

## **Sidelines and Solidarity: Race and cultural hegemonies in the transition from mission to national soccer in Fiji and South Africa**

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### **Abstract**

Comparing experiences in two widely differing yet not totally dissimilar multiethnic, formerly colonial countries, Fiji and South Africa, this paper looks at the context and significance of soccer in assignments of race, ethnicity and class under colonialism and apartheid in soccer in the two. In doing so it formulates hypotheses on, and analyses and draws conclusions on the instances of sublimation of, and resistance to, dictats of race, ethnicity, class, colonialism and apartheid. As a first step it examines and contextualises the transformation of soccer in Fiji from being part of Christian missions and their school curriculum, between 1900 and 1961, to its present standing as a sport of urban leisure. This foregrounds immediate points of comparison with the history and role of missions and schools in South Africa. The role of the Fiji Indian Football Association (Fiji Indian FA) between 1938 and 1961 is examined for complicity and colonial agency towards separate development of races in Fiji. The transition to inclusive national associations in Fiji and South Africa is examined in wider hegemonic contexts – colonial and under internationalism – for the creation and erasure of ethnic sidelines, with particular attention to a moment of serendipity in 1961 to the sport in both countries and their affiliation with FIFA.

## I: Of Histories and Hegemonies – Theoretical Platforms for a comparative analysis of Soccer and Race in Fiji and South Africa

Soccer in Fiji takes on a racially charged outlook that it is an Indo-Fijian sport. This in part is due to the creation of racial myths that was given currency due to colonial policies and practices on racial segregation that evolved into a policy of separate development between Indo-Fijians and Indigenous Fijians. Historians like Brij Lal, K.S Gillion and Adrian Mayer, trace these policies to the Native Policy formulated by Governor Gordon with its protectionist and paternalistic view of Indigenous Fijians. This starting point evolved into a colonial policy of racial segregation for most of the period of British rule in Fiji. A policy that also determined who played sports and with whom.

Formed in 1938, the Fiji Indian FA remained ostensibly an exclusively ‘Asiatic’ organisation in its administrative and playing membership, until 1961. Under this directing clause of an ‘Asiatic’ sport it included only those of Indian or Asian, mainly Chinese, origins – and by colonial dictate, Europeans could play if they chose to do so (Prasad, 1998, 39). The transference between race and racial schisms along the lines of Aimé Césaire’s definition of black and white relations, found in *Black Skin White Masks* (1952) gains currency in soccer played under the colonial gaze.

Within this gaze are found common sub-categories of colonial definition of race – blacks, coloureds and Asians in South Africa, and Natives, Indians, Asiatics and Half-Castes in Fiji. In this paper race as used in colonialism and under apartheid applies as a register to define identity, categorise people and consign them to particular places within a centrally defined hierarchy. On paper such racial categorisation defined individual identities through their life cycle. John and Jean Comaroff, through various case studies of religious and political historical events and incidents in South Africa, view hegemony and colonialism through a different prism. In *Of Revelation and Revolution. Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, the Comaroffs say:

We take hegemony to refer to that order of signs and practices, relations and distinctions, images and epistemologies – drawn from a historically situated cultural field – that come to be taken for granted as the natural and received shape of the world . . . (1991, 23)

The historically situated cultural field for the Comaroffs is not clearly defined in their works, but it can be safely assumed that it is based heavily on the transportation of British colonialism to South Africa with its attendant social and economic class values and interests. The idea of the natural and received shape of the world in their works is illustrated in their studies of missionary work in the Northern Cape, primarily among the Tswana speakers in South Africa. Their preferred term to hegemony is ideology, following Raymond Williams’s (1977) discussion of Gramsci. One defining premise of the Comaroffs’ work is that one of the unintended consequences of the educative work of missions is to prepare the colonised subject for resistance against the colonial hegemony through their acquisition of the colonisers’ language and from the values of individual freedom and liberty at the heart of biblical teachings. This paper, in the study of the cultural hegemony of soccer, tests the notion of mission work preparing the colonised subject for resistance in both South Africa and Fiji.

Aimé Césaire and his protégé Frantz Fanon have been widely documented as producing seminal works that emanated from the field of psychology. The impact and influence on other disciplines in their anti-colonial strategies and narratives of resistance was immediate and irreversible. Central to their contributions is the idea of the colonial gaze, a gaze that defined, categorised and stereotyped the colonised to an essentialised racial and cultural Other. Fanon states the basis of this gaze simply in *Black Skin, White Masks* (and it is later restated by writers such as V. S. Naipaul through his creation of the mimic men personae, in whom European culture, appearance and modes of behaviour and thought are benchmarks against which all others are judged):

There is a fact: White men consider themselves superior to black men. There is another fact: Black men want to prove to white men at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect.  
How do we extricate ourselves? (1952, 10)

Emergent literature from the colonies became notable in producing narratives of resistance to political, psychological, economic and cultural discrimination on grounds of race and colour. The emergence of writers from the colonies like Kamau Braithewaite, V. S. Naipaul, Wole Soyinka, George Lamming, Samuel Selvon, Dom Moraes and Peter Porter, among others in the immediate post-World War II period, saw the emergence of narratives of resistance that addressed the punitive colonial gaze that Césaire and Fanon had brought into clear view. In covering the immediate post-World War II period of the anti-colonial movement, this paper looks at the narratives and texts of race and racial divides under colonialism and apartheid at play on the soccer field. It investigates the extent to which this play replicated anti-colonial resistance, or instances when soccer was utilised to mobilise mass resistance, or when and if the sport became a field of comprador elites acting in self-interest.

Definitions and clarifications designate that in Fiji, sports are framed within a complex history of racial and cultural relations within the country. Indigenous Fijians are now styled *I-Taukei*, the first inhabitants. During much of Fiji's colonial era, 1874–1970, they were referred to as 'Natives'. (In this paper the term I-Taukei is used, no matter what the conventional usage was at the time being discussed.) *Indo-Fijians* refers to descendants of both Indian indentured labourers brought to Fiji between 1879 and 1920 and of later free immigrants from India. During the colonial era their assignation in official discourse and archives was 'Indian'. There is no pretence of a homogeneous Indo-Fijian diaspora; it exists with diverse sectarian, religious and cultural divides apart from those of class, gender and age. Nor does one assume the same for the I-Taukei, as this paper also acknowledges their diversity of dialects, clan genealogies, and post-contact religious denominations within Christianity.

These definitions as part of the official doctrine had parallels under the South African assignations of racial classification as a cornerstone of its apartheid regime. Assignations found in the division of soccer for Whites only and for Non-Whites, including Blacks, Asians and Coloureds in South Africa. Soccer in Fiji and South Africa under colonialism and apartheid, respectively, is clearly racially demarcated, in a manner cutting across other sports and rationalised by the hegemony of colonial rule that is also found at the heart of apartheid. It forms the basis of the discrimination

against the racially, and thus culturally and historically, inferior countries and people on the Non-West, as dictated by colonialism. Theorists like Fanon, Césaire and Edward Said, and writers like Chinua Achebe, Ayi Kwei Armah, V. S. Naipaul, Epeli Hau'ofa, Albert Wendt and Subramani, among others, resist and interrogate these racial and cultural reductions through their works, in much greater detail than is possible in this study.

Italian thinker and political activist Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937) is cited to provide a lead-in perspective to most discussions on the concept of hegemony. Gramscian hegemony has a Marxist foundation in that the agency of control is via a society's superstructure rather than its base or social relations of production of a predominately economic character. Edward Said prefaces his study *Orientalism* within the context of the distinction Gramsci makes between civil and political society. Said outlines it thus:

Culture, of course, is to be found operating within civil society, where the influence of ideas, of institutions, and of other persons works not through domination but by what Gramsci calls consent. In any society not totalitarian, then, certain cultural forms predominate over others, just as certain ideas are more influential than others; the form of this cultural leadership is what Gramsci has identified as *hegemony*, an indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial West. (1995, 7)

The concept of consent and the formation of cultural hegemony will be extended to this study of soccer in Fiji and South Africa, through an examination of the cultural leadership found in the hierarchy of the administration of the game. Seminal works by writers like Anderson Perry (1976), Raymond Williams (1977, 1985) and within the colonial/postcolonial framework by Gauri Vishwanathan (1989) expand on Gramsci to provide the foundations for conceptualising the lived experience and popular culture in more contemporary times. Of particular interest to this paper are the constructs of consent and cultural hegemony within civil society, which Gramsci advocates as demonstrating the essentially political and politicised nature of such ostensibly non-political social and cultural entities. The hegemonic nature of relations in its all-encompassing spread is summarised by Gramsci under his notion that:

State is the entire complex of practical and theoretical activities with which the ruling class not only justifies and maintains its dominance, but manages to win the active consent of those over whom it rules. (1971, 244)

Thus hegemony in the Gramscian sense provides a useful tool to examine relationships of rule and domination and the gaining of consent from those being dominated in various arenas, including that of sports. In this paper, the participants in such hegemonies range from the British colonial administration, I-Taukei chiefs, colonialist corporations like the Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR), and Christian missions. It is extended to the Fiji Indian FA, FIFA, South African Football Association (SAFA) and an assortment of rival football bodies, within the framework of the more totalitarian hegemonic control of – the apartheid state of the Republic of South Africa from 1909 to 1990, and of Fiji under the British Colonial Administration between 1874 and 1970. In studying ethnicity, religion, national associations and soccer, these hegemonic

groups can be examined under Gramscian definitions of the 'private' and the 'political society' or the 'state', and their incestuous exhibition of 'deeply political' traits (1971, 77).

Oligarchy as a related term to cultural hegemony as defined by Gramsci in studying soccer relies on a specific definition and is related to the concept of 'consociationalism'. R. S. Milne applied the term to 'developing' countries like Fiji, quoting Lijphart to describe consociational democracy as '... government by an elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy' (1975, 413). This form of political engineering is inherent in local and national soccer oligarchies in South Africa and Fiji. The definition of oligarchy relates to Milne's conclusion: 'Finally, Fijian experience suggests an adaptation of consociationalism theory to meet the case of a bi-polar society on the question of the balance of power among subcultures' (430). In Fiji, the fractured and surreally apocalyptic post-independence political history is framed in ironic tones by the relatively stable progress of the elite cartel in administering soccer in Fiji, a feat achieved and facilitated by hegemonies and oligarchies that prospered under the reasoning, behind Milne quoting Hans Daalder's statement that, 'The properties of consociationalism and 'democracy' should be disentangled' (431).

Ethno-cultural divides in sports in the period of this study are imposed by colonial or governmental authority, for example, the apartheid state of South Africa. Subservience of subversion to the imposition requires complicity and collusion of the larger community. An exposition extended to the sublimation of these divides, based not merely on the persuasive hyperbole of soccer breaking down ethnocentric barriers. But more, one that results from the creation of fraternity based on soccer hysteria and fandom. This sublimation is contextualised within the history of race relations and soccer in Fiji and South Africa. The relevance of such a comparison as is demonstrated later in this paper, lies in various points of historical serendipity between the two countries and soccer between 1938 and 1961.

The complicity in exchanges of myths and narratives on soccer and ethnocentrism in Fiji requires examination of colonial hegemonies, of both the coloniser and the colonised. This includes the British colonial administration, its transnational corporate doppelgänger – the (Australian) Colonial Sugar Refining Company – as well as other interests, commercial, and evangelical. Among the colonised, the hegemonies in this study are divided, given the aims of the study, according to race, for example, the Fiji Indian FA, and I-Taukei traditional chiefly leadership.

Before arriving at 1961, a comparative of the evolution of soccer in Fiji and South Africa enables a number of pertinent points to be made. It provides a starting point, to examine some of the commonalities of the history of soccer under the colonial and apartheid nexus, found in policies and practices in both countries. The place and nature of ethnocentric divides, ethno-solidarity and every so often the sublimation of such divides is contextualised within the power relations of the controlling oligarchies in soccer from the local clubs to national associations to the international monolith of FIFA. And like most things in former British colonial outposts such as Fiji and South Africa, it all began from England at the zenith of its imperial ascendancy.

## II: Missions and the Religious and Educative Zeal for Football

As Allen Guttman points out, the formation of the Football Association (FA) in England on 26 October 1863 led to codified rules for soccer, and inaugurated a sport that quickly established itself as a global sport (1994, 42). The game spread to Fiji following its cession to Britain on 10 October 1874, with civil, commercial and military teams in existence, apart from soccer in mission schools. The first available photographs of a “national” team dates back to 1906 with a “European” selection playing against teams from visiting naval and merchant ship. The introduction of soccer in Fiji follows the well-worn path of the sport globally under imperialism, as documented by the pioneering group of sports historians like Janet Lever and Allen Guttmann, among others.

The history of soccer in both Fiji and South Africa is closely tied in with mission education and evangelism. Christian missions emphasised a particular morality and discipline of mind and body among the newly converted flock. C. L. R. James in *Beyond a Boundary* (1963) stamped an early mark in determining the nature of the allegorical relationship between sports and Empire. This entailed the creation of associations through sports with an emphasis on inculcating particular cultural hegemonies that more or less fitted in with the prescribed hierarchies based on race and class within colonial societies, as it did under apartheid. John and Jean Comaroff in their works on Christianity and Colonialism in South Africa move away from easy hierarchies and binaries, as they propose their concept of hegemony, as always being in flux, that entails transitions among and between groups, for example, the inclusion of merchant classes into or at least tolerated on the fringes of the ruling oligarchy. Such a concept of hegemony has to be contextualized within the limited social mobility possible under colonial or apartheid regimes.

On the other hand, other notions of mobility and transformation could be more easily achieved through the relatively simple and cheap, yet immediately popular, sport of soccer. Peter Alegi describes the crucial transitions in soccer in South Africa as ‘... the transformation of football from a mission school pastime for *amakhola* (Christian educated) elite to a popular form of African urban leisure in the segregation era’ (2002, 17). A similar transformation takes place in Fiji, initially among the Christian I-Taukei elite, who as Garrett points out, were the sons of chiefs enrolled in missions and schools from the 1890s (1992, 166). This explains the popularity and spread of soccer in the formation of clubs based on birth and genealogical ties across Fiji among the I-Taukei in this early period. This wide dispersal of soccer enthusiasm was possible only under chiefly patronage; the popularity goes into a sudden and seemingly irreversible decline, 1938–1961.

The shifting of loyalty from soccer to rugby among the I-Taukei remains a largely unexplored area of scholarship. Such an accomplished commentator as Simione Durutalo did not venture into this transformation in his well-documented and insightful thesis, where he does note the role of rugby as part of hegemony of traditional I-Taukei leadership and oligarchic patronage that controls all facets of life in Fiji. Durutalo concentrated instead on what he calls ‘... the four R’s ... ratuism, royalism, religion and rugby’ to analyse the hegemony of the traditional oligarchic chiefs over native I-Taukei communalism (quoted in Howard, 1991, 54).

Durutalo defined ‘ratuism’ as ‘the ideology of chiefs being divinely ordained natural rulers who should be obeyed unquestioningly by the native commoners’. Royalism glorified the British Royal family and legitimised aristocratic rule of chiefs over commoners. Religion through Christianity, especially Methodism, promoted loyalty to chiefs and fostered broader docility among I-Taukei commoners. Christianity also marked difference between I-Taukei and Indo-Fijians, an extrapolation easily made to rugby and soccer and their racial assignments.

Rugby, like soccer, had its beginnings through the British, and increasingly the New Zealand and Australian complement in Fiji’s colonial civil, military and business sectors. This gained its natural expansion through Christian missions and schools. The Fiji Rugby Football Union (FRFU) was established in 1913, when the travelling All Blacks played a friendly match against a Fiji European XV. FRFU was a European organisation and the Native Rugby Union (NRU) was affiliated to it in 1915 (Fijirugby.com). Fiji representative teams were divided into European and I-Taukei XVs, as on the 1938–39 tours of New Zealand. The ‘flair and entertainment value’ of the Fiji teams with I-Taukei players were showcased in the successful tours of New Zealand (1951) and Australia (1952). The Fiji Rugby Union, as the representative national body, was formed in 1963. This closely followed the transition to Fiji FA in 1962, indicative of the transition towards a national ethos, increasingly reflected in sports.

During most of this early period, rugby was restricted to the South-Eastern Fiji grouping, mainly around Suva. According to an FRFU website statement this was because ‘[i]t is very difficult to establish the game outside Suva because almost every suitable ground already has a concrete cricket pitch at the centre’ (Fijirugby.com). This statement overlooks the earlier introduction and spread of soccer on the other parts of the island, particularly North-Western Viti Levu with its well-established Native Soccer leagues. The District Commissioner of Ba, E. I. Barker, in his official diary in 1933, for example, noted the localised nature of the popularity of soccer over rugby in the Western Districts (on the main island of Viti Levu in Fiji):

Rugby was an innovation on this coast, with district teams formed in Ba and Lautoka among the Europeans and Half-Castes in Ba and Lautoka with the exception of the Fijians, for they had learnt the game in Suva. Fijians play football for some teams playing for a trophy. (3 March 1933)

The Fijian oligarchic patronage overlooked such regional loyalty to soccer and turned to rugby as the national sport – where nation is defined within I-Taukei citizenry. Rugby through this prism promoted associated values of loyalty and bravery – as well as ethnic solidarity, as an I-Taukei sport. Interpersonal ties created through specific rugby clubs, such as ‘Old Boys’ clique from the schools established under colonial dictate for the scions of the chiefly families, especially Ratu Kadavulevu School (RKS) and Queen Victoria School (QVS). Post-World War II, rugby and military service emerged as symbols of a macho culture linked to Fiji’s warrior past. This consolidation and growth in rugby as the I-Taukei sport par excellence coincides with the period of growth and consolidation for soccer among Indo-Fijians.

The shift of official and traditional patronage among the I-Taukei, from soccer to rugby, in turn coincides with the sanctioning of soccer for Indo-Fijians under the Fiji FA. A complex exchange

of loyalties made simple by dictates of the oligarchic colonial hegemonies that designated soccer and rugby to Indo-Fijians and the I-Taukei, respectively. An exchange also found in South Africa with its own particular history of sports and assignations to race. South Africa kept its people apart through strict segregationist laws under apartheid. The modality imposed by British colonialism of separate development among races in Fiji, played itself out like the free hand of the market place. The end result was not always the same, despite the intended outcomes put into place, by the controlling hands of colonialism and a segregationist state.

In Fiji, missions evangelised to separate Indo-Fijian and I-Taukei congregations, similar to the practice in South Africa with racially divided churches. Evangelism was conducted within the ethnic-linguistic cleavages of the larger Fijian society. Such sidelines did not exist in mission schools in spreading the good word on soccer. The spread of the unholy trinity of 'Christianity, Colonialism and Commerce' often worked in unison, although as most histories attest, not always within a hegemonic unity. The Christian missions in Fiji, particularly among the Indentured Indian labourers and their descendants, are replete with celebrated figures like J. W. Burton and C. F. Andrews.

Just as fervently as Burton and Andrews in their anti-indenture campaigns, others like Hannah Dudley, L. M. Thompson, Ellen Meyers, Reginald Steadman and Richard Piper contended for Indian souls (Garrett, 1992, 394). Toorak was originally envisioned as a white upper-class suburb on a hilly ridge above Suva. It became an important area for the Indian Methodist community in Fiji, centred on the work of Hannah Dudley. She began mission work at the turn of the 20th century in Fiji and dedicated her life to the cause. Toorak was an influential centre for the transition of soccer from mission schools to the realm of urban leisure. The Vridi Cup organised by the Indian Reform League was first played in rotation from 1928 to 1932 on the Catholic Mission grounds in Toorak and the Methodist Davuilevu grounds in Nausori (Prasad, 1998, 32).

Dudley's Church in Suva, advanced education and welfare for Indo-Fijians during a period when the general Methodist missions were looked upon as colonial and CSR sycophants (392). Dudley's stalwarts in Toorak included a catechist from India, Ishwari Prasad, who converted an influential free migrant shopkeeper from India, S. N. Deoki and his family in 1918. The Deoki surname in this period became synonymous with soccer. In one of the earliest documented photographs of an Indo-Fijian soccer team, Sunshine, based in Toorak in 1922, the central figure is the captain, S. S. Deoki, scion of the family. The soccer connection continued through players and administrators, including Andrew (A. I. N.) Deoki, a successful lawyer. He was President of the Fiji Indian FA (1951–53 and 1955–58) and was a central figure in the transition to the racially inclusive Fiji FA in 1961.

The role of Church missions and schools in introducing and fostering the growth of soccer in the European colonies is well documented. Henning Eichberg includes it in his analysis of the global nature of sports colonialism and its impositions of Western ideas on body, space and community. Eichberg, , wrote, 'It is not by accident that the Olympic Games started at the height of the age of colonialism. The sports disciplines represented in Olympism are – with the exception of Judo (from Japan) – exclusively of European and North American origin' (101). It stands to reason that the first modern Olympics in 1896, and its expansionism of Western sports also coincides with

the spread of Christian missions and the introduction of soccer into the curriculum in Fiji and South Africa.

### **III: Divided Pitches – Football, Class and Racial Divides under Comprador and Conflict Paradigms**

The transition of soccer into the sport of urban leisure and into the consciousness, both bodily and spatial, and eventually towards the national, was soon well underway. Those who once kicked the round ball into a designated goal marked by posts or a carelessly thrown cap found contending local and national institutions eager to organise and develop the game. In South Africa and Fiji, this institutionalising of soccer engendered racial assignations. Ethnic divides under colonialism and apartheid replicate structure, form, and practices. There are also points of departure on all three scores, between Fiji and South Africa. It remains beyond contention that in both instances, the official edict was to keep the races separate, and this included sports. Claudia Martinez-Mullen documents the early racial context of soccer in South Africa as:

Within the same period (1882–1892) the ‘whites only’ Football Association of South Africa (FASA) was launched in 1892, followed by the South African Indian Football Association (SAIFA). South African Bantu Football Association (SABFA), South African Coloured Football Association (SACFA) in 1903, 1933, and 1936, respectively. Thus, early football in South Africa was racially defined. (2010, 16)

In similar vein to missionary activity in soccer in Fiji, the Durban and District Football Association was formed in 1916 through their (missionary) schools and missions ... as well as other recreational activities for urban black African migrant workers living in compounds and hostels (Martinez-Mullen, 2010, 16).

Soccer also gained patronage and official sanctions from various colonialist quarters, usually motivated by utilitarian and commercial ends. Martinez-Mullen noted that in 1917, nine Johannesburg clubs established the first African soccer body, called the Wittwatersrand and District Native Football Association (WDNFA). WDNFA organised soccer with the approval of the ‘White Mine compound managers, who hoped to curb worker militancy and improve discipline and production as well as improve workers health’ (2010, 19). Fiji had its own mine-sponsored soccer through the Goldfields Native League that was formed in 1937, under the patronage of the Emperor Gold Mines in Vatukoula. Colonialists in Fiji never had the numbers for sustained competitions in soccer, unlike South Africa with its large settler colonialist population. The main role for the colonial administrators and increasingly, the CSR and other major commercial interests such as the Emperor Gold Mines, Burns Philp and Morris Hedstrom, was the official sanctioning and patronage of soccer.

In South Africa, with the white-only leagues in existence, matches between Indians, Coloureds and Africans became more frequent and popular. At the official level in Fiji, from 1938 to 1961, participation in soccer remained within racial leagues. As part of the official and universally understood colonial policy and practice, both ‘Indians’ and ‘Fijians’ accepted and promoted this separation. This official separation was restricted to the adult competitions. The primary schools

national championships that began in 1938, followed by the secondary schools competition in 1951, did not have any race restrictions on players.

The friendship between Ratu Meli Qoro and J. K. 'Mudu' Gopal, for example, was based on their soccer playing days for the Lautoka Methodist Primary School. The multiracial element of the game documented in an early photograph of the 'unbeaten team' in 1932 also documents a European, an I-Taukei and two Indo-Fijians as the coaching and managerial component (Prasad, 1998, 18). Soccer did not end in schools for the I-Taukei. The popularity of soccer among the I-Taukei in the Western District, particularly in Lautoka, Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki, is easily documented through their leagues, competitions, trophies and medallions. Most of the 'Native Leagues' continued well after the formation of the Fiji Indian FA in 1938. I-Taukei teams continued to play in some Fiji Indian district club competitions. As found in the following documentation by Prasad, 'Until 1942, the Labasa competition included Fijian club sides, with Qio of Wailevu club being the second highest scorer for the 1938 season' (1998, 41).

The interactions were not restricted to the playing fields. At the annual IDC (Inter-District Competition), 'Indian' teams were billeted in villages at the host district, usually under the patronage of the traditional chief. In Levuka in 1942, the Rewa side were losing 0–2 to arch-rivals Suva, only to be inspired by the half-time pep talk by their host, the Tui Levuka (traditional chief of the area), to rally for a 3–2 win. Traditional ties based on history, genealogy and kinship, between the people of Rewa and Levuka, were cited in an interview with the late M.T. Ali, as the reason for the chiefly patronage that inspired their fight back, otherwise they would lose face (in a personal interview, 3 March 2010).

In 1944, the *Fiji Times* reported that the victorious Rewa captain thanked the Tui Rakiraki and his village for their hospitality in billeting the team and ensuring their success at the IDC (Victory at Rakiraki, 1944). Esala Masi, the first I-Taukei to play under the Fiji FA banner in 1962, argued that soccer provided a strong fraternal bond across racial divides. He maintained, 'In soccer people shared their knowledge of the game and delighted in providing practical help and moral support to each other' (in a personal interview 29 April 2009). The human elements to these stories in soccer are often best left alone without over-intellectualising the argument into aridity and abstraction. The accounts by Gopal, Ali and Masi document more than mere hyperbole on promoting soccer and a passion for the game.

The integration of soccer into the national consciousness, in both Fiji and South Africa, also carried an element of organic evolution, such as that described by Claudia Martinez-Mullen:

Weekend and holiday crowds of men, women and youths – ranging from domestic and factory workers, miners, lumpen elements and the unemployed, to traders, clerks, messengers, teachers and students – made their way to football grounds across the country to participate in sporting rituals of urban popular culture. (2010, 19)

Soccer history also shifts away from this organic evolution to take into account more causal and catalytic events. Sports, particularly rugby, cricket and soccer, sought international affiliations and acceptance from the early days of the Union of South Africa. The push for sporting

acceptance strengthened after the Second World War as world opinion turned its back on South Africa, spurning it as a pariah apartheid state. The revival of FIFA and the plans for the flagship World Cup post-World War II as a premier global event saw a corresponding rise in international football. The resounding success of the 1950 World Cup in Brazil sparked off a spate of international matches and tours. Soccer as a global game had arrived and South Africa saw affiliation with FIFA as an important sign of international acceptance.

South Africa applied for membership of FIFA, under the whites-only Football Association of South Africa (FASA) in 1952. A causal element to the FASA application was that it pre-empted any moves at international recognition or affiliation by the anti-apartheid SASF. Steve Bloomfield describes the racial elements of the quest for international acceptance and affiliation by South Africa:

As in every other field of South African life, races were kept apart. An anti-apartheid football association, the South Africa Soccer Federation, was established in 1951, which organised leagues and cup. None of the players were allowed to join the Football Association of South African (FASA). Despite the racial ban, FIFA had no problem accepting the all-white FASA into its ranks in 1952. (2010, 269)

As Steve Bloomfield (2010, 269), Peter Darby (2002, 79) and Claudia Martinez-Mullen (2010, 20) point out, the FIFA decision in 1952 vindicated the white hegemony of the world body. This is evident in the fact that FIFA did not consider membership to the racially inclusive South African Soccer Federation (SASF), as an alternative. FIFA's white hegemony was made clear in their refusal to consider the Fiji Indian FA's initial application for membership on the grounds that it was an ethnic-based association. This contradicted FIFA's earlier acceptance of South African membership under SAFA. In contrast, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) excluded South Africa from the inaugural Africa Cup of Nations (ACN) in 1957 due to their policy of a whites-only national team. CAF suspended the FASA membership after FASA stuck to their racial policy for the second ACN in 1959 (Martinez-Mullen, 2010, 19).

The African National Congress (ANC) utilised soccer in its advocacy against apartheid. The formation of SASF in 1951 had resulted in the largest soccer organisation in South Africa, with more than 46 000 members (Martinez-Mullen, 2010, 20). SASF worked actively with other South African liberation movements, as soccer on a mass scale inspired hope of a multiracial society. The hope engendered by soccer in filling the barren landscape of apartheid cannot be underestimated. Nor can one undervalue the more tangible activist elements of the role of soccer under SASF in the anti-apartheid movement.

Between 1952 and 1961, SASF with the tacit support of the ANC and other anti-apartheid bodies, continued to call for the expulsion of South Africa under FASA from FIFA. This led to the campaign against racially segregated sport in Paris in 1955, before the International Olympic Committee. FIFA, in the face of international opinion, in 1958 officially re-affirmed their recognition of the whites-only FASA. This encouraged FASA to launch the whites-only professional National Football League (NFL) in 1959 (Martinez-Mullen, 2010, 20).

Two years later, despite FASA including some black players within their structure, FIFA finally bowed to international pressure and suspended South Africa. The significant push came from the relentless anti-apartheid lobbying, with SASF at the forefront. SASF timed their lobbying well with the World Cup in England in 1960. In reaction to the FASA professional league, SASF organised the professional South African Soccer League (SASL) in a meeting at Johannesburg in February 1961 (Martinez-Mullen, 2010, 19). This was not a solitary act of defiance against FASA, but part of a larger and sustained movement of using soccer as a means of achieving freedom from apartheid.

According to Martinez-Mullen:

During the same period, the Black South African population reacted strongly against the unfair policies of the apartheid system, mounting mass protests against the apartheid regime whose repressive activities claimed thousands of Black Africans' lives. The football stadia became places not only for enjoying football matches, but also for discussing political strategies against those in power. The struggle for survival of the SASL in the middle of this reactionary period was decisively influenced by FIFA's decision to uphold the suspension of the racist white SASA from international football in 1961. That was one of the first international indictments against the apartheid regime. (2010, 19–20)

The hegemonic resistance to an inclusive soccer agency in South Africa is extensively explored by Paul Darby in *Africa, Football, and FIFA: Politics, Colonialism and Resistance*. As he demonstrates, the resistance explodes beyond the Gramscian notes of geography-bound state-centred determination of political hegemony, to border-busting international cultural hegemonies of sport. This includes the relationship between FIFA and the racially exclusive white South African FASA from its formation in 1952 until 1974, which depicts the white racial hegemony in soccer at the international level.

Darby points out that the white hegemony of the FIFA Presidency under Sir Stanley Rous (1961–74) and his support for FASA was made worse by his negative stance against South African and African soccer organisations of colour. Rous in 1968 publicly rallied against CAF and the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC), while declaring his open support of FASA. Darby cites the response by the Kenyan delegate to the CAF General Assembly in 1968 that exemplified the African viewpoint on Rous and relations with FIFA.

In his declaration we saw a manifestation of old and dying colonialism. It is of no avail for him to say that the Football Association of South Africa had committed no crime because it is the government which is responsible for the apartheid policy. It is the government which controls the affairs of FASA. We in Kenya wish to see all means possible are used to bring about a change in South Africa so that our brothers there may have the same freedom in sports as we have. (2002, 79)

South African soccer, FASA and discrimination under apartheid became a pivotal part of the successful campaign by Brazilian João Havelange for the FIFA Presidency in 1974. The

hegemonic construct within FIFA in 1961 becomes a serendipitous point of history, to look at the transition in Fiji soccer that sidelined its own period of apartheid.

#### **IV: From Racial to National Identity in Soccer in Fiji and South Africa**

Between 1938 and 1961, the first generation of Indo-Fijian lawyers clamoured for the Presidency of the Fiji Indian FA. Their aspiration, it can be argued, was based on the recognition that the football body was the closest thing to a national assembly for Indo-Fijians. In this regard Gauri Viswanathan's *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India* provides a useful correlation to sports as a colonial text that has parallels to the assertion that English literary studies emerged as a discipline in colonial settings with 'the imperial mission of educating and civilising colonial subjects in the literature and thought of England,' thus 'serv[ing] to strengthen Western cultural hegemony in enormously complex ways' (1989, 2–3). As is evident earlier in this paper, the 'mission' can be applied to a range of colonial subjects, including that of cultural constructs such as football clubs and their special interests, that links in organic fashion to maintaining the agency of the colonial rulers, at both the local and national levels. In this regard, there is reason to interrogate the status of the first generation of Indo-Fijians with overseas tertiary education in relation to their comprador or anti-colonial impulse.

Tulsi Ram Sharma, the first Indo-Fijian to qualify as a lawyer, presided over the Fiji Indian FA, 1940–45, 1947–51 and in 1954. He was followed by the prominent lawyer A. I. N. Deoki (1951–53 and 1955–59) who served as Attorney-General of Fiji in later years. Deoki, was a key figure in the transition to the Fiji FA, aided by two other presidents of Fiji FA, Sir Moti Tikaram (1959–60) and Abdul Lateef (1960–62). Both were notable lawyers (Prasad, 1998, 51–52). Abdul Lateef, said the transition to an inclusive national football body was part of a natural progression of opening up the game. He traced this transformation back to the 1958 AGM of the Fiji Indian FA, when the motion was first considered, but not debated (in a personal interview, 9 November 1997). The affiliation of New Zealand with FIFA in 1958 prompted the Fiji Indian FA to enquire about membership in the same year. Sir Tikaram recalled that FIFA advised that the Fiji Indian FA as an ethnic based national association could not be considered for affiliation. Sir Tikaram said the opening up of the game during the 25th anniversary celebrations of the Fiji Indian FA signalled the end of the days of 'blackballing' affiliations to clubs, and associations based on race; it was a 'sign of the times' (in a personal interview).

In 1961, A. I. N. Deoki, now a life member of the Fiji Indian FA, toasted to 'kindred associations' and put forward the motion for deleting the word 'Indian' from the association. Deoki's motion was put to the AGM and passed into history.

The *Fiji Times* of 9 August 1961 reported that:

The word 'Indian' has been deleted from the title of the Fiji Indian Football Association. This was decided at the annual meeting of Fiji Indian Football Association held in Nadi on Saturday. The Association decision means that soccer players other than that of Asian extraction will now be able to play representative soccer. (11)

The instrumental role of Deoki in the transition to the Fiji FA (FFA) is traced to the multiracial nature of his education and mission school background. Upon his return as a lawyer, he was the key figure in the formation in 1951 of the Fiji Secondary Schools Soccer Association without any racial restrictions. The Fiji FA documents their transition from the Fiji Indian FA in the silver jubilee souvenir program of the 1962 IDC tournament.

To reflect the feeling that the Association has always striven to get all sections of all communities in Fiji to work and play together for the good of Fiji the name of the Association was changed to its present name 'Fiji Football Association' in 1961. (11)

The salutary remarks by Fiji FA and the roles played by individuals like A. I. N. Deoki, Abdul Lateef and Sir Moti Tikaram in developing a national ethos under the Fiji FA need to be qualified. The transition to the Fiji FA was a direct and immediate response to the earlier condition from FIFA on removal of the ethnic name and exclusionary clause on playing before it would consider affiliation as a national association. Affiliation with the Fiji Amateur Sports Association (FASA) also depended on the removal of the exclusionary clause and change of name. The transition paved the way for acceptance into FASA and for a national soccer team to participate in the inaugural South Pacific Games hosted by Fiji in 1963. On 1 January 1963 Fiji FA was officially accepted into FIFA, the first South Pacific nation to achieve this.

The transition was not without its challenges. In 1961, Suva FA banned players who played rugby from their competitions, basing the decision on an interpretation of the Fiji FA constitution by-laws that did not allow 'players from other football competitions'. The by-law was designed to stop rival football bodies from emerging, rather than a directive against rugby players. Suva, though, withdrew this ban after the Fiji FA clarified the by-laws. An overtly ethnically-grounded challenge to the new-look Fiji FA came from a rival soccer body. In 1962, Lautoka FA President, Choy Gopal, after a refusal by the newly formed Fiji FA to endorse a sectarian South Indian selection tour of New Zealand, formed the rebel Fiji Soccer Federation (FSF) (Prasad, 1998, 57). The FSF organised the Federation Cup, in which nine districts with Indo-Fijian players participated. The FSF attracted local support and patronage from Indo-Fijian business houses, indicative of the particular ethnic ethos associated with soccer. Fiji FA won a court battle against the FSF to put an end to the ambitions of the breakaway group.

Raymond Williams's chapter on 'hegemony' in *Marxism and Literature*, despite more recent works, bears a citation for its concise exposition of the 'lived experience' that is relevant to the analysis of sport and the hegemonies that it operates within or constructs. In this sense the 'lived experience' of the local, for the soccer fraternities in Fiji and South Africa, constitutes, according to Williams, 'It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives. (1977, 110) Thus soccer as it is played and how it is administered has a very definite local hegemonic paradigm of real and lived experiences and interactions. These are not always fixed and often open to various challenges. As Williams argues, 'It [hegemony] does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not all its

own' (1977, 113). The transitions and transformations from the Fiji Indian Football Association to Fiji Football between 1938 and 1961 attest to Williams's determination that hegemony in process as well as in its schematic avatar has a wide range of strategies to neutralise opposition and that '... the decisive hegemonic function is to control or transform or even incorporate [alternatives and opposition]' (1977, 113).

The interviews and views of the central figures at the heart of the transformation of the football body in Fiji provide a basis to engage with Williams's contention that hegemony is not necessarily dominant to the point of total control and that within its constructs exist breaks. Such discontinuities and fissures in the hegemonic open up the field of play in football, to counter the often misleading assertion that the hegemonic agency is an all-pervasive and bullet-proof monolith that is responsible for all political and cultural agency. As Williams points out, such breaks become apparent when we '... develop modes of analysis which instead of reducing works to finished products, and activities to fixed positions, are capable of discerning, in good faith, the finite but significant openness of many actual initiatives and contributions' (1977, 114).

The origins of soccer in Fiji under missions and schools, its transformation under the Fiji Indian FA and its own transition to a national association in 1961 created various fields of play. The comparative with South Africa, to use soccer terminology, also established that various interplays of hegemonic forces are involved in the creation of ethnic divisions and sidelines. Sidelines demarcate the end of the field of play where the spectacle of the game is embodied in various realms of the corporeal. This co-exists in the game with divisions that sublimate into fandom and hysteria. There is of course a whole world, real, imagined, mythic and corporeal as well outside the sidelines of the pitch and spectators captive in a park. In the beginning this was the world of word of mouth about a game. Now it is digital narratives on radio, television and the internet.

Constructs of fields of play and sidelines carry narratives of the corporeal and mythic elements of soccer to communities, real and imagined. It is too easy and convenient to dismiss the Fiji Indian FA as a mere instrument of colonial rule. The Fiji Indian FA administration (1938–1961) was without doubt, ambitious in their roles and vision for soccer. This is evident in their lobbying, first for their affiliation with FIFA, and secondly, for a regional confederation to represent Oceania to the world body. Fiji FA was a founding member of the Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) in 1966. The role of football administrators from Fiji in this period points to a visionary element that was now outthinking and outperforming any suggestion of colonial instrumentality.

In soccer, there always exists a cartographical and totemic mapping of place from where a club, district or nation emerges as place that dictates identity. Race, ethnicity, class, gender and age are determinants of identity that played their own role in the transitions in soccer in Fiji and South Africa. In Fiji, the vagaries of racial policy sublimated difference, as cited in personal interviews with J. K. Gopal and Esala Masi, on the subversions against segregation. Soccer as urban leisure held little regard for policy diktats for those who kicked a ball on a dusty river bank. This forms an important determinant in individual definitions of space in soccer as a cultural form, and how the interrelated world of that sport frames them, in this instance, in a world removed from current global media forms. It accounts for the relatively easy transition from mission to national soccer in Fiji, almost a decade before independence. The political branding of identities as strategy,

position and resistance in soccer during the apartheid and the transition to the post-apartheid eras, as outlined earlier by Martinez-Mullen and others, found latent expression in the success of the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.

In both the South Africa and Fiji examples of the transition from mission to national soccer, traces remain of what James Kellas identifies ‘... as three facets of nationalism in sport: nationalist behavior, national consciousness and national ideology’ (1991, 49). This is evident in the powerful anti-apartheid movement against racially exclusive soccer in South Africa in the quest for the utopia of national consciousness of a rainbow nation. Thus it provides a contrast to the SAFA, FIFA and the apartheid state of South Africa, a collusion advocating and practising soccer of a segregationist and racially oppressive bent.

In the Fiji example, the lines are less clearly defined under colonialism in soccer: the lines are drawn and adherence to playing within these markers – racial and cultural – is desired, but there is no sustained official apparatus to enforce this. The cultural hegemony that Gramsci talks about for its inbuilt mechanism of consent becomes even more diffused when the element of the game takes hold and transcends prescriptive diktats of colonialism and apartheid. Benedict Anderson’s construction of ‘imagined communities’ comes into play in soccer, where the game takes an organic turn in finding and displaying faith in the hyperbole of a shared passion. This follows the argument by Sugden and Tomlinson that: ‘Sport in many cases informs and refuels the popular memory of communities, and offers a source of collective identification and community expression for those who follow teams and individuals’ (1999, 3).

Affiliation, loyalty and sense of community of soccer found in South Africa and Fiji is qualified by Archetti’s paradigm that ‘... identity is positional and strategic’ (1996,37). Children carried friendships across racial divides into adulthood in Fiji post-1961, which deserves more than hyperbolic assignation in improving race relations. In South Africa, identity as ‘positional and strategic’ enabled SASF to integrate soccer successfully as part of the anti-apartheid movement under the ANC and, arguably, forced world cultural hegemonies like FIFA to become truly international and inclusive global organisations post-1974 (Darby, 2002, 81). Soccer, in the transition from mission schools to the national, affirms the nation, flags, colours, anthems, songs and other totemic and performative aspects of autonationalism, drawn from the original idea of Anderson’s ‘imagined community’. Examples abound of this imagined community among soccer fans wired into instant familiarity, for instance, branding of Brazilian soccer brilliance as ‘Braziliant’ in newspaper headlines that trumpet triumphs in soccer. Then we have the more political branding of identities through a common passion for the game that led North and South Yemen to form a national soccer team symbolic of their unification and progressive that marked the formation of a cultural hegemony to subvert centuries old disunity under variant political hegemonies (Stevenson & Alaug, 1999, 84).

Janet Lever in *Soccer Madness* provides an analysis of the iconic power of the game in Brazil in establishing a community out of the expression and imagination of *futebol*. Lever proposes that ‘Sport’s paradoxical ability to reinforce societal cleavages while transcending them makes soccer Brazil’s most popular sport, the perfect means of achieving a more perfect union between multiple groups’ (1983, 6). Such a union is evident in the transformations in soccer from Fiji and South Africa, in willing a world without sidelines to the beautiful game.

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