

**Sport, Culture and the Media**  
**at the *Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres de Dakar* (2010)**

*Introduction*

From 10-31 December 2010, Dakar, the capital of Senegal, hosted the *Troisième Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres* (commonly referred to as FESMAN), which took for its main theme the notion of an ‘African Renaissance’. The main architect of FESMAN was the octogenarian Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade who had, since his election in 2000, attempted to position himself both politically — through his membership of the steering group at the head of NEPAD, the New Programme for African Development—and culturally—through the organization of FESMAN and the construction of the controversial Monument of the African Renaissance<sup>1</sup> — as the central figure in the revival of a utopian pan-Africanism. For, FESMAN essentially sought to position itself as the contemporary expression of the pan-Africanism that had been prevalent in the era of decolonization from the 1950s to the 1970s. However, at the same time, it departed in significant ways from many of the ideas, values and forms that had marked previous pan-African cultural festivals, not least the ‘original’ *Premier Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres*, held in Dakar in 1966, of which President Léopold Sédar Senghor had been the chief architect. As the chief theorist of Negritude and a Sorbonne-educated intellectual, Senghor ensured that the festival would promote the values of an essentially defined ‘blackness’ and that it would do so through the celebration of high cultural expressions of this ‘blackness’. In place of Senghor’s firm belief in the superiority of an elite, high culture, FESMAN celebrated popular culture and extended its definition of arts and culture to include sport in

---

<sup>1</sup> For an informed discussion of Wade’s controversial monument, see De Jong and Foucher (2010).

various manifestations, amongst myriad other aspects of popular culture. The aim of this article is to trace the connections that were drawn by the media between sport and the wider artistic, cultural and identitarian agendas at work in the festival. At the same time, it will seek to uncover what this reveals to us about the evolution that has taken place in the understanding of culture and identity in the 44 years between the 1966 and the 2010 festivals. Was the inclusion of sport a sign of the democratization of culture or rather of the demagoguery of the latter years of Wade's reign?

This latter issue is one of the most difficult to assess in analysing FESMAN, for this pan-African festival, which had an explicitly global agenda, was also inextricably bound up in domestic political struggles in Senegal. It seems evident that Wade held the festival in late 2010 in part at least as a way of burnishing his credentials as a statesman of major international standing in the long run-up to the presidential elections due to be held in Spring 2012. At the time of the festival, Wade's legitimacy as a candidate was the subject of great contestation with a ruling from the constitutional court due a few months later.<sup>2</sup> The local press coverage of the festival was thus filtered through a domestic political prism, which saw Wade's critics bemoan, on a daily basis, the extravagance, waste and alleged corruption, involved in bankrolling such a major event when the state was in a state of ongoing financial destitution.<sup>3</sup> When the festival began, the opposition press took great pleasure in highlighting the organisational chaos that saw many events postponed or even cancelled at the last minute, and they increasingly questioned where the money had

---

<sup>2</sup> Shortly after coming to power in 2000, Wade altered the constitution and fixed a limit of two successive presidential mandates. It was thus generally understood that Wade would stand down in 2012 but, after the 2007 presidential election, his views on the matter began to shift and, in order to justify his decision to run for the presidency a third time, he claimed that his 2000 election victory should not be counted as it preceded the change to the constitution. The constitutional council eventually found in his favour in January 2012, leading to a wave of demonstrations across the country.

<sup>3</sup> It would appear, given current investigations in Senegal, that large amounts of FESMAN funding were siphoned off by corrupt officials, including Wade's daughter who is under investigation at the time of writing (May 2013), accused of stealing over half a million pounds from the FESMAN coffers.

gone. Wade was subsequently defeated in the second-round run off, against his former protégé Macky Sall, in the presidential elections of March-April 2012. In this political context, FESMAN and its legacy have been the subject of ever more bitter criticism in both the media and the political arena. While not ignoring the domestic political issues at stake in the festival, this article will attempt to shift the discussion to a more discursive level, gauging the manner in which the festival organizers sought to mobilize sport and culture as factors that might project a sense of pan-African unity both within Senegal and across the ‘black world’. The notion of a ‘black world’ may be largely a fiction but it is a fiction that still resonates with millions of people across the globe.

### *Performances of Pan-Africanism*

For President Wade, organizing FESMAN was both a process of looking to the future and of renewing with a highly idealistic, utopian pan-Africanist past. For FESMAN 2010 was not the first but rather the third *festival mondial des arts nègres*: previous editions of the festival had been held in Lagos in 1977 and the first in Dakar in 1966:<sup>4</sup> the 2010 festival was thus a ‘return’ both physically and spiritually to the perceived ‘home’ of pan-Africanism. The 1966 Dakar festival was a major international forum that showcased a wide array of arts and was attended by such celebrated luminaries as Duke Ellington, Josephine Baker, Aimé Césaire, André Malraux and Wole Soyinka. Described by its principal architect, Senegalese President Léopold Sédar Senghor, as ‘the elaboration of a new humanism which this time will include all of humanity on

---

<sup>4</sup> The title FESMAN appears to have been coined solely in relation to the 2010 festival; it certainly does not appear in any of the contemporary accounts of the 1966 festival. As for the Lagos event, it is commonly known as FESTAC, the Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture, the direct English translation of ‘les arts nègres’ (black arts) being seen no doubt as potentially offensive to both Muslim and Christian communities in Nigeria (a ‘festival of black arts’ conjuring up images of a gathering of Satanists and ‘witchdoctors’).

the whole of our planet earth' (cited in Flather, 1966: 57), the festival sought to emphasize the significance of culture and the arts in defining a global role for Africa in the aftermath of empire.

The 1966 festival was organized in the middle of a period extending from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s during which a wide range of organizations and events—cultural, sporting and political—informed by pan-Africanist ideals were created.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the 1966 and 1977 festivals mentioned above, a pan-African festival was held in Algiers in 1969, and a major black music festival was held in Kinshasa in 1974 to coincide with the (in)famous Foreman-Ali boxing match, 'The Rumble in the Jungle'. The Organization for African Unity (OAU, now transformed into the African Union) was created in the early 1960s. The footballing African Cup of Nations was launched in the late 1950s with just a few teams but gradually mushroomed into a biennial event featuring over 50 independent African nations. Pan-African film festivals were launched in Carthage (Tunisia) and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) in the late 1960s, with the latter event, FESPACO (a biennial fixture on the film festival landscape), going on to establish itself as one of the most significant cultural gatherings on the continent.

The example of FESPACO illustrates two of the fundamental features of these pan-African events/bodies: firstly, despite their pan-Africanist ideals, they are always as much national as international in their aims: FESPACO was organized by a Burkinabe government seeking to give this impoverished, landlocked nation (which at that time did not even have any filmmakers of its own) a prominent place on the

---

<sup>5</sup> Over the past two decades, there has been a growing interest in the phenomenon of colonial exhibitions (see Coombes, 1994; Lebovics, 1994; Morton, 2000) but there have as yet been very few sustained analyses of these pan-African festivals, which borrowed so heavily from their colonial predecessors in the way they imagined the staging and the subjects of their events. Andrew Apter's volume on FESTAC 1977 (Apter, 2005) is one of the few exceptions. See also the festival guidebook produced by the Algerian government recording the 1969 event (*Le Premier Festival Culturel Panafricain*, 1970). For an informed account of the recent theorization of festivals, see Gotham (2005).

international stage; secondly, these events were generally born with radical aims to ‘decolonize’ Africa culturally (although the nature of the emerging African culture was always contested). If the national dimension of pan-African cultural festivals remains, the politically radical edge has largely been lost in the more than 50 years since independence: for example, where FESPACO in its early years called for a radical cinema to overthrow Hollywood in particular and Western cultural hegemony more generally, its fortieth anniversary edition in 2009 had the much more prosaic theme of ‘African cinema, tourism and cultural heritage’. This decline in radicalism is of course not restricted to Africa, for cultural festivals across the world have gradually been incorporated into a global market that promotes various forms of cultural tourism. Such is the context within which FESMAN 2010 took place.

### *Sport at FESMAN 2010*

The ways in which FESMAN 2010 departed from the conceptions of culture that had marked earlier pan-African festivals, in particular the 1966 event, will be explored in detail below. This section, though, will focus on the decision taken by the FESMAN 2010 organizers to include a number of high-profile sporting events and exhibitions within the festival’s remit, despite the proclaimed focus on ‘les arts nègres’. We are by now familiar with the idea that many major sporting events will be accompanied by arts festivals (from the Cultural Olympiad to the arts festivals organized in conjunction with the European football championships<sup>6</sup>) even if the concepts underpinning such received practices are rarely expressed explicitly. However, FESMAN was, if not unique, then certainly quite unusual in its decision to invert this process and place sport at the heart of a cultural festival. Three sports-related

---

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the concept and practical organization of the Cultural Olympiad, see Stevenson (1997) and Garcia (2008).

activities occupied a central position within the three-week festival; one took the form of an exhibition but two of them involved actual competitive sporting events:

1) The day after the official launch of the festival, FESMAN had organized three football matches that were held at the national stadium, the pick of the bunch being a clash between the U-17 teams of Senegal and Brazil.<sup>7</sup> As with all of the events at FESMAN, there was no entry fee, which meant that upwards of 20,000 people were in attendance, far more than one might have imagined for such an eclectic event. After the second match, the crowd was treated to a parade of great black and African sportsmen, encompassing figures from north and sub-Saharan Africa, as well as from the diaspora: the athlete Tommie Smith, one of the two African-American athletes (the other was John Carlos) who gave the black power salute from the podium at the Olympic Games in 1968; Rachid Mekhloufi, a member of the nomadic FLN football team during the Algerian War of Independence; the outstanding Malian footballer, Salif Keita, one of the pioneers of post-independence African football success in Europe; and, last but not least, the Congolese basketball player, Dikembo Mutambo, a giant of the game (in every sense of the word) who blazed a trail in the US professional game in the 1970s.

2) The very next day, a poster exhibition entitled *L'Afrique et la planète football*, was launched in the lobby of the National Assembly, tracing the history of football (and sport, more generally) in Africa. For a variety of reasons—a fairly unimaginative word-and-image display; the imposing location (armed police guard the entrance to the building which is generally closed to the public)—the exhibition failed to attract

---

<sup>7</sup> The other two matches featured respectively a meeting between the 'junior' teams of Senegal and the Brazilian club side Sao Paulo, and a local cup final between two Senegalese club sides, Racing Club de Dakar who defeated Jaraaf.

the popular audience that had attended the national stadium the day before.<sup>8</sup> The narrative related by the posters delved back in time to discuss long-standing African sporting traditions, in particular, *lamb*, the form of wrestling that is without the most popular sport practised in Senegal. However, as we shall see below, *lamb* had no place within the festival (even though high-profile bouts were held in Dakar throughout December 2010, dwarfing attendance at many of the FESMAN events).

3) Finally, towards the end of the Festival, on 26 December, FESMAN had organized a fun run/road race with 5km and 15km options open to participants.<sup>9</sup> The start of the race was located on the *corniche* by the University, an obvious strategic choice, as this is the preferred destination for many of Dakar's recreational joggers and serious runners alike: in the gathering dusk from Monday to Friday, the University campus is swamped by runners on their way to the beachfront where, from Monday to Friday, the municipal authorities hold a daily mass fitness class. It is possible that the event attracted a large crowd but, unfortunately, I was unable to witness it myself, as I had left Dakar by that stage, and I have found no account of the race in newspaper accounts of the festival. In the circumstances, it is quite likely that it was quietly dropped from the schedule, as happened with so many of the events scheduled to take place during FESMAN 2010.

It is difficult to discern an overarching rationale for the inclusion of sport within the festival, for the FESMAN organizing team produced no single document outlining the

---

<sup>8</sup> On the weekday afternoon that I attended the exhibition, I was the only visitor present (outnumbered 10-1 by the burgundy-clad FESMAN guides who, they regretfully informed me, were at that time unable to show me round as they were still on their lunch break).

<sup>9</sup> The organization of cross-country races was a favourite policy of the French Communist Party in the post-WW2 period, the great Czech long-distance runner, Emile Zatopek a frequent winner of *Le Cross de l'Humanité*.

philosophy governing its conception of culture, and President Wade's speeches on the topic were a hotchpotch of ideas in which he seemed singularly unaware of the irony of invoking an African Renaissance almost 50 years after that same renaissance had been announced by one of his predecessors. In the absence of a guiding rationale explaining precisely why sport should feature alongside literature, music and the visual arts, how then did the Senegalese media cover the sporting dimension of the Festival? Were such events seen as part of FESMAN's overall cultural-ideological project or were they covered as separate and detachable: were they written about solely in the sporting pages or were they included in the main discussions of FESMAN which dominated the print media throughout the duration of the festival? Or if they did appear in the traditional, back-pages allocated for sport, did the coverage seek to transcend the sporting rubric? What connections, if any, were drawn between sport and the wider artistic, cultural and identitarian agendas at work in the festival? In order to begin to answer these questions, the article will focus primarily in the pages that follow on the football match and the parade of black sporting heroes, as these were the events that received the most sustained coverage, and they constituted the biggest single sporting showcase within the festival as a whole.

### *FESMAN, Sport and the Media*

Back in 1966, Senegal had just one daily newspaper, *Le Soleil de Dakar*, which clearly situated itself in the tradition of *la presse de qualité*. It was also quite unapologetically a government newspaper, seeking always to promote the official line on any given subject (a widespread phenomenon in the Francophone Africa of the 1960s where one-party states soon became the norm). This meant that its coverage of the 1966 festival was unfailingly positive, celebrating the role of Senegal as

temporary capital of the black world. However, the gradual opening up of the political scene in the mid-1970s was followed by a liberalization of the laws governing the print media in the early 1980s under President Abdou Diouf. Since that time, the media scene in Senegal has been both incredibly vibrant and determinedly confrontational. (For a general discussion of the opening up of the press in Africa in the 1980s-90s, see Perret, 2005.) Deregulation has been slower in the area of television and radio, where successive governments have been reluctant until quite recently to relinquish the dominance provided by its ownership of state TV and radio stations (for a history of television in Francophone Africa, see Diouf, 2009). But the print media has seen an explosion in the number of daily newspapers, almost all of which in the later years of Wade's rule sought to mark themselves out by their opposition to the government (a process that has continued under Wade's successor Macky Sall, after the shortest of periods of grace). The Senegalese government is still represented in the print media by *Le Soleil*, which in 2000 quietly transferred its allegiances from the Socialist party who had ruled Senegal for 40 years, to President Wade's free-market PDS party (and has now seamlessly positioned itself as the champion of Sall's regime). Many of the main daily newspapers in Senegal, such as *Wal Fadjri* and *Sud Quotidien* are owned by communications groups that also run radio stations and in rarer cases TV channels, as is the case with the *Futurs Médias* group, owned by the internationally renowned pop star, Youssou N'dour, which launched the TV channel, *Télévision Futurs Médias* (TFM), in late 2010.<sup>10</sup> Sport is featured heavily in all of these media forms and there are even some sports weeklies

---

<sup>10</sup> Alongside *Télévision Futurs Médias*, N'dour's group owns the popular daily newspaper, *L'Observateur*, commonly known as *L'Obs*. N'dour's media ownership became the subject of controversy when the singer, who entered politics in late 2011, was appointed to Macky Sall's government as Minister for Tourism and Culture: *L'Obs* criticized the actions of several government ministers leading N'dour to endure a series of caustic remarks leaked to the media by ministerial colleagues.

such as *Lion* and *Walfadjri Sports* for the true sports addict. The two major sports covered in the press are football and *lamb* (or Senegalese wrestling), the latter a hybrid mix of traditional sporting practices and the razzmatazz of US-style World Wrestling Entertainment: as will be argued below, the fact that wrestling did not feature as part of FESMAN 2010 (apart from the passing reference in the poster exhibition at the National Assembly) is significant for a variety of complex reasons.

As many scholars have noted, French newspapers have long cultivated sports writing in various forms, from the development of a specialist sporting press (most notably via the daily, *L'Equipe*, whose origins lie in the provision of in-depth, day-by-day coverage of the *Tour de France*) to the employment of literary figures to cover major sporting events, explicitly seeking to elevate such writing above the prosaic recording of results (again, the *Tour de France* is the classic example, with the writings of Antoine Blondin contributing to the myth of the *Tour* over several decades).<sup>11</sup> Despite having a less well-developed media industry, the press in postcolonial Senegal has inherited many of the characteristics of French sporting coverage, often couching its sports reports in the type of aestheticizing language that is so alien to much Anglophone sports journalism, factors that were evident in press reports on the sporting events held during FESMAN.

The highly oppositional nature of debate in the Senegalese print media was almost comically evident in the general coverage of FESMAN 2010. For the opposition press, the festival was, in essence, a last-ditch attempt by Wade to prove his importance as an international statesman in the run-up to the 2012 elections; it was chaotically organized and something of a financial black hole (its successes all coming despite the shortcomings of the organisers), while for *Le Soleil* it was a

---

<sup>11</sup> For an overview of the history of the relationship between sport and the press in France, see Attali, (2010), Combeau-Mari (2007), Marchand (1999), Seidler (1964).

brilliantly organized triumph. These dichotomous stances gave rise to wonderfully contrasting headlines: for instance, the day after the opening ceremony of the festival, *Le Soleil's* front page read 'Dakar, capitale de la culture négro-africaine' (11 December). Even the sceptical *L'Observateur*, which had been predicting catastrophe all week in the run up to the ceremony somewhat grudgingly proclaimed 'Entrée réussie' (11-12 December). However, the vitriolic *Le Populaire* refused to budge from its oppositional stance and produced the memorable headline 'Une belle fête dans l'indifférence des Sénégalais', (11 December) which was only outdone by *La Sentinelle's* brutally caustic 'Folklore à gogo au FESMAN' (11 December)

In this highly charged context, FESMAN was inevitably interpreted in the Senegalese press through the prism of domestic politics: a presidential election was less than 18 months away and Wade was quite clearly (in the view of the opposition media) using the festival to bolster his image as a leader still capable of playing a key role on the world stage, despite the fact that another term of office would see him leave the presidency well into his 90s.<sup>12</sup> Could the sporting events at FESMAN escape the clutches of this polarized situation or would they too be read as signs either of Wade's magnificence or his delusions of grandeur, depending on one's political point of view?

### *Le Soleil*

The government had clearly invested extra money in *Le Soleil* as, for the duration of the festival, it featured a colour supplement with articles in both French and English, sometimes on glossy paper. (Senegalese newspapers are mainly printed in traditional black and white and on very poor quality paper.) As a 'serious', 'quality' newspaper,

---

<sup>12</sup> Many commentators believe that Wade is even older than he admits to officially.

*Le Soleil* is not renowned for its sports writing, so it was not entirely surprising that its coverage of the parade of black sporting heroes was somewhat muted, featuring solely in the supplement. Curiously, the title of the article failed even to mention the parade—‘D’anciennes gloires du sport, hôtes de Me Wade’ (13 December 2010)—focusing instead on their visit to the presidential palace the following day where they were officially received by the President and given a copy of his book *Un destin pour l’Afrique*. Adopting the tone of a dutiful government press release, the article goes on to record the fairly banal words of the likes of Moroccan footballer Moustapha Hadji (a well-known figure in Africa due to his exploits in the 1998 World Cup) and the Congolese basketball great, Dikambo Mutombo on their desire to see the youth of Africa work hard and become successful sportsmen like them. However, the article gives no clue as to why FESMAN might have wanted to celebrate them and their achievements in the first place. Even when an athlete’s symbolic capital is all too evident, as with the great US sprinter Tommie Smith, the journalist manages solely to record the bare facts of his courage alongside John Carlos at the Mexico Olympics: ‘Il est surtout resté célèbre pour avoir protesté avec son compatriote John Carlos contre les discriminations dont étaient victimes les Noirs aux États-Unis’.<sup>13</sup> It is only in the final short paragraph that the ceremony held in the stadium the previous day is even mentioned and then solely to say that they received a ‘trophy’ as part of the festival. But why exactly did they receive a trophy? Was it solely because, as the article states: ‘Tous ces sportifs ont chacun écrit une des plus belles pages dans leur discipline’? Of course, these sportsmen (but no women<sup>14</sup>) had achieved different levels of ‘greatness’

---

<sup>13</sup> It seems unlikely that the journalist designated to cover the event was a regular sports writer, for he later claims that Smith’s sub-20-minute 200m world record was not broken until May 2010 by Tyson Gay, seemingly oblivious to the exploits of the likes of Michael Johnson and Usain Bolt.

<sup>14</sup> No women were included in the actual parade but the likes of Marie-José Percec, the former Olympic sprint champion from the French Caribbean, did make a virtual appearance on the posters paraded

in their respective sports but they had also clearly been chosen, in certain instances at least, because of the pioneering role they had played as ‘black’ sportsmen: Tommie Smith was indeed a great athlete but he has gone down in history due to his courage in using the Olympics as a platform to make a stand against racial discrimination in the United States (which led to both he and Carlos being banned from international athletics).

By contrast, the article covering the football matches had the merit of attempting to set out from the start the relationship between the game and the festival: ‘The festival on Saturday witnessed the entry of sports as a medium to foster brotherhood and interaction between peoples from the South American continent and their peers from Africa’ (13 December 2010).<sup>15</sup> The main section of the article records the main events of the U-17 match, which was won 2-0 by the Senegalese, in a straight piece of sports reportage which would not have been out of place in the sporting section of the newspaper, before returning in the concluding paragraph to the contest’s symbolic value:

[T]his match will be recalled in this Third World Festival of Negro Arts and Culture as a moment of pure and clean football as well as a historical day for [its] friendly and fair-play display of brotherhood and cultural diversity. It was a moment of emotion especially when the Senegalese and Brazilian U-17 boys exchanged jerseys as a sign of fraternity.

---

around the stadium. The participation of women in sport receives little coverage in the Senegalese media, although discussion of this issue extends beyond the scope of the present article.

<sup>15</sup> Some press quotes are provided in English as certain reports from the bilingual FESMAN supplement in *Le Soleil* were, somewhat confusingly, published solely in either French or English: that is, the French section was not simply a translation of the English section and vice versa.

Once again, the symbolic significance of the moment is taken for granted, and what might otherwise be perceived as a fairly standard gesture on the football field—swapping jerseys—is imbued, rather tenuously, with a profound pan-Africanist sentiment. The rumour circulating in Dakar before the festival was that Wade had originally wanted to bring the Brazilian senior team to FESMAN for a match with the Senegalese national team: unfortunately, the last-minute nature of the festival preparations (confirmation that the festival would go ahead after several previous postponements only emerged late in the summer of 2010) made this impossible, for even a man as wilful as President Wade was unable to alter the FIFA international calendar at such short notice.

### *Opposition Press*

The uncertainty regarding the status of the football matches within a cultural festival was shared in the opposition press. *L'Obs* reported on the Senegal-Brazil match in its sports section and gave no indication anywhere in the piece that the event had taken place within the framework of FESMAN. The ceremony celebrating ‘les gloires du sport africain et de la diaspora’ was featured in an article in the paper’s daily FESMAN round-up (13 December 2010), which was mostly a list of things that had gone wrong over the opening weekend.

Despite the newspaper’s general animosity towards FESMAN, which had been gathering pace over the preceding weeks, the evidence of its coverage suggests that the focus of its ire was the incompetence and likely corruption of those organizing it, whereas the soundness of the basic principles behind the decision to hold a festival celebrating the black world were not questioned. Thus, the events at the

national stadium were deemed a complete success both in practical/organizational and in broadly ideological terms:

Le sport a admirablement joué sa partition pour la 3e édition du FESMAN le weekend dernier. [...] Une partie de l'histoire du sport africain et de la diaspora a ainsi été revisitée, avec la présence de plusieurs grands noms qui ont porté le Noir au panthéon du sport mondial. (13 December 2010)

Far more than in the official state newspaper, *L'Obs* points towards the role that these sporting heroes are being asked to play within the festival: 'Tour à tour, ces grands noms qui ont marqué l'histoire du sport ont défilé sur le podium érigé sur la pelouse du mythique stade qui porte le nom de Léopold Sédar Senghor, chantre de la Négritude. Tout un symbole!' Sport is here somewhat tangentially linked to culture in the form of Senghor's Négritude (although the national stadium bears Senghor's name, he was no great fan of football), as a way of marking the entrance of black people on to the world stage: essentially, FESMAN 2010 is presented as a direct continuation of the project that had begun with the 1966 festival.

Other newspapers, including *Sud Quotidien*, *Le Populaire*, and *L'As* also included accounts of the football match within their sports sections, often with only passing reference to their role within FESMAN and with no discussion of the reasons why such events had been included within the festival. The awards ceremony for the sporting heroes was also covered in the sports pages with its symbolic value unquestioningly accepted, although *L'As* (13 December 2010), did manage to identify a 'flagrant' omission in the decision not to include the Senegalese boxer, Battling Siki, Africa's first boxing world champion, in the roll call of those honoured. In so

doing, FESMAN ‘fait bien l’affaire des “révisionnistes” occidentaux qui ont toujours voulu mettre un voile sur les performances de Battling”’: the journalist claims that the festival was in effect attempting to shy away from radical images of blackness but in order to support his rather tendentious claims omits to comment on Tommie Smith’s presence as anything other than that of a former athlete. *Sud Quotidien* (17 December 2010) went further than most of the press, including interviews with the likes of Motumbo and Mekhloufi, attempting to flesh out their different pioneering roles. In the interview with Mutombo in particular, the journalist repeatedly returned to the question of how the ‘message et les idéaux du FESMAN’ related to the world of the NBA (professional basketball in the US). For the former basketball player, the festival would create a dialogue between the black diaspora of the NBA and young basketball players in Africa: the former would be role models for the latter and would permit more and more Africans to lead successful sporting careers in the US: the message to young Africans that ‘le futur sera mieux que celui [*sic*] d’aujourd’hui’ rather paradoxically celebrating a pan-African unity based on flight from the African homeland.

It is thus evident that both the government and the opposition press almost unquestioningly followed the FESMAN organizers in perceiving sport, and particularly football, as an easy shorthand to evoke both national and pan-African pride. In fact, *L’Obs*, in many respects deeply opposed to FESMAN, provided the pithiest expression of the festival’s mixing of sport and culture in its headline on the morning of the football matches—‘Il y aura de l’art et du football [au stade] Léopold Sédar Senghor’ (11-12 December 2010)—, the article’s mix of references to ‘l’art’, ‘le jeu’ and ‘le spectacle’ displaying many of the distinctive characteristics of a certain style of French journalistic writing about sport with its use of aesthetic criteria.

However, at the same time, the coverage indicated the difficulty of providing a coherent intellectual account of the sentiments aroused by such sporting events, and in particular, of the manner in which they related to the artistic/cultural manifestations that dominated the festival. The notion that contemporary globalized and increasingly commercialized sport might represent the same sense of black solidarity that surrounded, for example, Smith and his compatriot John Carlos's 1968 black power salute was troubled by the absence of current black sporting superstars from the parade of sporting heroes. The likes of Samuel Eto'o and Usain Bolt (present as images on banners carried during the parade) are in effect global sports brands who are at once both familiar yet remote from most Africans. Equally, the absence of wrestling, perhaps the most popular sport in Senegal, illustrates the difficulty faced by the organizers in finding cultural, artistic and sporting forms that genuinely spoke to all black constituencies. Football may have displayed the existence of a bond between Brazil and Africa but it is doubtful whether the matches had the same impact on African-American visitors, for whom football is likely to have been seen as a minority pursuit. Sport brought out the crowds at FESMAN but it could not be deployed unproblematically as an expression of a universally shared black culture that the festival was seeking to promote.

### *Art, Sport and Culture*

This final section will tease out further the relationship between art, sport and culture as they were played out at FESMAN 2010. It is patently obvious that the organizers in no way felt bound by the precise terms of the festival's official title which, of course, emphasizes the importance of 'les arts nègres'. Indeed, FESMAN 2010 seems more in line with the pragmatic English translation of the festival title, which emphasises

‘black arts and culture’. However, FESMAN’s focus on a very broadly defined conception of culture rather than on the arts per se is not primarily a question of translational pragmatics: rather, I would argue that it reflects the profound social, political and cultural changes that have taken place both in Africa and more widely since the 1960s. At the 1966 festival, Senghor was seeking to ‘perform’ an African renaissance for a continent emerging from what is perceived as the long darkness of oppression represented by slavery and colonialism (just as the European Renaissance emerged from the alleged obscurity of the Middle Ages): in Senghor’s terms, this involved defining an African classical age that could act as an inspiration for the future, and the high arts (literature, painting, sculpture, music) were seen as central to this process. In speeches made prior to the Festival, Senghor made remarkable comparisons between contemporary Senegal and ancient Greece:

Nous ne pouvons prétendre à être une grande nation au sens de la puissance matérielle. Nous n’avons l’étendue, la population, ni de la République du Nigéria [...] ni de l’Ethiopie, pas même du Maroc ou de l’Algérie. Nous ne pouvons prétendre à la puissance de Rome: à la quantité. Le peuple que je vous propose en exemple, c’est donc le peuple grec, le peuple hellène, comme il s’appellait lui-même. Il habitait un pays pauvre, fait de plaines étroites et de collines caillouteuses. Mais, comme le peuple sénégalais, il avait la mer en face de lui et des céréales sur ses plaines et de l’huile sur ses collines et du marbre dans son sol. Le peuple grec, en son temps, a préféré la qualité à la quantité. Il a tout sacrifié à l’amour de la liberté et de la vérité, au goût de la vie et de la beauté. Il a cultivé, avec amour, les lettres et les arts [...] les mathématiques et la philosophie. [...] C’est pourquoi, si longtemps que vivront des hommes sur

notre planète, ils parleront de la civilisation grecque comme d'un monde de lumière et de beauté: le monde de l'homme. (Speech to Senghor's UPS party congress in January 1966; cited in Rous, 1967: 76-77)

This is a typically utopian piece of Senghor prose, which deploys his Classical training in ancient civilization in the name of defining a shared sense of black culture and identity in an emerging postcolonial world. Of course, this rhetoric poses far more questions than it answers: How exactly might Senegal have become the new Greece? Was Senghor right to place such value on culture over the modern industrial and technological development of his homeland? Perhaps most importantly does the logic behind the 1966 not lead to a situation in which culture is posited as a form of compensation for the absence of material development? Despite the change in the precise nature of the rhetoric, similar questions might be asked of FESMAN 2010. Is a lavish cultural festival really the best way of investing scarce state resources and what exactly is the relationship between culture and development?

While the 1966 festival was marked by its explicitly selective approach to the arts, FESMAN 2010 showcased a highly eclectic mix of African arts with a strong emphasis on popular arts, especially pop music, as well as elements of African culture defined far more broadly (in addition to the sporting events, the festival included workshops on urbanism and architecture, arts and crafts). As was mentioned above, no one official festival document or speech spells out exactly what FESMAN 2010 understood by culture. Indeed, imbued with the spirit of President Wade, the Festival mastermind, the organizers seem to have prioritized 'making lots of stuff happen': for whatever criticisms one might have made of Wade during his twelve-year presidency, there was no denying that he was a perpetual whirlwind of activity. The festival was

packed full with a bewildering array of events, and, it should not be forgotten, absolutely everything was free to the public. During the ten days I spent at the festival, I attended: the football matches at the national stadium; an impressive exhibition of contemporary art at the Biscuiterie de la Médina (featuring works by the likes of renowned British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare); there was a rather low-key exhibition of ‘traditional’ art at the newly renovated Musée national (whereas the traditional art exhibition had been the centrepiece of the 1966 festival); I saw the Ethiopian National Ballet troupe at the Maison de la Culture Doua Seck and returned there the next day for Mandomix’s outstanding, high-tech interactive exhibition on black music. Every night, there was a free, open-air concert at the independence monument in Colobane, and huge crowds turned up to see the likes of Youssou N’dour, Salif Keïta and Diams. (These concerts were also broadcast live by the government-controlled television channel, RTS.) Time caught up with me and prevented me from attending any of the theatre, architecture or literature programmes. By any standards, this was a big and incredibly eclectic festival that sought to engage with a wide range of audiences. The inclusion of sport was instinctively seen as a way of evoking both national and pan-African feelings of pride in black achievement. Equally, including popular sporting events tallied with the (unstated) objective of prioritizing popular over ‘high’ forms of culture. However, as has been argued above, it proved difficult to identify sports that might unite the black world symbolically in the fashion desired by Wade and the organizing team.

The ‘high tech’, decentred and participatory qualities of FESMAN 2010 made it in certain respects an exemplary postmodern endeavour but it was also chaotic, with many events simply cancelled at the last minute. Equally, its potentially democratic tendencies might easily be read as populism and demagoguery: Wade opened the

festival to the urban masses in a way that Senghor did not but he did so with shamelessly transparent political goals in mind and, as was mentioned above, it seems likely that large amounts of FESMAN funding were misappropriated by corrupt officials. Wade's Senegal emerges from the festival as a hybrid mix of *dirigiste* state intervention sitting uneasily alongside a vaunted free-market spirit. One of the most revealing articulation of FESMAN 2010's ethos comes in an article entitled 'L'Afrique, la culture et le progrès', published shortly before the festival in the weekly, Paris-based, pan-African magazine, *Jeune Afrique*, in which the Senegalese columnist Cheikh Yérém Seck, a prominent defender of Wade, argues that:

Plus que tout autre, l'homme africain a besoin de création et de créativité. Après avoir été dominatrice pendant des siècles, sa culture a été rattrapée voire surpassée par les autres.

Le continent africain doit renouer avec l'inventivité, l'efficacité, le travail. Max Weber l'a démontré depuis 1904 dans *L'Ethique protestante et l'esprit du capitalisme*: aucun peuple qui ne croit en son génie créateur ne peut se développer. Les Chinois, qui sont en passe de dominer le monde, ont assimilé l'enseignement de Confucius: "Seules la créativité dans l'art et l'ardeur dans le travail élèvent l'homme". Les Africains gagneraient à s'inspirer de cette culture de progrès. (Seck, 2010: 71)

In this vision, art and the spirit of entrepreneurialism go hand-in-hand. Far from the top-down vision of state-sponsored high art as promoted by Senghor we are here asked to admire a more generalized sense of culture as a spirit of creativity that informs all areas of life, including sport.

At FESMAN 2010, the ability of sport to transcend difference (social, economic, political, cultural, linguistic) and to mobilize feelings of national and pan-African pride were clearly in evidence. In the 44 years since the 1966 Dakar festival, there may have been a decline in the elitism that defined sports in Africa purely as popular leisure pursuits but, in that same period, sport (football, in particular), has been commercialized to a degree that makes its role within FESMAN 2010, cited as a general source of black cultural pride, highly problematic. The parade of black sporting heroes sought to invest sport with cultural and political meaning but even this was largely taken for granted rather than given articulated in a clear fashion that might be embraced by the recalcitrant public. Essentially, sport was viewed by FESMAN as a way of reaching the masses but not with any clear sense of what it wanted to tell them.

#### *Acknowledgements*

This work was funded by a grant from the British Academy.

## References

- Apter A (2005) *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Attali M (ed.) (2010) *Sports et médias du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle à nos jours*. Biarritz: Atlantica.
- Combeau-Mari E (ed.) (2007) *Sport et presse en France: XIX<sup>e</sup> et XX<sup>e</sup> siècles*. Paris: Le Publieur.
- Coombes AE 1994. *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- de Jong F and V Foucher (2010) La Tragédie du Roi Abdoulaye? Néomodernisme et renaissance africaine dans le Sénégal contemporain. *Politique africaine* 118: 187-204.
- Dioh T (2009) *Histoire de la télévision en Afrique noire francophone, des origines à nos jours*. Paris: Karthala.
- Flather N (1966) Impressions of the Dakar Festival. *Africa Report* May: 57-60.
- Garcia B (2008) One hundred years of cultural programming within the Olympic Games (1912–2012): origins, evolution and projections. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 14.4: 361-76.
- Gotham KF (2005) Theorizing urban spectacles: Festivals, tourism and the transformation of urban space. *City*, 9.2: 225-46
- Lebovics H (1994) *True France: The Wars Over Cultural Identity, 1900-1945*. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Le Premier Festival Culturel Panafricain* (1970) Algiers: Ministère de l'information et de la culture.
- Marchand J (1999) *Les Défricheurs de la presse sportive*. Biarritz: Atlantica.

Morton PA (2000) *Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris*. Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press.

Perret T (2005) *Le Temps des journalistes: l'invention de la presse en Afrique francophone*. Paris: Karthala

Rous J (1967) *Léopold Sédar Senghor: la vie d'un président de l'Afrique nouvelle*. Paris: J. Didier.

Seck CY (2010) L'Afrique, la culture et le progrès. *Jeune Afrique* 7-14 October: 72.

Stevenson D (1997) Olympic Arts: Sydney 2000 and the Cultural Olympiad. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. 32.3: 227-238.

*Newspapers consulted*

*L'As, Le Soleil, L'Observateur, Le Populaire, La Sentinelle, Sud Quotidien, Walfadjri.*