zimpapers owned radio station. Taderera is also one of the veteran football radio and television presenter and commentator
117 http://www.mbadadiamonds.com/
118 http://www.herald.co.zw/mbada-unveil-us1m-tournament/
in Marange… Recently they donated money to Harare City Council but why not donate to Mutare City Council (sic) (Mavhunga, 2013). Discourses of sponsoring the world’s most followed game need to be explored. The magnitude of media publicity that comes with football sponsorship at national level could be the reason behind the decision to go into football.

It might be apt to argue that given the popularity of football and its connection with the ordinary person, the game has become a critical site for managing perceptions or diverting people’s attention from certain realities. There have been questions asked by ordinary Zimbabweans in their everyday concerning who is benefiting from national resources such as diamonds. Answers have remained elusive. By sponsoring the game, this might be a way of diverting people’s attention from asking that question. Moreover football being the ‘people’s game’, an impression is created here that the people are benefiting from their national resources. This perspective is persuasive given the fact the format of the Mbada Diamonds Cup. The tournament is spread countrywide with thousands of t-shirts bearing the company logo given to football fans who attend the matches. Even remote areas such as Chiredzi are also given the honour to watch such football matches under the disguise of ‘spreading’ and ‘developing’ the game countrywide. When analyzing, it might be apt to argue that the amount put into football sponsorship is just but nothing compared to the huge profits being made by these companies.

Companies like Mbada Diamonds will be trying to divert public attention from previous controversies. There were controversies which surrounded the mining of diamonds at Chiyanzhwa diamond fields around the 2007-2008 period. The state flexed its muscle and unleashed violence on unarmed civilians under ‘Operation Hakudzokwi’ (Chibuwe, 2009) to move away from the area. Venturing into football sponsorship could be a way of trying to do public relations on behalf of the state to draw away public attention away from brutalities they encountered at the hands of the state.

Mbada Diamonds and Marange Diamonds are not an exception in Zimbabwe or even in neighbouring countries such as South Africa. The relationship between football and mining companies is a historical one in Zimbabwe and other African countries. Scholars (Stapleton, 2001; Alegi, 2010) emphasise on the role played by mining corporations in developing football

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119 Chiredzi is in Masvingo province
in colonial Africa. These scholars contend that these mining corporations introduced and developed football in Africa to sedate the mind of the employees who were being exploited in factories and industries. This argument resonates with the Marxist notion that football is the modern day ‘opium’ of the masses.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has presented and discussed experiences and views of football administrators, sports journalists and members of the corporate world and observations made by the researcher. The chapter concludes that football administration is characterized by regional and ethnic factional fights in modern day Zimbabwe. The government also controls football albeit in subtle manners in modern day Zimbabwe. The next chapter titled ‘The Pitch’ discusses views from footballers, coaches and referees on how football relates to discourses of power, identities and development in Zimbabwe.

**Chapter 5: The Pitch**
This chapter presents and discusses the experiences and views of footballers, coaches and referees. The chapter is titled ‘The Pitch’. This title has been preferred since the respondents belong, as it were, on the football pitch. The chapter explains from the footballers, coaches, and referees viewpoints how football relates to the discourses of power, identity and development in Zimbabwe. This chapter explores the proposition that football in Zimbabwe is more than just a game. Seen as more than a game, football becomes a site where power, identity and development issues converge and diverge.

**Football pitch as a theatre: Identity and power performances**

Zimbabwe has several PSL and ZIFA sanctioned football pitches mainly concentrated in the major cities and towns. In Harare, there is the National Sports Stadium used by national football teams and other PSL teams specifically CAPS United FC. There is also Rufaro Stadium, home to Dynamos FC which is located in Mbare, one of Harare’s oldest high density suburbs. There is also Gwanzura Stadium in Highfields high density suburb. Both Rufaro and Gwanzura are owned by the Harare City Council. Callies Stadium and Danny Bismarck stadium in Arcadia are some of the ‘small’ stadia found in Harare. In Bulawayo there is Babourfields Stadium home to Highlanders Football Club, located in Mzilikazi high density suburb, the city’s oldest suburbs. There is also Luveve Stadium home to How Mine and Chicken Inn Football Clubs, located in Luveve high density suburb. Both Luveve and Babourfields stadium are owned by the Bulawayo City Council.

There are also other football pitches in other smaller towns in Zimbabwe. These include Ascot Stadium (Gweru), Baghdad (Kwekwe), Sakubva (Mutare), Trojan (Bindura), Gibbo (Chiredzi), Dulibadzimu (Beitbridge), Colliery (Hwange), Mandava and Maglas (both Zvishavane) among others. Most of these stadia in small towns are bumpy and rough due to negligence by the responsible authorities. Former Dynamos and Zimbabwe Warriors footballer Moses Chunga, in 2007 condemned Trojan as a ‘Potato field’ due to its state. In 2012, Chunga again described Baghdad Stadium in Kwekwe as a ‘tobacco field’.

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120 Shona word for happiness
Every football pitch in Zimbabwe as elsewhere is demarcated by various markings which assist referees in defining and implementing FIFA laws of the game. These markings include a centre line that divides the pitch into two halves. Plays and [re]plays start at the centre circle. There are also four corner flags marking the edges of the pitch. In Foucauldian terms, these markings can be equated to discourse which regulates the ‘sayable’ and ‘unsayable’ in a given context (Foucault, 1980). Playing the game outside these markings can be interpreted as transgression of discourse. The corner flags also guide referees and players where corner kicks can be taken from.

A penalty box is another crucial demarcation on the pitch. The box assists, defines and regulates where a goalkeeper is allowed to use or not to use hands on the ball. It also assists the referee to determine whether to award a penalty kick or not after a goal bound player has been fouled.

A football team is allowed to field 11 players only and three substitutes in a match. A maximum of three substitutes can be used in a professional football match. The goal keeper is regarded as the ‘first line’ of defense for any team on the pitch. While players from the same team put on similar attire, a goalkeeper dresses uniquely, for easy identification. The goal keeper is also the only player allowed to use his/her hands on the ball during play, but within defined parameters. The goalkeeper also enjoys the privilege of being treated on the pitch in the event of any injury incurred during play. Other players are ‘stretched’ off the pitch and receive treatment outside while play continues. Goalkeepers can at times ‘abuse’ this privilege by feigning injury in an attempt to reduce the pace and tempo of the game when their team is under pressure.

Football language is closer to war, which implies the game’s relationship to broader mainstream power discourses. The goalkeeper is shielded/ protected by defenders. A ‘porous’ defence often exposes the goalkeeper to danger while a punishing defence is the foundation on which success stories of teams are built. The number of defenders used in a match depends with the ‘tactical’ approach or formation preferred by the coach at any given moment. Defenders have different roles although the purpose remains one-to defend. There are usually two centre backs, with the last man usually being called the ‘sweeper’. The name could have emanated from the playing process, since he is expected to collect all loose balls and thwart ‘danger’ that might be facing the goalkeeper. There is also the left and right wing backs in defense to assist the centre backs. These defenders should systematically coordinate for them to successfully thwart danger.
Midfielders immediately follow after the defenders. These midfielders vary in number, depending with the coach’s formation, and have specific names and powers. Amongst the midfielders, there is an ‘anchorman/ defensive link’ who plays at the centre of the midfield, providing cover to the defenders. A ‘good’ anchorman makes the job easier for his/her defense. The midfield is the hub of creativity in football matches. ‘Matches are won or lost on the middle of the park’, implying that midfielders are the nerve centre of a team. Midfielders have the responsibility of creating scoring chances for the team.

A football team is incomplete without strikers. Strikers have the responsibility of scoring goals. The number of strikers used in a match also depends on the coach’s tactical approach. Strikers are however, ascribed various identities by the media or supporters depending with their performances. Some are referred to as ‘chief striker’ or ‘gun man’, a discourse that is closer to war. A team also has substitutes waiting to replace the tired or injured during a match. Within this category, some are identified as ‘super-subs’ due to their ability to change the tempo of the game once introduced in a match.

Not only identities are performed but power is also exercised in various dimensions on the pitch. Every football team has a captain. Just like in the army where a captain is in charge of a squadron, on a football pitch, the captain is the leader of the team. Team captains wear arm bands for easy identification purposes. The captain is the ‘authorised’ spokesperson of the team who raises their complaints to the referee. Any other footballer on the pitch who might just complain to the referee risks being yellow or red carded. Protocol has to be followed on the pitch. It is the responsibility of the coach to appoint a team captain of his/her choice although the boardroom can at times interfere with the coach’s choice. Murape Murape and Innocent Mapuranga are the current club captains for Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC respectively while Partson Jaure is the Warriors captain.

A football pitch can also be equated to a dariro\textsuperscript{121} -a stage for the performances of various identities. Dariro can also be read as a site where heroes and villains emerge. A site characterised by plots and sub power plots. Similarly, a football pitch is also characterised by power and identity discourses. The performance of footballers on the pitch, earn them varying

\textsuperscript{121} This is a Shona word for a theatre
reputations and names. Some players are regarded as ‘stars’ implying they outshine others while others remain ‘ordinary’ footballers. In terms of valuing and rewarding labour of a ‘star footballer’ player is rewarded more than that of an ‘ordinary’ or ‘average footballer. Every team has its own stars. Globally, journalists or media practitioners in each country have the mandate to select best footballer stars of the season and give them financial rewards.

Footballers are not the only crucial ‘actors’ on the pitch/dariro. Without coaches and referees the performance of identities and exercise of power is incomplete on the pitch. Coaches are the ‘brains’ behind the success stories of football clubs. ‘Artistry’ work displayed by players for 90 minutes on the pitch is credited to coaches who groom and impart skills on them. For instance the Spanish national football team is known for its tiki-taka-flowing entertaining passing game, a style credited to John Cruyff122 a former Barcelona football club legend of Dutch origin. In as much as coaches take credit during moments of success, they are expected to take responsibility during times of losses. Their job is a result oriented one. Due to the nature of their job, football coaches always have a love-hate relationship with the boardroom, the media and the terraces. However, the success or failure of a coach depends on the support from the boardroom and even the players. Officially, the boardroom is responsible for the appointment and dismissal of coaches. This implies that the boardroom also has the capacity to create a conducive or a hostile environment that can enhance or constrain a coach to achieve his objectives. Moral and financial support from the boardroom is critical for a coach to successfully guide the team to victory. A smooth relationship is expected to prevail between the coach and the boardroom for the team to yield results.

Football coaches can be described as ‘gate keepers’ due to the power they wield on selecting players who are supposed to play or not at any given moment. Coaches in consultation with their ‘backroom’ staff decide which players to field in the first line up or to be ‘benched’. Regardless of how talented a player might be, he/she cannot just walk onto the pitch to play soccer. It is the coach who has the power to approve the players’ presence on the pitch. During the course of a match, no matter how ‘impressive’ the player might be in the eyes of the boardroom, the terraces or the media, the coach reserves the right to substitute any player depending with the ‘tactical’ approach to be adopted in any given circumstance.

It is the coach in consultation with the boardroom who decides on new players to be signed on, loaned or ‘offloaded’. Equally the boardroom cannot just impose players on the coach, who are not in his plans. The boardroom cannot also just ‘sell’ players without the coach’s consent. At the end of the day, the coach is answerable for the good or bad results a team might achieve.

In Zimbabwe and elsewhere coaches often complain that they lose matches as a result of referees. “…At times referees award decisions such as penalty kicks or red cards which might disadvantage a team resulting in it losing” stated Luke Petros one of the leading Zimbabwe’s coaches to emerge in the post independence era. In most cases, for the entire 90 minutes, coaches hardly sit down but stand near the touch line. This is not only for the purpose of monitoring play and giving instructions to players. The researcher was told that coaches will be attempting to put referees under pressure. At times coaches deliberately signal gestures of dissatisfaction to the referee even when they are fully aware that the referee’s decision is justified. “At times as coaches, we will be trying some tricks, so that the referees can protect our teams. It is not easy to stomach a defeat as a coach…” revealed Luke Masomere a former Dynamos, Warriors and Buffaloes Football Club coach.

While a football pitch is a site or *dariro* for footballers and coaches to perform their superiority, this has to be done through defined limits. Football is regulated by FIFA laws. Referees are there to ‘police’ and ensure that the laws of the game are adhered to on the pitch. Traditionally, referees used to be identified with black attire. However, today the attire for referees appears in different colours. Referees are also identified with their symbols of power—the whistle, the yellow card and the red card. The whistle is always on the mouth, ready to be blown at any moment. The yellow card is for cautioning and stays in the pocket of the shirt. A player cautioned twice, will be expelled from the pitch as this is equivalent to a red card. The red card is the most unpopular symbol of power carried by referees. Footballers, coaches, administrators and the fans hate this ‘device’ because of its implications. Once a player has been red carded, he/she becomes ineligible to play for two consecutive matches.

Four officials preside over any professional football match. The first referee will be on pitch with the whistle and the cards. The other two ‘assistant referees’ commonly known as the ‘lines
man\textsuperscript{123} will be on the opposite ends of the pitch with flags in their hands. The fourth official is commonly referred to as the ‘match commissioner’. In stadia where there are television screens, the fourth official sits before a television screen closely monitoring the progress of the match so as to advise the referee on the centre where he/she might have missed action. The fourth referee is also there to replace any of the three referees who might fail to continue with his/her duties.

For 90 minutes, referees coordinate as a team, controlling proceedings on the pitch, and ‘arbitrating’ on the fate of players. Players are expected to exercise sportsmanship. Those showing unsporting behaviour risk facing the ‘wrath’ of the referee. The power of the referee is not limited to the 22 players on the pitch but extends to the substitutes’ bench. A player can be cautioned or red carded while on the substitute bench if he or she transgresses laws of the game. In essence while coaches have power over players on the pitch, referees have power over coaches. Thus coaches just like their players, can also be red carded by referees if they go against the laws of the game.

Due to their power and ability to ‘influence’ match outcomes, referees always have a love-hate relationship with footballers and coaches as well as the fans. Ideally referees are supposed to be neutral. However, this neutrality is always questionable. Often, players, coaches, club officials, the media and fans accuse referees of awarding ‘dubious’ penalties, rejecting ‘clear’ goals, allowing ‘controversial’ goals to stand or ‘undeservedly’ red carding players. In other words referees are accused of ‘abusing’ their power to ‘punish’ or put other teams at advantage. Referees are also accused of being victims of bribery and of being unethical. Interviewed referees however, refuted such claims insisting that referees operate in a ‘professional’ conduct across the globe. “We are professionals guided by the FIFA code of conduct...But the sad thing is that most losing coaches blame us for their fate” stated Jabulani Ngulube\textsuperscript{124} a Gweru based PSL referee during an interview.

Interviewed footballers who have played for ‘smaller’ teams before joining either Dynamos FC or Highlanders FC claimed that there is a ‘close’ connection between ‘big teams’ particularly Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC and the referees community in Zimbabwe. Some of these players accused referees in the Zimbabwe’s Premier Soccer League of giving preferential

\textsuperscript{123} Even when they are females
\textsuperscript{124} Pseudo name for a Gweru based PSL referee
treatment to players from Dynamos and Highlanders when they play against ‘smaller teams’. This phenomenon was attributed to the teams’ alleged closer connections to the media. Dynamos is said to be closer to The Herald while The Chronicle is closer to Highlanders. Referees are said to be under pressure when officiating matches involving these football teams for fear of negative publicity, which can ruin their careers “It is so painful that when you play either Dynamos or Highlanders, referees deliberately make decisions which cost smaller teams...At times these big clubs are awarded a penalty from nowhere” (Moyo125, 2013). Interviewed referees however, dismissed such allegations as unfounded.

Such negative perceptions towards referees across the world, Zimbabwe included, makes refereeing a dangerous job. At times fans, players and club officials can be violent to the extent of assaulting referees both physically and verbally. The researcher witnessed referees officiating the match between Highlanders and Shabanie Mine Football Club at Maglas Stadium on 29 March 2013, being ferried out of the stadium in ambulances, disguised as patients as Shabanie Mine Football Club supporters threatened to kill these officials. In another similar violent incident, on 21 April 2013 at Rufaro Stadium, after a Dynamos/Highlanders match, Highlanders players Mthulisi Maposa and Milton Ncube attempted to physically assault referee Norman Matemera. These footballers accused Matemera of adding ‘excessive’ time which resulted in Dynamos FC equalising when they thought they had won the match. In the reverse fixture at Babourfields stadium on 27 October 2013, Dynamos defender Partson Jaure also attempted to physically assault referee Thabani Bamala after he had been red carded following an altercation with Highlanders FC striker Njabulo Ncube. One of the ugliest moments in Zimbabwean soccer happened during a social soccer match in Gokwe South during the year 2013. Football team coach Onismo Muruvi Fichani reportedly struck assistant referee Isaac Mbofana on the head with a log, for allegedly raising a flag disallowing a scored ‘controversial goal’. Mbofana died on the spot and Fichani has since been sentenced to 23 years in prison126.

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125 This is an assumed name. The player plays for Shabanie Mine Football Club.
126 http://www.chronicle.co.zw/ref-killer-jailed-23-years/
Unlike in coaching and playing where Zimbabwe has successfully exported labour to neighbouring African and even European leagues; it has not been the same with refereeing. In actual fact, Zimbabwe at one time rather opted to ‘import’ refereeing labour. There were complaints in 2011 by football clubs like Dynamos and Highlanders, fans and the media that Zimbabwean referees are prone to bribes. This prompted ZIFA to hire South African referees to officiate matches for the Mbada Diamonds knockout cup in 2011 (Gumede, 2013). The football pitch therefore can be read as a multifaceted site where power and identity discourses converge as illustrated below making particular reference to Zimbabwe’s 2013 national elections where football iconography and imageries dominated political discourse.

**Referees’ decision is final? The pitch ‘drama’ and Zimbabwean elections**

The football pitch, footballers, referee, football metaphors and other related discourses occupy a central place in contemporary Zimbabwean politics as witnessed prior to the July 2013 Zimbabwean elections. Mainstream political parties- the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) appropriated football images, symbols, metaphors and discourses in their campaign communications. Zimbabwe symbolically became a football pitch where these two main rivals battled to score political points (Ncube, 2014).

Football discourses were dominant in these political parties’ campaign messages. Both ZANU PF and MDC-T referred to themselves as ‘teams’ equating themselves to footballers. ZANU PF ran their campaign under a theme ‘Team ZANU PF Bhora mugedhe/Bhola egedini’ (Maodza, 2013). The Shona phrase *Bhora mugedhi* (or *iBhola egedini* in Ndebele) (score the ball) showed ZANU PF’s intention to score political victory over its main rivals MDC-T. Robert Mugabe launched the ZANU PF election manifesto on 5 July 2013 on a football pitch, at Zimbabwe Grounds in Highfields, and held his last campaign rally on 28 July 2013 at the National Sports

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127 The MDC was formed late 1999 under the leadership of Morgan Tsvangirai. However, the party split into two factions in 2005, with the larger faction remaining under the leadership of Tsvangirai. The party rebranded itself to MDC-T while the smaller faction currently under the leadership of Professor Welshman Ncube rebranded itself as MDC-N.
Stadium. It is important to note that Zimbabwe Grounds was the scene for Mugabe’s first campaign rally in 1980 upon his return from exile. Morgan Tsvangirai similarly, launched the MDC-T campaign at Rudhaka Stadium in Marondera. The rally was dubbed the ‘Game Over Rally’ as the MDC-T leader claimed that the election would mark the end of Team ZANU PF and in particular Mugabe’s participation in the ‘match’- politics. Tsvangirai came with a soccer ball to the rally which he kicked into the crowd, demonstrating the ‘game over’ concept (Ncube, 2014).

During the entire course of the campaign even other political parties like the smaller MDC faction led by Welshman Ncube and ZAPU, made use of stadiums for their campaign star rallies. Welshman Ncube, dubbed his final rally ‘Siyinqaba’ (We are conquerors) which was at White City stadium on 29 July 2013. My research in Bulawayo has revealed that The Siyinqaba slogan is part of Highlanders FC emblem. Given the popularity of Highlanders in Bulawayo and Zimbabwe at large, Ncube’s appropriation may be seen as an attempt to win the attention of Highlanders fans who are the majority in Matabeleland provinces.

Football stadia became crucial sites for Zimbabwean politics. Stadiums did not just host football matches but provided space for political contests to take place. The decision to use soccer stadia was not just for ‘space’. There are other alternative spaces that could have been used for rallies such as rugby stadia, hockey stadia available in Zimbabwe which were however, deliberately not used. Politicians were for spaces familiar to ‘ordinary’ people to identify with the ‘masses’.

During these campaign rallies, political party leaders like Mugabe and Tsvangirai and other political dignitaries sat at the centre of the stadia. These politicians resembled the players. The image and identity of Mugabe was fluid, multiple and circumstantial during the course of the campaign. At one time Mugabe assumed the identity of the ‘coach Gushungo’ and a strategist. Team ZANU PF was strongly advised to play according to the tactics and strategies advised by their coach, Gushungo –Mugabe. However, on some instances, Mugabe was ascribed the identity of the team captain of ‘Team ZANU PF’ which implied he was also a player and leader on the pitch. Mugabe at times was also refered to as the ‘gun man’ or ZANU PF chief striker

128 Gushungo is Mugabe’s totem. In the Shona culture calling someone by his/her totem identity is a sign of respect.
who had the responsibility to pull the ‘trigger’ or to ‘put the ball into the nets’. In that context ZANU PF aspiring councillors who operated at grass roots levels assumed the identity of ‘defenders’ while aspiring parliamentarians were referred to as the midfielders and playmakers. The midfielders were encouraged to supply clear chances to the chief striker Mugabe so that he could easily score as many goals as he could and ‘bury’ the rival team-MDC-T (Ncube, 2014).

At ZANU PF’s last campaign rally on 28 July 2013 at the National Sports Stadium in Harare, a mini football match was organised to demonstrate the Bhora mugedhi/Bhola egedini concept. ZANU PF ‘team’ was wearing green and gold colours, the official colours for Zimbabwe’s national football teams, creating an impression that they represented the Warriors or the ‘nation’ rather. The goalkeeper of the rival team wore red, which symbolised the MDC-T since red is the official colour for the MDC-T, making an impression that they were a ‘foreign’ team. This supports the assertion by historian Peter Alegi that most African governments and politicians usually use football stadia to hold political rallies and for celebrating other key events in the nation state (Alegi, 2010).

Zimbabwe became a microcosm of a football pitch during the period from June up to the 31 July 2013 elections. The impression was that Zimbabwe’s two biggest ‘football teams’, Team ZANU PF and MDC-T Team, were counting down to a big cup final. Such an atmosphere is usually generated when Dynamos and Highlanders are expected to meet in a cup or league deciding match. Though other ‘smaller’ teams are also present in the PSL, the real contest is between Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC in Zimbabwe. Similarly the participation and appropriation of football discourse by ‘smaller’ political parties like MDC and ZAPU were overshadowed by the hype created by MDC-T and ZANU PF. It was a football match marred by intense rivalry indeed.

ZANU PF’s thrust was on ‘putting the ball into the nets’-Bhora mugedhi. MDC-T however challenged the discourse advocating for a counter-hegemonic discourse

– Bhora musango. Bhora musango (‘kick the ball into the bush’) is a tactic used in soccer whereby players of the leading team in a game of football randomly kick the ball out of the pitch
as a delaying tactic (Ncube, 2014). This type of play became synonymous with former Warriors defender Dumisani Mpofu. Occasionally fans would shout ‘rasha Dumi’ or ‘Bhora musango Dumi’ (kick the ball out of play Dumisani), encouraging him to do so when the team was under pressure. Ncube (2014) asserts that the Bhora musango play is attributed as having cost ZANU PF, and Mugabe in particular, during the 2008 harmonised elections. Prior to the 2008 election, there was anxiety that ZANU PF needed another leader to replace Mugabe because of worries about his age. The 2007 annual ZANU PF conference, which was expected to resolve the issue, went on to endorse Mugabe’s candidature for the 2008 election in a move which resulted in discontent in the party. ZANU PF Politburo member Simba Makoni, despite being touted as the ‘Prince’ or possible successor to Mugabe by some sections of the media in Zimbabwe, pulled out of ZANU PF to contest for the presidency. Political analysts (for example, Sachikonye, 2011) have argued that Makoni’s withdrawal from ZANU PF must have caused Mugabe’s defeat because it robbed him - Mugabe - of the ‘electoral initiative’. It is argued that this also put Mugabe’s legitimacy in both quandary and doubt, providing ammunition for the anti-Mugabe critics. It can also be asserted that the Bhora mugedhi/Bhola egedini discourse was used during the 2013 election to counter the subversive 2008 Bhora musango discourse (Ncube, 2014). The MDC-T also appealed to Bhora ngariponjeswe (deflate the ball). Fundamentally, in a football match, once the ball has been deflated it becomes impossible for the match to proceed. Football metaphors thus became a feature and location of power struggles during Zimbabwe’s election. It was more of a psychological warfare between the ZANU and MDC-T teams on the eve of the match.

The iconography of the referee also became central during Zimbabwe’s 2013 elections. To ZANU PF, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) under the leadership of Justice Rita Makarau, which has the legal mandate to run elections in the country, symbolised the referee. Just like in the world of soccer where officials court ‘controversy’ or face accusations of bribery, to the MDC-T ZEC represented a ‘biased’ referee who would influence the outcome of the match in favour of ZANU PF. The MDC-T were therefore participating in the match officiated by ZEC under protest, fully knowing the consequences they were likely to meet—a ‘stolen’ vote. MDC-T questioned the fairness of the elections describing them as a manipulation of figures (Ncube, 2014). The MDC-T therefore appealed to their ‘own referees’ whom they felt would
fairly handle the big match with transparency. ‘Ordinary’ Zimbabweans resembled the referees in the game whose firmness and authority on the match was expected to assist the MDC-T to walk out of the ‘pitch’ celebrating a deserved victory.

Consequently, refereeing symbols such as whistles and the red card could be seen at MDC-T rallies: as a result, one could perhaps be pardoned for interpreting MDC-T rallies as football matches due the presence of whistles and red cards. MDC-T campaign posters at stadiums had images of a hand raising a red card (imitating what happens in a football match where the referee sends off a player who has transgressed against the rules of the game). On that red card was inscribed the phrase ‘Let’s finish it’. Moreover, at MDC-T rallies Tsvangirai and his supporters waved and dramatised this expected ‘sending off’ of Mugabe from the political field of play (Ncube, 2014). The referee metaphor represents the voters. In this case the referee/voters were in charge of the match proceedings with a red card in the pocket and whistle in the mouth as symbols of power which they were ready to utilise. The referees were supposed to exercise their powers including expelling players who violate match rules (using the red card).

The study however, submits that these ‘referees’, despite their power, were also at risk of being ‘beaten’ or killed like what happened to the Gokwe referee mentioned earlier who was killed at a social soccer match. Zimbabwean elections due to allegations of the use of intimidation tactics and violence by ZANU PF (Hammar and Raftopolous, 2003; Wadahl, 2004) could be equated to social soccer. Voters who symbolised referees could be seen as officiating in a jungle where their lives were at risk. However, the MDC-T looked up to the PSL, ZIFA, CAF and FIFA to protect the ‘referees’-voters. In this context, these boardies symbolised election observers.

Mugabe in particular, the ZANU PF team captain, symbolised ‘rogue’ players in the eyes of the MDC-T ‘footballers’ and supporters. It was therefore viewed as both necessary and long over due to red card him in order to allow fair play to prevail. Muponde and Muchemwa (2011) submit that the red card and the referee’s whistle are the central tokens for the desired change and the tools for managing and enforcing political change in Zimbabwe. They become a way of punishing Mugabe and his allies for lack of sportsmanship (Muponde and Muchemwa, 2011). Violence and intimidation have been cited as some of the tactics employed by ZANU PF
to retain their waning hegemony in contemporary Zimbabwe (Hamar and Raftopolous, 2003; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). The red card was therefore expected to discipline Mugabe and his Team ZANU PF.

But does that meant the referee’s decision was going to be final? Shifting perceptions emerged again as pitch symbols and metaphors dominated Zimbabwe’s political discourse. To ZANU PF, the decision\(^{129}\) were to stand. For the MDC-T results announced by their ‘referees’-voters were under threat from the boardroom. In this case, to the MDC-T, ZEC assumed the identity of the boardroom like UEFA or CAF which had power to ‘reverse’ the referee’s red card or other decisions. The boardroom was accused of being sympathetic to team ZANU PF. The same boardroom could in the same manner descend on the referees using violence and other related intimidation tactics. This can be related to the manner in which referees are insulted or even killed like the Gokwe referee mentioned above. The 27 June 2008 election run-off between Mugabe and Tsvangirai failed to take place. Morgan Tsvangirai withdrew from the race in the face of alleged and documented violence, intimidation, murder, torture and arrests perpetrated on his supporters by a combination ZANU PF militia and state security organs (Cheesman and Tendi, 2010). Such discourses were brought into context in the context of the July 2013 election. The MDC-T feared for the lives of their trusted ‘referees’. Thus, football pitch discourses dominated the political landscape and became a site of ideological struggle mainly between Zimbabwe’s mainstream political parties ZANU PF and MDC-T (Ncube, 2014).

The football pitch is not only a site for the play of political power but religious and cultural too. The section below presents and discusses the centrality of football stadia in the manifestation as well as contestation of different ‘religions’ existing in the Zimbabwean society.

**The pitch as a symbolic cultural, religious and ritual entity**

\(^{129}\) Results announced by ZEC
A football pitch can also be understood as a symbolic religious-cultural and ritual entity. Football in Zimbabwe like elsewhere in Africa is closely intertwined with discourses of ‘super natural’ powers. Most footballers and coaches believe that the game cannot just be played without the intervention of ‘super’ powers from other sources. Different ‘religions’ and ‘cultural practices’ are therefore performed on the football pitch.

Football pitches thus are crucial platforms for reflecting different ‘religious’ beliefs and practices co-existing in the Zimbabwean society. Zimbabwe is a multi-religious country with religions comprising of Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion (ATR). Though Christianity appears to be the dominant religion in Zimbabwe, its hegemony is heavily threatened by African traditional religion especially at football matches. Both religions explicitly contest for recognition in football stadiums. Robertson’s (2004) assertion that the popularity of football has resulted in the collapse of orthodox religions such as Christianity is anachronistic, or at the very least not a uniform phenomenon worldwide.

Christianity is popularised in football stadiums during matches. It is actually portrayed as the de-facto dominant and ‘morally’ accepted religion. ‘Marginalized’ religions such as African Traditional Religion also surface during football matches. Zimbabwe is a largely Christian society and this is reflected by some of the rituals performed on football pitches, before, during and after football matches. Before each soccer match, footballers kneel down or just bow their heads in prayer asking for ‘divine’ power to outdo their opponents. At times The Holy Bible will be present during these prayer ‘rituals’. The opening of the bible and reading of specific texts from the bible could be interpreted as an act of inculcating confidence in players. Winning or losing a football match is described as ‘God’s will or grace’. In an interview, Kelvin Kaindu Highlanders FC coach said:

I am a Christian and a believer, by praying. The Lord’s grace will guide us to victory…Last year (2012) Highlanders lost the league championship to Dynamos but it was God’s plan and this year I continue praying for God’s grace so that we can win the league” (Kaindu, 2013).

The researcher observed that football teams ‘prayer positions’ are systematic. Teams hardly change praying positions. Dynamos FC players consistently kneel and pray between the goal
posts. One player told the researcher that the club’s culture is to pray between goal posts they will be defending in the first half as a way of appealing to ‘divine’ powers to protect their goalkeeper from conceding goals. Other football clubs such as CAPS United FC and Highlanders FC use the centre circle as their site of prayer. Lack of flexibility on adjusting or changing positions of prayers confirms the assertion by Foucault that discourse structures the world and tends to shape human behavior (Foucault, 1980). There is a psychological belief that changing praying position can bring bad luck to the team.

The dominance of Christianity in football stadiums does not imply the absence of other religious sub-cultural forms of ‘religions’ (see Gramsci, 1970). The Zimbabwean football landscape is so obsessed with beliefs in juju than has been generally appreciated. Mhiripiri (2010) observes that ‘identities’ are performances and the football pitch is one of those sites where religious-cultural identities are performed. Footballers perform both Christianity and African Traditional Religion identities on and off the pitch. The same players and coaches who kneel down praying before and after matches also appeal to juju, for redemption or to ‘complement’ divine power or vice versa. Some players revealed to the researcher that they had never consulted n’angas (traditional healers) in their lives until such a time they joined certain football clubs which ‘initiated’ them to the rituals.

Goalkeepers, team managers, coaches and team captains are some of the key people responsible for taking juju to football pitches. Every player is bound to comply with ‘religious’ rituals of the club or else his contract can be terminated. Luke Petros, a former captain of Lancashire Steel Football Club and Zimbabwe Warriors player, confirmed this position. “During my days as the captain for Lancashire Steel I could be tasked to carry the juju. As the captain I had to lead by example and there is no way I could refuse since this could be interpreted as insubordination…” (Petros, 2013).

Lloyd Mutasa a former Dynamos coach was relieved off duties in 2011 after he had instructed Dynamos players to shift their praying positions from the goal posts to the centre circle. He also told the players not to bow their heads when praying but to look to the east, a practice of the “Johane Masowe Apostolic church” where Mutasa worshiped. Interestingly, Dynamos’ poor performance was also blamed on this ‘shift’ from the traditional way of praying.

Luke Petros played for the now defunct Lancashire football club in Kwekwe in the 1990s, played for CAPS United in 1999 and joined Kazer Chiefs of South Africa from 2000-2002. He also played for Zimbabwe Warriors during this period.
Other players interviewed also confided to the researcher that most PSL clubs consulted traditional healers or *n’angas* for *juju* before matches. “Some of these teams ‘camp’ at graveyards or *sangomas* for the whole night before a match” said a Highlanders Football Club player who preferred anonymity. This *juju* is believed to protect footballers from harm and give them good luck to score goals and chase away evil spirits that might bring losses to the team. George Kandiero, head of the Zimbabwe National Traditional Healers Association and also a practicing herbalist was quoted in *The Herald* newspaper in 2013 confirming that PSL teams often consult services of traditional healers to win matches. “Losing teams are always coming to us to find a good remedy, a good *muti* (medicine)...Teams, big and small, want to enhance their performance or confuse their opponents”, (Kandiero, 2013)

In March 2014, *Gemazo* magazine published a story claiming that Dynamos Football Club used US$14 000 to pay bills for the services of several traditional healers for the 2013 PSL season (Makanda and Viriri, 2014:3). On average thus Dynamos spent US$500 per match. The story however, claimed that the Dynamos board is split over the use of *juju* with coach Kalisto Pasuwa publicly stating that he is a member of the Johane Masowe weChishanu Apostolic church while some members of the technical team prefer to use *juju* for the team to win (Makanda and Viriri, 2014:3). There is also precedence of conflicts between Dynamos coaches and the executive over the use of *juju* and/prophecy. Elvis Chiweshe claimed in 2010 after leaving Dynamos that he was being forced to use *juju*. Lloyd Mutasa who succeeded Chiweshe was also allegedly dismissed as a result of misunderstandings with the Dynamos Board of Directors after refusing to use *juju* in favour of Christian prophets (Makanda and Viriri, 2014:3). The researcher however, failed to interview these three coaches to get their perspectives on the issue.

There is a general belief in Zimbabwean soccer that hosting teams secretly plant some charms/medicines at strategic points such as dressing rooms, stadium entrances, goal posts, corner flanks and at the centre. Due to such beliefs, at times players refuse to use the ‘normal’

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entrances into stadiums\textsuperscript{133}, preferring to climb fences and durawalls. They also refuse to shake hands of players from the opposing team in a belief that their \textit{juju} can be ‘neutralised’. “You cannot just greet everyone before a match because you don’t know what he has …that’s risk because some players bring juju to weaken opponents or give them bad luck” stated Job Moyo\textsuperscript{134} a Dynamos footballer during an interview. The researcher witnessed incidents where other teams refused to do a ‘warm up’ routine exercise before the match. For instance, on 21 April 2013 at Rufaro Stadium, at a match between Dynamos and Highlanders\textsuperscript{135} Football Club some Highlanders players refused to go for a pre-match warm up. The researcher was later on told by some insiders at Highlanders Football Club that they had been ‘warned’ by ‘prophecy’ that Dynamos had planted juju on the pitch so going for a warm up exercise would expose them to the harm posed by the \textit{juju}. The match however, ended in a 1-1 draw.

There are also allegations that some \textit{sangomas}\textsuperscript{136} (traditional healers) have ‘power’ to ‘remove’ goal posts and keep them in their ‘pockets’ for 90 minutes, resulting in opposing teams failing to score. Strikers’ failure to score is at times attributed to the fact that there will be no goal posts but mere ‘reflections’. Such is the complicated story of \textit{juju} in Zimbabwean soccer. It became difficult for the researcher to separate facts from fiction in as far as these discourses are concerned. This belief in \textit{juju} power was also witnessed at Rufaro Stadium during a match between Harare City and Monomotapa Football Club on 29 September 2013. A black cat emerged from the terraces and rushed onto the pitch and went to the Monomotapa goal area. Harare City Football Club, the hosts and also the owners of the stadium scored just after the incident. Supporters in the stadium particularly from Monomotapa football club, called for Harare City Football Club to account for the ‘origins’ of the cat.

\textsuperscript{133} On 15 July 2013 Chicken Inn football club refused to use the normal entry at Babourfields stadium where they played Highlanders football club. This was because they suspected Highlanders had sprinkled juju which could negatively affect their play
\textsuperscript{134} Pseudo name
\textsuperscript{135} Highlanders players refused to go for warm up exercise before their match against Dynamos, a decision which some of the club officials told this researcher was adopted because they had been told by reliable sources that Dynamos had smeared \textit{juju} on the pitch, hence going for a warm up could result in them falling into the ‘juju trap’. In an interview, however, Kelvin Kaindu dismissed such juju speculations, arguing that this was only a ‘strategy’ of trying to beat Dynamos.
\textsuperscript{136} This is Ndebele word for a traditional healer
Due to *juju* beliefs, the use of salt\(^{137}\) and urine\(^{138}\) have become common practices at football stadiums. These are meant to ‘neutralise’ opponents’ *juju*. At times, footballers openly sprinkle water mixed with salt or urine at ‘strategic’ points where they suspect charms could have been planted. In Foucauldian analysis, this could be interpreted as signifying the capillary of power. Power is present even in banal aspects (Foucault, 1980; Mbembe, 2001). It implies that ‘ordinary’ things like urine and salt signify soft power discourses. Those who ‘plant’ *juju* (or what they believe to be *juju*) in stadiums would be aiming to benefit from supernatural powers. However, they are not guaranteed everlasting protection from *juju* as urine and salt can be used to subvert that power. It might be compared to a gambler’s luck – sometimes they win and sometimes not. Foucault (1980) states that discourse produces and protects power, but discourse can also expose power and make it fragile (see Gaventa, 2003). In other words, discourse can also be the actual entry point for resistance. This is what really happens when salt and urine are also used to challenge whether ‘real’ or ‘imagined’ *juju* ‘planted’ by other teams in stadia.

In order to ‘protect’ themselves from harmful *juju*, some of the players put salt on their heads and playing boots. This salt is also meant to neutralise the power of the opponents. At times footballers go on to the extent of soaking their socks in urine so that when they come into contact with opponents who use *juju* they will be ‘protected’ and ‘neutralise’ the *juju*. Some footballers also told the researcher that baboon urine is the most powerful device used to ‘neutralise’ *juju* in soccer.

It has also become a ‘culture’ for some teams to travel with containers of urine when they go for matches. Josphat Shoko\(^{139}\) a Dynamos Football Club player stated, “Urine matures with age like wine so we prefer using urine which has lasted for some days” (Shoko, 2013). At times when goals are elusive, supporters give the ball boys bottles of urine to throw or sprinkle on the goal. Discourses of ‘purity’ tend to emerge when such rituals are performed. “In most cases young

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\(^{137}\) In Zimbabwean society, salt is commonly believed to be a powerful weapon for neutralising evil spirits and ‘magical’ powers. Due to this belief salt discourse has become part of the ‘instruments’ used at stadiums to neutralise *juju*

\(^{138}\) In the Zimbabwean tradition, especially among the Shona speaking people, there is a belief that urine can be used to neutralise dangerous medicine or evil spirits. As a result of this belief football teams always resort to the use of urine especially when they are failing to score goals. There is a belief that once urine is poured between the goal posts, charms will be neutralized and goals come.

\(^{139}\) Psedo name for Dynamos FC player
boys who are yet to have sexual intercourse are supposed to perform the ritual of throwing urine on the goal”, the researcher was told.

On 15 July 2013 at Rufaro Stadium at a match between Dynamos FC and Buffaloes Football Club, the researcher witnessed the urine ‘ritual’ being performed. Dynamos despite dominating play, failed to score goals. This triggered the Dynamos family to believe that *juju* had been used by Buffaloes FC to prevent them from scoring. The ball boys soaked the Buffaloes FC goal area with urine. Resultantly, Dynamos scored a goal through their defender Augustine Mbara.

Football pitches owned by mining teams are said to be the ‘hottest’ zones for *juju*. There are allegations that these teams hardly lose matches at their home grounds due to *juju*. Peter Dube\(^\text{140}\), a former Highlanders FC players, argued, “From our playing days in Rhodesia and early years after independence we knew that it was difficult to win a match at places like Hwange, Mhangura, Rio Tinto, Ziscosteel and Shabanie Mine… those mining teams were very good at using *juju*” (Dube, 2013). Luke Masomere a former Hwange Football Club player and Dynamos FC coach also supported this position. “During my days as a player at Hwange, we could not play any match without *juju* and this was the norm, as the coach would really advise us to make sure that everybody has *juju*…” (Masomere, 2013).

The connection between mining teams and *juju* however, is intricately linked to the establishment of mining communities in Southern Rhodesia. The mining community in Zimbabwe is dominated by what historian Muzondidya (2004) has categorised as Zimbabwe’s invisible ethnic minorities. Descendants of immigrants from countries such as Malawi and Zambia who came to Southern Rhodesia during the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1953-1963) are concentrated in mining towns. These people came looking for employment and the mines and farms became common areas where they were absorbed. Some of these people’s surnames include Phiri, Banda, Mwale among others. They have been stereotyped as the experts when it comes to the use of *juju* in football and other social dimensions.

Of late Zimbabwean football has become dominated with ‘prophecy’. Prophet Blessing Chiza leader of the Eagle life Assemblies Church from Bulawayo is one of these prophets who have openly predicted match results particularly for Highlanders and the Warriors. On 18 November

\(^\text{140}\) Pseudo name for Highlanders FC former player
2013, prior to the Mbada Diamonds Cup final match between Highlanders and How Mine Football Club, Prophet Chiza ‘prophesised’ that Highlanders would win the trophy (Shumba, 2013). Chiza was quoted in *The Chronicle* state controlled daily newspaper saying:

Two days ago I saw a vision of a trophy with two handles, with black and gold emeralds at the bottom and Zimbabwean colours. I checked on the Internet and saw that the trophy that I had seen in the vision looked exactly like the Mbada Diamonds Cup. God said it is definite that they will get it. I saw them lifting the trophy and God said he wants to give them money. “This is a sign of what God is going to do. I have spoken to their assistant coach Bekithemba Ndlovu and told him that his people must not use *juju*. That is the condition. The team that will play with Highlanders can climb up the mountain, walk down the valley and visit any traditional healer to win the Cup but God has said the Cup is for Highlanders (Shumba, 2013141).

Importantly, the prophet gave Highlanders footballers a condition for them to win the cup. The players were supposed to strengthen their relationship with God and exhibit faith by not using *juju*. Moreover, the prophet stated that football is equally a religion on its own and thus demons are also present in the ‘beautiful’ game.

…It is a religion, which is why thousands of people are seen at stadia every Sunday to watch soccer matches…God says we cannot conquer Bulawayo until we have conquered Barbourfields Stadium. We must pray for our teams and we will start with Bosso… Football is spiritual, that is why we see people fighting, stoning each other and some spending days without eating when their favourite team does not win (Shumba, 2013).

Interestingly, Highlanders won the Mbada Diamonds Cup final on a 3-1 score line. It could however, not be ascertained whether it was because the team had followed Prophet Chiza’s ‘advise’ not to use *juju*. Prophet Chiza has not only made his prophecies in matches involving Highlanders but the Warriors too. On 28 January 2014 prior to a CHAN tournament semi-final between the Zimbabwe Warriors and Libya in South Africa, Chiza predicted that the Warriors would win the match 3-0 with Highlanders player Peter Moyo being one of the scorers (Shumba, 2013). The Warriors however, lost the match after a penalty shootout. The match had ended 0-0

141 http://www.chronicle.co.zw/chiza-predicts-bosso-victory-in-mbada-cup-final
in the regulation time. Fans and the media blamed Chiza for giving the nation false hope. The prophet however, blamed some ‘spiritual forces’ and lack of cooperation particularly from the coach Ian Gorowa (Shumba, 2013).

…I told the coach that we had to walk together for them to win the match but he was not forthcoming. It was of paramount importance for me to talk to him and give him a few instructions, such as making sure that no player enters the stadium with *juju* (Shumba, 2013).

It can be argued that prophets or traditional healers always find excuses when proven wrong by the ‘reality’. In this context, the alleged use of *juju* by some footballers in the Warriors team became a ‘scapegoat’ to account for the team’s loss when the prophet had given the nation hope. In the broader framework, football is reflecting Zimbabwean society at large. Contemporary Zimbabwean society has witnessed the rise of prophets such as Emmanuel Makandiwa, Uebert Engels, and Walter Magaya among others. These prophets are competing for recognition in a society characterised by various religious beliefs as well as religious denominations. Football or sport in particular could be viewed as one of the crucial platforms where these prophets seeking prominence and attention appeal to. Religious goals can be scored through football as well.

The publicity and prominence given to prophesy issues in the media and other spaces could also be interpreted as a reflection of the society. Christianity and prophecy in particular is hailed and given legitimacy as a sure route to God and heaven. African Traditional Religion practices and traditional healers are despised, despite people consulting their services in secrecy. The ‘beautiful’ game therefore becomes a mirror for reflecting societal identity, power and cultural issues.

Prophecy and ‘dreams’ is not something limited to the ‘prophets’ and church leaders in Zimbabwe. Even football coaches like Luke Masomere claim that they equally ‘dreamt’ before crucial matches. Masomere\(^{142}\) stated that at times he ‘dreams’\(^{143}\) a night before a match.

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\(^{142}\) Luke Masomere is the current Buffaloes football club coach. He started his football career as a player at Shabanie Mine in 1984, and later joined Mashonaland United (now Zimbabwe Saints) football club in 1986 and finally Wankie (now Hwange) in 1990, where he started his coaching career in 1995. He has also coached Amazulu football club in South Africa where he won the league championship in 2003, Dynamos 2004, CAPS United, Masvingo United, Shabanie Mine and the Warriors.
If you are a soldier there is a time that you dream whilst you are in the battlefield, if you are a doctor there is also a time when you dream whilst you are in the theatre, I am a football coach there is also a time that I dream my team playing or to dream about football. So it came one night when I was sleeping in 2012 when we were about to play FC Platinum in the Mbada Diamonds cup semi final... at times I refuse to mention score lines for fear of being accused of ‘fixing’ matches...(Masomere, 2013).

Dreams and prophecy are embraced in Zimbabwean football as part of modernity while *juju* is attacked as a reflection of backwardness and lack of civilization. According to Masomere, prayer and modern soccer coaching techniques go hand in hand. Masomere who claims to be the ‘Doctor of football,’ stated that previously, coaching soccer was viewed as a hobby and a place for those with passion. However, coaching now requires those educated and qualified to do the job like himself who possess a ‘PhD’ in football which took him ten years to ‘complete’.

My PhD was on the ‘scientific and professional wider knowledge’ of coaching football in relation to current global developments... Football has become really scientific and sophisticated, and it needs great minds that acknowledge this and quickly adapt to coaching formations and playing methods which are compatible with the prevailing global trends (Masomere, 2013).

Masomere however, highlighted that some of his colleagues in the coaching profession are reluctant to move with times by continuing to use *juju* at the expense of embracing ‘modernity’ and ‘development’ in the game.

It is so sad that even some of Zimbabwe’s biggest football clubs are coached by traditional healers or *sangomas* who masquerade as coaches... It is embarrassing to find that some of my friends spend their time hunting for *juju* instead of learning new tactics and skills required by the game...such people are resisting change” (Masomere, 2013).

On 19 October 2012 Masomere was quoted in the press claiming that Prophet Makandiwa had appeared in his dream telling him about the two teams which were going to make it to the finals of the Mbada Diamonds cup final (*The Herald* 19 October 2012:6). Masomere however refused to mention the teams which were going to win.
The researcher also posed the question: Does juju work? Kaindu responded “If juju works, Africa should have won the World Cup and no other continent would have succeeded in taking it away from Africa” (Kaindu, 2013). Pannenborg (2012) has argued that African football teams believe so much in the use of juju. Though most football administrators and footballers deny using juju, the reality is that teams look for ‘armament’ before crucial matches.

The ‘beautiful’ game should be treated as more than a game in Zimbabwe as elsewhere since it assists us to view various aspects and behaviours of a society on different aspects. Football pitches in Zimbabwe should be understood both literal and metaphorical senses as they reflect Zimbabweans’ everyday life routines. Below the thesis discusses the problem of ethnicity in Zimbabwean football and how it affects player movement particularly between Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC.

**Soma-Phiri breaks the ‘Shangani river ritual’**

This research advances that ethnicity and regionalism are some of the problems affecting player movement in the local PSL. Interviewed footballers revealed that this problem was mainly common in the first and second decade after Zimbabwe’s independence. Interviewees further stated that this problem was also common in the Warriors camp from early independence. Warriors’ footballers were said to be divided along regional lines specifically between the Northern and Southern regions. Just like in the boardroom, these divisions also manifested in Ndebele/Shona binaries.

Joramu Moyo\textsuperscript{144} blamed footballers from Matabeleland-Southern part of the country for being at the forefront of inciting tribalism in the Warriors camp. “Those players often excluded themselves from the rest in camp and would spark tribal tensions for us in camp, which however, were not necessary”. Footballers from the Southern region however, refuted such accusations and equally blamed footballers from the North for being on the forefront of triggering ethnic hostilities during national team matches.

\textsuperscript{144} Pseudo name for former Dynamos and Warriors footballer
The presence of ethnic conflicts in national football teams was also reinforced by former Warriors players Abbas Amidu, David Kutyauripo and Luke Petros. Amidu who played for the junior and senior national football teams in the 1990s stated that:

When we were playing for the Under 20, Under 23 and the senior national team people in these teams were divided. The Bulawayo guys would do their own things and the Harare guys would do likewise. Even the sleeping arrangements they would sleep on their own. On the football pitch we would however, play together, but in camp, those things existed (Amidu, 2013).

Amidu and Kutyauripo further stated that players like Peter Ndlovu, Benjani Mwaruwari (both former Warriors team captains from Bulawayo) and Harlington Shereni played important roles in fostering unity in the national team camps.

Ethnic conflicts that characterised the national football teams were also present in the then Super League, now Premier Soccer League. Due to these tensions, footballers could hardly transfer from the Southern region to the Northern region. Footballers from Matabeleland and Midlands provinces were thus restricted to either play for the Bulawayo based teams Highlanders and Mashonaland United (later Zimbabwe Saints). Ndebele speaking players would opt for Highlanders while Shona speaking players opted for Zimbabwe Saints. In Harare, Mashonaland provinces, Masvingo and Manicaland provinces and some parts of the Midlands predominantly occupied by Shona speaking people, footballers preferred to play for Dynamos FC, CAPS United or any other football teams in Harare. It was a ‘taboo’ to cross the Shangani river moving either from Harare or Bulawayo going either side. Dynamos and Highlanders were the protagonists of regional and ethnic tag of wars between Harare and Bulawayo.

Former Dynamos FC footballers such as Luke Masomere, Abbas Amidu and George Shaya highlighted that it was impossible for a player to move from Dynamos FC and join Highlanders FC or the other way round as ‘Ndebele/ Shona’ discourses were unavoidable. Amidu stated “It was very rare during our time to have players coming from Bulawayo to play for Dynamos... Only exceptions were players like Nkululeko Dlamini from that region who played with us” (Amidu, 2013). Nkululeko Dlamini however, - though ‘Ndebele’ and tracing ‘roots’ from

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145 Abbas Amidu and Nkululeko Dlamini played for Dynamos in the 1980s and late 1990s.
Matabeleland grew up in Harare and never played for Highlanders. The researcher however, failed to interview Dlamini and get his response on the matter.

As a result of regional and ethnic conflicts that were present in Zimbabwean soccer specifically just after independence, no football player transferred from Dynamos to play for Highlanders or from Highlanders to join Dynamos. Makwinji Soma-Phiri became the first player in Zimbabwe football history to metaphorically ‘cross the Shangani River when he joined Dynamos in 1994 from their rivals Highlanders. What motivated Makwinji to take such a decision? “I had some misunderstandings with people at Highlanders hence I decided to leave the club... Dynamos were our biggest rivals so they were the next big team and I was up for the challenge …” (Soma-Phiri, 2013). Football is not limited to scoring goals in the pitch but beyond (see Pannenborg, 2010). By joining Dynamos, Highlanders’ biggest football rivals in Zimbabwe, Makwinji was ‘scoring back points’ against those who had frustrated him at Highlanders.

Makwinji Soma-Phiri’s decision to cross the Shangani River not only shocked but angered his family, friends and the Highlanders football community. He revealed that some were pessimistic and doubted his chances of settling at Dynamos Football Club, given the traditional rivalry which exists between the two clubs. “… Most people thought I couldn’t make it, and actually thought I was crazy by joining Dynamos” (Soma-Phiri, 2013). Highlanders’ supporters in particular did not take his decision lightly. Makwinji was subjected to heavy criticism and booing especially when Dynamos played Highlanders. “Highlanders fans would call me all sorts of names hure (prostitute) or mutengesi (sell-out) but I was not moved and remained focused on my new job to score goals for Dynamos…and I scored them” (Soma-Phiri, 2013).

Despite the tension or rivalry which exists between teams from the Northern part and those from the Southern part of the country-Dynamos and Highlanders in particular, players in contemporary times are free to move around joining clubs of their own choice though there are some people who still have reservations over this issue. Crossing the Shangani River remains an issue though not as bad it was when Makwinji Soma Phiri broke the jinx in 1994. In actual fact,

146 Makwinji Soma-Phiri grew up in Bulawayo and joined Highlanders football club as a youngster and rose through the club’s junior structure. He played for Highlanders in the then Super league from 1989 until 1994 when he joined Dynamos. Makwinji is well known for his ‘trade mark’ headers which made him a hero at Highlanders and later Dynamos. He played and scored for Dynamos in an African Champions league match against Asec Mimosa of Ivory Coast in 1998. According to him, that goal he scored from a header, remains the most memorable goal in his football career.
after Makwinji Soma-Phiri had left Bulawayo to go and play in Harare, more players followed suit, especially after the year 2000.

Dazzy Kapenya, Lovemore Ncube and the late Lenny Gwata are some of the Highlanders players who went on to join Dynamos FC from Highlanders FC. Another ‘rare’ case was of Stewart Murisa, who made a name playing for Caps United FC in 1996 but crossed the divide to join Dynamos FC in 2001. However, Murisa left Harare in 2002 and crossed the Shangani River in the opposite direction to play for Highlanders Football Club. Gift Lunga (Jnr) left Highlanders to join Caps United FC and was part of the Charles Mhlauri-coached side that won back to back PSL titles in 2004 and 2005.

Masimba Mambare became the latest player to cross the Shangani River from Highlanders FC to Dynamos FC in 2014. Actually, The Chronicle newspaper labelled Mambare a ‘traitor’ for his decision to join Dynamos FC. It appears the regional or ethnic ‘grudge’ somehow resurfaces.

The section below shift attention from the local sphere, exploring Zimbabwean footballers movement to foreign leagues.

**Playing for hope: Europe via South Africa**

The fact that football has developed to become a profession and an industry implies that footballers expect competitive remunerations which allow them to lead decent lives. Interviewed footballers revealed that most footballers in Zimbabwe cannot afford to buy houses and thus they live on rented premises. Moreover, most of these footballers cannot afford to drive their own cars as a result of paltry salaries they receive. Interviewed footballers in the PSL therefore stated that they play football for prestige and ‘hope’. Their ‘hope’ is that one day opportunities will come for them to go and play in better remunerating leagues. “...Our salaries are very low in Zimbabwe...I just hope that one day opportunities will come so that I can play in South Africa or other better paying leagues around the world”, stated Washington Pakamisa a Dynamos Football Club player. These footballers get inspiration from their colleagues who have made it to the neighbouring South African league and other better paying leagues.
Luke Petros who played for South African team Kaizer Chiefs (2001-2003) expressed that playing in South Africa positively transformed his life. “… I managed to educate my kids, buy my house and develop my rural area after playing for Kaizer Chiefs. Playing here in Zimbabwe it is very difficult to find a team which can give you money to buy a house like this one. I have today…(Petros, 2013). To Petros the South African league is a sure route for footballers to develop and transform their lives for the better.

Resultantly, Zimbabwean footballers have been leaving the country particularly in the post 2000 period due to the declining national economy and a hyperinflationary environment. Europe and Asia have become some of the destinations for some of these Zimbabwean players as they seek to earn a better living. It appears the Zimbabwean Premier Soccer League has been reduced to a ‘breeding’ and training ground for the South African Premier Soccer League.

Interviewed footballers also revealed that their ‘dream’ is to play football in European leagues. These footballers stated that unlike the South African Premier Soccer League which only develops the player financially, Europe goes beyond the financial aspect. “Besides obvious financial gains, Europe exposes our footballers to the wider knowledge of the game that includes modern playing techniques, player’s diet and even coaching knowledge” revealed Paul Gundani. In other words, Europe is perceived as the cradle of football ‘civilisation’. South Africa, therefore, is regarded as a stepping stone or ladder for the route to Europe. There are a number of Zimbabwean footballers such as Benjani Mwaruwari and Knowledge Musona who used the South African Premier Soccer League as avenues to eventually play in the English Premiership and the German Bundesliga respectively.

One of Dynamos football club founding members Freddy Mkwesha, the first Zimbabwean black player to secure a football contract in Europe, Portugal at the height of colonialism in Southern Rhodesia in 1966. He played for Sporting deBragga football club and spent 18 years in that country until 1984 when Caps United football club flew him back home to take a coaching job at the club.
talented youngsters to go and get that European exposure. It actually benefits even our national team. Look at Ghana and Ivory Coast; most of their players are going to Europe. If we are going to blend them with local players then it will be good for us (Mkwesha, 2013).

Mkwesha’s 18 year experience in Portugal might be the source of influence for his high opinion of the European leagues. From Mkwesha’s perspective, exporting football labour to Europe results in football development in different ways. Footballers playing in Europe are said to assist the national team to develop, the way countries like Ghana and Ivory Coast who have majority of their footballers in Europe (Darby, 2007; Alegi, 2010) have done. Zimbabwe is therefore supposed to follow suit if its national teams are to improve when competing at continental and global level.

Paradoxes were however, noted within the hailed ‘development’ discourse associated with exporting football labour to the South African and European leagues. While muscle drain (see Darby, 2007) benefits individuals and transform their lives, it was also highlighted that this trend has compromised the development and quality of Zimbabwean football. Former CAPS United and the Warriors goalkeeper Brenna Msiska revealed “… If we had the money to keep our players we would want to retain them, look at Dynamos, their Champions (League) journey was cut short because they lost their best players to foreign clubs” (Msiska, 2013).

Dynamos FC lost four footballers to the South African Premier Soccer League in 2013. These include Takesure Chinyama (Orlando Pirates), Denver Mukamba (Bidvest Wits), Roderick Mutuma (Celtic) and Washington Arubi (Pretoria University) (Kausiyo, 2013). In 2014, Dynamos lost their goalkeeper George Chigova and key defender as well as Warriors captain Partson Jaure to a South African club, Pretoria University. Highlanders FC also lost Milton Ncube, Peter Moyo and Kudakwashe Mahachi to South African teams in 2014 (Sharuko, 2014).

As indicated by Msiska above, the quality of Zimbabwean football is declining due to the departure of ‘quality’ footballers on a yearly basis. This can be confirmed by the fact that Dynamos football club reached the finals of the African Champions league in 1998 where they lost 2-4 to Asec Mimosa of Ivory Coast in ‘controversial’ circumstances (Sharuko, 2014).
2008 Dynamos also reached the semi-finals of that completion (Sharuko, 2013). Dynamos Football Club has however, failed to progress beyond the first round of the African Champions League since 2008. In 2011, the team suffered its heaviest defeat since establishment as they were beaten 6-0 by Esperance of Tunisia in a Champions league match (Sharuko, 2013).

An inverse relationship was thus established. While footballers leaving Zimbabwe for South Africa or Europe are benefiting financially, the standards of the local game are spiralling down. Sport sociologists have however, argued that this situation is not peculiar to Zimbabwe alone but most African countries save for a few like South Africa which has a strong economy at the moment (Darby, 2007; Alegi, 2010). Crucially, the debate of player movement in Zimbabwe also cascade to the terrain of coaches. While Zimbabwe has been exporting playing labour, when it comes to coaching, the country also significantly relies on foreign labour especially for the national team-the Warriors.

‘Foreign’ or ‘local’ coaches?

Since the professionalisation and commercialisation of football in Zimbabwe in 1993, football coaches are now being recognised as professionals. In line with FIFA and CAF requirements the Premier Soccer League in Zimbabwe and ZIFA allow only those with a minimum qualification of the Zimbabwe Soccer Coaches Association (ZISCA) Level four certificate, a CAF Licence B or better to coach a Premier Soccer League team. Those coaching in the lower regional division leagues are also expected to be holders of the ZISCA Level three coaching certificate and a CAF Licence C or better (Gwesela 2013).

The exact number of ‘qualified’ Premier Soccer League soccer coaches in Zimbabwe could not be ascertained. However, from a gender point of view, one could argue that coaching is largely a ‘male domain in Zimbabwe. All the 16 PSL football teams in the PSL are coached by men. The ‘backroom staff’ is also composed of men. Since independence, no Zimbabwe PSL team has ever appointed a female coach. The same can also be said about the Warriors. The coaching departments have also been dominated by men since independence.

Xolisani Gwesela is the Communications Officer for the Zimbabwe Football Association

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149 Xolisani Gwesela is the Communications Officer for the Zimbabwe Football Association
Most PSL coaches in Zimbabwe are retired footballers. Unlike in the boardroom where business people and politicians dominate, it is rare to find those with a non-playing background on the coaching bench. Charles Mhlauri a former CAPS United coach who guided the team to back to back league cup victories in 2004 and 2005 is the only coach with a non-playing background who managed to win a league championship with a Zimbabwean team. Mhlauri also guided the Warriors to their second Africa Cup of Nations finals in Egypt 2006.

Former Dynamos footballers constitute a huge number of coaches currently coaching Zimbabwean PSL teams. These include Kalisto Pasuwa (Dynamos), Taurai Mangwiro (CAPS United), Biggy Zuze (Triangle United), Masimba Dinyero (Harare City), Lloyd Mutasa (FC Platinum), Luke Masomere (Buffaloes), Moses Chunga (Chiredzi FC). Former Dynamos players and coaches also have a record of higher achievement in Zimbabwe. Sunday Chidzambwa is the first Zimbabwean coach to guide a Zimbabwean team (Dynamos) to the finals of the CAF Champions League. Another former Dynamos player David Mandigora guided the same team to the semi-finals of the CAF Champions league in 2008 at the height of the Zimbabwean crisis. In 2004, Chidzambwa became the first coach to guide the Warriors to the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) in 2004.

From 1980, both the Warriors and Premier Soccer League clubs have often attracted foreign coaches of European and African origin. Reinhard Fabisch (late) from Germany who coached the Warriors from 1991-1994, is one of the respected European coaches to have ever coached the country’s national team. Mickey Pool (England), Clemens Westerhof (Netherlands), Ian Poterfield, Wieslaw Grabowski (Poland), Klaus Dieter Pagels (Germany) are some of the European coaches who coached the Warriors at different epochs (Sharuko, 2013). These mentioned coaches however, failed to qualify for either the Africa Cup of Nations or the World Cup finals. Despite their little success in Zimbabwe informants to the thesis stated that European coaches in particular are needed partners in the development of Zimbabwean football.

Brenna Msiska\(^{150}\) said “We need them as technical advisors so that we learn one or two things from them while they also learn a thing or two from us. They know football better than we do

\(^{150}\) Brenna Msiska is the Goalkeepers’ coach at CAPS United. He played for Zimbabwe Warriors and was Sunday Chidzambwa’s assistant coach when Zimbabwe Warriors qualified for the Africa Cup of nations for the first time in 2004
here” (Msiska, 2013). Another former footballer and coach Paul Gundani also highlighted the same perspective. “We need foreign coaches to come and partner us in the development of the game. Our training methods here in Zimbabwe in comparison to Europe are far apart. We need their expertise. When these coaches come, they bring modern techniques to prepare our teams. That knowledge alone impacts positively on our local game…” (Gundani, 2013).

Due to the beliefs that ‘foreign’ coaches are ‘superior’, Zimbabwe’s Premier Soccer League teams tend to appoint foreign coaches from Europe and even the African region at different moments. Highlanders football club appointed Eddie May (from Netherlands) in 2000-2001 who guided the team to two consecutive league championships (Sharuko, 2013). CAPS United also appointed Sean Connor from Ireland in 2012 but terminated the coach’s contract before the season had ended due to a string of poor results (Sharuko, 2013). Zambian and Malawian coaches are always found in Zimbabwe’s Premier Soccer league at any given moment. Currently Highlanders are coached by Kelvin Kaindu of Zambian origin. At the beginning of the 2013 season FC Platinum had appointed Tenant Chilumba, another Zambian who however, quit the job later on (Kausiyo, 2013).

Due to lower remuneration and other related unfavourable working conditions, some Zimbabwean coaches just like footballers also leave the country for ‘greener’ pastures in countries like South Africa, Botswana, Malawi and Swaziland. For instance Madinda Ndlovu\textsuperscript{151} and Elvis Chiweshe\textsuperscript{152} are currently coaching in Botswana (Kausiyo, 2013). Some of these coaches even sacrifice to coach in unfashionable lower divisions such as the South African Mvela League to earn a living. However, no Zimbabwean coach is yet to break into the European leagues since independence.

Zimbabwe’s PSL clubs rarely offer coaches contracts more than three years long (Masomere, 2013). In most cases, coaches are given one year or 6 months long contract to be reviewed based on performance. At times, these contracts are violated albeit employers fail to meet contractual obligations. This culture of appointing and dismissing coaches is also common at ZIFA which

\textsuperscript{151} Former Highlanders player and coach
\textsuperscript{152} Former Dynamos player and coach
manage national teams. For instance the Cuthbert Dube led ZIFA board from 2010 -2013, appointed and dismissed six national team coaches (Moyo, 2013).

**Conclusion**

This chapter has presented and discussed the experiences and views of football players, former players and coaches interviewed for the purpose of the study. Observations and interpretations made by the researcher also constitute empirical data presented and discussed above. From the findings presented above, it is compelling to argue that football in Zimbabwe is predicated with discourses of power, identity and development. The next chapter is titled ‘The Terraces’ and it is the final data presentation chapter paying particular attention to perspectives of football supporters on the discourses under interrogation.
Chapter 6: The Terraces

This is the final data presentation and findings chapter, falling under the theme ‘The Terraces’. Data presented in this chapter was elicited from the supporters. The researcher made use of a contextually specific ethnography of football supporters in Zimbabwe’s major cities as discussed in detail in the opening chapter under the methodology section.

Terraces as a semiotic site for power and identities

In the literal sense, ‘terraces’ refer to supporter/fan stands from which supporters/fans ‘consume’ football in stadia. The term ‘terraces,’ is an analogue used in the study to refer to football supporters or fans. My interviewees stated that they consume football at stadia and via media in equal amounts, depending on the availability or non-availability of spending money. The economic downturn in Zimbabwe meant that stadium attendance was, at each point, a function of the contents of the pocket.

During this study, it became more or less apparent that ‘Terraces’ are salient sites for the unfolding play of power, race, ethnicity, gender and political identities. Just as the pitch and the boardroom are sites of ongoing struggle and contestation, football terraces in Zimbabwe manifest localised movements and struggles over power. To sit or stand in the terraces, and to sing or shout, is to participate in heteroglossic carnivals of power that pit ordinary people against other ordinary people, and ordinary people against the elite. On the terraces, power is exchanged, lost, stolen, recovered, regained and shared.

The very architecture of football terraces at Rufaro Stadium and Babourfields Stadium reflects the politics of class and related local identities. Stadia such as Rufaro Stadium, Babourfields Stadium, Gwanzura Stadium and the National Sports Stadium are all segmented, bordered, separated and fenced-off into compartments and ‘bays’. Although they will be watching the same match and even supporting the same team, supporters do not just sit together in the semblance of one harmonious family. Rather, there are bays strictly divided according to one’s spending
power. The divisions of football stadia into bays ensure that people sit according to their ‘classes’ and disposable incomes. ‘Haves’ generally sit with other ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots,’ with fellow ‘have-nots’. Although there are some ‘haves’ who might prefer the ‘excitement’ and ‘exoticism’ of the ‘have-nots’ sections and who subsequently join them, there are no ‘have-nots’ who sit in the ‘have’ sections. This terrace ‘apartheid’ has its basis in capitalist logic.

The pricing and labelling of these sections and bays varies. In 2013-14 it cost US$3 to watch a match from stands defined as ‘rest of the ground’. However, it costs US$10 to watch the match from the ‘Very Important Person’ (VIP) section while it cost US$20 to watch from the Very Very Important Person (VVIP). At times the VVIP section is strictly by ‘invitation’ either from ZIFA of the PSL board. Free market ‘discourse’ demarcates and reinforces class divisions on the terraces. It structures, defines and authorises people where to sit and not to sit, at any given moment. Dynamos/Highlanders supporters cease to be just supporters, but clients, consumers and customers. It might be correct to talk about poor/rich Dynamos/Highlanders supporters depending with where they afford to sit during matches. These ‘apartheids’ or separations function to position poor Dynamos fans closer to poor Highlanders fans. By the law of the pocket, rich Dynamos fans are closer to rich Highlanders fans, as demonstrated by their sitting together in the VIP sections.

For the duration of the match, supporters at the ‘rest of the ground’ at times can be soaked by rains or scorched by the sun while those from the VIP and the VVIP are safe from these hazards. Ironically, in colonial Africa, class divisions were premised on and enforced through artificial racial binaries. At times Africans were forced to spend the entire duration of the match standing while their White counterparts comfortably sat down (Alegi, 2010). Today, divisions in Zimbabwe have taken on a new aspect. Some ‘rest-of-the-ground’ blacks sit in the burning sun while other ‘very-important’ blacks sit in the shade. Further irony is demonstrated by the fact that the poor sections of the terraces are often the sites of violent flare-ups, pitting poor Bosso against poor Dembare. The VIPs and the VVIPs, in their shaded areas, have never been known to shout at each other or come to fisticuffs. In essence, well-off Bosso fans get on well with well-off Dembare fans. This state of affairs links the poor parts of the stadium with violence, hooliganism, disorderliness and a general state of being ‘uncivilised’ and ‘unhygienic’ while the
well-to-do areas are orderly, quiet, clean and ‘civilised’. Interestingly, the most vocal support emanates from the ‘rest-of-the-ground’ areas, while the VIP sections are normally very quiet. As some of the researcher’s respondents pointed out, to get the ‘true’ football experience and to find real ‘drama’ and ‘life’ in Harare and Bulawayo, a supporter has to go to the Vietnam or Soweto stands respectively.

Football club supporters who regularly attend matches instinctively know which part of the terraces they belong to. Everyone has their permanent ‘terraces’ during matches. Such separation, akin to self-willed natural selection, represents separate layers of belonging that are premised, on the one hand, on disposable income and, on the other hand, ethnicity and region. In the latter context, fans from other teams are rarely welcome in the terrain of other teams; supporters. For instance at Rufaro Stadium the Vietnam stand, which is at the eastern side, ‘only’ houses Dynamos supporters when the club is playing at home. At Babourfields Stadium, the Soweto stand, which is at the western side, accommodates Highlanders fans. These stands/bays fall within the category of the ‘rest of the ground’. Fans occupying these terraces are supposed to wear the correct regalia of the home team. Those who trespass or go to the ‘wrong’ places have been known to meet one form of harm or another and, in a few cases, even loss of life. For Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC, Soweto (Highlanders) and Vietnam (Dynamos) terraces are characterised by hostility and intolerance towards each other. As noted, there is a high amount of tolerance among the fans of different football teams in the elitist sections of the terraces.

The discourse of class on the terraces has other facets. There are some ‘decently’ employed people who afford to pay for the VIP sections but prefer to watch the game from the ‘popular’ supporter stands. For instance a number of medical doctors employed at Mpilo hospital in Bulawayo informed the researcher that they prefer to watch football from stands such as ‘Soweto’ because of the ‘authenticity’, homely rituals and ‘freedom’ that exist at such stands. This ‘freedom’ and ‘authenticity’ of the ‘rest-of-the-ground’ makes terraces a form of carnivalesque Ancient Agora where ‘discourse’ more or less flows unfettered. The VIP or VVIP spaces, though safe for their occupants, tend to restrict some of the contestation. For instance, the

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153 Dynamos FC home ground
154 Highlanders FC home ground
researcher observed fans freely smoke *mbanje/marijuana* at Soweto or Vietnam in the presence of police officers.

Below: Dynamos supporters smoking *mbanje* at Rufaro Stadium

![Dynamos supporters smoking mbanje at Rufaro Stadium](image)

**Figure 1 (Source: Author)**

However, outside the stadium one can be arrested immediately if caught taking such drugs. At Vietnam, some Dynamos fans have composed a song “*Bhai bhai Lucia/Ndoenda kunorima fodya/Kuimba kwatinoita uku/mbanje dzatinobhema* (“Goodbye Lucia/I am on my way to go and plant marijuana/It is this drug which gives us power to sing in this manner”). The song is often sung while some of the supporters smoke marijuana. It is safer to smoke *mbanje*, or to mock the police, in the mass anonymity of the Vietnam stand than in the spaciousness of the VIP stand.

Religious performances are also common at the terraces. In as much as others smoke *mbanje*, bibles are also opened while Christian choruses, dances and teachings also take place at the terraces. Just like on the pitch, different ‘religions’ freely contest on the terraces. Just like on the pitch, the The Bible is also opened and verses read at the terraces, though at times it is hardly opened but just used as a signification of the presence of ‘divine’ power. The pictures below,
show Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC (respectively) showing Christian bibles, joining their teams in prayer 4 May 2014 at Babourfields Stadium.

Supporters also regularly use the Soweto or Vietnam stand to break taboos and display what Mbembe (2001) has referred to as ‘vulgarity’. For instance, the researcher noted fans singing displaying vulgarity through songs mocking figures of authority such as police officers. Police officers, in their role as instruments and upholders of state power, are common figures of derision from the terraces. A ‘popular’ song from the Vietnam stand directed at the police is “Officer mamisa mboro, ino haisi nguva yekumisa mboro...(Police officer you have an erect penis...But this is a wrong time to do so). Normally, mocking the police in their presence in Zimbabwe attracts harsh retribution. The terraces, however, provide a space for exercising power over the police, if only for ninety minutes. Achille Mbembe (2001) asserts that the vulgar should not be interpreted as a sign of ‘backwardness’ but a clear expression of power. Power, in its banality, exists in unofficial cultures of celebration, carnival and protest.

Figure 2 : The Bible as a ‘Closed text’ and The Bible as an ‘Open text’ (Source: Author)


Police presence at matches seems intended both to extend state surveillance over ordinary people’s lives as well as to maintain ‘order’. It is no surprise that uniformed police are always strategically placed to watch the Vietnam and Soweto stands. At the end of matches, the police presence ensures that the ‘vulgarity’ of the terraces does not spill over into streets. Terraces therefore, become sites where it is negotiated and contested in ordinary people’s everyday lives. In the view of Zimbabwean scholars Muponde and Muchemwa (2011: 279), a stadium is a dense semiotic site with many slippages of symbols and meanings drawing linkages between the game of football and politics. Muponde and Muchemwa further contend that the post colonial state uses the space of the stadium as an arena in which struggles over the polity are brought into sharper relief (Muponde and Muchemwa 2011:279). The following section discusses centrality of the terraces in Zimbabwean political discourse.

**Terraces and contemporary Zimbabwe political discourse**

There is evidence that terraces are elastic sites whose discourses occasionally spill over into everyday life, and from everyday life into political discourse. For instance, football terraces have contributed significantly to the shape and form of contemporary Zimbabwean political discourse.

As noted earlier in the ‘Pitch’ chapter, political parties appropriated football pitch discourses, images, symbols and metaphors in their campaigns prior to the July 2013 presidential and parliamentary elections. Football pitches were once again turned from playgrounds to charged sites for staging ‘star rallies’ by political parties in the form of ZANU PF, MDC-T, MDC and ZAPU. It seemed that politicians were deliberately targeting and milking the symbolic power of ‘the terraces’. Football, as a game associated with ‘ordinary’ people from its origins (McKinley, 2011), could become a ready Trojan Horse for smuggling the discourse of ‘votes’ into everyday life. One way to reach the ‘ordinary’ people who constitute the larger percentage of voters was to borrow the ‘terraces’ from them.

Popular football grounds such as Babourfields Stadium, Gwanzura Stadium and Rufaro Stadium are symbolic nodes strategically located in the centres or on the edges of highly-populated urban ghettos. Rufaro Stadium, for instance, is located in the high density suburb of Mbare, one of the
oldest and poorest suburbs of Harare. Babourfields Stadium in Bulawayo is located in the township ghetto of Mzilikazi. Not surprisingly, ‘Ordinary’ people from such ghettos and townships are the dominant voice of the terraces. Appropriating the voice of the terraces for political ends has, therefore, seemed to appeal to Zimbabwean politicians. The location of stadiums in African locations during the colonial era helped to spread hegemony through giving the oppressed people their weekly ‘bread and circuses’. This ‘bread and circuses’ has also acted as a magnet for post colonial governments and other mainstream political parties seeking to harness the terraces for ballot purposes.

During the run up to Zimbabwe’s July 2013 elections, rallies were choreographed to resemble football matches. The spatial aspect of the rallies took on the shape and form of football spectacles. Politicians, for instance, erected their pavilions at the centre of the pitch, performing the salient role of football players. ‘Ordinary’ people, meanwhile, occupied the terraces where fans sit during a football match. ZANU PF’s Bhora mugedhi (score the ball) slogan incorporated the image of a ruthless star soccer player who would score spectacularly and win handsomely against a defenceless MDC-T. The background to this characterisation was the 2008 election where some disgruntled ZANU PF voters and politicians had allegedly sabotaged the party through a policy of bhora musango (kick the ball into the bush). In 2013 Team ZANU PF represented itself as being re-united and having only one goal: to kick the ball spectacularly into the net. The nationalist party’s use of the ‘Team ZANU PF’ was also meant to both identify with, as well as to excite, the terraces, in the way that football teams line-ups hail and interpellate fans. Team ZANU PF aimed to create an impression of being a united ‘people’s team’. In the same way that fan support carries teams, ordinary people were to support Team ZANU PF through voting for ZANU PF in the elections. They were also to deny their support to ZANU PF’s main rival, MDC-T.

ZANU PF’s main rival in the elections, MDC-T, also referred to themselves as ‘MDC-T team’. The notion of ‘team’, borrowed from sport in general, easily became a site of contestation. A noticeable shift in the symbolic use of the ‘terraces’ was observed during the election period when it came to the MDC-T campaign. To the MDC-T team, the terraces stood in relation to

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156 High density areas
the referee’s role in deciding matches. The referee’s crucial instrument – the red card – was appropriated, democratised and given to the fans to use to eject Mugabe from power. In the MDC-T’s view, Mugabe needed to be penalised harshly for his lack of democratic sportsmanship. The MDC-T, by giving the terraces officiating powers of the referee, the impression that the party intended was to empower ordinary people.

Soccer stadia are also appropriated because of their size as sites of commemorations. Certain days on Zimbabwe’s national calendar, such as Heroes Day, Independence Day and National Unity Day, are celebrated in football stadia, incorporating the same ‘terrace’ choreography. Such commemorations always end with a football match, ideally pitting crowd-pullers Dynamos and Highlanders. Willems (2013) has argued that Independence Day celebrations in Zimbabwe no longer appeal to the urban populations who, coincidentally, are the backbone of the MDC-T. These people are, ostensibly, tired of ZANU PF’s unfulfilled promises and empty political rhetoric. In an effort both to construct a big audience and to create a semblance of unity, Dynamos and Highlanders, are selected to play the function of the climaxes of the celebrations (Willems, 2013; Ncube, 2014).

The Independence Day celebrations of 2013 were held at the National Sports Stadium in Harare where President Robert Mugabe, the then Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, and other politicians were in attendance. The capacity audience was conveniently bused in from different parts of the city and the country. Again, the ensuing event was choreographed to take on the aspect of a football match. The president, prime minister, government officials and other politicians sat at the centre of the pitch while the ‘ordinary’ people occupied the terraces performing the ‘cheering’ role. On cue, at 3.00 pm just after President Mugabe’s national address Dynamos and Highlanders took to the pitch in the Independence Cup final to ‘entertain the nation’. The participation of Dynamos and Highlanders football clubs was far from accidental. Rather, it was aimed at manufacturing the audience by filling the ‘terraces’.

Heroes holiday commemorates the contribution of living and dead heroes who fought for Zimbabwe’s liberation from colonial rule; Independence day commemorates the birth of the Zimbabwean nation on 18 April 1980, which officially marked the end of colonial rule; while the National Unity day celebrates the signing of the Unity Accord between two nationalist parties ZANU (PF) and ZAPU in December 1987, to form a ZANU PF government led by President Robert Mugabe with Joshua Nkomo as Vice President, bringing to an end more than a five year period of conflict (see Alexander, McGregor and Ranger 2000) which resulted in more than 20 000 civilians being killed in Matabeleland and the Midlands provinces.
Empirical data of this study has revealed that Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC are supported along regional as well as ethnic lines. Dynamos FC are mainly supported in Harare, Mashonaland provinces, Manicaland, Masvingo and some parts of the Midlands. Highlanders FC are mainly supported in Bulawayo, Matabeleland provinces and some parts of the Midlands (Ncube, 2014). Some fans who responded to the study are persuaded that Dynamos represents the interests of Shonas and ZANU PF while others associate Highlanders with ZAPU and Ndebeles. If such views were to be admissible, it would appear that the invitation of Dynamos and Highlanders to participate in the independence trophy final was not only a way of attracting thousands of people to the stadium, but also re-enacting of the Unity Accord\textsuperscript{158}. At another level, however, the duel between the two teams is a vicarious, metaphorical ‘war’ between Shona and Ndebele, or ZANU and ZAPU.

To the extent that popular culture has become central in political communication (van Zoonen, 1996; Thrame, 2006); football can be used as an instrument to score political goals. The argument that dominant classes in society have co-opted popular culture as part of their mechanism of social control-(Thram, 2006; Dimitrova et al., 2005; Dolby, 2006) places football, on the one hand, on the side of co-opted culture and, on the other hand, the side of oppositional culture. By bringing Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC to play in the Independence Cup final, people of different political, ethnic and religious persuasions were seemingly being brought together in a single space\textsuperscript{159} in conditions favouring the extension of the ZANU PF hegemony. These national commemorations may be seen as attempts to forge a common Zimbabwean national identity which has been elusive over the years (Chiumbu, 2004, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).

\textsuperscript{158} There were security problems in Matabeleland provinces and some parts of the Midlands with reports on ‘dissidents’ who were assumed to be ZAPU supporters threatening to violently remove the Robert Mugabe led ZANU PF government. In response, Mugabe deployed a North Korean brigade which resulted in the death of more than 20 000 civilians (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger 2000). However, in 1987 Mugabe’s ZANU (PF) and Joshua Nkomo’s (PF) ZAPU signed a Unity Accord and the two nationalist parties became ZANU PF turning Zimbabwe into a pseudo one party state. In the post 2000 period, some politicians like Dumiso Dabengwa broke away from ZANU PF to ‘revive’ ZAPU.

\textsuperscript{159} National Sports Stadium
**Owners of the game in Zimbabwe**

Charles Mabika, a veteran Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) radio and television football commentator, often describe supporters as the ‘owners of the game’. Mabika maintains that without the supporters, football matches would cease to be meaningful. Football’s presumed ‘beauty’, therefore, partly lies on the material presence of the terraces. The terraces also ‘own’ the game in the sense that they wield the power to influence the course and outcome of a football match either positively or negatively. For some, supporters are the ‘twelfth man’ in the game. This is a reference to the role that fans play in sustaining the footballing institution. Fans can boo or cheer a player or coach, influencing the public perception of that player or coach. Murape Murape, the Dynamos captain usually appeals to the terraces to cheer players when Dynamos FC is being pressurised by opponents. The assumption is that songs and noise from the terraces motivate players while also unsettling the opponents. Terraces may, therefore, be seen as veritable pockets of power in the qualitative architecture of the stadium with the ability to directly and indirectly influence proceedings on the pitch. Coaches, players and referees on the pitch are visibly aware of the presence of the terraces.

Football supporters, as a norm, either dress in their favourite ‘team colours’, wave club flags or cheer their team on as part of showing visible support. Dynamos FC supporters regard blue and white to be their club colours, Highlanders FC - black and white, CAPS United FC- green and white, Shabanie mine football club supporters put on maroon colours, and so on. Other supporters may paint their faces and bodies in team colours. Brian Gowa, a popular Dynamos supporter from Harare, religiously attends Dynamos and Warriors matches dressed in “leopard” attire. Gowa, who calls himself ‘Dembada’, remarked that his suit “…is so because Dynamos are the legitimate owners of the Mbada Diamond Cup and no other team shall win it in Zimbabwe,” Dynamos FC won the Mbada Diamond cup from its inception in 2011 and 2012. However, the cup was won by Highlanders in 2013.
Below Brian Gowa in his attire at Rufaro Stadium

Fig 3 (Source: Author)

The exact number of people who follow football in the country could not be ascertained by the researcher. However, Dynamos FC appears to be the most followed/supported team in Zimbabwe. Highlanders FC and CAPS United FC, follow respectively. This can be confirmed by annual Premier Soccer League gate taking statistics. All the 16 premiership football teams do not record statistics on their supporters. Dynamos however, claim to have seven million supporters (Sharuko, 2014). This, if it were to be proven, would imply that they are followed by more than half of the population of football supporters in the country since Zimbabwe has a population of 13.5 million people.

There is great rivalry that exists between Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC supporters. This rivalry is contested on and off the pitch. Indications are that this rivalry is based on real and perceived historical and contemporary ethnic and regional enmities between Zimbabwe’s two dominant ethnic groups – the Shona and the Ndebele (Ncube, 2014). In Africa, Dynamos and Highlanders’ rivalry is at par with that between Al Ahly and Zamalek in Egypt, and Gor Mahia and AFC Leopards in Kenya. In Europe, it is mirrors the rivalry between Celtic and Rangers (Scotland), Real Madrid and Barcelona (Spain) and Manchester United and Liverpool (England). Due to this intense rivalry, Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC matches generate much interest among supporters in Zimbabwe. Such matches are eagerly awaited. Due to the rivalry between these two clubs, their supporter identities cannot be easily swapped.
Lack of flexibility on Supporter identity

Football supporters hardly change their team identities in Zimbabwe. Tinotenda Moyo a Dynamos supporter based in Gweru noted that, “Supporting Dynamos is not by choice but a ‘birth right’ which cannot be ‘traded’ so easily”. ‘Roots’ rather than ‘routes’ (Hall, 1997; Gripsrud, 2002) are emphasised when it comes to loyalty to football teams. Some fans commonly noted, “Dynamos/Highlanders is my home. That’s where I belong; I was born and bred in a family which loves the team and I will remain there till death”. In some families, Football teams are treated as part of generational inheritance.

Due to the rivalry existing between Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC it is generally difficult for one to change his or her identity from either team to the other. Once Dynamos/Highlanders, the identities are supposedly carried until death. Mdudusi Sibanda a Highlanders fan remarked:

Chances are high that I can change my sex from being male to female than those for me becoming Dynamos... Not in a thousand years I won’t support Dynamos ...Highlanders and Dynamos are like oil and water they don’t mix (Sibanda, 2013).

Similar sentiments were expressed by some Dynamos FC fans who argued that it would be an act of ‘betrayal’ to change their identity from Dynamos FC to become Highlanders FC fans. Arbitrary identities are, hence, essentialised.

For some interviewees, supporting a team is a ‘life time commitment’. Supporters proclaim that they ‘love’ their football team whole-heartedly and are even ready to die for it. Interestingly, though favourite players at clubs may move to other clubs, supporters remain with the same club. Makwinji Soma Phiri, Lovemore Ncube, Lenny Gwata and Dazzy Kapenya are notable Highlanders FC players who left the club and crossed the Shangani river to play for Dynamos FC. Highlanders FC supporters however, remained Highlanders FC supporters. Similarly, in 2006, at least 14 Dynamos Football Club players left the team and joined newly-promoted Shooting Stars Football Club in Harare. Despite virtually the whole team becoming Shooting Stars FC overnight, few if any Dynamos supporters changed into Shooting Stars FC supporters.

160 Pseudo name for a Highlanders Gweru based supporter
Highlanders FC supporters have a slogan that reveals permanent affiliation to the team. ‘Bosso for life - Highlanders FC for life’. While players and administrators can go on retirement, supporters do not appear to retire. For some, only death can separate them from their favourite teams.

Nevertheless, football supporters may also dress in ‘borrowed robes’ depending with prevailing circumstances. On 17 November 2013 at Babourfields Stadium where Dynamos FC played Chicken Inn FC, CAPS United FC and Highlanders FC supporters united at Soweto stand and stood together in support of Chicken Inn FC. These supporters would often throw another ball into play, to disrupt a Dynamos FC attack. The referee would then stop play. These tactics were intended to give Chicken Inn FC an opportunity to stabilise or reorganise themselves whenever they seemed under pressure. However, when Dynamos FC equalised the short-lived ‘marriage’ between Highlanders FC and CAPS United FC supporters instantly broke down. As news filtered from Harare that Highlanders FC had lost 0-4 against Harare City FC, Highlanders FC supporters promptly turned against CAPS united supporters.

Football supporters often use totemic ‘nick names’ as a way of expressing their bond with their favourite club. Dynamos FC supporters for instance, affectionately call their team ‘Chazunguza mudzimu unoera’. Highlanders FC equally call their team ‘Bossolona’ (appropriated from Spanish football giants Barcelona), ‘Tshilamoya’, ‘iBosso lenkani (Highlanders will never surrender)’, ‘aMatengwani (birds)” and so on. CAPS United FC supporters refer their club as the “Green Machine”.

A love/hate relationship exists between players and the terraces. When results fail to please the supporters, they may turn against players that they may still regard as ‘heroes’ once the team is winning. Players such as Chamu Musanhu, who went on to become virtual Dynamos FC legends, were detested by large sections of the Vietnam Stand during their first few seasons.

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161 Powerful and unstoppable supernatural force
162 From their official green colours
Some Dynamos FC supporters from the ‘Harare Chapter’ reportedly vowed to consistently boo Tawanda Muparati, the club vice captain at the beginning of the 2014 PSL season.

The terraces can also use threats and physical violence against the board room. Mwandibhuya Kennedy Mutepfa, a former ZIFA Board Member, recounted his experience in 2003, while serving as a Secretary General for the Premier Soccer League, some Dynamos FC fans drove from Harare to his workplace at Lancashire Steel in Kwekwe and threatened to physically assault him. The PSL had docked Dynamos FC three points for fielding an ineligible player, Tendayi Mwarura, who had a running contract with Motor Action Football Club. Mutepfa, in his role as the Secretary General, was viewed as the ‘snake’.

It pertinent to note that the rivalry between Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC can be read as a manifestation of historical conflicts specifically between Zimbabwe’s two dominant ethnic groups, the Shona and the Ndebele respectively.

‘You killed our fathers’: the unhealed historical ‘wounds’

Ethnic tensions manifesting on the terraces during soccer matches tend to take on a historical-ethnic dimension. Fletcher (2012) has asserted that studying sport actually opens avenues for exploring everyday issues affecting society. Though the Zimbabwean government and society are largely reluctant to engage openly with the problems of ethnicity (see Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007), football discourse has consistently provided a platform where these problems not only refuse to go away but continuously rise to the surface.

Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC football matches, it can be expected, create opportunities for these historical ‘scars’ to open. Historical Shona ‘wounds’ date back to pre-colonial Zimbabwe, in the 1860s when the Ndebele ethnic group under Mzilikazi came into present day Zimbabwe.

Muparati’s ‘crime’ is that at the end of 2013 he thanked Dynamos supporters Bulawayo Chapter for their support on the team. Harare Chapter felt unappreciated therefore have vowed to punish Muparati for this slight. Murape Murape has also, occasionally, been a victim of these supporters.
from Nguniland. Historian Beach (1984) argues that the Ndebele conquered Shona chiefdoms and empires such as the Rozvi and established a strong Ndebele empire. Shona chiefs such as Mutasa and Mugabe from that period were forced to pay tribute to the Ndebele king. It is also argued that the Ndebele people largely thrived on raiding cattle and carrying off women from the conquered Shona groups. This trend is said to have only stopped with the arrival of Cecil John Rhodes’ British South Africa Company’s (BSAC) Pioneer Company in 1890, to occupy Mashonaland and later Matabeleland (Beach, 1984; Phimister, 1988).

Some supporters insist that this relationship of plunder and rape between the Ndebele and the Shona in pre-colonial Zimbabwe remains an unhealed scar in the memories of the Shona ethnic group. In the songs sung by Shona fans of Dynamos football club, the Ndebele people are often represented as those who ‘killed’ their fathers and raided their cattle, children and wives. During Dynamos/Highlanders matches, some fans openly shout, “Mandevere, makauryaya vana baba vedu, mombe dzedu nevasikana vedu vakapambiwa naMzilikazi tovada (Ndebeles you killed our fathers, we want our cattle and ladies who were taken away by Mzilikazi)”. Such utterances make reference to pre-colonial ethnic conflicts between the Ndebele and the Shona. These ‘scars’, often downplayed by national leaders, become visible in the course of the so-called ‘beautiful’ game. At such times, football becomes more than just a game.

The discourse “You killed our fathers” is contested by Highlanders supporters. Most songs by Highlanders supporters reflect that the Shona have inflicted recent ‘wounds’ on the Ndebele community and that these have not meaningfully healed or been forgotten. An example of this is the song; “Lingababulali (You are killers), Bayasizonda tina amaNdebele (they hate us we the Ndebeles)”. Hence:

- **Lingababulali heya walibulala ubaba** (You are killers hey, you killed our fathers)

- **Heye lina amashona** (Hey you Shonas)

- **Heya heya walibulala ubaba lina mashona walibulala ubaba** (Hey, Hey You killed our fathers you Shonas).

- **Mugabe lishona heya! UMugabe lishona heya!** (Mugabe is a Shona, Mugabe is Shona)

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164 Present day South Africa
A critical analysis of the lyrics of this song illustrates that for the Ndebele, any and all Shona people are murderers of the Ndebele. From the song, the Shona people, and Mugabe in particular, deliberately massacred Ndebele forefathers and relatives.

In the early 1980s, a power struggle occurred between two nationalist parties, ZANU PF and Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU). Historians Alexander, McGregor and Ranger (2000) assert that around 1982, Zimbabwe experienced severe security problems, especially in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces. The official government perspective is that ZAPU was culpable in masterminding ‘dissident’ activities in an attempt to overthrow Mugabe and ZANU PF leadership (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger 2000). To deal with the problem, the ZANU PF government deployed a “North Korean trained brigade in Matabeleland province and in the process more than 20 000 civilians were killed while others were beaten, raped and lost their property” (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, 1997: 1).

The government ‘operation’ in Matabeleland and Midlands provinces was code-named Gukurahundi. Gukurahundi is a Shona word which refers to the early rains that wash away the chaff of harvest time. After these early rains what follows is a blooming of flowers and new leaves, and the sprouting of green shoots. In short what follows Gukurahundi is supposed to be a new lease of life; regeneration. It can be argued that the Mugabe government not only saw ZAPU as post-independence chaff that needed to be cleansed, but also hoped for a new lease of life in the country after Gukurahundi. Those from Matabeleland argued, and to some extent still argue, that Mugabe literally equated them to hundi (rubbish/ chaff) which needed to be swept away, connoting genocide and ethnic cleansing. This is also the conclusion reached by the CCJP (1997). Foucault has argued that discourse is always implicated with power and that at times some discourses are aimed at

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165 The Fifth Brigade was a result of an agreement signed between the North Koreans and Zimbabwe’s Prime Minister Robert Mugabe in October 1980 (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger (2000: 191). At the brigade’s passing out parade in 1982; Mugabe handed over the brigade a flag emblazoned with the name Gukurahundi (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger, 2000: 191).
justifying dehumanisation (Foucault, 1980). A term such as Gukuruhundi is dehumanising essentially because it treats people as hundi (chaff; dirt; undesirables).

Polarisation is noted in scholarship when it comes to explaining the ‘root’ cause of the conflict in Matabeleland in the 1980s. Despite a perceived lack of consensus among academics (Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007) ethnicity emerges as one of the apparent key causes at the root of the conflict. Alexander, McGregor and Ranger (2000), state that ethnic tensions sparked problems which affected Zimbabwe in the 1980s. These historians blame Enos Nkala, a former ZANU PF minister of Ndebele origin, for fanning tribal tensions. Nkala reportedly claimed that dissidents were Ndebele people who were calling for a second war of liberation following ZAPU’s defeat by ZANU PF in the 1980 elections. Nkala is said to have openly advocated for the shooting down of the Ndebele and the ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo – whom he called the self-appointed Ndebele king (Alexander, McGregor and Ranger 2000:186). As compelling as this argument is, it fails to demonstrate how ethnicity became an instrument in the hands of power. The foremost reasons the government sought to crush ‘dissidents’ was because they posed a threat to its monopolistic hold on power. Furthermore, the existence of so-called dissidents contradicted the message that Zimbabwe was one united nation. The actual implementation of Gukurahundi took on ‘ethnic cleansing’ proportions, firstly, because ethnicity is never far from the surface in Shona/Ndebele relations and, secondly, because it was convenient for power to use ethnicity as a justification for collective punishment.

To sections of Highlanders FC supporters, Dynamos FC symbolises ‘Shona oppressors’ who killed their fathers, mothers, sisters, brother and relatives in the 1980s. Mlondolozi Ndlovu, a Highlanders fan who during a conversation recalled how he felt after Dynamos FC had beaten Highlanders FC 3-0 at Babourfields Stadium in a league match in 2003. “...I won’t forget that day... I felt like the Shona people and Mugabe in particular have descended on Bulawayo and conquered the Ndebele people again...It was bad indeed”. When asked to clarify on what he meant with the phrase “conquered the Ndebele people again”, Ndlovu stated that he was making reference to Gukurahundi. To a supporter like Ndlovu, Highlanders’ loss to Dynamos FC is more than a loss in a game of football but symbolises
Ndebele people’s continued ‘suffering’ at the hands of the Shona and Mugabe. The reverse is also true. A Highlanders FC victory over Dynamos FC is celebrated as symbolic ‘revenge’ on Mugabe and the Shona people. Dumiso Dlamini a Highlanders FC stated “...beating teams that represent people who dominate and oppress us obviously mean we have revenged and won a battle in a war for social recognition” (Dlamini, 2013).

The fact that Webster Shamu, ZANU PF’s party commissar, is the patron for Dynamos Football Club creates polarised views. While some Dynamos fans did not see anything sinister in this patron role, most Highlanders supporters interviewed saw this as proof of Dynamos FC not only being a front for ZANU PF but part of larger conspiracy against the Ndebele ‘nation’. The fact that Dynamos FC was founded the same year (1963) when ZANU broke away from the Joshua Nkomo led ZAPU, tempts some to claim that the same people who formed ZANU are the same who formed Dynamos FC. Freddy Mkwesha one of the surviving Dynamos FC founding ‘fathers’, however, dismissed such views as conspiracy theories. He claims that Dynamos FC was formed before ZANU and by different people. Interestingly, Highlanders FC was not formed at the same time as ZAPU and has more or less outlived ZAPU. Though ZAPU had effectively been ‘swallowed’ by ZANU by the1990s, Highlanders FC has not been swallowed by Dynamos FC. The patronship of ZANU PF politician Obert Mpofu at Highlanders FC, however, suggests attempts at co-option into ZANU PF. Such an interpretation is, nevertheless, complicated by the fact that Mpofu is Ndebele.

Despite the continued official ‘silence’ about Gukurahundi in Zimbabwe (see Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007), the issue remains alive and largely unresolved. According to the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, “thousands of people still have unhealed wounds... people still suffer today, physically and psychologically and practically as a result of what they experienced in the 1980s (Catholic Commission for Justice Peace for Justice and Peace, 1997: 4). Ethnography carried out amongst Highlanders FC supporters at Babourfields Stadium and other stadia have confirmed this.

Highlanders FC fans go as far as claiming that gukurahundi not only negatively affected their team’s performance in the 1980s, but was indeed intended to have this effect on the team. In
other words, *Gukurahundi* was targeted at all institutions of the Ndebele ‘nation’, including Highlanders FC. They claim that Dynamos FC’s dominance in the 1980s and into the 1990s was partly due to the success of *Gukurahundi*. “Even referees during that period were forced to sabotage Highlanders FC especially when it played against Dynamos or Harare teams”, remarked Qubani Dube from the Soweto stand. In Dube’s view, *Gukurahundi* did not end in the 1980s but has continued to this day. Hence Highlanders FC are currently being ‘neutralised’ and having its ‘Ndebele identity’ neutralised by a disproportionate presence of Shona players. More importantly, Dube claims, ‘quality potential, real Ndebele players’ were lost during the *Gukurahundi* era. Despite many Dynamos FC supporters dismissing such views as baseless, these views are taken seriously by some in Bulawayo. The persistence of these views in Bulawayo points to the fact that the official silence on *Gukurahundi* is backfiring. In the absence of official acknowledgment of *Gukurahundi*, alternative theorising about the genocide have taken precedence. This has led to greater polarisation. Such polarisation is today reflected in calls for secession by, among others, groups such as *Mthwakazi*. Ethnic differences are expressed each time when the teams play. While ethnic differences between the Ndebele and the Shona are expressed at different fan stands, Soweto and Vietnam take the lead.

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**Soweto, Vietnam Stands and Performances of Shona/Ndebele Identity**

The ‘Vietnam’ section of the Rufaro Stadium and the ‘Soweto’ section at Babourfields Stadium are sites where ethnic rivalry and tension between the Ndebele and the Shona ethnic groups

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166 From 1980-1990, Dynamos managed to win seven league titles in the then Super league while Highlanders failed to win even a single league title (Sharuko, 2013).

167 Mugabe merely called it a ‘moment of madness

168 These groups argue that Matabeleland provinces which have predominantly Ndebele speaking people, suffer from government’s deliberate policies to under develop them since 1980 (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2007). Moreover, *Mthwakazi* groups argue that ‘Zimbabweanness’ is being manipulated and constructed from a ‘Shona’ perspective and inherently, they feel they are being treated as second class citizens in their country of birth (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Due to these concerns, the Ndebele political movements call for the establishment of an independent Ndebele state/nation (United Mthwakazi Republic) (Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007)
manifest. Mangezvo (2005) states that “The stand ‘Vietnam’ was named after Vietnam, a reference to the 1960s war in which the United States of America suffered its first defeat. Not only was Dynamos FC formed around the same time as the war in Vietnam, but the success of the Vietcong guerrillas against the ‘mighty’ Americans was an inspiration to the Zimbabwean guerrilla struggle that began in 1966. The Vietnam stand is, therefore, a site of resistance against power. The ‘Soweto’ stand at Babourfields was named after the popular black township of Soweto which was the hotbed of the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa (Mangezvo, 2005: 69). Given the well documented history of resistance to power that Vietnam and Soweto have, it is no surprise that these stands are a magnet for non-conformist fans- ‘magandanga’. As Mangezvo notes, “These stands become theatres for the expression of pent-up expressions, ethnic idiosyncrasies and subtle forms of class-based hostilities” (Mangezvo, 2005: 69). The gathering of non-conformist guerrilla types before and during matches at these stands is a source of ongoing conflict, rivalry and contestation.

Gandanga is a Shona word which was ascribed to African nationalist freedom fighters who fought Ian Smith’s White minority government during the second liberation struggle/second Chimurenga. ‘Magandanga’ refused to be tamed by colonial rule and thus rebelled against the system.
Although the Soweto stand is ostensibly open to all Highlanders FC fans, in reality not all fans are welcome to the stand. Only ‘real Ndebele’ fans are welcome at Soweto. The so-called ‘legitimate’ occupants of the Soweto stand believe they trace their origins from the ‘original’ Khumalo/Ndebele group who arrived in pre-colonial Zimbabwe from Nguniland in 1868 under the leadership of King Mzilikazi. Some of these people’s surnames today include ‘Dlodlo’, ‘Khumalo’ and ‘Gumede’. The researcher noted that some of these ‘legitimate’ fans actually have permanent places reserved for them at Soweto. When newcomers to Soweto sit in one of these seats, it is quite common for them to be warned that “leyo indawo kaDlodo (that is Dlodlo’s place). A hierarchy of legitimacy and authenticity is thus played out over seats in the Soweto stand.

Typically, Highlanders fans at Soweto are not welcoming of non Ndebele speakers when Highlanders play against a Harare based football club, particularly Dynamos FC. On these occasions the fans sing, “Hakula Shona lihlale eSoweto (Shona people are not welcome at Soweto stand)” or “Sowake walibona iShona lihlale eSoweto? (Have you ever seen a Shona sit at
Soweto stand?)”. These chants reinforce the sense of ethnic and cultural division. The notion that Highlanders FC is a club for authentic ‘Ndebeles’ only is reflected in a number of songs sung at the Soweto stand. For instance, they sing, “Highlanders wake walibona nga ishona libhalwe tshilamoya? (Where on earth have you seen a Shona person written Tshilamoya?)”. Such songs function to exclude members of Shona ethnicity at the ‘Highlanders/Ndebele’ only stand. In fact, the ‘rule’, “Hakula Shona lihlala eSoweto (Shonas are not allowed at Soweto)” is strictly enforced. Highlanders FC fans of Shona origin who cannot express themselves in fluent Ndebele may not watch soccer from Soweto stand at Babourfields when Highlanders are playing (Ncube, 2014).

Soweto, just like Vietnam, is a ready-made discursive construction. In one poignant instance that took place at Soweto on 1 April 2013, the researcher experienced how ‘serious’ it is for a Shona speaking person to transgress ready-made discursive constructions. On this occasion, Highlanders FC were playing Harare City Football Club. Though I was dressed in Highlanders FC colours, some of the fans, ‘noticed’ that I was a stranger to the ‘Soweto culture’. One of the fans, Peter, then demanded to ‘vet’ my Ndebele proficiency. After vetting my accent Peter immediately cried out, “Kule Shona eSoweto (there is a Shona person at Soweto)”. On hearing this, other Highlanders fans surrounding the researcher expressed considerable disapproval, made clear each time Highlanders FC missed a goal scoring chance. All the missed chances were attributed to the presence of a ‘Shona’ at Soweto.

On this occasion, it was claimed that “Khule Shona eSoweto namuhla iBosso izadliwa (there is a Shona at Soweto today so Highlanders will lose)”. Streams of obscenities and curses were pronounced on the researcher’s family and on all ‘Shona’ people. A sound beating, or worse, was promised should the team lose. Only a Highlanders goal scored in the 54th minute by Njabulo Ncube ‘saved’ me. I conveniently sneaked out of Soweto unnoticed during the wild celebrations. Speaking Ndebele fluently, as well as being able to sing and dance the ‘Soweto dances’, are markers of authenticity. For some ‘die-hard’ Highlanders fans, it is impossible for a Shona person to support Highlanders. Dynamos ‘die-hards’ also claim that it is inconceivable for a Ndebele to support Dynamos FC, that Ndebele’s can only bring bad luck to the team. This is despite the fact that Dynamos has vocal Ndebele support in the form of the Dynamos Bulawayo Chapter.
The question of authenticity on the terraces extends to attitudes towards certain players. Some Highlanders FC fans, it emerged, are not comfortable with having Shona players in the team. To solve the contradiction of celebrating a goal, goal-saving tackle or dribble by a Shona, the fans rename the Shona players, giving those players Ndebele-sounding names. Hence Mapuranga was renamed ‘Mplanka’, and Masimba Mambare became ‘Mandla Mambale’. The renaming of players to sound Ndebele is a way of ‘Ndebele-nising’ the Shona players by making them honorary ‘Ndebeles’. This renaming is a form of ‘paradigm repair’- a way of insisting that the core Ndebele-ness is constant and never changes. Rather, it is those who come into contact with Ndebele-ness who are changed. This strategy of renaming can be traced back to the Ndebele King Mzilikazi, as well as to Lobengula’s nation building strategies, in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. Conquered Shona groups were assimilated during the building of the Ndebele nation, forming the lowest class\(^{170}\) (Beach 1985; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2010). The renaming of Shona players to appear ‘Ndebele’ is a way of solving the crisis brought about by their alien presence in the Highlanders/ Ndebele family.

Shona players who play for Highlanders are hailed (in Althusserian terminology) through discourse by being categorised as ‘wise Shona’. This is confirmed by the song, “*IShona lihlakanipileyo liyadlalela itshilamoya* (A wise Shona plays for Highlanders)”. However, this temporary ‘accommodation/appreciation’ gesture to Shona players at Highlanders FC vanishes the moment Highlanders FC lose matches especially against Dynamos FC. It appears that Shona players are appreciated at Highlanders FC when the club is doing well and the players are excelling. Once the team loses, the players are subjected to various forms of scapegoating.

Some Highlanders FC fans have gone as far as claiming that Dynamos FC’s current dominance of Highlanders is explained by ‘too much’ presence of Shona players in the team. Dynamos FC, it is claimed, is a ‘Shona team’ and is hence the ‘real home’ to most of their players. Such players are fingered as lacking the will and motivation to win against their ‘home’ team. On 27 October 2013 when Highlanders lost to Dynamos FC at Babourfields Stadium, supporters at Soweto stand openly accused Highlanders FC striker Masimba Mambare for ‘deliberately’ missing scoring chances so that Highlanders would lose and allow his fellow Shona team-Dynamos to win. Innocent Mapuranga, who got injured towards the end of the match, was also

\(^{170}\) Amahole
accused him of feigning injury to allow Dynamos FC to score. These supporters called for the coach Kelvin Kaindu to take away the team captaincy from Mapuranga and give it to a player possessing authentic Ndebele identity. Apparently, this was not the first time Mapuranga was marked with illegitimacy. Mapuranga was criticised in November 2012 at the burial of former Highlanders FC and Warriors striker Adam Ndlovu for giving his speech in Shona. Some sections of Highlanders fans demanded an apology from Mapuranga for reducing the burial of a former Highlanders FC player to a ‘Shona’ funeral. Ironically, Highlanders FC supporters, conveniently ignore the fact that Adam Ndlovu was himself not authentically Ndebele but, rather, of Tonga origin.

The Vietnam stand, like Soweto, is one of the key sites where ethnic rivalries and contestations are played out. Though the contestations are not as dramatised as those the researcher encountered in the Soweto stand, they are equally poignant. The differences in dramatisation appear to be a function of who has power. The Ndebele, as the ‘victims’, may feel the need to overcompensate for their pent up frustrations. Interestingly, Shona is not a homogenous identity. Furthermore, many so-called Shona are also anti-Mugabe. The ‘common’ position taken by Shona Dynamos fans in the Vietnam stand against Highlanders fans is illusory and serves to mask immense differences in culture, dialect and value system amongst the Zezuru, Karanga, Manyika, Zezuru, Kore-Kore171 and so on.

171 These are the five dialects of ‘Shona’. There is a documented history of dialectical/ethnic tensions between them that have roots in the liberation war (Tekere, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).
Stereotypical representations, labelling and name calling are common during Dynamos-Highlanders matches in Harare. Dynamos FC fans, for example, sing songs that denigrate the Ndebele ethnic group. One of these ‘popular’ songs at Vietnam goes as follows:

*MaNdvere munoapireiko doro?* (Why do you give the Ndebeles beer?)

*Anonetsa adhakwa* (They become troublesome when drunk)

*Mandevere musaape doro havazogeze* (Don’t give Ndebeles beer they will refuse to bath when drunk)

This song appropriates lyrics of Zimbabwean musician Paul Matavire’s song “*Vana musavape doro* (Children must not be given beer)” as they lack self control once they are drunk. Dynamos FC fans make use of these lyrics so as to construct their Highlanders/Ndebele counterparts.
through infantilisation. The songs that fan groups make use of are stereotypical representations that frame Ndebeles through xenophobic cliches.

Mxolisi Ncube and Mkhululi Chimoio cite the case of former Dynamos FC Captain Chamunoda Musanhu who was disqualified from the Soccer Star of the year selection in 2000 because of his infamous statement “*Gore rino championship haidzokere kuma Ndeere* (This year the championship will not return to the Ndebeles)” (Ncube and Chimoio 2012:32) as evidence of the ethnic divide that exists in Zimbabwean football. Musanhu made this statement live on Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) national radio. By ‘*ma Ndeere*’ Musanhu was referring to Highlanders Football Club. Ncube and Chimoio also state that “When Highlanders win a league trophy in Zimbabwe; the Ndebele celebrate and even refer to club’s founding days, spearheaded by King Lobengula’s grandsons...” (Ncube and Chimoio, 2012:32). At times the rivalry between these two prominent Zimbabwean teams generate into ‘war’ resulting in loss of lives and property.

**War minus shooting: The Battle for Zimbabwe**

Sporadic eruptions of verbal and physical violence at matches between Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC seem to relive the history of ‘war’ between Shona and Ndebele ethnic groups in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. Football is not limited to scoring goals on the pitch but scoring political, economic and cultural goals also (Pannenborg, 2010). In light of Pannenborg’s argument, it can be argued that for Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC fans, football allows them to score vicarious ethnic goals against each other. The games’s presumed ‘beauty’ is thus contradicted during such moments.

Matches between Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC have been dubbed, in the mainstream media, as ‘The Battle for Zimbabwe’. The ‘Battle for Zimbabwe’[^172] is a ‘battle’ both in the literal and

[^172]: The phrase ‘Battle for Zimbabwe’ was coined by the Zimbabwean media around 2000 to refer to Dynamos and Highlanders matches. In an interview, Robson Sharuko *The Herald*’s senior sports editor claimed to have coined the term.
metaphorical sense. Perhaps the intriguing question ‘asked’ by matches between Dynamos and Highlanders FC echo the question asked by a Frenchman at a derby match in the nineteenth century: “If this is what they call football, what do they call fighting?” (Oakley 2007:69).

Mlondolozi Ndlovu, a Highlanders FC supporter, reflected on his childhood memories of Dynamos FC-Highlanders FC matches, “…We would go to Highlanders/Black Rhinos matches but there was no mentioning of the Shona issue …But when it comes to Dynamos FC matches my father would tell me and even today people say asambeni siyabulala amashona (let’s go and kill the Shona)... It means if we lose against Dynamos FC, someone must die” (Ndlovu, 2013).

Some interviewed Dynamos FC supporters revealed that they prefer to watch Dynamos/Highlanders FC matches on television than to go to Babourfields Stadium or Rufaro. Tinashe Mberi recalled that from the 1980s to the present, violence has always erupted between Dynamos and Highlanders matches often in Bulawayo.

… We knew if we won, something bad was really going to happen. Highlanders FC supporters would never take a Dynamos victory lightly, because to them it meant being beaten by the Shona... They did not mind fighting and burning cars... In most cases we had to be escorted by police out of the stadium after a Dynamos victory at Babourfields (Mberi, 2013).

Songs like “Bophi ijambo sikhabe Shona (tie your shoes and kick a Shona)” seem to lend credence to these claims.¹⁷³ Singing that a Shona should be kicked, however, does not mean that Shonas then get kicked. There is no proof that there is a one-to-one correlation between songs and eruptions of violence. Furthermore, while it cannot be denied that some Ndebele fans engage in hooliganism, this does not imply that all or even most Highlanders FC fans are hooligans. Most likely a minority is behind the violent flare-ups. By the same token, some Dynamos fans engage in sporadic hooliganism. This is not taken to reflect that most or all Dynamos FC fans are violent. In any case, there is no demonstrable proof that the Ndebele are necessarily any more

¹⁷³ On 27 October 2013 after Highlanders’ 0-1 loss to Dynamos Highlanders fans at Soweto shouted “Val’ gedhi iShona lingapumi (close the gates so that no Shona can get out). Some Highlanders ‘hooligans’ started beating those who were putting on the blue and white –regalia (supposedly Dynamos fans). Police had to intervene with their tankers, dogs, tear gases and horses.
violent than the Shona. A lot of the evidence offered that the Ndebele are violent people is largely anecdotal, conjectural and stereotypical.

Violence at matches involving Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC appears to have a pre-mediated aspect. At the match on October 2013 and even in June 2014, it appeared that some Highlanders FC supporters had long prepared for ‘war’ before the match. Missiles, particularly stones, had been heaped just outside Babourfields Stadium to exercise ‘geology’ on Dynamos supporters and police officers. During the ‘fight’, some Highlanders FC supporters openly accused the police for being ‘Shona’ and also being used by Mugabe to kill their relatives during the Gukurahundi era. It appeared the match provided some fans within the crowd an opportunity to retaliate against state sponsored violence which they encountered in the 1980s and beyond. Some Highlanders FC fans and Dynamos FC fans retaliating fought running battles with the police who were ‘protecting’ victims of the battle. The fighting cascaded into Makokoba, Mzilikazi and the City centre. According to onlookers, people dressed in blue in the City centre were also beaten. In the end, 86 people were arrested for hooliganism.

Below is a picture of police tankers fighting violence at Babourfields after a Dynamos Highlanders match.

![Police tankers fighting violence at Babourfields](image)

Figure 6 (Source: Author)

Football supporters refer the violent exercise of fighting with stones at stadiums as ‘geology’
The general fear of violence at Babourfields Stadium is exemplified by the fact that some people routinely park their cars at Mpilo hospital and at the police station which is close by the stadium. Residences that are close by also charge money for safe keeping of people’s cars during matches. Some fans informed the researcher that it is much safer to travel in public transport rather than risk vandalism when Highlanders FC is playing Dynamos FC. It appears that the violence is, in reality, only sporadic. The perception that violence occurs all the time or that all Highlanders fans are violent has proven hard to shake off. The stereotypical fear of the ‘violent Ndebele’ ironically encouraged and abetted by some Ndebele appears to be neurotic and deep-seated amongst many Shona.

The violence which occurs at Dynamos/Highlanders FC matches has sometimes also resulted in loss of lives. In one incident, a well known Dynamos FC fan popularly known as Taribo West, died in 2005 due to injuries suffered at the hands of Highlanders FC supporters in December 2004 at Babourfields Stadium after Dynamos FC had beaten Highlanders FC 2-0 in a ZIFA Unity Cup final match (Buju, 2014). It is alleged that West was thrown off the Soweto stand after having naively decided to engage in ‘friendship’ with Highlanders FC fans. In August 2014 at Babourfields stadium, a Highlanders FC supporter Thembelenkosini Hloni was killed allegedly by Dynamos FC supporters following violent clashes between the two clubs supporters after a Dynamos/Highlanders FC match. The Dynamos-Highlanders FC encounters sometimes generate what can be termed ‘ethnic-patriotism’ as fans become ready either to kill or to be killed for their clubs.

The death of people at football matches is however, not limited to Dynamos/Highlanders FC encounters. For instance Fig 6 below shows an unconscious man who later died after being stoned by supposedly Highlanders FC supporters on 6 April 2014 at Ascot stadium, Gweru during a PSL match between Chapungu FC and Highlanders FC.

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175 The researcher lost a brother Tawanda, in 1998 at Rufaro stadium in an independence trophy final match, after violence had exploded following Dynamos 2-0 win over Highlanders.
176 A self-proclaimed Dynamos ‘Number one’ supporter who wore dreadlocks resembling those of Nigerian defender Taribo West
177 http://www.chronicle.co.zw/113430/
Besides violence which characterise Dynamos/Highlanders FC matches, such games also allow for the expression of counter hegemonic versions of nationalism particularly Ndebele nationalism.

Highlanders and the Ndebele ‘xenophobic’ nationalism

A ‘radical’ counter-hegemonic form of nationalism-Ndebele ethnic nationalism\(^\text{178}\) has emerged

\(^{178}\) This nationalism is spearheaded by radical Ndebele pressure groups such as *Vukani Mahlabezulu* and *Imbovane yamahlavezulu* which focus on reviving particularistic features of the Ndebele culture (Chikuhwa 2004:93 in (Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007). There are also other more politically oriented ‘Ndebelelistic’ groups especially the *Mthwakazi* Action group on Genocide and Ethnic cleansing in Matabeleland and Midlands and Mthwakazi people’s Congress (MPC) (Ndlovu Gatsheni 2003) which call for the establishment of an autonomous Ndebele state/ nation (United Mthwakazi Republic). The groups have declared: We totally agree with you when you say that ‘Blair keep your England and we shall keep our Zimbabwe. But we further go to say: Mugabe keep your Zimbabwe (Mashonaland) and we shall keep our Matebeleland (Ndlovu- Gatsheni 2009:149).
in Matabeleland province in post 2000 Zimbabwe. Such nationalism contests the idea that Zimbabwe is a unitary state. Rather, there have been calls for the establishment of an independent Ndebele state. The discourse operates through claims that the current ‘Shona dominated’ state deliberately ‘underdevelops’ Matabeleland provinces (Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009).

In this context, Highlanders Football Club is, for some, an embodiment of aspirations of the Ndebele ethnic group for an independent ‘Ndebele’ nation. Highlanders FC matches at Babourfields Stadium and are turned into ready sites for the demonstration of ‘the spirit’ of Ndebele ethnic nationalism. This form of ‘nationalism’ reflects the desire by some Ndebele people for the eventual secession of Matabeleland provinces from the Zimbabwean state to [re]establish an autonomous Ndebele ‘nation’. According to Mdudusi, a Highlanders FC supporter, “The song *Boph' jambo* (tie your shoe-laces) is a revolutionary song aimed at raising consciousness among us the Ndebele people so that we remain aware of the fact that Shona people are our oppressors whom we must kick away and establish an autonomous free Ndebele nation.” The song therefore calls for the mobilisation or action of the Ndebele people to fight the perceived ‘inequality’ in a Shona dominated society.

There are also other songs such as “*Highlander Tshilamoya*” which communicate the lingering desire for change in Matabeleland. During Highlanders matches the fans sing “*Highlander Tshilamoya, iteam yezwe lonke, wakali umantengwane wakali kwaze kwase* (Highlanders a whirlwind, team of the nation, the bird chirps till dawn). But what does ‘tshilamoya’ mean? Richard Mahomva a Highlanders supporter explains:

> This is a Ndebele term which refers to a tide or a strong whirlwind that brings a turnaround or change...People of Matabeleland have historical wounds inflicted by the Shona so they believe Highlanders shall one day give them an opportunity to turn tables and bring repression to an end

However, Ronald Moyo offered another interpretation to *tshilamoya*. For Moyo, the term implies ‘suffocating’ (Moyo, 2014). Highlanders FC is thus, viewed as a team with potential to suffocate
opponents. With reference to the spirit of Ndebele nationalism, some hope the club shall provide a platform to change the situation for people in Matabeleland and ‘suffocate’ their opponents. This view was also expressed by another Highlanders supporter, Pumulani Dlodlo, who said:

...Emotions and instincts arise when we start singing songs like iShona tshaya lizwa ngemboma (beat the Shona with a whip)...We begin to think that one day the Ndebele people are going to rise to be free in heaven and celebrate as a free and sovereign nation, free from Shona oppression ...Highlanders is a platform for a possible revolution for the Ndebele and we believe the Dynamos-Highlanders affair is going to provide the platform for the revolution to take place (Dlodlo, 2013).

Highlanders FC become the symbolic hope of the people of Matabeleland, providing a ready argot of mobilisation of Ndebele nationalism. Uppermost is the aspiration to revive the ‘fallen’ Ndebele kingdom.

Highlanders’ role in Matabeleland politics and power struggles took on a new turn in 1980. Mehluli Ndlovu, a Highlanders FC supporter who claims to have followed the club since 1972, stated:

People of Matabeleland are very pro ZAPU and when ZAPU lost the elections in 1980, the only platform that was left for the people to express their pain and maintain their pride was Highlanders...the team took an aura totally different from football and became a rallying point for the people of Matabeleland ...and even now Highlanders has maintained the aura of politics of resistance (Ndlovu, 2013).

Nevertheless, interesting contradictions and paradoxes were noted within expressions of Ndebele ethnic nationalism reflected during Highlanders FC matches. There is no consensus among sections of the Ndebele speaking people on the version of the imagined ‘nation’ which they seek to establish. Though groups such as the Mthwakazi Liberation Front, advocates for the secession of Matabeleland provinces to establish an independent Ndebele state/nation. Some sections of the Ndebele community disagree about this. Though a majority of Ndebeles are literally fed-up with Shona domination, there is no indication that they necessarily aspire for an ‘independent’
Ndebele nation. A vocal minority, encouraged by the example set in Sudan, is on the forefront of arguing for secession. It is far from certain, though, that most Ndebeles prefer this solution. Some appear to prefer (an admittedly impossible) reunion with Nguniland (now South Africa), while others wish to remain a part of Zimbabwe under a federal state. Figure 7 below shows Highlanders FC supporters as Babourfields raising the South African flag, an expression of their disapproval of the current Zimbabwean state.

Figure 7

These supporters at the Soweto stand prefer to sing the South African national anthem (as opposed to Zimbabwe’s “Simudzai Mureza”) just before Highlanders matches, flying the South African flag during the course of the match. “We the Ndebele people originated from South Africa that is where we trace our roots... With the kind of treatment we are subjected to by the Mugabe government, we feel it is high time we re-trace our roots” stated Simon Mabhena a Highlanders fan.

Figure 8 (Source: Author)
In June 2013 during a CAPS United/Highlanders match at the National Sports Stadium, Highlanders fans occupying Bay 17 sang the South African national anthem before the match. The South African national flag could also be seen flying in the same bay. The supporters took turns to shout “Mthwakazi” during the course of the match. It appears increasingly obvious that flags and monuments such as national stadia have become crucial sites in the Zimbabwean football landscape at which to contest and re-define Zimbabwe’s nationhood. The raising of a flag and singing of a national anthem from a neighbouring country is a clear attempt to disrupt the image of a united Zimbabwe ‘fathered’ by Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe. The sentiment is one of refusal to belong, while expressing a longing to belong somewhere else. Such refusal and longing are complicated by the fact that returns to and citizenship in an imagined Nguniland is virtually impossible in the context of regional politics.

The tense rivalry between the Ndebele and Shona ethnic groups, which manifests when Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC play, is also evident when the Warriors play. The Warriors support base thus is hugely fragmented. The fans are either Highlanders/Dynamos supporter first and then Warriors fan later.

‘Not a real Zimbabwean team’: tribalism, regionalism and the Warriors

Ethnic contestations characterising Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC matches are also prevalent when the national team, the Warriors, are playing. During moments of success, it is easy for the Warriors ‘unify’ the “nation”. The same Warriors team also divides the ‘nation’ during defeats. The norm after demoralising defeats is for supporters to become uber-critical, questioning the selection and loyalties of the players. Ethnic and regional discourses emerge as anchors of the debate about who is to blame for losses.

Some Highlanders FC supporters have alleged that Highlanders FC players or players in the Southern part of the country in general, are sidelined by national team coaches. For these supporters the Warriors represent the interests of people from Mashonaland provinces. According to Ndlovu, a Warriors supporter from Bulawayo, “This team called the Warriors is not even nationally composed...But a Dynamos or Shona project. People of Matabeleland should
have their own national team which represent them”. This view has led some to call for a Ndebele national team. Moyo, a Warriors supporter from Harare, however, was of the opinion that national teams are ‘balanced’. Often supporters from the Northern region usually sympathetic to Dynamos FC and those from the Southern part of the country usually sympathetic to Highlanders see ‘balance’ when the national team has more of their favourite clubs players than those of the rival club.

National development discourses follow national football team discourses. One respondent from Bulawayo, Dumiso Dlamini, stated, “...The manner in which this Shona dominated government has marginalised Matabeleland provinces in development programmes is also similar to the way footballers from the Southern part of the country are left out from the national team”. Dlamini further claimed that there is an unwritten ‘law’ that being ‘Shona’ is the license to play for the Warriors. Due to the numerical superiority of Dynamos FC players in the national team, supporters based in Matabeleland often disassociate themselves from the Warriors and criticise it as a ‘Mashonaland United’ or ‘Dynamos United’.

In 2013 when the Warriors lost 2-4 to Egypt in a World Cup qualifying match at the National Sports Stadium (Harare) ethnic and regional contestations surfaced. Firstly, the match was poorly attended. It appeared the majority of the supporters who attended were from Dynamos FC as they were putting on Dynamos FC blue and white. Highlanders FC supporters questioned German coach Klaus Dieter Pagels’s criteria of player selection. Dynamos FC, contributed seven players, while there was not a single player from Highlanders. After the match, some Highlanders FC supporters openly mocked the national team. “Mashonaland United/ Dynamos United has been walloped”. Ndebele-Shona binaries were visible after this match. Clifford Lunga, a Warriors supporter, stated:

Good results, what do you expect from team selection based on tribal lines. 90 percent of players selected are bench warmers and their licence to represent the country is only that they are Shonas? As long as ZIFA allows tribalism in sport, the Warriors will perform badly. Justice done by Egypt (Lunga, 2013).

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279 The current Ian Gorowa coached Warriors team which participated at CHAN finals in 2014 is constituted by eight Dynamos players while there are only two Highlanders players.
Not to be outdone, some Dynamos FC supporters accused Felix Chindungwe, a defender in the Warriors team, for ‘selling out’ by allowing Egyptian strikers to score. Chindungwe plays for Chickenn Inn, a football club based in Bulawayo. Some Dynamos/Warriors fans saw it fit to blame the Warriors assistant coach Peter Ndlovu$^{180}$ for bringing in Chindungwe into the team. One of the Dynamos supporters remarked, “Taigohwina nepi iye Peter Ndlovu atiunzira mutengesi Chindungwe wekuMatebeleland (How could we win the match when Peter Ndlovu had brought Chindungwe, a sell-out from Matebeland into the team)”. Discourses of ‘sell-outs’ in post-2000 Zimbabwe are common in ZANU PF slogans that demonise the ruling party’s opponents (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Scholars agree that such discourses have contributed to the creation of a polarised Zimbabwean society in post 2000 Zimbabwe premised, on the one hand, on ‘patriots’, and, on the other, ‘puppets’ and ‘sell-outs’ (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). Such discourses also emerge readily when the national team plays and loses.

$^{180}$ Peter Ndlovu is a former Highlanders football club player and comes from Bulawayo.
Some Warriors supporters from the Northern and Southern parts of Zimbabwe support the national team coach in office at a given time on ethnic/ regional grounds. When the Warriors lose under the guidance of a coach from Matabeleland or the Southern region, some fans from the Northern region celebrate privately or openly. They resultantly accuse the ‘Southerner’ or ‘the Ndebele’ for ‘killing’ Zimbabwean soccer. The reverse applies when–the Warriors lose under the guidance of a coach from the Northern part of Zimbabwe. In October 2012 the Warriors lost 0-2 to Angola in a match which resulted in the Warriors’ failure to qualify for the Africa Cup of Nations 2013. Supporters from the Northern part of Zimbabwe complained, “MaNdevere auraya bhora redu guys, Rahman ngaadzingwe Mapeza adzoke (The Ndebeles have killed our football Rahman Gumbo must be fired and Norman Mapeza\textsuperscript{181} reinstated). Interestingly, Rahman Gumbo is not Ndebele. He traces his origins from Mberengwa area in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe. The fact that Gumbo stays in Bulawayo and played for

\textsuperscript{181} Norman Mapeza is a former Warriors paler and coach from Harare who was banned by the Cuthbert Dube led ZIFA board on allegations of taking part in the Asiagate scandal.
Highlanders makes him Ndebele in the eyes of the Northerners.

Supporters based in Matabeleland also complain that most national team football matches are rarely staged at Babourfields Stadium in Bulawayo. “Why is it that national team matches are only played at the National Sports Stadium or Rufaro in Harare?” asked Brian Ngwenya a Warriors supporter from Gweru. To some supporters in Matabeleland provinces, monuments like Rufaro and the National Sports Stadium are a celebration of Shona heroism. “I don’t see any problem with national team games being played in Harare...That is the capital of Zimbabwe”, stated George Moyo a Warriors supporter from Gweru.

Divisions are also evident on the terraces when the national team is playing. Some Dynamos FC supporters openly support their current and former players in the national team. Highlanders FC supporters also do the same. In August 2013 when the Warriors played Zambia at Rufaro Stadium, Dynamos FC supporters at Vietnam stand booed Highlanders players like Milton Ncube and Masimba Mambare each time they lost possession. Highlanders FC supporters sitting at the City End stand also retaliated, booing Dynamos players, Tawanda Muparati and Partson Jaure.

Power and identity contestations in Zimbabwean soccer also cascade to the terrain of gender. In most cases the female will be at the centre of contestation in the context of Highlanders/Dynamos rivalry or even at any football match.

**Gender blind fans? [Re] production of masculine and feminine identities**

When Highlanders FC lost 0-1 to Dynamos FC on 1 April in the Independence Cup Final at the National Sports Stadium (Harare), Highlanders FC fans at Bay 17 were heard shouting;

“Heyi lina madoda kalisakwanis’ ukudlal’ ibhora, kanti lazeka amashona hini (Guys you can no longer play football, did you have sexual intercourse with the Shona ladies?)”.

A general perception within soccer fan culture is that women are objectified and vilified in stadium discourses (Ncube, Mccracken and Engh, 2013).It has been argued that modern competitive sports arose as a response to a ‘crisis in masculinity’. Sport sociologist Messner
argues “sport was a male-created homosocial cultural sphere that provided men with psychological separation from the perceived feminization of society” (Messner, 1988:200). While modern competitive sports across the world have become increasingly inclusive and accepting of female athletes, fans and athletic femininities, fan cultures still represent and reinforce traditional heteronormative and masculine discourses. Due to the incorporation of particular forms of masculine ideals, fandom remains a domain from which women are largely excluded (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). At Highlanders FC’s Soweto stand, women are rarely welcome unless they are identified as well-known and regular members of the Bosso FC ‘family’ of supporters (Daimon, 2010).

Dynamos FC fans also make use of gendered discourses regarding ethnicity, masculinity and femininity when they shout things like “Mandevere mahure (Ndebeles are prostitutes) (Ncube, Mccracken and Engh, 2014)”. Song lyrics and name calling that include gendered insults regarding the female anatomy are common at football stadia, and operate so as to reinforce the idea of sports as a male preserve (Dunning and Birell, 1994). While it is not uncommon for sports fans to liken defeated teams to ‘women’ or ‘girls’, the ethnic rivalry between Dynamos and Highlanders fans adds another dimension to these gendered insults. Mgcini Mpofu says:

“Guys iteam ngekhe iwine ngenxa yamashona. Kumel’ siqotshe amashona ale gozi elingcolileyo (the team has failed to win because of the presence of Shona players who have unholy blood so let’s chase them away).”

Mpofu constructs women as being in direct opposition with masculine athletic performance and prowess; intercourse with a woman may in fact ‘contaminate’ the athletic ability of a man.

Due to the chauvinism exhibited at stands such as Vietnam and Soweto, the number of women who attend matches at stadia is low. The few who attend are often in the company of men or else watch the game from the VVIP or VIP sections. “Those guys from Soweto or Vietnam can fondle your buttocks or breasts, I am scared of them” stated Sesisa Gumede a female Highlanders FC supporter from Gweru. During a Highlanders/CAPS United match, supporters from the Soweto stand shouted obscenities. “Unouya nemukadzi kuno kubhora manje tichamubata magaro kana musindo watanga (You bring your wife here, we shall molest her
buttocks once violence erupt)” at the researcher’s female colleague. On the terraces, these practices are normalised.

Sex, sexuality and male virility are core themes of terrace masculinity. A song such as, “Baba Bule munonaka (Bule’s father you are sweet in bed says:

Baba Bule murume wangu munonaka (Bule’s father my husband you are sweet)

Baba Bule munogona kani (Bule’s father you are a star)

Kana nemiwo Mai Bule munogona (And you too my wife you are a star)

The husband is described\(^\text{182}\) as a superstar, whose prowess is incomparable. Though the ‘male voice’ comes in later to reciprocate appreciating the female performance, it is undoubted that the show is constructed by around male dominance.

Discourses at the terraces also categorise football teams either as ‘real men’ or ‘weak men’ or in other words as ‘women’ depending on how the team performs (Ncube, Mccracken and Engh, 2013) The moment a team is winning, it is ascribed a masculine identity where it is interpreted as showing qualities of ‘real men’. In contrast, if a team loses, it is ascribed a feminine identity and becomes a symbol of a ‘weak man’ or a ‘woman’. A team’s defeat is interpreted as a sign of being ‘fucked’. Dynamos FC fans, for instance, sing, “Highlanders yarohwa nyoro (Highlanders FC have been forced to have unprotected sex)”. Kaminju and Ndlovu (2011) state that, the act of conceding goals in a football match signify penetration during sexual intercourse. Fiske (1992) concludes that football stadia allow policing of gender identities.

During terrace performances, sex is constructed as an instrument or expression of power which can be used to ‘discipline’ or ‘conquer’ women who challenge their positions in society. This is reflected in songs such as “Mahure dzikamisai nenyoro hombe (discipline prostitutes using unprotected big penises). Men therefore believe that their male organs are instruments of exercising control over the female body. The songs also present what can be viewed as an ideal female body which is expected to bring sexual gratification to the male counterpart. For

\(^{182}\) By a male singer impersonating a lady
instance the song, “Hure riye rematako mahombe...randitadzisa kuisa nyoro (the prostitute with big buttocks prevented me from enjoying penetration reflects the size-zero image of advertising which suggests that an ‘ideal’ beautiful lady should be slim and slender. Harris (2007) observes that this sexualisation of women through stadium songs is just ‘treated’ as normal.

Cultural institutions including football have generally been regarded as male domains which allow men to speak their minds while sharing out some concealed ‘truths’ (Kaminju and Ndlovu, 2011). In that regard women presence in stadiums could be interpreted as an ‘intrusion’ into the male sphere and transgression of the natural order. By objectifying, sexualising and commodifying the female body through songs, football terraces remain guarded, masculine places.

Footballers who transfer from other teams are equated to a woman who beds different men. The players who left Dynamos FC for Shooting stars FC such as Leo Kurazvione were booed by Dynamos supporters as mahure183. During a Dynamos/Howmine match at Rufaro Stadium, Dynamos fans at Vietnam composed a condemning song for How Mine player Hebert Dick184 labelling him a prostitute.

Dick ihure, Dick irombe (Dick is a prostitute, Dick is destitute bum)

Dick ihure, Dick anovhurira vese (Dick is a prostitute, Dick opens legs for everyone)

Dick irombe, wakatadza kutengera mai vake vhara beche (Dick is a destitute, he failed to buy his mother panties)

Dick left Amazulu to join Sundowns before leaving for the South African PSL, then returning to join Highlanders FC and later Bantu Rovers FC and How Mine FC.

Women have also appropriated football discourse to speak back to power through song. For instance:

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183 prostitutes
184 Hebert Dick is the current captain of How mine football club. He has also played for Amazulu, Dynamos, Highlanders and Chicken Inn football club.
Everyone is a prostitute on this earth

Everyone enjoys and wants to have unprotected sex

We shall all perish since everyone wants to have unprotected sex

Below: women celebrating at Rufaro stadium

This song could be viewed as a wakeup call from the once ‘voiceless’ ‘prostitutes’ that in actual fact, almost every earthling enjoys unprotected sex. In the end death affects everyone. Women could be said to have ‘seized’ discourse in the Foucauldian sense reading from the way they celebrate or dance as indicated on Figure 9. While in ‘private’ spheres women can be prone to rape if they play the ‘Gumbura dance’, at public spaces such as stadiums, they actually mimic some of the injustices perpetrated on them. Thus in Gramscian terms, popular culture becomes a site of struggle between the dominant and dominated groups.

This death is linked to HIV and AIDS or any other sexually transmitted diseases.
Conclusion

This chapter has presented and discussed experiences and views of the ‘owners’ of the game. Observations made at the terraces suggest that football fandom patterns just like in the pitch and the boardroom are charged and contested. Historical and contemporary political, ethnic and cultural questions that are hidden in official discourse manifest in the ‘beautiful’ game. The next chapter threads together the research findings and concludes the thesis.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

Football remains the most popular sport in Zimbabwe and, more so, across the globe. Pele, the well known Brazilian footballer star, dubbed football the world’s most ‘beautiful’ game. However, this presumed ‘beauty’ has not been subjected to adequate academic interrogation at any rate; this is the case in Zimbabwe where the study of football is yet to excite mainstream academic interest. A general reason for the neglect is that, with a few notable exceptions, the study of the discourse of popular sport (including football) is still in its nascent stages worldwide. Following on Marc Fletcher’s (2012) assertion that researching sport should not be restricted to sport but should open up wider avenues of enquiry into everyday life, this study qualitatively and critically explores the discourse and ‘politics of football’ in Zimbabwe with a focus on the nature of its influence on discourses of power, identity and development in the everyday lives of Zimbabweans, in the post-independence period.

In other words, the thesis surveys and examines complex relationships and interdependencies that surround the ‘beautiful’ game in modern day Zimbabwe, relating the discourse(s) of football in Zimbabwe to specific social, cultural, political and economic contexts and landscapes in the country. It has been argued that football in Africa is not limited to scoring goals on the pitch but also in politics, power struggles, cultural formations and economic matters (Lin and Nai 2008; Pannenborg, 2010; Siriwat, 2012). This is an argument that this study is completely in agreement with.

Theoretically, the thesis actively recast and adapts Foucauldian discourse to a discussion of ‘football as power’ (and ‘power as football’) in modern-day Zimbabwe. Foucault defines discourse as “a form of power that circulates in the social field and can attach to strategies of domination as well as those of resistance” (Diamond and Quinby, 1988:185). On the basis of such a definition, Foucault (1972; 1980; 1989) contends that discourse is always already implicated with power. By this Foucault means society is characterised by endless power struggles. Furthermore, discourse itself has power to mark, define and deploy truth and knowledge (Foucault 1980). In this study football became a lens through which power, identity
and ‘development’ were viewed. The study also appeals to the Neo-Gramscian approach which views popular culture (including football) as a formative site for the play of power, where identities are negotiated and contested in people’s everyday lives. This approach is critical in complementing the shortcomings of the Foucauldian approach especially in terms of discussing football as a specific form of popular culture.

In particular, the Neo-Gramscian interpretations of power, popular culture and popular struggle were found to be good fits to the project of using football as an entry-point to discoursing about Zimbabwean society. The Neo-Gramscian approach views popular culture as a site of ideological struggle between the dominant and dominated groups (Strinati, 1995), rejecting the one-dimensional perspective which views popular culture (including sport) as a site where only governing authorities exercise unchecked power, privilege and dominance. In Storey’s view (1999), the introduction of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony into the field of cultural studies in the early 1970s brought about a radical rethinking of the politics of popular culture. Seeing popular culture as a site for the production and reproduction of hegemony Hall (1978) became a normative position. Hence:

> Popular culture is a field of struggle and negotiation between the interests of dominant groups and interests of subordinate groups: between imposition of dominant interests and the resistance of subordinate interests (Storey 1999:149).

This nuanced view of power being subject to multiple negotiations is the one adopted and preferred in this study.

The thesis extends other soccer monographs and ethnographies on the African continent, particularly by Arnold Pannenborg (2010) in Cameroon and Ghana and Marc Fletcher’s (2012) in South Africa. The study is also indebted to the pioneering contributions made by Giulianotti and Armstrong on the consumption of British soccer. These scholars provided a foundation from which to explore fan/supporter identities beyond surface observations (Fletcher 2012).

Only a selection of ‘football events’ were investigated. In particular, Premier Soccer League matches specifically those involving Zimbabwe’s most popular teams, Dynamos FC and
Highlanders FC were critical for this ethnography. Most of the purposively selected matches involved these football clubs. The Warriors were also targeted for study. Such selectivity was necessitated by a need to focus the study. Considerable groundwork needs to be done still if there is to be inaugurated, in the future, a ‘football studies’ in Zimbabwe.

The research period took two years, between 2012 and 2014. Data collection continued until saturation. Saturation point was reached in early 2014. Participant observation was utilised at selected football stadia especially Rufaro Stadium, Babourfields Stadium and the National Sports Stadium, subjecting to critical discourse analysis songs and discussions by fans in stadiums. The aim was to get a better understanding and make a ‘thick’ description (Geertz, 1973) of how the consumption of soccer is constituted. The aim was also to interrogate how such a consumption of football frames and influences, and is framed and influenced, by specific social identities. This qualitative interpretive research approach emphasise the need to study ‘reality’ at the natural setting (Bryman, 2012). The researcher, coming from a Media Studies background, appreciates the particular shortcomings of mediated ‘reality’ which suffers from inevitable dilution from mediation processes and politics of signification (Hall, 1997; Devereaux, 2004). It was therefore important to interact with ‘reality’ in stadium and also in the everyday lives of people rather than to sorely rely on ‘texts’. Theorising the ‘everyday’ is necessary.

Observations made in stadia were complemented by in-depth semi-structured interviews with purposively selected football fans, players, coaches and football administrators. The atmosphere in the stadia, in particular, favoured the researcher somewhat. People tended to be freer to express their views and to perform their identities than at any other places. However, as Mhiripiri (2010) warns, the fact that identities are performances made it necessary to extend thick description beyond the stadium. Observation went beyond stadiums into homes, streets and workplaces. This kind of far-reaching interaction with the research subjects transformed the research into sociology of football of sorts.

As briefly hinted earlier, the ethnographic approach adopted in this study included taking on board not only the voices of the fans but of other critical stakeholders in the game as well. These ‘others’ included sports journalists, football players, coaches, administrators, politicians and
government officials. This admixture of respondents was a way for the study to combine a bottom-up and top-down approach. The inclusion of a multiplicity of voices allows for one to examine how football discourse is appropriated and deployed by the authorities to win consent, while at the same time looking at how subaltern groups appropriate the same discourse to speak truth to power and resist domination.

The study is not without its problems and limitations. In particular, ethnography came with its sets of risks. Some ‘terraces’ were openly hostile to the researcher. This lack of ‘open’ access may have inadvertently coloured some of the researcher’s conclusions. The researcher’s inability to proficiently express himself in all languages transformed him into the ‘other’, turning the gaze of the researched back on the researcher. The Samsung HMX-Q20 Full HD Digital Camcorder used for recording data and interviews, in particular, brought mixed reactions among the participants. Despite assuring the participants that data collected was only for academic purposes, some suspected that it could be for use by tabloid newspapers. Suspicion, coupled with administrative red tape, at times proved a hindrance to data collection. For instance, a high ranking official at the Zimbabwe Football Association kept putting off interviews and postponing dates. An interesting instance was when one of the founding Dynamos FC members initially flatly refused to grant the researcher an interview on the basis that the researcher’s surname sounds Ndebele. Such a surname seemed to indicate that the researcher was not only Ndebele but a Highlanders fan on a spying mission at Dynamos FC, a Shona team.

A further study limitation is the dominance of male voices. An instance is the boardroom chapter. Football administration posts in Zimbabwe are largely male dominated. Football itself remains a masculine sport across the globe. The world’s first female coach of a men’s professional league club has only just been appointed in France. The coach, Helena Costa, now coaches Clermont in France’s Ligue 2. There is only one female referee in the British Premier League, Sian Massey. This is despite the fact that men coach female teams without any problems. The implication is that football has a long way to go before it becomes both a man’s and woman’s sport. At the moment, the overwhelming feeling is that women are playing a men’s game.

\(^{186}\) Ncube
Some of the women administrators targeted by the researcher at the beginning of the study refused to participate in the study. The chairperson of the Women’s Football League refused to be interviewed. Ironically, she referred the researcher to her media assistant, a male character to answer questions about women’s football on her behalf. A former Zimbabwe Football Association Chief Executive Officer also declined to be interviewed, emphasising that she no longer had anything to do with Zimbabwean football. The Women’s national football league which had been launched in 2012, failed to take off in 2013 due to financial challenges. The generalised low enthusiasm around women’s soccer had the effect of limiting the study to men’s football. This is a gap that future studies could address. The theme of the femininity of the game, situating it in the social, political and economic broader context, is a topic worth examining.

Sixteen football clubs play in Zimbabwe’s Premier Soccer League. This research however, is only limited to Zimbabwe’s two ‘biggest’ football clubs-Dynamos and Highlanders as well as the senior men’s national football team-the Warriors. Such a deliberate inclusion of these teams as well as exclusion of other football clubs requires an explanation. The three football teams were selected basing on the researcher’s knowledge and assumptions on Zimbabwean football, politics and economic history. The three football teams used however cannot be regarded as the best cultural map, or metaphorical representation (Giulianotti, 2002) which enhances our understanding of the Zimbabwean society. Future studies could also extend the analysis to the so called ‘small’ teams to enrich our understanding of the Zimbabwean society through football lens.

In essence, this study is largely limited to Harare, Bulawayo and Gweru, Zimbabwe’s main cities despite the fact that more than 70 percent of the Zimbabwean population resides in rural areas. Moreover, PSL teams are spread all over the country to areas such as Hwange, Kariba and Mutare. Future studies could also study the relationship between football and national discourses in Zimbabwe’s smaller cities-particularly the mining communities as well as rural areas.

Though this thesis relies on ethnographic methods particularly participant observation as well as in-depth semi-structured interviews and informal conversations, with purposively selected
participants drawn from the boardroom, pitch and the terraces the study also has its limitations. This study is not a longitudinal study as testified by the fact that the research span stretches from 2012-April 2014. It might be necessary for future studies on football discourse to extend the time frame on the field as well as including other ‘critical’ voices that might have been overlooked by the current study.

The study has had as its theoretical goal the integrating of football and football fandom into the family of disciplines that make up what could be called Zimbabwean Cultural Studies. The study also patently belongs within sport studies and in the sociology of sport studies. Important beginnings have been made in the area by scholars such as Stuart and Wagg (1995), Stuart and MacClancy (1996), Giulianotti (2004), Alegi (2010), Bloomfield (2010), Muponde and Muchemwa (2011), Zenenga (2012) and Willems (2013). The thesis therefore complements and extends the work of these already existing works. To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, however, the use of the kind of methodological and theoretical approaches utilised in the study to critique football in Zimbabwe is unique. Certainly, there is every indication that this study is the first of its kind at doctoral level in modern Zimbabwe.

The thesis also provides towards a bigger picture in the centrality of sport in understanding society. The bigger picture is the movement towards mainstreaming the study of sport in Zimbabwe. At the very least, the study has attempted to illustrate why the discourse of popular sport and football in particular deserves a special place in the academic field in contemporary Zimbabwe. The study consistently argues that football is a space in which much more than sport happens. Researching football opened up wider unexpected avenues of enquiry into everyday life (Fletcher, 2012). Sadly, football is still under-theorised in Zimbabwe.

**Discourse reinforces but can also expose power**

The relationship between football and political authority that began in colonial times went on to reproduce itself in post-colonial Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU), two nationalist parties which
challenged colonial authority through the use of football, appropriated football to control the people after independence (Zenenga, 2012). Just as Dynamos FC and Highlanders FC were critical sites for evading the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) in the past, the two clubs find themselves at the centre of nationalist and oppositional contestations today. These two most followed football teams in Zimbabwe are constantly courted in crude and subtle ways by the ruling ZANU PF party as conduits for dominant discourses about the ‘nation’ and ‘national identity’. Football is a major feature of ‘national day’ menus. Football is used to celebrate important national days on Zimbabwe’s calendar such as Heroes Day, Independence Day and Unity Day. Dynamos and Highlanders are often selected to play in these matches. The participation of such popular football teams helps draw huge crowds. It has been argued that huge crowds attend these gatherings because they want to watch the games between Highlanders FC and Dynamos FC not because they like ZANU PF (Willems, 2013). However, the presence of huge crowds at pro-ZANU PF functions was taken to indicate the popularity of the party, even when this was not the case. Regardless of ZANU PF’s effort to win people’s support and legitimacy through football discourse, the nationalist party finds itself in the predicament of being challenged through the same discourse-football, a platform it once successfully used to subvert colonial rule. At the very least, it is proven that power does not lie in one single pocket (Foucault, 1980; Mbembe, 2001; Willems, 2010).

Another convincing set of evidence pointing out how ZANU PF’s hegemony is challenged through football is the rise of Ndebele ‘ethnic nationalism’ which is opposed to a state of affairs where Ndebeles are governed from Mashonaland. This variant of nationalism is founded on the quest for a mythical Ndebele ‘nation’. Such discourses are partly rooted in the oneiric vision of return to the ‘golden age’ of the Ndebele Kingdom under Mzilikazi and Lobengula. The middle-of-the-way form of Ndebele ethnic nationalism looks towards a federal state, and was represented in the 2012 referendum in the figure of Welshman Ncube of MDC-N\textsuperscript{188}. The extreme form, on the other hand, completely rejects the current Zimbabwe nation advocating, instead, for the breaking away of Matabeleland to form an autonomous Ndebele state. It is

\textsuperscript{188} Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-N) party is lead by Professor Welshman Ncube. It split from the main MDC party in 2005.
argued that the current state celebrates Shona heroism while marginalising the Ndebele (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2010).

This study established that the counter-hegemonic nature of Ndebele ethnic nationalism is performed, enacted and reflected during football matches through songs, paraphernalia, gestures and symbols. Mirroring the situation in Spain where the Catalonia nationalism is spearheaded through Barcelona Football Club, Highlanders Football Club has become central for the articulation of Ndebele nationalism. Such articulations are strongly anchored in a perceived or even invented Ndebele cultural unity and purity. In truth, however, no Ndebele cultural purity exists – just as there is no Shona cultural unity or purity. The so-called Ndebele nation under Mzilikazi and Lobengula was, in fact, an amalgam of the eZansi, Enhla and Amahole. This hybridity and syncretism is denied in stadium songs and chants. Instead, it is replaced by a thoroughgoing essentialism. In denying the syncretism of the Ndebele, Ndebele nationalism strives for a subversive ideal. Consequently, this subversive form of nationalism does not only manifest itself in calls for the secession of Matabeleland provinces from the Zimbabwean state to [re]establish an autonomous Ndebele ‘nation’, but also manifests various forms of ‘xenophobia’ ranging from mild and jocular banter to the extremely virulent and violent.

The expression of invented cultural purity and dislike for the ethnic ‘other’ is not confined to Ndebeles. Shona fans, often from Dynamos FC, likewise are implicated in expressing ethnic arrogance and ‘xenophobia’, especially at Dynamos-Highlanders FC matches. Though the notion of Shona is a colonial invention (Beach, 1984), it has nevertheless been used to manufacture consent by the powerful and the powerless alike. When Dynamos FC fans sing that Ndebeles murdered Shona ancestors and that Gukurahundi was pay-back for these historical crimes, they are claiming responsibility for a genocidal crime that was perpetrated by a ZANU PF government. Ironically, such a government did not kill on behalf of the Shona at all but, rather, for its own ends. That is, Gukurahundi was about power, not ethnicity. Ironically, such a government included prominent Ndebeles such as Enos Nkala, who were implicated in the genocide.

189 These were different groups constituting the Ndebele state in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. Hierarchically, the eZansi group had a higher status. The original ‘Khumalo’ group from Zululand made this group, while conquered groups on the way such as the Sotho constituted the Enhla. Shona groups conquered and incorporated into the Ndebele state were ascribed the name Amahole and had the lowest power positions in society (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2010).
One easy conclusion to reach is that the centrality of football in either maintaining or subverting hegemony explains why Zimbabwean government like other governments across the African continent – retains an active, permanent and vested interest in the game. Such vested interest manifests itself in the ‘seconding’ of pro-ZANU PF functionaries into football governing structures such as ZIFA, PSL and the SRC. Indeed, several former football administrators went on to contest for political office on a ZANU PF ticket. Interestingly, such a scenario is common in African countries such as Liberia, Nigeria and Cameroon (Pannenborg, 2010; Bloomfield 2010). The government has also consistently found strategies to ‘subvert’ FIFA statutes prohibiting government interference in football administration. It can be concluded that the intention has always been to protect ZANU PF government interests through the institution of sport. Failure to build ZANU PF’s hegemony into governing structures is seen by the power brokers as risking allowing opposing strategies to be deployed through football.

Importantly, the thesis also established a strong similarity between Zimbabwe’s mainstream elections and ZIFA elections. Literature on Zimbabwean national elections particularly in the post 2000 period indicate that the ZANU PF government maintain their political dominance through unorthodox electoral tactics such as rigging and unleashing violence on the electorate (Wadahl, 2004; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009; Chibuwe, 2013). Football is far from being a ‘beautiful’ game as what is unproblematically claimed. Discourses of election rigging, intimidation and vote buying are also common in as far as ZIFA elections are concerned.

The study demonstrates that football is power and power is football. For the powerful, football’s beauty lies in the fact that it provides them economic and political gain and popularity. Wealthy plutocrats such as Cuthbert Dube have maintained an interest in football administration, despite there being no indication that they necessarily make more money from heading ZIFA. ZIFA (and CAF and FIFA) becomes a simultaneously real and symbolic seat of power (chigaro) that opens up avenues for more power. In Althusserian terminology, it could be interpreted as the [re]production of politics of the game.

Cottle (2011) has observed that sport can be like a hammer which can be used to build and at the same time to destroy. Zimbabwean football also possesses that potential. Due to factional power
fights in football administration structures, it has become a norm to maintain a ‘balance of power’ between Zimbabwe’s Northern and Southern regions. The need to constantly maintain a balance of power indicates that Zimbabwean national identity has remained a question without answer (Chiambu, 2004; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). The consensus in the halls of power is that football, if not properly managed, could be another source of generalised national schism in modern day Zimbabwe. As Foucault (1980) emphasises, discourses produces, protects and reinforces power but it can also expose the power making it.

Football’s relationship with power goes well beyond politics. The Zimbabwean game is intricately intertwined with another kind of power: the spiritual, the ‘supernatural’ and the metaphysical. This ‘power’ is central in the Zimbabwean game from the pitch, to the boardroom, and the terraces. Football stadiums are critical sites where spiritual planes are reflected and contest. For instance, there is a strong belief among many fans, administrators, coaches and players that victory or loss is something beyond human control. Rather, there are ‘divine forces’ lurking around us which can either negatively or positively be used to influence outcomes of football matches. Some supporters bring bibles to the terraces, players pray on the pitch before and after matches, and coaches look up to the skies or close their eyes during a penalty shootout. Others make use of salt, bute (snuff) or even urine to ‘neutralise’ juju purportedly planted by opposing teams.

**Football and identity**

Football discourse(s) assist us to understand the ‘politics’ surrounding identity issues in Zimbabwe ranging from ethnicity, race, class, gender, religion and political identities. Ethnic conflicts in particular remain one of the major problems characterising modern Zimbabwe. Despite the government often downplaying these conflicts, they manifest during football matches. It took 15 years after Zimbabwe’s independence, for instance, before soccer players could metaphorically cross the *Shangani*. Makwinji Soma Phiri of Highlanders FC became the first player to break the tradition in 1995 when he left Highlanders FC to join their main rivals,
Dynamos FC. With the professionalization of the game, more players have crossed the Shangani. However, ‘tribal’ discourses continue to surface.

It also is evident that ‘essentialism’ characterises football supporter identity in Zimbabwe. The researcher was ascribed a ‘Ndebele’ and ‘Highlanders supporter’ identity and ‘rejected’ by some Dynamos FC members on the basis of his surname Ncube. In other words, it is taken as a given by some sections of Dynamos supporters and footballers that all Ncubes are ‘Ndebeles’ and consequently Highlanders fans. Contrastingly, for some Highlanders supporters, all Shona’s are Dynamos supporters and are also ZANU PF and Mugabe people. As indicated earlier, the researcher’s poor Ndebele proficiency made him the ‘other’ and not his surname among Highlanders supporters. Thus one’s ability to speak fluently speak Ndebele makes him/her part of ‘us’ (Ndebele) whilst failure to speak makes him/her the ‘other’. In the end one is made to feel like an alien-born in Zimbabwe but treated as alien.190

This thesis offers a theoretical formulation of the embedded position of football as part of the fabric of people’s everyday lives. Using Dynamos, Highlanders as well as the Warriors, the thesis lucidly illustrates how the football culture affects social identities in Zimbabwe. The study presents critical and rare primary data grounded on empiricism accentuated by the researcher’s knowledge of the Zimbabwean political, economic, social and cultural history. Preliminary African and Zimbabwean ‘football studies’ lack this insight as most of the researchers who are largely ‘Western’ lack the cultural context in which these discourses are located. With reference to Zimbabwe in particular, these ‘Western’ researchers lack proficiency in ‘indegenous’ languages191 which are key in the exploration of power, identity and development discourses embedded in sport.

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190 Aliens have been regarded as Zimbabwe’s invisible minorities (Muzondidya, 2004). This group is made up of descendants of people who migrated to Southern Rhodesia from countries such as Zambia and Malawi in search of employment in the 1960s. From independence until the new constitution came in 2013, ‘aliens’ could not vote or acquire a Zimbabwean passport. However at the same time in Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique where they ‘originate’ they were equally regarded as ‘aliens’. Thus they ended up stateless. Some people find themselves in the same predicament in the terrain of football fandom.

191 Ndebele and Shona
Whose ‘development’?

Sport and football in Zimbabwe just like elsewhere, has become closely intertwined with ‘development’ discourses in complex ways. The thesis deploys the Foucauldian discourse in an attempt to make a holistic analysis and critique of some unproblematically underscored development discourses and paradigms related to football in people’s everyday lives.

Development is a contested terrain whose definition justifiably tends to vary from society to society and from time to time (Hettne, 1990). Football plays an important role in mirroring, shaping, and critiquing discourses of local and national development. The concept of ‘development’ emerged in the second half of the twentieth century largely due to the increasing concern about economic prospects for Third World countries following the wave of decolonisation (Rist, 1999; Melkote and Steeves, 2001). It was also at a time when capitalist nations were involved in ideological wars with the Eastern Communist bloc.

Development praxis has gradually shifted from a focus on GDP per capita to a focus on practices for qualitatively enhancing human potential and working towards improving people’s quality of lives (Chitnis, 2005). These practices include social and economic progress and people’s freedom to participate in the socio-political processes that affect their lives. The desired goal for development today is to provide opportunities and empowering the most marginalised to have control over their lives (Melkote and Steeves, 2001).

Football is intertwined with development discourses both in the sense of the narrow modernisation paradigm and Freirean participatory humanisation paradigm. Football administrators, coaches, footballers and the fans generally look favourably at ‘overseas’ football leagues. Foreign based players are held in highest esteem compared to the local ones. The study traced these attitudes largely to a number of factors such as association of foreign leagues with ‘professionalism’, the ‘white man’, money, riches and the good life, and simply with the fact that the grass seems greener on the other side of the fence. The foreign based player is not only thought of as having ‘been-to’, but also that his game is improved by the supposedly highly technical European game, coaches and training facilities. It is actually ‘a dream’ for most if not all locally-based footballers in Zimbabwe to go and play football in Europe or, at the very least,
in South Africa. Even countries such as Sudan, Libya, and China have hosted local players. When it comes to the selection of the national team, foreign based players are considered the best, and foreign (often white) coaches are better. Due to the interpretation of the West as the ‘developed’ ones, there is a general perception that local football is on a trajectory towards being like European football. Until local football is played and administered like the European game, we have ‘not arrived’.

Despite these perceptions, there is no evidence that foreign-based players are necessarily better than locally based ones. Also, the two most successful national soccer coaches in Zimbabwe’s history have been locals. The perception that foreign is intrinsically better, however, persists.

The development of Zimbabwean football, in the Freirean sense of empowering the powerless, has remained stagnant. There is little evidence of political will in the sense of the Nkrumah-style commitment to football. The government continues to see sport as a drain on priority resources while the corporate sector only has a selfish, proprietary relationship with local football. Only a handful of companies are involved in football sponsorship, and even these are limited to ‘small change’ sponsorship. What little value remains in the game is continuously leeched through maladministration, incompetence and corruption such as was witnessed with the Asiagate scandal that broke in 2010.

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Appendix

Source for all photos: Author

**Photo 1:** Highlanders FC supporters cheering their team at Babourfields Stadium

![Photo 1](image1.jpg)

**Photo 2:** Smiling Highlanders FC supporter at Soweto Stand Babourfields Stadium

![Photo 2](image2.jpg)
Photo 3: ‘Disjointed’ Warriors Supporters at the National Sports Stadium

Photo 4: Warriors Supporters at the National Sports Stadium
Photo 5: Dynamos’ Brian ‘DeMbada’ Gowa imitating the referee at Rufaro Stadium

Photo 6: Shabanie Mine FC flag burnt by Dynamos FC ‘hooligans’ at Maglas Stadium
**Photo 7:** Dynamos’ FC ‘unique’ Coloured supporter

**Photo 8:** The helicopter landing to hand Dynamos FC the PSL trophy at Ascot stadium in 2012

**Photo 9:** Highlanders FC warming up before their Bob Super Cup final match against Dynamos FC at Rufaro Stadium, March 2014
Photo 10: Dynamos FC players warming before their match against Highlanders FC at Rufaro Stadium, March 2014