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Reviews

African Soccerscapes: how a continent changed the world's game by P. ALEGI
London: Hurst, 2010. Pp. xvii + 179, $21.49 (pbk).
doi:10.1017/S0022278X12000237

This lively and well-researched survey provides a useful overview of the history of association football ('soccer') in Africa. It traces the sport's introduction to the continent, by European administrators, missionaries and settlers, in the late nineteenth century, its subsequent association with elite colonial schools, and its later use – mostly by former students of those elite schools – as a vehicle for political mobilisation. During the late colonial period, football teams became powerful symbols of anti-colonial sentiment, while in post-colonial times football clubs and leagues were used as a tool for integrating newly independent nation-states. For example, in Algeria the liberation movement's 'national' team began playing in international competitions in 1958 (four years before independence), while in Nigeria the country's first president, Nnamdi Azikiwe, used the tours of his own club, Lagos ZAC, as a means for projecting his vision of 'Nigerian-ness' throughout the country. Football also made a contribution to pan-Africanism, especially in the context of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa (during which membership of the umbrella Confederation of African Football, CAF, helped to bring about consensus against the government in Pretoria).

Alegi also examines the influence that African football has had on the global game, especially through the increasing migration of African players to clubs in Europe, and latterly also to teams in the USA, the Middle East and Asia. Driven both by a growing appreciation for African playing styles – as exemplified by individuals such as Eusebio da Silva Ferreira (the Mozambiquan-born former captain of Portugal, who is widely regarded as one of the best players of all time) – and by a growing need for non-elite clubs to recruit 'cheap talent', this trend has vastly improved the profile of 'African football', yet has also drained many African countries of their own best players. Through a series of well-chosen case studies, Alegi also highlights the very mixed fortunes of individual African players who made the move abroad. Thus, for every Michael Essien (who in 2005 was signed by English Premier League side Chelsea, for a then record £26 million), there are very many more like Albert Youmba (who in the late 1990s ended up a penniless illegal immigrant in France, having failed to be signed by French Second Division side Le Havre, and having been ripped off by a middleman to boot).

However, the book is not without flaws. It is overly detailed in places, and too reliant on statistical evidence (for this reviewer's tastes, at least). In addition, the argument of the final chapter – which examines the growing commercialisation of international football, and the new media environments that have fuelled this – is not entirely convincing. Specifically, Alegi argues that the new

commercialism is a form of neo-colonialism, and is therefore overwhelmingly detrimental for African clubs/leagues, and for African viewing publics. Yet this view denies all but a very small business elite any agency in the process. Certainly, the trend has generated the kinds of negative effects Alegi describes – in particular growing financial and competitive disparities between elite and other clubs. Yet the broadcasting of African football on satellite TV (and the broadcasting of European football to Africa) has also led to a veritable explosion in the number of 'viewing halls' across both urban and rural areas. These have, in turn, become key sites for ordinary Africans to engage in new money-making ventures and new forms of spectatorship, both of which may also be politically empowering in various ways. Overall, though, *African Soccerscapes* provides an excellent starting point for anyone new to the subject, and it will be useful in teaching.

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Globalization in Africa: recolonization or renaissance? by P. CARMODY
Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner, 2010. Pp. 195, £47.50 (hbk).
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Writing from within the broad critical development geography framework, Pádraig Carmody sets out to explore to what extent globalisation might be said to be 'good' for Africa. The volume investigates the developing character and effect of globalisation throughout Africa, framed within the recent huge upsurge in Chinese, American and others' economic and political interests in the continent.

From the 1980s onwards, Africa was basically marginalised by globalisation processes. The colonially inherited economic structures that Africa was left with clearly did not function in the interests of the continent's people. Stressing low-value added cash crops and resource exports demonstrably hemmed Africa into a vicious cycle of asymmetrical trade relationships, as price fluctuations and an overall decline in commodity receipts occurred alongside a steady increase in the cost of imported manufactured goods. Throw in poor governance and misjudged economic planning, and the end result was familiar to all. This was compounded by the inability of import-substituting industries, which were set up post-independence in a wave of nationalist fervour, to compete with imports (primarily Asian) domestically, or in the global export market after economic liberalisation was undertaken. The end result was an entrenchment of Asian supremacy in the manufacturing sector, a decimation of Africa's manufacturing base, and a subsequent intensification of Africa's resource dependency. Subsequently, the continent was inadequately placed to take profitable advantage of the opportunities and economies of scale that an increasingly globalising economy arguably presented.

Using illustrations from the historical trajectories of Chad, Sudan and Zambia, the author looks at whether the resource curse, which has long staked out much of Africa's political economy, can become a good thing. Thus far, the emphasis on enclave-based natural resource exports has been highly lucrative