Men and Football in Africa

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Abstract

Football in Africa remains a male-dominated space. This chapter traces male dominance in the game showing how the idea of maleness is embraced across the game. The widespread popularity of the game makes it an important prism to understand men and the idea of maleness in Africa. Football has provided an important space for the construction, valorisation and celebration of specific types of masculinities across the continent. Sexual symbols and phallocentric images permeate football culture making the sport a male-dominated space. In this chapter we analyse the place of men in African football, noting how men and hegemonic masculinities dominate various parts of the sport, including ownership of teams, playing, coaching, refereeing and fan cultures. Using various scholarly works on football from across Africa, we highlight how masculinities are interwoven with the everyday notion of football to the extent that for a long time the sport was sorely played by men. The chapter also interrogates how men dominate football consumption spaces including bars, sports betting halls and stadiums.