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Football Betting in Nigeria

A social phenomenon is strongly crystallising in Nigeria. Football is a strong socio-economic sport in the country. This is particularly so in comparison with European football clubs. The number of fans of these clubs is enormous, as a result of which the economy is strongly evolving and due for scientific investigations. Every time a match of major football leagues across the world takes place, fans – apart from watching the football batches – make bets on the results, hoping to get economic rewards, as well as the psycho-social experiences. Football betting is today a major form of business in Nigeria. It is a growing industry, as betting shops are opening, thus becoming an important part of social phenomena, regardless of the national underdevelopment. This article therefore attempts to understand how football betting phenomenally shapes social relations in Nigeria. The research questions are: what is the origin of football betting in the context of study? Why do people engage in football betting? And how is football betting organized, processed, and structured? The study that this article was based on was empirical within the theoretical orientation of social exchange and Marxism. The study utilized purposive and accidental sampling techniques. Three hundred copies of a questionnaire were administered. Qualitative approach was also adopted through eight in-depth interviews (IDIs) and eight key informant interviews (KIIs). Data analysis was done through statistical software and content analysis. Important findings were made and presented in the article.

Key words: football betting, football economy, Ibadan, Nigeria, Africa

Introduction and Background

Sport is essential to humans. The complexity, nature, purpose, and essence of sport has, however, always varied over time and across societies. According to

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Omobowale (2009), for instance, sports are usually aimed at entertainment and leisure, but their meaning varies among different cultures. Similarly, for Tade (2014), sports serve both social and therapeutic purposes across social contexts, including male and female relations in the context of home. This shows that sports, like for instance football, have diverse appeals and are multi-contextual in purposes and manifestations (see Armstrong, Giulianotti 2004). In general national and global terms, it is impossible for humans to develop without sports and human relations may become more challenging without sports. Sports have the capacity to contribute to development if well-practiced and understood. Human growth, progress and development are at the core of social relations and societal existences, and sports play a part here. Bearing that in mind, it is important to engage the implications of sport through its manifestations and implications for human development especially in developing societies.

Sport is increasingly becoming boundless to the extent that it impacts technological, physical, social, economic, psychological and conflict spaces of humans in Africa and globally (Armstrong, Giulianotti 2004). Sports today are largely capitalistic and football is the predominant fang/organ. There is a large scale subliminal aggressive infusion of capital accumulation into football, particularly in football betting, which is the case in broadcasting and related interests. As football makes incursion into homes and societies, including very remote ones in Africa and Asia, it propagates capitalism in some ways. And many unconsciously embrace capitalism, and its ancillaries, through football. As people are entertained through football, they gradually become involved in capitalist profit motivated practices like betting, and so furthering western enrichment and southern impoverishment (see Vidacs 2006; Nauright 2004; Washington, Karen 2001).

Sports gambling and football betting are largely expressive economic and social activities in the western history, but having global trans-border reverberation such as capitalism causes the increase of gains in new territories and the consolidation of the existing ones through unfamiliar means like football. Football betting, in most societies where it is practised, is fast becoming a popular space for resources exchange within the capitalist remit. This is so since fans take their “fandom” further through expressive economy for gains and loss in the context of Marxian survival of the fittest in the capitalists’ moderated settings. Football betting takes usually the form of games’ results predictions made by fans. Fans that predict correctly are rewarded and those whose predictions were wrong lose and are financially punished. This is fast becoming the order in Nigeria, as fans that are “fans enough” go a step further to “stake” on the higher level of fandom and expertise in the football understanding. What most fans do not know or do not care to know is the capitalist base of the football betting wrapped with recreational norms and values.

Majority of football fans in Nigeria are fans of foreign European football leagues. Football betting in Nigeria is consequently organized around major European leagues. These major European Leagues are mostly, in order of popular-

ity among the Nigerian fans: English Premiership, Spanish La Liga, Italian Serie A and German Bundesliga. English Premier Clubs gain the greatest number of fans, Spanish La Liga is in the second place, and the Italian Serie A in the third. The most widely supported clubs, in order of the number of fans, are: Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal, Barcelona, Real Madrid and Liverpool (see Tade 2014; Ifeduba 2011; Omobowale 2009). It must, however, be noted that the “wide fan base” of the clubs is not rigid in Nigeria, but fluid, depending on the overall performance of the clubs over time. The local league in Nigeria gains in general a low number of fans. As football becomes popular and generates huge interests in Nigeria, capitalists have developed huge economic interests and built businesses around it. These businesses are thriving – for instance in football betting. The strength of these businesses lies in the football fandom that is still on the increase especially as concerns European Leagues and Champions League (see Tade 2014; Sport Accord 2011; SiweiXu 2011; Omobowale 2009). The popularity of the European football is connected with the introduction of DSTV, Eurosport, and other sports channels on the platform of cable and satellite technology in Nigeria in the 1990s (Ifeduba 2011; UEFA Guiding Principles 2009) and this marked the beginning of a speedy decline in the fan base of local clubs (see Omobowale 2009).

Before the introduction of DSTV, Eurosport, and other satellite televisions, local football clubs like Stationeries Stores, IICC Shooting Stars, Rangers International and E1 Kanemi Warriors, among others, controlled a huge fan base. In contemporary terms, however, the fan base of the local clubs is nearly non-existent, as European clubs mop up the fan base, and football bettings thrive in this field. The major research questions this article examined are: what is the origin of football betting in the context of study? Why do people engage in football betting? And how is football betting organized, processed, and structured in the context of study?

Literature Review on Football Betting

In literature, football betting and soccer betting are used interchangeably. Football betting, as used in this article, means staking economic and non-economic resources on the results of football matches. Football is the most used concept in Nigeria and we have decided to adopt this concept, since this is what the betters and others use in the context. Football betting is a common aspect of gambling in societies (see Moore, Ohtsuka 1997; Frey 1996). People gamble for different purposes. These include ego, recreation and relaxation, resource accumulation, therapeutic purposes, such as showing adherence to group norms to avoid sanction, or demonstrating addiction. Gambling is a big business globally to the extent that it is now taxable and regulated as a legitimate business (see Requirement of Online Sports Betting in Lagos 2015; National Sport Policy of Nigeria 2009). For instance, according to Statistica Portal (2015), even though it may be difficult to accurately estimate the total value of global sports betting, due to the inconsis-

tency in the regulatory and financing environments, responsible surveys estimate the value of sports betting industry at around 700 billion U.S. dollars and 1.000 billion U.S. dollars, while in fact the illegal betting only might be as high as 500 billion U.S. dollars³. Some bookmakers even believe that sports betting is now worth over one trillion U.S. dollars⁴.

It is worth noting that any figure on the process of betting is only an indicative of the official gambling. Most gambling activities are undocumented and operate on the informal levels among friends, colleagues, spouses, relatives, and even enemies, and can be as much as billions of U.S. dollars globally. Generally, online gambling is a fast growing business with an estimated annual growth rate of 12%, according to Global Betting and Gaming Consultants (2011), and this is driven by globalization and technology. Online betting and football betting particularly are best seen as an ancillary of westernization and globalization (Akanle 2011; Akanle, Olutayo 2010; McMillian, Laker 2009; Crawford 2003).

Football has become not only a recreational engagement, but also a social and economic activity with a strong appeal across classes, genders, races, sexuality and other social categorization, especially in Africa and beyond (Cooky 2009; Anderson 2005, 2007; Armstrong, Giulianotti 2004; Crawford 2003) with continuously huge potential for growth. While professional literature has shown that football is entertaining, the role of technology in the forceful imposing of the game at people can never be underestimated. Satellite and digitization of television is the major driving force that has made football available to the people even in the remotest parts of the world, thus making the fan base wider (Cooky 2009; Anderson 2007). Apart from spreading the reach of football betting, technology has also widened the competitive capitalist market space and platforms of football betting, to mention, for instance, online betting platforms, telephone betting, lotto-like betting platforms, and so on (Dowling et al. 2010; McMillan, Laker 2009; Derevensky, Gupta, Winters 2003; Derevensky, Gupta 2000; Lesieur, Klein 1999). Generally, against all the football betting platforms online and offline, the odds offered by bookmakers are based on probability assessments or forecasts of matches which attract a wide support of the fan base (Siwei Xu 2011). Regardless of the degree of the loyalty of fans, the denominator is the strong followership of football which has led to capitalistic business creations.

It is, however, important to note that football betting, as a form of economic exchanges, while serving positive capitalistic purposes (such as, for example, creation of employment and wealth) for the upper class, has negative outcomes on betters and societies. For instance, many commit suicide after losing their very high stakes; many ruin their marriages and important social capital. Tade (2014),

³ Statistics and facts on Sports Betting, <http://www.statista.com/topics/1740/sports-betting/> (access: 8.10.2015).

⁴ See Sports Betting Tops One Trillion US Dollars Says Bookmaker to the Billionaires, <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/sports-betting-tops-one-trillion-us-dollars-says-bookmaker-to-the-billionaires-273768381.html> (access: 8.10.2015).

for instance, documented how spouses experience dramatic mood changes and engage in deviant behaviors due to football results. According to Tade (2014: 1):

The European Champions League and Premiership have become infectious to Nigerian Families. As a patriarchal society, husband fanship influences and alters social interactions before, during and after UEFA matches. (...) Husbands' identification with European clubs is redefining social relationships at the family level. (...) Loss of matches may lead to refusal to eat food, aggressive behaviour, conflict, lack of communication, while victory brings joy, gifts and better bonding and communication. Watching matches outside the home increases the opportunity of husbands to associate with deviant peers and, consequently, deviant behaviour.

The point above was also supported by Omobowale (2009) when he observed that sport is an aspect of culture where the attached meaning has implications for social relations. As people are exposed to sports as values, they pick behaviours that may be compatible and/or incompatible with local culture to the extent that they will affect social structures and social relations both positively and negatively. Psychologically, football betting results may lead to stress and anxiety whether fans win or lose. According to Shaffer (2003), stress from gambling often leads to depression, anxiety, impulsivity, and suicide, especially when debts reached extreme levels (see also Welte et al. 2008; Delfabbro, Lahn, Grabosky 2005; Derevensky, Gupta, Winters 2003; Delfabbro, Thrupp 2003; Derevensky, Gupta 2000; Volbergand 1999; Moore, Ohtsuka 1997; Shaffer, Hall, Vander 1999; Ladouceur, Pepin, Sylvain 1994; Ladouceur, Dube, Bujold 1994; Lesieur, Klein 1999; Zinberg, Shaffer 1999).

There have also been attempts at dividing the effects of gambling according to socio-demographics. This is because people's socio-demographic parameters influence how they react to issues and social realities, including football betting. Also, even though people of different socio-economic and demographic status appear within the context of football, these factors may affect exposures, practices and outcomes. Researches on adolescence and gambling are conclusive in their submissions. For instance, it was found out that between 60% and 80% of young people between the age of 13 and 17 gamble at least once a year, and around 3–5% of young people report behaviours indicative of pathological gambling with activities such as sports-betting (Delfabbro, Le Couteur 2010, 2011; Derevensky, Gupta 2000; Derevensky, Gupta, Winters 2003; LaBrie et al. 2003; Fisher 1992, 1999; Lesieur, Klein 1999; Shaffer, Hall, Vander 1999; Volbergand 1999; George Mason University 1998).

Gambling, especially among the youth, has negative consequences, such as: truancy, reduced educational performance, aggressive risk-taking behaviours, lying, poorer psychosocial adjustment, higher rates of irritation, frequent borrowing, alcohol consumption, illicit drug use and more serious criminal behaviours, such as stealing (Delfabbro, Winefield, Anderson 2009; Kessler et al. 2008; Abott, Clarke 2007; Bradley 2006; Shaffer et al. 2004; Shaffer et al. 2005; Gallagher 2005;

Kadison, DiGeronimo 2004; Gallagher 2004; Abott, Mckenna, Giles 2000; Del-fabbro 2000; Dickson, Derevensky, Gupta 1999; Fisher 1999; Burnett, Ong, Fuller 1999; Griffiths, Sutherland 1998; Bale 1993).

Theoretical Framework

This article is based on the Social Exchange Theory and Marx's view of capitalism. In the order provided by George Homans in his work *Social Behavior as Exchange*, exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, are more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two people or groups (Homans 1958, 1961). This view was also supported by later orders of Peter M. Blau and Richard M. Emerson (Blau 1964; Emerson 1976). Human exchanges are dyadic and have sociological and anthropological appeals as involving both small and large groups within kinship and larger society, as in the case of global and national football betters. Social Exchange Theory hinges on three basic propositions of success, stimulus, and deprivation-satiation. According to the success proposition, when individuals relating with others are rewarded for their actions, they tend to repeat the action. According to the stimulus proposition, the more often a given stimulus has resulted in a reward in the past, the more likely a person will respond to it. According to deprivation-satiation proposition, the more often in the recent past a person has received a particular reward, the less valuable any further unit of that reward becomes.

According to Social Exchange Theory: 1. Most gratification among humans comes from others, 2. People have access to information about social, economic, and psychological aspects of their interactions that allows them to consider alternative, more profitable situations relative to their present situation, 3. People are goal oriented in a freely competitive system, 4. Exchange operates within cultural norms, 5. Social credit is preferred over social indebtedness, 6. The more deprived the individual feels in terms of an act, the more value the person will assign to it, 7. People are rational and calculate the best possible means to compete in rewarding situations (see Homans 1958). The same is true about punishment avoidance situations. Namely, humans as rational actors will engage and continue to engage in rewarding actions, especially if they meet their social, cultural, psychological and economic goals. It is, however, important to note that within capitalist social models not all actors are benevolent in their exchange activities. Many are exploitative and will engage in actions and encourage others to engage in actions that bring small capitalist interest of surplus value. Within Homans' and Blau's social exchange, exchanges should be covered by reciprocity of further social and kinship interests. This is, however, not the case with the western value of actions, driven by globalization. Capitalists of nowadays (and the future) do not function within reciprocal dictates, but within exploitative dictates. People who are

involved in the exchange interactions in capitalist societies are rationally seeking to maximize their profits.

Football is supposedly a recreational action. It has, however, become an exchange and capitalistic action through betting. Through betting in football, exchanges occur as betting platforms where operators give better spaces to bet and betters satisfy their betting desires. It must, however, be noted that these exchanges are capitalistic. Platforms' owners seek profit. They get commission on betting and recycle gains. Even European leagues are business companies. They are worth billions of U.S. dollars. Football teams are multi-billion dollars business empires. As football matches are displayed, rights are sold and bought in manners of exchange and some people become richer, while others become poorer due to viewing and betting within capitalistic exploitative tendencies. Football fandom and football betting are therefore not mere recreational activities and reciprocal exchanges, as many in the social web and space might think of them, but huge capitalist, western, globalised, and commoditised exchange processes with extreme implications for social relations, national and international human development.

The Research Methodology

Methodology is a very important component of any scientific research due to its implications for processes, findings and conclusions. If a methodology is faulty, the research becomes worthless and findings become invalid. Therefore, this article adopted a relevant methodology. Exploratory research design was adopted. The primary data was collected in Ibadan Metropolis. Secondary data was also gathered through books, journals, CD ROMs, reliable internet sources and other scholarly sources. Ibadan is located in south west Nigeria, West Africa. Ibadan is located 128 km inland northeast of Lagos and 530 km southwest of Abuja, the federal capital of Nigeria. Ibadan has 11 Local Governments in the Metropolitan area, consisting of five urban local governments in the city and six semi-urban local governments. Ibadan is the second largest city in Africa, the most traditional, yet gradually modernising with incursions of modern artefacts (see Olu-tayo, Akanle 2009). There is a preponderance of football betting in Ibadan. This is due to strong presence of European League clubs' fan base. While many football betting companies already exist, many new ones keep appearing continuously, competing for the burgeoning business of football betting, just as the fan base is also increasing as new fans join the league day by day.

The population under research comprised owners and operators of betting centers and customers of football betting (betters). That group thus included all the actors in the football betting marketplace. Purposive and accidental sampling techniques were used to select respondents due to the nature of this study. Respondents (interviewees) were purposively selected at betting shops where betters usually converge to place bets. 300 copies of questionnaire were administered at

Agbowo, Sango, Ojoo and Orogun, which are the epicenters of football betting in Ibadan. 8 in-depth interviews (IDIs) were organized with football betters, while 8 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were organized with owners of football betting companies. These qualitative methods were triangulated with quantitative method to deepen the quality of data collected for the study (see also Omobowale et al. 2014; Akanle, Olutayo 2011; Bryman 2004). Quantitative data was analyzed with the use of statistical software, while qualitative data was analyzed with the use of content analysis and presented as ethnographic summaries. Best practices in ethical research were observed through informed consent, beneficence, confidentiality, and the right of withdrawal and participation. No subject was coerced to participate and no payment was made for data collection. The fieldwork for this article was done in 2014.

Data Presentation, Findings and Discussion

This section presents the analysis, finding and discussion of data gathered from the fieldwork. We interpret the results/findings on football betting in the metropolis as a useful case study to clarify the problems in the research context.

Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

For the quantitative data, respondents of <20 years constitute 13.7%, 21–30 years form the majority of betters (54.7%), 31–40 years of age are 16.7%, while 41 years and above constitute 15%. By implication, most football betters in the context are the youths around 20 and 30 years of age. 79% of the respondents are males and 21% were females. This implies that the majority of football betters are males and men engage more in sporting activities, including football betting than women in Nigeria. Most of the respondents are single (64%), married (29.7%) and divorced and separated are (2%) and (2%) respectively. This shows that never-married young people are the ones who most often engaged in football betting in our context of study. This is very sustainable as this group has fewer responsibilities and is in the period of youth. 50.8% of the respondents are Yoruba, 26.9% are Igbo, 15.8% are Hausa, and 6.4% belong to other ethnic groups. This is because Ibadan is in the south west Nigeria, an area mostly occupied by the Yoruba people. 43% are students, 14.7% are artisans such as tailors, carpenters and mechanics, 3% are in service sector, civil servants 13%, 24.3% are in business (informal sector) and 2.3% are indifferent. The distribution in quantitative data is largely consistent with that of qualitative data.

Origin of and why people engage in Football Betting in Ibadan, Nigeria

Majority of the respondents saw a connection between soccer betting and the prior existence of Lotto (lottery) which has probably prepared the minds of the residents of Ibadan metropolis for the more sophisticated soccer betting. Lotto was a prior immediate post-colonial gaming system in Nigeria. It was built on traditional gaming practiced that had already existed in pre-colonial Nigeria. Lotto was successful at immediate introduction, but later experienced dwindling fortune due to socioeconomic and demographic changes in the country. Football betting therefore did not suddenly appear in an unfamiliar area. There have been other forms of betting and gaming before football betting, though not as sophisticated. Unlike other previous types of betting, however, football betting assumed instant appeal driven by the popularity of the European League. The table below presents relevant distribution.

From the findings of the quantitative data from fieldwork, 39.0% of the respondents indicated that the form of betting that existed in Ibadan before the modern soccer betting were lotto, Polo 3.7%, visa lottery 2%, 10.3% believed that it was *Baba Ijebu*, Pool 15.3%, while 21.7% said others – throwing dice, playing card or “whot” betting, table tennis and snooker. However, 5% of the respondents were indifferent. This distribution largely demonstrated high level of knowledge among the people which is appropriate for data quality. From the data above, football betting did not emerge in Ibadan until about 2005. Although as much as 66.6% of the respondents indicated 2011–2014, this period was only the time of crystallization of the widespread popularity of European League in Nigeria. Generally, this finding is consistent as the popularity of European Football League dates back a decade (see Tade 2014; Omobowale 2009), although the popularity within the decade has been phenomenal.

The continuous growth of the fan base is such that “football viewing centres” are real business ideas in the country regardless of how remote the location may be. These “football viewing centres” show only European Football Leagues and charge fee per person/viewer in the amount of 1 U.S. dollar per match. This is a relatively high price in a poverty infested society where as much as 70% of people are poor and live on less than a dollar a day (see Akanle 2013). Entrance fees to “viewing centres” are, however, dynamic and can be much higher or lower, depending on the location, class of people/viewers, and availability of auxiliary services like air conditioning, fans, pepper soup, drinks, access to girls and neatness of centre. It is important to examine the observed popularity of football betting in Ibadan. Thus, we asked the respondents to indicate how prevalent the phenomenon of betting is. Interestingly, as many as 88.7% of the respondents maintain that football betting is very popular in the context especially because many young people engage in football betting. The major reasons many people engage in the betting are: 1. to make money through the prize, 2. to demonstrate their knowl-

edge/expertise of European football, 3. to alleviate poverty through possible gains, and 4. to show their commitment to their clubs.

To comprehensively describe the nuances of the issue, the examination through qualitative method covered such aspects as the origin of football, popularity and reasons for betting. A lot of consistencies were found in the gathered data. Majority of the respondents maintained the first major betting in Ibadan is Lotto and *Baba Ijebu*. According to an interviewee:

Lotto has been in existence and *Baba ijebu*. People prefer football betting because it's interesting since they watch matches and know more about football⁵. People participate in football betting because they have interest in football. It is legal business and it will also encourage them than other form of betting like *Baba Ijebu* or Lotto. Football betting is the prediction between matches and one must win. You can bet with 100 naira minimum (about half a dollar) and you can win N28000 (about USD \$ 150).

(IDI/Football Better/19 years old/2014)

According to another interviewee:

Football betting is actually a practice that started from the western world and people round the world that loves football usually engage in betting. Especially nowadays, people play betting now with passion and make it a business. Pool used to be in existence before football betting in Ibadan. Football betting came to Ibadan when the owners observed that football is becoming more socialized/popular among different people even in the villages and they also know that people have passion for this game. So it enters Ibadan through Lagos. It is basically because of the money involved and the situation of poverty in the country. So people want to better their life and make money from betting. Some people even go as far as selling their property just to play this bet. Why people participate more in football betting than other forms of betting is because people really know more about football especially the clubs they support. So they can predict easily, the result of football more than any other betting.

(IDI/Football better/32 years old/2014)

Another interviewee opined that:

What I know is that it (football betting) started online through internet and then, only few people who have access to internet were the people doing it then. The number one factor is the money factor, because everybody is always looking for more gain. Also based on personal satisfaction people derive from watching foot-

⁵ This is why it is commonly said that an average Nigerian is a football coach because many people watch the game at the advance level of European Leagues and always demonstrate their knowledge in forms of pre and post-match arguments at the "viewing centres", newspapers stands, offices, roads, schools and everywhere fans meet especially after major matches like *El Clasico*, eliminations stages of Champions League, Matches between; Arsenal and Man U, Chelsea V Man U, Man City V Arsenal, Arsenal V Chelsea and so on.

ball. Why football betting is preferred to other betting is because football is the most watched sports and if that's the case, people tend to stake their money on something that is very certain for them. Football betting is a kind of game in which if two teams are playing, you can choose one of them to win, draw or loose. They can play as many teams as they can in order to gather more returns. Lotto used to be before football betting.

(IDI/Football better/24 years old/2014)

Organization, Process and Structure of Football Betting

In this section, we examined the organisation, process and structure of football betting in the context. Findings show that football betters have knowledge of at least one avenue for football betting. These avenues referred to platforms available for football betters in Ibadan and a microcosm of Nigeria and football betting. Available platforms are: online betting, bet shops and mobile phones applications. Betters who have access to the internet freely use the internet to bet. For those with little or no access to the internet, they visit bet shops to place their stakes. The last platform, not in order of popularity, is mobile phone applications. These platforms answer the betters' need of access.

We found important processes involved in staking football bet. These processes involved five key steps. The steps are: 1. pre-determination of matches to stake on, 2. writing out codes, 3. online registration of stakes by an attendant (if in the bet shop especially), 4. making payment, 5. collection of bet slip or receipt. As regards wins, we found out that getting all predictions correctly and presenting bet slip are important preconditions for the declaration of a person as a winner and eligible to collect the expected amount of money. However, a significant difference was found among bet companies. Some football betting companies like 1960bet, Bet9Ja and Goldenbet refund the money with which a customer staked if the better gets all predictions correctly but one with an odd of not less than 1.20. These are a huge competition among football betting companies in Ibadan and Nigeria, as betting companies woo betters with better deals. Football betting is a competitive business in Nigeria, as competitive as banking and telecommunication industries.

Betting companies look for the weaknesses of competitors and attempt a competitive edge. This is more so in the case of new entrants. There are no less than a dozen football betting shops in Nigeria with potential for increase at the time when European football leagues remain very popular. The most popular betting companies in Nigeria are: Bet365NAIJA, 360bet, Surebet247, Nairabet, Bet9ja, 1960BET, Merrybet, Betrepublicana, Betcolony, Lovingbet. These are the established betting companies with the three most common platforms: online, shops, and mobile applications. There is a number of other companies with only online platform where betters can only bet virtually. This platform targets the elites and internet literate ones. These online betting sites include: www.9japredict.com,

www.mybet9ja.com, www.winnersgoldenbet.com, www.winnersbet.ng, www.betcolonyafrika.com, www.parknbet.net, www.stakersden.com, www.sportybet.com, www.sportsbet.com, www.kickoffbet.com, www.nairastake.com (see National Sports Policy of Nigeria 2009; Requirements of Online Sports Betting in Lagos 2015). The findings in this section were further examined quantitatively as presented in the table below.

Judging from our fieldwork data, most football betters place their bets in the bet shops (38.7%), as opposed to 26.3% of those who place their bets online, and 32.2% who place their bets combining the two platforms of online bet shops. The preponderance of placing bet in the shops is connected with negative digital division and Information Technology literacy level in Ibadan. Many people in Ibadan are traditional (illiterate/semi-illiterate by formal education) and have weak IT knowledge, so they prefer the shop bet. Even those who have the knowledge of IT still prefer to combine online and shop bet. Football betters get money to stake from a number of sources. These include: salary (35.3%), borrowing (2.7%), stealing (2.3%), playing on credit (9.7%), using “pocket money” (sustenance allowance, 41.7%). The preponderance of staking with “pocket money” is noteworthy. In Nigeria those who collect “pocket money” are the unemployed or youths. This is consistent with earlier findings that most football betters are youths.

This was followed by those who stake with their salaries. A number of betters also steal to engage in football betting. These findings are consistent with earlier findings in the professional literature that betters may be made to engage in criminal activities to satisfy their gambling/betting habits (see Delfabbro, Winefield, Anderson 2009; Abott, Clarke 2007; Bradley 2006; Shaffer et al. 2004, 2005, for example).

The findings above are also consistent with those from qualitative data as presented in the ethnographic summaries below. According to an interviewee:

How football bet is placed is that there is code for each match. You will get the code, observe and pay in our bet shop. You will be registered on internet and a receipt will be issued called code ticket. What you need to start this business are banner to direct people, laptop or desktop, printer, standard generator. You must predict, pay for your betting. Then all those team you predict must win or draw or loose as you set it in your code ticket. After then, you must bring the print out back to our office to claim your money. Failure to do that is nullification of your bet. So no money will be given. The only rule and regulation is to issue a printout ticket to our customers when they pay and once they are coming back, they must present the ticket in order to cross check whether what they bet on and win is actually correct for their payment to be processed. Challenges are system corruption, customers' impatience and network problem.

(KII/Football Betting Company Owner/45 years/2014)

Another interviewee from another football betting company observed similarly:

We will give them the match codes and they will fill it before we register it into the system for them. Then, we will issue them a printout. What we need are standard generator, office or a shop, connection of strong internet, then, we will print fixtures of betting codes. Computer system and people will play with minimum of 100 naira (half a USD \$). There are some points that must be attained to win, like placing bet on seven matches. When the person loose by one game, he will be given his money back but if he plays less than seven games and loose one, he won't be refunded. The person must come along with the printed ticket code. The ticket code will be typed on our own system. If it has been confirmed that he has won, then we will pay the person his money. The rules and regulations are such that if the money won on a ticket is over one million naira, the person won't have the opportunity for the second time. And anybody that places bet must come along with the ticket.
(KII/ Football Betting Company Attendant/28 years/2014)

Another bet shop operative opined that:

How to place bet. Once you know there are teams that want to play themselves like Manchester United vs. Sunderland, Chelsea vs. Arsenal, Liverpool vs. Everton and so on then you can predict who is going to win. Placing bet starts from 3 games or matches to 30 matches. So if you win, you will come with the ticket code given to you when you paid for placing and if the person didn't come with it, the owners of the shop automatically have the money. To start, organise and operate this business, you will pay for ticket, printer, computer or laptop, generator, and internet facility. For those that play we always tell them not to misplace their ticket code because it's part of the rules and regulation that you must present the ticket printed out before you can claim your money. In fact, let me tell you a secret, we, owners of football betting shop always pray that its either the people placing bet do not win or even if they win, they should lost their ticket because that is going to be our own major profit. Challenges to the business are lack of regular electricity which makes us spend a lot on fuel.

(KII /Football Betting Shop Owner/43 years old/2014)

Another interviewee maintained:

You must know about football very well to set up this kind of business. You must know different clubs and how they play. Football betting is being played by predicting teams, whether they win, draw, or lose and to do that, they must pay and receive a ticket that contains their code. The elements that must be in place; you must know about football, when they play, the clubs, you must know it in depth. I operate on naira bet, the headquarters is in Lagos. I am an agent in Ibadan, so what we do is we play it online, we make use of computer, internet facility and printer. Your code ticket must be kept. You must have bet before the match begins. So if you observe that you have won, what you will do is bring the ticket that contains the code to our office and your money will be given to you under 24 hours. There

are rules and regulations. One of them is that you have to come with your ticket because every team has an id number which you will use to play. The challenge in this business is that since it is a business that deals with many youths, you have to be very understanding. You must also have a standby generator.

(KII/ Football Betting Shop Owner/35 years/2014)

Given the above findings, European Football Leagues are phenomenal in Nigeria, and Ibadan is not an exception. It is in reaction to this phenomenon that business of football betting developed and is increasing substantially. Football betting is a major socioeconomic force and reality in Ibadan and Nigeria, and its ramifications are crystallising and may not decline soon. As long as European Leagues continue to thrive, football betting will continue to thrive and continue to affect human actions and behaviours in Ibadan within the prism of capitalism. While football betting is a social force, it is also an economic agenda strongly driven by capitalism which is belied by unequal exchange processes and exploitative capitalist relations within international and local political economy.

A lot of football betters engage in football betting almost on a daily basis especially when European Leagues are in season and this has implications for socio-economic and deviant behaviours as well as international development, especially between the football exporting north and the football products consuming south. Most of the football betters are yet-to-marry youths and they find football and the betting not only economically rewarding, but also socio-psychologically attractive. This is the case especially in countries with high level of unemployment and socio-political exclusions. Therefore, given the background of capitalist exchange systems, the capitalists created a social reality of football and its economy in exchange for economic resources from the betters, while the betters get “imaginary socioeconomic wins”, and the factual ecstatic feeling of satisfaction while watching the matches and while betting.

Whether these exchange processes are mutually benefiting, within the capitalistic African context, and the degree of the benefits, is, however, left to the key actors and an individual’s objective interpretation. In terms of practical manifestations, however, time will show. Though, there is a need for Social Scientists to continue watching the contours of these social relations. Generally, football betting is a source of profit-making for its operators/companies in Ibadan metropolis and globally. The more people bet, the more profits and surplus values accrue to football betting companies, and the reverse will be the case for the betters and the social systems, as characteristic of capitalist elements throughout ages. This determines at whom the operators target in marketing, the mode of organization, processes of betting and strategies of entry, as found in the introduction and operations of football betting in Ibadan. Football betting is a well-organized and syndicated business and social reality, and – judging from the analysis of our data above and the findings – it can be maintained; the ascendancy of football betting

and its implications will continue in the long run, unless the unexpected happens, as it is sometimes the case in human social environments.

Conclusion

In this article we have examined football betting as a social reality and a crucial social phenomenon in Ibadan, Nigeria. The ultimate objective of this article was to draw scholarly attention to the issue and to point to the emergence of a new form of social reality in the country and on the continent, through the economy of football. Major aspects of the social reality of football have been introduced in this article and they include: description of football betters; popularity of European football/the clubs; football betting; origins of football betting, its organization, associated exchange processes, perceived benefits, structure and processes. While the article was based on empirical study through primary and secondary data, it was also theoretically framed within the capitalist and social exchange meta-narratives. While football is commonly expected to be a recreational activity, at least for many people, it certainly is more than that in Ibadan, as “extra-recreational” relationships – economic, social and psychological – have developed around it. These “extra-recreational developments” appear to be giving even more significant meanings to football. As long as these “extra-recreational matters” remain appreciated and continue to sink into the consciousness, and propel behavioural patterns among the football fans, European football will continue to be popular in Nigeria and Ibadan, its fan base will continue to soar and its economy will continue to grow substantially, especially if the current ambivalent socio-economic, political and regulatory regimes and environments of the country persist.

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