

Introduction: Towards an Epistemology of African Football — The Symbolic Significance of the 2010 FIFA World Cup

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Abstract

Mega-football events are highly mediated, with a vast potential to attract the attention of millions of people across the globe. Live matches are broadcast on television and big screens in public viewing areas, and radio, newspapers and the internet do their fair share of mediation of the actual sport and the politics and fanfare surrounding the sport. This edited volume uses the FIFA 2010 World Cup in South Africa as a lens through which the multiple narratives about Africa, both those rooted in stereotypical assumptions and those with counter-hegemonic tendencies, are critically examined. In particular, it focuses on how media constructions of the 2010 FIFA World Cup contributed to and were informed by these narratives. The book examines football as a mediated discourse imbued with potent symbolic meanings that permeate ordinary life. The backdrop for such theorization is the FIFA 2010 World Cup, the first World Cup on African soil. Various chapters in the book reveal how the FIFA 2010 World Cup became a site upon which identities are imagined, constructed, reconstructed and deconstructed, thus demonstrating how football events can become positive forces for transforming societies.