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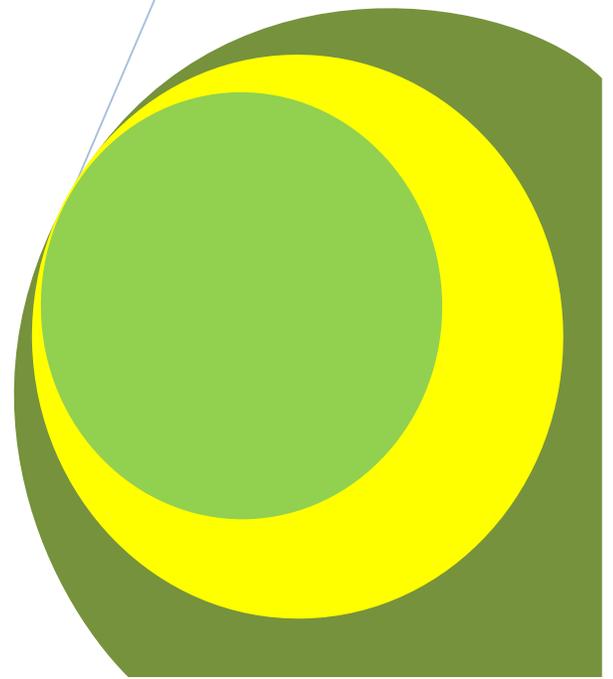
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Sport and Racial Inequality: An Analysis of Pre-Independence Zimbabwe (1890-1979)

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Research Article

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to trace the racial imbalances in sport over the pre-independence historical period and to find out the extent to which racial discrimination was being practised in the pre-independence Zimbabwe. The research followed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and a descriptive survey design with a historical approach. Questionnaire and interview schedule were used to gather data from forty (40) subjects (54-78 years of age) who were purposively selected on the basis that they were former freedom fighters, former political detainees or sports persons who lived or participated in sport during the pre-independence era (1965-1979). It was found that racial inequalities were common in sport before independence and black Zimbabweans were segregated in most sporting disciplines but, they were allowed to participate in soccer, athletics, boxing and netball. Whites on the other hand participated in unlimited sporting games including cricket, rugby, swimming, tennis, hockey, horse-racing and fencing. Blacks were not allowed to represent their country at international competitions, a privilege that was only accorded to white sportsmen.

Keywords: Racism; Freedom fighter; Political detainee; pre-independence.

INTRODUCTION

Racism is one of the major social problems confronting societies around the World. Hornby (1995) defines racism as a belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.

According to Kuper and Kuper (1996), racism stems from the institutional rules and regulations that are established on the basis of certain characteristics, qualifications or standards set by the group in power to keep other groups out.

Smedley and Smedley (2005) views racism as a direct correspondence between a group of people's values, behaviours, attitudes, and its physical features and it can be traced back to the European colonization of much of the World and development of European and American slave trade periods. From an African's point of view, the European-American colonization of the World is the major event that made it possible today for skin colour and race to become a defining link in the relationship between Europeans or Americans and the people of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Every African country that has been colonised at one time or the other went through some form of racial discrimination from the colonisers in both economic and social sectors. Black African athletes who ply their sporting careers in Europe and America are often called by disparaging and inhuman names mostly by opposition teams and supporters because of the racial make-up, evidence to the fact that racism is an inherent social problem the World over and is far from over despite efforts by various Governments to stop it.

Historical researchers in Zimbabwe have been focusing mainly on the inequalities in political and economical matters and none has focused on the imbalances in sport as a social entity.

An overview of literature on racism in sport across the World reflects that in Europe and America, it was the majority native race which discriminated the minority foreigners, whereas in African countries, it was the minority race which dominated the majority native race (Spracklen et al., 2006; Welchi et al., 2004; Guttman, 2003; Kuhl, 1994).

Racism in German sport

In German, racial discrimination was constituted in the laws of the country. Blacks and other non-Aryan races were considered 3rd class citizens and were segregated from all economic, political and social activities. Foreigners were not allowed to compete in national sport competitions, such events were strictly for German citizens (the Aryan). At the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Adolph Hitler (German Prime Minister) ordered that the

Olympic team be selected strictly from members of the army and police and only a few athletes from other German citizens but, there was no place for non-citizens despite how best they were in sports (Kuhl, 1994).

Racism in United States of America sport

In America, racism existed but, it was not sanctioned by the American government as was the case in Germany. Blacks were allowed to represent the country in international events. Afro-Americans (Black Americans) were allocated a quota of 11% in all American National teams (Frey and Eitzen, 1991; Jobu, 1988). Racial discrimination was practiced but, under the disguised principles of Nationalism. Afro-Americans were only allowed to mingle with White Americans during international competitions but, locally they had separate leagues. In individual sports such as boxing, for a black boxer to be admitted into the ring, it was on the pretext that he agrees to lose to a white man in order to showcase the whiteman's superiority (Cashmore, 1982). According to Jobu (1988), at international tournaments, black sportsmen were used as 'show horses' for White Americans, just to bring national prestige and fly the US flag high to the World.

Racism in Great Britain sport

The most inferior races in Britain were blacks from Africa (Afro-Caribbean), Asians (Caucasian) and the Jews. Ouseley (1983) propounds that, segregation on racial bases existed in Britain but, it was not common or formal. The Government of Britain did not accommodate racism in their laws. However, the racial discrimination practices existed outside government approval. The practice came into light to the Race Relations Office, after the influx of a significant number of Afro-Caribbean and Asian migrants into the country around 1950-1960s. According to Green (2004), the need for equality in sport became a public policy concern until in 1970 when the Government intervened leading to the establishment of Great Britain Sport Council with the mandate to promote equal participation in sport for all regardless of age, race, gender or creed. In 1998, a UK Commission for Racial Equality in sport was established which worked with senior sports managers to encourage them to develop racial tolerance and anti-racism campaigns to promote racial equality in their respective sports (Houlihan and White, 2002).

Racism in Ancient Greek sport

According to Ptychion (2005), the term 'Ancient Greek' was racist and tribalistic. It was used to refer to the non-Greek (Barbarians) as well as other Greek tribes like the Macedonians and the Boeotians who were viewed as inferior, uncivilized and backward and excluded from the civilized Hellenic tribe. Racism in Greek sport can be traced as far as the ancient Olympic Games 1300BC. These games were held in every four years in honour of the Hellenic gods and goddess such as Oenomaus, Zeus, Rhea, and Hera. They were held in Olympia- the Greek's official religious site and were open only to free-born Greek men. Slaves and non-Greek citizens as well as Macedonians and Boeotians were regarded as barbarians and as such were not allowed to participate or be spectators during these games (Ptychion, 2005). This shows that the idea of segregation based on race, ethnicity or creed back dates to ancient periods.

Racism in Russia sport

Brod (2006) stipulates that racism in Russian sports appears mainly in the form of negative attitudes and xenophobic actions by Russians towards people who were not considered ethnically Russian. It also included anti-semitism as well as hostility towards various ethnicities of Caucasus and Jews. However, the non-soviets were allowed equal participation in all national teams and in all other sports from club levels to international levels. The soviet officials upheld the principle that, 'merit alone should be the measure for sport success'. Hence, best sports persons of non-Russian origin were allowed to represent Russia during international sports competitions.

Racism in Argentina and Spain sport

According to Guttman, (2003), racism and anti-semitic attacks in sports were mostly against the Russo (Russians) and Jews but, were infrequent before the World War 1 in Argentina and Spain. It grew after the Russian revolution between 1918-1930, when Germany accused the two countries for accommodating the Nazi war criminals (mostly Jews) because the two countries had relaxed immigration policies and a high respect for human rights. They declared non-racial and human rights policies that regarded all citizens as equal and encouraged all non Argentines and Spaniards to take part in all economic, political and social activities.

Racism in South African sport during Apartheid

Racial discrimination in sports in South Africa was rooted on the platform of Apartheid. (A concept of separatism which states that racial groups should develop separately in all political, economical and social systems and the Whitemen should always be at the top and in control of all the systems) (Hain, 1989).

Blacks were allowed to take part in their own sports, managed by their own sport bodies and were not allowed to represent their own country in any international competition. According to Hain (1989), "no mixing of races was allowed in sport. Any violations to this standing were opposed by the apparatus of the South African Police." The discrimination in South Africa resembled that in Germany in the sense that the government was instrumental in promoting racism by passing laws which were discriminatory. However the difference between the two countries is that, while in Germany, it was the minority blacks and Jews who were disadvantaged by the Aryan majority, in South Africa, it was the Black majority that was segregated by the white minority.

An overview of the colonial Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe was colonised by Britain in 1890 and got independence in 1980. After colonisation, the name was changed to Rhodesia in honour of the first colonial Prime Minister Cecil John Rhodes. It remained under the British government rule until 1965. In November 1965 to 1979, the then British-appointed Prime Minister, Ian Douglas Smith unilaterally declared the country independent from Britain and he was no longer accountable to the British government. The Black Zimbabweans remained under colonial bondage, this time under Smith regime until 1979. The period of 1965-1979 was known as the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) and was characterised by heavy and bloody gun fighting between Smith government and the Black Zimbabweans.

A review of sporting activities in Zimbabwe showed that formal sport was introduced in the country by the British- South Africa Company (BSAC) in the late 1890s. The BSAC (also known as the Pioneer Column) was a British council that was established by the British Government and mandated with the administration of British affairs in its colony, Zimbabwe. The council was headed by Cecil John Rhodes and operated from South Africa, a neighbouring country of Zimbabwe which was also a British colony.

Upon the establishment of Zimbabwe as a British colony by the British- South African Company, (BSAC/Pioneer Column) all sports (boxing, bowling, cricket, rugby, archery, soccer, hockey, swimming, tennis, and others) were introduced in this country and were exclusively for the British White settlers.

Racial inequality in sports existed in Zimbabwe since, colonialism in the late 1890s and continued for some decades after Independence (1980) with the white maintaining superiority over blacks. The British Whites, despite being the minority ethnic group, dominated the Black majority and controlled the national economy and all the means of production (minerals, land, wildlife, and manufacturing industries), pushing the Black Zimbabweans out of the economic, social and political discourse.

No documented researches have been found concerning racism in Zimbabwean sports prior to independence (1980), hence, this paper is the first to explore the area.

Hypothesis (H)

There were racial inequalities in Pre-Independence Zimbabwean sport.

Research Questions

The research is founded on the following research questions:

- To what extent was there discrimination in sport before independence?
- Were Blacks allowed to represent the country in international matches?
- What criteria were used to select nation teams in various sporting disciplines?

METHODOLOGY

i. Design

The study followed a descriptive survey design with a historical and analytical approach which included a systematic examination and explanation of an array of sport practices during the period under review.

ii. Sample

A sample of 40 subjects (25 males and 15 females, age 54-78 years) was purposively selected from targeted subjects who had the desired characteristics of being former freedom fighters, ex-political detainees or sports

persons with intensive knowledge of the events that took place during the liberation war era, in prisons or in detention camps. The sampling technique was preferred in order to target only the subjects who lived and participated in the liberation struggle or in sports during the pre-independence period.

iii. Research instruments and Data collection

Data was collected from participants using questionnaires and interview schedules. Against the multiplicity of constrains of these methods, the researcher was convinced that adequate information was gathered that facilitated the inference and drawing of conclusions on the subject of racism in Zimbabwean sport prior to independence.

The questionnaire was a combination of demographic questions, multiple choice and open-ended questions that require the subjects to give their narration and views with regards to racism in sport in Zimbabwe before independence. The questionnaires was personally distributed in sealed envelops by the researcher and collected back after two days, while interviews were conducted face- to- face and through telephone for those participants who were out of reach for face- to- face interviews. Data was analysed both qualitatively using descriptive statistics and quantitatively using Statistical Package in Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19. The Goodness-of-Fit Chi-Square statistic was used to test the hypothesis. A significant level of '0.05' was used to approve or disapprove the hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the total sample, 55% were sports persons and 45% was constituted by former freedom fighters, war collaborators or political detainees.

Was discrimination constituted in the law?

Racial discrimination during the period under review was sanctioned by the colonial laws of the British Government in Zimbabwe as postulated by 100% of the respondents. The Immorality and Separatism Ordinance of 1903, continued to operate, during the UDI era, prohibiting Blacks and other non-White races from mingling with Whites in any social function. The law prohibited any association with a white person through marriage, in education and health institutions, or in sports and infringement to this order attracted a 2 year imprisonment penalty.

Extent of racial discrimination in economic and social activities

From the questionnaire and interview responses given on the 'extent of racial discrimination before independence in 1980', it was alluded that Zimbabwean's economic, political and social affairs including sport was managed by South Africa since the colonial regime was administered from South Africa under the Cape Colony Legislative Council (The British Governing council in South Africa). Therefore, the rules that applied to South Africa also applied to Zimbabwe.

Discrimination of black Zimbabweans on the grounds of race and colour was applied in all spheres of the economy, politics and social life to the extent that it was an offence for a black person to be seen in the Central Business District of any town. Hyper-streets like 1st, 2nd, and 3rd streets in the capital Harare, were a no-go-area for blacks. Trying to buy clothes from a hypermarket shop was a punishable offence to black Zimbabweans. Segregation was also imposed on health institutions and schools. There were schools and hospitals specifically for whites and for blacks. The schools were divided into Group A, for white children and Group B, for blacks in urban areas and Group C for blacks in rural areas and farms. In the Group A schools, the curriculum was different from that offered to blacks in Group B and C. Blacks were taught practical subjects/ courses that will enable them to be farmers and industrial labourers such as basic agriculture, building, carpentry, plumbing, while the curriculum for whites composed of mathematics, sciences and management subjects/courses. There were only basic sport sporting activities in black schools such as soccer and athletics, while in white schools, sporting disciplines included elite sports such as swimming, hockey, rugby, tennis and cricket.

Blacks were allowed to participate in these games?

Table 1: Responses as to whether Blacks were equally allowed to participate in similar games like whites.

Games	soccer	cricket	tennis	hockey	swimming	Athletics	Netball	Rugby	Boxing
Agree (%)	100	0	0	0	0	85	90	0	90
Disagree (%)	0	100	100	100	100	15	10	100	10

Sporting disciplines such as cricket, tennis, hockey, swimming and rugby were regarded as whiteman's games as cited by 100% of the respondents. Other games that were listed as whiteman's games include; equestrian activities (horse racing and polo), karate, bowling, and fencing. It constituted a punishable offence for a blackman to participate in these games or to be found in possession of any equipment for such games. According to Table1, the majority of respondents agreed that, blacks were only allowed to play soccer, netball, boxing and athletics in their black communities. However allowing blacks to participate in such games (soccer, athletics, netball and boxing) did not mean that whites were not playing such games, they played those games too and competing as all-whites teams.

This was a similar case in the United States of America, where games such as soccer, athletics, netball, boxing and volleyball were attached to the middle and lower class citizens only, while high profile sports like basketball, baseball, tennis, hockey etc were attached to the upper class and the bourgeoisie. It was reported that there were separate leagues in Zimbabwe for whites and for blacks' sports and the leagues were administered differently. Black sporting leagues were not allowed to represent the country in any international competition; they were only social leagues while, the all-whites' leagues were the national leagues. The blacks' leagues were called Bantu leagues (Bantu soccer league, Bantu netball league etc). The term Bantu was a vernacular word for Black Zimbabweans.

Was there a representative distribution of sports and recreation centres in blacks and whites residential areas?

From the interviews conducted on whether there was an equal distribution of sports and recreational facilities in the blacks' high density and whites' low density suburbs, respondents asserts that:

- * There were very few recreational centres meant for blacks before independence while there were many in low density areas.
- * Facilities such as sports halls were available but, were very few and small in size and were meant for boxing, musical performances, drama, films and other cultural activities as well as council meetings. One hall was shared by people from at least five residential areas.
- * Only a soccer field with athletics track and a netball pitch were the main features of a recreational facility found in the high density residential suburbs.
- * The management of these centres was under the Town Council authorities and very few people benefited from these centres. People from suburbs geographical further from the suburb with the facilities could not benefit from the recreation facilities due to distance. As a result, those who resided in far away locations would prefer playing sports in the streets and other small free spaces in between houses, hence, the emergence of such names as 'street soccer, street athletics, street boxing'.
- * In low density areas, where whites lived, the recreational centres and sport clubs were many with a ratio of one residential area to one recreational centre. The centres provided all kinds of sporting facilities, fully equipped for all sporting games including golf and other elite sports such as; fencing, judo, bowling, darts, and table tennis.
- * These centres were whites-only and were a no-go area for any black except during cleaning and maintenances.
- * The immorality ordinance was applied to blacks who transgress the rules by entering into the whites' sports premises.
- * Entry was through membership, whereby subscriptions and affiliation fees were paid prior to using the facilities but not open to blacks. Toilets and bathing facilities were well built and hygienically maintained all the time in the whites' residential areas than in the blacks' residential areas. Bar, catering and refreshments after match were also fully provided.

Did black prisoners have sporting opportunities while in restriction camps or prisons?

Table 2: Responses on whether prisoners had sporting opportunities.

Prisoners had sporting opportunities	Yes	No	Not sure
Responses (n)	0	38	2
Percentage (%)	0	97.5	2.5

There were no sporting activities extended to prisoners as confirmed by 97.5 % of the respondents, while 2.5% could neither confirm their views. This was a similar case in South Africa, where prisoners were also not playing sports while in prisons. In Zimbabwe, there were restriction camps during the period, 1965-1980 where people were kept under security fence and tight monitoring so that they could not mingle with the freedom fighters as a method of cutting food supply to the fighters. In these camps, adults and children played informal ball games using balls made from plastics and rugs of old clothes (street sport). They organised themselves into teams/clubs which had vernacular names that symbolized PEACE, UNITY or INDEPENDENCE. For example , Rusununguko

(independence), Kubatana (united), Takashinga (courageous) and Chiedza (light/better life). All these names have liberation war themes meant to encourage the blacks to keep fighting the whites.

Contingency Table showing Chi-Square statistics

Table 3: The Goodness-of-Fit Chi-Square Output.

		Test Statistics							
		Which race was superior	Laws which promoted discrimination	Blacks were allowed to participate in	Were there limitations for whites for participation	Were there sport clubs for blacks	Representative distribution of sport facilities	Type of facilities in black residential areas	Distance of sport facilities
Chi-Square		36.100 ^a	11.600 ^a	10.800 ^a	36.100 ^a	31.850 ^d	13.850 ^d	11.250 ^a	12.200 ^d
df		1	5	3	1	2	2	4	2
Asymp. Sig.		.000	.041	.013	.000	.000	.001	.024	.002
Monte Carlo Sig.	Sig.	.000 ^f	.039 ^f	.011 ^f	.000 ^f	.000 ^f	.001 ^f	.020 ^f	.003 ^f
	95% Confidence Interval								
	Lower Bound	.000	.036	.009	.000	.000	.000	.018	.002
	Upper Bound	.000	.043	.013	.000	.000	.002	.023	.004

Testing was performed at 95% confidence interval (0.05 level of significance). From Table 3, it can be observed that the white race was regarded as superior, there were no limitations to whites' participation in sports, and there were no sport clubs for blacks ($p=0.00$), sport facilities distribution favoured the whites ($p=0.01$). Racism was promoted in the constitution of the land ($p=0.04$) and there were specific arms of the law that supported discrimination ($p=0.01$). Black people were allowed to participate in selected sport (soccer, netball, athletics and boxing) ($p=0.013$) and only selected sport facilities were found in their high density residential areas ($p=0.024$). Based on these statistics in Table 3, we can accept the hypothesis (H) and conclude that there was racism in Pre-Independence Zimbabwean sports.

CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that racism was rampant in Zimbabwean sport before independence and was supported by Government laws which enforced discrimination on the basis of skin colour and race. Trends of racial discrimination in Zimbabwean sport were similar to those in the European countries. Racism in Zimbabwe was encountered in all spheres of the life; economic, political and social spheres. The majority race (blacks) was discriminated against by the white minority. During the colonial period (pre-independence), blacks and whites were entitled to different sporting disciplines with majority of blacks dominating in soccer, netball, athletics and boxing. Whites dominated in all sports including cricket, rugby, swimming, lawn tennis, gymnastics, hockey and golf - the so-called 'elite games' which were regarded as exclusively for whites and blacks were not allowed to represent their own country in international sports.

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