

Reimagining Sports: African Athletes, Defection, and Ambiguous Citizenship¹

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This paper interrogates citizenship in the context of the ease and fluidity with which talented African athletes from the global South are defecting to the North and the Gulf states and switching nationalities; in particular, how the pull of capital and globalization are impinging on traditional notions of citizenship. It postulates that the inevitability and irresistibility of petrodollars in the postmodern world are rendering the notion of nationalism diffuse and leading to differentiated forms of citizenship. Sporting competitions today present spaces for the articulation of nationalism and the construction of identities, whether national or individual, in new ways. With the heavy injection of capital and consumerism into sports, ideals of sports for the sake of sports as well as individual and even national identities are not only in a state of flux, but also in crisis. The essay concludes by assessing some realistic and pragmatic responses to these issues.

Background

Three stories—involving runners Meb Keflezighi, Lydia Cheromei, and Georgina Toth—illustrate the complexities of the intertwining of sports and citizenship.

Mebrahtom Keflezighi, better known as Meb, won the 2009 New York City Marathon—the first time an American had won the race in twenty-seven years. However, some people apparently did not think that Meb was American enough. He had immigrated to the United States from Eritrea at the age of twelve, and even though he had since been living in the country and had attended UCLA, many, as the *New York Times* reported, did not consider him a true “American runner.” They saw him as just another elite East African runner. He counters his critics by saying that he is a descendant of immigrants, just like millions of Americans (Kolata 2009).²

Lydia Cheromei won the junior world cross-country title in 1991 in Spain. Following her victory, she flew home to Kenya, but there was no welcoming party of athletics officials waiting to congratulate her at the airport.

Instead, she had to take public transportation to reach the city center. Fearing that her gold medal might be stolen by pickpockets in Nairobi, she wrapped it in a handkerchief before boarding a bus to her school in Iten, 400 km away. Two decades later, many Kenyan athletes still feel that they do not receive the same respect and financial incentives at home as they can command abroad. Many retired athletes end their lives in poverty, with no pension to live on. In consequence, some of Kenya's best runners are saying enough is enough and are defecting to countries in Europe and the rich Gulf states in search of more recognition and money (Greener Pastures 2003).³

The third story involves Georgina Toth. During the 2008 African Athletics Championship competition, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a relatively unknown athlete acquired a great deal of attention. She was Georgina Toth, a hammer thrower who competed for Cameroon. Her case attracted considerable controversy and intrigue for several reasons: she was white and had no tangible connection to Cameroon by marriage, ancestry, or residence. She was, in fact, a Hungarian student studying in Arizona who had had a fortuitous meeting in 2006 with Ange Sama, then President of the Cameroon Athletics Federation, who suggested that she could compete under the Cameroonian flag. One week before the African championships, she was granted Cameroonian citizenship after Hungary permitted her to do so, thereby making it possible for her to bypass the two-year waiting period imposed by the International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) on athletes who switch national federations.

Even though Georgina did not win a medal in Addis Ababa (she placed fourth), her participation under the Cameroonian flag touched off considerable debate in Cameroon and raised a number of questions vis-à-vis citizenship.

- Can this form of fast-track citizenship offset the brain-and-muscle drain toward the North?
- Does the granting of citizenship to someone who has absolutely no connection to her adopted country (Cameroon) cheapen citizenship? Is citizenship being auctioned?
- Do this case and others like it support the notion of dual, and even global, citizenship? Cameroon, like many African countries, does not recognize dual citizenship, yet government officials in many African countries, including Cameroon, turn a blind eye on the issue when, for example, their soccer players who have taken up outside residences and become naturalized citizens to play for foreign teams turn around and play for their countries of birth in international competitions. Practically every player on the Cameroonian national football team has a dual nationality.

Introduction

The increasing defection of athletes from the global South to the West and Middle East in the past two decades has engendered new debates over questions of citizenship. The problem, exacerbated by new global competition for athletic talent, has sparked debates on emigration/immigration and naturalization. How is the ease with which athletes are changing nationalities affecting the idea of citizenship? Are we entering an era of transnational societies, in which imagined notions of citizenship straddle borders and emotional attachments to the nation-state are diffused? What is the impact of defection on birthright countries?

Issues/Questions

The goal of this paper is to interrogate citizenship in the context of its transformative capacity in the face of increasing pressures imposed on it by the ease and fluidity with which talented athletes are switching nationalities from the global South to the North and the Gulf states; in particular, how the pull of capital and globalization are impinging on traditional notions of citizenship. It postulates that the inevitability and irresistibility of petrodollars in the postmodern world are rendering the notion of nationalism diffuse and leading to differentiated forms of citizenship. It concludes by assessing some realistic and pragmatic responses to these issues.

The justification for this study lies in the lacunae of work in the area. Despite the proliferation of op-eds and journalistic pieces, Lukalo (2005) remains the only full-length paper on the subject of the defection of African athletes to other continents. Even on the broader subject of the brain drain, Andres Solimano's edited volume, *The International Mobility of Talent* (2008), deals with entrepreneurs, scientists, students, health professionals, and cultural workers, but makes no mention of athletes as part of this exodus.

From Brain Drain to Brawn Drain

In many respects, the defection of talented athletes from poorer African countries to richer Gulf States and Western nations is part of the brain drain that the continent has been suffering for centuries. The phrase *brain drain*, sometimes known as human capital flight, refers to a large-scale emigration of individuals with technical skills or knowledge. Brain drains are common among third-world developing nations, where marketable skills are not adequately rewarded. Factors that contribute to emigration include lack of opportunity and political instability. Brain drain is usually regarded as an economic cost, since it entails loss of capital, training, and capacity. For these reasons, it is sometimes equated with capital flight.⁴

Until the past two decades, African brain drain had tended to attract people with talent in areas such as science, technology, and culture, the

so-called “individuals of high impact.”⁵ In recent times, however, another component has been added to the ranks of those fleeing northward from the global South: that of talented athletes, hence, the phrase *brawn drain*.

Some notable athletes who have switched citizenship⁶

<i>Country</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Adopted Country</i>	<i>Adopted Name of birth</i>
Ethiopia	Zenebech Tola	1500m	Bahrain	Maryam Yusuf Jamal
Kenya	Stephen Cherono	Steeplechase	Qatar	Saif Saeed Shaheen
Kenya	Albert Chepkurui	5000m	Qatar	Ahmed Hassan Abdullah
Kenya	Richard Yatich	Marathon	Qatar	Mubarak Hassan Shami
Kenya	Gregory Konochellah	800m	Bahrain	Youssef Saad Kamel
Kenya	Thomas Kosgei	800m	Qatar	Ali Thamer Kamal
Kenya	Daniel Kipkosgei	Steeplechase	Qatar	Rasheed Essa Ismael
Kenya	Bernard Lagat	1500m	USA	Bernard Lagat
Kenya	Wilson Kipketer	800m	Denmark	Wilson Kipketer
Kenya	Lornah Kiplagat	Long distance	Netherlands	Lornah Kiplagat
Morocco	Rashid Ramzi	800/1500m	Bahrain	Rashid Ramzi
Nigeria	Francis Obikwelu	Sprints	Portugal	Francis Obikwelu
Nigeria	Gloria Alozie-Oluchi	Hurdles	Spain	Gloria Alozie-Oluchi
Nigeria	Christine Ohuruogu	400m	UK	Christine Ohuruogu
Nigeria	Florence Ekpo-Umoh	400m	Germany	Florence Ekpo-Umoh

In 2005, it was reported that some forty Kenyan athletes had defected to Qatar and Bahrain alone; the IAAF, according to its Web site, approved at least 258 nationality transfers between 1998 and 2007.

Reasons for Defection

A prime reason often given for defection is frustration resulting from lack of compensation. A seething problem is the feeling of neglect and unfair treatment. In contrast, frustrated athletes at home see better prospects and opportunities for lucrative competitions abroad. Many complain about poor

training facilities at home. Finally, top local athletes have little or no prospects for retirement as they see their predecessors retire in poverty, with no pension. A former Kenyan Olympian who preferred to be anonymous said in Eldoret, a Rift Valley town that has been home to dozens of Kenyan champion athletes, that he would be devastated if his son ended up in poverty as he had:

I am grooming my son to become a world and Olympic champion, but I would not like to see him end up like myself. I was in three Olympic Games, four world championships and two World Cups, and here I am queuing to board a *matatu* [public minibus]. I do not even have a permanent house. If defecting to another country can secure a comfortable future for the young athlete, so be it. (Greener Pastures 2003)

Changing Notions of Citizenship

The ease with which defecting athletes acquire naturalization status in their adopted countries has not only added fuel to the resurging interest in the concept of citizenship, but raised critical questions about the notion. Admittedly, citizenship has always been a contested concept; however, the questions raised in this paper go beyond the traditional debates about conceptions of citizenship—individual rights and duties within the territorial limits of a political entity (i.e., nation-state), to active participation in a civil society; they inform new and emerging ideas of citizenship:

Citizenship is now a popular “buzz word” in sociological circles. New challenges and new perspectives have given a new lease of life to a hitherto stagnant concept. But we still do not have a shared, recognizable and satisfactory definition of “citizenship.” (O’Byrne 2003:1)

Traditionally, “a citizen owes unqualified allegiance to his or her state and, subject to certain limitations . . . possesses complete civil and political rights” (Zurcher 1992: 447). This allegiance is “permanent.”⁷ The four components of citizenship, in the traditional sense, are membership, rights, duties, and participation.

But is citizenship becoming ambiguous? Are there stateless citizens? Asian Games 800-meter record-holder Youssef Saad Kamel of Bahrain, formerly known as Gregory Konchellah of Kenya, conceded in 2009 that he was stateless because he could not compete for either his country of birth or his adopted country. His problems started in November 2008, when he quit training camp, claiming that his salary and bonuses were not being paid, and asked Bahrain to release him so that he could return home to compete for Kenya, but Bahraini officials refused and confiscated his passport.

Reimagining Sports: Nationalism and Patriotism

The historically underlying goal of international sports, going back to the beginning of the Olympic Games, has been to bring athletes together in a spirit of fair competition, but there is no denying that international sporting competitions are often intertwined with nationalism, sometimes even overshadowed by national chauvinism and animosity. During the cold war era, for example, the USSR and the United States counted the number of Olympic medals that each won as an indication of the superiority of their countries and political systems. Indeed, sports incite national identity like no other activity except war. For example, in recent years, a subtext of international track and field meets such as the Penn Relays at the University of Pennsylvania has been chants of "USA" versus "Jamaica," underscoring the competition between those nations for track and field supremacy.

Sporting events are spaces for the symbolic dissemination of power. Sports articulate the nation and its narrative of triumph or failure. "The quest for identity, nationhood or independence usually draws upon romanticism, mythology, invented tradition and objective artifacts, e.g., flags, songs, and great sporting moments" (Jarvie and Reid 1999:103). Benedict Anderson (1991) asserted that nationhood and nationalism are often built around cultural artifacts of a particular kind. In this sense, sports provide a unique medium for articulating national sentiments in a highly symbolic way. The sports arena makes more real the nation or imagined community. It incites the national psyche as no other activity, often acting as a surrogate for politics. For a country like Kenya, long-distance running is not just a sport: it constitutes a national epic. It narrates the national discourse around which contestations of identity, recognition, and power coalesce. For example, traditionally, the steeplechase is identified with the country of Kenya. Therefore, when the former Cherono of Kenya, running as Shaheen for Qatar, beat the Kenyan champion Ezekiel Kemboi at the 2003 World Championships in Paris, the Kenyan government reacted with anger and charged Athletics Kenya to probe defection cases.

National pride takes center stage in international competitions such as the Olympics, where the number of medals won is a measure of a country's worth, prowess, and reputation. Winning is a matter of national pride. But what happens when the newly naturalized athlete at the winners' podium hardly knows the lyrics of the national anthem being played? What ambivalent emotions are evoked when the victor is known and identified with one country, such as Kenya, but the anthem being played is that of another country, such as Qatar?

China's determination to host the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing is one of the most glaring modern-day illustrations of the interconnections among sports, nationalism, and global politics. The country's all-out effort to make the games the greatest spectacle on earth was driven by a search for a new national identity and a move from relative isolation to

internationalization. China used the games not only to showcase its newly-found greatness, but also to integrate itself into the world community as a recognizable and respected member.⁸

Equally significant in terms of the interrelationship between sports and national ethos was South Africa's hosting of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. Writing in a BBC blog on 12 July 2010, David Bond quoted Archbishop Desmond Tutu as having expressed his amazement at the level at which the World Cup had united "all the colours and races [of South Africa] in a common cause. We have all talked about the rainbow nation, but we are the caterpillar that has become the beautiful butterfly." Irvin Khoza, chairman of the South African Organizing Committee of the World Cup agreed that the games brought together an often troubled nation, and Danny Jordan, the chief local architect of the World Cup affirmed: "never in our history have we seen South Africa so united." He compared the impact of the event to the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 and the first democratic elections in 1994 (Reuters, 13 July 2010).

Seeking to translate this sense of unity into a lasting impact, Brand South Africa CEO Matt Miller remarked in 2010 to a group of journalists in Johannesburg:

This year, we have come together as a nation united and flown the flag high. We are a people who are proudly defined by *ubuntu*, diversity, innovation and creativity. Our "South Africanness" opens up a lifetime of possibilities for us all. Now we need to keep it flying, providing platforms for South Africans to keep achieving and showcasing their "South Africanness" to the world, while entrenching the principles of pride, patriotism and solid citizenship that have been established over the past year." (Miller 2010)

Indeed, it has been observed that as 3.5 million vuvuzela-blowing fans watched the games, the vuvuzela became more than a cheering instrument. It was transformed into an African metaphor and a particular discourse for hitherto unacknowledged African capabilities at the global level. In this narrative, pan-African triumph came to be intertwined with African success in staging a world championship (Sharra 2010).⁹

For third-world nations, in particular, sports often carries a special political function that goes beyond national pride; it can evoke a deep national consciousness that superficially masks internal divisions and forge a façade of unity. Thus in countries where internal tensions exist, international sports can provide a stimulant to apparent harmony, for throughout history, sports has been employed not only as a tool in nation building, but also as a means of transcending internal strife. Immanuel Wallerstein (1987:279) has suggested that in Africa people feel an affection and adulation for the victorious athlete that would not have existed, given the ethnic divisions in the weak states constructed out of colonialism.

Further, in developing nations, sports has been utilized in political ways to help bridge the gap between the powerful and less powerful nations. Indeed, sports is clearly one arena where submerged nations can assert themselves on the global state. Thus, third-world sporting victories over Western nations, especially former colonial powers, are seen not only as a sign of vindication, but also of equality. It is for these reasons that Senegal's victory over France in the 2002 World Cup, for example, was celebrated throughout Senegal as a singularly sweet accomplishment. Sporting victories can bring respect and recognition in the global community.

Another illustration of the political uses of sports was evidenced during the apartheid era, when the exclusion of South Africa from world sporting competitions was employed as a weapon in the fight against the racist regime, and when apartheid was finally dismantled, in the 1990s, President Nelson Mandela proclaimed that sports were part of the glue that held the nation of South Africa together.¹⁰ It is largely out of this unique connection between sports and nationalism that the defection in recent decades of African athletes has raised questions of patriotism. Writing in the *New African*, Wanjohi Kabukuru (2005) bemoaned: "Kenya: athletes for sale? No one ever thought of them as exports. For decades, patriotism had been the hallmark of their art. But in the last five years, Kenyan athletes have managed to give 'patriotism' a new meaning."

Writing in the same vein earlier, Daniel Alabrah and Fredrick Efole (2008) had derisively referred to Nigeria's sports defectors as "Nigeria's lost sportsmen." In 2008, it was estimated that more than fifty Nigerian-born athletes were competing for other countries in Europe and the Americas and across Africa. They included Francis Obikwelu (sprinter, competing for Portugal), Gloria Alozie-Oluchi (hurdler, competing for Spain), Christine Ohuruogu (400 meters, competing for Britain), and Florence Ekpo-Umoh (400 meters, competing for Germany). The reasons they opted for "greener pastures" elsewhere ranged from the insensitivity of the Nigerian national federations to athletes' concerns, including poor incentives, lack of developmental programs at home, and nonpayment of training grants before major competitions (2003).

A BBC opinion blog on 4 August 2005 posed the question: "Do you think athletes can afford to be patriotic in an era when professional sport is awash with money? Do you agree with their complaint that they do not receive enough recognition in their own countries?"

The continual defection of athletes for economic gain has touched off a debate on whether athletes are being unpatriotic. At the peak of the Kenyan defections in 2005, when it was widely known that at least forty prominent athletes had left their homeland for the Gulf states in the preceding two years, President Mwai Kibaki, in an attempt to curb the flow of defections, called on Kenyan athletes to put patriotism above all considerations and resist the temptation to change citizenship for financial gain. But in an age of pragmatic realism and in an environment where poverty is rampant, patriotism and moral obligations fade in the face of economic imperatives.

As Mehdi Mabrouk (2009), professor of sociology at Tunis University put it, "patriotism is very important[,] but in the absence of a decent living it becomes difficult for these athletes."

Tensions come into play between individual obligations to self and family, on the one hand, and love of country, on the other. At the core of this tension is the fundamental question: how far can the individual shoulder the burden of the nation? As one critic saw it, "[P]ublicly an individual athlete's ability is subsumed into a political collectivity for the purposes of nation building where the successful body performs and promises the triumph of the body politic" (Lukalo 2005:124).

There is abundant evidence that many athletes who have changed nationalities carry a burden of ambivalence. On Cherono's defection to Qatar, for example, his mother was not happy with the change of allegiance; his father, Augustine, however, had no qualms: in his youth, he recalled, athletic remuneration "came in the form of lanterns, blankets and hoes. Not like today when one can live on running. . . . He [Cherono] went to secure his future and that is what we all want all young men to do" (Njenga and Macharia 2001).

They may appreciate the monetary benefits, but African athletes competing for other countries nonetheless are often ambivalent about their situation. In a revealing interview, titled "Nigeria: It's Painful Competing," longtime sports editor Onochie Anibeze (2009) chronicled the pain that some athletes felt about the issue of patriotism. Francis Obikwelu had just won the silver medal in the 200-meter race in the Athens Olympics in 2002 for Portugal. In the interview following the race, the reporter asked him: "What would it have meant to you if you had won this medal for Nigeria?" What appeared to be a simple question turned out to be rather difficult for Francis. With bitterness clearly written all over him, he frowned and never uttered a word in response.

Six years later, Blessing Okagbore, another leading Nigerian athlete who won the long jump at the Beijing Olympics, echoed the same sentiment. She was being asked in an interview after the IAAF Grand Prix in Abuja about how she was gearing up for the London Olympics. She scornfully retorted: "Which Olympics? For who?" After calming down somewhat, she continued:

It is painful, so painful competing for Nigeria. You are never encouraged. It is interesting that you are asking about the London Olympics. Are you sure the people [administrators] are interested? They don't care, so I don't know if one should care too.

It came as no surprise when Daramola Osiyemi, the current queen of Nigerian track and field, similarly lamented publicly that it was so frustrating running for Nigeria that the country should have no qualms when its athletes adopted other nationalities (Anibeze 2009).

In some cases, personal ambivalence has been coupled with ambiguity of political status. Kenyan athletes competing for their adopted countries of Bahrain and Qatar, for instance, do not have full legal protection; many are made only permanent residents and do not have full citizenship. And as if to punish their athletes who had defected, the then Kenyan sports minister Ochillo Ayacko declared in 2000 that such athletes would be treated as foreigners and would therefore have to apply for visas in order to visit their home country.¹¹

Ethics versus Commercialism/Consumerism

The increasing commercialization of sports has inevitably engendered questions of ethics. The traditional notion of sports for the love of it or for the love of country seems to have dissipated in today's market-driven culture. Does the lure of petrodollars undermine the spirit of sports?

Some have even charged that citizenship is now for sale and that athletes have been reduced to virtual commodities. In an incisive critique, Jacques Rogge of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) frustratingly lamented in 2004 that athletes were selling themselves off as mercenaries to the highest bidder. Kip Keino (2008), the legendary Olympian who once headed Kenya's National Olympic Committee, openly reproached Qatar for its policy of enticing athletes to defect as a form of "slavery."¹² Keino's compatriot Isaiah Kiplagat, president of the Kenyan athletics federation in 2008, similarly charged that the luring of athletes for dollars is "like trading slaves. . . . It is exploitation. . . . It is happening with children as young as 15. Young people who aren't qualified to represent themselves are being deceived into changing nationality for a few shillings." Is it a question of exploitation, slavery, or market forces at work?

When the IAAF tightened its citizenship laws by requiring a waiting period, rich countries like Qatar found a loophole by turning to promising junior athletes instead of established stars. Qatar set up training camps in Kenya, Morocco, South Africa, and Brazil, primarily for recruitment purposes.

The issue of athletes competing for their adopted countries in return for lucrative contracts is another illustration of the hegemony of capital. Sports is not simply a game anymore; it has become an economic enterprise. The pull and seduction of petrodollars, especially from the Gulf states, is irresistible and unstoppable; for better or for worse, this is the new economic reality, and athletes are increasingly turning to money as an avenue toward liberation from poverty and marginalization. Large financial inducements are hard to resist. Shaheen, who admitted that his defection to Qatar was motivated by financial reasons, was reportedly guaranteed a salary of \$1,000 a month for life on top of a bonus of \$100,000.

To curb the wholesale defection of athletes, the International Association of Athletics Federations joined the International Olympic Committee

in 2005 in ruling that athletes intending to switch nationalities would have to serve a three-year waiting period following their acquisition of new passports before they could compete for their adopted countries. At about the same time, FIFA, fearing large-scale defections as a result of Qatar's move to purchase a large group of German, Brazilian, and African soccer players, intervened by imposing a five-year residential qualification.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The continuing flight of talented athletes out of poorer African countries to richer nations must be seen as part of the universal inevitability of talent pursuing better opportunities elsewhere. For centuries, human talent has increasingly moved around the world in pursuit of opportunities. Given that the current intense wave of globalization will only worsen this situation, what responses and alternatives should be pursued?¹³

One possible response derives from the brain-circulation theory. Some scholars have gone beyond the brain-drain-versus-brain-gain debate to advance a theory of brain circulation. It offers an alternate to the zero-sum argument that Africans leaving their homelands for greener pastures elsewhere constitutes a situation of total loss to their countries of origin versus the total gain of the receiving nation's theory. Instead, it argues that since human migration of talent will increase rather than go away, we should allow nationals from the global South to emigrate and gain cutting-edge knowledge, access to business networks in the enabling environments of the receiving countries, and personal resources and then bring some of this complex capital back to their countries of origin via different modalities. This strategy, it is contended, allows Southerners to be in control (Patterson 2007).

Be this as it may, this study enables us to reconceptualize notions of citizenship and nationalism. Sporting competitions today present spaces for the articulation of nationalism and the construction of identities, whether national or individual, in new ways. With the heavy injection of capital and consumerism into sports, ideals of sports for the sake of sports as well as individual and even national identities are not only in a state of flux, but also in crisis.

Some point to the ease with which athletes switch nationalities today as a phenomenon that supports notions of "world citizenship." In a postmodern state of diffused territoriality, issues of immigration are intertwining with competitive sports, leading to a weakening of allegiance to the traditional nation-state. Sports evidently transcends national borders. The continuous wave of defections points to a diffusion of core ideas associated with citizenship and a decline in belief in the Westphalian model of the nation-state and its inherent ethical imperatives. Thus, one of the lessons of this development in international sports is its contribution to our understanding of differentiated notions of citizenship and postnationalist challenges posed by globalization, wherein the physical, legal, and political

borders of states are increasingly permeated by actors, forces, and norms that are beyond the control of the traditional nation-state. In this context, actors are increasingly driven by individual self-determination, rather than national self-determination or patriotism. The pull of petrodollars draws upon individualization and choice, not collectivity and nation.

With sports—particularly track and field and soccer—now being firmly enmeshed in the capitalist system and the lure of petrodollars seemingly irresistible and inevitable, national sporting bodies are faced with a dilemma. Should government deter, acquiesce in, or demand recompense for defections? There are no easy answers. One recommendation is for governments to provide incentives that are adequate by local standards to their top athletes, for it is hard for a young man from a starving family to resist the lure of \$1,000 a month for life. A second suggestion, the idea of payback as a condition for defecting, is gaining popularity and some athletes are even known to be doing this voluntarily. It was widely reported, for example, that Kenyan athletic officials may have acquiesced in Cherono's defection to Qatar because Qatar made a sizable contribution toward the renovation of a stadium in his native Eldoret, in northwest Kenya.

Other recommendations are that governments

- Provide expanded rewards and inducements, such as homes and vehicles;
- Facilitate the provision of long-term care, such as health insurance for life and pensions; and
- In a variety of creative ways, recognize and honor retired athletes so that they do not end their lives in anonymity, poverty, and wretchedness.

In the final analysis, it should be recognized that current global trends and financial imperatives are increasingly and inevitably deemphasizing the traditional notions and values associated with citizenship, as argued above. Indeed, some are floating around the notion of "transnational citizenship," one that allows athletes who have naturalized in other countries continued entry into their birth countries, return home for training, and compete for their mother countries, for they send remittances back and thereby contribute to their home country's economic development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Association for the Study of African Life and History conference at Cincinnati, September 2009. I am grateful for the comments of Samuel Obeng of Indiana University and Osei-Mensah Aborampah of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

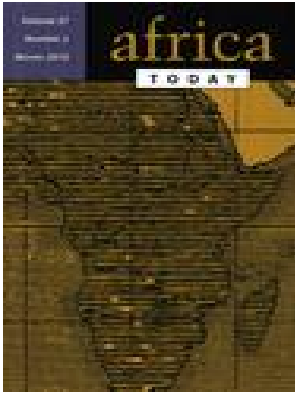
1. The last American to win the New York Marathon was Alberto Salazar, in 1982, who had immigrated to the United States at the age of two.
2. Guest Columnist 2003.
3. The converse phenomenon is *brain gain*, which occurs when there is large-scale immigration of technically qualified persons.
4. See, for example, Kuznetsov 2006:viii.
5. Table compiled by author.
6. See, for example, Havens 1986:742–745.
7. See, for example, Xu 2008.
8. As this paper was going to press, in December 2010, FIFA, soccer's world governing body, announced that the hosting of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups had been awarded to Russia and Qatar, respectively. That Qatar, a country of 1.7 million people, had beaten out Australia, Japan, Korea, and the United States, shocked many observers. The tiny desert country has neither the minimum number of stadiums nor the infrastructure to stage the World Cup. The average temperature during the summer months, when the competition is staged, is 115 degrees Fahrenheit. Unlike previous hosts, Qatar is a country with a weak soccer tradition, and by its own admission, FIFA classified Qatar's bid as "high risk."

Once again, it appeared that politics and money had taken precedence over merit, exemplifying the interconnection between sports and petrodollars. Qatar's hosting of the World Cup will be a first for the Middle East; in fact, with the support of twenty-two Arab countries, Qatar's hosting of the competition is intended to be a pan-Arab event. Some have gone as far as to see in Qatar's hosting of the World Cup something of an instrument in bridging the gap between the Arab and Western worlds. To assuage potential Israeli sensitivities, Qatar undertook to let Israel participate on its soil, even if it does not recognize the Jewish state. It would even permit alcoholic consumption during the World Cup. As for assurances to FIFA, money would not be an issue. Qatar has undertaken to build twelve new solar-powered, air-conditioned stadiums and develop the necessary infrastructure. As former U.S. national soccer team star Eric Wynalda was quick to observe in a telephone interview immediately following FIFA's announcement, "Oil and natural gas won. . . . This was not about merit, this was about money" (Casert 2010).
9. In the movie *Invictus*, Nelson Mandela, the new leader of an embattled postapartheid South Africa, utilizes the national rugby team and its white captain, François Pienaar, as a tool to unify his country, achieve racial reconciliation, mend old wounds between the historically wronged blacks and their former white Afrikaner oppressors, and bring the nation together, as the team faces off in the heated 1995 Rugby World Cup.
10. Government spokesman Alfred Mutua, Nairobi, April 2005, on behalf of Sports Minister Ochillo Ayacko.
11. Keino 2005.
12. For example, U.S. immigrants from Africa doubled in the past decade; at least 1.7 million Americans report sub-Saharan Africa as their place of birth (Patterson 2007:4).

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Author: Adjaye, Joseph K.

Title: Reimagining Sports: African Athletes, Defection, and Ambiguous

Source: Afr Today 57 no2 Wint 2010 p. 27-40

ISSN: 0001-9887

Publisher: Indiana University Press

601 North Morton Street, Bloomington, IN 47404

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