

# Governance and regulation of South African football: A case-study of the emergence of a professional football industry in a developing economy

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## Aim of paper and research questions

This paper aims to present a detailed case-study of the system of governance and regulation within the South African football industry. Drawing on analysis of documentary secondary data, the objective is to illustrate the key governance challenges associated with the development of a professional football industry within the context of a developing economy using the case of the South African football industry as an example. The paper first presents a descriptive historical review of the development of the football industry in South Africa. It then specifically reviews the structure of the South African football industry and considers the extent to which the governance structures of the Premier Soccer League of South Africa (PSL) and the South African Football Association (SAFA) are able to effectively address key governance issues.

- What are the organisational structures of SAFA and the PSL and how effective have they been in facilitating the development of a vibrant football industry in South Africa?
- What has been the impact of the development of the PSL, as a professional elite league, on the role of SAFA as the overall governing body of South African football?
- What are the key governance challenges facing South African football?
- How well equipped are SAFA and the PSL to successfully address these challenges?

## Literature review

Over the last twenty years African football has grown in significance. First, Africa's prominence in world football has been enhanced through representation within FIFA's institutional structures, thereby challenging the idea that Africa is a peripheral continent within the world game (Darby, 2002: 1). This is illustrated by FIFA's decision in 2000 to introduce a continental rotation system for the World Cup hosting rights, confirming that the 2010 tournament would be held in Africa. Second, there has been a dramatic growth in the number of African players migrating to play in European leagues since the early 1980s (Darby, 2000: 47). Third, the growth in media coverage of competitions such as the African Cup of Nations has been a key factor in ensuring that interest in African football beyond Africa, and in Europe in particular, has never been greater (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2004: 1). This interest is now being reflected in an increasing body of academic literature focusing on aspects such as the history and role that football has played in African politics, society and culture (e.g. Nauright, 1999; Alegi, 2004; Armstrong & Giulianotti, 2004); how globalisation has encouraged the migration of African footballers (Lanfranchi & Taylor, 2001; Bale, 2004); and analysis of the role that Africa has played in the governance of world football (Darby, 2000; 2002; 2003). Despite the growth in interest, studies examining governance and regulation within individual African countries remain relatively scarce. South Africa's status as the African continent's most

economically developed country, as the host nation of the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and as the home of the continent's most developed football professional league (the PSL) make it a particularly appropriate case-study through which to examine the development of the governance structures in African football as a whole.

### Research design and proposed data analysis

The research design of this case study has two stages. The first stage is based on the analysis of documentary secondary data. Written documents such as annual reports, organisational records, and website information constitute documentary secondary data. The use of these sources of data is important within qualitative research, particularly as it can be used to give a historical insight. The case study therefore draws on publicly available documents including PSL Annual reports, SAFA annual reports, newspapers articles and website analysis. The second stage of research will involve a seminar event in London drawing on key stakeholders in South African football to discuss governance in the football industry.

### Discussion of progress

This paper presents work-in-progress having completed the first stage of the case study research. A three month period of study has involved undertaking secondary data analysis drawing on a range of documents. This paper presents the findings from the initial secondary data analysis. The seminar event involving a range of stakeholders of South African football is currently at the planning stage and is due to take place in autumn 2009.

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