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Country profile of Ghana: sport, politics and nation-building

Derrick Charway^a and Barrie Houlihan^{a,b}

^aDepartment of Sport and Social Sciences, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, Oslo, Norway; ^bSchool of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences, Loughborough University, Loughborough, UK

ABSTRACT

The profile gives an overview of the changing trends of sport policies adopted in Ghana and highlights how past political upheavals made it difficult to have stable sport development strategies. Currently, the emergence of different actors within the sport policy sub-system of Ghana is apparent however the reliance on government for the development of sport makes it difficult to decouple party politics from sport development strategy. The profile begins with a detailed account of the emergence of sport from pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial traditions in the history of Ghana. This is followed by an analysis of the current structure of sport and funding patterns and trends. The dominance of football and contemporary issues such as migration, gender equality and disability are also discussed in terms of their impact on policy. The final part highlights the nascent 'sport for development' sector in relation to the United Nation's MDGs and SDGs and how they have influenced sport policy and development in Ghana.

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Ghana; politics; sport development; sport policy and sustainable development goals

Historical context

Precolonial era

Dating back to antiquity, sport in the form of physical activity has been linked to recreation, security, survival and other cultural practices (Cozens and Stumpf 1947, Dunlap 1951, Kyle 2007). Ghana is no exception and this profile provides an insight into sport (in a form of physical activity, games and play) prior to the advent of the European influence in the 15th century (Ocansey *et al.* 2013). The Ghanaian physical culture in the bygone ages was part of the socialisation process and core to the traditions of the tribes located in various parts of present-day Ghana (Busia 1964). Geographical location (coastal, arable and pastoral areas), security and occupation to some extent determined the kind of physical activity of the tribes (Asare 1982). For instance, young men were trained to defend and secure their tribal territories. Also, young people whose parents were fishermen were taught swimming, canoeing and diving; hunters were taught hunting; and farmers were taught farming. Various games, dependent on one's tribe, including wrestling, foot racing, bow and arrow and spear throwing (target games), canoeing and swimming, were keenly contested among men during off-seasons and period of low business activity. Cultural activities such as drumming, dancing and singing during special occasions such as festivals and warriors contest (like wrestling) were also indicative of the physical culture of the indigenous people. According to Asare (1982, p. 55) such '... activities had not only social and cultural value, but also influenced the moral and political stability of the society at the time'. A sense of tribalistic ideals (nationalism) was enforced so that the young boys

CONTACT Derrick Charway  d.o.charway@nih.no  Department of Sport and Social Sciences, Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, P.O. Box 4014 Ullevål stadion, 0806 Oslo.

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were taught to be proud tribesmen, physically strong and familiar with native lore (Watkins 1943). Women and girls during these periods (from most tribes) were not considered for the rigorous physical culture traditions but were active in certain traditional and recreational games that require less-physical demands such as 'ampe', 'kantata', 'oware', 'pempenaa', 'pilolo', 'sabala', 'sansankroma' and 'tumatu' (mostly among southern tribes) to mention a few (Asare 1982). Of these games, 'ampe' and 'oware' remains popular till date in most tribes in Ghana and neighbouring West African countries. 'Ampe' is a female game, requires no equipment and can be an individual or team game depending on the number of people present. 'Ampe' involves facing your opponent(s), jumping while clapping rhythmically and then scoring a point with feet extended (after each jump) in the opposite or same direction of the opponent. 'Oware' extends beyond the borders of Africa to the Caribbean due to the transatlantic slave trade from the 16th to 19th century (Stoffle and Baro 2016). It is a board game, played by both sexes/opposing pairs and it uses strategies meant to hone critical thinking. While there were no written/formal strategies or policies to guide the activities of the indigenous people, the informal traditional education (passed orally) of men and women valorises family and community interests above self-interest (Busia 1964). This sense of community ensured that the physical culture was tailored to the core tribal values which were security, economy and health.

Colonial era

European influence on Ghana (then called Gold Coast) extended from 1471 to 1957. During this period, the Portuguese (1471–1642), Dutch (1580–1872), Swedes (1640–1663), Danes (1674 to 1850), Brandenburgers of then Prussia (1682–1721) and British (1631–1957) engaged native tribes in various trade transactions and missionary activities which altered their way of life and traditions. Like many 'anglophone' African countries (Ndee 2000), aspects of the British culture particularly had permeated the traditional culture of the indigenous people of Ghana by the mid-19th century. Thus, in pursuit of colonial trade in the 18th century which demanded educated natives for interpretation purposes (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 1975) and missionary work for the propagation of Christianity (Graham 1976), sport and recreational games became an offshoot according to Scanlon (1964) which attracted indigenous people into colonial school and Christian settings. By the 19th century, the British public-school system and physical culture of athleticism, health, muscular Christianity, self-discipline, patriotism, sport, physical and moral education, which characterised the Victorian and Edwardian eras (Watson *et al.* 2005, Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2006) became prominent in the Ghanaian physical culture. The export of the British physical culture has been said to be part of the British imperial strategy to maintain a strong political front, protecting its interests and territories around the world (Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2006). However, Asare (1982) argues that such a system of toughening, disciplining, athleticism, competition and moral education resonates with the physical cultural motifs of the Ghanaian tribes in the precolonial times. Gradually organised sport and physical education by the mid-20th century had become an integral component of the education/school, military training and political systems of the then Gold Coast. Ex-military and enthusiasts with no education in sport and physical education were often used as teachers or trainers in schools (Ocansey *et al.* 2013). It is important to mention that, though games such as athletics, boxing, cricket and volleyball were played and taught albeit with limited facilities (Apter 1955), football was given the most attention.

Sport strategy adopted during colonial era: Sports Council Ordinance No. 14 of 1952

By the beginning of the 20th century Ghanaians (then people of Gold Coast) had fully embraced organised sport which led to the formation of the first sport association called the Gold Coast Football Association (GCFA, now Ghana Football Association) in 1920. This was followed by the formation of Gold Coast Amateur Athletics Association (GCAA, now Ghana Athletic Association) in 1944 and Gold Coast Olympics Committee (GCOC, now Ghana Olympic Committee) in 1951. Ghana

as Gold Coast (combined with British Togoland [comprising current Togo and Volta region of Ghana]) participated in its first-ever Olympic Games in 1952 held in Helsinki, Finland. Participation in the Olympic Games led to the enactment of Sports Council Ordinance No. 14 of 1952 by the British Colonial rule to administer, develop and control sport in the Gold Coast (Ocansey *et al.* 2013, p. 19). This became the first legal framework and main precursor for sport development in Ghana during colonial era. Under the Ordinance Ghana debuted as an independent country at the 1958 Commonwealth Games held in Cardiff, Wales, presenting 16 athletes (10 in athletics and 6 in boxing) and winning 1 bronze medal (Commonwealth Sport *n.d.*). The Ordinance also established the Gold Coast Amateur Sports Council (GCASC) to manage sport associations, organise and promote amateur sport and sport-for-all under the umbrella of the central government. This objective was however hampered by inadequate sport facilities and lack of qualified/trained persons to advance the Ordinance's objectives across the entire country. Nevertheless, elements of the Sports Council Ordinance No. 14 of 1952 remained relevant beyond Ghana's independence in 1957 as it ensured that prominent European football coaches were brought to coach the national football teams of Ghana. George Ainsley (1958 to 1959), Andreas Sjolberg (1959 to 1962) and Joseph Ember (1963) from England, Sweden and Hungary, respectively, coached the national football teams until the first Ghanaian president, fuelled by his pan-African ideas, ended the importation of European coaches.

Postcolonial era

The transition from colonialism to independence was characterised by a sense of pride and nationalism (Morrison 2004) having been colonised by multiple European countries from the early 15th to mid-20th century (McLaughlin and Owusu-Ansah 1995, p. 8). One of the main catalysts for independence was the first president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, who led the Convention People's Party. He found fame with the people of the then Gold Coast with the slogan, 'self-government now', a demand that resonated deeply with the people and thus, opened the door for partial independence in 1957 and full independence in 1960. Nkrumah became the substantive president of the first republic of Ghana on 1 July 1960. The political landscape of Ghana since independence has been subject to many upheavals. The postcolonial period in Ghana has been marred by radical and disruptive political ideologies, corruption, coup d'états and militarism. This section examines recent Ghanaian political history and demarcates significant periods in the history of Ghana.

First Republic (1960 to 1966) and military rule (1966 to 1969)

Shortly after the first democratic presidential election, and according to the new constitution for the Republic, power was consolidated in the hands of the president and his cabinet of ministers. Despite the acknowledged intellectual capacity of the president, Kwame Nkrumah (McLaughlin and Owusu-Ansah 1995), the political priority he gave to 'Africa Must Unite' and the Pan-African Movement came at the expense of domestic affairs and development which led to discontent. As Nkrumah once stated, 'The independence of Africa would be meaningless unless it is tied to the total liberation of Africa'. This paved way to courting a new relationship with the Soviet Union where both countries concluded cultural and academic exchange agreements (that included sport) between 1960 and 1966 (Kulkova and Sanusi 2016). Influenced by socialist ideologies (Gyimah-Boadi 2008) Nkrumah sought for unity and a better standard of living for all African workers who in his view have been exploited by capitalist enterprises in Africa. Consequently, Ghana's economic and natural resources were used extensively for the pursuit of external objectives (McLaughlin and Owusu-Ansah 1995, Gyimah-Boadi 2008). This strategy culminated in a serious economic crisis (particularly rapid inflation and rising taxes) and civil protests in Ghana. Nkrumah's time in power was short-lived and he was overthrown in 1966 by a coup d'état led by military and police officers who thence, formed the National Liberation Council (NLC) and held on to power until 1969 before ushering Ghana into multiparty parliamentary democracy.

Key sport strategies adopted by the First Republic and NLC

Central Organization of Sports (COS), 1960. The COS was a de-facto state-led organisation created in the First Republic by Nkrumah's presidency to replace the erstwhile Gold Coast Amateur Sports Council (GCASC). The president expunged the imperial elements in the GCASC with a renewed mandate of using local sport experts to focus on amateur and professional sport development throughout Ghana. Subsequently, a director and deputy director of sport, regional sport developers and several other staff were employed within COS as part of the president's accelerated programme to satisfy the overwhelming wave of nationalism and pride among Ghanaians while pursuing his Pan-African agenda. Capitalising on sport as means to foster national pride, the President envisioned that '*... In the field of Sports, it is the concern of my government that an independent Gold Coast [now Ghana] shall stand to none, and it is our intention to encourage national competitions which will produce sportsmen and athletes for national and international contests. These competitions must run through the entire educational system in order to provide us with continuous supplies of distinguished sportsmen*' (Nkrumah 1961, p. 58). Based on directives from the president, the Schools and Colleges Sports Federation (SCSF) was created through the then Ministry of Education. A move which deemphasised the relevance of physical education and games in schools (Ocansey *et al.* 2013) in favour of organised competitive team sport.

A significant influence at this time was the relationship between Ghana and the Soviet Union which resulted in the Soviet Union boosting sport development in Ghana through various sport exchanges and training programmes as well as providing facilities, financial and technical support (Ocansey *et al.* 2013, Kulkova and Sanusi 2016). Furthermore, Nkrumah instructed COS to set up the Real Republikans Sporting Club to focus on athletics, boxing, football, hockey and table tennis. The investment in the Real Republikans Sporting Club resulted in Ghana's participation in the summer Olympics at 1960 Rome Olympics (won 1 Silver medal in Boxing) and 1964 Tokyo Games (won 1 Bronze medal in Boxing). Ghana also participated and performed well at the Perth 1962 (won 3 Gold, 5 Silver and 1 bronze medals) and Kingston 1966 (won 5 Gold, 2 Silver and bronze medals) Commonwealth Games. The enormous support and particular focus on football by the President led the senior national football team of Ghana to win the African Cup of Nations in 1963 (hosted by Ghana) and in 1965 (in Tunisia).

According to Asare (1982) Nkrumah's support for sport was a reflection of his personal political and social values. Baba (2010) mentioned that the preference for competitive inter-school sport meant that trained physical education teachers were faced with the daunting task of preparing students for competitive sport at the expense of physical education. Adum-Kyeremeh (2019) also detailed how the unchallenged power vested in the management team of COS resulted in mismanagement of funds, nepotism, favouritism and autocracy. This led to the reduction in the extensive powers and dismissal of the sport director of COS by the National Liberation Council (which was formed after the military coup that deposed Nkrumah in 1966).

Sports Council of Ghana. After the overthrow of Nkrumah, the National Liberation Council (NLC) military rule assembled a sport review committee (named Tibo Committee) and thence, promulgated Decree 224 to empower the Committee to review, decentralise and streamline the activities of the Central Organisation of Sports (COS). The review led to the creation of the Sports Council of Ghana (SCG) on 2 February 1968, with the responsibility of fulfilling an advisory role on policy for sport administration and development in Ghana. Furthermore, to enforce the mandate of the SCG, the National Liberation Council passed NLC Decree 330 on 17 February 1969, under which the SCG made recommendations (accepted in the Second Republic) for stringent financial measures to foster transparency and the need to dissolve and replace COS with the establishment of national, regional and district sport councils in Ghana. Despite the prevailing political tensions and military occupation, the senior national football team continued to be successful, finishing second in 1966 (in Ethiopia) and 1968 (in Sudan) African Cup of Nations.

Second Republic (1969 to 1972) and military rule (1972 to 1979)

Soon after the overthrow of Nkrumah as president, the 1969 Constitution of the Second Republic was enacted and Kofi Abrefa Busia was elected prime minister. The Constitution assigned real executive position to the prime minister while making the presidency a nominal executive position. After grappling with the woes of the economy for 27 months in office, the 1969 Constitution was suspended and Busia was ousted in 1972 by the second military coup d'état in the history of Ghana. Having gained popularity and support from the people by reversing Busia's unfavourable austerity measures, General Ignatius Kutu Acheampong together with other high ranked military officers decided to introduce full military rule in 1975 by forming the Supreme Military Council (SMC) characterised by military ideologies and principles. The Supreme Military Council, like the previous administration, was undermined by high inflation, high taxes, hunger, and protests across the country. Subsequently, a counter-coup d'état was staged by junior ranked army officers, led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings in 1979.

Key sport strategy adopted by the Second Republic and Supreme Military Council (SMC)

Sports Act SMC Decree 54 of 1976 (LI 1088). The Second Republic accepted many of the reforms introduced under National Liberation Council Decree 330 and subsequently accorded oversight responsibility for sport to the Ministry Education, Culture and Sport, marking the first time that sport was attached to a government ministry. However, this reform was short-lived. Following the formation of the Supreme Military Council, the Sports Act SMC Decree 54 of 1976 was enacted and became the first detailed sport legislation in Ghana. The Sports Act created the National Sports Council in 1976 with a responsibility to handle all matters of sport as well as to report directly to the then Head of State (the military leader at the time). The National Sports Council was mandated to organise, promote, develop and provide financial support to amateur and professional associations. Subsequently, a substantive Ministry of Sports headed by a 'Commissioner for Sports' was formed in 1978 and charged to have oversight of sports development in Ghana and also to report directly to the then Head of State. Eventually, the National Sports Council became a unit within the Ministry of Sports. From 1979 a minister was assigned to the Ministry of Sports and this has been the norm to date. It is, however, important to mention that Legal Instrument (LI) 1088 was passed to empower the Minister of Sport under Section 42 (sub-section 2a and 2b) of SMC Decree 54 of 1976 to regulate and oversee the political processes and programmes of National Sport Federations/Associations (herein referred to as NSFs) in Ghana. Though SMC era was fraught with a troubled and fragile economy, Ghana hosted and won the African Cup of Nations in 1978.

Third Republic (1979 to 1981) and military rule (1981 to 1993)

As promised by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), the 1979 Constitution of the Third Republic was passed, executive presidency and multiparty democracy were restored, and thence Hilla Limann, a former diplomat became the president. However, his presidency was abruptly curtailed in 1981 by the members of the AFRC who felt the Limann administration was incapable of steering the affairs of government. To mark the end of the Third Republic, Rawlings assembled a new council called Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) and it was made up of both army officers and civilians with the aim of 'restore[ing] human dignity to Ghanaians [with] a chance for the people, farmers, workers, soldiers, the rich and the poor, to be part of the decision-making process.' (Naylor 2000, p. 22). Rawlings was hailed for the initiation of the Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) which led to reduced inflation from 122.2% to 10% and a change in economic growth from -5% to 4.1% between 1983 and 1987 (IMF-DataMapper 2019). Rawlings further promised to return the country to constitutional rule. It is, however,

important to mention that Rawlings' tenure was characterised by the execution of alleged corrupt public officials, high unemployment, an abysmal exchange rate, media censorship, poor education and the 1981 to 1983 famine (Donkor 1997, Tan and Rockmore 2018).

Key sport strategy adopted by the Third Republic and Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC)

National Sport College, Winneba. Holding on to the mandate of the Ministry of Sports and state-controlled SMC Decree 54 of 1976 (LI 1088), Ghana won the 1982 African Cup of Nations held in Libya and also won Bronze in football at the 1992 Barcelona Summer Olympics. The success in 1982 was short-lived due to the emigration of players and trainers from Ghana as a result of the volatile economy under the PNDC. Consequently, a number of famous and iconic football players like Karim Abdul Razak (to USA, UAE and Egypt), Abedi Ayew Pele (to Qatar, Switzerland, Benin and France), Anthony 'Tony' Yeboah (to Germany) and Nii Odartey Lamptey (to Belgium) signed with foreign football teams (Darby 2016). In response and through the Sport SMC Decree 54 of 1976, the National Sport College, Winneba (NSCW) was created in 1984 under the Provisional National Defence Council regime to specifically train, equip and foster retention of sport coaches, administrators and the youth in Ghana.

Fourth Republic (1993 to date)

Following enormous pressure from both internal and external organisations, Rawlings set up a 258-member committee of constitutional experts to draft the 1992 Constitution. The draft constitution was overwhelmingly approved through a national referendum by 92% majority of the 3,680,973 Ghanaian who voted (Ayee 1993). In this light, multiparty party democracy was once again restored, and Rawlings became the fourth elected president of the Fourth Republic of Ghana by representing the National Democratic Congress (NDC) which he founded as a replacement for Provisional National Defence Council. Though Rawlings stood for the election as a civilian, the major opposition party (National Patriotic Party [NPP]) feared the awakening of military tendencies given that Rawlings' cabinet comprised some former military members of the Provisional National Defence Council. Nevertheless, the Fourth Republic marked the beginning of an era that emphasised a free press, good governance, health, human rights, sport and various development objectives. Since then, Ghana has experienced seven peaceful elections and political power has alternated between NDC and NPP. In recent times, Ghana has been increasingly receptive to globalisation demands and neoliberal reforms, nevertheless, it is important to point out that the approach to governance between NDC and NPP has been characterised by alternating waves of social democracy and liberalism.

Key sport strategies adopted by the Third Republic and PNDC

National Sport Policy (NSP) of 1994. In tune with the new civilian era characterised by multi-party democracy, active citizenry, freedom of expression and civil society participation in politics and policy discourse, the NSP of 1994 was formulated to provide clear guidelines and strategies for policy implementation in Ghana. The NSP became the first sport policy of Ghana and it was framed with an inclusive approach indicated by the inclusion of sections concerning women's sport and sport for persons with disabilities/para sport. The NSP of 1994, through the Ministry of Youth and Sports (Youth section added in 1994) spearheaded the creation of the Women's Sport Association of Ghana (WOSPAG) and Association of Sports for the Disabled (ASD). Furthermore, grassroots sport development and inter-ministerial collaboration (which included collaboration with Ministries responsible for local government, education and health) were also highlighted. Nevertheless, many described the NSP as a football policy which placed the 'Black Stars Image' (senior football national team) as the centrepiece of sport excellence and development in Ghana (Ocansey 2013). Activities of the Ghana Football Association dominated government business which, according to Ocansey, was due to the

overwhelming support given to the 'Black Stars' by politicians at the expense of other sport disciplines and associations.

Sports Act SMC Decree 54 of 1976 (LI 1988). In 2011, though qualified, Ghana was suspended by International Olympic Committee (IOC) ahead of the London 2012 for government interference in the operation of the Ghana Olympic Committee that undermined the principle of the autonomy of National Olympic Committees. The suspension by IOC caused a major policy-change in Ghana. There was an immediate reaction from both parliament and the executive to replace LI 1088 (which reduced the autonomy of NSFs including the GOC). Consequently, LI 1988 was agreed by the executive council of Ghana which resulted in NSFs becoming autonomous and the government limiting its involvement in their decision-making processes and management. In response, the IOC lifted the ban. The LI 1988 was, however, deemed a temporary measure at the time because there was a Sport Bill (now Sports Act, 2016) which had been on the floor of parliament since 2000.

Sports Act, 2016 (Act 934). The Sports Act, 2016 was passed to meet modern trends and global standards of sport development. The policy is meant to provide development through sport as well as promotion and management of amateur and professional sport. The Sports Act, 2016 was the result of extensive debate and advocacy from civil society groups including the NSFs, sport for development (SDP) organisations and individual experts. The NSFs believe that the enactment of the Sport Act 2016 will oblige the government to stay committed to their financial needs and holistic development of sport in Ghana. The SDP organisations, on the other hand, opined that the Sports Act, 2016 will legitimise their 'sport for all' activities and also recognise them as core actors of the SDGs which forms part of the MOYS policy agenda. Subsequently, the Sports Act, 2016 established and enforced the National Sport Authority (NSA, replacing the National Sports Council) as the corporate body with three broad objectives: (1) to promote, develop and organise mass participation, amateur and professional sports; (2) to encourage increased participation and improved performance in sport; and (3) to encourage the private sector to contribute to the funding, development and promotion of sport. To meet these objectives, the policy further enumerated 14 functions to include, but not be limited to, partnership and collaboration with stakeholders, promoting para sport as well as adopting policies regarding gender equity, equal opportunities and access to sport, child protection in sport and safe/drug-free sport. The sustained lobbying efforts and solidarity from various civil society organisations are indicative that the Sport Act, 2016 will take account of the different but interconnected roles that state and non-state sport organisations will bring to the development agenda of Ghana.

The Sports Act, 2016 (934) nonetheless, lacks depth with regards to detailed strategic plans and policy guidelines on how each of the three broad objectives of the NSA will be achieved in every region and district of Ghana. It therefore calls for a new and comprehensive national policy guideline. Furthermore, despite mirroring what Philippe Schmitter (1974, p. 103) referred to as 'societal corporatism' which is based on consensus and interest representation, the policy has deepened the imbalance of power relations among interest groups. Thus, confirming Cohen and Pavoncello's (1987) assertion that among interest groups there could be disparity in power relations because well-resourced interest groups will have more bargaining power (to access the state mechanisms) over relatively under-resourced groups. The Ghana Football Association in this regard has benefitted immensely at the expense of all the other interest groups at state and non-state levels.

Current structure of sport in Ghana

The Ministry of Youth and Sport (MOYS) has the responsibility to formulate youth and sport policies, monitor and evaluate policy implementation; achieve national integration and international recognition through sport; promote youth empowerment and self-development; and provide an enabling environment for sport development, organisation and promotion. MOYS oversees three distinct

state agencies, the National Sports Authority, National Sports College, Winneba and the National Youth Authority. The National Youth Authority does not have a direct link to sport development as it focuses on empowering youth civic engagements and partnering with the private sector and civil societies to provide employment opportunities for and invest in young people. The National Sports College, Winneba, on the other hand, is responsible for training coaches, sport managers and other people within sport. However, activities of the National Sports College have stalled due to recent developments where universities in Ghana are offering academic programmes in coaching and sport management while NSFs are also conducting training programme to suit their respective international sport federations. The National Sports Authority serves as the sport implementation and development arm of the MOYS. As already mentioned in the Sport Act, 2016 (934), the National Sports Authority is a ‘corporate body’ (adopting a corporatist approach) with a distinct sport governing structure with a mandate to oversee the development and encouragement of mass participation in sport. See Figure 1 for the organogram of sport in Ghana.

The National Sports Authority has regional and district structures with obligations to cascade the holistic development of sport and physical activities as well as to use sport to achieve various social outcomes in communities of Ghana. The National Sports Authority has Regional Sport Committees (RSCs) headed by a regional sport director in the current 16 regions (use to be 10 regions until 2019) of Ghana to ensure the implementation of the National Sports Authority’s goals in the 260 districts in Ghana. To do this, RSCs liaise with District Sport Units (DSUs), headed by district sport directors who have direct links to communities and civil societies. Additionally, the National Sports Authority also implements its goals through collaboration with relevant stakeholders such as the Ghana Education Service, the Ghana Olympic Committee, the National Paralympic Committee of Ghana, NSFs, Sport for Development organisations and tertiary schools in various communities of Ghana.

Organising sport programmes and activities across different levels

Various sport programmes such as school sport (basic and tertiary), elite sport leagues and community development through sport programmes have been organised by multiple sport organisations

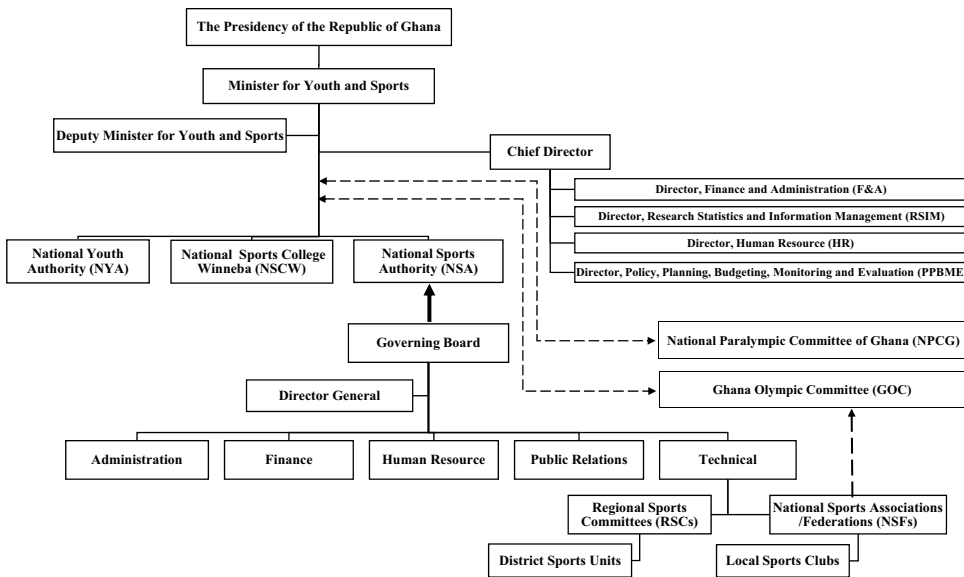


Figure 1. Organogram of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the National Sport Authority of Ghana. Source: Edited from the home page of both Moys and NSA.

without direct links to either MOYS or National Sports Authority. Organisation of sport, be it 'development of sport' or 'development through sport' in Ghana can be categorised under seven main organisations which comprise three state and four non-state organisations. Thus, while Ghana Education Services, National Council for Tertiary Education and National Sports Authority are state organisations, the Ghana Olympic Committee, National Paralympic Committee of Ghana, National Sport Federations and Sport for Development organisations (comprising NGOs that use sport for social and community development) are non-state organisations. Though these non-state organisations are somewhat autonomous, they are not mutually exclusive as their programmes tend to interdependent with each other while also complementing sporting activities of the state organisations.

Funding

The Ministry of Youth and Sport (MOYS) like all state ministries in Ghana follows the Programme-Based Budgeting pattern. This requires a stated goal, objectives and detailed programmes and activities for funds distribution. Since 2016 the MOYS policy goal for the funds allocation is:

To contribute to the attainment of national integration, sustained macro-economic stability, peace, healthy population and SDGs through youth development and empowerment, and promotion of sports.

Policy objectives through which funds were disbursed (in relation to sporting objectives) are to (1) enhance sports and recreational infrastructure; (2) build capacity for sports and recreational development; and (3) ensure sustainable funding sources for the growth and development of sports. Funds to MOYS (as headquarters) since 2016 have been allocated specifically to administration; human resource; and development and policy, planning, monitoring and evaluation. While these allocations address the needs of MOYS it is important to mention that the MOYS reserves a supplementary budget (referred to as 'other budget' in the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework [MTEF]) and through the National Sport Authority, funds are allocated to support activities of the NSFs, Ghana Olympic and Paralympic Committees. Though the supplementary budget is mentioned in the MTEF, full details of the budget allocation are unavailable. This lack of detail makes it difficult for policymakers to analyse and compare the funding trends and support given to NSFs, Olympic and Paralympic committees. Nevertheless, MOYS has consistently and specifically provided a relatively high level of support to the national football teams of the Ghana Football Association. This special support has been consistently noted in the major achievements of MOYS in each financial year. Most NSFs usually tagged 'lesser known sport' in Ghana, have expressed dissatisfaction over unfair treatment from MOYS since the financial support given to all other NSFs bears no comparison to the funding provided to the Ghana Football Association for international competitions.

Funds allocated for sport development are distributed between NSA and NSCW (see [Table 1](#)). Funds for the NSA are distributed to the Regional Sport Committees for district/grassroot-sport programmes and sport infrastructure development/management (see [Table 2](#)). This is basically to make sport accessible, available and to encourage mass participation through the regional and district programmes. As noted in [Table 2](#), funds retained at the headquarters of the NSA are partly used for elite sport programmes such as talent identification/development (in partnership with NSFs). However, the MTEF budget-sub programme objectives and results of the NSA tend to focus more on elite sport programmes than mass participation or sport for all programmes which are integral to the MOYS policy of achieving the SDGs. Beside the NSA allocations community and elite sport programmes, funding details for adult, youth, women and disability sport programmes are absent. Again, this makes it difficult for policymakers, researchers and academics alike to have a full grasp of the sport development models and systems in Ghana.

The NSCW receives the least funding as shown in [Table 1](#). The NSCW funds over the years have mainly been used for organising sport workshops/seminars/training programmes for staff, agencies

Table 1. Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) of MOYS in Ghana Cedis (GHC).

Year	Allocation	% Change	Gen. Admin. Headquarters	Youth Service NYA	Sport Development	
					NSA	NSCW
*2012	54,244,178	-	-	-	-	-
*2013	53,872,871	-0.68	-	-	-	-
*2014	36,134,116	-32.9	-	-	-	-
*2015	36,186,217	0.14	-	-	-	-
2016	22,560,058	-39.65	5,574,038	7,472,131	7,430,943	2,082,947
2017	46,910,275	107.9	15,604,765	12,995,130	14,033,543	4,276,836
2018	32,799,500	-43.02	11,930,809	7,533,929	11,058,414	2,276,348
**2019	43,795,180	33.4	19,174,409	8,444,417	13,311,580	2,864,640

*Budget allocation details unavailable. Also denotes financial years before the introduction of the Programme-Based Budgeting.

**Denotes unaudited budget/current budget allocation year.

Source: edited from the Ghana Ministry of Finance.

Table 2. National Sport Authority funding for regional/community and elite sport programmes, 2016 and 2017.

Regional Allocation	Year	
	2016	2017
Headquarters	6,728,646	9,314,471
*10 regions	702,297	4,719,072
Total	7,430,943	14,033,543

* Ghana had 10 regions until 2019.

Source: edited from the Ghana Ministry of Finance.

and some stakeholders of MOYS. The MTEF for 2019 also showed that the NSCW has specifically focused on football and tennis, accounting for a total 113 and 120 training and development programmes in 2017 and 2018, respectively.

As detailed above, the weight of responsibility for countrywide sport development and policy implementation lies with NSA and to extent NSCW. However, a careful analysis of [Table 1](#) shows a steady rise in the percentage of the total allocation to MOYS (Gen. Admin. Headquarters) from 24.7% in 2016 to 43.8% in 2019, while that of NSA and NSCW, respectively, dropped from 32.9% to 30.4% and from 9.2% to 6.5% of the total allocation from 2016 to 2019.

Politics of Ghana sport

As recounted in both colonial and post-colonial eras, sport has always been part of Ghanaian politics. It is almost impossible to decouple sport from government business in Ghana partly because of the heterogeneity of the population with over 100 languages and tribes as well as different religious sects. Given this background, sport is used as an instrument to reinforce national identity and deemphasise differences. Also, coupled with the prominence of sport on the international scene, global capital market and social media platforms in recent times, the sport consumer base in Ghana (like many African countries) has attracted all kinds of people beyond athletes and coaches ([Alegi 2010](#)). Ghana lacks the statistical data on sport participation; however, colonial heritage games like athletics (track and field), boxing, field hockey and football are very popular. Of these games mentioned, football dominates the public's attention. Football was initially used by the first president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah to legitimise his position with Ghanaians as well as to spread his agenda of African Unity and Pan Africanism ([Darby 2013](#)). One of Nkrumah's most significant actions was the creation of a national football club, named Real Republikans, which comprised the best players from across Ghana (a strategy designed to appeal to Ghanaians irrespective of tribe) to participate in the local football league and also represent Ghana in some international competitions.

He also initiated the drafting of the most talented football players from schools to create what came to be known as the 'Academicals' who were meant to feed into the various national football teams of Ghana.

Football's popularity has not only been used by Ghanaian politicians to improve their public ratings or to launch their political career but has also been co-opted into party political manifestos to either score political points or make campaign promises. It is not uncommon to see political parties/leaders taking credit for the achievements of the senior national football team in international competitions like the African Cup of Nations and FIFA World Cup competitions. The current MOYS funding trends are a typical example of why football is extolled and held in high esteem. For instance, in 2005, the then Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (now MOYS) played a role in securing a three-million-dollar sponsorship from Gold Fields Ghana Limited for the GFA to support the Black Star's preparations for the 2006 World Cup (Darby 2013). Furthermore, the previous National Democratic Congress government manifesto in 2016 enumerated how their support led the Black Stars (senior men's national football team of Ghana) to achieve second position in the 2015 African Cup of Nations held in Equatorial Guinea, the Black Satellites to placed third in the Orange African U-20 Cup of Nations Tournament held in Senegal and how all the female football national teams (Black Queens, Princesses and Maidens) qualified for major FIFA tournaments. Furthermore, while the National Democratic Congress made promises in their 2008 manifesto to establish more sport academies (mostly football academies) in Ghana, the New Patriotic Party, on the other hand, promised to improve and regulate activities of the academies also in their 2008 manifesto. It is not surprising that many researchers and academics alike have often adduced Ghana as one of the citadels of football academies in Africa when discussing various sport-related issues (Bale 2004, Darby and Solberg 2010, Esson 2013, van der Meij and Darby 2017).

Contemporary issues

Gender equality

To mark the beginning of the Fourth Republic, the 1992 Constitution of Ghana categorically repudiated all forms of gender disparity and discrimination by according 'guaranteed equal rights' to women in economy, education, politics and nation-building as a whole. Nevertheless, recent reports from the Ghana Statistical Services (2018) showed that women are under-represented in a wide range of professions. These findings corroborate findings from UNDP's (2018) Gender Inequality Index (GII) which ranks Ghana 131 out of 161 nations.

Against this backdrop, it is significant to mention that women's recognition and representation in sport has garnered less governmental attention and has been largely marginalised in comparison with the men whose participation has dominated the government, media and public's attention. From 1952 to date, Ghana has actively participated in the African Games, The Commonwealth Games, Olympic Games and Paralympic Games. However, recent competition shows that women representation improved at the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games (37 out of 70 athletes) but were underrepresented at Rio 2016 Summer Olympic Games (6 out of 13 athletes), 2016 Rio de Janeiro Paralympic Games (no representation of 3 athletes), and Rabat 2019 African Games (20 out of 96 athletes). Beside these differences, general success in terms of medals won shows a decreasing trend in relation to The Commonwealth Games, and the Olympic Games while increasing with the African Games (See Figure 2). There has not been any medal won in the Paralympic Games so far.

Thus, despite the emphasis on gender equality in the SDGs (key goal of the MOYS) the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (2016 to date) of the MOYS showed no specific allocation to activities and programmes that ensures equal participation and opportunities for women.

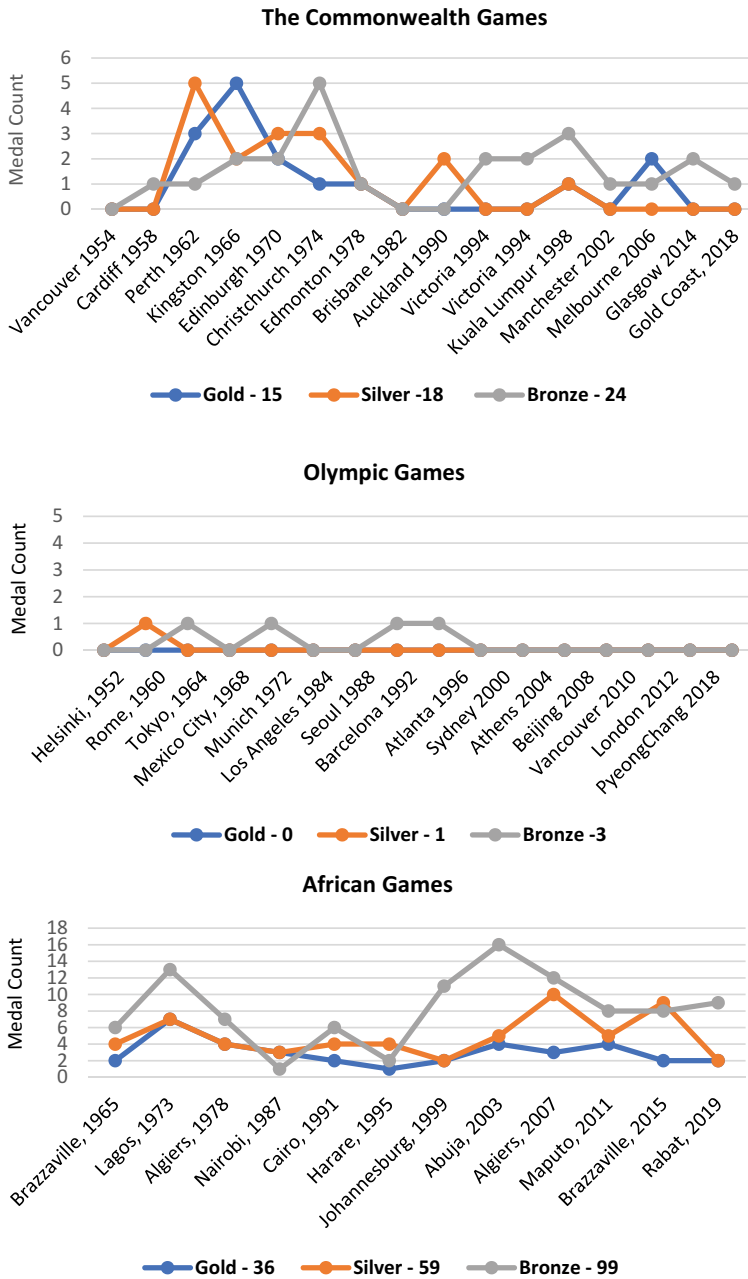


Figure 2. Performance at international sport competitions.

Para sport

The passage of Ghana’s Persons With Disability (PWD) Act 715 in 2006, the signing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN-CRPD) in 2007 and the ratification of the UN-CRPD in 2012 were important milestones in Ghana’s acknowledgement and legitimation of the rights of PWDs. It is worth mentioning that section 6 (article 38) of PWD Act 715, 2006 and section 30.5 of UN-CRPD made specific references to sport and the importance of enabling PWDs have equal access to sporting and recreational activities. Notwithstanding the strategic positioning

of sport, many advocates (led by the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations) have noted that Ghana's PWD Act 715, 2006 lacks significant provisions such as concrete policy guidelines for implementation and recognition of the rights of women, girls, and children with disabilities. Thus, falling short of the expectations of the UN-CRPD and not reflecting the real situation of PWDs in Ghana (Asante and Sasu 2015, Forber-Pratt 2015).

Also, despite creating the Association of Sports for the Disabled (ASD) in 1994 which laid the foundation for the establishment of the National Paralympic Committee of Ghana (NPCG) in 2003, activities of the ASD and para-sport, in general, have received far less attention and support than other major sport development organisations in Ghana. This resonates with Ocran's (2019) assertion that, notwithstanding the existence of several anti-discrimination laws (including the PWD Act 715, 2006) in Ghana, the social, economic and political rights of PWDs have not been fully protected. Similarly, although para-sport has a representation on the Governing Board of the National Sport Authority (see Figure 1), the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in cognisance of the MTEF (from 2016 to 2019), has not prioritised and adequately financed the development of para-sport. Ghana's participation in major para-sport events such as the African Games (in 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019), Commonwealth Games (in 2010, 2014 and 2018) and IPC's Paralympic Games (in 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016) has only been possible because of support from philanthropic individual and Ghanaian corporations. Part of the success of para sports in gaining funding has been due to the effective lobbying by para-athletes of domestic and especially international organisations. Support has been obtained not only from MOYS and the ASD but also from organisations like the Ghana Federation of Disability Organisations (GFD), Right To Play, Alive & Kicking and Danish Sports Organization for Disabled (DSOD, now Parasport Denmark) who have been keen advocates for para-sport, para-athlete rights and education against ableism in Ghana (Bourgeois 2011).

Migration

Migration through sport in post-colonial Ghana was potentially significant but was limited due to Kwame Nkrumah's socialist reforms and ambitions in the First Republic of Ghana. From 1960 to 1966 audit reports stated an amount of '£553,335 or N¢1,106,668' government subsidy spent on the activities of the Central Organisation of Sports (COS) meant to develop, retain and showcase the might of Ghana and Africa in the global political hemisphere (Ghana Office of the Auditor-General, 1967, p. v). Unfortunately, this period was brief given the subsequent frequent political upheavals following Nkrumah's overthrow. Since the 1980 s, Ghana has been cited in numerous studies of sport labour migration with particular attention given to football labour migration (Alegi 2010, Bale 2004, Darby 2010, Esson 2013, 2015). In more recent times there has been an increase in the emigration of Ghanaian track and field athletes mostly to USA and Canada. A combination of factors has accounted for the emigration of talented sport persons in Ghana. Generally, the rejection of socialism (ousting Nkrumah) and the promotion of neoliberalism (from the 1980 s with focus on individualism, liberating the deprived, the global market, a reduction in social welfare and internet and new media) in Ghana served as the backdrop that has stimulated emigration of Ghanaians (including sport labour). Esson (2013) also recounted that local football managers as well as undue family pressure (on young footballers to succeed financially due to the poor state of the Ghanaian economy) are factors that contribute to emigration. In 'track and field' the Ghana Athletic Association and some individuals have been instrumental in getting young Ghanaian athletes such as Ghanaian Youth Olympic 800 m Gold Medallist, Martha Bissah, to study in the USA.

Sport and sustainable development goals

Having acceded to the World Bank and IMF neoliberal reforms and returned to multi-party democracy and rule of law in 1992, the National Democratic Congress government (political party in power then) marshalled a long-term 25-year plan dubbed 'Vision 2020' in which Ghana

was expected to attain 'balance economy and middle-income country status' by 2020 with keen focus on socio-economic and human development, protecting the environment and supporting science and technology. Within this plan the role of sport in contributing to the Vision 2020 objectives was not emphasised instead strategies were outlined to improve sport infrastructure, training and participation in national and international events. The New Patriotic Party government won the 2000 elections and the 'Vision 2020' strategy was abrogated in order to align the country with the World Bank and IMF's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS) having opted to join Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. A notable prerequisite for receiving IMF (2019) concessional support (from the Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust [PRGT]) is for the country to function within the framework of UN's development goals (then MDGs and now SDGs). Since then, Ghana has gone through various reforms to meet UN development goals which include and recognise that 'sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development ...' (UNGA, 2015, p. 10).

Under section 13 of PNDC Law 327 of 1993, the Ministry of Youth and Sport (MOYS) is charged to undertake the development agenda in consultation and partnership with the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) which is also mandated by law to formulate, monitor and evaluate developmental policies in Ghana. In the wake of the UN's MDGs and the recent SDGs, sport in Ghana has moved beyond competition to become an integral part of development goals. The MDGs provided the basis for Ghana's medium-term national development plans (like the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Shared Growth Development Agenda) from 2000 to 2017. Following Ghana's involvement in both MDGs and SDGs, sport for development became a key policy area of focus under the 'Human Development, Productivity and Employment' section of the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda from 2010 to 2017 (NDPC 2010, p. 84–85, NDPC 2014, p. 125–126). Furthermore, sport was considered part of the key elements for 'Sectorial Issues in Social Development' of the 40-year Long-term National Development Plan of Ghana from 2018 to 2057 (NDPC 2017, p. 3).

Conclusion and future research

From an amorphous state, foregrounded in colonial periods and thence becoming part of public policy in postcolonial Ghana, sport development remains a puzzle to unpack. The ramifications of the political turmoil and fragile economy from the First to the Fourth Republics of Ghana have made the development of a stable sport strategy very difficult. In most cases and as recounted above the sport policies and strategies have been reactive, due to changes in government (with new political ideology) as well as yielding to external forces such as the World Bank, IMF and some international sport federations. Currently, Ghana may be enjoying multi-party democracy with relatively stable economy but it continues to grapple with defining the scope of sport policies and development. As the public interest in sport grows and sport becomes an integral part of the Ghanaian culture it is incumbent on the government not only to formulate consistent sport policies but also to consider the influence and interests of the network of stakeholders who operate within the policy area. This acknowledges the insight of Colebatch (2006, p. 1) and Rose (1987, p. 261–8) who assert that public policy is 'collectively made' and 'a product of joint interactions', respectively.

Finally, the commitment to the United Nations development goals (such as the then MDGs and now SDGs) since the year 2000 has given depth to and expanded the contributions of sports in the regions and districts of Ghana. Of importance is the growing concerns of both state and non-state organisations to use sport to address social issues in areas such as employment, education, health, disability, gender equality, poverty and tribal/ethnic conflicts. Besides the efforts of the Ministry of Youth and Sports and its agencies, notable non-state organisations such as Right To Play, Right To Dream, UNICEF and some NSFs have been active in this regards. Core to the SDGs implementation, as noted in the UN's '2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', is the contributions of relevant multi-

stakeholders such as state and non-state organisations. Nevertheless, research into the collective contributions of the different actors within the sport policy sub-system of Ghana and how they draw resources to problematise specific issues is lacking.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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