Choosing to Run: A History of Athletics and Gender in Kenya c. 1940s – 1980s

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Short Abstract

Choosing to Run: A History of Athletics and Gender in Kenya, c. 1940s – 1980s explores the history of gender and athletics in Kenya, with focus on the Rift Valley Province, from the onset of late colonial rule in the 1940s through the professionalisation of the sport during the last decades of the twentieth century.

The first two empirical chapters provide a history of athletics during the colonial period. The first highlights the continuity of ideas about sport and masculinity that were developed in nineteenth century Britain and were subsequently perpetuated by the men in charge of colonial sport in Kenya. The next chapter considers how pre-colonial divisions of labour and power within Rift Valley communities informed local peoples' cultures of running. The absence of women's running was not only the result of sexism translated from the British metropole to its Kenyan colony but also of pre-existing divisions of responsibilities of indigenous Kenyan men and women into separate, gendered domains.

The second half of the thesis considers the impact of social change within women's athletics internationally and of marriage, childbirth and education locally on female runners in the Rift Valley during the post-colonial period. Most women abandoned athletics once they reached maturity. Those who sought to do otherwise, as the final chapter argues, found that they could only do so by replicating the prototype of masculine runners that had already been established. Later, after the professionalisation of running allowed women to become wealthy, female patrons took this a step further by providing resources to those in their community in need, setting themselves up as 'Big (Wo)men'. This thesis uses athletics to reveal how gender relations and gender norms have evolved and the benefits and challenges that the sport has brought both to individual Kenyan women and their communities.

Long Abstract

Choosing to Run: A History of Athletics and Gender in Kenya is an exploration of the history of gender and women's running in the Rift Valley of Kenya from the onset of late colonial rule in the 1940s until the professionalisation of running in the 1980s. Thus far, the literature on sport in Kenya has not engaged with issues of gender while Kenyanist scholarship on gender ignores sport. This dissertation aims to redress these omissions by considering both masculinity and femininity and how they have been shaped by, and in turn shaped, sport. Its central themes intersect with a number of broader issues that have concerned historians of Kenya, sport historians and scholars of gender in Africa.

During the first half of the twentieth century, Kenyan men benefitted disproportionately from a gamut of British imperial institutions, from waged work to land registration and new political positions. Sport was no exception. As western forms of running were introduced to the colony, African men were encouraged to compete; women were not.

Conceptions about sport and masculinity that had developed in nineteenth century Britain underscored the exclusion of women. Women were not welcomed in the increasingly organised world of British sport and at major international competitions like the Olympic Games. The imperatives of Victorian society, Muscular Christianity and imperialism celebrated manliness in sport that constrained the possibilities and expectations of women as athletes. Their limited participation had significant implications for the rest of the world that looked to Europe for the values upon which to model sport.

The nineteenth and early twentieth century 'games revolution' also offered a strong fit for imperialists in their search for moral authority in the colonies. To

encourage indigenous peoples to run, jump and throw according to western movement cultures was to justify the righteousness of colonial rule. In the imperial imagination, the principles of sport presented an opportunity to instil western ideals in colonised peoples.

The model upon which Kenyan athletics was based reached Kenya infused with strong codes of gender conventions and ethics. Religious leaders, military men and educators played an integral role in perpetuating this version of hegemonic masculinity. Early British colonial administrators also had little experience with women's involvement in physical games. The men responsible for administering and organising sport for the duration of the colonial period had been taught as students at elite public schools, where the masculine nature of organised games was assumed. They shaped the culture of Kenyan athletics according to these codes of behaviour, and according to a strict gender regime that was expressed at the highest levels of international sport.

Under their governance, an exclusive male culture around athletics consolidated in the Rift Valley. In Kenya, athletics was first institutionalised in the 1920s under policies that re-created the system of social exclusion that characterised British athletics, though it became race rather than class that stratified male runners in the colonies. Subsequent decision-makers closely adhered to this model throughout most of the colonial period. There was a high degree of continuity among the men responsible for Kenyan athletics, which perpetuated the status quo. The possibility of participation by Kenyan women at any significant level of athletics was not considered until the eve of independence in the decade of the 1960s.

Although it has been overlooked, the pre-colonial history of Kenya is also significant in its own right in this regard, and provides an essential context to any

explanation of what followed in terms of the history of athletics during both the colonial and post-independence periods. Indigenous Kenyan bodies were not a *tabula rasa* for white occupiers to 'civilise' – even though that is what some thought, through the introduction of sport, was taking place. Over many centuries, Kenyan societies had created social norms and cultural traditions, which could both conflict or coalesce with British ideals and ideologies. British policies outlawing historical gender norms and social institutions such as clitorodectomy and cattle raiding caused immediate and wide-scale resistance among Kenyans. Conversely, athletics as a singularly masculine domain enjoyed longstanding mutual support from a large cross-section of the population throughout the colonial period.

This was the case, as this thesis argues, because prior to colonialism, occupations in Rift Valley pastoralist societies were created through a variety of practices to conform to gender attributes. The construction of masculine and feminine identities was distinct and socially embedded, even to the extent that women could stand as 'female husbands' without issue. The division of labour was one in which men were runners via gender-specific tasks and responsibilities. From cattle raiding to message delivery, and from military affairs to days of marching, men undertook endurance-based activities; women did not. Any activity or occupation that involved running was understood to be a male-only function long before the introduction of western forms of athletics.

The male-centred model of British sport thus found compatibility with the movement cultures of running among the pastoralist societies of the Rift Valley. Participation by women in athletics would have violated established gender norms. Though the idea of running acquired new forms and categories, the concept of runners as adult men but not as adult women was the norm. This construction of

gender identities, which was embedded in both African and European social fabric, meant that Kenyan women did not participate as athletes during most of the colonial period. Athletics therefore developed into a cultural institution shared by colonisers and many of the colonised and from which women were excluded.

The longstanding policy of competition along racial lines was finally challenged when the Kenyan men's team debuted at the 1954 Empire and Commonwealth Games amidst the Mau Mau Emergency at home. Kenya's participation at the Games followed the landmark decision by the leaders of Kenyan athletics to enact policies of racial equality among male runners. These decision-makers shared a vision for international success by Kenyan athletes and, in order to accomplish this goal, they agreed it was necessary to provide equal opportunities for African men to compete directly with European men. These events advanced the integration of men but did nothing to introduce women into sport.

The second half of this thesis examines what will be called the 'fragile project': the earliest stage of Kenyan women's running during the period of post-colonial, pre-professional sport. For the first time, a handful of women competed internationally. Yet from independence until the professionalisation of athletics, international competitive success eluded the vast majority of Kenyan females, many of whom had been successful junior athletes. By the mid-1980s, the situation of these runners had improved only relative to the colonial period, during which time women did not compete abroad at all. Their participation and results at the international level remained limited and tenuous, while male runners' participation increased and their performances vastly improved.

At the international level, two changes accelerated international opportunities for women's running during this period. These were the expansion of middle and

long-distance races including the marathon for women at major meets and the passage of Title IX legislation in the United States mandating equal funding for men's and women's athletics at all federally funded American schools and universities.

Standards within women's athletics were improving significantly and it became official policy that a female athlete could compete at even the longest distances. At the global level, from the early 1960s until the Los Angeles Games of 1984, women's athletics emerged from the 'wilderness' of sport that globally had characterised the first half of the twentieth century. Assisted by top-down legislation as well as by the efforts of individual female athletes like Boston Marathon pioneer Katherine Switzer, women's involvement in track and field increased culminating in their participation in the full panoply of events long enjoyed by men.

The expanded international women's programme had a trickle-down effect on national competitions and institutions within Kenya, which became more receptive to women's participation at all distances. In the wake of changes at the international level, national championships gradually reached parity between men and women. Women-only running camps and meets opened new opportunities for Kenyan women to train and compete.

American athletic scholarships also increased Kenyan runners' opportunities to compete abroad. A crucial legal decision in 1973 meant that age was no longer a constraint on the scope of foreign athletes' tenure as student-athletes in the United States. The removal of the age constraint combined with the passage of Title IX in 1972 should, in theory, have allowed Kenyan women to benefit immediately from the same range of opportunities as men at the collegiate level. However, in practice, years of women's athletic participation were lost as a result of delays in the enforcement of Title IX in the US. From the early 1970s, it was not Kenyan women

but Kenyan men who were the predominant beneficiaries of athletic scholarship opportunities.

These developments, though beneficial to many, affected Kenyan male and female runners differently, particularly in the context of Kenya's scarce resources. While women were forced to wait, Kenyan men took full advantage of the range of competitions and scholarship opportunities in the United States that were now open to them. The intersection of inadequate facilities and fewer competitive opportunities stunted the progress on women, which was already constrained by cultural and economic factors which worked to inhibit the development of their talent.

Girls also faced a litany of heavily entrenched and seemingly intractable cultural views regarding gender roles. Education in Kenya and the Rift Valley widened after independence as thousands of primary and secondary schools were built, resulting in rising enrolment rates. Yet girls were more likely than boys to leave primary school prematurely and therefore far fewer transitioned to secondary school. As a result, the pursuit of a university education and sport abroad, an opportunity that many of Kenya's best male athletes accepted, was an option available to few female runners. Pregnancy caused some girls to drop out of school and sport, though most girls who left education prematurely did so for other reasons, including financial constraints. Ultimately, the differential achievement in education between boys and girls both reflected and consolidated historical patterns of socially constructed gender identities.

Fears of undisciplined female behaviour continued to constrain women's success in running during the post-colonial period. Women who sought to race after marriage faced unsupportive husbands and widespread derision from others in the community. Men worried that such unconventional choices would bring shame on

them, reflecting long-standing debates about civic virtue and the relationship between men and women that lay at the heart of productive households and respectable adulthood. The practice of married women running was a particular source of familial and societal conflict and caused many to abandon the enterprise completely.

Imagined cultural ideals of womanhood and gendered construction of runners rooted in the pre-colonial past curtailed what was acceptable for women in the realm of athletics. This heritage, recent and distant, created family structures and ideas about gender in which a woman was expected to behave in ways that did not challenge masculinities. The same was true for men who faced sanctions for engaging in traditional feminine tasks. Training and travelling to compete, particularly once children were born, violated established gender identities for women and risked imposing domestication and loss of social status on men. The persistence of these historical gender norms continued to negatively impact Kenyan women.

Despite these many obstacles, some female Kenyan runners achieved success in sport during this period. This vanguard contingent resisted dominant ideologies of gender and created new spaces for themselves by emulating male behaviours. They left their rural homes, took up waged employment and established alternative ways of life. On the track, at military bases, in urban centres and abroad, they demonstrated that it was possible to compete as adult women and to succeed through sport by constructing their own identity within masculine domains. In doing so, this group of successful female Kenyan runners gained power, wealth, status and mobility.

By replicating the prototype of 'masculine runners' that had been established during the previous fifty years, these women's lives reveal the structure of gender relations within post-colonial communities in Kenya's Rift Valley. Their experiences

demonstrate that despite the negative social consequences involved, some women were able to use sport as a vehicle to expand the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

Rejecting, delaying or subverting marriage and complying with longstanding notions of masculinity also meant that significant gender inequalities between men and women persisted in sport. Even by the mid-1980s, only a fraction of Kenyan women were competing in the senior ranks. While participation in sport fostered new opportunities and even independence for a few individuals, a range of constraints continued to limit the achievements of most girls. The tiny subset of women at the top who found ways to circumvent structural inequalities did not bring liberation for the vast majority. Conventional expectations of mothers and wives persisted, as did asymmetrical expectations of manhood and womanhood and together succeeded in marginalising most women in sport. Women without economic independence had few options and most remained stymied in their athletic pursuits. To succeed, female runners had to adapt to masculine terms during this fragile period.

What emerges through the first pre-professional generations of female runners in Kenya is that masculinity in sport was non-negotiable – women could compete, but only by emulating longstanding masculine patterns for success. People thus interpreted their development in ways congruent with established notions of masculinity. Because change in gender expectations was missing at the village level, particularly regarding the acceptance of wives as competitive athletes, women's running remained tenuous and stunted in the twenty years following independence and it was not until the professionalisation of athletics that the barriers to their success began to be broken down.

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Table of Contents

Short Abstract iii

Long Abstract iv

Acknowledgements xii

Table of Contents xiv

List of Tables xvi

List of Figures xvii

Abbreviations xviii

Introduction 1

Structure of *Choosing to Run: A History of Athletics and Gender in Kenya* 8

Chapter One: Studying and Conceptualising Sport and Gender 10

Introduction 10

Studying Gender and Sport 12

Concepts of Gender and Masculinity in African History 25

Conclusion 38

Chapter Two: Researching the Rift Valley 40

Introduction 40

The Ethnic Identities of Kenya's 'Running Tribe' 42

Documents and Discussions 60

Identity 70

The Kenyan Media 73

The Standard and *The Nation* 75

The Sports Section: Mostly Uncensored and Under the Radar 78

Media and Sport: Production and Reception of Culture 82

Conclusion 85

Chapter Three: Empire Games 87

Introduction 87

The 'Games Revolution' 89

Kenyan Athletics Follows the British Model: Women Need Not Apply 104

Colonial Sports Institutions in Kenya: Race Trumps Gender 113

Conclusion 123

Chapter Four: Kalenjin Masculinities and Running in the Rift Valley 125

Introduction 125

Authorities on African Womanhood 127

Gender Relations in Rift Valley Communities at the Onset of Colonial Rule 132

The Gendered Realms of Politics and Religion 140

Linking Kalenjin Masculinities and Running 147

Conclusion 156

Chapter Five: The World Beckons 158
Introduction 158
International Women's Athletics: 'Against the Laws of Nature' 160
Emerging from the 'Wilderness Years' 167
Opportunities Delayed but Not Denied 177
Expanding International Competitions Motivates Kenya 191
Conclusion 198

Chapter Six: Blockades for Women, Benchmarks for Men 200
Introduction 200
A Fragile Project: 1964 – 1984 202
A Brief History of Education in Kenya 213
Blockades to Education 221
Thwarting Schoolgirls' Pursuit of Athletics 226
'Marriage is Essentially Inegalitarian' 235
Conclusion 241

Chapter Seven: Role Reversals: Female Options in Masculine Domains 243
Introduction 243
'The Most Decorated Athlete (or Soldier?)' 248
'Like the Bullets She Triggers … Ruth Shot Suddenly to the Top' 254
'Half Man, Half Woman': All Pokot 264
From Cooking Pots to Jackpots: Opportunity for All, Opulence for Some 274
'Big (Wo)men' 282
Conclusion 284

Conclusion 286

Appendix 305
Discussion of Fieldwork in Kenya 305
Interview Guide/Questions 317
Consent Form 318
Ethics Application Approval 319
Biographies 320

Bibliography 327

List of Tables

Table 4.1 Kipsigis' Gender Division of Labour 133

Table 5.1 Entry of Athletic Events into International Competition Programmes 176

Table 5.2 1984 Best Performances: Women and Men's 3000 Metres 189

Table 5.3 1984 Best Performances: Women and Men's 1500 Metres 189

Table 5.5 1984 Best Performances: Women and Men's 800 Metres 190

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 Medals, Men's Track Events 800 Metres to 10,000 Metres – Olympic Games, 1964 to 1996 45

Figure 5.1 National Origin of Superior Foreign, Male Track-and-field Athletes at American Colleges, 1973-85 185

Figure 6.1 Kenya's Olympians in Athletics, 1964 - 1984 204

Figure 6.2 Percent Distribution of Women of Aged 15-49 by Level of Education and Age for Rift Valley Province, 1984 218

Figure 6.3 Kenyan Students' Enrolment in Primary and Secondary Schools, 1963 to 1983 221

Figure 6.4 Kenyan Students' Secondary School Enrollment 224

Figure A.1 Consent Form 318

Figure A.2 Ethics Application Approval 319

Abbreviations

AIAW	Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women
AIM	African Inland Mission
A&ASA	Arab and African Sports Association
CSM	Church of Scotland Mission
DC	District Commissioner
DO	District Officer
EAS	*East African Standard*
KAAA	Kenyan Amateur Athletic Association
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KAR	King's African Rifles
IAAF	International Amateur Athletics Federation/International Athletics Associations Federation
IBEAC	Imperial British East Africa Company
IOC	International Olympic Committee
LAOOC	Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletics Association

Introduction

People from across Kenya's Rift Valley crowded around televisions and radios to witness the victories of Edna Kiplagat and Wilson Kipsang in the 2014 London Marathon.[1] The celebrations and animated discussions that followed made clear that people took their running seriously. In many towns and villages, girls and boys engage in races and avidly follow the fortunes of the best runners in the Diamond League Athletics circuit who have taken their speed and endurance to Europe. Running has become so integral a part of Kenyan culture that when Mombasa hosted the World Cross Country Championships in 2007, the governing body Athletics Kenya promoted the event with the slogan, 'Cross Country Comes Home'. According to one report:

> Tens and tens of thousands of people, many of them packed body to body between a barbwire fence, others hanging out of trees, many not able to see any of the racing at all except for a torso here and there, packed the Mombasa golf course in excruciating heat and humidity to witness 'cross country come home' to its birthplace of Kenya.[2]

For myriad fans and Olympic Games hopefuls, running represents a passion and a joy. For scholars, reconstructing the history of sport 'offers an opportunity to capture the historical texture of everyday life'.[3]

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[1] S. Magut, 'Grand Reception Awaits London Winners in Iten', 15 April 2014, [Accessed 15 July 2014] http://allafrica.com/stories/201404150759.html.

[2] W. Johnson, '2007 World Cross Country Championships Recap in Mombasa, Kenya: Controlled Chaos', 24 March 2007 [Accessed 15 July 2014], http://www.letsrun.com/news/2007/03/2007-world-cross-country-championships-recap-in-mombasa-kenya-controlled-chaos/.

[3] E. Akyeampong and C. Ambler, 'Leisure in African History: An Introduction', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Special Issue: Leisure in African History (2002), pp. 1-16

In recent years, sport history and gender history have been the subject of a significant amount of academic literature related to Africa. However, outside of a small yet growing corpus of writing on *Women's Sport in Africa,* very little has been written about female athletes or the gendered history of African sports, with the result that most histories presented as Kenyan, Ethiopian or Nigerian experiences of sport are actually those of young men.[4] When the absence of women goes unquestioned, masculinity is often also left unexplored.[5] Such histories are partial and misleading – and this is especially the case case within the sub-category of East African runners.

During the decades after Kenya's independence in 1963, international running competitions began to open up for participation by female Kenyan runners. However, this involvement was confined to only a handful of pioneering athletes. It was not until the end of the twentieth century with the professionalisation of the sport that adult Kenyan women became more accepted as runners. This thesis explores the history of gender and women's running in the Rift Valley from the onset of colonial rule until the professionalisation of running in the mid-1980s. Its central theme intersects with a number of broader issues that have concerned historians of Kenya, sport historians and scholars of gender in Africa.

The term athletics (used interchangeably with 'running') will be used to denote a broad range of activities that include competitive exertions in track-and-field, cross-country and marathons. These athletic events will be analysed in conjunction

[4] Only two book-length texts have been published on this topic: M. Sikes and J. Bale (eds.), *Women's Sport in Africa* (Abingdon, 2014); and J. Shehu (ed.), *Gender, Sport and Development in Africa: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Patterns of Representations and Margalization* (Dakar, 2010).

[5] For discussion of why masculinity matters, see J. Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain', *History Workshop Journal*, Vol. 38 (1994), pp. 179-202; M. Sinha, 'Giving Masculinity a History: Some Contributions from the Historiography of Colonial India', *Gender and History*, Vol. 11 (1999), pp. 445-60; and M. Roper and J. Josh (eds.), *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London, 1991).

with the forms of running that had been undertaken in Kenya before colonialism. To this end, the phrase 'movement cultures' has been employed, following Bale and Sang's formulation.[6] Movement cultures of running refer to the configurations of basic bodily movements that make up the repertoire of athletics - running, throwing and jumping – before the introduction of western sport.

The aim of the thesis is to examine the history of gender in Kenya through the lens of sport. By considering both masculinity and femininity and how they have been shaped by, and in turn shaped, sport and by inserting women's own experiences into the long trajectory of the history of running in Kenya, this study probes the role of agency, choice and negotiation within the social and historical constructs of manhood and womanhood at local, national and global levels.

In this thesis, gender is understood as a social construct distinct from biological sex, varying on a spectrum of masculinities and femininities, depending on the context in which these social identities are produced. It is created, maintained and transformed through the cultural and social relations of power between women and men, but also among women and among men.[7] Men are used as one lens through which to understand women, because the way they were treated set the parameters for how women were treated – until women were able to break this down and create new opportunities. During the pre-colonial and colonial periods, running was a domain in which men were the predominant actors and this only slowly changed during the

[6] J. Bale and J. Sang, *Kenyan Running: Movement Culture, Geography and Global Change* (London, 1996), pp. 18, 47.

[7] This conception has now become widely accepted in academic writing on the subject, though some scholars have pushed the debate further, arguing against the dichotomy between '(biological) sex' and '(social) gender'. Concerned about what and how much was to be attributed to the one or to the other, they assert the fluidity of sex as a social construct. For article and book-length reviews of these ideas, see, respectively: C. Dayton and L. Levenstein, 'The Big Tent of U.S. Women's and Gender History: A State of the Field', *Journal of American History*, Vol. 99, No. 3 (2012), pp. 793-817; and K. Canning, *Gender History in Practice: Historical Perspectives on Bodies, Class and Citizenship* (Ithaca, NY, 2006).

decades after independence. Women remain at the centre of this narrative in order to address questions of why they were excluded from sport initially, and persistently, and how some women overcame this.

This thesis fills a number of intellectual gaps by studying gender through a history of running in the Rift Valley. Running has been one of the most successful sports for Kenyan women, yet there is no text that adequately celebrates their triumphs, accounts for their absence or even tells their story. While this narrative concentrates on gender and Kenya's history of athletics, the themes identified will enable those working in similar fields to make comparisons. It should encourage further research into the history of competitive sports in Africa as an approach to understand changes in, and the persistence of, the social construction of gender over time.

This thesis represents the first history of running in Kenya from a gendered perspective. First, it argues that the emergence of sport in its modern form met the colonial ruling order's need for validation of its moral authority. The colonial administration enthusiastically embraced the 'games revolution' that occurred in and was transported from Britain as one answer in defence of its 'civilising mission'. Sport reflected wider society, however, in that various segments were hierarchically ordered according to wealth and power, and in terms of gender, British sport has been called an 'athletic apartheid' because of its restricted male character. Under the aegis of the 'civilising mission' and Muscular Christianity, the culture of athletics in Kenya harmonised with British metropolitan notions of masculinity.

Secondly, it argues that local construction of masculinity and femininity mattered. The pre-colonial history of Kenya is significant in its own right, providing essential links in explaining what has followed in the history of athletics during both

the colonial and post-independence periods. Indigenous Kenyans were not a *tabula rasa* for white officials to 'civilise', though that is what, through the introduction of sport, many colonial officials imaged to be taking place. Over centuries, self-governing communities had been developing social norms and cultural traditions, which variously conflicted or coalesced with British ideals and ideologies.

The colonial period was a pivotal and transitional period during which aspects of pre-colonial gender relations were augmented, challenged and re-negotiated. As this thesis demonstrates, masculinity came to characterise Kenyan athletics during the colonial period virtually without protest because of the fusion of British colonial and local Kenyan gendered cultures. Within Rift Valley pastoralist communities, men and women occupied distinct categories in social and economic organisation. This division of labour was one in which a range of gender-specific tasks and responsibilities had long positioned runners as men.

Colonial intent to masculinise athletics agreed with the manner in which running had already been arranged within the construction of Kalenjin masculinities and femininities. Officials dedicated to sport sought to modify colonised peoples' cultures without fundamentally altering the gendered patterns of behaviour that had been laid down prior to colonisation. Understanding both African and British perspectives is essential for addressing why women were denied participation as athletics emerged and began to flourish under colonial rule in Kenya.

The third contribution of this thesis is an explanation of the two trends that characterised Kenyan women's running from independence in 1963 until the professionalisation of athletics in the 1980s. On the one hand, a handful of women competed internationally for the first time. On the other, the significant gap between

male and female Kenyan athletes persisted in both participation and accomplishment throughout these two decades.

The expanding programme of women's running events at major international track meets increased the number competing. This occurred amidst the second wave of feminist activism in Europe and North America, when gender equality issues were at the centre of debates. These broad global changes influenced local Kenyan women's emergence as runners during the first decades of the post-colonial period. Institutions at the national level in Kenya became more receptive to women's participation as they, too, provided equal athletic opportunities to men and women.

Yet Kenyan men's greater access to international racing, particularly through their pursuit of American universities' sports scholarships from the 1970s, contributed to the gender gap while poor track surfaces, scarce resources for travel and coaching, and few opportunities to compete domestically, constrained all runners based in Kenya. Girls were also disadvantaged in athletics relative to boys because of early pregnancy and fewer educational opportunities, and above all, by a social construction of gender identities that continued to constrain wives' running through the mid-1980s. Most women were unable to deviate from a social construction of femininity in which sport after marriage was curtailed. The persistence of gender norms around movement cultures established before and reinforced during colonialism produced hostility to athletic participation by married women and a concomitant admiration of running success for men.

Kenya's pioneer generation of internationally successful female runners emerged during the post-colonial era with the first group of female Olympians competing in Mexico City in 1968. They did so not only by taking advantage of new opportunities for women runners at the global level but also by constructing 'female

masculinities' at home, the final argument put forward in this thesis. Exceptional female athletes chose to configure their behaviour according to the template of successful runners within their community. Like men, they worked in the army, delayed marriage and raced and studied abroad. After the professionalisation of running allowed them to become wealthy, female patrons – 'Big (Wo)men' – took this a step further by providing resources to those in their community in need. Their individual efforts and achievements did not, however, produce systemic change in gender norms around movement cultures and opportunities in sport continued to be denied to them. Despite 'acting like men', transformative change proved elusive.

This is not to say that the first generation of female runners had no effect on the social construction of gender. They blurred the lines of what was acceptable for women by succeeding in a male domain and were role models, setting precedents that younger women emulated. The importance of the latter became clear after the professionalisation of athletics in the mid-1980s. The pioneer generation of female athletes inspired younger female runners, which meant women were competing when new economic opportunities in sport appeared and thus could take advantage of this change alongside males. In recent years, women have begun to win medals in roughly equal proportion to their male counterparts.

In order to tell this story, this thesis focuses on a single ethnic group, the Kalenjin located in Kenya's Rift Valley, placing women at centre-stage within the narrative and arguing that understanding both sport and gender in Kenya has been compromised because of the general disregard of women's engagement with running. Recognising the evolution of the gendered nature of Kenyan running helps to explain the persistence of gender inequalities in other contexts. Men's and women's participation in athletics at both local and global levels are examined by tracing

individual experiences in running via archival sources, oral histories and local news reports, and then correlating these with national and international changes. Doing so produces a nuanced and balanced account of sport and gender.

Structure of *Choosing to Run: A History of Athletics and Gender in Kenya*

The main contribution of the thesis is divided into five empirical chapters. This introduction and the following chapters on the existing historiography (Chapter One) and methodology (Chapter Two) represent the introductory part of the thesis. Chapter One situates the thesis' arguments within some of the major texts, debates and theories about women and gender in Africa since the field emerged in the 1970s. Chapter Two discusses the methodologies and sources that were central to writing this dissertation: newspaper articles on athletics published in the major Kenyan daily newspapers as well as oral histories and archival sources. The Rift Valley was a focus of research and discussion of the social construction of ethnicity, specifically around the Kalenjin, is also explored here.

Chapters Three and Four consider British colonial and metropolitan patterns of athletics together with analysis of local Kenyan experiences. Sport was an arena in which colonised and colonial men negotiated their relationship. Chapter Three examines the British contribution to the development of sport in colonial Kenya and explores how nineteenth-century Victorian ideals about sport, empire, 'civilisation' and manliness were connected with athletics during that time. Chapter Four addresses the establishment of athletics as a masculine domain in colonial Kenya by applying the perspective of local ideas about gendered movement cultures in Rift Valley communities. The history of sport was not simply a product of colonial imposition;

Africans actively participated and supported the new forms and organisation of running.

The remaining chapters analyse broad international developments related to the 'fragile phase' of Kenyan women's participation after independence in 1963 and include a detailed study of Kalenjin communities and successful female athletics pioneers. There were international changes that expanded Kenyan women's opportunities to run, and these are explored in Chapter Five. Chapter Six looks into the local limitations that shaped participation of women athletes, focusing on marriage, childbirth and uneven educational opportunities. The final chapter illustrates the strategies that a handful of women employed that enabled them to emerge as internationally competitive athletes.

Choosing to Run: A History of Athletics and Gender in Kenya offers an exploration of women's participation in athletics in Kenya from late colonial rule until the professionalisation of sport in the 1980s. It integrates the achievements of Kenya's pioneering female athletes to histories that have overlooked them and probes the level of support they received and the reasons for their exclusion and persistent marginalisation. Masculinities and the social construction of gender emerge as key themes that exerted influence on women's participation in sport. The thesis also examines the lives and choices of the women who were able to run at the World and Olympic level, despite the challenges that confronted them. By fusing local case studies along with research on international sport over the course of the twentieth century, and by drawing on a range of sources, this thesis provides a detailed examination of a significant period of Kenya's history and contributes to a better understanding of gender and sport.

Chapter One: Studying and Conceptualising Sport and Gender

Introduction

Anthropologist Bea Vidacs surmised that Africanists have given the topic of sport little serious attention because it appears 'trivial, light, without consequence and not on a par with the grave problems the continent faces from poverty and corruption…in short, underdevelopment'.[1] Yet people often see sport as a way out of poverty. Many find in it a source of hope and inspiration, which has been highlighted in research on basketball and boxing in inner-city American communities, baseball in the Dominican Republic, football in Brazil, Liberia and Cameroon, and basketball in Senegal and Trinidad and Tobago.[2] To Olympic gold medallist Meseret Defar, 'Ethiopia is not just about famine and drought – I want the world to see strong women clutching the Ethiopian flag in stadiums all over the world'.[3]

Studying sport should be of intrinsic interest to scholars, if only because of its scale and significant presence in people's lives. As Steve Bloomfield, author of *Africa United: How Football Explains Africa*, observed:

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[1] B. Vidacs, 'Through the Prism of Sports: Why should Africanists Study Sports?' *Afrika Spectrum*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (2006), p. 336.

[2] For boxing: L. Wacquant, 'The Social Logic of Boxing in Black Chicago: Toward a Sociology of Pugilism', *Sociology of Sport Journal,* Vol. 9 (1992), pp. 221-54; For basketball: D. Frey, *The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams* (New York, 1994); JR Mandle and JD Mandle, *Grass Roots Commitment: Basketball and Society in Trinidad and Tobago* (Parkersburg, IA, 1998), and M. Ralph, 'Prototype: In Search of the Perfect Senegalese Basketball Physique', *The International Journal of the History of Sport,* Vol., 24, No. 2 (2007), pp. 238-63; For baseball: A. Klein, *Sugarball: The American Game, the Dominican Dream* (New Haven, 2001). Football: G. Armstrong and R. Giulianotti (eds.), *Football in Africa: Conflict, Conciliation and Community* (Basingstoke, 2004) and J. Lopes, 'Successes and Contradictions in "Multiracial" Brazilian Football', in G. Armstrong and R. Giulianotti (eds.), *Entering the Field: New Perspectives on World Football* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 53-86.

[3] D. MacDougall, 'The Women Who Became Athletes to Escape Forced Marriage', *Look* (1 February 2010), pp. 51.

> Everywhere I've travelled – from the beaches of Freetown to the streets of Mogadishu – people have been playing football. They don't even need a proper football; a bundle of plastic bags and rags tied together into a roughly spherical shape is enough.[4]

This echoes Karin Barber's seminal essay from more than twenty-five years ago on 'Popular Arts in Africa', that sport - like popular arts - merits serious scholarly attention because:

> They loudly proclaim their own importance in the lives of large numbers of African people. They are everywhere. They flourish without encouragement or recognition from official cultural bodies, and sometimes in defiance of them. People too poor to contemplate spending money on luxuries do spend it on popular arts, sustaining them and constantly infusing them with new life.[5]

Barber sets popular arts as a category distinct from football and makes no reference to any other sport in her 79-page essay, yet she is very clear that the arts are 'social facts' that fall under an umbrella of broader social activities.[6] Both men's and women's sports are certainly also a constituent part of this domain. As with the arts, sports illuminate important aspects of the societies in which they take root and 'communicate all kinds of meanings'.[7] Analysis of the social dimensions and history of African sport and games thus becomes an investigation into the workings of societies as a whole.

This chapter provides examination of the existing historiography and emphasises the need for studies of masculinities and femininities in histories of Kenyan sport. The dearth of substantive work on the socially constructed relationships between the sexes in the realm of Kenyan running is evident in both monographs and

[4] S. Bloomfield, *Africa United: How Football Explains Africa* (Great Britain, 2010), p. 15.
[5] K. Barber, 'Popular Arts in Africa', *African Studies Review,* Vol. 30, No. 3 (1987), p. 1.
[6] Ibid, p. 41.
[7] Ibid, p. 75.

overviews of sport and of gender in Africa, as this chapter will explain. After putting forward the motivation for studying this topic, the chapter situates the thesis' arguments within some of the major texts, debates and theories about women and gender in Africa since the field emerged in the 1970s. Men are used as one lens through which to understand women, because to a large extent, the way they navigated the athletic world set the parameters for how women subsequently did so. As the literature on sport in Kenya has not engaged with issues of gender while Kenyanist scholarship on gender ignores sport, this thesis attempts to fill an intellectual gap by considering both masculinity and femininity and how they have been shaped by, and in turn shaped, sport.

Studying Gender and Sport

In studies of sport and colonialism outside of Africa, academics have done much to prove that 'the history of a society's sport can illuminate the history of the whole society'.[8] Taking three seminal studies of cricket and colonialism as an example, CLR James was the first to make the case for the game as a subject worthy of serious study. His book from 1963 has long been one of the most acclaimed studies of colonialism, identity and exchange of culture.[9] James explores the presence of cricket in colonial Trinidad in *Beyond a Boundary*, using it to understand 'that categorisation and specialisation, that division of the human personality, which is the greatest curse of our time'.[10] William Mandle's pioneering study of Australian cricket demonstrated the importance of successes against England in addressing a colonial legacy of

[8] H. King, 'The Sexual Politics of Sport: An Australian Perspective', in R. Cashman and M. McKernan (eds.), *Sport in History* (Australia, 1979), p. 69.
[9] C.L.R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London, 1963).
[10] James, *Beyond a Boundary,* p. 191.

inferiority and in developing Australian nationalism.[11] Also writing a notable history about the interplay of colonialism and cricket in Barbados, Brian Stoddart asserted, 'cricket is not so much a game which inspires enthusiasm as a cultural institution, a way of life in itself'.[12]

From Dunning and Sheard's 1979 social history of rugby to Maguire's more recent work on *Global Sport*, scholars have made clear that sport does not exist in a neutral or isolated social context.[13] As Clarke and Clarke declare, 'it becomes impossible to treat sport as if it stands outside of all the other social relations within which we spend our life. Sport…is systematically and intimately connected with society'.[14] Jarvie makes the point that 'the history of sport matters because it helps to illuminate past themes, events and changes in their own terms as mattered at the time'.[15]

Increasingly, researchers are finding similar insight within African history. Though not precisely about sport, some of the earliest examples include Clyde Mitchell's *The Kalela Dance: Aspects of Social Relationships among Urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia* and Terence Ranger's *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa*.[16] In the latter, Ranger identifies in the Beni dance a variety of responses to colonial rule

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[11] W. Mandle, 'Cricket and Australian Nationalism', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 59, No. 4 (Dec 1973), pp. 225-46.
[12] B. Stoddart, 'Cricket, Social Formation and Cultural Continuity in Barbados: A Preliminary Ethnohistory', *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Winter, 1987), p. 318.
[13] E. Dunning, and K. Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players* (Oxford, 1979); J. Macguire, *Global Sport: Identities, Societies and Civilizations* (Cambridge, 1999).
[14] A. Clarke and J. Clarke, '"Highlights and Action Replays" - Ideology, Sport and the Media', in J. Hargreaves (ed.), *Sport, Culture and Ideology* (1982), p. 62.
[15] G. Jarvie, *Sport, Culture and Society* (Abingdon, 2006), p. 61.
[16] C. Mitchell, *The Kalela Dance: Aspects of Social Relationships among Urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia* (Manchester, UK, 1956); T. Ranger, *Dance and Society in Eastern Africa 1890-1970: The Beni Ngoma* (Berkeley, 1975).

that were central to nationalism and resistance. In his conclusion, he writes that through the 'concreteness of a topic like Beni one could reach…reality'.[17]

Building from collections published in the 1980s like William Baker's and James Mangan's edited volume *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History*, Emmanuel Akyeampong's more recent study of the emergence of popular boxing in Ghana presents an example of how sport, along with other elements of European culture and its values, could be reshaped by ordinary people to reflect their own ideals.[18] What emerges is that boxing in Accra, like boxing in Kenya and football in South Africa, was not simply imported and inscribed upon colonised people's lives.[19] Rather, boxing developed in the context of both an existing athletic tradition and western conceptions of the sport.[20] Similar ideas about how sport reflected a combination of pre-colonial ideas and colonial European organisation and aesthetics are brought up in two works on football, one written by Phyllis Martin on colonial Brazzaville and the other by Laura Fair on colonial Zanzibar.[21] Both make clear that Africans were not

[17] Ranger, *Dance and Society*, p. 165.
[18] W. Baker and J. Mangan (eds.), *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (London, 1987); E. Akyeampong, 'Bukom and the Social History of Boxing in Accra: Warfare and Citizenship in Precolonial Ga Society', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, Special Issue: Leisure in African History (2002), pp. 39-60.
[19] For boxing in Kenya, see: M. Carotenuto, 'Grappling with the Past: Wrestling and Performative Identity in Kenya', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 30, No. 16 (2013), pp. 1889-1902. For football in South Africa, see: P. Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, Politics, and Society in South Africa* (Scottsville, 2004); and P. Alegi, *African Soccerscapes* (Athens, 2010). Other histories of South African sport include: G. Jarvie, *Class, Race and Sport in South Africa's Political Economy* (London, 1985); J. Nauright, *Sport, Cultures and Identities in South Africa* (Leicester, 1997); and D. Booth, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa* (London, 1998).
[20] For similar ideas in related fields, see: T. Parsons, *The African Rank-and-File: Social Implications of Colonial Military Service in the King's African Rifles, 1902-1964* (Portsmouth, N.H., 1999); P. Harries, *Work, Culture, and Identity: Migrant Laborers in Mozambique and South Africa, c. 1860-1910* (Portsmouth, N.H., 1994); and P. Ocobock, 'Joy Rides for Juveniles: Vagrant Youth and Colonial Control in Nairobi, Kenya, 1901-52', *Social History*, Vol. 31, Is. 1 (2006), pp. 39-59.
[21] P. Martin, *Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville* (Cambridge, 1995); and L. Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community, and Identity in Post-Abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Oxford, 2001).

simply fooled into adopting Western sport: they enjoyed the game for their own reasons and on their own terms.

As sportswomen like Defar continue to produce world-class performances, some scholars have taken steps to include women and gender within the study of sport in African societies. Both Jennifer Hargreaves, in *Heroines of Sport,* and Denise Jones, in her contribution to *Sport and Women: Social Issues in International Perspective,* consider the impact of apartheid on female athletes in South Africa.[22] They situate women's sport within wider debates about race and class, drawing upon both oral and written sources to illustrate how girls and women were marked as outsiders. When women first entered the traditionally male world of football, for example, their participation was often trivialised or devalued with now prominent female football teams made to play 'curtain raisers' to professional male teams' 'real games'. Jones uses the sports career of a talented coloured female in South African karate as both a history of the politics of the country and a lens through which to understand the restructuring and transformation of gender relations.[23]

Cynthia Pelak has focused on the extent to which South Africa's social inequalities constrained women's participation with respect to access to facilities and resources as most quality sports facilities are located in white, urban areas.[24] In the

[22] J. Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity* (New York, 2000); and D. Jones, 'Women and Sport in South Africa: Shaped by History and Shaping Sporting History', in I. Hartmann-Tews and G. Pfister (eds.) *Sport and Women: Social Issues in International Perspective* (London, 2003), pp. 130-44. See also: P. Naidoo and Z. Muholi, 'Women's Bodies and the World of Football in South Africa', in A. Desai (ed.), *The Race to Transform: Sport in Post-Apartheid South Africa* (Cape Town, 2010), pp. 105-44.

[23] D. Jones, 'In Pursuit of Empowerment: Sensei Nellie Kleinsmidt, Race and Gender Challenges', in J. Mangan and F. Hong, *Freeing the Female Body: Inspirational Icons* (London, 2001), pp. 219-236.

[24] C. Pelak, 'Negotiating Gender/Race/Class Constraints in the New South Africa: A Case Study of Women's Soccer', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol. 40, No. 1 (2005), pp. 53-70; C. Pelak, 'Local-Global Processes: Linking Globalization, Democratization, and the Development of Women's Football in South Africa', *Afrika Spectrum*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (2006), pp. 371-392; C. Pelak, 'Women's Sport as a Site for

post-apartheid period in South Africa, as in the last years of British rule in Kenya prior to independence, national leaders prioritised the racial integration of men's sports and international sports tournaments and tours ahead of building greater gender equality in sport. Pelak argues for an intersectional approach to studying this domain, one that takes into account the mutually reinforcing constructions of race, ethnicity and gender when analysing the experiences of women in the world of African sport.

Martha Saavedra has done much to introduce women's agency within the burgeoning sport-in-development literature.[25] She has charted the progress of women's football, noting that by 2003, women were playing organised football in at least thirty countries in Africa. By tracing the development of women's football in Senegal, Nigeria and South Africa, she shows how the rise of women's football elsewhere encouraged the development of 'football féminine' in Africa. Presenting a rather more positive view of changes taking place around women's sport in South Africa, Saavedra writes about how as democracy unfolded and women's football exploded onto the international scene, the opportunities for women to play football opened up and girls began to play in their own teams. Progress has certainly been made since Pallett's 1955 *Women's Athletics* surveyed the development of women's international athletics yet devoted only one paragraph out of its 289 pages to African athletes.[26]

Challenging Racial and Gender Inequalities in Post-Apartheid South Africa', in H. Britton, J. Fish, and S. Meintjes (eds.), *Women's Activism in South Africa: Working Across Divides* (Scottsville, 2008), pp. 96-123.

[25] M. Saavedra, 'Dilemmas and Opportunities in Gender and Sport-in-Development', in R. Levermore and A. Beacom (eds.), *Sport and International Development* (London, 2009), pp. 124-156; M. Meier and M. Saavedra, 'Esther Phiri and the Moutawakel Effect in Zambia: An Analysis of the Use of Female Role Models in Sport-for-Development', *Sport in Society*, Vol. 12, No. 9 (2009), pp. 1158-1176; M. Saavedra, 'Football Feminine - Development of the African Game: Senegal, Nigeria and South Africa', *Soccer & Society*, Vol. 4, Is. 2 (2003), pp. 225-53.

[26] G. Pallett, *Women's Athletics* (London, 1955), p. 253.

Nonetheless, the study of gender within African sport largely remains part of what Jarvie would consider 'the almost obscene deafening silence in the academic world over certain aspects of sport'.[27] What has been published so far has been largely confined to single journal articles or papers within edited collections that focus on sports and as indicated above, has taken Southern Africa as the region of focus. Pfister and Hartmann-Tews' edited volume *Sport and Women: Social Issues in International Perspective* contains sixteen case studies on women's sports from around the world.[28] Two of these essays pertain to Africa: one looking at women's sport in Tanzania and the other Jones' essay considering South African women 'shaped by history and shaping sporting history'.[29] Within Hong and Mangan's collection on *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation,* Saavedra's comparative analysis of women's football highlighted above was the sole contribution about African sportswomen.[30] In one of the first attempts to write on the topic in a chapter on women and sport in Mauritius, Ramola Ramtohul described the gendered inequalities about the island's sport that had been modelled on the British colonial system, yet the study was 'largely exploratory' and she calls for more extensive research in the area.[31]

Within interdisciplinary inquiries into 'East African running', women and gender relations have been ignored.[32] The study of Kenyan and Ethiopian runners'

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[27] G. Jarvie, *Sport, Culture and Society: An Introduction* (New York, 2006), p. 383.
[28] I. Hartmann-Tews and G. Pfister (eds.), *Sport and Women: Social Issues in International Perspective* (London, 2003).
[29] P. Massao and K. Fasting, 'Women and Sport in Tanzania', in I. Hartmann-Tews and G. Pfister (eds.), *Sport and Women: Social Issues in International Perspective* (London, 2003), pp. 118-129; D. Jones, 'Women and Sport in South Africa'.
[30] M. Saavedra, 'Football Feminine-Development of the African Game: Senegal, Nigeria and South Africa', in F. Hong and JA Mangan (eds.), *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation: Kicking Off a New Era* (London, 2004), pp. 234-263.
[31] R. Ramtohul, 'The Gendered Dimension of Competitive Sports in a Multicultural Context: The Mauritian Scenario', in J. Shehu (ed.), *Gender, Sport and Development in Africa: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Patterns of Representations and Margalization* (Dakar, 2010), p. 98.
[32] Other unpublished scholarly histories of sport in Kenya include theses from M. Anderson, 'The Development of Athletics in 1950s Kenya: Order or Leisure?', (University of Oxford.

success brought together scientists, historians, sociologists and anthropologists to produce *East African Running: Towards a Cross-Disciplinary Perspective*.[33] As the editors acknowledge in its introduction, 'there is little [in this book] that deals with issues of gender'.[34] In *Kenyan Running*, which co-authors John Bale and Joe Sang describe as an 'interdisciplinary endeavour drawing on the fields of geography, history, sociology, anthropology, development studies, sports studies and travel writing', women barely feature and gender not at all.[35] Defending this decision, Bale and Sang write that 'women athletes have not been mentioned simply because they were not significantly involved'.[36] However, by the time the book was published in 1996, World Championship medals had been won by Susan Sirma in the 3,000 metres in 1991, Sally Barsosio in the 10,000 metres in 1993, and Tegla Loroupe in the world 10,000 metres in 1995.[37]

Similarly, *Sport and Postcolonialism* offers a collection of articles that engage with the question of how far colonial legacies continue to impact the sports cultures of individual nations.[38] In their introduction the editors confess that 'the essays overlook, as much writing on sport unfortunately does, the question of gender and the role of women within the sport and postcolonial nexus'.[39] In his *Run to Win*, published in 2006, Jurz Wirz describes the politics, corruption, history and current state of

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MSc thesis 2008); and J. Thorold, 'Colonialism, Race, and Cricket in Kenya 1895-1963', (University of Cambridge. MSc thesis, 2014). For popular writing on the topic see: T. Tanser, *Train Hard, Win Easy: The Kenyan Way* (Mountain View, CA, 1997); T. Tanser, *More Fire* (Pennsylvania, 2008); A. Finn, *Running with the Kenyans: Discovering the Secrets of the Fastest People on Earth* (London, 2012).

[33] Y. Pitsiladis *et al* (eds.), *East African Running: Toward a Multi-disciplinary Perspective* (London, 2007).

[34] Ibid, p. 7.

[35] Ibid, p. xiii.

[36] Ibid, p. 96.

[37] M. Butler (ed.), *IAAF Statistics Handbook* (London, 2009), pp. 195, 199.

[38] J. Bale and M. Cronin (eds.), *Sport and Postcolonialism* (Oxford, 2003).

[39] Ibid, p. 9.

Kenyan athletics - except the involvement of women in the sport.[40] Wirz offers an explicit apology to his 'female readers' for the fact that the vast majority of the people mentioned in his book were men. He justifies this with the declaration that 'there were no women playing a decisive role in the development of athletics in Kenya', a claim that cannot be substantiated about the post-colonial period with which his book is concerned.[41]

In addition to ignoring their contribution to sport, the authors of these texts tend to subsume women into the category of men linguistically.[42] By taking the generalised experience of male athletes as a normative reference point, many scholars have effectively written women out of history. Though they present themselves as universal histories of sport, many of these narratives deal exclusively with men's experiences. This is evident in competing explanations as to why runners from this region are so successful. These studies have appeared in both popular and scholarly publications in fields ranging from biology, psychology, exercise-physiology, genetics and nutrition to those of anthropology, sociology and history.[43] Some are

[40] J. Wirz, *Run to Win*, (Oxford, 2006).
[41] Ibid, p. 13.
[42] It is also perhaps worth noting that the vast majority of those writing on this topic have been men. For instance, of 29 contributing authors to *East Africa Running: Towards a Cross-Disciplinary Analysis*, four were women. All four of the book's editors were men. Of eleven contributors to *Sport and Postcolonialism*, all were men, as were its two editors.
[43] For socio-cultural explanations of their success: V. Onywera, *et al*, 'Demographic Characteristics of Elite Kenyan Endurance Runners', *Journal of Sports Sciences*, Vol. 24, Is. 4 (2006), pp. 415-422; J. Manners, 'Kenya's Running Tribe', *The Sports Historian,* Vol. 17 (1997), pp. 14-27; and J. Bale and J. Sang, *Kenyan Running* (1996). For physiological explanations: B. Saltin *et al*, 'Aerobic Exercise Capacity at Sea Level and at Altitude in Kenyan Boys, Junior and Senior Runners Compared with Scandinavian Runners', *Scandinavian Journal of Medical Science and Sports*, Vol. 5 (1995), pp. 209-21; H. Larsen, 'Kenyan Dominance in Distance Running', *Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology Part A: Molecular and Integrative Physiology*, Vol. 136, No. 1 (2003), pp. 161-170; R. Scott and Y. Pitsiladis, Genotypes and Distance Running: Clues from Africa, *Sports Medicine* (2007), pp. 424-27. For diet and nutritional aspects: D. Christensen, 'Food and Macronutrient Intake of Male Adolescent Kalenjin Runners in Kenya', *British Journal of Nutrition,* Vol. 88, Is. 6 (2002), pp. 711-7. For geographical explanations: J. Bale, 'Lassitude and Latitude: Observations on Sport and Environmental Determinism', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol. 37 (2002), pp. 147-58. For popular writing favouring environmental

controversial, such as Jon Entine's *Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports and Why We're Afraid to Talk About It,* which offers a biological explanation for East African runners' success.[44]

What both sides in the debate have in common about the reasons for Kenyans' athletic success is the conflation of the category 'runner' with that of 'men', taking men as representative of all runners and ignoring the extent to which women have contributed to the history of Kenyan running. John Bale provides a clear example of this, eleven years after the publication of *Kenyan Running*, in what was an otherwise informative chapter about the rise of (male) athletics in Kenya.[45] Exploring the histories of particular athletes and detailing the 1968 Mexico City Olympics, at which three female Kenyans competed for the first time in the nation's history, he neglected to mention this watershed event for women. Such texts commit what Helen Bradford calls the 'devastating conceptual error of androcentric thought'.[46]

It is perhaps not surprising to conclude that relatively new sub-disciplines such as African women's sport and East African running are partial and fragmented. Yet Africanist gender historians have been equally neglectful of sport, including Kenyan running, and they do not make even passing reference to the topic. Sport is largely absent from the now voluminous literature on women and gender in Africa.[47]

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determinism, see K. Moore, 'Sons of the Wind', *Sports Illustrated*, Vol. 78, No. 8 (1990), pp. 72–84 while Gashaw Zergaw takes an opposing view: G. Zergaw, 'Ethiopia: East African Running Dominance - What is the Secret Behind It?', *The Reporter,* 21 April 2007, [Accessed 14 August 2014] http://allafrica.com/stories/200704230220.html.

[44] J. Entine, *Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports and Why We're Afraid to Talk About it* (New York, 2000).

[45] J. Bale, 'Kenyan Running Before the 1968 Mexico Olympics', in Y. Pitsiladis *et al* (eds.), *East African Running: Toward a Multi-disciplinary Perspective* (London, 2007), pp. 11-23.

[46] H. Bradford, 'Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and Its Frontier Zones, c. 1806-70', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (1996), pp. 351-370.

[47] Discussion of work undertaken on histories of African women and gender follow in the section 'Concepts of Gender and Masculinities in African History'.

Whether from Kenya or elsewhere, sportswomen currently have no place in overviews devoted to histories of African women, such as Coquery-Vidrovitch's *African Women: A Modern History* and Berger and White's *Women in Sub-Saharan Africa: Restoring Women to History*.[48] Nor do they appear in synthesises of the literature, like Hunt's 'Placing African Women's History and Locating Gender' or more recently, Andrea Cornwall's introduction to her edited collection on *Readings in Gender in Africa*.[49] The latter is a retrospective of scholarship on gender relations in Africa that brings together twenty-eight essays from history, sociology, political science, education and development studies, and sport is not among them. Nor have athletes been studied in research on changing gender relations among Kenyan pastoralist communities, despite the fact that the vast majority of Kenya's best athletes both male and female have originated from rural communities in the Rift Valley.[50] Chepyator-Thomson's *African Women and Globalization* is the rare exception for allocating one chapter of the thirteen to women in sport.[51] As an anthology not thematically related to sports, her volume is exceptional for containing even that single piece discussing female runners.

The study of gender and sport in Africa is severely limited, and not only in terms of women's representation. Men and their contribution to athletics have been

[48] C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, *African Women: A Modern History* (Boulder, 1997); I. Berger and F. White (eds.), *Women in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Indiana, 1999).
[49] N. Hunt, 'Placing African Women's History and Locating Gender', *Social History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1989), pp. 359–379; and A. Cornwall, 'Introduction: Perspectives on Gender in Africa', in A. Cornwall (ed.), *Readings in Gender in Africa* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 1-19. Athletes also receive no mention in F. Sow, 'The Social Sciences in Africa and Gender Analysis', in A. Imam, A. Mama and F. Sow (eds.), *Engendering African Social Sciences* (Great Britain, 1997), pp. 31-60.
[50] H. Moore, *Space, Text and Gender* (Cambridge, 1986); R. Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change: The Nandi of Kenya* (Stanford, 1985); and B. Kettel, 'The Commoditization of Women in Tugen (Kenya) Social Organization', in C. Robertson and I. Berger (eds.), *Women and Class in Africa* (New York, 1986), 47-61.
[51] J. Chepyator-Thomson, 'African Women Run for Change: Challenges and Achievements in Sports', in J. Chepyator-Thomson (ed.), *African Women and Globalization* (CA, 2005), pp. 239-258.

studied but not in a holistic gendered fashion. This tendency has left masculinities largely unexamined. Historians have neglected to view athletics in Kenya as a masculinised domain.

In light of this, Patrick McDevitt's work stands out for its careful consideration of conceptions of masculinities during the colonial period. In addressing questions at the intersection of empire, sport, colonialism and masculinity, McDevitt's *May the Best Man Win* probed a gender issue that few scholars have addressed. In a chapter on Gaelic sports, for instance, McDevitt demonstrates how sport became a conduit for refashioning Irish masculinity in opposition to British conceptions. Based on case studies of Irish team sports, polo in India, and the West Indies and Australian cricket teams' engagement with the 'bodyline affair', McDevitt notes that 'organised games functioned crucially within imperial contexts as a means for disseminating British ideals of masculinity as well as constructing alternate and contrasting masculinities around which colonial subjects could mobilise'.[52]

The notion that sport could be a new approach for colonised people to assert their own identities has not, however, been the dominant conception in many histories of imperialism and sport in Kenya. Rather, the arrival of sport has been described in terms like 'diffusion', 'dissemination' and 'imposition'.[53] This is the case in Bale and Sang's *Kenyan Running*, which remains the most influential account of athletics in

[52] P. McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity, and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880- 1935* (New York, 2004), p. 4.

[53] A. Clayton, 'Sport and African Soldiers: The Military Diffusion of Western Sport throughout sub-Saharan Africa', in W. Baker and J. Mangan, *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (New York, 1987), pp. 114-37; J. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London, 1998); J. Mangan, 'Britain's Chief Spiritual Export: Imperial Sport as Moral Metaphor, Political Symbol and Cultural Bond', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 27 (2010), pp. 328–336; P. Mählmann, 'The Role of Sport in the Process of Modernization: The Kenyan Case.', *Journal of Eastern African Research and Development*, Vol. 2 (1992), pp. 120–131; A. Kirk-Greene, 'Imperial Administration and the Athletic Imperative: The Case of the District Officer in Africa', in *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History*, W. Baker and J. Mangan, *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (New York, 1987), pp. 81–113.

Kenya. The monograph contains two historical chapters, the first of which charts the progression of 'Folk Games and Sport-Like Activities of Earlier Times' on the basis of travel writers' accounts from the early twentieth century. The second chapter then records the introduction of athletics into Kenya through schools, the police and army.

Bale and Sang present a very clear narrative: 'Europeans brought their sports' to Kenya. Thus began the 'Europeanisation of African movement culture' as 'the Kenyan masses' adopted 'another form of Western body culture'. 'The movement culture of pre-modern Kenya' was 'fundamentally different from modern sport'. The spread of sport in Kenya, at the expense of 'folk games' and 'regional cultures', represents 'a classic example of cultural imperialism and the erosion of regional cultures'.[54]

Their explanation locates agency entirely in Europeans' hands. Central to Bale and Sang's argument is a suggestion that 'the body management of the colonist was clearly marked very different from that of the African'.[55] As this thesis will illustrate, there were historical and cultural precedents within 'Africans' body management' that were very similar to the sport culture that the colonists sought to introduce.

Though he does not focus on gender, Tom Cunningham has made a similar case in his analysis of the Church of Scotland Mission's attempt to spread European games among the Kikuyu during the first decades of the twentieth century. He determines that the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru could have participated in sport for a range of reasons, not necessarily because it 'flowed' from Britain to the rest of the

[54] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 63-76.
[55] Ibid, p. 73.

world.[56] Prior to the arrival of well-known 'Muscular Christians' like the missionary Dr John Arthur, there was, for instance, a vibrant games and recreation culture among Kikuyu children. This study agrees with Cunningham's assertion that sport in colonial Kenya did not emerge in the way that it did because of the actions of any one group; rather, it was a product of a convergence of cultures.

The history of Kenyan running is the product of gendered movement cultures that converged. Making this point is not to endorse the exclusion of people from participation in sport on the basis of being a male or female. It is to emphasise that the pre-colonial history of Kenya is significant in its own right, providing essential links in explaining what has followed in the history of athletics during both the colonial and post-independence periods. Running in Kenya was never a *tabula rasa* upon which European movement culture could freely inscribe its designs absent any receptivity and input by Kenyans themselves. Understanding sport cannot be achieved simply by studying colonial agendas, ambitions and institutions in the absence of consideration of indigenous Kenyans' customary roles, relations and social values, which include masculinities and femininities. Pre-colonial Kenyan peoples held conceptions of gender and movement that were entirely compatible with those brought by colonialists.

Within the history of Kenyan sport, gender has played a critical role. Although denied opportunities to compete during the colonial period, female runners have raced in Kenya's national championships since the late 1950s and in every Olympic Games to which Kenya has sent a team since the women debuted in 1968.[57] Women were involved with defining and developing the set of practices and standards

[56] T. Cunningham, '"These, Our Games": Sport and the Church of Scotland Mission to Kenya, c. 1907-1938', (University of Edinburgh. MSc. thesis, 2013), p. 43.
[57] This does not include the Games of 1976 and 1980, which Kenya boycotted.

of running. Omitting gender from the history of sport prevents an understanding of how it emerged as a masculine institution and precludes understanding why this persisted. Studying gender enlarges understanding of Kenyan sport and returns women to histories that should include them.

Concepts of Gender and Masculinity in African History

Historians studying other topics have articulated similar arguments about how gender relations are historically formed at the intersection of local, international, cultural, political and economic forces. First, however, the experiences of African women were added to a historical record that had largely excluded them. From histories of women, gender emerged as a category of analysis.[58]

Contributions to the first wave in the 1970s and 1980s of collections and monographs on what was effectively African women's history (as opposed to gender history) came from a wide range of disciplines, including political science, economics, and anthropology. Hafkin and Bay's 1976 volume on *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change* was one pioneering attempt to provide specific examples of the roles women played in social systems from which they had been invisible, including slavery, the Protestant church and market trading.[59] Hay and Wright's early collection of essays on aspects of colonial law offered a starting point in recovering women's voices from the court record.[60]

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[58] J. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 91, No. 5 (1986), pp. 1053-1075.
[59] N. Hafkin and E. Bay (eds.), *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change* (Stanford, 1976). For women and slavery, see: C. Robertson and M. Klein (eds.), *Women and Slavery in Africa* (Madison, 1983); and M. Wright (ed.), *Strategies of Slaves and Women: Life Stories from East/Central Africa*, 1 (London, 1993).
[60] J. Hay and M. Wright (eds.), *African Women and the Law: Historical Perspectives* (Boston, 1982).

Ester Boserup's seminal 1970 publication *Women's Role in Economic Development* demonstrated that rural women's labour was central to African economies and warned against colonial development strategies that devalued their roles.[61] Her work has inspired significant research into women's economic contributions to agriculture.[62] Historians also criticised Marxist notions of class for their failure to take into account women's experience of work, which was considerably different from men's, notably in Bay's *Women and Work in Africa,* published in 1982, and Robertson and Berger's 1986 edited collection on *Women and Class in Africa*.[63]

Much of this research was concerned with the differential impact of colonialism on women as opposed to men and the ways in which the colonial state undermined women's status, authority and autonomy. As colonial states simultaneously attempted to benefit from the labour of the people they governed and to maintain social order, the status of women and gender relations changed dramatically. Scholars highlighted women's lack of political authority, their exclusion from opportunities in agriculture and land ownership and the gradual loss of customary rights.[64] Studies about women and the law emphasised how their social

[61] E. Boserup, *Woman's Role in Economic Development* (London, 1970).
[62] For work influenced by and dedicated to Boserup see: D. Bryceson (ed.), *Women Wielding the Hoe: Lessons from Rural Africa for Feminist Theory and Development Practice* (Oxford, 1995).
[63] E. Bay, *Women and Work in Africa* (Boulder, 1982); C. Robertson and I. Berger, *Women and Class in Africa* (New York, 1986).
[64] In addition to the work noted above, see S. Greene, *Gender, Ethnicity, and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast* (Portsmouth, 1996); and J. Allman, S. Geiger, and N. Musisi (eds.), *Women in African Colonial History* (Indiana, 2002). For work on gender and politics, see: J. van Allen, '"Sitting on a Man": Colonialism and the Lost Political Institutions of Igbo Women', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Special Issue: The Roles of African Women: Past, Present and Future (1972), pp. 165-181; For the impact of the individualisation of land titles on Kenyan women, see: M. Etienne and E. Leacock (eds.), *Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York, 1980), especially A. Okeyo, 'Daughters of the Lakes and Rivers: Colonization and the Land Rights of Luo Women'; and Oboler, *Women, Power, and Economic Change*.

and geographical mobility was curtailed when colonial courts designated women to be legal minors, an 'invention of tradition' that provided them with no direct recourse to law in their own right.[65] As Lonsdale put it, 'no matter how little we know of Kenya's household histories, it is nonetheless clear that colonial rule disturbed the bedrock issues of straightness and growth'.[66]

Yet colonialism was not the only cause of unequal access to power and resources. Based on her years of ethno-historical research among Maasai in Tanzania, Hodgson argues that contemporary gender relations are the result of a 'historically particular constellation of interactions' involving both British norms and previously existing Maasai ideas and practices, an argument that aligns with the assertions of James, McDevitt and Akyempong, as well as this thesis, that change, in sport and elsewhere, was never simply 'imposed'.[67]

Colonial administrators commoditised livestock, monetised the economy and targeted men for development interventions. But the ways in which people responded to these changes were rooted in a pre-existing division of the interconnected responsibilities of men and women into spatially separated, hierarchically gendered domains.[68] The many different previously existing forms of social and economic

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[65] M. Chanock, *Law, Custom and Social Order* (Cambridge, 1985). For specific cases: S. Hawkins, '"The Woman in Question": Marriage and Identity in the Colonial Courts of Northern Ghana, 1907-1954', in J. Allman, S. Geiger, and N. Musisi (eds.), *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Indiana, 2002), pp. 116-143; and D. Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion and Power: The Construction of Moral Discourse in Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1930* (Oxford, 1993)

[66] J. Lonsdale, 'Authority, Gender and Violence: The War Within Mau Mau's Fight for Land and Freedom', in E. S. Atieno Odhiambo and John Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration*, p. 52.

[67] D. Hodgson, 'Pastoralism, Patriarchy and History: Changing Gender Relations among Maasai in Tanganyika, 1890-1940', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 40, Is.1 (1999), p. 42. For other work that support these ideas, see: D. Hodgson and S. McCurdy, *"Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa* (Oxford, 2001); and M. Grosz-Ngate and O. Kokole (eds.), *Gendered Encounters: Challenging Cultural Boundaries and Social Hierarchies in Africa* (New York, 1997).

[68] Hodgson, 'Pastoralism', p. 43.

organisation mattered for new contexts and institutions, including athletics, in which gender was defined and its significance reconfigured.

In this regard, African allies that colonial rule required held a particularly pivotal role. Colonial rule and rural capitalism rested on African supporters who were also not averse to invoking 'customs' that bolstered their authority even as the practice of indirect rule also widened opportunities exclusively for them. Elizabeth Schmidt made this clear in her work on Shona women from the late eighteenth century to the start of the Second World War.[69] For a variety of reasons, including the fact that women's labour guaranteed food crops and that their marriages solidified kinship alliances, African chiefs and older men welcomed the Southern Rhodesian state's efforts to restrict women to the rural areas. In Kenya, the colonial state sought to maintain control by collaborating with some African men, exacerbating social difference and creating new sources of political power. Writing about the Maasai, Dorothy Hodgson notes that such policies allowed elder Maasai men not only to arbitrate community disputes but also to establish their new office as the centre of their peoples' interaction with the colonial state.[70] Among the Kikuyu in the 1940s, as Derek Peterson has described, wealthy older men seemed to have monopolised marriageable women, driving up brideprice and making it difficult for young men to embark upon and maintain stable marriages.[71] Bonnie Kettel explained how the British colonial government's appointment of prominent Tugen elders as chiefs and members of the Local Native Council contributed to reshaping power at the local

[69] E. Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939* (Portsmouth, 1992).
[70] Hodgson, Pastoralism, Patriarchy and History, p. 55.
[71] D. Peterson, 'Writing in Revolution: Independent Schooling and Mau Mau in Nyeri', in A. Odhiambo and J. Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration* (Oxford, 2003), especially pp. 83-88; and D. Peterson, 'Wordy Women: Gender Trouble and the Oral Politics of The East African Revival in Northern Gikuyuland', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 42 (2001), pp. 469-489.

level in the Rift Valley.[72] These political appointments that produced opportunities for economic gain from which women and young men were excluded also feed into John Lonsdale's powerful argument that to understand Mau Mau, one must recognise the aggravation of relations between genders and generations and how far the erosion of the possibility of 'respectable adulthood' ultimately endangered the colonial regime.[73]

Other historians explored the ways in which some women manipulated the assumptions and expectations within colonial institutions in their own interest.[74] Margot Lovett, for instance, in her essay on 'Gender Relations, Class Formation, and the Colonial State in Africa' argued that African women were active agents and often worked to maintain their economic autonomy, contesting the definition of African femininity that colonial authorities sought to impose.[75] Garcia Clark supports this in her discussion of the dynamics of marriage in colonial and present-day Asante, which draws attention to the gendered nature of colonialism and the centrality of African women's agency in the shaping of colonial societies.[76] More recently Brett Shadle, describing young Kisii women and men who were unwilling to accept marriage on

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[72] B. Kettel, 'The Commoditization of Women in Tugen (Kenya) Social Organization', in C. Robertson and I. Berger (eds.), *Women and Class in Africa* (New York, 1986), pp. 45-61.
[73] Lonsdale, 'Authority, Gender and Violence'. It is important also to note that it was in the regions closest to the colonial centre that 'politics of collaboration' became socially insupportable. These ideas are explored in greater depth in the next chapter.
[74] T. Zimudzi, 'African Women, Violent Crime and the Criminal Law in Colonial Zimbabwe, 1900-1952', *Journal of Southern African Studies,* Vol. 30 (2004), pp. 499-517; M. Wright, 'Justice, Women and the Social Order in Abercorn, Northern Rhodesia, 1897-1903', in M. Wright (ed.), *Strategies of Slaves and Women: Life Stories from East/Central Africa*, 1 (London, 1993), pp. 125-50; K. Mutongi, *Worries of the Heart: Widows, Family and Community in Kenya* (Chicago, 2007); S. Hynd, 'Deadlier than the Male? Women and the Death Penalty in Colonial Kenya and Nyasaland, c. 1920-1957', *Stichproben,* Vol. 12 (2007), pp. 13-33; M. Carotenuto, 'Repatriation in Colonial Kenya: African Institutions and Gendered Violence', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 45 (2012), pp. 9-28.
[75] M. Lovett, 'Gender Relations, Class Formation and the Colonial State', in J. Parpart and K. Staudt (eds.), *Women and the State in Africa* (Boulder, CO, 1985), pp. 23-46.
[76] G. Clark, *Onions are my Husband: Survival and Accumulation by West African Market Women* (Chicago, 1994).

senior men's terms, confirms the importance of the ability of women to manipulate fissures in what was a highly inegalitarian legal system.[77]

Within Kenyan scholarship, histories are increasingly understood as gendered processes yet masculinity is often invisible. Lynn Thomas' *The Politics of the Womb* is one example. Thomas takes reproduction as the frame of analysis for exploring the history of colonial enforcement of female initiation. The three themes on which she focuses are all central to the 'women's sphere': female initiation, pregnancy and childbirth.[78] Her writing, as well as White's work on prostitution, Pederson's on clitoridectomy and Kanogo's on *Womanhood in Colonial Kenya*, are all well-regarded publications that are similar in this regard.[79] Nor is the Kenyan literature atypical. As Nancy Rose Hunt observed, much scholarship on gender in African history has been framed through women's struggles and analysis of production and reproduction.[80] Understanding how new masculinities were invented, produced and resisted has been secondary.

Two exceptions stand out from the dearth of research on masculinities within Kenyan historiography. One is Luise White's analysis of Kikuyu Mau Mau fighters' autobiographies.[81] She looks at how British colonialists sought to control the movements of working African men by legislating what they would earn and where

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[77] B. Shadle, *'Girl Cases': Marriage and Colonialism in Gusiiland, Kenya, 1890-1970* (Portsmouth, 2006).
[78] L. Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (California, 2003), p. 4. Her title was chosen in reaction to Bayart's writing on *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly* (London, 1993), which does not discuss issues around reproduction, sexuality and gender.
[79] S. Pedersen, 'National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy-making', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Dec., 1991), pp. 647-80; L. White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago, 1990); T. Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya: 1900-1950* (Oxford, 2005).
[80] Hunt, 'Placing African Women's History'.
[81] L. White, 'Separating Men from Boys: Constructions of Gender, Sexuality, and Terrorism in Central Kenya, 1939-1959', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 23 (1990), pp. 1-25.

they might reside. She concludes these were attempts to create an African masculinity that mirrored the officials' own understanding of maleness. Her observations of colonial attempts to manipulate masculinity in other domains mirror those made by sport officials concerned with moulding sport and sportsmen according to the 'manliness' of athletics that had been ingrained in them as schoolboys and Oxbridge undergraduates.

Kenyan masculinities also featured in one study within Ouzgane and Morrell's *African Masculinities*.[82] Based on research carried out in rural Kisii and urban Dar-es-Salaam, Margarethe Silberschmidt observed that the idea of men as breadwinners and heads of household predominated in both places. Yet men were often unable to live up to these responsibilities, which required that women fill them and hence led to the breakdown of traditional roles. In light of the consequences of men's disempowerment, Silberschmidt argues that men have been affected by socio-economic change to a greater extent than women. Her work makes clear the need for greater awareness of what comprises masculine identity to complement what is known about female identity.

Studies of masculinities have, however, flourished within research on Southern Africa.[83] Since editing a special journal issue on 'Masculinities in Southern Africa' in 1998, historian Robert Morrell has galvanised scholars of that region to

[82] M. Silberschmidt, 'Poverty, Male Disempowerment and Male Sexuality: Rethinking Men and Masculinities in Rural and Urban East Africa', in L. Ouzgane and R. Morell (eds.), *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Basingstoke, 2005), pp. 172-189.

[83] G. Reid and L. Walker (eds.), *Men Behaving Differently: South African Men since 1994* (Cape Town, 2005); M. McCullers, '"We do it so that We Will be Men": Masculinity Politics in Colonial Namibia, 1915-49, *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 52 (2011), pp. 43-62; M. McKittrick, 'Forsaking their Fathers? Colonialism, Christianity, and Coming of Age in Ovamboland, Northern Namibia', in L. Lindsay and S. Miescher, M*en and Masculinities*, 33–51.

engage with the concept.[84] He attributes its expansion within South African scholarship to the global advance of gender research, which includes studying men from gendered perspectives, and to South Africa's understanding of itself as a site of unjust gender practices.[85]

One text that illuminates this is *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*, which Morrell co-edited. It involved English and French scholars from a range of disciplines, including education, sociology and anthropology.[86] In spite of its suggestively expansive title and significant contribution to Africanist scholarship, the volume also largely maintains southern Africa's 'academic hegemony' in the field of masculinities. Nine of the sixteen chapters are studies about the region; of the remainder, three chapters are devoted to Egypt while Guinea, Nigeria, Tanzania and Kenya receive one each.

Within this book and other works on African masculinities, Raeywn Connell's ideas about 'hegemonic masculinity' have been particularly influential.[87] Morrell most recently collaborated with experts of South African health, education and psychology to review the engagement of those disciplines with the idea of 'hegemonic masculinity'.[88] Commenting on its widespread and creative uses, they observed that it had been integrated into the South African literature in two broad ways. In some

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[84] Robert Morrell (ed.), *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, Special Issue on Masculinities in Southern Africa (Dec., 1998). See also his contribution to that issue: R. Morrell, 'Of Boys and Men: Masculinity and Gender in Southern African Studies', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (1998), pp. 605-630.
[85] R. Morrell *et al*, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Reviewing the Gendered Analysis of Men's Power in South Africa', *South African Review of Sociology*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (2013), p. 15.
[86] L. Ouzgane and R. Morrell (eds.), *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (New York/Scottsville, 2005).
[87] R. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley, 1994); R. Connell and J. Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept'. *Gender and Society*, Vol. 19, No. 6 (2005), pp. 829–859). For pioneering historical work using the concept to explore gender relations in another part of the British empire: M. Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, UK, 1995)
[88] R. Morrell,, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', p. 14.

cases, it was the analytical device that connected empirical findings with a dialogue about South African cultures. In other instances, hegemonic masculinity had been used both to clarify the South African context as well as to engage more broadly with issues of theory.[89] Morrell's own scholarship consistently applies Connell's concept of 'hegemonic masculinities', which advances understanding of elite boys-only schooling and how such education contributed to the development of men's power and to strengthening masculinities in colonial Natal.[90]

Connell's major contribution has been to create a theory that allows for a dynamic understanding of gender, emphasising the importance of both femininity and masculinity in its historical development. Trained as an historian but writing in the discipline of sociology, Connell took as her starting point the unequal relationship between men and women, and the notion that masculinity and femininity are relational constructions (one cannot be understood without reference to the other). She also points out that in any society, there is no single, universal masculinity, or femininity for that matter. This thesis agrees with this construct. Rather than a single universal masculinity, there is a range of masculinities that are 'not fixed character types but configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships' and arguably, which are can be constructed by women as well as men.[91] Class, race, sexuality and other factors are also constitutive of the form that masculinity takes and not all masculinities are equally powerful.

[89] Ibid, p. 7
[90] R. Morrell, *From Boys to Gentlemen: Settler Masculinity in Colonial Natal, 1880–1920* (Pretoria, 2001); R. Morrell, 'Masculinity and the White Boys Boarding Schools of Natal, 1880–1930', *Perspectives in Education*, Vol. 151 (1994), pp. 27–51.
[91] Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 81.

Hegemonic masculinity is the form of masculinity that is dominant in a given society – 'the currently most honoured way of being a man'.[92] Connell argued that hegemonic masculinity was a collective pattern of practices that allow some men to exert power over women and other men. Different categories of masculinity, such as 'subordinate' and 'complicit', involve the collusion of people born as men but whose behaviours do not fully align with hegemonic masculinity.[93] These men nevertheless benefit from the privileges accorded to gendered hierarchies. As Cleaver points out, the processes that confer privilege on one group are often invisible to those upon whom the privilege is conferred.[94]

Lindsay and Miescher's edited volume *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* highlights some of the limits of 'hegemonic masculinity'. Despite general agreement about white superiority, the politics of white southern Africa prevented the formation of a unified colonial masculinity.[95] English, Dutch and German colonialisms competed and as Lindsay and Miescher observe, 'it was not always obvious which notions of masculinity were dominant, or hegemonic, since understandings of gender depended on the specific context and different actors'

[92] Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', p. 832.
[93] Connell, *Masculinities*, p. 73. Another type is 'oppositional' (or protest). Transgender activists disagree with the idea that a man retains male privilege in society even if he chooses to live as a woman. Scholars of transgender studies approach gender not as a social category distinct from biological sex but as a 'global system within which…forms of human beings were produced, enmeshed and modified along multiple axes of signification'. See S. Stryker, '(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies' in S. Stryker and S. Vhittle (eds.), *The Transgender Studies Reader* (New York, 2006), p. 8. A key text is S. Stone, 'The *Empire* Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto', in S. Stryker and S. Vhittle (eds.), *The Transgender Studies Reader* (New York, 2006), pp. 221-36. See also J. Serano, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity* (CA, 2007).
[94] F. Cleaver (ed.), *Masculinities Matter! Men, Gender and Development* (London, 2002), p. xii.
[95] L. Lindsay and S. Mierscher (eds.), *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Portsmouth, NH, 2003). See also L. Ouzgane and R. Morrell (eds.), *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (New York, 2005), p. 8-9.

"subject positions"'.[96] Certainly, the divided nature of South African society demonstrates the necessity of deploying the concept of hegemonic masculinities in the plural.[97]

Some sociologists and gender researchers have also criticised the tendency in current research on men and masculinities 'to marginalise women and femininities, and recreate men, manliness and masculinity as the big central issue'.[98] This version of androcentrism – the focus on men or men's interests - arose partly in reaction to the sustained emphasis on women and women's interests in studies of gender. Now, however, as Holter writes, what is needed is 'a better integration of the gender equality dimension in the research framework of men and masculinities, including a more heterosocial focus and a greater awareness of implicit androcentrism'.[99] Within Africanist scholarship, *Men and Masculinities* is a good example of this.[100] In spite of its title, it pays much attention to women. The extent to which women feature prominently in much of the analysis illustrates that masculinity does not have to lose sight of the role that women have historically played.

This thesis also attempts to avoid a one-sided perspective by recognising that masculinities in Kenyan running were constructed congruent with international sport

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[96] Lindsay and Mierscher, *Men and Masculinities*, p. 6.
[97] Barker and Ricardo have also written about masculinities in rural and urban settings, between ethnicities, and that specific and different types of masculinities are associated with farmers, warriors and cattle herders: See G. Barker and C. Ricardo, *Young Men and the Construction of Masculinity in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, Conflict, and Violence* (Washington, DC, 2005). For studies of multiple masculinities in contexts outside of Africa, see: S. Dudnik, K. Hagemann, and J. Tosh (eds.), *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History* (Manchester, UK, 2004); J. Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire* (Harlow, 2005); and S. Wieringa, E. Blackwood, and A. Bhaiya, *Women's Sexualities and Masculinities in a Globalizing Asia* (Basingstoke, 2009).
[98] O. Holter, 'Social Theories for Researching Men and Masculinities', in M. Kimmel, J. Hearn and R. Connell (eds.), *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (Thousand Oaks, CA, 2005), p. 16.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Lindsay and Miescher (eds.), *Men and Masculinities*.

as well as with femininities in local communities. In so doing, it presents case studies in which some female runners negotiated gendered power structures and their attendant constraints by adopting the culturally 'most honoured' form of masculinity. In this process, they became complicit in sustaining the existing hegemonic model.

This 'gender transgression zone', to which McGuffey and Rich refer in the context of an American youth summer camp, involves any behaviours or activities that have the potential to be seen as violating gender norms in some way.[101] It is the social space between what is seen as appropriate for women and appropriate for men. In their study of the girls who sought to participate in activities understood as 'male', including sport, most were marginalised. Marginalising girls preserved the idea that the activity was 'male'. Treating a persistent and accomplished minority as 'honorary boys' required that they give up their femininity. To do otherwise – to retain femininity while participating fully in a male activity - would have jeopardised the construction of hegemonic masculinity. This is what happened to talented female Kenyan runners as they matured and sought to compete in athletics. Most capitulated under duress and gave up sport. Those who did not chose instead to give up their femininity, particularly the ideals of wifehood, in order to compete.

Social organisation in pre-colonial communities in Kenya also provides a precedent for this conception of female athletes' behaviour. Gender inversion was possible in that women could become 'female husbands'. Much has been written about women-to-women marriages as a strategy for women to control resources.[102]

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[101] C. McGuffey and B. Rich, 'Playing in the Gender Transgression Zone', *Gender and Society*, Vol. 13, Is. 5 (1999), pp. 608–27. Other studies on this theme include M. Messner, 'Boyhood, Organized Sports and the Construction of Masculinities', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, Vol. 18 (1990), pp. 416-44 and B. Thorne, *Gender Play: Girls and Boys in School* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1993).

[102] Oboler, *Women*, pp. 69-88; Bujra, 'Women "Entrepreneurs"', p. 231-2; J. Peristiany, *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis* (London, 1939), pp. 81-2; C. Obbo, 'Dominant Male Ideology and Female Options: Three East African Case Studies', *Africa,* Vol. 46, No. 4

Tietmeyer gathered material on 'women marriages' in more than forty different African societies.[103] As Oyèrónké Oyewùmí and Ifi Amadiume have pointed out, such institutions challenge the universality of western gender constructs.[104]

Krige defined such woman marriages as an 'institution by which it is possible for a woman to give bridewealth for, and marry, another woman, over whom she has full control (including offspring), delegating to a male genitor the duties of procreation'.[105] To Obbo, woman-to-woman marriage and migration were the two main viable alternatives offering women greater independence than marriage to a man.[106] Though only a minority of women among the Kalenjin followed this path, the institution is important for illustrating both the clear-cut demarcation of what it meant to be a man or a woman as well as how gender role fluidity allowed a small minority of women to operate as men in predominately male arenas.

The process required a woman to take a wife and stand as a 'father' to children if she desired. One woman paid bridewealth to the other to become the 'female husband' and any children born to either woman belonged to this lineage. As an economic and residential arrangement that could enhance women's resources, a woman-to-woman marriage was usually between women otherwise unable to lead

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(1976), pp. 372-9; J. Cadigan, 'Woman-to-Woman Marriage: Practices and Benefits in Sub-Saharan Africa', *Journal of Comparative Family Studies,* Vol. 29, No. 1 (1998), pp. 89-98. For studies of woman-to-woman marriage on the Nuer, Lovendu and Igbo see, respectively: E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Kinship and Marriage Among the Nuer* (London, 1951); Krige, 'Woman Marriage with Special Reference to the Lovedu', *Africa,* Vol. xliv, Is. I (1974), pp. 11-37; and I. Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*, 2nd ed. (London, 1998).

[103] In S. Wieringa, 'Women Marriages and Other Same-sex Practices: Historical Reflections on African Women's Same-sex Relations', in R. Morgan and S. Wieringa (eds.), *Tommy Boys, Lesbian Men and Ancestral Wives: Female Same-sex Practices in Africa* (Johannesburg, 2005), p. 283.

[104] O. Oyèrónké (ed.), *African Gender Studies: A Reader* (New York, 2004), Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands*.

[105] Krige, 'Woman Marriage', p. 11.

[106] Obbo, 'Dominant Male Ideology', p. 386.

satisfying lives in a conventional marriage. Women in such marriages could be of childbearing age or beyond it.

The tradition of 'female husbands' demonstrates that categories of gender could matter more than being anatomically male or female. By reshaping their gender and behaving 'as a man', some women were able to access masculine domains without disrupting entrenched cultural perceptions of what it meant to be male or female.

Studying gender fluidity, specifically how women enacted masculinities, advances theories of masculinities that usually consider only men and expands a literature on women that has tended to focus on conventionally feminine domains. As discussed in the first half of this chapter, this analysis is grounded in the understanding that the structural limitations on female participation in sport were the consequence of mutually reinforcing gender practices between African and European cultures. By focusing on the handful of women who accessed international athletics after independence, pioneering female runners can be seen to reflect the intersection of pre-colonial gender role fluidity with egalitarian ideals that were emerging outside of Africa. This kind of gender inversion in sport, not unlike woman-to-woman marriages, empowered a few individuals but left traditional gender boundaries largely intact.

Conclusion

This thesis brings together gender studies, African studies, sport and history to provide original insight into the changing processes of identity formation within a particular sport-related context: running in Kenya. Literature on sport in Kenya has

not engaged with issues of gender while Kenyanist scholarship on gender ignores sport. It takes the history of women's running as its central narrative. However, the overall focus is on gender, not women, because in sport, women have long been understood to be in a subordinate relationship to men. In reality, men's athletics history, like women's, does not stand by itself. A full perspective requires attention to both.

Paying attention to men's identities as well as women's is essential for engaging with the full range of gender relations. Masculinity has too often been assumed to be fixed. In fact, it is socially constructed and fluid. Examination of what Phil Corrigan called 'masculinity as right' must be undertaken in order to answer fundamental questions about how the exclusion of women from running in Kenya began, was perpetuated and challenged.[107] Studying the masculinisation of Kenyan running during the colonial and post-colonial period sheds light on colonial politics and legacies. Understanding these implications and studying gender in terms of both femininities and masculinities is essential, and not just for analysing the history of athletics in Kenya.

The world of sport deserves a larger place in historical studies because of its importance in the modern world. The increasing dominance of Kenyan women as the world's fastest runners, as they showed most recently at the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow underscores the significance of the study of gender and sport.

[107] P. Corrigan, *Social Forms/Human Capacities: Essays on Authority and Difference* (London, 1990), Ch. 13.

Chapter Two: Researching the Rift Valley

Introduction

Gender history research that has focused on Kenya seldom considers the significance of sport. Nonetheless, these studies do offer frameworks and approaches through which women's participation in athletics, and the limitations they faced may be examined. Oral history, in particular, offers an effective way to study gender as a category of historical analysis.[1] As Kathleen Canning declared in *Gender History in Practice*, 'the narratives and life stories that form the raw material in the study of historical memory bring gender strikingly into the open'.[2] Particularly within African studies, to Luise White, Stephan Miescher and David Cohen, 'no element has served as a clearer signature of and for African historiography' than the development of oral history as a methodology and source.[3] However, oral testimony has limitations and it can be a problematic source.[4]

[1] For the seminal article introducing 'gender as a category of historical analysis', see: J. Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 91, No. 5. (Dec., 1986), pp. 1053-1075.
[2] K. Canning, *Gender History in Practice* (Ithaca, NY, 2006), p. 59.
[3] L. White, S. Miescher and D. Cohen (eds.), *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Indiana, 2001), p. 2. Luise White, Jean Davison, Cora Presley and Tabitha Kanogo are pioneers in employing oral history approaches to investigate questions of gender in Kenya. See: L. White, *The Comforts of Home* (Chicago, 1990); C. Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion, and Social Change in Kenya* (Boulder, 1992); J. Davison, *Voices from Mutira: Lives of Rural Gikuyu Women* (Boulder, 1988); and T. Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya, 1900-50* (London, 2005).
[4] See for instance, G. Minkley and C. Rasool, 'Orality, Memory and Social History in South Africa,' in S. Nuttall and C. Coetzee (eds.), *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa* (Cape Town, 1998).

This history thus emerges through triangulating interviews with media reports, archived documents and early ethnographies. Over 3000 newspaper articles were consulted in the course of research and 87 people were interviewed. Furthermore, as this chapter argues, incorporating analysis of ethnicity alongside study of other social identities is essential to making a contribution to literatures that have hitherto neglected women's participation in sport. Although this thesis mainly focuses on gender, attention must be given to the role played by ethnicity in order to know more about who the Kalenjin people are and the values and ideas on which their community is based.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first sets out the Rift Valley as the main research setting and introduces the theories about ethnicity to which subsequent chapters of the thesis will refer. The literature on ethnicity in Africa is vast and, as Anderson and Cheeseman have observed, the emphasis placed on Kenyan (and African) ethnicity has at times obscured the significance of other salient identities, including gender.[5] Also long overlooked within the literature on ethnicity in Kenya, Kalenjin history has received significant attention from David Anderson and more recently Gabrielle Lynch.[6] Drawing upon their work, the chapter surveys the

[5] For a recent survey of the literature see: R. Waller, 'Ethnicity and Identity', in R. Reid and J. Parker (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern African History* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 94-113. See also: D. Anderson and N. Cheeseman, 'An Introduction to African Politics', in D. Anderson, N. Cheeseman and A. Scheibler (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of African Politics* (Abingdon, 2013), p. 6; and G. Lynch, 'The Politics of Ethnicity', in D. Anderson, N. Cheeseman and A. Scheibler (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of African Politics* (Abingdon, 2013), pp. 95-107.

[6] Anderson's writing on the Kalenjin is extensive but see, for instance: D. Anderson, *Eroding the Commons*; D. Anderson, 'Black Mischief: Crime, Protest and Resistance in Colonial Kenya', *Historical Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (1993), pp. 851-77; D. Anderson, 'Stock Theft and Moral Economy in Colonial Kenya', *Africa*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (1986), pp. 399-416; and D. Anderson, 'Visions of the Vanquished Prophets and Colonialism in Kenya's Western Highlands' in D. Anderson and D. Johnson (eds.), *Revealing Prophets: Prophecy in Eastern African History* (London, 1995), pp. 164-194. For Lynch's monograph on the social construction of Kalenjin ethnicity: G. Lynch, *I Say to You: Ethnic Politics and the Kalenjin in Kenya (*Chicago, 2011). For other historical studies of particular Kalenjin sub-groups see: B.

history of the Kalenjin before arguing that Londsale's theory of moral ethnicity is a useful lens through which to think through internal debates about gender within this community.

The remainder of the chapter explores the methods and sources that inform this thesis. The second section evaluates the approach taken to gathering oral testimonies and to conducting research in Nairobi and the Rift Valley archives. Issues of memory, identity and the power of the state are discussed. The final section situates Kenya's two major dailies, *The Nation* and *The Standard* within a larger historical context, analysis of which reveals that male and female identities were articulated explicitly while discourses around ethnicity and ethnic relations were muted. Gender was not a basis for politicisation to the same extent as 'tribe', which freed it for public debate. This reinforces the fact that taking into account both gender and ethnicity in the exploration of sport reveals social processes that cannot be captured wholly by looking at either dimension separately.

The Ethnic Identities of Kenya's 'Running Tribe'

The Rift Valley highlands of East Africa are celebrated as 'the cradle of world class runners', 'the epicentre of the endurance world' and 'the world's foremost manufacturer of elite middle- and long-distance running talent'.[7] The Rift Valley cuts

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Kipkorir, *People of the Rift Valley: Kalenjin* (London, 1978); A. Matson, *Nandi Resistance to British Rule 1890-1906* (Nairobi, 1972); D. Ellis, 'The Nandi Protest of 1923 in the Context of African Resistance to Colonial Rule in Kenya', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 17, Is. 4 (1976), pp. 555-75; H. Mwanzi, 'Koitalel arap Samoei and Kipchomber arap Koilege: Southern Kalenjin Rulers and their Encounters with British Imperialism', in B. Kipkorir (ed.), *Imperialism and Collaboration in Colonial Kenya* (Nairobi, 1980), pp. 15-36; C. Youe, 'Settler Capital and the Assault on the Squatter Peasantry in Kenya's Uasin Gishu District, 1942-1963', *African Affairs*, Vol. 87 (1998), pp. 393-418; and R. Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change: The Nandi of Kenya* (Stanford, 1985).

[7] P. Nearman, 'Kenya's Rudisha Refocuses After Record Year', *New York Times*, 2 March

through Kenya and Ethiopia, and the majority of successful Kenyan and Ethiopian runners have long been clustered geographically within this high-altitude region.

The Rift Valley corridor is divided into three different ecological zones with distinct production systems: the highlands, valley floor and an escarpment zone separating the two. Formerly part of the colonial 'white highlands', the highland plateau has high and reliable rainfall patterns, comfortable temperatures and rich soil suitable for farming.[8] A forested escarpment zone separates the plateau from the marginal areas below. The steeply sloped hills are rugged and much of the most fertile land has been terraced since the 1950s to minimise the effects of erosion.[9] The valley basin is characterised by land that has an inhospitable appearance and harsh climatic conditions in which rainfall is erratic. The different climatic zones produce a variety of crops: from pyrethrum and wool in the coolest areas and tea, potatoes and maize in the rest of the highlands, and fruits like mangoes and oranges in the warmer valley below.

Located northwest of Nairobi, the region is principally populated by the Kalenjin, a recently formed ethnic community of several sub-groups. Though they are but one of the forty-two ethnic groups in the country, of which no single group comprises more than 22 per cent of the population, Kenya's Kalenjin runners have enjoyed staggering and disproportionate success at the international level of major running competitions.[10] Representing a country that comprises some 0.5 per cent of the total world population, Kenyan men won eighteen straight world cross-country

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2011, B14; M. Rosen, 'A Journey to Iten', *Boston Globe*, 5 April 2008, p. B10; B. Dabbs, 'Paths to the Marathon in a Small Kenyan Town', *New York Times*, May 2012, p. B17.

[8] S. Chebet and T. Dietz, *Climbing the Cliff: A History of the Keiyo* (Eldoret, 2000), p. 13.

[9] D. Anderson, *Eroding the Commons: The Politics of Economy in Baringo, Kenya 1890-1963* (Oxford, 2002), p. 14.

[10] Officially, there are 42 ethnic groups in Kenya. However, this is contested. When delegates at the 2003 National Constitutional Conference were asked to compile a list of Kenya's ethnic communities, the number increased to 94. See G. Lynch, *I Say to You: Ethnic Politics and the Kalenjin in Kenya* (Chicago, 2011), p. 191.

team championships from 1986 onwards, with only Ethiopia eventually breaking the stranglehold in 2004.[11] Within this streak, John Manners calculated that:

> In eight of the twelve winning years, if only the Kalenjin runners had competed, they would still have taken the team title. I contend that this record marks the greatest geographical concentration of achievement in the annals of sport.[12]

Manners also estimates that the Kalenjin, with a population of around three million, which at the time of the 1989 census accounted for approximately 11 per cent of the total Kenyan population, won about 75 per cent of the countries' medals at major international athletics competitions and account for half of the top-ten times in the eight endurance races contested at the Olympics.[13] Between 1963 and 1975, all of Kenya's 45 Olympic and Commonwealth Games medals were won by Kalenjin or Kisii runners.[14] In the Olympic Games between Kenya's independence in 1963 and the mid-1990s, male Kalenjin distance runners won nearly three times as many medals and three times as many gold medals in track distances from 800 metres to 10,000 metres as competitors from other countries and other parts of Kenya, as shown in the following chart:

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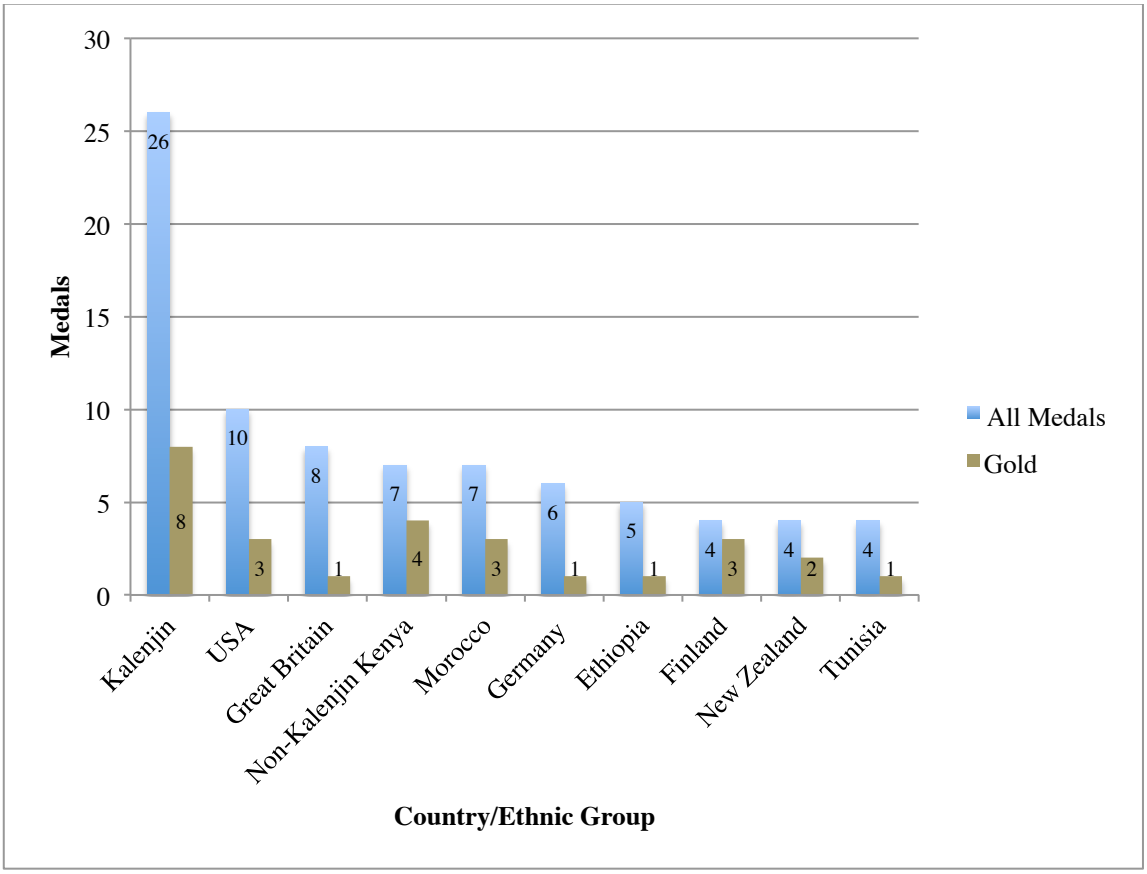
[11] The cross-country championships were inaugurated in 1973. During the seventeen years before 2000, three Kenyan men won twelve individual titles. John Ngugi won five times between 1986 and 1992, William Segei won twice in 1993 and 1994, and previous marathon world record holder Paul Tergat won five straight titles between 1995 and 1999.

[12] J. Manners, 'Kenya's Running Tribe', *The Sports Historian,* Vol. 17, No. 2 (November, 1997), pp. 14-27. See also R. Mayes, *The Cybernetics of Kenyan Running* (Durham, NC, 2005), p. 5.

[13] J. Manners, 'Raiders from the Rift Valley: Cattle Raiding and Distance Running in East Africa', in Y. Pitsalidis *et al* (eds.), *East African Running: Towards a Cross-Disciplinary Perspective* (London, 2009), pp. 40-50. As a comparison, at the time of the 1989 census, the Kikuyu accounted for 21 percent, Luhya at 14 percent, Luo at 12 percent, Kamba at 11 percent, Kisii at 8 percent and Meru at 5 percent. The 1999 census omitted ethnic data but results from 2009 reveal that the Kalenjin now constitute 14 per cent of the population. See Lynch, *I Say to You*, Kindle Locations 111 and 113.

[14] J. Manners, 'In Search of an Explanation', in D. Prokop (ed.), *The African Running Revolution* (Mountain View, CA, 1975), p. 26.

Figure 2.1 Medals, Men's Track Events 800 Metres to 10,000 Metres – Olympic Games, 1964 to 1996



Source: J. Manners, 'Kenya's Running Tribe', *The Sports Historian*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (1997), p. 16. Note – this chart excludes the boycotted Games of 1976 and 1980.

A recent study published in 2014 aimed to investigate the ethnicity of Kenya's most successful international runners, tracking this over the period of their international emergence and current dominance.[15] By looking at male track distance events from the 800 metres upwards from all the major global athletics championships from 1964 to 2013, and the annual Top-25 world marathon performances since 1990, the authors found that the well-documented dominance of African distance runners is primarily a Kenyan phenomenon, driven by the Kalenjin, and in particular, the Nandi sub-ethnic group.

[15] R. Tucker, V. Onywera, J. Santos-Concejero, 'Analysis of the Kenyan Distance Running Phenomenon', *International Journal of Sports Physiology Performance* [Epub ahead of print] (2014), see: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25115138.

For most people within and outside Kenya, the Kalenjin constitute a recognised ethnic group; however, as mention of the running success of the particular Nandi sub-ethnic group implies, categorising 'the Kalenjin' can be subjective and predicated upon the complex and divided character of ethnic identities. Today, the Kalenjin are a confederation of constituent peoples that share a range of cultural elements, speak dialects of a common language and are concentrated in and around the farming lands of the former White Highlands.

The catalogue of subgroups is a matter of debate.[16] The major clusters of Kalenjin-speakers in Kenya are commonly listed as the Keiyo, Kipsigis, Marakwet, Nandi, Pokot and Tugen. They are the largest ethnic group in Bomet, Kericho, Baringo, Koibatek, Keiyo, Marakwet and West Pokot Districts in the Rift Valley Province and Mount Elgon District in Western Province and have a significant presence in Trans Nzoia and Nakuru.[17] They also constitute the principal population in Uasin Gishu, which includes Eldoret, though it is a more heterogeneous mix of ethnic groups.[18]

[16] The 2003 National Constitutional Conference named 13 Kalenjin sub-groups: Bong'omek, Elkony, Keiyo, Kipsigis, Lembus, Marakwet, Nandi, Ogiek, Pokot, Sabaot, Sengwer, Terik and Tugen. However, the Lembus are generally considered part of the Tugen while the Elkony and Bong-omek are conjoined with the larger Saboat community. The position of the Ogiek is problematic since most speak a Kalenjin-related dialect but have a history of permanent residence in forested areas, leaving their position contested. See G. Lynch, 'Histories of Association and Difference: The Construction and Negotiation of Ethnicity', in D. Branch, N. Cheeseman and L. Gardner (eds.), *Our Turn to Eat: Kenyan Politics since 1950* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 177-198; and G. Lynch, 'Negotiating Ethnicity: Identity Politics in Contemporary Kenya', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 33, No. 107 (2006), pp. 385-410. See also D. Anderson, *Eroding the Commons: Politics of Ecology in Baringo, 1890-1963* (Oxford, 2002), p. 17.

[17] Administrative demarcations changed during the colonial and post-colonial period, and the Constitution of 2010 established a new system of county governments. Following Lynch, the districts refer to the units that existed from post-independence to pre-2002. Lynch, *I Say to You*, p. 3.

[18] Lynch, *I Say to You*, p. 3.

Long before the onset of colonialism, the Rift Valley served as the north-south conduit for the migration of the peoples who would become the Kalenjin.[19] According to Richard Waller, the ancestors of the communities that today inhabit western Kenya arrived in the present Rift Valley Province and on the plains of the Uasin Gishu Plateau in several waves of migration.[20] Gideon Were considers that Kalenjin-speaking groups were in the vicinity of Mount Elgon at the beginning of the seventeenth century.[21] Kipkorir believes that they came from a 'generally Northern direction, probably from the south of what is now Sudan'.[22] They followed the Rift Valley floor, and Mount Kenya served as a 'distant beacon in their migration'.[23]

By the early twentieth century, the Pokot, Marakwet, Keiyo and Tugen inhabited the western escarpment of the Northern Rift Valley; the Nandi and Kigsigis occupied the upland areas to the southwest of the Uasin Gishu plateau and behind the Mau escarpment, respectively; and the Sebei had moved to the eastern slopes of Mount Elgon, in Uganda.[24] The areas of forest separating the southern Tugen and Keiyo from the Nandi and Kipsigis were periodically used by all these peoples and were permanently occupied by small numbers of Kalenjin-speaking Ogeik, making the Kalenjin-speaking areas virtually contiguous and the forest a particularly contested site of ethnicity.[25]

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[19] R. Hennings, *African Morning* (London, 1951), p. 13; Kipkorir, *People of the Rift Valley*, p. 5; A. Hollis, *The Nandi, their Language and Folklore* (Oxford, 1909), pp. 1-2. See also: W. Ochieng', *An Outline History of the Rift Valley of Kenya up to AD 1900* (Nairobi, 1975); H. Mwanzi, *A History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi, 1977); and B. Walter, *The Territorial Expansion of the Nandi in Kenya* (Athens, 1970).

[20] R. Waller, 'Ecology, Migration and Expansion in East Africa', *African Affairs,* Vol. 84 (1985), pp. 347-370.

[21] G. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya: c. 1500-1930* (Nairobi, 1968), p. 190.

[22] Kipkorir, *People of the Rift Valley*, p. 10.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Anderson, 'Stock Theft and Moral Economy', p. 400.

[25] For discussion of other Kalenjin sub-groups in Western Kenya not mentioned in the text above, namely, the Endorois, usually regarded as a sub-section of the Tugen, see: Anderson, *Eroding the Commons*, pp. 298-9; and for the Ogiek (or Ogiik), who claim distinction from

As Waller cautions, although the very broadest outlines are perceptible, much of the world that these early African pioneers built will never be known in detail.[26] People lived in small, loosely organised communities that interacted through trade and marriage as well as cattle raiding and warfare. Tensions were defused through the workings of traditional systems of land tenure, which were flexible and fluid. Land was plentiful, and new space could be opened up when necessary, thus making a large number of family and dependents the measurements of wealth and power.

The situation changed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the arrival of British colonialists and white settlers. The territory became a British Protectorate in 1895. In 1920, the region was declared a colony, a status it retained until 12 December 1963 when Kenya regained its independence as a self-governing state. During the colonial period, Britain not only expropriated millions of acres of territory for white settlers but it also forced indigenous peoples to live in reserves located on inferior lands. These separate and allegedly ethnically delineated administrative units joined together categories of ethnicity and land 'as two sides of the same coin'.[27] The commercialisation of land and establishment of the colonial capitalist economy also spurred inequalities along lines of ethnicity as well as race and gender. Formal education became a political instrument in these political,

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the Sabaot, and the Sengwer, regarded as a sub-section of the Marakwet or Pokot, see: Lynch, 'Negotiating Ethnicity'.

[26] Waller, 'Ecology', p. 349. What is known comes largely from anthropological material: A. Hollis, *The Nandi: Their Language and Folklore* (Oxford, 1909); M. Beech, *The Suk: Their Language and Folklore* (Oxford, 1911); M. Beech, 'Sketch of Elgeyo Law', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 20, No. 79 (1921), pp. 195-203; J. Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya* (London, 1927); J. Peristiany, *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis* (London, 1939); Hennings, *African Morning*; GWB Huntingford and C. Bell, *East African Background* (London, 1945); GWB. Huntingford, *Nandi Work and Culture* (London, 1950); GWB Huntingford, *The Nandi of Kenya: Tribal Control in a Pastoralist Society* (London, 1953); I. Orchardson, *The Kipsigis* (Nairobi, 1961). A useful overview can be found in Anderson, *Eroding the Commons*, especially Chapter One: Baringo in the Nineteenth Century, pp. 23-47.

[27] K. Kanyinga, '*The Land Question in Kenya: Struggles, Accumulation and Changing Politics',* Unpublished PhD dissertation, Roskilde University (1998), p. 48.

economic and cultural shifts. Of particular significance for this thesis, men gained disproportionate access relative to women to these highly transformative domains.

In the final years of colonial rule, leaders from the Rift Valley consciously sought to form a closer sense of community among what had been autonomous groups, hitherto referred to as the 'Nandi-speaking peoples', under a single name: Kalenjin. Gabrielle Lynch argues that the Kalenjin provide perhaps the best example in the Kenyan context of an ethnic community structured by the colonial context but consciously constructed by Africans. In writing *I Say to You: Ethnic Politics and the Kalenjin in Kenya*, Lynch shows this ethnic amalgamation was predicated on the twin processes of European conceptions of 'tribal Africa' and African imaginings, specifically the attractiveness of expanding the sense of kinship among 'Nandi-speakers' during the power struggles among Kenya's ethnic groups in the late-colonial period.[28]

The choice of the word Kalenjin for collective identification first took place among students at the Alliance High School in Nairobi.[29] In 1944, fourteen 'Nandi-speaking' students at the elite all-male boarding school decided that their constituent sub-groups should share one word that would easily identify them. They picked 'Kalenjin', meaning 'I say to you', because the phrase had been used frequently during the vernacular radio broadcasts of World War II.[30] The students established the first 'Kalenjin Union' as a political organisation at Alliance. Another Kalenjin Union was established at Eldoret in 1948.[31] The 1949 Annual Report for Uasin Gishu

[28] Lynch, *I Say to You*, especially Chapter One, 'Creating a Community from Nandi Speakers to Kalenjin'.
[29] For more detailed accounts of this history, see: Anderson, *Eroding the Commons*, p. 19; Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*, p. 18; Lynch, *I Say to You*, Kindle Location 548.
[30] A Nandi, John arap Chemallan has been credited with using the term during his radio broadcasts to the 'Nandi-speaking' troops.
[31] KNA/DC/UG/1/2/1949, '1949 Uasin Gishu Annual Report'.

described it as the 'Kalenjin, or Nandi, Elgeyo [Keiyo] and Kipsigis, Union', an indication of the liminal nature of this identity at the time.[32] Other cultural markers that helped to strengthen the 'Kalenjin' as a political and ethnic identity were radio broadcasts featuring Kalenjin talk shows and music pieces, a monthly magazine *Kalenjin* that appeared in 1954 and the standardisation of local dialects through the production of a 'Kalenjin Bible'.[33]

Athletics also contributed to the consolidation of the Kalenjin ethnic identity through events like the 'Kalenjin Games', organised in Eldoret in 1957.[34] This continues to be the case today as the notion of Kalenjin as both 'winners' and 'warriors' retains a connection to their sporting achievements, with two-time Olympian Kipchoge Keino widely regarded as the 'father of Kenyan track'.[35]

According to Lynch, the driving force for this amalgamation was the fear that the fragmented communities of linguistically similar 'Nandi-speakers' would find themselves marginalised to the benefit of more cohesive and larger communities.[36] As events in Kenya progressed towards independence, these political organisations and identities coalesced and helped to catalyse the emergence of a common ethnic identity across the various 'Nandi-speaking' sub-groups. Since the new Kalenjin identity had encapsulated, rather than replaced, existing ethnic identities, people were able to

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[32] KNA/DC/UG/1/2/1949, '1949 Uasin Gishu Annual Report'.
[33] Kipkorir, *People of the Rift Valley*, p. 2; Lynch, *Our Turn to Eat*, p. 181. As a benchmark, the Kikuyu Bible's New Testament appeared in 1926 and the Old Testament in 1939, in J. Lonsdale, 'Contests of Time: Kikuyu Historiography, Old and New', in A. Harneit-Sievers (ed.), *A Place in the World: Local Historiographies from African and South Asia* (Leiden, 2002), p. 215.
[34] KNA/NDI/AR/1957, '1957 Nandi Annual Report'.
[35] B. Wambugu, 'Olympians who Brought Kenya Fame and Glory', *The Nation*, 7 August 2008, p. 29.
[36] The extent to which Kalenjin dialects are similar should not be overstated. For instance, Anderson has pointed out that the Tugen dialect varies markedly from north to south throughout Baringo district and that this reflects a wider pattern of dialect variability evident among all the major clusters of Kalenjin-speakers in Kenya. See: Anderson, *Eroding the Commons*, p. 17.

continue to assert differences from, and solidarity with, the whole, depending on their relation to each 'imagined community', supporting Waller's assertion that ethnicities are 'in an endless process of transformation'.[37]

Colonial rule officially ended in Kenya in 1963 when the British handed control to Jomo Keyatta and the Kenya African National Union (KANU).[38] Kenyatta had returned to Kenya from Britain in 1947 after living there for sixteen years. During his time in England, he studied anthropology at the London School of Economic (LSE), co-sponsored a Pan African Congress with Kwame Nkrumah and wrote *Facing Mount Kenya*, in which he elucidated and defended the cultural practices of the Kikuyu.[39] During the Mau Mau Emergency, which will be discussed in the following chapter, the colonial administration suspected Kenyatta was the mastermind behind the conflict and detained him between 1953 and 1961 despite the lack of convincing evidence. Upon his release in April of 1961, he was invited to become the leader of the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the most popular and ambitious nationalist party of the day. KANU then went on the win the national elections with Kenyatta as its leader. He later became first Prime Minister of Kenya and following a constitutional change, the first President.

With Kenyatta, a tier of new elites emerged into the post-independence period with political power rooted in ethnic cleavages and in coalitions that had been

[37] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983); R. Waller, 'Conclusions', in T. Spear and R. Waller (eds.), *Being Maasai: Ethnicity and Identity in East Africa* (Oxford, 1993), p. 302. See also B. Berman, 'Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil National', *African Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 388 (1998), pp. 305-341.

[38] Jomo Kenyatta was born in Gatundu in 1894 and became known during the anti-colonial struggle after joining the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) in the mid-1920s. He ruled from 1963 until 1978. D. Branch and N. Cheeseman, 'Introduction', in D. Branch, N. Cheeseman and L. Gardner (Eds.), *Our Turn to Eat: Politics in Kenya Since 1950* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 1-22.

[39] J. Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu* (London, 1965).

energised during the late colonial period.[40] Processes of forming, re-forming and sustaining ethnic coalitions have dominated Kenyan politics throughout the post-colonial period. From their formation in 1960, KANU and the Kenyan African Democratic Union (KADU) were coalitions of ethnic groups with conflicting approaches to organising an independent state. KANU was comprised of mainly Kikuyu and Luo. Fearful of Kikuyu domination, the 'Nandi-speaking peoples' and other smaller communities joined KADU, a cleavage that played into the consolidation of Kalenjin identity. A more recent example of an attempt to build a broader ethnic alliance, following the return of multi-party politics, was KAMATUSA, or the Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu Alliance, initiated in the mid-1990s by a group of Kalenjin politicians.[41]

As President, Jomo Kenyatta consciously exacerbated these ethnic awakenings by choosing to award top jobs to his Kikuyu allies and sending resources disproportionately to the Kikuyu-centric Central Province.[42] These patronage flows were later disrupted when President Daniel arap Moi sought to divert resources to his Kalenjin Rift Valley base during his tenure. Moi had begun his political career in KADU in an attempt to represent the Kalenjin during the last years of colonial rule. KADU merged with KANU in 1964 and three years later, Moi was selected Kenyatta's Vice-President, in part because Kenyatta hoped to use him as a conduit to gain political influence and access to land in Kalenjin areas. Despite staunch opposition from many Kikuyu leaders, Moi assumed the presidency in 1978 and ruled

[40] See: D. Branch, N. Cheeseman and L. Gardner (Eds.), *Our Turn to Eat: Politics in Kenya Since 1950* (Berlin, 2010); D. Branch and N. Cheeseman, 'The Politics of Control in Kenya: Understanding the Bureaucratic-Executive State', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 33, No. 107 (2006), pp. 11-31; N. Cheeseman, 'Introduction: Political Linkage and Political Space in the Era of Decolonization', *Africa Today*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Winter 2006), pp. 3-24.
[41] G. Lynch, 'Negotiating Ethnicity: Identity Politics in Contemporary Kenya' *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 33, No. 107, State, Class & Civil Society in Africa (2006), pp. 49-65 [p. 57].
[42] Branch and Cheeseman, 'Introduction', p. 2; Lynch, *I Say to You*, Kindle Location 1312.

until 2002, during which time he invested heavily in promoting the prominence and unity of the Kalenjin community – this was essential to the stability of his government, as his own sub-group, the Tugen, were too small to represent a solid base from which to exercise national power.

However, Moi's rise to power did not go unchallenged. In the immediate post-colonial period, his main rival was Seroney, a former classmate and one of the first Kalenjin university graduates, who had entered politics in November 1961 and quickly became the most prominent Nandi politician. Their personal antagonism increased over the years and became a feature of national politics in the 1960s and 1970s. As Lynch and Cheeseman have argued, as a Tugen from Baringo District, Moi's leadership helped to strengthen Kalenjin unity at the same time as it also fostered internal divisions.[43]

Both Kenyatta and Moi ruled via a tight 'inner circle' staffed with their closest allies.[44] While Kenyatta worked with a relatively limited and stable Cabinet, under Moi, the size of the Cabinet ballooned and MPs were rotated frequently through ministries, thereby enhancing the scope of patronage available to him.[45] Moi also introduced large-scale instrumental use of political violence, structured along ethnic lines and underpinned by notions of *majimbo*.[46] Meaning 'regionalism', *majimbo* is a particularly powerful idea that has never been far from the surface of Kenyan politics. Initially, *majimbo* was promoted by the leaders of smaller and economically marginal

[43] Lynch, *I Say to You*, Kindle Locations 111; N. Cheeseman, 'Kenya since 2002: The More Things Change, The More They Stay the Same', in L. Whitfield and R. Mustapha (eds.), *Turning Points in African Democracy* (Oxford, 2009), p. 106.
[44] Cheeseman, 'The More Things Change', p. 107.
[45] Cheeseman, 'The More Things Change', p. 107.
[46] D. Anderson, 'Majimboism: The Troubled History of an Idea', in D. Branch, N. Cheeseman and L. Gardner (eds.), *Our Turn to Eat: Politics in Kenya since 1950* (Berlin, 2010), pp. 23-52; D. Anderson, 'Yours in Struggle for Majimbo': Nationalism and the Party Politics of Decolonisation in Kenya, 1955-1964', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 40, Is. 3 (2005), pp. 547-64.

groups within KADU, who saw it as a way of protecting their own interests. However, although the combined efforts of KADU and European and Asian minorities led to the inclusion of regional provisions in the independence constitution, these were not adequately safeguarded and KANU was able to reintroduce a centralised state soon after the end of colonial rule.

Thereafter, the notion of *majimbo* as a means of advancing the interests of smaller groups against the dominance of larger communities has continued to gain significant traction. As Anderson notes, 'though the clamour for *majimbo* faded away in the mid-1960s, the idea did not die'.[47] Indeed, the concept returned to the centre-stage of Kenyan politics in the early 1990s when Moi sought to legitimise his increasingly unpopular government by promising to finally deliver *majimbo* government. Scholars have argued that this contributed to the salience of ethno-geographical identities, which combined with historical grievances over land ownership, economic inequality and political exclusion, catalysed the ethnic clashes of 1992 and 1997, in which over 3000 lives were lost and over 300,000 displaced, as well as to the crisis of 2007-8, in which over 1000 people died and more than 500,000 were displaced and continues to shape the politics and economics of today's Rift Valley.[48]

However, while influential, elite machinations, ideologies, coalitions and the manipulation of ethnic loyalties for political and economic ends should not obscure

[47] Anderson, 'Majimboism', p. 23.

[48] For a comprehensive discussion of events surrounding the 2007 elections, see D. Branch and N. Cheeseman (eds.), 'Election Fever: Kenya's Crisis', special edition of *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2008), particularly N. Cheeseman, 'The Kenyan Elections of 2007: An Introduction', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 2, Is. 2 (2008), pp. 166-184; and D. Anderson and E. Lockery, 'Violence and Exodus in Kenya's Rift Valley, 2008: Predictable and Preventable?', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 2, Is. 2 (2008), pp. 328-43, See also: N. Cheeseman, 'Kenya Since 2002: The More Things Change the More They Stay the Same', in L. Whitfield and A. Mustapha (eds.), *Turning Points in African Democracy* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 94-113.

the historically grounded centrality of what ethnicity has meant to 'ordinary people'. In the literature on Kenya, this is often discussed in the context of John Lonsdale's influential distinction between moral ethnicity and political tribalism.[49] The former emerges from internal struggles over moral economy tied to the definition of ethnic communities, while political tribalism concerns the external conflicts that arise over differential access to resources.

Before colonial rule, Africans were few in population and lived within local moral economies of unequal reputation. Because the basis of society lay in attracting people, moral economies governed social relationships; namely, the obligations that men and women, rich and poor, and juniors and elders owed each other. These values formed the basis of public authority, and public esteem, which Lonsdale calls 'civic virtue'. Lonsdale's discussion stemmed from research on the Kikuyu community, who have a term for this ideal: *wiathi*, translated as 'self-mastery', entailing a respectable adulthood.[50]

Civic virtue was a public good in at least three ways. Firstly, it was based upon wider recognition that an individual had achieved a particular status. Secondly, it demanded 'fertile' patronage, which entailed both the reliance of juniors and

[49] Lonsdale, 'Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism', in P. Kaarsholm and J. Hultin (eds.), *Inventions and Boundaries: Historical and Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Roskilde, 1994), pp. 131-150; J. Lonsdale, 'The Moral Economy of Mau Mau: Wealth, Poverty and Civic Political Kikuyu Thought', in B. Berman and J. Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa, Book Two: Violence and Ethnicity* (London, 1992), especially pp. 461-8. Lonsdale's essay on authority and gender in *Mau Mau and Nationhood* extends the concept beyond the Kikuyu in Kenya, and his recent chapter in the *Oxford Handbook on the History of Nationalism* extends its geographical scope. See J. Lonsdale, 'Authority, Gender and Violence', in E.S. Odhiambo and J. Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms Authority and Narrative* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 46-75; and J. Lonsdale, 'Anti-colonial Nationalism and Patriotism in sub-Saharan Africa', in J. Breuilly (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook on the History of Nationalism* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 318-37. See also B. Berman, 'Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State'.

[50] D. Peterson, 'Writing in Revolution: Independent Schooling and Mau Mau in Nyeri', in A. Odhiambo and J. Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority and Narration* (Oxford, 2003), p. 79.

dependents on their seniors for land and resource allocation just as economic production relied upon disciplined female sexuality to procreate and on their labour to make the household productive. Production and reproduction are thus rendered indivisible. Finally, it relied on hierarchy. The attainment of high status necessitated that subordinates such as children and dependents reinforce the 'relational' nature of civic virtue. Powerful people received obedience and loyalty in return for continuously sharing their resources and wealth.

The intrusion of colonial capitalism posed a significant challenge to this 'implicitly unequal' moral economy with its embedded norms of reputational accountability, leading to 'subjection, household conflict and social unease'.[51] By offering women and juniors new opportunities in urban areas, it freed them from rural dependence while calling into question the conditional nature of relationships between people. In return for the promise of support for a future marriage and the tools to attain adulthood, sons had remained obedient to fathers; with the onset of migrant labour, young men could instead find alternative means of achieving self-mastery by providing wage labour to others. Parents also lost daughters who absconded from domestic constraints in order to work in the towns. Alliances between colonial officials and African collaborators devalued clients and could lead to their neglect. According to Lonsdale, this raised critical questions, such as 'To whom was duty now owed, at what cost, for whose benefit?'[52]

Against this background, Lonsdale interprets moral ethnicity as an effort to manage a complex process in which new inequalities were replacing older ones. It was an attempt to re-moralise opportunities and relationships in the light of profound social change and in ways that did not require a shared bond of colonial subjugation

[51] Lonsdale, 'Anti-colonial Nationalism', p. 325.
[52] Ibid.

across all regions and places. Instead, men and women applied a series of arguments from the past to their radically changing present situation. This attempt to respond to social change played into and strengthened the image of 'the tribe', which in turn sustained the identity of the ethnic group. As he puts it, 'few remained "tribal"; most *became* more ethnically aware' [italics in the text].[53]

Lonsdale considers this as the shift from moral economy to a harder vision of moral ethnicity, in which the idea of a community was more prominent and pronounced, and in which the rights, duties and protections of ethnicity had to be keenly argued. Moral ethnicity refers, then, to the argumentative effort to protect access to civic virtue. As David Anderson puts it, disagreement over how to manage rapid social change was 'the daily stuff of Kikuyu political life'.[54]

While taking pains to indicate her understanding of ethnicity as socially constructed, Lynch argues that the history of Kalenjin ethnicity breaks from other formulations, writing:

> Herein lies the particularity of the Kalenjin case in the Kenyan context, as a defensive politics of ethnic belonging has conjoined with a painful sense of status reversal and persecution complex and leaders who have opted to use violence as a political strategy at moments of potential threat and opportunity in a context of economic inequality, institutional decay and diffusion of violence.[55]

This raises the question of whether Lonsdale's ideas, which derive from his study of the Kikuyu community, can be applied to understand the Kalenjin. Evidence from his treatise on 'The Moral Economy' suggests that such an extension would indeed be apt. Commenting on a draft prior to its publication, two Kalenjin teachers from western

[53] Lonsdale, 'Anti-colonial Nationalism', p. 325.
[54] D. Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, p. 11.
[55] Lynch, *I Say to You*, Kindle Location 449.

Kenya remarked, according to Lonsdale, that 'their own thought argued the same issues as the Kikuyu, if with different terms'.[56]

Because this thesis is interested in gender more so than ethnic relations, Lynch's skepticism over engaging with Lonsdale's ideas in the context of Kalenjin communities does not apply in the same way. Departing from ethnic tension and elite political mobilisation, the same kinds of arguments about civic virtue can also be identified among the Kalenjin. And at the heart of civic virtue was the attainment of productive households, which in turn depended on the diligent commitment of women to marriage.

Anderson has provided evidence to show that Kikuyu and Kalenjin had common ethnic predicaments in this respect. Writing in 'Black Mischief: Crime, Protest and Resistance in Colonial Kenya', his articulation of the way that manhood was attained among the Kalenjin is akin to that of the Kikuyu. It is worth quoting the passage in full:

> Around the time of initiation, young men hoped to begin to acquire cattle of their own, which would mark the beginnings of herds which would provide the economic basis for their eventual marriage and the establishment of independent households. Elders within a family would commonly contribute to this process through various arrangements of loaning or bonding out cattle, but this naturally placed the elder in a position of considerable authority regarding the redistribution of wealth, and (by extension) over the ability of young men to marry and establish households.[57]

This formulation is supported by Richard Waller, among others, in their writing about pre-colonial pastoralist moral economies.[58] It becomes clear that the powerful were

[56] Londale, 'The Moral Economy', p. 468. Lonsdale himself evinced no surprise over their reaction, pointing out in the next line that 'inside every united tribe, a debated ethnicity is struggling to get out'.
[57] Anderson, 'Black Mischief, p. 859.
[58] R. Waller, and N. Sobania, 'Pastoralism in Historical Perspective', in E. Fratkin, K. Galvin and E. Roth (eds.), *African Pastoralist Systems: An Integrated Approach* (Boulder, 1994), pp. 45–68; N. Sobania, 'Feasts, Famines and Friends: Nineteenth Century Exchange and Ethnicity in the Eastern Lake Turkana Region', in J. Galaty and P. Bonte (eds.), *Herders,*

those in command of social networks - the practice of circulating cattle was what bound people together and bestowed prestige on those in possession of cattle that could be loaned. But motivating these networks of exchange were 'the ambitions of younger men with as yet no household (and thus no moral authority) to their name'.[59]

Productive households, the means to attain moral authority, depended on faithful marriage. Gender relations thus emerge as fundamental to moral ethnicity among the Kalenjin, like the Kikuyu, though the extent to which cattle were necessary presents a point of departure. As cultivators, ownership of land was the fundamental economic basis for manhood among the Kikuyu; possession of cattle was what mattered among the pastoralist Kalenjin. But the on-going fight for civic virtue was germane to both communities and this depended on patronage relationships as much as it did disciplined female sexuality.[60]

In the face of social and economic change, gender tensions could also play a role in the hardening of ethnic identity. Kikuyu prostitutes in towns, for instance, fed worries that other groups would come to believe 'that the Kikuyu nation is useless because their women have no self-respect in their hearts'.[61] Similar perceptions occurred in reaction to the emergence of the first generation of female Kalenjin runners, as Chapter Seven of this thesis will discuss in greater depth. While 'fears of economic and political marginalization by ethnic "other"' have certainly mattered, localised social change calling into question the attainment of 'civic virtue' should not be overlooked in these historical, and on-going, processes.[62] Seen in this light,

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Warriors and Traders (Boulder, 1979), pp. 118–42; P. Little, *The Elusive Granary: Herder, Farmer and State in Northern Kenya* (Cambridge, 1992); R. Waller, 'Pastoral Production in Colonial Kenya: Lessons from the Past?', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (2012), pp. 1–28.

[59] Anderson, 'Black Mischief, p. 855.

[60] For Peterson's analysis, see his chapter in *Mau Mau And Nationhood*, especially pp. 83-8

[61] J. Lonsdale, Writing for Kenya: The Life and Works of Henry Muoria, p. 283.

[62] Lynch, *I Say to You*, Kindle Location 441.

Kalenjin social identities emerge not only because of the fearful competition over material goods with others, as scholars like Lynch emphasise, but also as an adaptable field of moral argument that changed over time.

Social change generated internal moral debate on many issues, some of which pertained to gender, and Lonsdale's focus on civic virtue is useful for the focus of this study. Recognising this allows connection to be made between the evidence about gender relations presented here and longer-standing disputes. While fears of other ethnic communities were the primary drivers for some, and certainly the foremost concerns of the wealthy and powerful, to local people, a more localised fear of social closure, of destitution, of lacking the means to establish secure households formed their understanding of ethnic awareness. As a consequence, when researching the Rift Valley and discussing what it means to 'be Kalenjin' and how this changes over time, one must be careful to give equal weight to both the associated 'bottom-up' pressure to attain civic virtue as well as to the machinations of elite actors able to manipulate ethnic loyalties.

Documents and Discussions

Much of what is known about the history of gender in Kenya comes through intermediaries - colonial administrators, anthropologists, missionaries, chiefs and journalists. The colonial administration left a rich record of the dominant male power structure. Written by men, largely about men, the colonial archive is a space where the dynamics of gender are clearly visible. Archives serve as 'intricate technologies of rule in themselves' by facilitating governance 'through accumulated information'.[63]

[63] A. Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance,' *Archival Science*, Vol. 2 (2002), p. 87; M. Featherstone, 'Archive', *Theory, Culture, Society*, Vol. 23, No. 2-3 (2006), p. 591.

The archive provides insight into what Ann Stoler has described as 'the changing collection of colonial truths' about what were considered issues of security, secrecy, and 'political subversion against the state' as well as the ordinary practices of governance.[64] While keeping in mind their function and 'reading against the grain', the detailed reports available in the colonial archive provide insight into the everyday and exceptional features of an athletics history not otherwise recorded.

In addition to Rhodes House Library in the United Kingdom, this thesis draws on of the records housed in four locales across Kenya: Nairobi's National Archives, Nakuru's Rift Valley Province Archives and the District Archives held in Iten and Eldoret. The files found therein provide a view of the functioning of colonial rule, including incidents related to sport and gender. The next chapter uses this source extensively as evidence of the spread of gendered ideas put into practice by imperialists intent on promoting new schemes of rule through sport.

If the archive reflects the power of the state, there are limitations to the extent that insights can be gleaned by reading against the grain. To Philip Curtin, writing as early as 1960, historians had no choice but to work outside of archives in the metropoles, since these repositories contained 'the history of European interests in Africa, rather than the history of Africa itself'.[65] This search for evidence beyond what can be found in official repositories and documents still leads many scholars to heed Thompson's call to 'democratise' the study of history through the use of oral testimony.[66] In South Africa in the 1980s, it enabled the writing of African-centric

[64] Stoler, 'Colonial Archives,' p. 103.
[65] Quote in D. Peterson and G. Macola 'Introduction: Homespun Historiography and the Academic Profession', in D. Peterson and G. Macola (eds.), *Recasting the Past: History Writing and Political Work in Modern Africa* (Athens, 2009), p. 1.
[66] P. Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 6, 8; A list of all archives consulted across Kenya and in the United Kingdom can be found in the Bibliography.

social histories during the apartheid struggle.[67] In Kenya, Bethwell Ogot's pioneering 1967 publication of the *History of the Southern Luo* was one of the first to use oral traditions to write pre-colonial histories.[68] Nandi oral histories recounted from a range of sources spanning the early 1900s to the 1970s revealed the historical significance of the *orkoiik*, a type of ritual practitioner found among the Kalenjin peoples of the Western Highlands, with power stemming in part from an attribution of predicting the coming arrival of the 'white man'.[69] Oral history offers one way to discover the voices of those who were not given equal consideration in the 'official' version of events.

However, understanding the complexity of these testimonies is essential as they intersect with an overarching theme of this thesis: to explain the masculinisation of athletics in Kenya and the way in which this has eventually been challenged allowing women to become successful. Oral history opens the way for a more thorough investigation of histories of women that will lead to a reconsideration of the history of athletics and other gendered domains more generally.

Scholars define life history, oral history and oral traditions differently. To David Henige, an expert in oral history as a method within the fields of African studies and African history:

> Life history is essentially a spoken autobiography in which the informant is asked to relate at some length those parts of his life that seem *to him* to be most interesting and important [italics in the text].[70]

Henige defines oral history as 'the study of the recent past by means of personal recollections'.[71] Donald Ritchie, historian and former President of the Oral

[67] P. Denis, 'Introduction', in P. Denis and R. Ntsimane (eds.), *Oral History in a Wounded Country: Interactive Interviewing in South Africa* (Scottsville, 2008), pp. 9-16.
[68] B. Ogot, *History of the Southern Luo: Migration and Settlement, 1500-1900* (Nairobi, 1967).
[69] Anderson, 'Visions of the Vanquished Prophets', p. 165.
[70] D. Henige, *Oral Historiography* (London, 1982), p. 106.
[71] Henige, *Oral Historiography*, p. 2.

History Association, puts it another way, describing oral history as 'collect[ing] memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews'.[72] Oral traditions, then, are what John Tosh groups together as the narratives and descriptions of people and events in the past that have been handed down by word of mouth over several generations.[73]

The information gathered from the interviews collected for this thesis involved obtaining oral history and life history materials compiled from and about successful pioneer runners. From these interviews, as well as other sources, a 'voice' has been given to a group whose experiences have been neglected in more traditional historical documentary sources. Their testimonies help to bring their accomplishments alive and to contribute to a better understanding of how both men's and women's participation in athletics transpired.

Their recollections explain that the main reason that women became involved with running was the intrinsic satisfaction that they achieved from participation.[74] Fortunately, the sport has significantly changed since the years when the women who are featured in this thesis were competing. As many respondents noted, the money now available from the sport means that for a minority, earning an enormous livelihood through athletics is a real prospect. Sport is now shown on television and lucrative sponsorship deals are a significant part of what has become the Kenyan running industry.

Criticisms have been levelled at Africanist oral history practitioners for being too uncritical of the testimony they gathered 'as if oral testimonies were always

[72] D. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide* (Oxford, 2003), p. 19.
[73] J. Tosh and S. Lang, *The Pursuit of History: Aims, Methods, and New Directions in the Study of Modern History*, 4th edition (Great Britain, 2006), p. 310.
[74] G. Jarvie and M. Sikes, 'Running as a Resource of hope? Voices from Eldoret', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 39, Is. 134 (2012), pp. 629-644.

authentic and memory a simple act of transmission'.[75] Some of the limitations that runners present in terms of their testimonies might include a wish to exaggerate their own roles in breaking down barriers, for example. They might also wish to make it look as though there was less prejudice restricting their choices than there actually was. However, rather than using this as a reason for shying away from oral history, acknowledging these 'dangers' up-front makes the reader aware of potential problems of oral history.

The process of collecting peoples' testimonies for this project followed a regular pattern. Each interview lasted between one to two hours and was conducted with one person at a time. A one-on-one interview format was chosen for the three reasons that Denscombe has outlined: It was less complicated to arrange schedules with only one person, the transcription process was more accurate with only one other voice to recognise and all of what was said throughout the interview could be wholly attributed to a single source.[76]

The main disadvantage of the personal interview approach suggested in the literature was that it limited the number of people who could be included within the project, given constraints of time and resources during fieldwork.[77] Conducting group interviews with several people at once would have been more efficient. However, collecting personal interviews from a wide range of people proved feasible because most of those whose narratives were sought for this thesis resided in the Rift Valley region or else they converged on Nairobi for the National Cross-country Championships, which proved to be a productive opportunity for discussion. In total, 87 people were interviewed.

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[75] Denis, 'Introduction', p. 12.
[76] M. Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects*, 3rd edition (London, 2007), p. 177.
[77] Denscombe, *Good Research Guide*, p. 177.

Oral history has been criticised for having 'unsystematic' reasoning.[78] To avoid this, effective interview strategies applied by other scholars were followed. Themes were identified in advance that provided a focus and an objective to the conversation.[79] At the same time, an open-ended format was allowed to encourage detailed and more complex answers. Luise White noted that as oral historians, 'our data usually come from our questions' and questions reflect the research agenda.[80] While researching the history of prostitution in Nairobi, White herself began each of her seventy interviews with former Nairobi prostitutes by asking them to describe their fathers' polygamy.[81] In this study, a relaxed approach was taken in terms of how questions were phrased and in which order they were asked but the same broad set of themes was discussed with each person, making the method more rigorous.

Although similar themes were discussed among the range of interviewees, every interview was different because the order and depth of discussion were adjusted according to the flow of the conversation. The intention was to generate stories with plenty of contextual information.[82] As Ritchie advised:

> An interviewer must always be prepared to abandon carefully prepared questions and follow the interviewee down unexpected paths, always helping the interviewee by questioning, guiding, coaxing, and challenging.[83]

Conducting interviews flexibly allowed patterns and ideas to emerge unprompted from people's experiences and perceptions.

This study also undertook a non-random method of selecting informants. Given the research focus, the aim was to interview as many women and men as

[78] Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, p. 27.
[79] E. Adler and R. Clark, *How It's Done* (Canada, 1999), p. 221; Denscombe, *Good Research Guide*, p. 176; Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, p. 92.
[80] White, *The Comforts of Home,* p. 22.
[81] Ibid., p. 23.
[82] Adler and Clark, *How It's Done*, p. 235.
[83] Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, p. 29.

possible whose lives and achievements comprise the history of women's running in Kenya. To understand how others viewed female athletes, it was necessary to speak not only to the women but also to people from their communities. Non-runners interviewed were those who interacted with athletes in various capacities, such as bankers, car salesmen, market women, property dealers, government officials and journalists.

After creating a preliminary list of names of potential interviewees, the next issue was how to connect with them. The area around Iten, and the larger town of Eldoret, is where many of Kenya's most successful female and male distance runners still reside. Iten was used as a base from which the interviewees lived within a reasonable driveable distance and people could be easily located. Although the availability of interviewees fluctuated day-to-day, residence in Kenya over a period of eight months made it possible to arrange a meeting of one to two hours with those who had been initially identified as well as others subsequently added to the list.

The willingness of the interviewee to become involved with this project was crucial. An individual's interest in participating was what truly determined their availability, the distance that they were prepared to travel for a meeting and the extent to which their assertions were unembellished. Some were involved with business ventures while others were in the midst of full-time training. Persuading people to take time away from their daily lives and responsibilities to answer questions from a foreign research student could have presented a formidable obstacle. The exceptional effort required to retrieve the first-hand accounts from the range of actors involved with Kenyan running could not have been accomplished alone.

Above all, knowing trusted contacts in the area prior to starting the interviews facilitated the process. As Njoki Wamai notes, 'gatekeepers can advance or sabotage

your research'.[84] She defines a gatekeeper in research as a person who has power to refuse the researcher access to informants or one who has power to influence them to cooperate. Crucial during the months of fieldwork was the patience, trust and friendship of one former elite runner: Godfrey Kiprotich. Not only was he born in Keiyo, a resident in the Eldoret area and formerly a world-class runner but he possessed considerable knowledge of and extensive connections among the men and women of Kenya's running community.

Kiprotich's reservoir of goodwill within the community helped to ensure that hostility to or suspicion of the author was never an issue. Instead, one of the main challenges to researching in a rural environment was locating the interviewee. Finding athletes at home was not an easy task. Most days, it was an achievement to connect with one person; two, at best. People were often busy taking care of their livelihoods, whether in the office, market or shop, or they were resting to recover from training. For those in informal employment, weekends were as busy as other days and also the time when family or private commitments were fulfilled. As such, patience and flexibility about the timing of the interview were important.

Through a combination of random visits and mutual understanding across what was a network of people who knew each other well, testimonials were eventually gathered from a broad range of coaches, agents and former and current athletes living in the area. During each visit, Kiprotich did not deviate in the way he introduced the researcher to the interviewee. He first described her athletic credentials and university affiliation, after which she articulated the project and the specific purpose for coming to the area.

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[84] N. Wamai, 'First Contact with the Field: Experiences of an Early Career Researcher in the Context of National and International Politics in Kenya', *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, Vol. 6, Is. 2 (2014), p. 217.

Each interviewee gave permission to use their words within this thesis and signed an official consent form to this effect. As a token of gratitude, interviewees were given an 'Oxford University' hat at the end of the conversation. The researcher conducted all of the interviews but the assistance of Kiprotich and a second field assistant, Winnie Jebet, were invaluable. The interviews were never shorter than one hour in duration and sometimes took up an entire afternoon. The conversations were recorded and later transcribed.

During these visits, the rapport that was established with the interviewees was essential. A fundamental part of oral history research is the relationship between researcher and informant.[85] The conventional approach stipulates a carefully maintained distance between the researcher and her interviewee.[86] For instance, according to pioneering oral history scholar Jan Vansina:

> Any interview has two authors: the performer and the researcher. The input from the latter should be minimal, even though it can never be absent since he is at least part of the audience. His input is maximal when he asks questions...[87]

Other scholars later questioned whether such boundaries could even be established between the oral history researcher and her informants.[88] Cole and Knowles defined the relational aspect of oral history as 'two (or more) people coming together for purposes of inquiry into an area of mutual interest'.[89] Their conception of the research

[85] Much has been written about researcher-informant relationships but see, for example, R. Hertz (ed.), *Reflexivity and Voice* (Thousand Oaks, CA, 1997).
[86] See, for example: I. Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (New York, 1991); J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition* (Wisconsin, 1985).
[87] Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, p. 61.
[88] B. Myerhoff, *Number Our Days* (New York, 1979).
[89] A. Cole and J. Knowles (eds.), *Lives in Context* (Oxford, 2001), p. 26.

relationship is that it is authentic and 'ever-changing with boundaries that blur in kaleidoscopic fashion'.[90]

Tosh argues that it is 'naïve' to suppose that oral testimonies represent a pure transmission of past experience 'for in an interview each party is affected by the other'.[91] How far the researcher's relationship with an interviewee may alter the content of the interview and the extent to which a researcher actually can disguise his or her 'self' during face-to-face interviews remains central to debate in the oral history literature and to its acceptance as a methodology.[92]

Within the context of this research project, as described above, the interviews followed a thematically structured yet open-ended format, although it was not possible to 'bracket oneself out' as the traditional approach to oral history would advise. Moreover, introducing elements of the researcher's personal experiences enhanced the potential to collect information. A background as a professional runner and the network of relationships that had been formed through this career facilitated the process of accessing and interviewing many individuals within this running community.

These personal experiences also provided a set of situations in common with many of the interviewees. For instance, disclosing participation at the 2007 World Athletics Championships established a connection with many runners. As one of three women to represent the United States that year in the 5000 metres in Osaka, Japan, there was substantial common ground in the experience of competing in a foreign country at a young age. Video footage of a race in which the researcher won a

[90] Cole and Knowles, *Lives in Context,* p. 27.
[91] Tosh and Lang, *Pursuit of History*, p. 318.
[92] For a range of perspectives on this debate, see: N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edition (CA, 2000).

national championship by beating future Olympian Sally Kipyego in the final lap also provoked warm and animated conversation.

This helped to build rapport, justify the researcher's presence and mission and to some extent, bridge the gaps that existed between interviewer and interviewees in terms of nationality and other identity markers. Striking a balance between sharing personal experiences and conveying a sense of neutrality was delicate but offered the greatest potential for gaining trust and gathering information. Multiple interviews were conducted with some former athletes. In particular, Susan Sirma, Tecla Chembawai, and Mary Chemweno, among others, were generous enough to be interviewed several times over the course of this project, enabling hypotheses to be tested and follow-up questions to be asked.

Identity

At the most basic level, the researcher's physical identity and background form a set of features that inevitably shape the creation of new evidence. As Wax noted:

> In formal and quantitative methods, the peculiarities of the individual tend to go unnoticed. Electronic data processing pays no heed to the age, gender, or ethnicity of the research director or programmer. But, in fieldwork, these basic aspects of personal identity become salient: they dramatically affect the process of field research.[93]

Tosh makes the point that the hierarchy between interviewer and interviewee also affects the content of their conversation. Writing with Sean Lean, one of 'The Dangers of Oral History' is that 'the end product [of an oral history interview] is conditioned by the historian's social position *vis-à-vis* the informant'.[94] How an informant responds to the researcher's combination of physical appearance and

[93] R. Wax, 'Gender and Age in Fieldwork and Fieldwork Education: No Good Thing is Done by Any Man Alone', *Social Problems*, Vol. 26 (1979), p. 509.
[94] Tosh and Lang, *The Pursuit of History*, p. 318.

personality will differ, however slightly, from the answers given to another interviewer according to his or her uniquely identifying attributes.

This author navigated between identity as an insider in certain respects and an outsider in others. Identity as an accomplished runner was helpful in gaining access to information via the camaraderie gained from a shared set of experiences. Conversely, as a foreigner to Kenya, it was impossible to have certain conversations and the sense of being 'different' never quite disappeared. During the interview, it was sometimes necessary to ask for explanation of certain experiences in greater detail than would have been necessary for a native Kenyan. Nevertheless asking informants to articulate basic perceptions well enough that an outsider could understand is part of why the oral history methodology can be so illuminating.

After the introductions were made disclosing the author's background and research agenda, the interviewees understood what motivated the research and they recognised that one of the objectives was to record their remembrance of the history they authored. This mutuality of purpose ensured that interviewees had an avid stake in answering questions.

Negativists may claim embellishment or aggrandizement to questions inevitably limits the oral history approach. However, a collaborative research enterprise like this encourages active assistance in the interview process. This took a range of methods, from sharing details that extended beyond the scope of a particular question to spontaneous invitations into a person's home to share a meal. The best situations occurred when the interviewee felt a connection to the project and a sense of the significance that his or her contribution held to its success.

As time passes, everyone's memory fades and what is retained is a combination of facts and feelings.[95] Few people are able to recall dates reliably, and it is common to telescope two similar events into a single memory. Historian Elizabeth Tonkin, author of *Narrating Our Past: The Social Construction of Oral History,* argues that finding error in an account may also be revealing of what it purports to communicate.[96] Alessandro Portelli argues that for him what matters is not the fact itself but how people make sense of it.[97] To others, however, these are inescapable limitations that render oral history a problematic type of evidence in a discipline defined by documentary sources.

For these reasons, effort was taken to monitor the validity of the data. First, the interview focused on testimony of situations that the informant witnessed or experienced personally. Furthermore, conclusions were not drawn on the basis of a single interview but rather from themes emerging from the group as a whole. An idea can be discussed with greater confidence if it is an issue mentioned by many people. A critical mass of interviews was thus conducted such that information from one could be checked out against others. When answers were repeated, it was a signal that perhaps the breadth of experience in response to a particular query had been reached. Finally, what was discussed was checked against archival research and media reports. Triangulating among documents and personal observations was possible through the extensive appraisal of the colonial archive and media reports, as the next sections will discuss.

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[95] Africanists who have debated the role of memory in oral history include, for instance, Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*; Henige, *Oral Historiography*; Vansina, *Oral History as Tradition*; A. Sheftel and S. Zembrzycki, *Oral History Off the Record* (New York, 2013).
[96] E. Tonkin, *Narrating Our Past: The Social Construction of Oral History* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 114.
[97] A. Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', *History Workshop*, Is. 12 (1981), pp. 96-107.

The Kenyan Media

An array of documentary sources was consulted, including official government documents, sports reports and correspondence, ethnographies, memoirs and articles published in newspapers and other periodicals. Official government documents contained pertinent information but as noted above, insight into the local society was structured by the preconceptions of colonial officials.

Reports from Kenya's newspapers were therefore central. In particular, the major dailies, *The Standard* and *The Nation,* were extensively consulted.[98] Through a contact at *The Nation,* it was possible to conduct a keyword search within a database of articles published since 1959. Searching the names of 68 successful female runners yielded 2431 PDF articles. Searching terms like 'KAAA' (Kenya Amateur Athletics Association), 'KAO' (Kenya Olympics Association) and 'KECOSO' (Kenyan Communications Sports Organisation) produced a further 278 articles.

Retrieving material from *The Standard*, Kenya's oldest and second most popular paper involved spending months reading newspapers inside Rhodes House Library. Bound and microfilmed copies of that paper can be found there and these were ordered and examined. Publications from the earliest years of Kenyan women's presence in the international competitions, namely 1968 to 1972, were consulted. The daily publications during the years from 1989 to 1997, plus 2001, were studied in particular depth because it was during this period that Kenyan women began to win medals at the international level for the first time. Articles pertaining to athletics from these periods were printed and categorised, resulting in 895 reports. Across the two papers, 3604 articles were consulted. Searching for and compiling such a wealth of

[98] These two papers have undergone several name changes over the last century. *The Standard* and *The Nation* are the current forms and will be used here.

source material assured that nearly every sentence published on women in Kenyan athletics in the major dailies received consideration.

Taming this much information required consideration of the factors that could have exerted influence on the secondary literature, extracting themes from the source material and then reconsidering which were the most important. Broad concepts were assembled and subdivided into smaller, more manageable themes. These included evidence of the gendered nature of Kenyan athletics, economic incentives, education and decisions rendered by the sports governing associations at the national and international levels, among others.

Newspapers provide abundant categorisation of the events, concerns and debates of the past. They offer access to detailed descriptions of social stories and conflicts that are constantly unfolding. Historians often target newspapers as a source, not only about concrete events and ways of life but also about changing attitudes over time. However, though sport in newspapers is as ubiquitous in Kenya as Britain and elsewhere, historians have not taken full advantage of them as a resource for researching Kenya's cultural, social and economic history.

In the next section of this methodological discussion, the strengths and limitations of Kenya's newspaper culture are considered. The two major dailies are situated within a larger historical context, analysis of which reveals that male and female identities were articulated explicitly while discourses around ethnicity and ethnic relations were muted. Given the salience of ethnicity in Kenyan society and the extent to which Kenyan running has been the domain of a single ethnic group, the unwillingness to discuss or debate Kenyan running as 'Kalenjin running' in itself sheds light on the delicacy of the subject.

The Standard and *The Nation*

On 15 November 1902, Asian entrepreneur Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee began publishing the *African Standard*.[99] As a railway supplies contractor, Jeevanjee had become wealthy via construction of the Uganda Railway.[100] 'Ever an enterprising man…Jeevanjee conceived of the idea of starting a newspaper in Mombasa [and ultimately] the *African Standard* was born'.[101] However, Jeevanjee had little experience in the field of publishing or journalism and after only two years, sold the paper to two British businessmen. In 1905, new owners Meyer and Anderson renamed the weekly paper the *East African Standard*.[102] Five years later, they moved the newspaper's headquarters from Mombasa to Nairobi, where it remains today. By absorbing rival papers and publishing daily reports, *The East African Standard* established itself as the colony's leading English newspaper, serving as the 'voice of European settlers' until independence.[103] It has gone on to forge an unbroken streak of reporting for more than a century years, 'from pre-independence, through *Uhuru*, to post-independence'.[104] Presently known as *The Standard*, it is Kenya's oldest, and second largest, daily newspaper.

Kenya's most popular major daily newspaper is *The Nation*. Published by Nation Media Group (NMG) and owned by a leader of the Ismaili Muslim community and one of the world's richest men, the Aga Khan, it appeared in Kenya in 1959.[105] The paper presented the first significant challenge to *The Standard,* and initially set

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[99] R. Kahaso, 'One Man's Dream', *East African Standard*, 20 February 1995, p. 2.
[100] Z. Patel, *Challenges to Colonialism*: *The Struggle of Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee for Equal Rights in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1997).
[101] Kahaso, 'One Man's Dream', p. 2.
[102] P. Odonde, 'Democracy – and the Free Flow of News', *East African Standard*, 20 February 1995, p. 10.
[103] F. Carter, 'The Press in Kenya', *International Communication Gazette*, XIV (1968), p. 85.
[104] B. Tetley, 'Moving into the 21st Century', *East African Standard,* 20 February 1995, p. 6.
[105] G. Faringer, *Press Freedom in Africa* (New York, 1991), p. 36.

itself apart by adopting a policy of Africanisation.[106] Like *The Standard*, it too has continued its publications without break since its establishment.

Both *The Standard* and *The Nation* are English language publications. Fay Gadsden has described how the period between the end of World War II and the onset of the Emergency in October 1952 involved considerable growth of an African vernacular press in Kenya. During this period, Africans began publishing more than forty newspapers, although many lasted only a short time.[107] During the colonial period, the British government did not guarantee freedom of the press in its colonies.[108] According to Fred Omu, writing in the late 1960s:

> For although Britain believed in government by discussion for herself, and was inclined to assume that liberty of thought and speech were of universal validity, in governing other peoples outside her homeland, she was inevitably autocratic.[109]

British authorities sought to control the media in many parts of the world, and in Kenya, this meant that major dailies tended to operate as a medium of communication on behalf of the European community.

Post-colonial governments were also repressive of dissenting views.[110] Following a coup attempted in 1982, President Daniel arap Moi's stance towards the media hardened significantly.[111] He criminalised dissent and open intimidation

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[106] Faringer, *Press Freedom in Africa*, p. 36.
[107] F. Gadsden, 'The African Press in Kenya, 1945–1952', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (1980), pp. 515–535.
[108] F. Omu, 'The Dilemma of Press Freedom in Colonial Africa: The West African Example', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 9, No. 2 (1968), pp. 279-298.
[109] Omu, 'Dilemma of Press Freedom', p. 280.
[110] B. Frederiksen, 'Print, Newspapers and Audiences in Colonial Kenya: African and Indian Improvement, Protest and Connections', *Africa*, Vol. 81, Is. 1 (2011), pp. 155-172; P. Mbeke, 'Background Note: The Media, Legal, Regulatory and Policy Environment in Kenya – A Historical Briefing', *BBC World Service Trust* (March 2008), pp. 1-9, www.bbcworldservicetrust.org.
[111] Mbeke, 'Background Note', p. 5.

ensued, including sedition trials of the press.[112] Several independent and critical publications were banned, and the *Economist Intelligence Unit* described harassment of journalists as 'almost routine' and noted that prosecution was 'not rare'.[113]

Both major daily newspapers – *The Standard* and *The Nation* – solidified their dominance during the post-colonial era, largely for the same reason that *The Standard* thrived during the colonial period. Dependent on the goodwill of the government, these two papers had the upper hand in the market because the Kenyan state needed the press to disseminate its policies and decisions. Both before and after independence, the main Kenyan news media remained 'inextricably wedded to the state'.[114]

In 1995, *The Standard*'s executive editor acknowledged in his own paper that historically, this partnership had encouraged a particular political slant. 'In the olden days, the paper…tended to favour the European point of view'.[115] Yet political conservatism did not change with the end of colonial rule; the paper was attached to the status quo regardless of who imposed it. Even though it had long defended the interests of the colonial government, after independence, *The Standard* joined *The Nation* in sanctioning Kenyan self-rule.[116]

This shift in political allegiance, from supporting the British colonial government to that of President Jomo Kenyatta, indicated how government involvement contributed to the paper's 'unbroken streak of reporting' at the cost of its

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[112] Anonymous, 'Kenya's Seditious "Pambana"', *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 11, No. 6 (December 1982), p. 34.
[113] Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), 'Kenya Country Profile', *The Economist Intelligence Unit Country Profile* (London: The Economist Intelligence Unit, 1997).
[114] G. Ogola, 'If You Rattle a Snake, Prepare to be Bitten: Popular Culture, Politics and the Kenyan Media', in H. Wasserman (ed.), *Popular Media, Democracy and Development in Africa* (Abingdon, 2011), p. 132.
[115] Odonde, 'Democracy', p. 10.
[116] R. Ogonda, 'Transport and Communications in the Colonial Economy', in W. Ochieng' and R. Maxon (eds.), *An Economic History of Kenya* (Nairobi, 1992), p. 137; Faringer, *Press Freedom in Africa*, p. 35.

independence from politics. High-ranking officials embedded within Kenya's media hint at the government's influence over the press. Mark Too spent most of the 1990s as one of the most powerful ministers in the Moi government and chairperson of the board of directors of *The Standard*.[117] Revenue from government advertisements also facilitated involvement in both papers' editorial decisions. Faringer noted that the 'predominant position of *The Standard* and *The Nation* backed by considerable capital' meant that the mainstream press shied away from directly criticising controversial issues such as income distribution, ethnic rivalries, unemployment and political performance.[118] Ogola has argued that the extent to which newspapers' "independence" from politics was circumscribed cannot be disregarded.[119]

Close ties with, and financial support from, the government ensured that *The Standard* and *The Nation* would prosper. Although the *Standard* has endured since 1902, allowing it to provide a continuous narrative of events, it is important to bear in mind that the mainstream press in Kenya has had a long partnership with those in power, both during and after colonialism.[120]

The Sports Section: Mostly Uncensored and Under the Radar

State repression of the press, particularly during the Moi era, raises questions about the use of Kenyan media as source material. Nevertheless these formal political curbs and agendas targeted only certain areas, namely headline news, editorials, economic

[117] G. Ogola, 'Confronting and Performing Power: Memory, Popular Imagination and a "Popular" Kenyan Newspaper Serial', *African Studies*, Vol. 64, Is. 1 (2005), p. 84.
[118] Faringer, *Press Freedom in Africa*, p. 36.
[119] G. Ogola, 'The Idiom of Age in a Popular Kenyan Newspaper Serial', *Africa*, Vol. 76, Is. 4 (2006), p. 571.
[120] On the other hand, the continuity of this source also allows one to trace histories over the course of a century. Past publications of *The Standard* have been archived in its Nairobi headquarters, which can be combined with the searchable online database of articles within www.allafrica.com and newspaper holdings in Rhodes House Library, newspaper collections in the British Library and the US Library of Congress, to build a complete collection from 1902.

features and opinion columns. Ogola highlighted this in his analysis of a particular humour column, *Whispers*, published in both *The Standard* and *The Nation*.[121] 'It is in these marginal sites within the newspaper that one sees the making of the "social space" in the Kenyan newspapers', observed Ogola.[122] Sub-genres that were deemed politically inconsequential, including sport, were largely free of direct censorship. Sports journalists could write unfettered by external dilution or restriction, which left coverage of sport as an uncensored window through which to analyse values, representations and identities.

However, this is not the full story. Although free from direct censorship, Kenyan sports journalism was also characterised by what historian Stephanie Audoin-Rouzeau calls the 'national sentiment' that can exist between newspapers and their audiences.[123] 'National sentiment' refers to writing from the position that the status quo must be maintained. This occurs not through overt censorship but rather a form of 'self-censorship', in which the taste and acceptance of the readership forms a powerful censor in itself.[124]

Evidence lies in *The Standard* and *The Nation* sports sections' omission of ethnicity from any of its reporting on Kenyan sports, which is surprising in the light of the salience of that subject in Kenyan society and the dominance of a single ethnic group within athletics. In many nations and societies, sport tends to serve as an adhesive in the construction of nationalism; in Kenya, ethnicity tended to be a divisive and polarising subject. Since Kenya's dailies generally supported the national

[121] Ogola, 'Confronting and Performing', pp. 73-85.
[122] Ibid, p. 74.
[123] S. Audoin-Rouzeau, *Men at War 1914-1918: National Sentiment and Trench Journalism in France During the First World War* (Oxford, 1992).
[124] R. Nelson, 'Soldier Newspapers: A Useful Source in the Social and Cultural History in the First World War and Beyond', *War In History,* Vol. 17, Is. 2 (April 2010), pp. 167-191.

government, when it pertained to ethnicity, the sports section remained systematically silent.

On the other hand, journalists in the post-colonial period did pay attention to female athletes, even if it was through continually highlighting their absence. As an example, in an article titled 'Women: Plenty but Usually Wasted Talent', it was declared that 'Kenya has as many talented women in athletics as men, but for various reasons, Kenyan women have lagged far behind in performance, especially on the international scene'.[125] Wondering why the 'home of middle distance runners like Kip Keino' did not have women running to the same standard, another account declared, 'It boils down to hard work and dedication to training'.[126] Questions of why Kenya's sportswomen were not 'keeping pace' with the men were invoked far more often than queries around why Kalenjin runners were more successful than any other ethnic group, though the dominance of this ethnic group in running was arguably as clear-cut as men's over women.

Bodil Folke Frederiksen has explored a similar puzzle in her work on urban culture in Kenya and African popular writing.[127] In that genre, questions of masculinity and femininity were prevalent while African ethnic relations and identities went unmentioned. She observed that gender could be 'debated, flaunted and engaged with…whereas African ethnicity leads a secret and furtive life'.[128] For Frederiksen, explanation lies in how, throughout colonial and post-colonial history, ethnicity had been highly politicised whereas gender had not. Gender was not a basis

[125] P. Ndoo, 'Women: Plenty but Usually wasted Talent', *Daily Nation*, 16 August 1986, p. 22.
[126] P. Ndoo, 'Medals for these Kenya Schoolboys', *Sunday Nation*, 9 August 1970, p. 37.
[127] B. Frederiksen, 'Gender, Ethnicity and Popular Culture in Kenya', *The European Journal of Development Research*, Vol. 6, Is. 2 (1994), pp. 52-62.
[128] Frederiksen, 'Gender', p. 58.

for politicisation at the national level, which freed it for public debate, and evidence of this can be found in both the writings of popular culture as well as of sport.

That said, what was presented was asymmetrical, in that more was written about men than women.[129] This is unsurprising, in light of numerous studies of western media across different medium and events, including the Olympics, in which men's sport received greater media coverage compared to women's sport.[130]

To some extent, the differential allocation of space between women's and men's athletics in the Kenyan press was mitigated by the extensive coverage given to sport as a whole within the papers. Okigbo and his colleagues conducted a comparative quantitative content analysis of the most widely read newspapers in Nigeria and Kenya, including *The Standard* and *The Nation*.[131] Their sampling looked only at the period from June 1994 to June 1995 but their results confirmed that sports received significant coverage in the Kenyan media. Sports occupied an average of 18.3 per cent of the total news coverage, behind only reports on government activities

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[129] This is based on the author's assessment. Coverage of female and male athletes within Kenyan newspapers has not yet been quantified or analysed systematically through a study specifically devoted this question.

[130] Research making this clear has emerged from media scholars and sports sociologists. See, for instance: M. Duncan, and M. Messner, 'The Media Image of Sport and Gender', in L. Wenner (ed.), *MediaSport* (London, 1998), pp. 170-185; S. Eastman, and A. Billings, 'Sportscasting and Sports Reporting: The Power of Gender Bias', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (2000), pp. 192-214; J. Harris, and B. Clayton, 'Femininity, Masculinity, Physicality and the English Tabloid Press', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol. 37, Is. 3-4 (2002), pp. 397-413; R. Bishop, 'Missing in Action: Feature Coverage of Women's Sports in *Sports Illustrated*', *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2003), pp. 184-194; M. Pederson, 'Examining Equity in Newspaper Photographs: A Content Analysis of the Print Media Coverage of Interscholastic Athletics', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol. 37, Is. 3-4 (2002), pp. 303-318. For research on the Olympic Games, see A. Billings and J. Angelini, 'Packaging the Games for Viewer Consumption: Gender, Ethnicity and Nationality in NBC's Coverage of the 2004 Summer Olympics, *Communication Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (2007), pp. 95-111; C. Tuggle, S. Huffman and D. Rosengard, 'A Descriptive Analysis of NBC's Coverage of the 2000 Summer Olympic', *Mass Communication and Society*, Vol. 5, iI. 3 (2002), pp. 361-375; A. Billings, *Olympic Media: Inside the Biggest Show on Television* (London, 2008).

[131] C. Okigbo, F. Eribo, M. Kizito, and C. Kyayonka, 'Beyond Cameroon: Model Content Analysis from East and West Africa', in F. Eribo and E. Tanjong (eds.), *Journalism and Mass Communication in Africa: Cameroon* (Lexington, 2002), pp. 133-150.

and the economy, which occupied 25.1 per cent and 19.3 per cent of coverage, respectively.[132]

Within this, some sports undoubtedly received more attention than others. While Okigbo and his colleagues were concerned only with measuring how much space sport received compared to other newsworthy topics and thus did not measure how coverage was divided among different sports, their findings confirm that the major papers in Kenya and Nigeria contain a substantial repository of data covering athletics. The researchers also found that articles concerning gender, defined as 'stories depicting stereotypes of men and women's behaviour and activities, female circumcision and those on meetings or conferences focusing on gender', received very little coverage, only 1.6 per cent of all published stories.[133]

For this reason, it is all the more imperative to use sports coverage as a way to study gender in terms of both masculinities and femininities. Looking at sport through the Kenyan press provides access to social and cultural preoccupations and how these evolved over a long time horizon.

Media and Sport: Production and Reception of Culture

As a source from which to study the history of gender and Kenyan women's running, the sports section of *The Standard* and *The Nation* had certain weaknesses. Only a handful of journalists wrote the many articles that appeared in these papers over the years and they tended to form a homogenous group. Before independence, most sports journalists were male Europeans; in the post-colonial era, they have been male Africans. Few Asians wrote articles and women wrote almost nothing that appeared

[132] Okigbo *et al*, 'Beyond Cameroon', pp. 141-2.
[133] Ibid, p. 138.

in the sports section. This homogeneity may have influenced which sports and which groups of people received attention.

A second criticism is that journalists with *The Nation* and *The Standard* were writing for a paying audience that was not representative of the nation's population. In 1997, the circulation of newspapers was estimated at 230,000 out of an approximately 25 million people living in Kenya at the time.[134] Nic Cheeseman estimates that *The Nation* today sells around 180,000 copies a day and *The Standard* around 60,000.[135] When sharing papers among a community is considered, actual readership of a news publication can end up as multiples of the number officially purchased. In the case of *The Standard*, it has been estimated that up to 70 people learn the content of each copy, directly or indirectly, given its distribution among local leaders who read the contents aloud to other villagers.[136] Cheeseman also cites research from the Afrobarometer, which found that ten per cent of adult Kenyans read a newspaper each day, around 2.4 million people.[137]

Journalists often wrote uninhibitedly when presenting a sports narrative. Their style of writing did not seem to impinge on the accuracy of the facts that were communicated, however, and Faringer has noted the broad spectrum of training programs and education offered to journalists in Kenya. Her assessment was that 'the quality of journalism in Kenya is relatively high'.[138] Cheeseman agrees, describing Kenyan journalists as some of the best in Africa.[139]

The global popularity of sport made it possible to test the credibility of the reporting. To supplement the narrative and triangulate reporting across a range of

[134] EIU, 'Kenya Country Profile'.
[135] N. Cheeseman, 'Are Newspapers on Their Way Out?', *Daily Nation*, 31 March 2014.
[136] Faringer, *Press Freedom in Africa*, p. 35.
[137] Cheeseman, 'Newspapers'.
[138] Faringer, *Press Freedom in Africa,* p. 36.
[139] Cheeseman, 'Newspapers'.

sources, certain events described in the Kenyan press were compared against reports published elsewhere, including the International Association of Athletic Federations' (IAAF) overview of athletics, western newspapers, particularly the *New York Times* and the *Guardian*, as well as running magazines, such as *Athletics Weekly* and *USA Track and Field*.

Besides the journalists' daily articles, the editorial section also drew attention to topics of concern. Sports writers aired grievances freely in weekly editorial columns, usually related to Kenya's turbulent national politics of sport, as did their readership in the 'Letters to the Editor'. Such discourses permit readers to grasp more than the ideas of a handful of sport journalists describing particular events in the sports world; the reader could contribute and broader themes emerged. Interpretation of sports victories and defeats did not simply flow from journalists, it was a cultural product subject to negotiation and reconsideration through an interactive process and situated within a wider field of politics and economic constraints and injustices.[140]

Similarly, articles published on sport sometimes quoted athletes directly, offering almost direct insight into this social fabric. Quotations revealing the feelings, reactions, and perceptions of the athletes and their coaches around past gender dynamics were particularly sought out. In this way, runners' voices, male and female, have been recognised in the sports sections of Kenyan newspapers, and this type of qualitative data, embedded within instruments of popular culture, like sport, rarely appears in the official archival record. Retrieving the memories of former athletes through oral histories also presented an alternative for understanding how people

[140] Karin Barber has written extensively on the production and reception of popular culture in African contexts. In addition to her 'Popular Arts in Africa', cited above, see: K. Barber, *Readings in African Popular Culture* (Oxford, 1997); K. Barber, 'Audiences in Action', *Africa*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (1997), pp. 347-62. See also B. Frederiksen, 'Popular Culture in the South: Production and Reception', in B. Frederiksen and F. Wilson (eds.), *Livelihood, Identity and Instability* (Copenhagen, 1997), pp. 167-177.

articulated and represented their experience of sport. However, unlike conducting semi-structured interviews, newspaper reports of discussed events minimised the imprecision caused by erosion of memory.

By analysing the history and production of Kenya's major dailies, the vast archive of reports available through which to study athletics can be brought to bear. Newspapers are a set of texts that deepen the knowledge of African athletes from a different era and continue to do so today. The articles provide a unique record and blend of the thoughts and feelings of the athletes, coaches, officials, journalists and spectators. While it is important to integrate different methods with use of the print media as a source of social and cultural histories, sports pages offer rich stories about, as well as insight into, the relationships among the people who made Kenya's athletics history.

Conclusion

Through the theories, oral histories and documentary sources discussed in this chapter, the history of Kenyan athletics can be analysed with respect to gender. Understanding the social construction of Kalenjin ethnicity aids understanding of the relationship among global and local changes and gender identities in athletics. In particular, it has been argued that Lonsdale's theory of moral ethnicity offers a useful lens through which to study gender among the Kalenjin.

This was also made possible by travelling to the homes and training camps of the elite runners of the Rift Valley permitted interviews with some of the earliest internationally successful female runners in Kenya. A privilege of studying such recent history is that many of the people who participated in the events described in

these pages are still living, and some were generous enough to share their time and stories to provide a personal picture of their experience of running in Kenya during the late twentieth century. Collecting oral histories combined with an evaluation of media reports were fundamental to reconstructing the history of athletics in Kenya.

Finally, shaped by the interplay of journalists and their readership but free from direct oversight and government censorship, the articles in Kenya's two major dailies, the *Nation* and *The Standard*, offered a range of images and narratives about Kenyan athletics. Using public media as a source provided ample baseline information for this project. Editorials and stories in these two newspapers offered a means to understand specific events in time as well as in wider context, and proved helpful in retrieving the voices of people who shaped the history of women's running in Kenya.

By bringing together archival documents, ethnographies, reports from the Kenyan press and oral testimonies, this thesis hopes to contribute new insights into the changes in gender and sport within a region where athletics has been a source of tremendous local and global recognition.

Chapter Three: Empire Games

Introduction

One year after Kenya's independence, British men remained at the helm of athletics in the new nation. Organising Inspector of Physical Education, Aish Jeneby, writing in the *Daily Nation* in 1964, decried that 'there has been no move by any sports association in Kenya to let any African take over the job of official. The usual answer is that they are not ready to do so'. He concluded:

> My views are, and will always be, that Africans must be given a chance to represent their own country in the Olympic Games and any other overseas visits. I will not accept anything other than giving a chance to Africans in this country to play their part in the running of sports affairs.[1]

Daily Nation sports editor Brian Marsden offered a rebuttal:

> The *men* who lead our teams must have the following qualifications: They must be Kenyans, whether they are Africans, European or Asian does not matter one jot. They must be *the men* whose qualifications are best suited to carry out the job successfully [italics added].[2]

In debating the racial configuration of Kenya's sports leadership, Marsden and Jeneby disagreed over whether 'only European officials [were] capable of taking teams overseas'.[3] As of the time of their writing, Europeans had always held responsibility for Kenyan athletics teams travelling abroad. After independence, the racial aspect of this arrangement was publically open for discussion.

Women of any race or ethnicity received no such consideration. Marsden left in no doubt the exclusive male culture of athletics that had been consolidated under British rule when he referred to officials as men explicitly, though to him it mattered

[1] A. Jeneby, 'Let the Public Decide…', *Daily Nation*, 20 April 1964, p. 14.
[2] B. Marsden, 'This is Not the Harambee Attitude…', *Daily Nation*, 20 April 1964, p. 14.
[3] ___ 'Africans should Lead Olympics', *Daily Nation,* 20 April 1964, p. 14.

not whether they were African, European or Asian. Not unlike other gendered cultural institutions that were thought to instil British values in empire, it seemed common sense that in athletics, manhood was an unequivocal starting point.[4]

The exclusion of women from athletics began when western forms of running were introduced to what was then the Protectorate during the first decades of the twentieth century. Under colonial rule, Kenyan men went on to become internationally successful runners in the absence of Kenyan women. Why was this the case? How had athletics in Kenya become such an all men's affair by the end of the colonial period?

Answers can be found in the continuity of ideas about sport and masculinity that developed in nineteenth century Britain and went unquestioned by the men in charge of sport for the duration of the colonial period. The 'games revolution' that occurred in and was transported from Britain not only offered one answer to colonial administrators' search for moral authority in the colonies but it meant that the form of athletics that reached Kenya came laden with British Victorian-era gender conventions. During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, men remained the protagonists in the increasingly organised world of sport in Britain and at major international competitions like the Olympic Games.

Essential to developing the gendered character of athletics in Kenya were the sports officials and colonial administrators who themselves had been indoctrinated in the masculinity of organised games and the ideology of Muscular Christianity while they were students at elite public schools. In Kenya and elsewhere, these men created

[4] The case of Boy Scout and Girl Guiding is instructive. Categories of race mattered in this realm as well. In the latter, African women did not serve in leadership roles until just before independence. See T. Parsons, 'The Limits of Sisterhood: The Evolution of the Girl Scout Movement in Colonial Kenya', in N. Block and T. Proctor (eds.), *Scouting Frontiers: Youth and the Scout Movement's First Century* (Newcastle on Tyne, 2009), pp. 143-158.

policies and institutions embedded with gender inequalities when deciding who should compete in athletics. These are the men who shaped the culture of Kenyan athletics, reflective of a gender regime apparent at the highest levels of international sport unfavourable to women's involvement as competitors or decision-makers.

This chapter begins by looking at the early history of sport in Britain and the 'games revolution' of the nineteenth century before analysing some of the individuals and institutions that were central to establishing masculine dominance of athletics in Kenya. It introduces an important episode in the history of Kenyan Athletics: preparations for the Kenyan men's team's first appearance at a major international athletics competition – the 1954 Empire and Commonwealth Games. The tumultuous 1950s are the focus because it was in that decade that Kenyan men debuted at international competition at the Commonwealth Games amidst the Mau Mau Emergency at home.

The 'Games Revolution'

Nineteenth century Britain gave the world the electric telegraph, railways and steamships. Many of today's most popular sports also emanated from England, in particular. From horseracing to boxing, games became more centrally organised and standardised. Richard Holt has written that 'while modern sport was not precisely invented during the years from the 1850s to 1880s, this was the period in which sport began to differ from earlier, traditional forms in important respects'.[5]

Games that were previously organised in a local or impromptu manner increasingly came under the control of national and international governing bodies

[5] R. Holt, *Sport and the British* (Oxford, 1989), p. 14. The standardisation of cricket came earlier, in with eighteenth century, with the formation of the MCC in 1787.

with the participants, mainly men, following a single set of written rules. Spectator sports like football and rugby rose to prominence. In 1880, the final of the Football Association Cup tournament attracted 6000 people; in 1899, a crowd of almost 74,000 gathered to watch that same event.[6] Upper class pursuits like golf, rowing and tennis also grew in popularity as 'games' were elevated to the more serious and absorbing status of 'sport'.[7] Driving the systematic reform of sport and games into recognisably modern forms was a burgeoning middle class and its establishment as a significant and stable sector within society. Increased income levels and time for leisure were conducive to participating in and viewing new sports and recreational activities. As Eric Hobsbawm has identified, 'the new invention of sport' was an increasingly important way to indicate membership in a certain social class.[8]

The version of competitive track and field with which the world is now familiar can be traced to competitions first held at Oxford and Cambridge in 1864 and to the founding of the (men's) Amateur Athletic Club for Oxbridge students in 1866.[9]

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[6] W. Mandle, 'Games People Played: Cricket and Football in England and Victoria in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Historical Studies,* Vol. 15, No. 60 (1973), p. 511.

[7] J. Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes, 1870-1914* (Manchester, UK, 1993), p. 65.

[8] Two other ways to signify one's class were engagement with leisure activity and formal education: E. Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (New York, 1987), p. 174.

[9] Relatively little scholarship has been devoted to the history of athletics in Britain. Polley suggests that scholars have been put off by the sport's complexity as both a team and an individual sport with several strands of administrative development. Each of the different sub-disciplines that comprise athletics established its own governing body, with further sub-divisions by gender and geography. Polley's work and Jeremy Crump's 1989 essay remain the two best scholarly histories of the sport. The history of athletics has also been captured in wider surveys of British sport, notably Holt's *Sport and the British* and Lowerson's *Sport and the English Middle Classes*. Biographies, like John Bale's *Roger Bannister* and Bill Jones' *Ghost Runner*, the latter detailing the tragic life of the British professional marathoner and ultra-runner John Tarrant, are useful for shedding light on individual runners' experiences. *The Official Centenary History* contains factual, descriptive detail but little interpretation. See: M. Polley, '"The Amateur Rules": Amateurism and Professionalism in Post-War British Athletics', in A. Smith and D. Porter (eds.) *Amateurs and Professionals in Post-War British Sport* (London, 2000), pp. 81-114; P. Lovesey, *The Official Centenary History of the Amateur Athletic Association* (London, 1979); J. Crump, 'Athletics', in T. Mason (ed.), *Sport in Britain* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 44-77; Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 109-11, 275-6; Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes*, pp. 162-80, 263, 275; J. Bale, *Roger*

Athletics clubs proliferated during the late nineteenth century, as running, jumping and throwing competitions were pegged to specific, set distances amidst a wider push for increasing classification and systematisation. By the end of the century, the sport had been institutionalised under the official umbrella of amateur athletics.

Founded in 1880, the Amateur Athletic Association (AAA) was 'fervently anti-professional'.[10] Twenty years after its establishment, the association was responsible for regulating more than 20,000 athletes and it prohibited all of them from accepting money for racing, competing against professionals and teaching the sport to others for compensation.[11] If an athlete were to accept financial remuneration for competing, a lifetime ban could result.[12] This policy emulated the practices of its predecessor, the Oxbridge-led AAC, which from the start had barred those who competed in races for money – 'professionals' - as well as all physical labourers.[13] Lowerson explains that this arrangement arose in part because of the suspicion that working-class men's 'muscularity' would give them an edge.[14] It also established a division between male members of the middle class and the status of their less privileged counterparts.

Where did women fit into this? George Pallett writes that 'the first trace of organised women's athletics in England seems to have been the formation of a ladies' section attached to Kensington Athletic Club in 1921'.[15] As it did for men, economic and social class constrained women's participation in the early years of athletics.

Bannister (Oxford, 2004); B. Jones, *The Ghost Runner: The Tragedy of the Man They Couldn't Stop, The True Story of John Tarrant* (Edinburgh, 2011).

[10] D. Birley, *Sport and the Making of Britain* (Manchester, 1993), p. 280.

[11] Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes*, p. 163.

[12] For a case study of the distinction between amateurism and professionalism, and how it came to define the life of a talented English runner, see Jones, *The Ghost Runner*.

[13] Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 108; D. Porter and A. Smith, 'Introduction', in A. Smith and D. Porter (eds.), *Amateurs and Professionals in Post-War British Sport* (London, 2000), p. ix.

[14] Lowerman, *Sport and the English Middle Classes*, p. 162.

[15] G. Pallett, *Women's Athletics* (London, 1955), p. 114.

While working-class women had competed in earlier centuries, the first females to be involved in organised track and field in the twentieth century were largely drawn from the socially elite sector of educated women. This did not, however, give them opportunities equal to men. The International Olympic Committee took until 1928 to allow a limited range of athletic events for women at the Amsterdam Olympics.

The effects of this stratification can be clearly seen in the ten Oxbridge men who won Olympic track medals between 1920 and 1928 entirely in the absence of female runners.[16] British women did not debut in athletics at the Olympics until 1932. Even when women did emerge within the first domestic and international teams, men coached them.[17] This was the case at both exclusively female clubs and those that had a section for both men and women. Men also worked as administrators and officials and in the roles of judges and starters. The combined effect was that at the international level in the early decades of the twentieth century, while poor men were marginalised, women were invisible altogether. McDevitt described the model of sport in Britain as a system of 'athletic apartheid' in terms of its gender restricted male character and track and field was no exception.[18]

At the local level, there were, however, exceptions. Some women's participation in competitive running could be observed during this time, though the range of events for women was far more limited than for men. At the beginning of

[16] There is evidence that Oxbridge women participated in the sports that developed within their colleges during the second half of the nineteenth century. See: P. Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850-1920* (Bloomington, 2005), p. 156-8.

[17] Attitudes differed significantly between those involved at the club level and those making the decisions governing international women's athletics. Opposition to women's participation was greater within the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) than within local clubs, where many of the positive developments leading to the eventual emergence of British women's athletics were located. See L. Robinson, '"Tripping Daintily into the Arena": A Social History of English Women's Athletics 1921-1960', (University of Warwick. PhD thesis, 1996), p. 65.

[18] P. McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win: Sport, Masculinity, and Nationalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1880- 1935* (New York, 2004), p. 3.

the interwar period, women competed in 60 or 80-yard races and the half-mile walk.[19] One of the first recorded female athletics championships was a 4x110 yard relay for female members of the armed services, held on 9 September 1918 at Stamford Bridge.[20] From the 1920s, the Civil Service had an active women's athletic section that held an annual national championship while private enterprise played a role in promoting the sport for women by organising 'Inter-Store Championships'.[21]

University sports days also introduced athletics to women in higher education, starting with Manchester University's initiation of women's inter-varsity competition in 1921.[22] The programme for university women in these competitions included the 100 yards, the mile, the high and long jumps, and the 120-yard hurdles. However, very few women attended universities and thus the impact of women's athletics in universities was minimal. The White City Stadium in London, which was the main venue for the most important men's university meets, was not made available to women until 1934, largely due to the opposition from the Amateur Athletic Association.[23]

Sports governing bodies had succeeded in bracketing off certain categories of people from international athletics by positioning 'gentleman amateurism' as a virtuous ideal and championing the nation that sport ought to be played for its own sake. To do otherwise, it was presumed, would ruin the sport and undermine the foundations of society.[24] As Mangan noted:

[19] Robinson, 'Tripping Daintily', p. 68.
[20] Ibid, p. 69.
[21] Robinson, 'Tripping Daintily', p. 71.
[22] Ibid, p. 72.
[23] Ibid, pp. 159-61.
[24] P. Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreations and the Contest for Control, 1830-1855* (London, 1978), especially chapters 4 and 5.

> No one should overlook the fact that morality – more than pleasure, leisure or relaxation – was at the centre of the evolution of modern European sport of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[25]

This 'morality' pervading the nineteenth-century 'games revolution' came from a range of sources: changing attitudes toward physical and mental health, divisions within the Church of England and the desire to actively promote religion, the influence of the social and evolutionary theories of Spencer and Darwin and the push of the imperial endeavour, which was linked with the rise of the British 'public school' system.[26]

Focusing on the latter, to Patrick Dunae, 'The British Public School and the British Empire represent one of the greatest institutional partnerships in modern history'.[27] James Mangan, who has built a career around studying this 'partnership' in relation to sport, writes that 'the public schoolboy learnt *inter alia* the basic tools of imperial command: courage, endurance, control and self-control and principally did so on the sports field'.[28] McDevitt emphasised that the masculinity of sport in empire was an expression of a worldview that held participation in and success at athletics as primary measures of the worth of a man 'as a man'.[29]

Charles Kingsley and others writing at the time promulgated a moral defence of sport via an explicitly enunciated masculinity:

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[25] J. Mangan, 'Prologue: Middle-class "Revolutionaries" in Pursuit of Moral, Physical, Political and Social Health and the History of Modern European Sport as a History of Modern European Ideas', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 27, Nos. 1-2 (January-February 2010), p. 27.
[26] E. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: From 1750 to the Present Day*, 2nd Edition (New York, 1999), especially pp. 141-2. Also Hobsbawm, *Age of Empire*, pp. 174-80. On the 'games revolution' and imperialism, see J. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public Schools: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge, 1981); J. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London, 1986).
[27] P. Dunae, 'Boys' Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914', *Victorian Studies* Vol. 24, No. 1, *Victorian Imperialism* (Autumn, 1980), pp. 105-121.
[28] Mangan, *The Games Ethic,* p. 18.
[29] McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win*, p. 2.

> Through sport, *boys* acquire virtues which no books can give them; not merely daring and endurance, but, better still, temper, self-restraint, fairness, honour, unenvious approbation of another's success, and all that 'give and take' of life which stand a *man* in good stead when *he* goes forth into the world, and without which, indeed, *his* success is always maimed and partial [emphasis added].[30]

The self-conscious 'manliness' attached to competitive sport in school was particularly clear in team sports like cricket and rugby union that became prominent in the curricula of schools like Eton, Harrow and Marlborough. Hobsbawm describes how from the mid-nineteenth century, these elite public schools elaborated the 'actively games-dominated Tory imperialism which was to remain characteristics of them', noting the oft-repeated claim that the battle of Waterloo had been won on the playing fields of Eton.[31] British public schools' sports maintained class and gender divides. Further, as with Robert Baden-Powell's Boy Scouting Movement, schoolboys' participation in sport was thought essential for the development of courage, loyalty and respect among the exclusive circles of future imperialists.[32]

Conversely, athletics for girls in schools faced opposition no matter what their place in the economy.[33] Competition was not favoured because it was seen as contrary to femininity. In this regard, the development of women's physical education in England was still very much influenced by the ideology of Per Henrik Ling, whose

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[30] In Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 93.
[31] Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire*, p. 147.
[32] For a discussion of the Boy Scout movement in British Africa, see T. Parsons, *Race, Resistance and the Boy Scout Movement in British Colonial Africa* (Athens, OH, 2004). For analysis of how British imperialists incorporated African traditions into the movement to support the imperial enterprise among boys, see T. Parsons, 'Een-Gonyama Gonyama!: Zulu Origins of the Boy Scout Movement and the Africanisation of Imperial Britain', *The Parliamentary History Yearbook Trust* (2008), pp. 57-66.
[33] Opposition to sport in girls' education at this time was far from unique to England. In Poland, for instance, a congress was held on women's physical education and sport in 1928. The majority of the delegates agreed that girls should aim for 'good technical performance and factors relating to beauty', rather than improving records. See A. Guttmann, *Women's Sports: A History* (New York, 1991), p. 176. For more detail on other European nations see, Guttmann, *Women's Sports*, pp. 154-77.

system of Swedish gymnastics first became popular in the 1830s.[34] His supporters occupied an influential role in women's physical education not only in Britain but also in North America and parts of Europe.

Swedish gymnastics did not challenge the aesthetic expectations of sportswomen nor the degree of physicality that was deemed 'safe'.[35] The practice was similar to military drill and was thought to encourage respect for authority and discipline, to develop the ability to follow instructions and to promote 'cleanliness of appearance' – a far different list of desirable attributes from those that competitive sport was intended to promote in boys.

In London, boy's athletics competitions were organised by the London School Athletic Association (LSAA) from 1900.[36] The first time girls there were involved was 1921. Girls were initially restricted to 100-yard races and relays because of complaints about the risk of injury to their supposedly more fragile bodies, together with anxiety that they would overstrain themselves. In line with Ling's theories, a competitive atmosphere was still believed to be detrimental to the development of girls' femininity. The reluctance to encourage girls' athletics was remarkably durable in British education, even in the face of ever-increasing proof that competitive running was not harmful for female athletes. As late as 1951, the Schools Athletic Association (SAA) was still not recommending races over 150 metres for girls.[37]

Published a century before, in 1851, *Tom Brown's School Days* offers insight into how the moral significance of competitive sport in boys' education first

[34] J. Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports* (London, 1994), pp. 48-9.
[35] S. Scraton, *Shaping Up To Womanhood* (Buckingham, 1992), pp. 38-41.
[36] Robinson, 'Tripping Daintily', p. 82.
[37] Ibid.

emerged.[38] The book describes the environment of sports and education at the Rugby School under headmaster Thomas Arnold. While leading the Rugby School, Arnold oversaw its considerable growth amidst middle-class parents' accelerating interest in enrolling their sons. In 1750, formal schooling had been a relatively insignificant and brief part of the education process. To the vast majority of the English population, acquiring skills of reading, writing and arithmetic was not a necessary prelude to economic activity. But as numerous 'public schools' were founded for the middles classes from the 1840s onwards, what Hobsbwan called the 'nurseries of the nobility and gentry', the increasing numbers of boys attending such schools ran parallel to the institutionalisation of games as a formal component of the curricula.[39] Though scholars have questioned the extent to which Arnold truly believed in the 'inherent virtue' of athletics, he became famous for championing education not only for academics but also as an avenue through which sport was used to build moral and upright 'Christian gentlemen'.[40]

From this combination of sport, religion, masculinity and moral education emerged 'Muscular Christianity', a doctrine in which the values of the games revolution, including 'healthy sport' and 'the formation of all that makes for true manliness, were connected with the 'civilising' mission of Christianity and colonial education in empire.[41] Like colonial officers, many of the young missionaries who

[38] T. Hughes, *Tom Brown's School Days* (Cambridge, 1857). See also: B. Kidd, 'Muscular Christianity and Value-centred Sport: The Legacy of Tom Brown in Canada', *Sport in Society*, Vol. 16, No. 4 (2013), pp. 405-415.
[39] Hobsbawm, *Age Of Empire*, p. 178.
[40] To McDevitt, Arnold was 'at best ambivalent about games', in *May the Best Man Win,* p. 11. Holt agrees, describing Arnold's view on physical education as being neither unhelpful nor 'an avenue to enlightenment or spirituality', in *Sport and the British*, p. 80. See also T. Chandler, 'Emergent Athleticism: Games in Two English Public Schools, 1800–60', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (1988), pp. 312-330.
[41] London's *Saturday Review* first used the term 'Muscular Christian' in February 1857. For a review of 'Muscular Christianity' and its adaptation over the last 150 years, see J. MacAloon, 'Muscular Christianity After One Hundred and Fifty Years', *The International Journal of the*

joined the church before fanning out to various parts of the empire were also deeply imbued with the 'games ethic'.[42] These men and the Oxbridge-educated colonial administrators who were posted to Africa, Asia or the Caribbean took with them an ingrained acceptance of the importance of organised games that were self-consciously male. Sport and the British empire were regarded as mutually reinforcing, gendered systems with a higher moral purpose.

In Kenya, one of the most famous 'muscular Christians' was Dr John Arthur. The 'Great Football Match' of 1909 that took place between two Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) teams gives an idea of how he incorporated sport into building Christian congregations. The game involved twenty-two Kikuyu boys and a 'goodly following of supporters'.[43] In a match report published after the event, Dr Arthur wrote about the rise of 'the playing-fields of sport, in which manliness, courage and unselfishness shall add their quota to the formation of Christian character'.[44] Athletics success was welcomed but the primary function of the match was to impart positive qualities like discipline, respect and honour to young boys. Europeans like Arthur were dutifully carrying out their commitment to the 'games ethic'. Lord Lugard would later further legitimise boys' engagement with sport and physical education in his treatise on indirect rule, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, writing:

> It is, of course, essential that playgrounds and gymnasia should be provided. In Nigeria, we have found that polo was an especially good game for the *sons*

History of Sport, Vol. 23, No. 5 (2006), pp. 687-700. See also: B. Stoddart, 'Sport, Cultural Imperialism and Colonial Response in the British Empire', *Sport in Society*, Vol. 9, No. 5 (2006), pp. 809-835; and J. Mangan, *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialisation and British Imperialism* (Manchester, 1990).

[42] B. Stoddart, 'Sport, Cultural Imperialism', p. 814; M. Huggins, *The Victorians and Sport* (London, 2004), p. 221; Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 351-2; J. Mangan (ed.), *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire and Society* (Abingdon, 1992); J. Mangan, 'Britain's Chief Spiritual Export: Imperial Sport as Moral Metaphor, Political Symbol and Cultural Bond', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 27 (2010), pp. 328–336.

[43] P. Alegi, *African Soccerscapes: How a Continent Changed the World's Game* (Athens, 2010), p. 14.

[44] Quoted in Alegi, *African Soccerscapes*, p. 14.

> of chiefs and others who could afford it, while for other *boys* cricket, football and 'athletics' bring the staff and pupils into close touch, and have the best effect in training character [emphasis added].[45]

In other parts of British-controlled Eastern Africa, boys learned football, such as in the schools in Zanzibar, run by young Muscular Christians like Henry Goodyear, whom a sports newspaper editor praised as a 'splendid football player and so genial a man'.[46] Reverend the Honourable A.V. Lyttleton, president during the 1890s of the Wodehouse Cricket Club in southern Africa; C.T. Studd, who gave up a promising career in cricket to undertake missionary work in the Belgian Congo; and Anglican G. L. Pilkington, who actively promoted soccer in the 1890s at a school in Mengo, Uganda, were among the legion of colonial administrators and missionaries who brought with them to different parts of Africa the belief that sport, arguably a religion in itself, forged a strong moral character within the young men with whom they engaged.[47]

Terence Ranger quotes a visitor to South Africa in 1897 that demonstrates the extent to which sport in empire had by that time become a vital cultural reference point for the colonists themselves:

> Even one who thinks that in England the passion for athletic sports has gone beyond all reasonable limits, and has become a serious injury to education and to the taste for intellectual pleasures, may find in the character of the climate a justification for devotion to cricket…our countrymen are not to be scared by the sun from the pursuit of the national game. They are as much Englishmen in Africa as in England.[48]

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[45] W. Boer, 'A Story of Heroes, of Epics: The Rise of Football in Nigeria', in G. Armstrong (ed.), *Football in Africa: Conflict, Conciliation and Community* (New York, 2004), p. 60.
[46] Quoted in Alegi, *African Soccerscapes,* p. 13.
[47] J. Mangan, 'Imperial Singapore – Culture Imperialism and Imperial Control: Athleticism As Ideological Intent, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 30, No. 11 (2013), pp. 1193-1220; Stoddart, 'Sport, Cultural Imperialism and Colonial Response', p. 816.
[48] quoted in T. Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa', in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 218.

He uses the example of cricket in South Africa to illustrate an 'invented tradition', not one associated with Africans but of the British in empire. Also for their own enjoyment, colonial authorities constructed in Africa their recently devised forms of sport. In sport, as in other domains, white men defined themselves in opposition to women and men of other ethnicities, reifying customs and hardening categories in the process. Considered by some as an 'ideal instrument of colonial purpose',[49] sport and the public school 'games ethic' helped to perpetuate throughout the empire a moral ideology closely associated with Christianity and in line with the British imperial enterprise.

In an era where women's sport was severely limited compared to men's, the 'cult of athleticism' replete with legible 'codes of manhood' fused together networks of men from different generations in Britain as well as provided glue to the 'old boys network' across a global empire. Calling it Britain's 'chief spiritual export', Mangan has argued that the language of and participation in sport became a code, so that to 'play the game' meant not so much to exert oneself in physical activity but to support the social conventions and beliefs that sport represented in Britain as well as in empire – this included stratification of participation by gender, class, ethnicity and race.[50] As subsequent sections of this chapter will show, running in colonial Kenya involved masculinities cross-cut by race, which left it as socially divided there as it had been segmented by class in Britain.

But this was not what the men who transported the 'games ethic' emphasised. Rather, they stood by the reputation that sport had gained as a virtuous and essential

[49] Mangan, *The Games Ethic,* p. 18.
[50] J. Mangan, '"Oars and the Man": Pleasure and Purpose in Victorian and Edwardian Cambridge', *British Journal of Sports History*, Vol. 1, No. 3 (December, 1984), pp. 245-271; J. Mangan, 'Lamentable Barbarians and Pitiful Sheep: Rhetoric of Protect and Pleasure in Late Victorian and Edwardian "Oxbridge"', *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (Summer, 1991), pp. 473-489.

vehicle for the transmission of positive qualities, of which 'manliness' was one. Like the character development that justified schoolboys' participation in sport, athletics was regarded as a means through which colonised men might be trained and 'civilised'. According to one District Commissioner stationed in the Rift Valley in 1949, 'the ability to win or lose games with the same good spirit is one of the tests of true civilization'.[51] A report from the Phelps-Stokes Commission undertaken in the early 1920s offers a rationale behind the encouragement that sport was given in Kenya. The value of physical fitness was stressed because 'the experiences of civilised countries should be used as fully as possible in enriching the lives of the native people in recreation'.[52] According to Dr Arthur in 1909, football represented the 'stylised epitome of a moral order and the metaphoric essence of a cultured civilisation'.[53]

But often it was not all about sport or even the larger 'civilising mission'. While protecting 'native rights' and advancing 'civilisation', the idea that the empire would be self-sustaining was an important part of colonial ideology, the contradictory 'dual mandate' with which officials had to cope. In Kenya's case, this can be traced back to the onset of the colonial period, when in the wake of the collapse of the Imperial British East African Company, Britain declared a protectorate over the territory between Uganda and the coast.[54] The decision to construct a railway from

[51] KNA/PC/GRSSA/3/21/29, African Affairs, 17 September 1949.
[52] RHO, African Education Commission, *Education in East Africa, 1923-24* (Phelps-Stokes Fund, Edinburgh House Press, 1925), p. xx.
[53] Quoted in P. Alegi, *African Soccerscapes*, p. 14.
[54] Britain's colonial conquest will be discussed further in the following chapter but see: J. Lonsdale, 'The Conquest State of Kenya, 1895-1905' in B. Berman and J. Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa, Book One: State and Class* (London, 1992), pp. 13-44; J. Lonsdale, 'The Politics of Conquest: The British in Western Kenya, 1894-1908', *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa, Book One: State and Class* (London, 1992), pp. 45-74; D.A. Low, 'British East Africa: The Establishment of British Rule 1895-1912', in V. Harlow and E. Chilver (eds.), *Oxford History of East Africa*, *II* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 1-56; and G.H. Mungeam, *British Rule in Kenya: The Establishment of Administration in the East Africa*

Mombasa to Uganda further exacerbated the challenge of attaining financial solvency.[55] Transforming what had been a three-month journey to one that took three days, the 'Lunatic Line' cost Britain dearly.[56] The colonial government was placed between contending forces to generate sufficient income to repay this large debt while still ruling in the interests of their 'native' subjects.

The solution was to establish a 'White Man's Colony' in which settlers gained private control of the most fertile land to which Europeans were actively encouraged to immigrate. Many responded to the promises of land, cheap labour and large potential profits and by 1905, there were nearly 3,000 white settlers in Kenya, most living in the fertile and temperate highlands.[57] A large-scale system of European-led cash-crop agriculture was expected to achieve economic growth and self-sufficiency. This idea often clashed with the colonial state's self-appointed duty to 'protect' and 'civilise' local populations.[58] When these objectives came into conflict, the administration had to make choices, and the usual priority was promoting white settlers' interests.

One of the ways they did this was through taxes. British taxpayers were not expected to pay for the empire, even if this meant placing an enormous burden on

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Protectorate, 1895-1912 (Oxford, 1966); D. Anderson, 'Massacre at Ribo Post: Expansion and Expediency on the Colonial Frontier in East Africa' *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (2004), pp. 33-54.

[55] In 1926, the railway's name was changed from the Uganda Railway to the Kenya and Uganda Railway. In 1948, it became the East African Railways and Harbours when it amalgamated with the Tanganyika Railway and Port Services. For histories of the railway, see: M. Hill, *Permanent Way: The Story of the Kenya and Uganda Railways* (Nairobi, 1950); and R. Ogonda, 'Transport and Communications in the Colonial Economy', in W. Ochieng' and R. Maxon (eds.), *An Economic History of Kenya* (Nairobi, 1992), pp. 129-147.

[56] J. Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925-52* (Oxford, 2000), p. 29.

[57] C. Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London, 2005), p. 3.

[58] It was not until the 1920s that the British government made public the principle that neither white settler nor Indian but rather 'native' African interests must be paramount. Even then the 'Devonshire declaration' was hedged with conditions that in practice and left room for settler supremacy. See: M. P. K. Sorrenson, *Origins of European Settlement in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1968); R. Maxon, 'The Devonshire Declaration', History in Africa (1991), pp. 259-70.

local populations in the process of developing the colonial infrastructure. The requirement that taxes be paid in cash, whilst banning Africans from growing and exporting profitable crops, such as coffee, forced men into the monetised economy and into work for Europeans, for whom labour was in otherwise scarce supply. Though illegal, some resorted to violence, such as hut-burning, in order to get done what the government expected in terms of raising tax or recruiting labour.[59]

Cultivating goodwill through the organisation of sport, then, offered a prudent way to navigate these difficult situations. The Kenyan state, Christian church and the Kenyan schools and other colonial institutions continued to embrace the 'games ethic' philosophy whose power also underlay the ubiquity of sport in Britain. A government official remarked in Nairobi in 1957 that:

> All who are interested in youth and in better understanding between peoples can be happy about the way in which the International Recreation Association has served throughout the world in its first year. It has a special mission to help the peoples in under-developed countries to see the values of proper recreation.[60]

What was proper recreation? It was a non-coercive way to express British cultural moral authority, behaviour standards and values, which came with clearly defined ideas about gender and race. In sport, Kenyans were asked to accept the exclusion of women and a hierarchy of masculinities that kept European runners separate from African runners. By the same token, British men and women accepted gender inequalities overshadowed by a caste segregation of masculinities that kept lower class men from competing against 'gentleman amateurs'. Both edifices were built on rhetoric of sport as a means through which boys and men developed

[59] A. Clayton and D. Savage, *Government and Labour in Kenya, 1895-1963* (London, 1974), p. 58.
[60] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/232, 'Honorary General Secretary's American & Vacation Report, 1957'.

particularly desirable personal characteristics. As the next section will show in greater depth, ideals of gender in Britain succeeded in recreating old cultures of exclusion in colonial Kenya.

Kenyan Athletics Follows the British Model: Women Need Not Apply

Ethical and behavioural codes will lose power and influence if they are not shared and actively followed. In Kenya, small groups of white men, and the institutions they led, were central to establishing and maintaining the continuity of athletics as a masculinised way of life. Cultural traditions about the roles of men and women in sport, established particularly during the nineteenth-century in Britain, were preserved in Kenya throughout the colonial period. Yet the history of running in Kenya during this period also demonstrates the interrelationship between masculinities and race. It proved an example of what has been called the 'reconfiguration of masculine hierarchies on the margins of empires during its death throes'.[61]

In September 1924, Englishman James Orr formed the Arab and African Sports Association (A&ASA) while serving as the colony's first Director of Education. The A&ASA was a group drawn from eminent sections of the colonial elite, including President Sir Edward Denham and supported by the Governor Sir Robert Coryndon. Prominent European leaders from the settler community as well as the police, army, schools and churches organised national 'Olympic' meetings while local committees held events in which Arab and African athletes competed among themselves.[62] The Association's self-appointed mandate was to 'foster, encourage

[61] M. Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century British Masculinity', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (2002), p. 651.
[62] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 77.

and control all Arab and African sports organisations and athletics meetings in the colony'.[63] By the 1920s, 'well-organised, formally timed' track meets were held where white men competed separately from men of other colours while women were invited as observers only.[64]

Based on the British model, running competitions in Kenya gradually evolved into a pyramidal system of local, district, provincial and national competitions.[65] District Officers and Community Development Officers who promoted athletics all did so through the strength of their ties and base at the local level. Christian missions were active in establishing athletics during sports days. Government and mission schools added athletics to the curriculum to teach students discipline and the virtue of playing fairly by the rules according to ideologies of Muscular Christianity.

Competition could be fierce between schools and within particular districts. Yet the story of the development of athletics in Kenya is very much one of cooperation, and competition among districts, provinces, up-country colleges and educational institutions.[66] Racing outside of Kenya took place for the first time in 1934, when Kenyan men travelled to compete against neighbouring British Protectorates Uganda and Tanganyika (Tanzania) at the inaugural 'East African Championships'. By the 1940s, it was becoming clear that male Kenyan athletes could compete against the best in the world. Notables during these early years of athletics include Richard Kimitei who covered 100 yards in 10.0 seconds in 1947,

[63] KNA/PC/EST 2/10/3, 'Constitution, Rules and Regulations of the AASA as revised by the Committee, 10 July 1939'.
[64] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 73.
[65] J. Bale, 'Kenyan Running Before the 1968 Mexico Olympics', in Y. Pitsiladis, J. Bale, C. Sharp and T. Noakes (eds.), *East African Running: Toward a Multi-disciplinary Perspective* (London, 2007), p. 13.
[66] M. Anderson, 'The Development of Athletics in 1950s Kenya: Order or Leisure?', (University of Oxford. MSc thesis, 2008).

Juma araap Lagat for his one-mile time of 4:23 and Kipkoech from the Rift Valley who ran the six miles in 29:34.6.[67]

The Arab and Africa Sports Association excluded Asians and Europeans. Pressure was growing to establish a single governing body for all runners by the early 1950s and the Kenya Amateur Athletic Association (KAAA) was founded on 16 March 1951 during a meeting attended by individuals drawn from all races. Momentum for its establishment and subsequent successes came in particular from Archie Evans, who had arrived in Kenya and taken up the role of Colony Sports Officer in 1947. Until he left Kenya in 1966, Evans served as the AASA's Honorary General Secretary from the time he arrived and in the same capacity for the KAAA after it was founded. Anderson refers to Evans as the 'architect of the formation of the KAAA'.[68] To Evans' long-time colleague Tom Askwith, it was 'Archie Evans who, more than anyone else, was responsible for the incredible success of the Kenya athletes in the 50s and 60s'.[69] In one KAAA Presidential Annual Address, Evans is described as having been 'the mainstay of Kenya's sporting achievements'.[70] A liberal who 'wanted to encourage further involvement of Africans in Athletics', Evans inspired the effort to build tracks around the colony according to international standards and as Askwith says, 'converted what were admittedly rather naturally talented athletes into athletes of Olympic Gold Medal standard'.[71]

The founding of the KAAA was the signal that 'modern athletics was established in Kenya'.[72] Bale and Sang suggest it 'constituted the beginnings of the

[67] K. Boit and G. Song, *The Kenyan Running Legends: The Early History of Athletics in Kenya (1922-72)*, Unpublished manuscript (in author's possession), p. 12.
[68] Anderson, 'Development of Athletics', p. 33.
[69] T. Askwith, *Getting my Knees Brown* (Cheltenham, 1996), p. 217.
[70] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/232, 'Presidential Address', 7 February 1955.
[71] Askwith, *Getting my Knees Brown,* p. 217.
[72] Anderson, 'Development of Athletics', p. 32.

globalisation of Kenyan athletics'.[73] It was certainly an essential step that had to occur before Kenya could debut at the Olympic Games in 1956. To receive an invitation to the Games, all nations were required to have established both a national athletics association as well as a National Olympics Association that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) recognised. The Kenya Olympic Association (KOA) fulfilled this requirement by 1955.[74]

In an echo of the mandate of the AASA, the primary aim of the KAAA was 'to encourage, foster, develop and control athletics amongst all races in the colony'.[75] It is telling that no mention was made of encouraging both men and women in this statement. Four years later, little had changed; in 1955, credit was given to the KAAA for:

> Doing a great deal to give the African the right sporting ideas and to help and encourage *him* to take a worthy place in the sporting world [emphasis added].[76]

As had been the case since the 1920s, women were still not involved, whether as athletes, coaches or officials. In official correspondence at the time of the establishment of the KAAA, no one raised the idea of inviting women to participate or for organising women's competition. It was not until 1957, three years after Kenyan men made their debut at the Empire Games and one year after they competed

[73] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 69.
[74] The inaugural meeting of the Kenya Olympic Association took place on 14 February 1955. Following this, application was made to the International Olympic Committee for recognition, which was accepted at the IOC's meeting in Paris in June 1955. KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/232, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Athletic Council of the Arab and African Sports Association' 27 June 1955.
[75] Anderson, 'Development of Athletics', p. 7.
[76] RVP Archives, Nakuru, DC/KSM/1/1/232, East African Sports Association Report. 'Presidential Address. Arab & African Sports Association of Kenya. Annual General Meeting Held in the Central Government Building, Nairobi on Monday, February 7th 1955 at 10:30AM'.

at the Melbourne Olympic Games for the first time, that an organised structure of women's running appeared on the agenda.

Explanation for this can be found by looking at the people in charge of the governing bodies of sport in Kenya as men who had been brought up in a heritage of the moral authority of masculinised sport. Exemplifying this was Sir Derek Quicke Erskine, son of Sir James Erskine, MP for Westminster, and educated at Eton and Sandhurst Military Academy.[77] Commissioned into the King's Dragoon Guards, Erskine arrived in Kenya in 1927 when he was twenty-two years old. By 1970, he was leading Erskine and Duncan Ltd., which manufactured potato crisps and distributed a wide variety of foods. With his brother, Keith Erskine who was head of Securicor, Britain's then largest security firm, Derek Erskine founded Securicor (Kenya) Ltd., and served as its chairman.

Erskine followed his father into politics, becoming MP and Chief Whip of Kenya African National Party (KANU) from 1961-64. As a member of Kenya's National Assembly (later the Legislative Council) during the Emergency of the 1950s, he opposed the mass arrests and detention of African leaders, contending that to place the blame on Jomo Kenyatta was 'damn silly'.[78] In 1961, he travelled to London as one of twelve National Members of the Kenyan Legislature.

Along with his position as a powerful member of the governing class, Erskine was a key figure in the formation of the Kenya Olympic Association and served as its chairman until 1965. He also held the KAAA Presidency until that year, a total of thirteen years, during which time he purchased the land in Nairobi next to the Railways Golf Course where the 35,000-seat Nyayo National Stadium was built, used his own funds to send a Kenyan team to compete in Madagascar, oversaw the

[77] 'From the Guards to Guarding: Sit Derek Erskine', *Sunday Nation*, 2 August 1970, p. 31.
[78] Ibid.

organisation of the teams that travelled to Vancouver and Cardiff for the Commonwealth Games, directed the International Recreation Association and chaired the Commonwealth Games Association.[79] His knighthood in 1964 was awarded for 'his bold stand for racial equality and his leading role in the achievement of sport'.[80]

On the basis of power held across the worlds of business, politics and athletics, men like Erskine could have initiated athletics for women in Kenya. Yet they were not interested as was made clear from the minutes of Erskine's President's Report to the KAAA at its 3rd Annual General Meeting on 29 May 1953, under the heading 'women athletes':

> In reply to a question, the President stated that it was the intention to assist the Ladies as much as possible and there was every hope of including some ladies events in the near future, but he thought that everybody would agree that the retiring Committee had its hands full with preparations for the Vth British Commonwealth and Empire Games.[81]

Erskine explicitly states that preparing the men to race abroad ranked ahead of the development of women's athletics. While this may have been due to the need to prepare the men for the imminent Commonwealth Games, as he suggests, or the pressures of the emerging Mau Mau Emergency, of which he makes no mention (discussed below), his words in this case reflect the fact that the on-going agenda for Kenyan athletics was singularly male. Ardently devoted to the sport, his efforts were rooted in an uncritical acceptance of the cultural context in which western running evolved. Following the Victorian games model, running was part of the direct cultural heritage of the public school code adumbrated in the late nineteenth-century Britain that Erskine would have come to know well as a student at Eton. Public-

[79] Anderson, 'The Development of Athletics', p. 45.
[80] _____'From the Guards', p. 31.
[81] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/227, 'The President's Report to the KAAA'.

school-trained 'gentlemen' were concerned with replicating, rather than altering, the social universe of masculine sport they had come to know in Britain.

Erskine also epitomised how little had changed in the patterns of leadership since the early 1920s' founding of the AASA. The management of the KAAA in the 1950s was still an athletics extension of the economic and political elite, and there was a high degree of personal continuity within a core group of men who dominated it throughout the last years of colonial rule. For instance, the same set of names appears within the Minutes of KAAA and AASA meetings throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. When Honourary Treasurer Wilkinson asked to step down in 1955, much was made of his decision as it came after serving on the AASA's executive committee since 1946 and as the Honourary Treasurer of the KAAA since 1952.[82]

Another central figure at this time was Tom Askwith.[83] Askwith served as Chairman of both the Arab and African Sports Association and the Kenya Sports Association. He also became a founding and executive member of the Kenya Amateur Athletics Association. He further encouraged (male) Kenyan athletes while Principle at the Jeanes School at Kabete. This school nurtured many of Kenya's best runners, jumpers and throwers in large part because of the enthusiasm for athletics that he shared with men like Evans and Erskine.

Born 25 May 1911 in Surrey, Askwith matriculated at Peterhouse, Cambridge to read Engineering. While at Cambridge, he excelled at rowing and won twice in the boat race against Oxford and twice represented Britain at the Olympic Games.[84] In 1935, he was admitted into the colonial service and sent to Kenya as a District

[82] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/232, 'Hon. Treasurer's Report. Arab & African Sports Association of Kenya', 7 February 1955.
[83] Material for his profile comes from archival material consulted in Rhodes House, Oxford and Askwith's memoirs published in: Askwith, *Getting my Knees Brown*.
[84] Askwith rowed in the Oxford-Cambridge Boat Races of 1932 and 1933. He competed at the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, where his boat finished fourth, and then at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, again finishing fourth.

Commissioner in Isiolo. At the end of World War II, Askwith was promoted to Municipal African Native Affairs Officer, based in Nairobi. Four years later, he was awarded a senior position as the colony's Commissioner for Community Development.

As Commissioner, Askwith had responsibility for the overall promotion of sport in Kenya using the broad powers of the Department for Community Development. It controlled sports 'rang[ing] from football leagues, athletics meetings and marathons to canoe sailing and swimming races'.[85] While Community Development Officers organised sport at the District level, Askwith worked closely with Evans, Erskine and others to promote athletics and football at the territorial level and train athletes for international competition.

As a Blues athlete, the most prestigious sports honour that only Oxford and Cambridge could bestow, Askwith exemplified what the agencies and officials responsible for making appointments were looking for in its Officer Corps. Anthony Kirk-Greene has examined how athletic success influenced the screening and recruitment of Britain's colonial administrators, noting that when selecting men into the ranks of District Officers, sportsmen were awarded 'consistently high marks'.[86] The job was understood to require significant time spent outdoors and that young officers were expected regularly to inspect the part of Empire assigned to them. The popular view was that rural administration consisted of 'saddle and safari, not files and fine prose' and that this was the only 'real' administrative work.[87] For men with

[85] RHO MSS.Afr.s.1770, T. Askwith, Memoirs of Kenya 1936-1961.
[86] A. Kirk-Greene, 'Imperial Administration and the Athletic Imperative: The Case of the District Officer in Africa', in W. Baker and J. Mangan (eds.), *Sport in Africa: Essays in Social History* (New York, 1987), p. 85.
[87] Ibid, p. 99.

an elite education, the empire was an arena in which they could put their sport training to use and 'play up and play the game'.[88]

With his Oxbridge credentials, Askwith was representative of the group of men who governed colonial Kenya. From 1890 to 1959, out of the 216 officers stationed in Kenya for whom data is available, 164 (76 per cent) had attended public schools and a similar percentage matriculated at either Oxford or Cambridge.[89] These officers as public schoolboys would have been embedded in the 'games cult' that Mangan described, and many, like Askwith, would take a strong interest in cultivating sport in Kenya true to the model they had learned as boys.

Under his watch, decisions were made over who was eligible for overseas travel and for whom races were organised, so ideologies of sport that he learned as a rower at Cambridge found expression in what was and was not made a priority. While espousing liberal ideas with respect to race by the mid-1950s, he never wrote critically about the fact that his decisions perpetuated an oppressive form of masculinity in sport. Askwith stated in his Annual Address of 1955:

> Sport must undoubtedly play as important a part in the African's life as it does in the lives of *men* of other races all over the world; it can be enormously beneficial to *him* in so many ways [emphasis added].[90]

Colonial officers and administrators were pivotal in their enthusiastic promotion of athletics but equally, they introduced a structure within Kenya's competitive running congruent with experiences shared in Britain. Sport, a creation that had divided British men into class-identifiable branches of amateur and professional, continued to divide people across empire according to gender and race.

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[88] Mangan, *The Games Ethnic and Imperialism,* p. 18. See also J. Mangan, *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience* (London, 1993).
[89] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 76.
[90] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/232, 'Presidential Address', 7 Feb 1955.

As Hall demonstrated in his history of sport and physical education in Kenya, 'the games that were popular in England were translated to Kenya'.[91]

Yet, accumulated habits and ingrained ideas could be overturned. Kenya's debut at the Empire and Commonwealth Games of 1954 took place in the midst of the Mau Mau Emergency and after the colony championships of that year. The latter was the first championships to allow all men regardless of ethnicity or place of birth to compete against one another officially. These bellwether meets did away with the racialised format of Kenyan athletics and represented an important step towards levelling the playing field.

Colonial Sports Institutions in Kenya: Race Trumps Gender

A tremendous amount of effort, energy and time was expended on the part of European officials in preparation for Kenyan men to participate in international athletics competition. On the 9th of September 1953, the KAAA accepted its invitation to compete at the Empire and Commonwealth Games, to be held at the end of July the following year in Vancouver.[92] Archie Evans informed the media, principals of African Schools and colonial administration that 'every endeavour will be made to cooperate with the Associations concerned in order that Kenya may be represented by the best possible athletes'.[93]

The preparation began by establishing a baseline performance standard that Kenyan athletes would need to attain for every event on the Empire Games

[91] S. Hall, 'The Role of Physical Education and Sport in the Nation-building Process in Kenya', (Ohio State University. PhD thesis 1973), p. 138.
[92] KNA/PC/NKU/3/21/3, 'Athletics 1954'.
[93] Ibid.

Programme in accordance with prevailing international levels.[94] Kenyan men vied for a place on the team through qualifying rounds of competition that officials organised for them throughout the summer, starting with the Provincial Championships, leading to the KAAA Championships in Nairobi and culminating in the Inter-territorial meeting in Kampala against Uganda and Tanganyika (Tanzania) on 19 June, one month before the Empire Games.

Athletes identified as potential Empire and Commonwealth Games entrants received additional coaching. An athletics course was organised for the top thirty men who had recorded times that made them 'Empire Games Possibles'.[95] Held from 6 to 20 February 1954 at the Jeanes School, the course was intended to provide specialised assistance to Kenya's best athletes in order to give them every chance to achieve international standards.[96]

Once they completed the course and returned home, the men were connected with the nearest European coach whose job was to provide either personal coaching or advice and to promote training during the months prior to the Games.[97] The two coaches for Rift Valley Province were Assistant Inspector Berret based in Nakuru and Education Officer Senderson at the Government African School in Kapsabet.[98]

In terms of finances, the Empire Games Ways and Means Sub-Committee committed to 'make every effort to select, train and send' a team.[99] It was unanimously agreed to write to the African District Councils and Municipal Councils asking for their support. The Kenya Government indicated it was prepared, if

[94] Note: 1 yard = 0.91 meters. Women's standards were not discussed. KNA/PC/NKU/3/21/3, 'Athletics 1954'.
[95] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/228, 'Athletics Course', 31 December 1953.
[96] KNA/PC/NKU/3/21/3, 'Athletics 1954'.
[97] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/228, 'Vth British Empire & Commonwealth Games', 15 March 1954.
[98] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/228, 'Jeanes School Athletics Course Reports, February 1954', 15 March 1954.
[99] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/227, The President's Annual Report', 16 May 1953.

necessary, to contribute 'on a pound for pound basis' up to £2500 towards expenditure. Although the original intention was to fund eighteen athletes, after the price of airfare increased, the number had to be reduced to nine.[100] Nonetheless, the Committee ultimately managed to raise a total of nearly £6000, which included support for the trip from the Kenya Legislative Council in the full amount of £2500.[101] Any civil servants among the athletes who were selected to represent Kenya in the Empire Games were also granted special leave with pay during their period of absence.[102]

Scarcity of resources had always been one of the great challenges of promoting sport in Kenya. In 1953, total funds given to the Department for Community Development, which along with the sports governing bodies was responsible for organising all of the colony's sports, amounted to only £31,000.[103] Barbara Dodd, who taught physical education in Nairobi from just before the end of World War II until the height of the Emergency, criticised the limited resources that had been devoted to sport in her 'Report on Physical Education in Kenya'.[104] She complained that there was 'no money at all for equipment for such "frivolities" as physical education…playing fields were carved from the bush, and even then, play fields were the first to be taken when new buildings were erected'.

Nonetheless, all available resources were made available to assist athletes' preparation for the Games. These included showing films related to sport and even hiring lecturers familiar with Canada, the location of the Empire Games, to educate

[100] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/232, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Athletic Council of the Arab and African Sports', 8 February 1954 at 3.00 PM'.
[101] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/232, 'Presidential Address', 7 Feb 1955.
[102] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/227, 'Civil Servants in the Empire Games', 27 June 1958.
[103] RHO MSS.Afr.s.1770, T. Askwith, Memoirs of Kenya 1936-1961, p. 42.
[104] RHO, B. Dodd, 'Report on Physical Education in Kenya', World Congress of Physical Education, Melbourne, Australia, Physical Education Association (1956), p. 60.

athletes about the country.[105] Final responsibility for selection fell to a 'properly constituted' Coaching Committee under KAAA Secretary Davies' leadership, which first met on 6 November 1953 and convened several more times during the months leading up to the Games.[106]

An all-male but relatively ethnically diverse Kenyan team emerged, with distance-runners, sprinters, high jumpers and one javelin thrower chosen to represent the colony in its first appearance at a major international athletics competition. Kenya's best performance would come from a Kisii runner, Nyandika Maiyoro, when he finished fourth in the 5000 metres in 13:43.8. Four years later, during the Cardiff Empire and Commonwealth Games, Maiyoro was also the first Kenyan to win a medal, earning bronze in the three-mile race.

All of this preparation came amidst the Mau Mau Rebellion that began in 1952 and lasted until 1960.[107] One of the most violent uprisings in the history of colonial Africa, it was a struggle in which Kikuyu, Embu and Meru peoples divided among themselves as a response to their growing disenfranchisement. The Kikuyu dominated the movement and those who experienced increasing poverty and landlessness expressed their anger at their situation, using Mau Mau for redress of those grievances.

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[105] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/232, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Athletic Council of the Arab and African Sports Association', 10th May 1954.
[106] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/227, 'KAAA Secretary Report'.
[107] There is no shortage of academic work on the Mau Mau rebellion that took place in Kenya. For a review, see B. Berman and J. Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (Athens, 1992), pp. 282-302. For an earlier survey, see R. Buijtenhuijs, *Essays on Mau Mau: Contributions to Mau Mau Historiography* (Leiden, 1982). For the British perspective, see M. Clough, *Mau Mau Memoirs: History, Memory and Politics* (London, 1998), pp. 33-42; and for the official colonial government's portrayal, see Corfield, *Historical Survey of the Origins and Growth of Mau Mau* (London, 1960). For a history of women, see C. Presley, *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion and Social Change in Kenya* (Boulder, 1992). For class analyses, see T. Kanogo, *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau* (Athens, 1987) and F. Furedi, *The Mau Mau War in Perspective* (Athens, 1989). For an examination of the loyalists, see D. Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War and Decolonization* (Cambridge, 2009). Other significant contributions include D. Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London, 2005) and C. Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London, 2005).

They joined together against Kikuyu loyalists who fought on the side of the British, European settlers and the colonial administration, launching a guerrilla-style insurgency in the quest for political mobilisation. In this brutal civil war fought within Kikuyu society as many Kikuyu loyalist 'Home Guards' fought with the colonial administration as did those rebelling against it.[108]

The Kikuyu-centric nature of Mau Mau meant that most of the developments in Kenyan athletics at the end of empire continued to take place outside of Nairobi and away from the Kikuyu-dominated Central Province. Leading officials had to adapt to realities within the wider society while setting the tone for the other agencies that were developing sport in Kenya, like the missions, schools and military. In this regard, in his 1953 Presidential Address, Erskine made no mention of the conflict and instead declared:

> We have lived through 14 months of very encouraging athletic activity in Kenya, and during this period, our Association has been able to provide a service, and assert its influence to an increasing extent so that Kenya athletics and their various clubs and associations are coming to accept the KAAA as their governing and co-ordinating body…and as a National Institution, knowing no barriers of Race, Colour and Creed, and seeking only to promote strength, unity and national pride in athletic achievement.[109]

Confronted by the colony's civil war, it is possible that Erskine was hoping to foster alliances among those from the non-radical contingent. Although athletics was held to provide a healthy and moral outlet for men, Mau Mau fighters, regarded as savages and not of any particular 'race', were outside of this.[110]

Tom Askwith had his own vision about how to use sport as a vehicle to reform young men involved with Mau Mau during this period. His tenure as Commissioner

[108] Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau*.
[109] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/227, 'President's Annual Report to the KAAA', 16 May 1953.
[110] For the official text in which Mau Mau fighters were dehumanised as 'savages' see Corfield, *Historical Survey*.

of Community Development and involvement with the KAAA, like Erskine's, spanned the Mau Mau Emergency. As Commissioner, Askwith was the architect of the government's programme of 'rehabilitation' of Mau Mau detainees. Detention was intended to reintegrate Mau Mau oath-takers into Kenyan society where they could be productive and convinced to adopt colonial values and ways of living. This process was meant to transform the fighters to 're-enter society, calmed and cleansed of the ideals about marriage and domesticity they had taught themselves while in revolt'.[111] Although detention camps were overwhelmingly male, female Mau Mau adherents were also imprisoned in two women's-only detention camps, Kamiti and Gitamayu, a satellite built to incarcerate the 'hardcore' women.[112]

Askwith's vision of the detention centres was as a means to keep order while changing the minds of Mau Mau proponents. Demonstrating the elasticity of nineteenth-century ideas around the 'games ethic', his intention was to socially re-engineer male Kikuyu through activities that were regarded by the British as constructive, such as literacy classes, agricultural work and craft training, as well as sports and games.

In practice, however, it was not the Community Development Department but the more conservative Prisons department that held overall authority.[113] The camps

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[111] L. White, 'Matrimony and Rebellion: Masculinity in Mau Mau', in L. Lindsay and S. Miescher (eds.), *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, (Portsmouth, 2003), p. 189.

[112] From 1954 to 1960, the British detained approximately 8000 women. Kamiti Detention Camp was the main site of women's incarceration though a second camp was established at Kitamaya (or Gitamayu as it was called in the colonial archive) from June 1958 to April 1959 explicitly for the intensive 'rehabilitation' of 'hardcore' female Mau Mau detainees. See: K. Bruce-Lockhart, '"Unsound" Minds and Broken Bodies: The Detention of "Hardcore" Mau Mau Women at Kamiti and Gitamayu Detention Camps in Kenya, 1954-1960', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (2014), pp. 590-608. For other accounts of colonial ideas about female deviancy applied to female detainees, see: Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*; Presley, *Kikuyu Women*; and M. Santoru, 'The Colonial Idea of Women and Direct Intervention: The Mau Mau Case', *African Affairs*, Vol. 95, No. 379 (1996), pp. 253-267.

[113] For the British treatment of detainees, which became more brutal and systematic over time, see Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*. For a recent complement to this analysis, see: A.

and prisons that emerged were characterised by brutality and humiliation. The possible exception, relatively speaking, were youth detention centres like Wamumu, part of what Ocobock calls 'the largest state-run system for the institutionalisation of young people on the continent'.[114] In the struggle to win the 'hearts and minds' of Mau Mau, youth sport was identified and employed as a means of Mau Mau 'rehabilitation'.

Thanks to the bifurcation of Emergency practices around age, according to Ocobock, sports like football featured within these youth detention camps for juvenile Mau Mau supporters.[115] Sport, along with literacy, labour and skills-training courses, was intended to inculcate in boys colonial ideas about discipline and authority. Explicit within this was the extent to which the entire enterprise was part of a larger conflict about how to reconfigure masculinities.

In the context of colonial Kenya in the 1950s, Askwith and Erskine emerge among the more liberal senior officials. Mau Mau detention camps were ultimately punitive but Askwith's vision had been to reconstruct the male Kikuyu population in a non-coercive fashion. His democratising impulse was also apparent in earlier efforts to build a 'United Kenya Club'.[116] With colleagues Lafontaine, retired Chief Native Commissioner, and Cooke, a retired District Commissioner, Askwith opened the United Kenya Club in 1946. The club held weekly meetings to arrange social evenings of debates, leisure and recreation. After the KAAA was established in 1951, it also held its meetings there. The Club 'was to be completely democratic and

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Baggallay, 'Myths of Mau Mau Expanded: Rehabilitation in Kenya's Detention Camps, 1954-60', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (August, 2011), pp. 553-578.

[114] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age: Making Manhood, Maturity, and the Elder State in Kenya* (forthcoming, 2015) p. 320. Manuscript in the author's possession.

[115] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, p. 251. When describing how sport was incorporated into the youth camps, Ocobock also emphasises how detention varied from camp to camp, according to both the behaviour of detainees as well as the temperament of the British officials and African warders.

[116] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/225, 'Annual General & Quarterly Meetings 1960'.

representative of Africans, Asians and Europeans' and according to Askwith, its purpose was to:

> Try and convince the public generally that the future of the country lay in cooperation rather than antagonism. We implicitly regarded all discriminatory practice as wrong. As such we must have been regarded as cranks.[117]

He described prejudices about race as 'engrained' and stated that 'his aim was 'to see what we could do to change people's attitudes on racial matters'.[118] This may have been true but this club can also be read as yet another vehicle through which to transmit British culture and channel local people's energies into what were considered by the colonial state as appropriate forms of leisure and away from potentially subversive activity.

Certainly, Erskine's similarly optimistic outlook about the KAAA's potential to 'promote unity' through creating common cultures of leisure and sport sharply contrasted with the civil war raging in his colony. Five months after Erskine's address in 1953, the third British Brigade arrived, the African Home Guard had 18,000 African men and 1,275 Asians were called up.[119] The struggle turned to Nairobi, where men like Evans, Erskine and Askwith lived and worked. There, the colonial state installed a curfew and ceded power to the Nairobi authority to impose economic penalties and close shops and hotels.[120] In April of 1954, three months before Kenya's debut at the Commonwealth Games, British efforts were finalised to launch Operation Anvil, a surprise attack in which a force of about 20,000 men surrounded the African areas of Nairobi and arrested every Kikuyu found. At Anvil's

[117] RHO MSS.Afr.s.1770, T. Askwith, Memoirs of Kenya 1936-1961, p. 5.
[118] Ibid.
[119] H. Swanzy, 'Quarterly Notes', *African Affairs*, Vol. 2 (1953), p. 17-18 [1-38].
[120] Ibid.

end, over 50,000 Gikuyu had been screened, half of whom remained in detention, the rest repatriated to the reserves - 'gutt[ing] Nairobi of its [K]ikuyu population'.[121]

Although no documentary evidence could be found to indicate a connection between the escalating conflict taking place predominately within Central Province and the colony's athletics future, the timing of change in the sport's racial complexion suggests this may have been a factor. Separate championships for African and European athletes had been held since the founding the AASA in the 1920s until 1953.[122] It was only in 1954, with the Empire Games looming later in the summer and at the height of the Emergency, that the AASA and the KAAA first agreed to hold the Kenya African Athletic Championships as a single event open to men of all races. The year 1954 was the first in which teams could gain entry into the championships on both an 'inter-provincial' and an 'inter-racial' basis, with 'teams selected from members of all races'.[123]

The changes stood firm. In correspondence with Provincial Commissioners about the KAAA Championships two years later, the KAAA Treasurer declared that:

> The Kenya Amateur Athletic Association Championships will be held at the African Stadium, Nairobi and <u>are open to athletes of all races</u> [underline included in text].[124]

Reinforcing this was a second note later in the document, also underlined, stressing that '<u>athletes from all races must be considered when team selection is being made and should take part in District and Provincial Meetings</u>'.[125]

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[121] Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 201-4; Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, p. 244.
[122] RVP Archive, Nakuru, DC/KSM/1/1/228, 'Kenya African Athletic Championships 1953', to DC Nyanza and Kericho from Nyanza Sports Association Chairman, sent 29 August 1953.
[123] KNA/PC/NKU/3/21/3, 'Athletics 1954'; See also KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/232, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Athletic Council of the Arab and African Sports Association' 10 May 1954.
[124] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/227. 'Correspondence regarding the Kenya Amateur Athletic Association Championships 1956 from Mr. CH Webb, Kenya AAA Treasurer, 10 August 1956'.
[125] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/227, 'KAAA Championships 1956'.

With the integration of the championships came the decision to reclassify and merge all national records into a single list in which assignment by birth and nation replaced explicit categorisation by race. Although none of these categories included women, racial divisions were finally being addressed. Previously, records up to and including 1953 had been separated according to statuses such as 'Kenya African Native', signifying the fastest time or farthest distance an African born in Kenya had recorded in official competition in Kenya.[126]

In place of this, a single category, that of 'Kenya Native Records', was installed. It kept track of records set within Kenya by athletes born in Kenya.[127] An umbrella category, 'Kenya National' was designated for records 'set in Kenya by athletes born in or permanent residents of Kenya', thus allowing the inclusion of Kenya's expatriates without explicitly referring to their race. Athletes of any nationality could set 'Kenya All Comers Records'.[128]

The commitment by Colonial officials to prepare all men to participate in the Commonwealth and Olympic Games was thereby complete. When assessing changes and continuities within the social configuration of athletics, it is important to bear in mind the common leadership of the athletics associations and the colony's political administration; the crisis unfolding within Kenya at the time; and the desire for the colony to represent itself well at the Empire Games. Together, these components provided sufficient stimuli for equality of competitive opportunities to be advanced for men. For men who considered themselves liberals, changing the perceived conduct and behaviour of women in sport was at that point still a step too far.

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[126] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/228, 'African Athletics Records'.
[127] Ibid. The oldest of which Ndalamia Nzioka from Nairobi recorded in 1943, running 10.0 seconds for the 100 yards in 1943.
[128] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/232, 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Athletic Council of the Arab and African Sports Association', 27 June 1955; and KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/227, 'Kenya Amateur Records, 8 August 1956'.

Kenyan athletics in the final days of the colonial period was in ferment. But in the face of social change domestically and the potential to offset that with positive international recognition through sport, racial hierarchies of running were overturned integrating Europeans and Africans. Kalenjin, joined to a some extent by Kisii runners, emerged as contenders on the international stage becoming the ethnic 'face' of Kenyan running.

Conclusion

The masculine culture of athletics in colonial Kenya agreed with its expressions with the climate of international sport at that time. British imperial sports culture, growing out of the 'games revolution' of the late nineteenth century, was the model upon which new masculinities were propagated in athletics in Kenya.

The homogeneity of the men in charge of Kenyan athletics resulted in a common belief in the intrinsic morality and masculinity of sport. These men institutionalised their vision in the 1920s and subsequent decision-makers closely followed until the end of the colonial period. Their policies involved re-creating the system of social exclusion and ranking that characterised British athletics, though it became race rather than class that stratified male runners.

Yet by the end of empire, new paths opened for some of Kenya's runners. Kenya's debut at the Empire Games in 1954 followed the landmark decision by the leaders of Kenyan athletics to enact policies of racial equality among men in athletics. These leaders came to share a vision for international success that would allow European and African men to compete with each other to represent the colony abroad.

There were few transformations in the gendered composition of Kenyan athletics throughout the colonial period. There was no written record of any demand by women to participate in competitions. This matters in that masculinity maintains a position of superiority through consent; men and women who do not raise questions or opposition to oppressive gender systems are complicit in their construction. As McDevitt has observed, 'influences [in sport] move both from the top-down and from the bottom up'.[129] This chapter considered the former, while the next discusses how African and imperial traditions of masculinities coincided and resulted in the consensual production of gendered cultures.

[129] McDevitt, *May the Best Man Win*, p. 4.

Chapter Four: Kalenjin Masculinities and Running in the Rift Valley



Source: KNA/DC/BAR/1/4, '1950 Annual Report Baringo'.

Introduction

Reigning six-mile champion Kipkoech arap Lagat from Elgeyo-Marakwet was denied the chance to compete for Kenya in the 1954 Empire and Commonwealth Games. The expense of airfare and scarcity of funds had forced a reduction in the squad from eighteen men to nine, and he was cut, despite holding Kenya's six-mile record and having recently won the inter-territorial competition held that year in Uganda.

Locally, 'the decision was decidedly unpopular and heated letters were sent to the vernacular press'.[1] No such action was provoked in response to the prolonged absence of women in athletics. Other executive decisions from colonial agencies engendered conflict about Kenya's cultural practices involving women, and their bodies, their roles and participation in many spheres. The exclusion of women from running competitions, however, was a point of consensus.

This chapter looks at the history of gender among rural communities in the Rift Valley in order to understand why women were not included in athletics. It argues that the absence of women's running during the colonial period was not only the result of British sexism but also of pre-existing divisions of the interconnected responsibilities of men and women into separate, gendered domains.

In the nineteenth century, before colonialism, occupations in Rift Valley societies were constructed through a variety of practices to conform to a particular set of gender attributes. Any activity or occupation that involved running was understood as a male-only function. It was a 'masculine' occupation long before the introduction of western forms of athletics. Though the idea of running later acquired new forms and categories, the concept of runners as adult men was the norm.

In the case of running, like politics and property ownership, the production and maintenance of exclusive masculinities was carried out along British colonial and local Kenyan axes that converged. The consensual manner in which this was achieved must be underlined because, as Nandy wrote, 'colonialism won its great victories not so much through its military and technological prowess as through its ability to create secular hierarchies'.[2] In Kenya, athletics became such a hierarchy

[1] KNA/DC/ELG/1/6, 'Elgeyo-Marakwet 1954 Annual Report'.
[2] A. Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: The Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism* (Delhi, 1983), p. ix.

that developed into a cultural institution shared by many colonised and colonisers and from which women were excluded. To fully account for this, the historical construction of gender in African societies must also be considered as well as the interaction between colonial and pre-colonial African institutions and social structures.

Authorities on African Womanhood

During the colonial period, African and European authorities found common ground as well as conflict in their attempt to control women's bodies and their physical and social mobility.[3] The prospect of single women relocating to urban centres produced alarm amongst colonial officials, European missionaries and African authorities alike. Justin Willis highlights how women moving from rural areas to Mombasa diminished the control that the state had over them, calling this an 'enduring problem for the administration'.[4] Tabitha Kanogo observes a similar phenomenon among Kenyan authorities noting that 'any unsanctioned movement by women threatened the elders' control of social capital'.[5] As discussed in Chapter Two, women's movement into towns risked shaming men in front of men of other groups - it did not reflect well on their masculinity that they were not able to create disciplined communities and households. There were also economic reasons why men would want women to remain in the rural areas. Wives and daughters living in towns meant fewer labourers

[3] T. Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya: 1900-1950* (Oxford, 2005); L. Thomas, *The Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley, 2003); B. Shadle, 'Bridewealth and Female Consent: Marriage Disputes in African Courts, Gusiiland, Kenya', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 44 (2003), pp. 241-262; N. Hunt, T. Liu and J. Quataert (eds.), *Gendered Colonialism in African History* (Oxford, 1997).
[4] J. Willis, *Mombasa, the Swahili, and the Making of the Mijikenda* (Oxford, 1993), p. 3.
[5] Kanogo, *African Womanhood*, p. 9.

on the farm resulting in reduced harvests at home. In addition to this, townswomen competed with men for limited labour opportunities in the cities.

Scholars have also written about women who were able to provide the equivalent of male labour power under some conditions.[6] Trading especially drew women into Kenya's emerging towns, which offered markets for their produce. Examining one neighbourhood in colonial Nairobi, Bodil Folke Frederiksen described women traders as 'urban pioneers' while Claire Robinson has traced the social history of Nairobi women traders throughout the twentieth century.[7] Both argue that efforts to control women's commercial activities in the Nairobi area began long before independence and that male Kikuyu elders were allied with the British colonial administration on this issue. Notably, actions to keep women in the rural areas and away from the city were unsuccessful; women bought urban property in Kibera and elsewhere, traded produce and made the city their own.[8]

Some urban women also chose to use their bodies for economic transactions despite African and European authorities' discouragement.[9] Luise White and Janet Bujra have portrayed prostitution in Nairobi as an assertion of will within a system

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[6] D. Anderson and R. Rathbone (eds.), *Africa's Urban Past* (Oxford, 2000), particularly Chapters 7, 11 and 13; D. Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power: The Construction of Moral Discourse in Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1930* (Oxford, 1993), especially Chapter 7; C. Robertson, *Sharing the Same Bowl: A Socioeconomic History of Women and Class in Accra, Ghana* (Bloomington, 1984).

[7] B. Frederiksen, 'African Women and their Colonisation of Nairobi: Representations and Realities', *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, Vol. 36-37, Is. 1 (2001), p. 223; C. Robertson, *Trouble Showed the Way: Women, Men, and Trade in the Nairobi Area, 1890 to 1990* (Bloomington, 1997).

[8] For other historical accounts of the development of Nairobi see J. Lonsdale, 'Soil, Work, Civilisation and Citizenship in Kenya', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July 2008), pp. 305-314; and D. Anderson, 'Corruption at City Hall: African Housing and Urban Development in Colonial Nairobi', *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, Vol. 36-37, Is. 1 (2001), pp. 138-154.

[9] L. White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago, 1990); J. Bujra, 'Women "Entrepreneurs" of Early Nairobi', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 9, Is. 2 (1975), pp. 213-34; J. Bujra, 'Proletarinization and the "Informal Economy": A Case Study from Nairobi', *African Urban Studies*, Vol. 3 (1978-79), pp. 47-66. For Southern Rhodesia, see Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*, pp. 169-198.

that constrained opportunities, and as a form of labour through which women could support themselves while living away from their natal homes.[10] Alongside Kenyan leaders who opposed the practice, the administration viewed prostitutes as 'casualties in a battle' in rural East African society.[11] Colonised and colonisers became allies when women sought to challenge the construction of gender roles that constrained their urban existence and sexual behaviour.

At the same time, other cultural practices involving women's bodies and gender relations triggered conflict. This was unequivocal during the 'female circumcision controversy' of 1928-1931, 'encompass[ing] all of Kenya'.[12] Much has been written about a complex struggle in which colonised peoples vehemently disagreed with colonial attempts to end the practice of clitoridectomy, one of the central cultural institutions in the construction of womanhood and identity in Kenya both during and after colonial rule.[13]

In 1929, the Protestant missions, led by the Church of Scotland Mission and Dr John Arthur, refused communion to all Christians who condoned female circumcision. This sparked the largest outbreak of popular protest in the colony since the beginning of British rule. Under the threat that they would otherwise be denied access to worship and education, some men were willing to pledge that their

[10] Bujra, 'Women "Entrepreneurs"', p. 215.
[11] White, *The Comforts of Home*, p. 39.
[12] Thomas, *Politics of the Womb*, p. 3.
[13] Kanogo, *African Womanhood,* especially Chapter 3: 'Becoming *Kavirondo*: Clitoridectomy, Ethnicity & Womanhood', pp. 73-103; P. Hetherington, 'The Politics of Female Circumcision in the Central Province of Colonial Kenya, 1920–30', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 26, Is. 1 (1998), pp. 93-126; H. Moore, *Space, Text and Gender: An Anthropological Study of the Marakwet of Kenya* (New York, 1996), pp. 57-60, 172-76; B. Frederiksen, 'Jomo Kenyatta, Marie Bonaparte and Bronislaw Malinowski on Clitoridectomy and Female Sexuality', *History Workshop Journal,* No. 65 (Spring, 2008), pp. 23-48; R. Tignor, *The Colonial Transformation of Kenya: The Kamba, Kikuyu, and Maasai from 1900 to 1939* (Princeton, N.J, 1976), pp. 226-50; L. Thomas, 'Ngaitana (I will Circumcise Myself)': The Gender and Generational Politics of the 1956 Ban on Clitoridectomy in Meru, Kenya', in N. Hunt, T. Liu and J. Quataert (eds.), *Gendered Colonialism in African History* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 16-41.

daughters would not be circumcised. Others repudiated the ban, fearing encroaching outside influence, the erosion of control over women and the breakdown of an institution central to social organisation. When missionaries refused to back down, the conflict escalated.

Claire Robertson has situated the crisis not only as a clash of colonisers and colonised but also as a conflict among generations in Kenya.[14] The controversy tested existing hierarchies between young and old, and between men and women, while exposing a disagreement concerning African and European judgements about women's bodies. At the same time, even when Kenyan men were disciplined for failing to prevent their daughters from undergoing clitoridectomy, acceptance of men's right to speak for women was a point of consensus. According to Pederson, this was seen as an 'ineradicable component of male political rights'.[15]

The crisis had long lasting consequences, not least for signifying that the colonial agenda was not always seamlessly imposed.[16] While Africanists have amply documented resistance to imperial power, the 'female circumcision crisis' illustrates that with respect to women's bodies and social relations of gender in Kenya, implementation of imperial ideas cannot be assumed. It mattered how communities historically defined and constructed gender roles.

The next section explores the history of athletics by focusing on the Kalenjin cultural construction of men as runners. The gendered structures and practices of British athletics could not have simply flowed from the metropole to a *tabula rasa* in the Rift Valley. The British conception of athletics was one of a gendered domain

[14] C. Robertson, 'Grassroots in Kenya: Women, Genital Mutilation, and Collective Action, 1920-1990', *Signs*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Spring, 1996), p. 620.
[15] S. Pedersen, 'National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy-making', *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Dec., 1991), p. 664.
[16] See, for instance: J. Spencer, *The Kenya African Union* (London, 1985), see especially 71-97.

during the colonial period which coalesced with existing and deeply embedded African gender structures and social practices. By organising running competitions in accordance with established gender dichotomies, colonial administrators took no chance of invoking what John Lonsdale has described as the 'mood of panic' on the part of men that had preceded the 1929 female circumcision crisis over the perceived loss of control of women.[17]

This analysis is based on ethnographic studies that male officials and anthropologists compiled after spending years in the western Rift Valley during the early colonial period.[18] Although their descriptions are useful as a starting point, households, social roles and community organisation tend to be presented as if they were universal, rigid and static, what Jane Guyer calls the 'jural model'.[19] By this she means an ahistorical and sterilised portrayal of peoples' lives with little mention of the ambiguity, contingencies and conflict that must have complicated the 'rules'. Read 'against the grain' and applied in the context of oral histories and other sources, the observations of the male officials and anthropologists are helpful for gaining a sense of the gendered patterns that were seen to direct people's behaviour and to demonstrate the fact that Kalenjin societies were characterised by clearly defined gender roles.

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[17] J. Lonsdale, 'The Moral Economy of Mau Mau: Wealth, Poverty and Civic Virtue in Kikuyu Political Thought', in B. Berman and J. Lonsdale (eds.), *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa, Book 2* (London, 1992), pp. 265-504.

[18] A. Hollis, *The Nandi, their Language and Folklore* (Oxford, 1909); M. Beech, 'Sketch of Elgeyo Law', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 20, No. 79 (Apr., 1921), pp. 195-203; J. Massam, *The Cliff Dwellers of Kenya* (London, 1927); J. Driberg, 'The Status of Women among the Nilotics and Nilo-Hamitics', *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Oct., 1932), pp. 404-421; J. Peristiany, *The Social Instutitions of the Kipsigis* (London, 1939); R. Hennings, *African Morning* (London, 1951); G. Huntingford, *The Nandi of Kenya: Tribal Control in a Pastoralist Society* (London, 1953); I. Orchardson, *The Kipsigis* (Nairobi, 1961); A. Matson, *Nandi Resistance to British Rule* (Nairobi, 1969).

[19] J. Guyer, 'Household and Community in African Studies', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 24, No. 2/3 (1981), pp. 87-137.

Gender Relations in Rift Valley Communities at the Onset of Colonial Rule

To understand the history of gender in the western highlands during the colonial period, gender relations within pastoralist communities on the eve of colonialism must be examined first. In pastoral communities, of paramount importance was animal stock consisting of cattle, sheep and goats.[20] Access to this scarce resource was controlled and most gender roles evolved in connection to it.

The four dimensions necessary for understanding the historical construction of gender roles were social, economic, political and ritual. Women were crucial in the maintenance of valuable herds but men and women occupied distinct social categories that structured their roles, responsibilities as well as access to productive resources. Power was stratified by age, wealth and gender, such that older men and women were accorded greater respect and rights in the realms of politics and religion. Collectively, the responsibilities of men and women were divided into separate and hierarchically gendered domains.

Gender to a large degree proscribed the kinds of labour one might undertake. Anthropologist Ian Orchardson provided lengthy descriptions of the ways in which the Kipsigis considered most tasks as masculine or feminine. Women milked cattle and tended to smaller livestock and calves, with the help of children. Brewing beer was also 'women's work'.[21] Building a hut for each wife was the husband's

[20] R. Waller, 'Ecology, Migration and Expansion in East Africa', *African Affairs,* Vol. 84 (1985), pp. 359.
[21] Orchardson, *Kipsigis*, p. 104. Both men and women could drink, though if a Kipsigis woman were to appear drunk would constitute a 'serious social offence', according to Orchardson, *Kipsigis,* p. 102. Nandi women held beer parties but these were generally smaller than Nandi men's. Huntinford reports that Nandi women could become intoxicated, although they were not often seen this way 'outside their huts'. See Huntingford, *The Nandi*, p. 75.

responsibility, though help from the wider community could be called upon.[22] After clearing the land for cultivation, a man was expected to sow grain on a separate field for each one of his wives. These fields were referred to as 'belonging to the man' but once the grain had been stored, it 'belong[ed] to the wife'.[23] These assignments may be condensed into the following table:

Table 4.1 Kipsigis' Gender Division of Labour

Kipsigis' Gender Division of Labour		
Task	Masculine	Feminine
Clearing land	X	
Burning the clearing	X	
Digging	X	X
Burning turves (grass/roots)		X
Spreading ash		X
Sowing	X	
Raking in seed	X	X
Final gathering up the rubbish		X
Cutting fencing sticks	X	
Carrying fencing sticks	X	
Erecting fences	X	
Hand weeding		X (plus children and old men)
Harvesting	X	X (all hands)
Stacking and carrying the harvest		X
Threshing and winnowing		X
Grinding		X

Source: I. Orchardson, *The Kipsigis* (Nairobi, 1961), p. 91-3.

Huntingford recorded similar patterns among the Nandi. Like the Kipsigis, Keiyo and Tugen, most tasks were designated as men's or women's work.[24] Nandi men were responsible for herding cattle to salt-licks, cutting down trees, clearing the land, working iron, making stools and honey-barrels out of wood, starting a fire and practicing rainmaking divination. Women undertook all domestic chores, which

[22] Orchardson, *Kipsigis,* p. 83.
[23] Orchardson, *Kipsigis,* p. 92.
[24] Orchardson, *Kipsigis,* p. 81.

included caring for children, preparing and cooking food, cutting firewood, fetching water and cleaning milk jugs. 'Women's work' also comprised cleaning cattle enclosures, cutting grass, leather working and crafting pottery.

Among the Keiyo, men's work included cutting down trees in new fields, tilling, building, herding, hunting and cattle raiding, from which a social hierarchy of labour was established.[25] Those who worked as artisans, making tools for use in the home, had the lowest social status. Blacksmiths were above the artisans while hunters, cultivators and pastoralists filled out the spectrum in increasing importance. The distinctions drawn between those who had, and those who lacked, access to stock is one of the ways in which pastoralist societies may be described as unequal.

Waller has also detailed the fact that large concentrations of wealth in cattle could emerge and persist among East African pastoralists.[26] Men then loaned out animals, using their wealth to accumulate the social capital of trading partners and dependents. As Lonsdale puts it, 'no pre-colonial African society was communalistic in its own day…but all were technically so simple that any individual accumulation of wealth ineluctably incurred social obligations which had constantly to be repaid'.[27]

Women were the 'sustainers of social and economic life of the family and society'.[28] They produced food crops and controlled its distribution and consumption. Women gained status through their ability to bear children, feed families and provide hospitable spaces where men, children and guests could congregate. Older women were the 'guardians of property' until their sons' marriage and they held authority over younger women.

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[25] S. Chebet and T. Dietz, *Climbing the Cliff: A History of the Keiyo* (Eldoret, 2000), p. 105.
[26] R. Waller, 'Pastoral Production in Colonial Kenya: Lessons from the Past?', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (2012), p. 3.
[27] Lonsdale, 'Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism', pp. 138-9.
[28] Chebet and T. Dietz, *Climbing the Cliff*, pp. 106.

Kettel has described the Tugen as having a 'clear-cut though not exclusive division of labour based on gender'.[29] Men exercised decision-making power over land and livestock (productive resources) while women cared for children (reproductive resources) and the day-to-day work of agricultural production.[30] Susan Chebet and Ton Dietz depicted a similar division of labour in their history of the Keiyo.[31] Work was split fairly evenly between men and women, which encouraged both mutual autonomy and interdependency.

Huntingford acknowledged that 'when women were not around to do so', men could undertake such tasks as cooking and collecting firewood and water. However, this was rare, as he explained:

> It is in fact seldom that [men] are reduced to such degrading tasks, for there is nearly always some woman on whom an unmarried man can depend for help – his *mureret* (sweetheart), his mother, or a friend's wife. To do women's work is considered shameful; it lowers a man's social standing, and is one of the reasons why marriage is a necessity for men.[32]

It is important to remember, however, that Huntingford's views reflected his own biases and that these codes of behaviour concealed a range of contingent outcomes. Huntingford's idealised division of labour would have varied in certain respects from one community to the next, and would have depended on individuals' personalities and resources, such that men in some families might be obliged to work alongside their wives in farming while others wealthy enough would not have been willing to do so.

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[29] B. Kettel, 'The Commoditization of Women in Tugen (Kenya) Social Organization' in C. Robertson and I. Berger (eds.), *Women and Class in Africa* (London, 1986), p. 47.
[30] Ibid, p. 54.
[31] Chebet and Dietz, *Climbing the Cliff*, p. 104.
[32] Huntingford, *The Nandi of Kenya*, p. 71.

Yet the extent to which categories and types of acceptable behaviour were constrained indicates a society characterised by a marked division of labour by gender. Men's labour roles were complementary to, and distinguished from, women's. Men were dependent on women for both the production and preparation of food. Domestic duties and caring for children were tasks that men avoided at the risk of embarrassment before the community. Those who transgressed gender regulations faced repercussions since non-conformity resulted in lowering one's social standing.

As in all societies, Kalenjin men and women collaborated in the construction of gender, and women played an integral part in the construction of Kalenjin masculinities. When they undertook 'women's work', they performed the essential tasks that ensured men could uphold the ideals that made them men. Except for joint undertakings, a change in what a wife or daughter did would require modifications in the role of husband or father.

Age and gender were not the only salient differences between people; a homestead's possession of cattle also mattered, because they were what people gave as gifts or loans, returned as a penalty in case of murder and used as a way to store wealth. To anthropologist Melville Herskovits, writing in 1926, cattle were such an important part of the East African communities that he labelled their cultural orientation a 'cattle complex'.[33]

Marriage and dependents, the other critical form of wealth and esteem in pastoralist communities, crucially depended on possessing cattle. A father would receive stock from a prospective husband to compensate for losing his daughter's labour power. 'Livestock reproduced, and thus were uniquely suited to bridewealth',

[33] M. Herskovits, 'The Cattle Complex in East Africa', *American Anthropologist,* Vol. 28, Is. 1 (1926), pp. 230–272.

as White has pointed out.[34] Men could marry more than one wife, and polygamy was conferred high social status and prestige.

According to the early ethnographers, control over cattle was the responsibility of men. In his lengthy discussions of the important of cattle to the Nandi, Huntingford stresses men's role as chief exchangers and controllers of livestock throughout.[35] A passage from his writing underscores this:

> The Nandi are a people whose primary and abiding interest in life is cattle – *tuka* … Not only do the Nandi own large numbers of cattle as well as goats and sheep but their whole lives are centred round their cattle, which form the main occupation of the *men*, provide the people with an important part of their diet, and are their only stimulus to action. Tribes which possess no cattle are held in contempt, and a Nandi who has none is regarded as a *man* of no account. The possession of cattle is, in fact, essential for full participation in the social and political life of the tribe; *the man* who had none will not dare speak at the *kokwet*, for he would not be listened to, and he has no chance whatever of taking a major part in any public business or ceremony. The first ambition of a Nandi *boy* is to acquire cattle, and the youth who has even one which he can call his own has greater social prestige than he who has none [emphasis added].[36]

Huntingford plainly considered cattle as the responsibility of men, and anthropologist Regina Oboler has also suggested that historically, Nandi men's control of livestock was a 'fundamental principle of society'.[37] Among the Tugen, men too have been described as the primary exchangers of cattle, though women possessed a degree of control over smaller livestock.[38] Women could for instance trade goats and sheep with each other and also with men, and husbands and wives conferred on decisions to kill, trade or give away an animal. Writing about the Keiyo, Robert reports that the

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[34] White, *Comforts of Home,* p. 31.
[35] Huntingford argues that cattle were an indispensable part of Kalenjin social organisation because they were what had to be exchanged as bridewealth, given as gifts or loans, returned as a penalty in case of murder, and used as a way to store wealth.
[36] Huntingford, *The Nandi*, p. 38.
[37] Peristiany, *Social Institutions of the Kipsigis*, p. 211; Orchardson, *The Kipsigis*, p. 110.
[38] Kettel, 'The Commoditization of Women', p. 47.

rights of disposal of stock were vested in men, while women had usufructuary rights, especially to cattle that had been given to them at marriage.[39]

According to Orchardson, among the Kipsigis, men had final decision-making power over cattle, though all members of the family were expected to concur before cattle could be sold.[40] Kettel's interpretation of the Tugen agrees with this to the extent that both men and women garnered prestige according to their homestead's wealth in cattle, children and overall management of domestic affairs. She has argued that despite how the words 'wealth' or 'price' imply acquiring or buying something, wives were not 'purchased'. To establish the transfer of a certain amount of cattle from husband to wife, an important transaction in animals occurred within the spousal relationship, understood as the assignment of 'house property', which was separate from the exchange of bridewealth.[41] Together, these accounts suggest that the designation of cattle as a male domain quite often underrated the role a wife actually played in the care of the herd. Yet fundamentally, she accessed livestock through her relationship with men, namely, her husband or father. This inheritance of cattle effectively ensured a continuity of masculinity and wealth between men over the generations.

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[39] B. Roberts, 'Livestock Production, Age and Gender Among the Keiyo of Kenya', *Human Ecology*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1996), p. 222.
[40] Orchardson, *Kipsigis*, pp. 111-2.
[41] In order to assign 'house property', it was customary on the day of her marriage for a Tugen woman to leave the home in which she grew up and walk to her new home. She would stop at various places as she went, for instance at rivers that lay across her path, and each time not continue until she had been awarded an animal. These would form the herd attached to her new house. The negotiations could continue sometimes right up until the point at which the bride arrived at her husband's home and were contingent on the bride's knowledge of her husband and her husband's family's resources. Kettle notes that such transactions over livestock were a source of pride among women, as well as the source of domestic fighting if it turned out that the husband had hidden resources from his bride. Although a husband had ultimate decision-making power over cattle, a wife was to manage these cattle for her household's immediate benefit in terms of milk and keep them in custody for her sons. Kettle, 'The Commoditization of Women', p. 55.

In addition to cattle, land was another element of differentiated economic power between men and women. At the onset of colonialism, when land was abundant, it had not been viewed as a form of private property. However, men had primary control over cattle, which was passed down to sons. Land was assumed to follow the same guidelines. Oboler reports that during the post-colonial period, property management was a male prerogative and that controlling land and cattle constituted 'an extremely important part of the cultural definition of male gender'.[42] According to Orchardson's earlier account, a 'good man' would not sell an animal from his wife's herd or a piece of land without consulting her, but a wife's ability to prevent a 'bad husband' from doing so was limited.[43]

Kalenjin women did possess property rights, however. Each married woman's household owned animals that could not be reallocated to the house of another wife and there were customary rules allocating certain types of property to women, such as the vegetable garden and milk. Kettel emphasised that women held rights in property 'based on the significance of their labour within the household'.[44]

A widow also had the right to establish herself as the head of the household. After her husband's death, she could continue to occupy the house, cultivate the fields and look after stock. Each Kipsigis widow within a polygamous family was entitled to receive the same share of her deceased husband's land and animals.[45] A Nandi widow controlled the disposal of her property during the rest of her lifetime, and if she could save enough money, she would have been free to buy a cow or another piece of land for herself.[46]

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[42] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*, p. 241.
[43] Orchardson, *The Kipsigis*, p. 82.
[44] Kettel, 'The Commoditization of Women', p. 55.
[45] Orchardson, *The Kipsigis*, p. 55.
[46] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change,* p. 270.

Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter One, gender boundaries could be trangressed through the institution of 'female husbands'. By inverting their gender and behaving 'as a man' within this socially sanctioned arrangement, some women accessed masculine domains without disrupting the cultural perception of differences between men and women. Of relevance for this discussion is that such a practice could only be possible in a context where male and female gender roles had been highly defined and consolidated.

Although Kalenjin social organisation included certain avenues through which a woman could increase her independence and access to productive resources, these pathways were embedded within prescriptions of traditional gender roles. The instances of 'female husbands' showed that for individuals, the construction of gender could be fluid but the vast majority of opportunities and choices were still regulated by gender. Should a man cook his own meals, or a woman desire to herd cattle, each would have confronted profound disapproval. This tradition was firmly embedded in society to the extent that a woman would have to take on the role of 'female husband' in order to perform 'male' tasks and be accepted for so doing. Married female runners would confront such threats to convention in later decades.

The Gendered Realms of Politics and Religion

Gender also underpinned the organisation of Kalenjin society in terms of its distribution of political and religious power. Gender and age were integral to politics and rituals as well as for organising economic resources. Both men and women gained power and social status as they aged over the course of their lives but men had scope to exercise greater formal authority and political power.

That said, women were involved to some extent in political decisions as well as in settling domestic disputes. They could, for instance, attend and testify at judicial proceedings, ask their sons to advance certain positions and advise their husbands. Women were also central to certain religious practices and rituals marking life-stage transitions such as birth, circumcision, and naming ceremonies. Among the Keiyo, women offered prayers on behalf of the community. Carried out through a ceremony called *imwochet,* these prayers were for protection against calamity, epidemic or natural disaster.[47] Nandi weddings required both a male and a female ritual expert.[48] Adult women, especially elder women, were also responsible for the behaviour of younger women.[49]

Oboler has described how only women could participate in a particular community-wide sanctioning process: the *njoget ab chebiosok* (punishment of women).[50] In this 'punishment of women', naked women would surround the house of a man who had committed a serious crime against a woman, such as incest, rape, other sexual deviations or less clearly defined crimes. While shouting, the women would drag out the offender, beat him and then set fire to the house. A similar process existed among the Tugen.[51] Although not precisely political, women's contribution to religious, ritual and judicial authority suggests that power was not always neatly divided in a hierarchy with men dominant over women.

Nonetheless, commentary on communities in Kenya's western highlands reveals the dominance of men in the public environment, especially in the political and ritual spheres. When describing the process of choosing who would serve as

[47] Chebet and Dietz, *Climbing the Cliff*, p. 101.
[48] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*, p. 65.
[49] Huntingford, *The Nandi of Kenya*, p. 105.
[50] Oboler, *Women*, p. 65-6.
[51] Kettel, 'The Commoditization of Women', p. 62-5.

'advisor' or 'kiruwekin' to the Keiyo, Beech describes an informal, general consensus of opinion, 'including curiously that of women'.[52] But the fact remains that the role itself was one for which only men could qualify.[53] Other central functions were reserved for men, such as the *orkoiyot* in Nandi.[54] This ritual leader was believed to hold supernatural powers of prophecy and divination, rainmaking and over ceremonies that commenced the planting season.[55]

The *orkoiyot* did not have executive powers, however, and indeed, often stood in direct conflict with the authority of the elders who exercised control through seniority and the manipulation of dependents and their wealth in stock.[56] His status depended entirely on reputation, which in turn was predicated upon the successful fulfilment of his prophecies. Rather than a single individual providing leadership, hereditary or otherwise, power was distributed between warriors and elders. Committees of male elders held formal political power and were responsible for the administrative affairs of the community. These elders governed within territorial units called *pororiosiek* (singular *pororiet*), which provided distinct forums for regulating peoples' political and economic affairs as well as for organising militarily.[57] This form of community organization meant that although the Kalenjin peoples had no chiefs,

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[52] Beech, 'Sketch of Elgeyo Law', p. 195. The 'Kiruwekin' or 'advisor' did not have executive power yet was in place to provide guidance should it be required. See also Chebet and Dietz, *Climbing the Cliff*, p. 106.
[53] Driberg, 'The Status of Women', p. 419.
[54] The term *orkoiyot* was used among the Nandi, Keiyo and Tugen while ritual experts among the Kipsigis were known as *laibon*, which came from the Maasai. For an early history of the *orkoiyot*, see G. Huntingford, 'The Genealogy of the Orkoiyot of Nandi', *Mau*, Vol. 24 (1935), pp. 22-3. See also his discussions in *The Nandi,* pp. 38-52. The continued importance of the *orkoiyot* for strengthening the military cohesion of Nandi society has been emphasised in D. Ellis, 'The Nandi Protest of 1923 in the Context of African Resistance to Colonial Rule in Kenya', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 17, Is. 4 (October, 1976), p. 559.
[55] Ellis, 'Nandi Protest', p. 559.
[56] D. Anderson, 'Black Mischief: Crime, Protest and Resistance in Colonial Kenya', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 4 (1993), pp. 855.
[57] Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff,* p. 126; Ellis, 'Nandi Protest', p. 559. The simplest translation of *pororiet* means 'territory'.

they had a sense of identity based on their military prowess and male access to various forms of political authority.

The martial element of pre-colonial Kalenjin masculinities was revealed clearly during their protracted resistance to colonial conquest.[58] The imposition of British through force was first proclaimed through the presence of military stations that appeared along Sclater's Road, the main route through East Africa prior to the Uganda railway. The road passed through the Nandi Hills, where the Nandi were the majority, as well as other land that they had won from the Uasin Gishu Maasai in the wars of the 1880s.

When the British sought to exert control over the East African Protectorate, as they called the land until it became the Kenya Colony in 1920, the Nandi proved a considerable obstacle to their administration. From 1896 to 1905, Nandi forces opposed the British and their 'African friendlies' including the Uasin Gishu Maasai.[59] Guided by *orkoiyot* Koitalel arap Samoei, Nandi fighters intercepted caravans on the way to Uganda, laid ambushes on the railway during its construction and employed attack-and-retreat tactics on telegraph and railway survey parties.

The Nandi's age-graded social structure and its division into *pororiet* facilitated their resistance. Seven age-sets organised men militarily into three groups: boys, consisting of two age-sets; warriors (*murenik*) who came from a single age-set; and elders, comprising the remaining four.[60] Initiations were held on a roughly fifteen-year cycle, which meant that members of the succeeding age would have been

[58] For histories of the establishment of British rule in Kenya, see: G. Mungeam, Br*itish Rule in Kenya: The Establishment of Administration in the East Africa Protectorate, 1895-1912* (Oxford, 1966); D. Low, 'British East Africa: The Establishment of British Rule 1895-1912', in V. Harlow and E. Chilver (eds.), *Oxford History of East Africa*, *Vol. 2* (Oxford, 1965); J. Lonsdale, 'The Conquest State of Kenya, 1895-1905', in B. Berman and J. Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa, Book One: State and Class* (London, 1992), pp. 13-44; D. Anderson, *Eroding the Commons* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 41-7.
[59] Anderson, *Eroding the Commons*, p. 42.
[60] Hollis, *The Nandi,* p. 11; Huntingford and Bell, p. 17.

preparing themselves during the previous fifteen years in order to qualify for warriorhood after circumcision.[61] A long history of cattle raids and battles with Maasai and Turkana had also prepared the Nandi to fight against the encroachment of the British.

Yet the British military proved superior. British losses included 97 killed and wounded while 1117 Nandi died with many more wounded. In addition, 4956 huts and grain stores were burned and 16,213 cattle, estimated at about half the herd, and 36,205 sheep and goats were captured.[62] Governor Elliot expressed little concern over the loss of life or material damage, noting 'unless we are to abrogate our civilising mission in Africa, such expeditions, with their attendant slaughter are necessary'.[63]

The conflict finally ended when Koitalel, the *orkoiyot*, agreed to meet commanding British army captain Richard Meinertzhagan under a flag of truce and the British treacherously assassinated him.[64] The Nandi subsequently were restricted to a bounded space that would become their reserve. British forces continued to Baringo where they established another station at Eldama Ravine and a reserve among the Tugen. Colonial authority would extend over the other Kalenjin peoples, with separate reserves defined for each.[65]

This arrangement had differentiated consequences, for young and old, men and women. Although not all men benefitted, opportunities widened for those

[61] Hollis, *The Nandi*, p. 11.
[62] Mungeam, *British Rule in Kenya*, p. 158.
[63] Ibid, p. 164.
[64] Meinertzhagan killed Koitalel and his peace party of 25 warriors in the morning of 19 October 1905. The loss of many of its best fighters along with their leader ended Nandi opposition to British rule.
[65] The timing of British rule varied across the western highlands. For instance, the Nandi Reserve was gazetted in 1906 but among the Keiyo, it was not until 1910 that headmen were appointed and given responsibility for collecting taxes and imposing colonial rule. R. van Zwanenberg, *Colonial Capitalism and Forced Labour in Kenya, 1919-1939* (Nairobi, 1975), p. 94; C. Youe, 'Settler Capital and the Assault on the Squatter Peasantry in Kenya's Uasin Gishu District, 1942-63', *African Affairs*, [pp. 393-418,] p. 399; Chebet and Dietz, *Climbing the Cliff*, p. 136.

designated as colonial intermediaries who then could exert power over their contemporaries. Huntingford had this to say about the series of District Commissioners in Nandi:

> In spite of the many and various tasks that fall to the lot of an administrative officer in Africa that bring him into close relations with the people, it is his influence on the political system of the Nandi which has been of most importance.[66]

This influence was the result of indirect rule, an approach to governance in which local authority was deferred to African men.[67] Within this system, British officers collaborated with and depended upon designated African chiefs for collecting taxes, enforcing conscription orders, recruiting labour, and maintaining law and order. Chiefs ranked beneath the provincial and district officers but above the rest of the African population. Together with colonial officers, select male elders comprised Local Native Councils (LNC), which were institutions designated for carrying out British policies locally.

In the case of the Kalenjin, wrongly believing the position held by the *orkoiyot* to be one of executive authority in the wake of Koitalel's leadership role during the Nandi resistance, colonial authorities appointed several *orkoiyot* as colonial chiefs.[68] The conflict became apparent in relation to tensions surrounding younger men's ability to acquire wives and cattle. Theft of cattle, discussed below, had conventionally been sanctioned by the *orkoiyot*, who were then rewarded with a share of stock seized. So by placing the *orkoiyot* in a position of administrative control and subverting the authority vested in elders, the British unknowingly deeply interfered

[66] Huntingford, *The Nandi*, p. 60.
[67] For further discussion of this important theme, see Chapter One, 'Concepts of Gender'.
[68] Anderson, 'Black Mischief', p. 859-63. The general unsuitability of the chiefs, headmen and officially-appointed *orkoiyot*, widely noted by district commissioners stationed among the Nandi, has been discussed by Ellis. See Ellis, 'Nandi Protest of 1923', p. 561.

with the pre-existing distribution of power within Kalenjin communities, setting off a wave of conflict that persisted over decades.

As was the case before the onset of colonial rule, Kalenjin women were peripheral to these contestations over political power. By targeting men exclusively to enforce colonial policies, British officers widened opportunities for men far more than for women. Kettel has shown how the colonial government's appointment of prominent Tugen elders as chiefs and members of the Local Native Council contributed to reshaping power at the local level.[69] Writing about the Maasai, Hodgson demonstrated that the practice of indirect rule allowed Maasai men to arbitrate community disputes and establish their new office as the centre of their peoples' interaction with the colonial state.[70] These appointments opened new avenues for economic gain and political influence to the exclusion of women of all age groups.

The new colonial order augmented and reconfirmed long-established gender patterns. Elder men already held greater political power within Kalenjin communities before colonial administrators sought to exert influence through them. The combined effect was to further extend the importance of the formal political domain, of which men already held purview. Athletics was far from the only social arena in which combined African and British gender norms resulted in institutions and practices inscribed as masculine.

Community social, economic, political and religious expectations ensured that each person fulfilled obligations and responsibilities according to their existence as male or female. Prior to the arrival of the British, Kalenjin men held responsibility

[69] Kettel, 'The Commoditization of Women', p. 58.
[70] D. Hodgson, 'Pastoralism, Patriarchy and History: Changing Gender Relations Among Maasai in Tanganyika, 1890-1940', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 40, Is. 1 (March 1999), pp. 41- 65.

for the domains that increasingly grew to matter most within colonial society: land, cattle and political authority. There was also an explicit link between manhood and warriorhood. Grounded in the idea that gender roles were clearly established and that each gender had specific rights and responsibilities, and that the colonial period could produce mutually reinforcing gender practices between African and European cultures, the next section examines the connections between masculinity and athletics.

Linking Kalenjin Masculinities and Running

During the early part of the twentieth century, European anthropologists, preoccupied with analysing the political and economic organisation, religion and kinship structures of the communities they encountered, generally considered the study of movement cultures and games as peripheral and inconsequential. Scholars in subsequent decades have replicated this pattern, a gap in the literature to which Matt Carotenuto calls attention in his study of the cultural significance of traditional wrestling in Kenya.[71]

Nonetheless, there is evidence that Kalenjin youth competed in running races prior to the arrival of Europeans. In his *Socio-cultural Profile of Elgeyo-Marakwet District*, Benjamin Kipkorir describes traditional games, and noted that how running was 'a game or sport for boys which at times involves girls'.[72] He elaborated:

> A spot is chosen as the starting and finishing point of the race. A group of boys and girls run to a chosen spot and return to the starting point. The first to reach the chosen spot is rewarded with a fruit or whatever is available. One or a couple of boys might act as starters and judges of the race.[73]

[71] M. Carotenuto, 'Grappling with the Past: Wrestling and Performative Identity in Kenya', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 30, No. 16 (2013), p. 1890.
[72] B. Kipkorir and J. Ssennyonga, *A Socio-cultural Profile of Elgeyo-Marakwet District: A Report of the District Socio-Cultural Profiles Project* (Nairobi, 1984), p. 132.
[73] Kipkorir and Ssennyonga, *Socio-cultural Profile*, p. 132.

Kalenjin boys as well as girls had their own culture of racing prior to the introduction of western forms of athletics. Kipkorir's account finds support from a study that Rose Chepyator-Thomson conducted in 1990.[74] She asked elderly Keiyo men and women to describe their childhood games, concluding 'only the traditional games that coincided with what British children played were promoted at school'.[75] Such games included high jump and running races for both girls and boys. British and Kalenjin cultures converged during the colonial period with respect to the organisation of youth running races.

Running races may have been acceptable for both boys and girls yet early ethnographic records prove that adult men had opportunities to engage in running and other endurance-based activities as utilitarian functions that adult women did not share. Early European travellers and missionaries praised the stamina of men who were able to cover long distances with seemingly little effort. Anthropologist Ian Orchardson, who arrived in Kericho in October of 1910 and lived among the Kipsigis for nineteen years commented, 'the men's endurance on the march and ability to go for long periods without food and without complaint [were] remarkable'.[76] When John Boyes claimed in 1912 that 'the Maasai runner thinks no more of carrying a message sixty miles a day than we should a three mile stroll', he referred only to men.[77]

Depictions of African running cultures also featured centrally within the key male-dominated spheres of Kalenjin pastoralist society: cattle herding and stock theft. 'The young men of Masop, in the High Country, spend many days of their lives on long foot journeys, across the grasslands and the hills, to see their family cattle',

[74] J. Chepyator-Thomson, 'Traditional Games of Keiyo Children: A Comparison of Pre- and Post-Independent Periods in Kenya', *Interchange,* Vol. 21, No. 2 (Summer, 1990), pp. 15-25.
[75] Ibid, p. 21.
[76] Orchardson, *The Kipsigis*, p. 34.
[77] J. Boyes, *King of the Wa-Kikuyu* (London, 1912), p. 61.

commented Baringo District Officer Hennings.[78] David Anderson has written extensively on the history of stock theft in western Kenya.[79] Male elders selected groups of warriors (*murran*) based on qualities such as dependability, past raiding success, ability to create comprehensive raiding strategies and speed. Once the cattle were captured, the fastest men would rapidly drive them home. Groups of scouts (*segeik)* also secretly travelled on independent reconnaissance missions into neighbouring groups' territories.

For their part, while making assiduous efforts to curb stock theft, colonial administrators identified raiding as the province of men. To the Provincial Commissioner of the Rift Valley Province, 'stock theft is the traditional sport of the young men of many tribes'.[80] According to Anderson:

> If cattle theft by Africans in colonial Kenya was thought of as a '*young man's sport'* by European settlers and administrators, then the *young men* of the Kalenjin in Kenya's Western Highlands were undoubtedly the sport's most enthusiastic participants [italics added].[81]

Women were invisible within these descriptions of African cultures of running.

In effect, after childhood, runners were male because occupations in Kalenjin society were socially constructed through a variety of practices to conform to a particular set of gender attributes. It was acceptable for men to spend time maintaining their physical fitness while other duties that did not require long-distance running were expected to engage women. To that extent, running was

[78] Hennings, *African Morning*, p. 163.
[79] D. Anderson, 'Stock Theft and Moral Economy in Colonial Kenya', *Africa*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (1985), pp. 399-416; Anderson, 'Black Mischief'; Anderson, *Eroding the Commons,* pp. 23-4, 30-7, 42-3.
[80] Anderson, 'Stock Theft', p. 399.
[81] Ibid.

counterproductive to a woman's social and cultural responsibilities and status. As Matson put it:

> In Nandi society, the division of labour between men and women left the able-bodied men free to devote most of their time to military activities and training exercises. Military aptitude, endurance and discipline were developed by games and herding duties in early boyhood and by long journeys to salt licks, *kaptich* grazing areas and on raiding expeditions before initiation into warriorhood. The warriors were expected to maintain their physical fitness, including abstinence from beer and tobacco.[82]

Boys, and to a lesser extent girls, may have competed against one other as children. But as adults, only male Kalenjin undertook the endurance-based activities of stock theft, message delivery, military activity and days of marching.[83]

As Matson alluded, a second domain that required adult men to run has been associated with masculinity in societies around the world: military service. A significant number of young Kalenjin men found employment with the colonial military, with implications for the masculinisation of athletics. The King's African Rifles (KAR), constituted in 1902 by Captain Richard Meinertzhagen, played a critical role in developing Kenyan runners.[84] By the 1920s, the KAR were hosting their own athletics championships.

If a man could demonstrate talent in running, it could lead to an army job, with steady cash income, though this proved to have greater appeal to Kalenjin men than those of other communities. The Maasai, for instance, have been described as reluctant to take part in athletics because they suspected that sport was 'simply another way of recruiting them into the KAR'.[85] Kalenjin men did not share this

[82] A. Matson, *Nandi Resistance to British Rule, 1890-1906* (Nairobi, 1972), p. 20.
[83] The history of 'mail runners' in Kenya is an area with scope for future exploration.
[84] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running,* p. 75. For a history of the KAR, see: H. Moyes-Barlett, *The King's African Rifles: A Study in the Military History of East Central Africa (1890-1945)* (Aldershot, 1956).
[85] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 75.

aversion and throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, the prison services and the army actively recruited them at championships.[86] Winners were approached and offered places in the respective forces. Wilson Kiprugut Chumo, Kenya's first Olympic medallist at the Toyko Games of 1964, when asked to recall how he found his way to the top echelons of athletics replied, 'Captain Kiptonui from North Rift identified me as a potential athlete and in 1959, he recruited me into the Kenya Armed Forces, known then as the Kings African Rifles'.[87]

Once employed in the forces, men received coaching as well as the time and opportunity to exercise, effectively subsidising the training of many of Kenya's top runners with good effect.[88] As an indication of this, the first Kenyan athletes to win titles overseas were soldiers with the KAR.[89] By the time of independence, military men from the Rift Valley, as well as Nyanza Province, were recognised as the colony's fastest runners.[90]

One of Kenya's most famous pioneer athletes, Kipchoge Keino, was recruited into the Kenya police largely because he had shown running promise.[91] Once a member of the police force, he was given a disciplined routine and encouragement to run and by 1962, he won his first Kenyan national championship. In 1964 he placed fifth in the Tokyo Olympics before going on to capture the world record in the 3000 metres and 5000 metres and medals at both the 1968 and 1972 Olympics.

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[86] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 91.
[87] M. Marta, 'Kiprugut, Kenya's Forgotten Hero', *Kenya Today*, 10-17 October 2010, p. 3.
[88] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 156.
[89] Competing in the Malaysian championships in 1952, Chepkwony threw the javelin 55 metres and Kipsang won the three-miles in 15 minutes, 3 seconds.
[90] Nyanza Province featured individual runners like Ibrahim Nyatake and Christopher Areri competing at the national level and Nyandika Maiyoro who was selected to represent Kenya at the 1954 Empire and Commonwealth Games. Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 95.
[91] J. Manners, 'Masters of Men's Track', *Africa Report*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Jan-Feb., 1974), p. 16. See also a biography of Keino: F. Noronha, *Kipchoge of Kenya* (Nakuru, 1970).

The running ability among people from Kipchoge Keino's sub-ethnic group, the Nandi, has garnered much attention. They have long been pivotal to the success of Kenyan athletics, starting with early victories over Uganda and Tanganyika at the annual Inter-territorial competitions of the forties and fifties. Nandi men routinely won the Provincial Athletics Championships before helping the Rift Valley Province to win the Colony Sports Championships.

Reflecting the region's prominence as a hub of athletics, in October of 1953, £800 was spent to construct an 'African stadium' in Eldoret.[92] Grass tracks were laid out around Nandi District, with athletic encouragement considered 'greater than ever before'.[93] Inspiration also came from athletes who returned from the 1956 Olympics and spent time instructing and coaching at schools and local meetings. Through the mid-1970s, although they numbered only about 250,000, the Nandi produced runners who won more than half of Kenya's Olympic and Commonwealth Games medals.[94] According to one report from 1957, 'there has probably never been a more successful year of athletics when the Nandi appeared to win everything, ending up with a splendid victory over South Nyanza'.[95] Also that year a 'Kalenjin sports meeting' had been organised for the first time, though only the Kipsigis, Nandi and KAR could attend, and the Nandi won. The fact that the KAR were allowed to enter a team at the 'Kalenjin sports meeting' alongside the Nandi and Kipsigis indicates how far military service and athletics overlapped within the Kalenjin communities of the Rift Valley.

[92] As one report described it, 'this fine rose-bowl stadium with its cinder running track round the perimeter and football field in the centre, to be planted with grass during the next rains, was intended to fill a long-felt need not only for the Africans of Eldoret but also for those of neighbouring Districts who regard Eldoret as the obvious centre for events such as Provincial Sports meetings'. See KNA/UG/AR/1953, 'Uasin Gishu 1953 District Annual Report'.
[93] KNA/NDI/AR/1957, '1957 Nandi Annual Report'.
[94] Manners, 'Masters of Men's Track', p. 17.
[95] KNA/NDI/AR/1957, '1957 Nandi District Annual Report'.

Cultural events demonstrate the ties between Rift Valley men as runners in athletics and as soldiers in the military. On 18 November 1961, for instance, the annual Nandi Reunion Remembrance Service and Parade of ex-soldiers concluded with a track meet.[96] The parade was attended by a record number of more than 800 ex-soldiers as well as for the first time a contingent of Nandi from the Kenyan Police Forces. Over 150 of these men and their guests were then entertained with a lunch while presiding over a track meet held at the Kapsabet Sports Club.

The cross-over between athletes from the Rift Valley Province who also served in the military services at times led to dispute. The tension between teams from the Rift Valley Province and those from the Army, both of which were competitive at the national level, surfaced in squabbles between officials from those two entities. The Army Athletics' Secretary, in correspondence with the Rift Valley Provincial Sports Association, once expressed his displeasure with the Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner for approaching the KAR to ask if soldiers from the Rift Valley would compete on their behalf.[97] After leaving in no doubt the Army's insistence on first claim of soldiers' representation at the Championships, the Secretary concluded, 'We are only too pleased to allow an individual Army athlete to gain a place in a provincial team and compete against us, if we do not require that man for one of our own teams'.[98]

Recruiting 'Nandi-speaking' men into the colonial security system had a long history, and has been traced to their prolonged resistance to the original encroachment of colonial rule. Lewis Greenstein describes how the Nandi, having earned a reputation for 'stiff resistance' to the British military at the onset of colonial rule,

[96] KNA/NDI/AR/1961, '1961 Nandi District Annual Report'.
[97] KNA/PC/NKU/3/21/8, 'Entry of Army Athletes in Closed Civilian Meetings', 30 June 1960.
[98] Ibid.

were heavily recruited into the KAR during and after the First World War.[99] By World War I, the military drew in large numbers of Nandi. Lynch estimates that between 1914 and 1918, ten per cent of the Nandi's adult male population served in the KAR.[100] Based on official KAR records, a total of 1197 Nandi were recruited during the war from a population of 40-50,000.[101]

From the government's perspective, bringing 'warriors' into the KAR was a non-coercive way of maintaining order by re-directing their military capacity and predilection for cattle raiding to safer channels.[102] From the Kalenjin perspective, the military service appealed as a way to perpetuate the warrior tradition at a time when the government sought to halt raids against the cattle of their neighbours.

In this way, 'warrior' masculinities can be seen to have produced both resistance to and the facilitation of effective colonial rule. The 'Protest of 1923', the Nandi's first organised resistance since the wars at the onset of colonialism, saw a reactivation of the assertiveness of older warrior cultures in reaction to increased pressures from the Colonial government for land, labour and taxes that would continue until independence.[103] During the Emergency, however, these had been reconfigured. The British 'with very good reason considered the Kalenjin to be the most loyal of all the peoples of Kenya'.[104] One official wrote that in Nandi, 'recruitment into the various armed forces could not have been more popular', with visits organised to collect men from each chief area by the busload.[105] The 1959 annual report for Uasin Gishu acknowledged with gratitude 'the neighbouring tribes,

[99] L. Greenstein, 'The Impact of Military Service in World War I on Africans: the Nandi of Kenya', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 16, Is. 3 (1978), pp. 495-507.
[100] Lynch, *I Say to You*, Kindle Location 604.
[101] Ellis, 'Nandi Protest', p. 498.
[102] Ellis, 'Nandi Protest', pp. 557, 562.
[103] Ellis, 'Nandi Protest'; Youe, 'Settler Capital'.
[104] Anderson, 'Black Mischief', p. 877.
[105] KNA/NDI/AR/1957, '1957 Nandi Annual Report'.

of whose service in the Armed Forces no mention is needed'.[106] Referring to Eldoret, another noted, 'you will find few if any of the Nandi, Kamasia [Tugen], etc. in any other Kenyan town. They of all tribes have deserved well of their country by service in the Armed Forces at all times'.[107] Lynch attributed their loyalty to relatively low levels of formal education and the absence of a local elite that might have fostered resistance among them.[108] But, as she also notes, the Nandi had remained 'a community that attached great importance to military achievements' and joining the British military provided a means to preserve continuity with pre-colonial ideals of attaining masculinity and maturity as warriors.[109]

In his discussion of how men attained maturity, Ocobock describes the ritual succeeding circumcision, whereby Kipsigis boys were secluded with special elder instructors who taught them the code of adult male behaviour and this included preparation for physical combat. He quotes Jonah Kiprono, who says, 'we learned about war, handling spears, bows and arrows, and we were also taught about the behaviour expected of a man'.[110] Peristiany offers support for this, describing cases in which colonial officials sought to end the Kipsigis initiation ceremony because they did not want young men gathering together with weapons.[111]

In the nineteenth century before the onset of colonial rule, Kalenjin men became warriors, and warriors were runners. Within the British colonial military, Kalenjin men could become warriors of a different kind, armed with guns rather than bows and arrows. Yet the British military provided substantial support to develop the talent of fast runners. Thus between the pre-colonial to the colonial period, the series

[106] DC/UG/1/4/1959, '1959 Uasin Gishu District Annual Report'.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Lynch, *I Say to You*, Kindle Location 602.
[109] Lynch, *I Say to You*, Kindle Locations 604.
[110] In Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, p. 53.
[111] Ocobock, *An Uncertain Age*, p. 69.

of connections linking runners, military matters and masculinities was bridged and reinforced.

The army was one of the principal institutions promoting athletics in Kenya and during the colonial period, it could do so only among African men, as women were not yet accepted into the forces. The long history of retention of men from the Nandi and other Kalenjin groups in the armed forces contributed to influencing the gendered nature of athletics that arose in the colony. The history of the social construction of Kalenjin gender does much to explain why the term 'runners' was interchangeable with 'men' throughout the colonial period.

Conclusion

Athletics in Kenya emerged as a masculine domain through the fusion of two sets of gendered cultures of running. The male centred model of British sport described in the previous chapter found complete compatibility among pastoralist societies of the Rift Valley. Men and women there had long fulfilled distinct functions in the social, economic, political and ritual spheres of their communities. Men needed wives for farming as well as cooking and bearing children while occupations like cattle raiding and war required time away from the home in the absence of women for long periods. A clearly defined 'women's sphere', while giving women individual and collective resources and responsibilities, had little overlap with the main movement cultures of running. This construction of gender identities embedded in both African and European social fabric meant that Kenyan women did not participate as athletes during most of the colonial period.

Colonised Kenyans found ways to contest British influence when it threatened historical gender norms and social institutions, such as cattle raiding and clitoridectomy. But in the world of athletics (Kenyan or British), track and field was understood to be a male-only preserve. Historical precedent in both cultures created a division of labour in which men were runners via gender-specific tasks and responsibilities. Participation by women in athletics was incompatible with traditional femininity. Colonial ideologies reinforced this tradition and running as a singularly masculine enterprise continued uncontested almost to the end of colonial rule in Kenya.

Focusing on the complex, traditional and gendered mechanisms for ensuring the survival of households and communities adds the role of local peoples to the history of athletics in colonial Kenya. The next chapter examines the international changes taking place in sport and the effects these had on gender and sport in post-colonial Kenya.

Chapter Five: The World Beckons

Introduction

In 1968, Lydia Stephens, Tecla Chemabwai and Elizabeth Chesire competed in Mexico City, becoming Kenya's first female runners to race at the Olympic Games. Stephens, Kenya's best sprinter, raced in the 100 and 200 metres, Chemabwai competed in the 400 metres and Chesire the half-mile. According to the *East African Standard*, 'the selectors of the Kenya Amateur Athletics Association have taken a bold step by including these three in the team to the 19th Olympic Games due to open in Mexico City'.[1]

In an international context, their Olympic participation contributed to what Katherine Switzer, the first woman to complete the Boston Marathon in 1967, called 'the beginning of the competitive age of women's running'.[2] Following the Second World War, the governing bodies of international athletics declined to expand the programme of events for women beyond that which had been achieved before the war. This lack of new events for women can be partly explained by the economic hardships experienced in many countries and the expense of expanding the programme. It took nearly seventy years for women to compete in the same full programme of events as men.[3]

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[1] H. Wepukhulu, 'Trio Make History', *East African Standard*, 3 August 1968, p. 31.
[2] K. Switzer, *Marathon Woman* (New York, 2007), p. 155.
[3] The women's 200 metres first appeared in the Olympic Games in 1948. In 1960, the 800 metres was reinstated; four years later, the 400 metres was added. The 1968 Games saw no expansion of the women's events but the 1972 Games included the 1500 metres. In 1984, the marathon, the 3000 metres and the 400 metre hurdles were all added and in 1988 in Seoul, the 10,000 metres appeared on the programme. The 10,000-metre race walk was contested for the first time in Barcelona in 1992 while the triple jump was added and the 5000 metres replaced the 3000 metres at the Atlanta Games of 1996.

After decades of exclusion, by qualifying for and competing at the Olympics, the pioneer generation of Kenyan women contributed to a burgeoning movement around women's international running. At the same time, female runners in Kenya benefitted from the legitimacy for women's sport fought for and achieved by women in other countries. The entry by Chemabwai, Chesire and Stephens into international athletics in the 1960s signalled the start of a period of growth in Kenyan women's running.

Because of its implications for Kenyan running, this chapter focuses on the history and constellation of forces at the international level, from the first modern Olympics in 1896 until the Los Angeles Games of 1984, that steadily expanded women's participation in track and field and finally culminated in their participation in the full panoply of events long enjoyed by men. In particular, two changes at the international level accelerated women's running during this period. These were the expansion of middle and long-distance races for women at major meets, including the marathon, and the passage of Title IX legislation in the US that mandated equal funding for men's and women's athletics at all federally funded American schools and universities. An expanded international women's programme had a trickle-down effect on national competitions and structures within Kenya while Title IX did not initially live up to its potential.

The accompanying changes at the national level in Kenya conclude the chapter. Expansion of the domestic programme of women's running in Kenya followed changes in women's sport at the international level. Within Kenya, the organisation of women-only running camps and meets opened new opportunities for women to train and to compete domestically. Increasing the range of race

opportunities for women at the Olympics and other major meets commensurate with the men's programme was an unequivocal win for female Kenyan runners.

American athletics scholarships also increased Kenyan runners' opportunities to compete abroad. A crucial legal decision in 1973 meant age was no longer a constraint on the scope of foreign athletes' tenure as student-athletes in the United States. The removal of the age constraint combined with passage of Title IX in 1972 in theory should have allowed Kenyan women to immediately benefit from the same range of opportunities as men at the collegiate level. However, in practice, years of women's athletics were lost caused by delays in the enforcement of Title IX in the US. From the early 1970s, it was not Kenyan women but Kenyan men who were the predominant beneficiaries of athletic scholarship opportunities abroad.

These events, though beneficial to many, affected Kenyan male and female runners differently, particularly in the context of Kenya's scarce resources. Progress was made from the colonial period but compared to Kenyan men, women had fewer race opportunities and chances to compete both inside and outside of Kenya. The intersection of inadequate facilities and fewer competitive opportunities stunted their progress.

International Women's Athletics: 'Against the Laws of Nature'

When Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and admirer of the British public school system, brought together athletes from around the world for a revival of the Olympic Games in Athens in 1896, not a single woman competed. In 1902, he declared that women's sport went 'against

the laws of nature', a position he maintained throughout his life.[4] As late as 1935 he wrote:

> I personally am against the participation of women in public competition…At the Olympics their primary role should be like the ancient tournaments – the crowning of victors with the laurels.[5]

Despite his exhortations, some women competed in upper-class sports at the Olympics, starting with tennis and golf in 1900 in Paris. At the St Louis Games in 1904, archery appeared as a women's competition, in which all the contestants were American, and women yachted and figure skated in the 1908 Games in London, though most of the participants were British.[6] Women's swimming events were added to the programme from 1912.[7] World War I intervened to prevent the Olympic Games of 1916, and the first post-war Games four years later in Antwerp included women's tennis, swimming and diving.

During the inter-war period in Europe, a struggle took place by women for participation in sport, as female public leisure gained respectability and the boundaries of women's involvement in athletics began to expand.[8] The cause of

[4] A. Guttmann, *Women's Sports: A History* (New York, 1991), p. 163.
[5] In R. Holt, *Sport and The British: A Modern History* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 129-30.
[6] Guttman, *Women's Sport*, p. 163. For a discussion of the historical changes that led to figure skating changing from a 'manly sport' to a 'girls' sport', see: M. Adams, *Artistic Impressions: Figure Skating, Masculinity and the Limits of Sport* (Toronto, 2011).
[7] In 1912, only one individual swimming event was organised for women: the 100 metres freestyle. By 1920, women were swimming in the 300 metres freestyle. By 1924, with the exception of the 1500 metres, women could compete over the same distances and using the same styles as men. See: P. Mullen, *Gold in the Water* (New York, 2001).
[8] For the best account of British women's sport and leisure in the interwar period, see: F. Skillen, *Women, Sport and Modernity in Interwar Britain* (Bern, 2013). Others who have written on this include: Holt, *Sport and the British*, pp. 132-4; A. Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty: Working-class Culture in Salford and Manchester* (Buckingham, 1992); C. Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England, 1920-1960* (Manchester, 2000); and J. Hargreaves, *Female Sports: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports* (London, 1994). For European women's athletics during the interwar period, see Guttmann, *Women's Sports*.

female athletes was also linked with socialist movements and campaigns that were committed to women's emancipation as part of a complete transformation of society.

The first track meet for French women was held in 1915 and by 1922, the inaugural Women's Olympics took place in Paris.[9] Efforts from Camille Blanc, president of the International Sporting Club of Monaco, and Alice Milliat, founder of the *Federation Sportive Feminine Internationale,* prompted the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) to appeal to the IOC to include women's athletics in the programme for the Games in Amsterdam in 1928.[10] For women to appear as athletes in public, unattached to families and men, was an immense achievement, though their presence aroused resistance.

This was made clear in the case of the now infamous 800 metres race at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics. The IOC had reluctantly complied with the IAAF's request and added five women's events to the Amsterdam Games programme as an 'experiment': the high jump, discus, 100 metres, 4x100 metres and the 800 metres.[11] At the conclusion of the women's two-lap race, some of the runners collapsed at the line. Hysterical news reports of their 'poor condition' caused uproar and served as controversial evidence that women ought not to be allowed to compete over such 'distances'. The fact that women had been competing internationally over this distance for several years had been forgotten.[12]

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[9] Guttman, *Women's Sports*, p. 165.

[10] Guttman, *Women's Sports*, especially Chapter Ten. See also M. Leigh and T. Bonin, 'The Pioneering Role of Madame Alice Milliat and the FSFI in Establishing International Track and Field Competitions for Women', *Journal of Sport History,* Vol. 4, No. 1 (1974), pp. 72-83.

[11] France, Holland, Norway, Greece, Belgium, Austria, Poland, South Africa, Switzerland, the USA and Germany were the nations that agreed to this 'experiment'.

[12] The Women's Olympiad of 1922 and the 1926 Second International Ladies' Games had featured the longer distance of 1000 metres without issue. In England, domestic races over 800 metres were also being held under the auspices of the WAAA. Women's internationals of 1924 and 1925 both included 800 metres, again without any report of distress. See Leigh and Bonin, 'Pioneering Role of Madame Alice'.

In 1929, the IOC voted to remove the 800 metres event, a decision that would hold firm for the next 31 years! The 200 metres remained the longest distance allowed at the European Championships until 1954 and at the Olympic Games until 1960, when on both occasions the 800 metres was included. Meanwhile, men continued to compete in the 400 metres, 800 metres, 1500 metres, 3000 metres steeplechase, 5000 metres, 10,000 metres and the marathon.

Additional events for women were not introduced during the immediate post-World War II years because an increased number of events would have meant additional expense, for both the organisers and for each individual competing nation. Also, for major games, large numbers of people had to be transported across Europe to the venue and then accommodated once they arrived. The widespread wartime destruction and the hazards of remaining bombsites hindered free movement across the continent. International governing bodies were thus reluctant to augment the programmes with new events and chose instead to make post-war international meets reflect the structure of those during the 1930s. The US, however, had suffered no damage to its infrastructure during the war and could not use the same argument to limit its running opportunities for women.

Yet the greater economic and social freedoms that women had enjoyed during the war did not translate into subsequent athletic opportunities at international competitions. In the United States, which had always boasted a strong team in men's athletics, considerable resistance to women as serious competitors meant that by the fifties, efforts to improve the women's team's standards were only barely underway. The prominence of American women in world athletics continued to fall below expectations. This was not only the result of entrenched resistance on the part of the sport's governing bodies but also the persistence of traditional ideologies governing

the image of sportswomen in wider society. As US track and field chairwoman Roxanne Andersen asserted in 1956:

> The American girl is still fighting the battle of mid-Victorian prejudice against participation by women in competitive sport. Many potential Olympic champions remain undiscovered because of our present system – or lack of it.[13]

Scholars broadly agree with chairwoman Andersen that the restrictions placed on women's international running during the post-war decades were rooted in long-held notions of womanhood and manhood.[14] Women's sports opportunities were accepted only within 'safe' activities that were not seen as threatening to their reproductive capacity.[15] Anatomical differences were called upon to justify women's and men's disparate participation in sport as natural, innate and therefore fixed. The idea that women were not suited to excessive physical activity, was remarkably durable and continued to influence opinion well into the twentieth century.

Other theories rooted in biology arose that could be problematic, namely the extent to which women's participation was thought to result in undesirable sexual consequences.[16] It was not uncommon for sportswomen to be called 'mannish', casting doubt on their desirability to men and their interest in men.[17] If athletes did not

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[13] In L. Tricard, *American Women's Track and Field: A History* (McFarland, NC, 1996), p. 360.
[14] For American sport: S. Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth-Century Women's Sports* (Cambridge, 1994); Hargreaves, *Female Sports*; J. Mangan, and R. Park (eds.), *From Fair Sex to Feminism: Sport and the Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post-Industrial Eras* (London, 1987). For British sport, see S. Fletcher, *Women First: The Female Tradition in English Physical Education 1880-1980* (London, 1984); C. Osborne and F. Skillen (eds.), *Women and Sports History* (London, 2011); J. Hargreaves, 'Playing like Gentlemen while Behaving like Ladies: Contradictory Features of the Formative Years of Women's Sport', in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (May 1985), pp. 40-52; and K. McCrone, *Playing the Game: Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914* (London, 1988).
[15] P. Vertinsky, *The Eternally Wounded Woman: Women, Doctors, and Exercise in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1994).
[16] H. Lenskyj, *Out of Bounds: Women Sport and Sexuality* (Toronto, 1986); J. Hargreaves and E. Anderson (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Sport, Gender and Sexuality* (Abingdon, 2014).
[17] McCrone, *Playing the Game*, pp. 7-18, 192-95; Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, pp. 7-30.

appear attractive in the eyes of those watching, particularly male members of the fourth estate, then they risked being ridiculed and their biological sex questioned.

The emphasis continued on the need for sportswomen to remain within a narrow definition of femininity consisting of marriage, housekeeping and motherhood. Historian of American women's sport Susan Cahn has asserted, 'women rarely competed directly against men…[because of]…male fear of loss of a masculine preserve and male hegemony'.[18] This, combined with the notion that physical activity could harm women, stymied a female presence in athletics.

In Britain, running, still an amateur pursuit, remained fundamentally about 'the competition of equally matched antagonists, which brings about all the manly qualities of the Englishman'.[19] It was argued that the traditional roles of wife and mother were beneficial, for both the good of society and the individual. Family lives were ideally based on the model of pre-war years, when the 'cult of domesticity' prevailed in women's magazines as well as in political speeches. Clearly, there was a desire to see the world return to 'normal', as it had been before the outbreak of war. Rather than leading to the flowering of new ideas, war had created a conservative backlash that exalted the family, home and marriage.

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[18] Cahn, *Coming on Strong,* pp. 53-54.

[19] Lowerman, *Sport and the English Middle Classes,* p. 186. Secondary sources on British women's history of involvement in international running are relatively scarce. In addition to the sources cited here, also consulted were Melvin Watman's, *History of British Athletics* (London, 1968), in which women's athletics is limited to a single chapter. Peter Pozzoli published *British Women's Athletics 1921-1964* (London, 1965). Aside from a brief introduction, it consists of statistical information, tracing the development of each event by recording the best performances each year. Twenty years later, Eric Cowe published *International Women's Athletics 1890-1940: A Statistical History* (London, 1985). As the name suggests, this was also a record of the improving standards in women's athletics. Several texts have been published on the history of the Amateur Athletic Association in Britain, but none on the Women's Amateur Athletic Association. See for instance: H. Abrahams, *Fifty Years of Amateur Athletic Association Championships* (London, 1961); P. Lovesey, *The Official Centenary History of The Amateur Athletic Association* (Enfield, 1979).

In some western countries, religion in particular prevented women from participating in Olympic competition.[20] Roman Catholic bishops in Germany, France, Ireland, Italy and Poland opposed women's involvement in physical sports in competitive situations.[21] Successive Popes had expressed their dislike of women and girls participating in sport, claiming that it was both unfeminine and immoral. In 1954, Pope Pius XII warned that many young women did not realise the 'harm caused by the exaggerations of certain gymnastic and sporting exercises (which) are not fitting for virtuous young women'.[22]

In the 1956 Olympic Games, 67 nations, including Kenya, sent athletes to Melbourne, Australia.[23] Altogether, 371 women competed compared to 2,818 men. The greatest participation for the women's events came from the United States, with 46 athletes. Britain sent 26 and the Soviet Union, making its debut into Olympic competition, sent 39 women. India, despite its 350 million population, sent only one female with 58 men, five fewer than South Africa whose women were 'restricted to members of the white race'. From within Europe, Spain, Luxembourg, Greece, Liechtenstein and Ireland failed to send any women, while only three or four athletes represented several other countries.

Every participating nation sent more men than women, although some of this difference can be attributed to the greater number of events in which men competed. Nevertheless, even taking this into consideration, the differential was significant. In the case of the United States, though it had the most athletes overall, females made up

[20] Pallett, *Women's Athletics*; Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport*.
[21] Guttmann, *Women's Sports*, pp. 154-5.
[22] Robinson, 'Tripping Daintily', p. 215.
[23] The following figures come from: '1956 Melbourne Summer Games', Sports Reference [Accessed 14 May 2014], http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/summer/1956/.

only fifteen per cent of the team. Similarly, women represented fourteen per cent of Great Britain's team of 189 athletes.

The sustained refusal by decision-makers to provide the same competitive opportunities to both women and men stymied the growth of women's international athletics through the forties and fifties. They maintained their policy of restricting women to the previously accepted 'feminine appropriate' sprints. To them, sport was an arena in which men could display their physical prowess. The possibility that sometime in the future, women's rate of participation could match men's was not seriously entertained. At the same time, the practical problems of combining a career in sport with motherhood were not easily solved in the absence of exceptional resources, time-saving technologies or fathers willing to encourage their partner's interests outside the home. Consequently, athletics in the first sixty years of the twentieth century was largely maintained as a male monopoly and generations of women were prevented from discovering their athletic talent.

Emerging from the 'Wilderness Years'

Women's international running eventually emerged from what Frank Murphy has called the 'wilderness years' of women's athletics from 1928 to 1960.[24] Starting in the 1960s, women's sport 'entered a dramatically new era, a period of tremendous gains and even higher hopes for women athletes'.[25] These gains were incremental, however. Between 1960 and 1972, the world's international sports governing bodies

[24] F. Murphy, *The Silence of Great Distance* (Kansas City, 2000), pp. 44-46.
[25] Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, p. 246.

embarked on what has been called the 'slow trudge' toward full recognition of women's sport.[26]

National and international standards of women's running had continued to rise despite the Second World War robbing many women of their best years in which to compete. In 1960, after a gap of thirty-two years and five Olympics, the International Olympic Committee finally voted to accept the reintroduction of the women's 800 metres to the Games. In that year, Rome hosted the first Olympics to be televised and a huge new audience was able to watch the Games for the first time. Before them was irrefutable proof that women could safely participate in all athletic events, crucial to debunking the medical myths that had limited female participation in sport.

Other evidence of women's capability to run came from the female pioneers of the marathon, the longest distance over which runners could compete at the Olympic Games and one from which female athletes were barred until 1984. Nonetheless, long before that race in Los Angeles, some female runners found innovative ways to infiltrate male races. In 1963, Merry Lepper and Lyn Carmen hid in the bushes before merging into the Western Hemisphere Marathon, held in Culver City, California.[27] When an AAU official tried to force Carman and Lepper off the road, Carman 'gave him a good punch, and he landed on the pavement. I kept going, and they left me alone'.[28] A handful dressed to disguise their sex; others joined in from the crowds of onlookers. All risked ridicule, penalty and even violence.

[26] Guttmann, *Women's Sports*, p. 204.
[27] D. Davis, *Marathon Crasher: The Life and Times of Merry Lepper, The First American Woman to Run a Marathon* (Kindle Edition, 2012), Kindle Location 222.
[28] Davis, *Marathon Crasher,* Kindle Locations 237-239.

In 1967, Katherine Switzer entered the Boston marathon using only her initials on the application.[29] During the race, the marathon's head official attempted to tear the numbers from her, yelling at her to get out of the race. With the help of fellow male track team members and her coach who surrounded her and prevented race officials from pushing her off the course, Switzer became the first registered woman to run the Boston marathon, completing the race in just over four hours. The year before, Roberta Gibb hid herself in the bushes before emerging at the 1966 Boston Marathon, where she finished in a reported unofficial time of 3:21, ahead of 290 of the 415 male contestants.[30]

This phenomenon of women pushing the boundaries of long-distance running occurred simultaneously in several countries. In 1964 Scotland's Dale Greig, trailed the entire way by an ambulance, set a women's record when she finished the Isle of Wight Marathon in 3:27:45. Mildred Sampson improved on that time three months later when she ran New Zealand's Owairaka Marathon in 3:19:33.[31] Canada's fifteen-year-old Maureen Wilton soon after completed an otherwise all-male race in Toronto in an astonishing time of 3:15:23.[32]

West Germany's promotion of women's long-distance running was ahead of Commonwealth nations and the United States, in part because coaches required female cross-country skiers to prepare for their races of five or ten kilometres by completing long runs in the summer. In 1968, German sports officials arranged for 51 women to compete in the Schwarzwald (Black Forest) Marathon and 53 women

[29] Switzer, *Marathon Woman*. Coverage of Switzer's feat also appeared in national newspapers: '2 Girls in Marathon Don't Have Lovely Leg to Stand On', *New York Times*, 20 April 1967, p. 55. 'N. Zealander Wins Boston Marathon', *The Washington Post*, 20 April 1967, C2; 'Lady With Desire to Run Crashed Marathon', *New York Times*, 23 April 1967, p. 19; W. Gildea, 'K. Switzer, Girl, Can Run Forever', *The Washington Post*, 21 May 1967, D4.
[30] J. Hansen, 'The Women's Marathon Movement', *Marathon and Beyond* (Jan/Feb 2012), p. 3.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid, p. 4.

entered the following year. When the German Athletic Association (DLV) sanctioned women's participation in 1971, it was the first national athletics federation in the world to allow women to compete officially in the marathon.[33]

The best men's times in the marathon had remained relatively stagnant while women continually produced ever-faster finishes over 26.2 miles, from Caroline Walker's 3:02.53 in 1970 to Grete Waitz's 1980 New York Marathon record of 2:25.41.[34] Women were justifying their place in the long distances of the sport and then fighting for increased opportunities. Michiko (Miki) Gorman's time of 2:46.36 in 1974 was, according to Katherine Switzer, 'just the kind of ammunition we needed to convince the IOC that women deserved a marathon event in the Olympic Games'.[35]

Some commentators even went so far as to suggest that women's physiology, once considered a liability in sport, might actually be an asset in long-distance running, as women's bone structure, body fat and lower centre of gravity could prove advantageous.[36] Until the medical myths of female 'frailty' were demolished and women realised their full physical capabilities in sport, the image of female athletes was not going to radically alter.

By the 1970s, long held biases concerning female frailty were being relinquished, allowing women to increase training and to participate in more events. The media played a role in this and female runners were receiving greater coverage. *Track and Field News* was one of a growing number of magazines that allocated space to women's accomplishments starting from the mid-1970s. *Runner's World*

[33] 'The World Oldest Woman Marathon Bräunlingen', AIMS - Association of International Marathons and Road Races [Accessed 20 June 2014], http://aimsworldrunning.org/documents/2012_congress/2012.5_michael-schwar_schwarzwald-marathon.pdf.
[34] Hansen, 'Women's Marathon Movement', p. 11.
[35] Switzer, *Marathon Woman*. See also: T. Stuark, 'Marvelous Miki Gorman', *Runner's World* (June 1974), pp. 18-9.
[36] J. Puleo and P. Milroy, *Running Anatomy* (Champaign, IL, 2010), pp. 5-9.

more frequently incorporated women runners in its regular features, including a 'Women's Running' column from January 1978. That year also saw the debut of a new periodical called *Women's Track World*.

As the second wave of feminist activism swirled through the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, a convergence occurred wherein some athletes became feminists and a number of feminists discovered the importance of sport. A landmark event within American women's sport that did much to bring about this convergence involved tennis player Billie Jean King. On 20 September 1973, she won one of the decade's most memorable athletic events, a 'battle of the sexes' match against self-proclaimed 'male chauvinist pig' Bobby Riggs.[37] Riggs had issued the challenge, telling one news source: 'Hell, we know there is no way she can beat me…When the pressure mounts and she thinks about fifty million people watching on TV, she'll fold. That's the way women are'.[38]

In the Houston Astrodome, in front of more than 30,000 people, the largest ever to witness a tennis match, and the TV audience Riggs had anticipated of approximately 50 million, King won in three straight sets.[39] King used her resources to advocate for gender equality in sport, financing the magazine *WomenSports* in 1974 and joining with Olympic swimmer Donna de Varona to establish the Women's Sports Foundation that continues to campaign against sexism in sport.[40]

The politics of the Cold War also gave impetus to developing women's sport, since success by either gender was held to mirror the success of competing

[37] Two years before the 'battle', King had emerged as the first female athlete to earn $100,000 in a single year. Riggs had previously beaten the top-ranked woman tennis player in an exhibition match for $10,000. Guttmann, *Women's Sport*, p. 209.
[38] A. Edwards, 'Why Sport? The Development of Sport as a Policy Issue in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972', *Journal of Policy History*, Vol. 22, Is. 3 (July 2010), p. 304.
[39] Edwards, 'Why Sport?', p. 304.
[40] Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, p. 252.

ideologies.[41] For athletics, particularly important were the dual meets held annually between track teams from the United States and the Soviet Union starting in the late 1950s. The best hope for victory on the American women's side came from African American sprinters, and their successes won great approval.

Women from the Soviet Union had been actively contesting the middle distance events for decades before 1960.[42] Particularly after 1968 and during the years leading up to the 1980 Moscow Olympics, the USSR's female runners achieved extraordinary results. In 1972, the first year that the 1500 metres was contested at the Olympics, women from East Germany and the USSR won gold and silver, and five of the eight women in the 800 metres were from Communist countries.[43] Also from the moment they emerged in international athletics, the Soviet women's team dominated the throwing events. It was a rare occasion when USSR throwers did not take the majority of medals at the major Games.

From middle-distance runners to shot-putters, Soviet-bloc women besting western women reinforced the need to improve the state of athletics in the United States. President Kennedy declared physical fitness a priority during his presidential campaign and once elected, established the President's Council on Physical Fitness.[44] But pressure also came from the emphasis that the Soviet athletic association placed

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[41] V. Peppard and J. Riordan, *Playing Politics: Soviet Sport Diplomacy To 1992* (Middlesex, 1993); J. Riordan, *Soviet Sport. Background To The Olympics* (Oxford, 1980); J. Riordan, *Sport in Soviet Society: Development in Sport and Physical Education in Russia and USSR* (Cambridge, 1977).

[42] Murphy, *Silence of Great Distance*. See Murphy's Chapter Five, pp. 104-129, for an excellent history of women's middle distance running in the Soviet Union from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s.

[43] Systematic regimes of banned performance enhancing substances were later discovered. See P. Dimeo, *A History of Drug Use in Sport 1876-1976: Beyond Good and Evil* (London, 2007); J. Riordan, *Sport, Politics and Communism* (Manchester, 1993).

[44] J. Kennedy, 'The Vigor We Need', *Sports Illustrated*, 16 July 1962, p. 12; J. Kennedy, 'The Soft American', *Sports Illustrated*, 26 December 1960, p. 16. See also R. Griswold, '"The Flabby American", the Body and the Cold War', in L. McCall and D. Yacovone (eds.), *A Shared Experience: Men, Women and the History of Gender* (New York, 1998), pp. 323-348.

on women's sport and the considerable success that their athletes were enjoying. The USSR's representatives encouraged the IOC and IAAF to accept more events for women. Furthermore, delegates from the Soviet Union, Australia, and the United States made the first attempt to achieve female representation within the IOC itself at the Rome Congress of 1960, though they were not successful in this endeavour until 1981.[45] The Russians had a stake in expanding the number of events for women because the success of their female athletes was seen as providing proof of the benefits of the communist system.

The commitment to expanding women's sport that had been made by activists, politicians, pioneering female athletes and the media slowly led to races for women at even the longest distances. Before any proposal of additional events in either the Olympic Games or European Championships could be realised, significant debate inevitably ensued. The Women's IAAF Commission was required to provide evidence that women's health would not be damaged, that the events could fit into the existing timetable and that their inclusion would not be detrimental to the Games. The requirement for experimental races to be held, before distances were accepted as championship events, slowed the rate of progress. In the eyes of the privileged men who made up the international governing bodies, the world of sport remained primarily a male domain and women's place in it continued to be secondary. The period from the sixties to the eighties thus saw a painfully slow progression of women's events being added to the programme of major international competitions until by 1980, only the longest distances were controversial.

[45] The Olympic Committee rejected the appeal, and it was not until the Baden Baden Session, under President Samaranch in 1981 that two women were elected into the IOC. They were Pirjo Haggmnan from Finland and Flor Isava-Fonseca from Venezuela. The first woman from Great Britain to be elected was Mary Alison Glen-Haig in 1982.

A pivotal decision was made in March of that year, when the IAAF resolved that all international men's marathons would, from that point onwards, include women's races. The IAAF World Championships in Helsinki in 1983 was the first major championship to include a women's marathon. That same year, the 5000 metres and 10,000 metres were also recognised as official world-record distances for women. The IOC's 1980 meeting in Moscow was thus the last chance to add competitions to the women's Olympic programme before the next cycle. There, the committee voted to add twelve events, including the women's 3000 metres and the 400-metre hurdles, with a postponement on the decision to include the women's marathon.[46] The IAAF endorsed the recommendation to include the women's marathon at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, and after some dispute, the IOC and the LAOOC (Los Angeles Olympics Organizing Committee) decided in favour of hosting the women's 26.2 miles race in 1984.[47]

At this juncture, the women's athletics programme at the Olympics had come very close to mirroring the men's, finally living up to Mary Wollstonecraft's basic standard that both sexes have access to the same rights and opportunities.[48] The

[46] The IOC board, which included no women, had used a legitimate but often ignored rule - that at least twenty-five countries practice a sport - to oppose the addition of a women's marathon to the Olympic roster. They also believed women's long-distance running would remain a temporary American phenomenon while the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, in charge of executing the first privately funded Games in 1984, contended that adding a women's marathon would incur too great a cost.

[47] The inaugural women's marathon would take place twenty-four years after Ethiopian Abebe Bikila won the first of his two gold medals in Olympic marathons, becoming the first African to win over that distance at the Olympics. Bikila raced barefoot at the Rome Olympics of 1960, an event in which Kenya's Kanuti Arap Sum finished 19th. Bikila's second victory, four years later, had a winning margin of more than four minutes. See T. Judah, *Bikila: Ethiopia's Barefoot Olympian* (London, 2008); and P. Rambali, *Barefoot Runner: The Life of Marathon Champion Abebe Bikila* (London, 2008).

[48] The women's programme finally matched the men's when the 3000 metres steeplechase was certified as an Olympic event in 2008. H. Bechthold, 'Overview: Women's Athletics at the Threshold of the New Century', *IAAF*, vol. 13, no. 2 (1998), pp. 11-16. For Wollstonecraft's writings, see: M. Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (London, 2004 [1792]).

timeline of entry of men and women's athletic events into the major international competitions of the Olympic Games, World Championship and European Championship programmes appears in the table below:

Table 5.1 Entry of Athletic Events into International Competition Programmes

Event	Men			Women		
	Olympic Games	World Champs	European Champs	Olympic Games	World Champs	European Champs
100m	1896	1983	1934	1928	1983	1938
200m	1900	1983	1934	1948	1983	1938
400m	1896	1983	1934	1964	1983	1958
800m	1896	1983	1934	1928/1960	1983	1954
1500m	1896	1983	1934	1972	1983	1969
3000m	-	-	-	1984-92	1980-93	1974-94
5000m	1912	1983	1934	1996	1995	1998
10,000m	1912	1983	1934	1988	1987	1986
Marathon	1895	1983	1934	1984	1983	1982
3000m steeplechase	1900	1983	1938	2008	2005	2006
100m hurdles	1986	1983	1934	1932	1983	1938
400m hurdles	1900	1983	1934	1984	1980	1978
4x100m	1912	1983	1934	1928	1983	1938
4x400m	1912	1983	1934	1972	1983	1969
10km race walk	1912-1952	-	1946-1965	1992-1996	1987-1997	1986-1998
20km race walk	1956	1938	1958	2000	1999	2002
50km race walk	1936	1980	1934	-	-	-
High jump	1896	1983	1934	1928	1983	1938
Pole Vault	1896	1983	1934	2000	1999	1998
Long Jump	1896	1983	1934	1948	1983	1938
Triple Jump	1896	1983	1934	1996	1993	1994
Shot put	1896	1983	1934	1948	1983	1938
Discus	1896	1983	1934	1928	1983	1938
Hammer	1896	1983	1934	2000	1999	1998
Javelin	1908	1983	1934	1932	1983	1938
Combined	1904	1983	1934	1964	1983	1950

Source: I. Bechthold, 'Overview: Women's Athletics at the Threshold of the New Century', *IAAF*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (1998), p. 16.

Beth Posnack conducted a study into the reporting on the Los Angeles Olympic Games of 1984 and concluded:

> The American media of 1984 identified female athletes by their achievements – not by their physical attributes. Clearly, the terms 'woman' and 'athlete' were

> no longer separate notions by 1984. Mary Decker was an athlete just as Carl Lewis was an athlete. There was no need to remind the reading public that Mary was also a woman who was capable of dressing up and applying make-up.[49]

Her words summarise the complete game change for female athletes that was accelerating in some parts of the world. Women in Europe and America had pushed back against strictly regulated boundaries of masculinity and femininity in sport in ways that would also influence female runners in other parts of the world. The chapter now turns to discussion of Title IX and its significance in driving the change that Posnack observed by abetting unprecedented numbers of female athletes in America, with implications for the development of Kenyan women's running.

Opportunities Delayed but Not Denied

When tennis star Billie Jean King was a student at California State University, Los Angeles in 1964, she had already won two Wimbledon doubles titles. Yet while the male players enjoyed tennis scholarships, she worked two jobs because women were not eligible for athletics scholarships at that time. 'People didn't think much about it', said King in 2007. 'Nobody seemed to care that girls didn't have opportunities'.[50]

But on 23 June 1972, American President Richard Nixon signed the Educational Act of 1972.[51] Title IX of this act states:

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[49] In Guttman, *Woman's Sport*, p. 100.
[50] In M. Chawansky, 'Getting the Girl: Female Athletes' Narratives of the Recruiting Process', (The Ohio State University. PhD thesis, 2008), p. 22.
[51] Much of the debate over Title IX has revolved around collegiate athletics, the concern of this thesis. However, the legislation applies equally to primary and secondary education as well. For accounts of Title IX and its impact, see: A. Fishel And J. Pottker, 'Sex Bias in Secondary Schools: The Impact of Title IX', in J. Pottker and A. Pishel (eds.), *Sex Bias in the Schools: The Research Evidence* (Rutherford, 1977), pp. 92-104; J. Gavora, *Tilting the Playing Field: Schools, Sports, Sex and Title IX* (San Francisco, 2002); L. Carpenter and V. Acosta, *Title IX* (Champaign, 2004); N. Hogshead-Makar and A. Zimbalist (eds.), *Equal Play: Title IX and Social Change* (Philadelphia, 2007).

> No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.[52]

The initial goal of the comprehensive anti-sex discrimination law was to combat gender inequalities in education, and as originally written, it did not mention sport, confirming King's point above. However, with this act, women's right to equal athletic participation with men had been codified in law.[53]

According to one account, 'other than women's suffrage, possibly no other piece of legislation has had a greater effect on women's lives'.[54] The availability of athletic scholarships dramatically increases a young woman's ability to pursue a college education and to choose from a wider range of colleges and universities. The level of financial expenditures on sport and the increase in female student athletes are two indications that Title IX made a vast difference. The average spending on women's sports by National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division I universities was $27,000 in 1973-4 and rose to $400,000 in 1981-2.[55] The women's percentage of the athletic budget at Division I universities rose from two per cent in 1972 when Congress passed the law to 42 per cent in 2010.[56] Girls in American high schools playing sports increased from 300,000 in 1971 to more than two million in

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[52] Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, p. 250.
[53] A beginning of collegiate women's sport in American universities can be traced to golf in the 1940s, when Ohio State University decided that women should have their own sanctioned and structured championships. Its success raised questions around whether a similar concept could be used in other sports. National championships for college women in athletics were held for the first time in 1969. Murphy, *Silence of Great Distance*, pp. 217-18.
[54] Hogshead-Makar and Zimbalist, *Equal Play*, p. 50.
[55] Guttmann, *Women's Sport*, p. 221.
[56] J. Coakley, *Sport in Society* (St Louis, 1978), pp. 255-7; C. Fields, 'Title IX at X', *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 23 Jun 1982; Title XI Fact Sheet: The Battle for Gender Equity in Athletics in Colleges and Universities', National Women's Law Center, June 2012 [Accessed 9 September 2014], http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/battle_for_gender_equity_in_college_athletics.pdf.

1992, disproving claims made by opponents of Title IX that the lower numbers of female athletes were due to lack of interest as opposed to lack of opportunities.[57] Similarly, at the university level, female athletes increased tenfold from 16,000 in the early 1970s to more than 160,000 by the late 1980s.[58] In 2010, a record number of 193,232 women competed, representing 44% of college athletes nationwide.[59]

However, these encouraging statistics belie the contested and uneven nature of Title's IX's implementation. Title IX was only applied to sport after a complex process involving external pressure and all three branches of the United States government.[60] In the early 1970s, negative perceptions about women's physical capabilities persisted, effectively denying widespread and significant changes and there was strong resistance to gender equality in sport that the law implied. A well-organised campaign to reverse the law combined with delaying tactics on the part of officials charged with implementing it meant that the federal government's enforcement of gender equality in sport did not even begin to take full effect until the late 1970s.[61]

Even at that time, not all institutions took the law seriously and the extent to which schools complied varied with different court rulings and additional

[57] For other statistics on women's increasing participation in sport, see Carpenter and Acosta, *Title IX*, pp. 168-9; Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, p. 246.
[58] Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, p. 259.
[59] 'Title XI Fact Sheet: The Battle for Gender Equity in Athletics in Colleges and Universities', National Women's Law Center, June 2012 [Accessed 9 September 2014], http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/battle_for_gender_equity_in_college_athletics.pdf.
[60] Edwards, 'Why Sport?, pp. 300-336.
[61] Fishel and Pottker have written a detailed account of Title IX's incremental progression through Congress and the executive branch from 1972 to 1975 while McCarthy takes the narrative of the extensive regulatory challenges that it faced through 1988. A. Fisher and J. Pottker, *National Politics and Sex Discrimination in Education* (Lexington, Mass., 1977); J. McCarthy, *Title IX from 1970 to 1988: A Study in Educational Policy Making* (Ann Arbor, 1991).

legislation.[62] Some universities were unwilling to admit that Title IX pertained to collegiate athletics, an uncertainty that the Supreme Court initially resolved in 1984, exempting athletics from the law, before Congress clarified its intent in 1988 by mandating that all programs at federally funded institutions, including sports, were indeed subject to Title IX's stipulation of gender equality.[63]

Such opposition resulted in years of delay that stalled progress for women's sport in America, which in turn adversely affected the development of women's running in Kenya. One of the country's largest athletic programmes, Ohio State University, did not award any women's track and field scholarships until 1976, four years after President Nixon signed Title IX into law.[64] In 1978, the University of Wisconsin's first full scholarship to a female track athlete went to Pat Johnston. She went on to win three national championships in the long jump.[65] The NCAA itself did not sponsor women's competitions and championships until 1982.[66] Although the legislation was signed in 1972, the first wave of female runners to benefit was comprised of women entering university in the early 1980s.

The boom in recruiting (male) African runners to American universities on track scholarships was itself side-tracked by rules preventing their full participation. A critical legal decision issued in 1973 lifted the age restrictions on foreigners competing abroad. For athletes of any nationality or gender, a sport scholarship from an American university was a remarkable opportunity. In exchange for four years of competitive athletics while maintaining grades above a certain threshold, the student-

[62] D. Anderson, J. Cheslock and R. Ehrenberg, 'Gender Equity in Intercollegiate Athletics: Determinants of Title IX Compliance', *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 77, No. 2 (2006), pp. 225-25.
[63] Ibid.
[64] L. Tricard, *American Women's Track and Field, 1981-2000: A History* (Jefferson, NC, 2008), p. 107.
[65] Murphy, *Silence of Great Distance,* p. 228.
[66] The Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) oversaw women's athletics from 1972-83. Murphy, *Silence of Great Distance*, p. 222.

athlete received equipment, medical care, coaching, and ample competitive opportunities on top of a free college education. Non-Americans, however, had long been subject to an 'overage foreigner rule', which caused them to lose one year of NCAA eligibility for every year in which they participated in organised competition in their countries past the age of nineteen. The thought behind it was that foreigners could be recruited out of high school and enrolled for four years but 'if you waited and tried to pluck off some Olympic gold medal winner from Kenya, then you would have him for considerably less time'.[67]

On 10 December 1973, a federal court suspended this rule on grounds that it did not comply with the 14th amendment's provision of equal protection under law, effectively removing all restraints on recruiting older foreign track runners.[68] The decision immediately affected NCAA programmes, particularly in athletics. At the 1974 outdoor men's track championships, foreign athletes won six individual titles and accounted for 150 points. In 1975, they took eight titles and 164 points; in 1977, non-Americans again won eight events and took the top two places at the Men's NCAA Cross-country Championships.

The swelling numbers of male African runners in US universities from the mid-1970s can be traced to this key legal decision. In the first year after it was passed, twelve international-calibre Kenyan men arrived in the USA on track scholarships. Particularly for schools that were at a recruiting disadvantage, the rule meant that no longer would they have to battle over limited American talent. As Ted Banks put it in 1977 while serving as head coach of Texas at El Paso's team with 25 foreign athletes on its 40-man roster, 'there's no way I'm gonna outrecruit [sic] big schools with big

[67] J. Conrad, 'Coaches Bemoan Foreign Flood, *Eugene Register-Guard*, 12 June 1974, p. 9.
[68] 'Track is Main Attraction: Foreign College Athletics Becoming More Common', *The New York Times*, 16 March 1877, p. 7B.

campuses and big reputations unless I bring in foreigners. I'm in the desert'.[69] At the time, he had a budget of $140,000 and the approval of his administration to call Canada or Kenya in the pursuit of talent.

The beginnings of what would become a 'pipeline' of athletes between Kenya and the United States can also be traced to 1970 when two men, Ghanaian sprinter George Daniels and Kenyan triple jumper Patrick Onyango, were awarded athletic scholarships to major NCAA sports programmes.[70] American student-athletes Bill Toomey and Mark Winzenried had met them the previous year during a US Information Services tour of Africa. Toomey recruited Daniels for his alma mater Colorado and Winzenried, still a student, persuaded Onyango to join him at Wisconsin.[71]

Onyango and Daniels performed credibly but with the 'over age rule' still in place, coaches at other NCAA Division I schools remained cautious about recruiting talented Africans. Another pair that played a role in changing this were Kenyans Julius Sang and Robert Ouko, who arrived together at North Carolina Central University in 1971 to compete in the 400 metres and 800 metres, respectively. The two attracted so much attention for their outstanding performances at their first NCAA Championships, as well as for the medals they won subsequently at the 1972 Olympics, that American coaches were soon scrambling to establish 'African connections' in the wake of the 1973 ruling.

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[69] ____, 'Track is Main Attraction: Foreign College Athletics Becoming More Common', *The New York Times*, 16 March 1977, p. 7B

[70] Though he did not receive an athletics scholarship, the first Kenyan athlete to compete for an American university was Steve Machokos at Cornell (Ivy League colleges are unable to award sports scholarships). See D. Prokop (ed.), *The African Running Revolution* (Mountain View CA, 1975.

[71] J. Manners, 'African Recruiting Boom', in D. Prokop (ed.), *The African Running Revolution* (Mountain View CA, 1975), p. 64.

A Washington State University case illustrates how connections developed between American universities and secondary schools in the Rift Valley from that point. Washington State's 'Kenyan connection' was established when a Kenyan lecturer at the University of Puget Sound contacted then assistant track coach at Washington State, John Chaplin, regarding a friend reputed to be an excellent distance runner. Although 'sceptical', Chaplin recruited the runner and in 1974, John Kipkemoi Ng'eno arrived in the Pacific Northwest. As a Washington State student, Ng'eno became a multiple-time NCAA champion and one of the world's fastest 10,000 metre runners.

'It was the easiest recruiting I've ever done', admits Chaplin, because recruiting excellent runners from the Rift Valley was often easier than courting the equivalent American talent.[72] According to Bale and Sang, 'instead of scouring the nation for a blue chip recruit, a telephone call from the track coach to an alumnus in Kenya could get a recruit for almost nothing', saving time and energy in the race to attract runners who could score points at conference and national championship meets.[73] By 1977, foreign competitors contributed 24 of the 25.5 points that gave Washington State its first national team title at the NCAA indoor track and field Championships, held that year in Detroit.[74] In reply to the observation, 'You must go on some pretty interesting recruiting trips', the coach reportedly said: 'We don't go on recruiting trips. We go on safaris'.[75]

The coming together of American legal precedent, well-resourced American universities, and gifted Kenyan runners with education sufficient to succeed in the American university system created the conditions for many of Kenya's best male

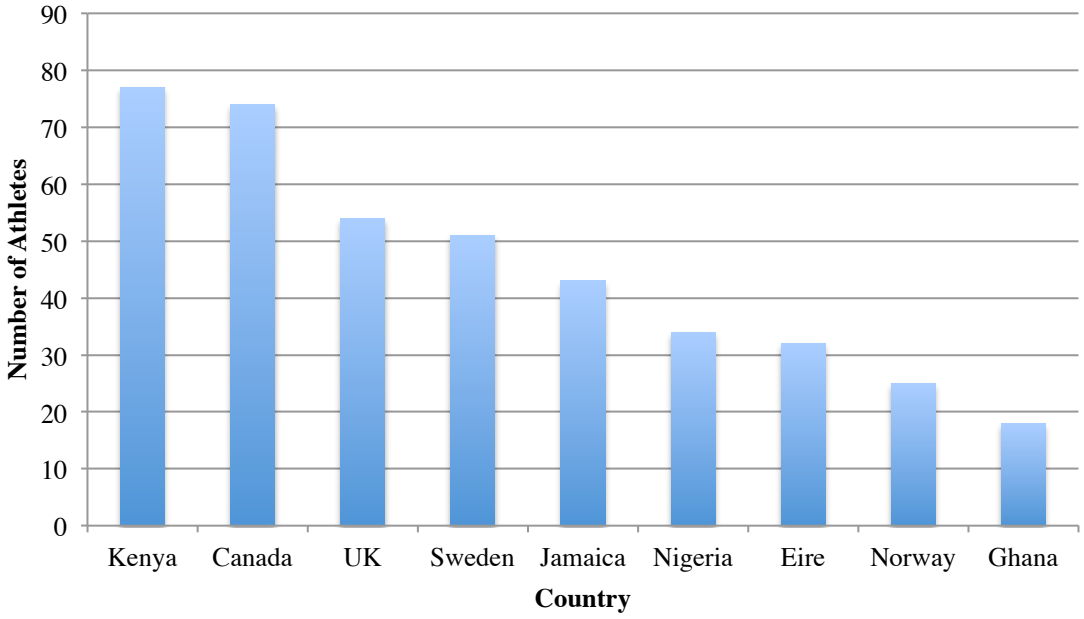
[72] Quoted in Manners, 'African Recruiting Boom', p. 65.
[73] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 125.
[74] ___, 'Track is Main Attraction', 7B.
[75] Ibid.

runners to spend four years developing their running abilities in the United States, and the flow of Kenyans exploded in the mid-1970s. Long-term Iten-based coach Brother Colm O'Connell commented that the lure of a scholarship to America was especially important for preserving interest in the sport during the period in which Kenya boycotted successive Olympics of 1976 and 1980.[76]

The movement of male runners between Kenya and America accelerated until the mid-1980s, when accepting a scholarship for running as an amateur athlete encountered a rival with the professionalisation of athletics. From 1971 to 1978, male Kenyans made up 17.2 per cent of non-American competitors at men's NCAA championships, the most of any foreign nation during this period.[77] As the figure below shows, between 1973 and 1985, Kenya outperformed all other nations in sending (male) track-and-field athletes who qualified for and competed at the NCAA Championships.

[76] C. O'Connell, Interview, 15 Jan 2010.
[77] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 125.

Figure 5.1 National Origin of Superior Foreign, Male Track-and-field Athletes at American Colleges, 1973-85



Source: Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 125.

Despite the achievements of many international student-athletes participating in American universities' sport programmes, there is little scholarly literature on the subject.[78] The main exception is John Bale's *The Brawn Drain*, published in 1991.[79] He was largely critical of the 'track drain' to America during the 1970s and 1980s, agreeing with Kenyan sports officials who considered that their runners had been 'poached' by American universities.[80] The officials were concerned that Kenyan runners were being used to improve the prestige of American universities' sports programmes rather than Kenya's. They did not appreciate it when athletes based overseas proved unable, or unwilling, to return to Kenya for mandatory national

[78] Two exceptions are: J. Lee and T. Opia, 'Coming to America: Challenges and Difficulties Faced by African Student Athletes, *Sport, Education and Society*, Vol. 16, Is. 5 (2011), pp. 629-644; W. Njororai, 'Global Inequality and Athlete Labour Migration from Kenya', *Leisure,* Vol. 34, Is. 4 (2010), pg. 443-461.
[79] J. Bale, *The Brawn Drain: Foreign Student-Athletes in American Universities* (Illinois, 1991).
[80] P. Ndoo, 'Athletics Talent on Parade', *Daily Nation*, 12 Nov 1977, p. 20.

training camps and championships while instead competing in the United States' National NCAA Championships.

Among the ranks of the United States Coaches Association there were also many opponents of the new trend of recruitment of foreign athletes. In 1974, a year in which 15 of 25 male track All-Americans were foreigners, a poll of coaches indicated that 65 per cent of them did not want foreign athletes competing in national collegiate championships in the United States.[81] Their frustration led to drafting a rule that would have banned American universities from enrolling more than one foreign athlete each year.[82] They contended that American universities were developing African talent to the ultimate detriment of the United States and for the benefit of African countries at the Olympic Games.[83]

Americans' distress over Kenya's participation in the college sports system adds weight to the argument that it was to Kenyan athletes' advantage to take up a scholarship. If the Kenyan student-athletes had simply raced reasonably well, without beating American runners, presumably the objections would have been less vocal. However, male Kenyans who attended American universities not only won NCAA championships but also often ended up ranking among the best runners in the world, including world record holders Henry Rono and Olympic Games champions Paul Ereng and Peter Rono.

Despite having to navigate the challenges of cultural difference, such as racism and inhospitably cold weather, most Kenyan athletes saw US athletic

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[81] ____, 'Coaches Poll Shows Support: NCAA to Study Possible Ban on Foreign Track, Field Stars', *The Observer*, 8 Jun 1974, p. B7.
[82] N. Da Costa, 'US Coaches to Put Foot Down on African Athletes', *Daily Nation*, 19 Dec 1973, p. 29.
[83] At the time, Kenya had 15 of its best athletes attached to universities in the United States, including Robert Ouko, Julius Sang, Mike Boit, Philip Ndoo, John Kiplangat, John Ngeno, Gerson Gichongeri, and Tecla Chemabwai. See: Da Costa, 'US Coaches'.

scholarships as beneficial.[84] According to Philip Ndoo, a runner and later journalist with the *Daily Nation* who studied journalism and economics while racing for Eastern New Mexico State University from 1973 to 1976, 'I don't know any[one] who regrets having come'.[85] The numbers also reflect that when they had the opportunity, Kenya's best runners chose to leave Kenya in exchange for four years of free education and well-supported competitive opportunities. In 1982, the peak year of Kenyan runners' migration to American universities, 24 of the 50 best male Kenyan 5000 metres runners were attached to colleges in the United States.[86]

The dearth of women in this narrative highlights to what extent the delay in enforcing Title IX adversely affected the development of women's running in both America and Kenya, though it was not the only factor limiting women's involvement. Tecla Chemabwai, Rose Chepyator-Thomson and Ruth Waithera were virtually the only Kenyan women to take advantage of the opportunities opening to women in the United States during this period.[87] Chemabwai left for the United States in 1973, Chepyator-Thomson was next, enrolling to study Physical Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 1979-1983, while Waithera attended the University of Arizona from 1981-84. Not coincidentally, they also became Kenya's very best international-calibre athletes throughout the seventies and early eighties.

Chemabwai was the first woman from Kenya to earn a scholarship. She accepted Chicago State University's offer to study and run in 1973 and the following year, she became the first Kenyan woman to win a gold medal at a major Games. Disliking both the Midwestern winters and Los Angeles smog, Chemabwai continued

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[84] H. Wepukhulu, 'The Secret behind the Kenyans Track Success', *Daily Nation,* 6 August 1988, p. 11.
[85] Quoted in Manners, 'The African Recruiting Boom', p. 69.
[86] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 125.
[87] ___ 'Chemabwai for States' University', *Daily Nation*, 28 April 1973, p. 22; R. Waithera, Personal Interview, Nairobi, 18 February 2011; T. Chembawai, Interview, 12 Jan 2011.

to search for the right environment and eventually found it in Albuquerque at the University of New Mexico, where she studied and competed for three years. In her words:

> It was my first time to step on the snow, to see the snow and feel the cold. It was a wonder. How can this be? But after one year, I couldn't take it and I went to LA. There it was also terrible, very humid. With the pollution, I could not breathe. So then I landed in New Mexico.[88]

She was part of the 'exodus' of talented runners from Kenya to American universities characteristic of the late 1970s and 1980s.[89] However, thanks primarily in part to delays in implementing Title IX, she was a rarity. On the US inter-collegiate circuit, female Kenyan runners were at least ten years behind male Kenyan runners.

Comparing the team affiliation of the best Kenyan men and women runners also gives an unmistakable indication that only Kenyan men were participating in athletics beyond secondary school, including taking full advantage of the opportunities to race and to train in the United States. Statistician Walter Abmayr has compiled ranked lists of the top-fifty performances in Kenya from fastest to slowest. The charts below show the rankings for the men's and women's 3000 metres, 1500 metres and 800 metres in 1984. Only the top ten performances have been included here, with each result showing the location and date in which the race took place as well as the athlete's name and affiliation. The runners who were affiliated with educational institutions have been highlighted in the tables below: Kenyan secondary schools appear in dark purple, Kenyan primary schools in light purple and American universities in green.

[88] T. Chembawai, Interview, 12 Jan 2011.
[89] P. Ndoo, 'Sang Threatens to Quit if Ouko is Not Reinstated', *Daily Nation*, 8 April 1975, p. 15

Table 5.2 1984 Best Performances: Women and Men's 3000 Metres

Women's 3000 Metres 1984 Best Performances			**Men's 3000 Metres 1984 Best Performances**		
Time	Name	Affiliation	Time	Name	Affiliation
8:57	Helen Kimaiyo	S. Sch.	7:49	Joseph Chesire	Army
9:19	Mary Chepkemboi	P. Sch.	7:51	Ibrahim Hussein	USA
9:22	Regina Chemeli	P. Sch.	7:52	Julius Kariuki	Army
9:23	Esther Kiplagat	S. Sch.	7:54	Kipsubei Koskei	Unattached
9:31	Theresa Chesang	P. Sch.	7:54.5	Paul Rugut	USA
9:35	Alice Mokeira	Post	7:56.6	Patrick Sang	USA
9:54	Mary Wagaki	Prison	7:59.1	Joseph Chelelgo	USA
9:57	Florence Maisiba	Railway	7:59.3	Charles Cheruiyot	S. Sch.
9:58	Florence Maisiba	S. Sch.	7:59.8	Paul Kipkoech	Army
9:58.4	Susan Sirma	S. Sch.	8:00	Joseph Nzau	USA

Source: W. Abmayr, *Track & Field Best Performances: Kenya 1984* (Nairobi, July 1985), pp. 36, 66.

Table 5.3 1984 Best Performances: Women and Men's 1500 Metres

Women's 1500 Metres 1984 Best Performances			**Men's 1500 Metres 1984 Best Performances**		
Time	Name	Affiliation	Time	Name	Affiliation
4:18	Mary Chepkemboi	S. Sch.	3:34	Joseph Chesire	Army
4:18	Justina Chepchirchir	S. Sch.	3:37	Kipkoech Cheruiyot	S. Sch.
4:20	Alice Mokeira	Post	3:37.2	Mike Boit	USA
4:21	Esther Kiplagat	S. Sch.	3:39	Josphat Muraya	Army
4:22	Prisca Chemeli	S. Sch.	3:39	Samson Obwocha	USA
4:24	Wayua Kiteti	Prison	3:40	Sisa Kirati	Army
4:27	Susan Sirma	S. Sch.	3:40.8	Sammy Koskei	USA
4:27	Helen Kimaiyo	S. Sch.	3:40.8	Paul Rugut	USA
4:29	Mary Chemweno	Unattached	3:41	Peter Koech	USA
4:32	Grace Chepchumba	Army	3:42	Julius Korir	USA

Source: W. Abmayr, *Track & Field Best Performances: Kenya 1984* (Nairobi, July 1985), pp. 36, 65.

Table 5.5 1984 Best Performances: Women and Men's 800 Metres

Women's 800 Metres 1984 Best Performances			**Men's 800 Metres 1984 Best Performances**		
Time	Name	Affiliation	Time	Name	Affiliation
2:04	Justina Chepchirchir	S. Sch.	1:42	Sammy Koskei	USA
2:05	Selina Chirchir	S. Sch.	1:44	Billy Konchellah	USA
2:06	Florence Wanjiru	Railway	1:44	Edwin Koech	USA
2:07	Susan Sirma	S. Sch.	1:45	Juma Ndiwa	Army
2:07.	Wayua Kiteti	Prison	1:46	Jame Maina Boi	Army
2:08	Helen Kimaiyo	S. Sch.	1:47.1	Charles Onsare	Post
2:08.	Rose Tata-Muya	Cargo	1:47.1	Joseph Chesire	Army
2:09	Florence Njeri	Post	1:47.8	Kipkoech Cheruiyot	S. Sch.
2:09.1	Mary Chemweno	Unattached	1:48	Kiprono Chepkwony	Army
2:09.2	Alice Mokeira	Post	1:48	Julius Korir	USA

Source: W. Abmayr, *Track & Field Best Performances: Kenya 1984* (Nairobi, July 1985), pp. 33, 63.

The female athletes were mainly affiliated with secondary schools or occasionally, with Kenyan institutions, such as the Railway, Prisons, and Posts. The fastest men, on the other hand, were most often students in the USA. In the 3000 metres, for instance, half of Kenya's top-ten fastest men were students attending American universities and three were affiliated with the Army. Among Kenya's top-ten females in the 3000 metres, seven out of ten were also students but in primary or secondary schools in Kenya. During this period, for a significant proportion of Kenya's men, educational opportunities at American universities facilitated athletic development; the same cannot be said for more than a minuscule number of Kenya's fastest women. The Kenyan Army, the second most common affiliation among the men, also employed few women.

Nonetheless, the aim of Title IX was to address gender equality in education, including athletics. This both reflected and influenced a normative shift that was taking place around women as athletes in many parts of the world. Similarly, within an environment of increased awareness of women's sport starting in the 1960s,

international athletic authorities were widening the women's programme and permitting longer races. Both of these changes positively impacted women's running in Kenya. Not only were the careers of a handful of women advanced considerably but also structural changes within Kenya were largely driven by these shifts.

Expanding International Competitions Motivates Kenya

Broadening the women's international programme advanced women's running in Kenya. The 1500 metres distance race typified this. The European Championships first included the women's 1500 metres in 1969, which the Commonwealth Games matched in 1970. The KAAA then chose to host the event at the National Athletics Championships in 1971 in advance of the debut of that distance at the 1972 Olympics.

A similar trend occurred around the 3000/5000 metres. Competing in the 5000 metres and converting the time for 3000 metres was an acceptable method for women to qualify for the Olympic Games. The event was held at the European Championships for the first time in 1974. The 'Women's World Championship' for the 3000 metres eventually took place in Sittard, the Netherlands in 1980, and it reached the Olympics in 1984.[90] In Kenya, a 'historic 5000 metres race' took place in May of 1981.[91] According to the Kenyan media, this was the first women's 5000 metres held officially in Africa and 'two youngsters took up the challenge'.[92] The

[90] S. Ferez, 'From Women's Exclusion to Gender Institution: A Brief History of the Sexual Categorisation Process within Sport', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2012), p. 276.
[91] J. Pewa, 'Two Records Tumble', *Daily Nation*, 3 May 1981, p. 25.
[92] Pewa, 'Two Records Tumble', p. 25.

inaugural championship of the event took place a few weeks later at the Kenyan National Athletics Championships in June of 1981.[93]

There is evidence that when it came to Olympic Games and other prestigious international competitions, the Kenyan Amateur Athletic Association was committed to supporting all its runners who achieved the required time standards. The *Daily Nation* reported 'Kenya AAA spokesman Aish Jeneby [stating] that every woman athlete to qualify will travel', indicating that in this respect, the KAAA did not discriminate between the sexes.[94] His words stand up to scrutiny in that no evidence was found of a woman, having achieved an international qualifying standard, being then denied the opportunity to represent Kenya at the Olympics, Commonwealth Games or World Championships.

Being able to send athletes to the Olympics has a positive effect on the status of sports federations and the nations that they represent. The difference between taking three women and eight men to the Games in 1968, or four women and twenty-four men in 1984, was not due to bias from the national selectors.[95] The year 1984 is a particularly clear case, as in total Kenya sent a very large contingent of 108 athletes, which included runners as well as shooters, hockey players and boxing squads.[96] The resources to send Kenyan runners abroad for major races were elastic enough during this period to accommodate the full complement of athletes who met the qualifying standards. As the programme of women's races expanded internationally, the opportunities for Kenyan women to become internationally successful runners increased proportionately.

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[93] A. Parker, 'All Roads Lead to Afraha Stadium', *Daily Nation*, 19 June 1981, p. 31.
[94] P. Moll, 'Munich Girls', *Daily Nation*, 11 August 1971, p. 5.
[95] P. Ndoo, 'Mike Boit Sets New School Mark in Rift Meet', *Daily Nation,* 23 July 1969, p. 18.
[96] R. Gachuhi, 'The Olympics: is it Doing Well or Winning Medals that Really Counts?' *Daily Nation*, 22 August 1984, p. 30.

There are also a few remarkable examples of 'athletic affirmative action'. In 1971, for the first time private sponsorship was provided to organise a meet for women only. In 1978, the KAAA decided to set up a women's only residential training camp in Nyahururu, a well-established centre for high altitude running.[97] An 'innovation' intended specifically to aid female student-athletes with their training during the school holidays, the camp was also the first opportunity for many to receive official coaching. Fourteen women, most previously named to a KAAA team, took part in the camp, consisting of an equal mix of runners and field event athletes.

However, selection for international races was still entirely dependent on a runner having first achieved the necessary qualification standard in official competition. Throughout the seventies and eighties, the organisation of track meets in Kenya relied on private sponsors such as Brooke Bond, British American Tobacco (BAT) and Coca-Cola. For example, in 1971, for Kenya's leading track officials, timekeepers and judges to attend all six BAT-sponsored athletics meetings, the chairman of BAT made a special grant of Ksh 5000 to KAAA president Bartonjo Rotich to cover travelling expenses and their accommodation. This came on top of Ksh 42,000 that the company had already put towards the costs of organising meets around the country that year. In his speech, chairman Gecaga said:

> These meetings, the first of which is scheduled for 1 May in Kisumu, will be widely spread throughout the Republic to enable as many enthusiasts as possible to see their favourite internationals in action. It is our hope that these meetings will encourage the young aspirant athlete to come forward firstly to obtain training and competition which are so vital to the development of new athletes and secondly, to enable the KAAA to discover areas where potential talent exists.[98]

[97] Nation Sports Reporter, 'KAAA Names Team for Residential Training', *Daily Nation*, 5 April 1978, p. 38.
[98] Nation Sports Reporter, 'Track Pay-off with BAT Cash', *Daily Nation*, 2 April 1971, p. 47.

His words show unmistakable commitment to developing athletics in Kenya and lack the explicit focus on the exclusive development of men's sport that had characterised discourses around athletics during the colonial period. Moreover, such support at the national level was essential because regular, well-funded competitions were fundamental to Kenyan athletes' success. Aspiring athletes, both male and female, depended on these meets to develop and improve their racing abilities and to record qualifying times.

Athletes who travelled to these major domestic events had their expenses covered by the meet's sponsor and the KAAA with varying levels of reimbursement. One report from 1978 asked all KAAA athletes to compete at a meet held in Nyeri's Ruringu Stadium. The athletes were to be given free accommodation at the Wambugu Farmers Training Centre and provided that they took the cheapest public transportation, they were to be refunded their transportation money.[99] Later that year, all 'promising athletes' in Kenya who took part in the All-Africa and Commonwealth Games trials held in Mombasa were to have travel costs subsidised and free accommodation provided at the Kanamai Sports Centre.[100]

There were times when preparations did not always proceed as planned. At a meet in Bungoma, the athletes complained of 'little food and lack of accommodation'. The situation was such that some athletes chose to sleep in the recently purchased KAAA bus. In an impressive display of resilience, after getting only four hours of sleep in the bus, John Kirimiti, Richard Juma and Christopher Kipkurgat ran one of

[99] Nation Sports Reporter, 'All Set for Nyeri Meeting', *Daily Nation*, 15 March 1978, p. 30.
[100] A. Ochieng', 'Room for All in Pre-Games Trials', *Daily Nation*, 14 June 1978, p. 30.

the best marathon races at that time in Kenya. Kirimiti won in 2:18, the fourth fastest time ever by a Kenyan, with Juma second in 2:22 and Kipkurgat third in 2:23.[101]

The KAAA also often did too little in terms of holding competitions, arguably its most basic function. This was of the utmost importance because as one official document noted:

> Kenya Amateur Athletic Association organised competitions sometimes are the only challenge for the many talented young Kenyan runners who cannot make their way overseas. However, a financial problem for the Athletic Association is the registration of the many talents. Unfortunately, these young talents can't be offered a specific competition programme to a sufficient extent.[102]

Athletics expert Bruce Tulloh was more critical, stating, 'To speak bluntly, Kenya [AAA] has derived an immense amount of prestige in the world from the performances of a handful of runners, but has done nothing for the sport in return'.[103]

Tulloh cited one seven-month stretch of time from the pre-African Games selection meet in early December 1972 to the Brooke Bond-sponsored meet on 26 May 1973 in which not a single track meet took place, despite salaried KAAA executive officers and Sports Officers stationed in every province. Without regular opportunities to race, aspiring athletes could not gain the race experience necessary to obtain international-level qualifying times, nor the feel of competition.

The *Sunday Nation* discussed the importance of improving the calibre of domestic competition, advancing the notion that the 'main problem facing talented African athletes was a lack of top-flight competition'.[104] It reported that although 'courage and determination have always spurred our African athletes to reach the

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[101] Nation Sports Reporter, 'Two Records Fall as 10 Qualify for Club Games', *Daily Nation*, 10 April 1978, p. 18.
[102] W. Abmayr, *Track & Field Best Performances: Kenya 1982* (Nairobi, 1983), p. 3
[103] B. Tulloh, 'Second to None in Natural Ability…', *Daily Nation*, 14 June 1973, p. 22.
[104] ____, 'Courage not Competition', *Sunday Nation*, 24 August 1969, p. 43.

top…they really have to struggle against the more experienced and established world-class runners'.[105] European and American athletes were seen as having the chance to compete routinely against their 'opposite numbers on other continents' while the only chance for Kenyan athletes to face international competition came at the Commonwealth Games and the Olympics.

Another limiting factor was the dearth of tracks with surfaces conducive to running fast. The first all-weather track was not built until 1983, and before then, all races were conducted on grass or dirt. In Iten, a stadium with a dirt track was built in 1959, opened for the first time on the occasion of a royal visit in February of that year, and remains in heavy use today.[106] For athletes based in Kenya, these unreliable track surfaces posed a significant challenge to recording the qualifying times necessary for racing in international meets or to garner the attention of US college recruiters. For instance, at a meet in Kisii in October of 1973 one reporter observed, the 'indifferent track and poor facilities put paid to the expectations' of athletes seeking the Commonwealth Games qualifying marks.[107] Nearly all the athletes competing that day blamed the meagre performances on the rain that had resulted in a heavy grass track.

To US Sports Affairs officer for Africa, Mal Whitfield, commenting after attending the Kenya Colleges and Schools Athletics Championships at Kakamega's Bukhungu Stadium, 'Kenyans have a better natural ability. But they just may not have the necessary facilities to enable them to get the best out of their talent. There are some things that one may not be able to achieve if devoid of facilities'.[108]

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[105] ____, 'Courage not Competition', *Sunday Nation*, 24 August 1969, p. 43.
[106] KNA/DC/ELG/1/7, '1959 Annual Report Elgeyo-Marakwet'.
[107] J. Okuthe, 'Kisii Meeting a Disappointment', *Daily Nation*, 8 October 1973, p. 22.
[108] J. Pewa, 'Soccer Fans Turn out to Give Athletes Morale', *Daily Nation,* 3 August 1985, p. 21.

The 1980 Kenyan National Championships, also held at Bukhungu Stadium, offered further proof of the deleterious effect that a poor track surface could wreak on runners' times. Kenya's best athletes had converged on Kakamega in front of a capacity crowd for the Championships, yet by the end of the first day, 'only two Kenyan records had fallen'. As the *Daily Nation* described, 'this gives a misleading impression of the performances put up by the athletes. They did enough to deserve more'.[109] A heavy downpour halfway through the day, after the two records were set, had loosened the surface of the track.[110] As the newspapers reported, 'No athlete knew better of the cruelty of the slippery murram than those who used lane one of the track. It had soaked enough water from the grass of the field to give its user a substantial handicap against other competitors'.[111]

Hardships particular to Kenyan athletics, from the absence of tracks with a consistently reliable surface to long stretches of time without officially sponsored meets, adversely affected all runners who were based in the country. However, as a group, women were more negatively impacted than men. This was because top Kenyan men could access many more opportunities to race abroad. After 1973, universities in the United States provided men access to coaching, training and regular opportunities to record fast times that women and other men who remained in Kenya did not share. As one reporter noted:

> Nowhere will the contest be hotter than in the women's programme. Our track Cinderellas have had all too few opportunities of overseas competition – and are determined not to miss out this time in making the grade for Munich.[112]

[109] R. Gachugi, 'Athletes Thrill Capacity Crowd', *Daily Nation*, 24 May 1980, p. 20.
[110] Both of the new records had been achieved before the rain.
[111] Gachugi, 'Athletes Thrill'.
[112] P. Moll, 'Munich Girls', *Daily Nation*, 11 August 1971.

Women primarily had to rely on domestic track events to attain the qualifying times to enter the international scene. These local track meets were not the optimal environment for fast times because they were contested on highly variable surfaces – if they were held at all. These barriers to achieving fast times intensified the difficulty of qualifying for international championships-- a vicious cycle, particularly for women.

Conclusion

Both cultural and economic factors undoubtedly influenced how international women's sport developed. Many people believed that following World War II the roles of men and women were becoming blurred. They were made aware of the potential of women from their work done outside the home on behalf of the war effort. But after the war the populace was encouraged to return to pre-war lifestyles and the decade of the 1950s was characterised by a resurgence of female domesticity. Sport remained a forum wherein male physical superiority was on display. Fears that sport would cause masculinisation of female participants, and possible damage to their reproductive capacity.

By the Rome Olympics of 1960, standards within women's athletics had improved significantly. It was openly declared by many that an elite woman athlete could compete ably at any distance. From that time, women's athletics began to emerge from the 'wilderness', assisted by top-down legislation like Title IX as well as by the efforts of individual female athletes like Katherine Switzer, the first woman officially to complete the Boston Marathon.

In Kenya, national championships were gradually reaching parity between men and women in the wake of changes at the international level during the first decades after independence in 1963. The inclusion of a full programme of women's races at major international events and policy changes through Title IX that included athletics as a component of gender equality in American education also helped to build incentives and increase opportunities in sports.

However, applying the full men's international athletics programme to women was still a slow and incremental process. Track scholarships for women were also not fully in place until the enforcement of Title IX in the late 1970s and early 1980s. While women were forced to wait, Kenyan men took full advantage of the range of races and scholarship opportunities in the United States.

The inclusion of longer distances at women's races at major international events promoted the emergence of Kenyan female runners. National institutions in Kenya were also becoming more receptive to women's participation by providing equal race opportunities to women during this period. The next chapter examines the factors that contributed to a dominant version of femininity in which sport after marriage was curtailed.

Chapter Six: Blockades for Women, Benchmarks for Men

'When one considers the women's events, one finds promise rather than achievement, but there has been remarkable progress…However, I hesitate to prophesy too much, for the Kenyan record in bringing on their female athletes has so far not been outstanding'.[1]

- Kenyan Athletics Coach, European 5000 Metre Champion, Bruce Tulloh, 1975

Introduction

Three weeks before the 1972 Kenyan Olympic Trials at a major track meet held in Nairobi's Jamhuri Park, the women's 400 metres had to be cancelled since 'no competitors came forward'.[2] In contrast, the men's 400 metres that day necessitated two heats: an 'A' heat for the fastest men and a 'B' for those remaining. The *Daily Nation*'s sports reporter questioned, 'Why was Tecla Chemabwai, Kenya's Munich qualifier in this event, in the stadium yet not competing, and Ester Makayo who lives in Nairobi just not there?'[3]

The race cancellation and the reporter's awareness of the names and locations of two potential entrants give an indication of how limited the pool of female Kenyan athletes remained by the early seventies. The same reporter also wondered, 'The other two track events for women went predictably - when are we going to see some fresh talent at these meetings?'[4]

The reporter's questions had substance, given the paucity of Kenyan women competing at this time relative to men. From Kenya's independence in 1963 to the

[1] Quoted in R. Pickering, *Birds Eye Athletics Year Book 1975* (London, 1975), p. 188.
[2] Nation Sports Reporter, 'Fabulous Maiyo Steals Jamhuri Park Limelight from Elizabeth Chelimo', *Daily Nation*, 12 June 1972, p. 22.
[3] Nation Sports Reporter, 'Fabulous Maiyo'.
[4] Ibid.

Los Angeles Olympics in 1984, ten Kenyan women, in total, competed in the four Olympics to which Kenya sent a team, compared with seventy-three men. Kenya's men steadily increased their numbers at the international level of athletics while Kenyan women remained locked in a twenty year pattern of relative underperformance. They had indeed made 'remarkable progress' entering a context in which masculinity had been consciously promoted throughout the decades of colonialism. But their numbers were few at the start and did not appreciably increase as the men's continued to do.

This chapter is the second in this thesis to question why, from independence until the professionalisation of athletics, women's running in Kenya persisted as a 'fragile project' with vastly fewer women than men. The previous chapter analysed what was happening at the international and national levels of the sport. Focusing on local communities in the Rift Valley, this one looks at what prevented 'fresh talent' among Kenyan women from appearing.

While Kenyan men were literally 'putting Kenya on the map', Kenyan women were confronting a host of 'blockades'. An ensemble of Kenyan girls ran extraordinary times while in primary school yet were unable to emerge as successful senior runners. Girls faced a set of staid and seemingly intractable cultural views about gender roles, and expectations of gendered differences in sport and elsewhere confronted them. These persisted throughout the first two decades after independence and were the single largest determinant of the gender gap in athletics during that period.

As had been the case during the colonial period, most women were unable to deviate from widely held expectations about femininity that did not condone athletic involvement after marriage. Girls were also held back by early pregnancy and fewer

educational opportunities than boys. The hostility to wives' running and simultaneous admiration of girls' and men's running arose from the continuity of historical gender expectations from the colonial to the post-colonial period.

A Fragile Project: 1964 – 1984

In Kericho at the first major meet of the 1973 track season, 'Tecla Chemabwai won against no competition in the long jump'.[5] Later that year at the Kenyan trials, the last chance for an athlete to achieve qualification for the Christchurch Commonwealth Games, the highlight was 13-year-old Rose Tata's qualifying time of 2 minutes 10 seconds in the 800 metres. It was 'all the more impressive for there were only two competitors in this race'.[6] Rose's excellent time and Tecla's victory stand out amidst the low level of female participation at these events.

The Kenyan media was well aware of how few women were participating in the sport. As Tecla and Rose were pursuing their goals, they did so in the presence of discourse preoccupied with assessing why Kenya's female athletes were not 'keeping pace' with the men. One of the more striking descriptions of this theme appeared in 1972:

> The paucity of women's athletic talent in Kenya will be as revealing as a mini-skirt at this weekend's national championships in Mombasa - where Rift, Central and Nairobi will vie for the team honours.[7]

The lack of participation in general, and particularly that of international-calibre female talent emerging onto the world stage from 1964 to 1984, highlights the tenuous nature of Kenyan women's athletics during those formative years.

[5] J. Okuthe, 'Top Performances at Kericho Meet', *Daily Nation*, 28 May 1973, p. 21.
[6] J. Okuthe, 'Kenya Name 30 for Christchurch', *Daily Nation*, 10 December 1973, p. 22.
[7] P. Moll, 'Adala - Running Back to Happiness', *Daily Nation*, 22 June 1972, p. 23.

The sentiment that the success of Kenyan women's athletics substantially trailed the men's was often repeated during the seventies. The *Daily Nation* ran an article under the headline 'Six More for Munich: Women Fail to Shine'.[8] During the KAAA Championships, Kenyan men had broken four national records and achieved six additional qualifying times for the Munich Olympics. The men's 800 metres was 'expectedly, another great race with an incredibly high class field going to the start', part of 'an afternoon of excitement that built up to a climax with Ben Jipcho winning the 3000 metres steeplechase in a fabulous Kenya best-ever time of 8 minutes 28.6 seconds'.[9] On the women's side the story was far different. As the *Daily Nation* opined, 'Again, the fact has been underlined that the women are going to require a great deal more attention over the next few years if their performances are to compare favourably with those of the men'.[10]

Reporting on a privately sponsored meet in Mombasa, another account lamented, 'the women's events will lack glamour with three top runners away in Australia'.[11] The only women's field event held that day was the discus, where 'Prisons glamour girl Lillian Cherotich' was thought likely to advance her throw from the previous season that had taken the Kenyan record to 116 feet 1 inch.[12] The absence of the women's shot-put and javelin throws, both of which were contested by the men, compounded by the women's events 'lacking glamour' because of the departure of three athletes, typify 'fragile' period.

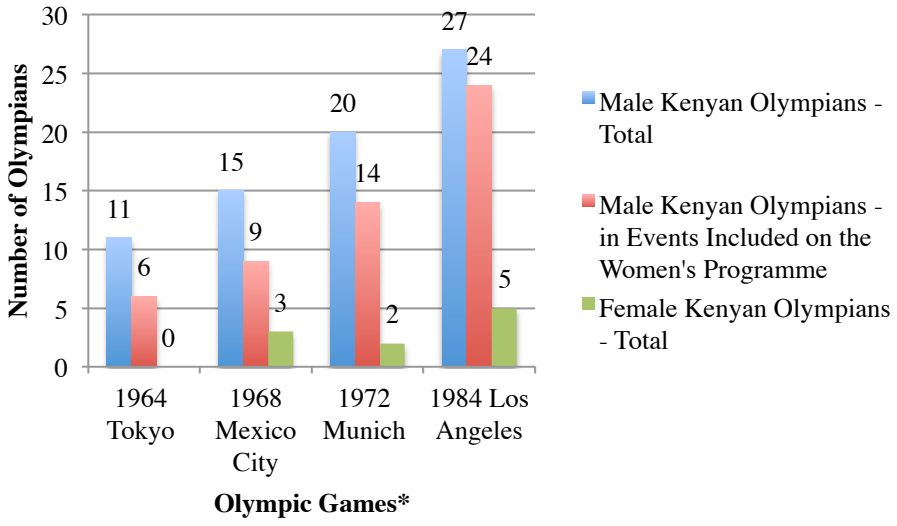
The fact that women were competing at all was progress. However, these accounts highlight the small fraction of Kenya's athletics that women's racing

[8] P. Moll, 'Six More for Munch: Women Fail to Shine', 26 June 1972, *Daily Nation*, p. 22.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.
[11] P. Moll, 'Hoping for a Better Meet', *Daily Nation*, 11 March 1972, p. 22.
[12] Ibid.

accounted for during this period. The breakdown by gender of Kenya's Olympic teams, outlined in the figure below, gauges the gap between men and women and how it changed over time. Kenya boycotted the 1976 and 1980 Games so only the teams from 1964, 1968, 1972 and 1984 are considered.[13]

A second constraint is that, as discussed in the previous chapter, 1968 was the first year in which women were allowed to race over the 800 metres and their progress in subsequent years was incremental. Comparing the number of male and female Kenyan Olympians directly thus does not accurately assess the situation as many Kenyan men competed at the Olympics over the longer distances from which women were barred. However, even when one excludes the events for which women could not qualify, a significant gap in Kenyan men's and women's participation remained. During these two decades, in total seventy-three Kenyan men competed in track events at the Olympics, compared with only ten women.

Figure 6.1 Kenya's Olympians in Athletics, 1964 - 1984



Source: Sports Reference Olympics, http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/.
*The 1976 and 1980 Olympic Games do not appear because Kenya boycotted them.

[13] In order to compete at the Olympics, athletes first had to achieve a certain performance standard during official competition. At most, three athletes could represent their nation in an individual event and only one team per nation was permitted for the relays.

At the 1964 Olympics, Kenyan men competed wholly in the absence of Kenyan women, continuing a tradition that had begun with their debut in 1956 during the colonial period. In 1968, for the first time, three young women from Kenya - Tecla Chemabwai, Lydia Stephens and Elizabeth Chesire - travelled to the Games held that year in Mexico City.[14] Of the fifteen men who joined them, nine were racing in events that were contested by both sexes. At the 1972 Games, fourteen men represented Kenya in races up to the 1500 metres, the longest distance over which women could compete, and in total, twenty men competed.[15] On the women's side in 1972, only two qualified to represent Kenya: Tecla Chemabwai, competing for her second time in the 400 metres, and Cherono Maiyo in the 800 and 1500 metres.[16]

By the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games, the 3000 metres and marathon were added to the women's programme. One female athlete represented Kenya in each of these events as well as in the 800 metres. Selina Chirchir competed in the latter, Justina Chepchirchir in the 1500 metres, Hellen Kimaiyo for the 3000 metres and Mary Wagaki in the marathon. Chirchir, Chepchirchir, and Kimaiyo did not advance to the finals and Wagaki finished 43rd in a time of 2 hours and 52 minutes. Ruth Waithera rounded out the contingent, competing in both the 200 metres and 400 metres.[17] Running what she called 'the race of my life', Waithera became the first Kenyan woman to compete in an Olympic final and set an African record time of

[14] P. Moll, 'Kenya Names 17 for Mexico - Kip Bids for Three Golds', *Daily Nation,* 2 September 1968, p. 19; Sports Reference, '1968 Olympic Games: Kenya' [Accessed 2 March 2014] http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KEN/summer/1968/ATH/.
[15] The 1500 metres is included because the 1972 Games were the first in which the event was held for women. Sports Reference, '1972 Olympic Games: Kenya' [Accessed 2 March 2014], http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KEN/summer/1972/ATH/.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Sports Reference, '1984 Olympic Games: Kenya' [Accessed 2 March 2014], http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/countries/KEN/summer/1984/ATH/, (last checked 2 March 2014).

51.54 seconds for 400 metres.[18] The Kenyan men, on the other hand, had three representatives in the 400 metres alone: David Kitur, John Anzarah and James Atuti.[19] The maximum number of men also entered several other events, such that 24 men represented Kenya in the events also available to women and 27 travelled in total.

Considering only the range of events in which both sexes could compete, the gap in the number of male and female Olympians widened throughout the period. While the number of female Olympians effectively remained constant, Kenya's Olympic representation among men increased steadily. This occurred in spite of the fact that at least one new event was added to the women's athletics programme for each of these Olympics, giving Kenyan women more opportunities to improve their numbers than the men. On top of this, while the women did not win any medals during this period, Kenyan men won a bronze medal in 1964, seven medals in 1968, four medals in 1972 and two more in 1984.

The long list of Kenyan male athletes with a world-class ranking from 1964 to 1984 illustrates depth in all the distances from 400 metres all the way to the marathon. It included notables like Henry Rono, who earned four world records in 84 days; Kip Keino, holder of a world record at one time and gold and silver medals from both the 1968 and the 1972 Olympics; Wilson Kiprugut Chumo, Kenya's first Olympic medal winner in 1964 who won another in 1968; Naftali Temu, Olympic gold and bronze medallist in 1968; Julius Sang, in 1972 placing third in the 400 metres and anchoring the gold medal winning 1600 metres relay, Paul Kipkoech, John Ngugi, Ibrahim Kipkemboi and Joseph Chesire were other talents of world class ranking. In contrast, most Kenyan women who were eligible for major championships were competing only to qualify for a final and did not return with medals. During this fragile period,

[18] G. Mjoroge, 'A True Heroine on Track and Off', *Daily Nation*, 21 March 1992, p. 16.
[19] Sports Reference, '1984 Olympic Games: Kenya'.

not a single Kenyan woman set a world record, won a world championship, brought home an Olympic medal or earned a top-ten rank in the world in a running or jumping event.

What motivated these pioneering women to compete? Before athletics became professionalised, the best women in Kenya chose to race on the basis of pride and the joy of participating in sport. Tecla Chembawai recalls how her keen interest in all sports, even as a young girl, primarily motivated her participation in athletics and led to her two appearances at the Olympic Games.

> I was a talented athlete. As a sports person, when I look back on my history, the way I know myself, I did almost everything in school. I was a netballer, I was a soccer player. I played with the boys, volleyball, and I was playing in the centre with men … This was at the beginning. So as I continued, I continued liking, loving running so much. I started running 100 meters, 200 metres, doing long jump, field events, everything except hurdles. So when I was running, I was running because I liked to run.[20]

Rose Tata-Muya, one of Kenya's most decorated female runners, competed in the same era as Chemabwai and she shared Chemabwai's intrinsic interest in sport. Tata-Muya explained that she, too, was motivated by the chance to travel, among many other reasons:

> My reason, it was just challenge. Competing with others. Interacting with others. Travelling all over the country, all over the world! You know? And I was very good in geography. So it was amazing. I like sports. And keeps yourself fit and keeps your life in order.[21]

Tata-Muya's outstanding twenty-five year career as an elite athlete took place before runners were permitted to receive prize money. Pride derived from representing the Kenyan nation was also significant. As Chemabwai describes, it was

[20] T. Chembawai, Interview, 12 Jan 2010.
[21] R. Tata-Muya, Interview, 19 March 2011.

important that 'you have a uniform with a Kenya patch, the medals'.[22] Olympian Ruth Waithera described her choice to run as being motivated by fame and 'to be protected'. In her words:

> [I ran] to change my life. To get the name, which means to be protected. Because if you have a name, it means you are protected. And people, they know you. And even your life, you are going to be happy.[23]

For Waithera, running would provide the means to gain a powerful patron within her community, which will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Seven. In possession of her own house and land, she could then enter into obligations of her own.

Intrinsic enjoyment of sport, the desire for fame and 'protection', the opportunity to represent Kenya and the chance to travel abroad were central motivations. But even before athletics became a lucrative career, there were also small material rewards for racing success. Chemabwai's vivid memory of the rewards she received in the 1960s indicates that receiving useful prizes left a strong impression:

> We used to be given so many presents. Cooking pots and knives. There were teabags. I'm talking about appreciation. You know like Coca Cola would bring so much drinks, many crates. I remember sugar, sugar factories. You would be given so many kilos of sugar. I got two crates of beer.[24]

Referring to her first races in the 1970s, Waithera recalls:

> So they give me the rubber shoes. Even, I didn't have the shoes. I was barefooted. So they gave me the bed-sheet, the towel, buckets. When I went abroad, they gave me allowances.[25]

[22] T. Chemabwai, Interview, 12 Jan 2010.
[23] R. Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

The difference in the scale of remuneration from cooking pots to million-dollar jackpots should not obscure the fact that runners, male and female, have from the start received material rewards for their success in athletics that encouraged their participation. The difference is that before the advent of professional sport, most women did not regard the opportunity to gain material benefits as the primary reason to devote their time and energy to running. Equally, earning a good living as a runner was not an option that could attenuate the escalating set of obstacles confronting young female athletes.

The paucity of successful female runners in this early period meant that young girls lacked role models and were less likely to perceive a future in athletics, which then led to fewer women running in competitions.[26] Yet this alone cannot fully explain men's and women's substantial and increasing differences in athletics achievements. The men also experienced an earlier period in which they were limited to only a handful of athletes capable of competing internationally.

When the Kenyan men's team made its debut in 1956 at the Melbourne Olympics, similar to the first appearance made by Kenyan women in the 1968 Olympics, only three male Kenyans represented the country: Nyandika Maiyoro in the 5000 metres, Arap Sum Kanuti in the marathon, and Joseph Leresae in the high jump. Maiyoro managed a respectable seventh place while Sum Kanuti settled for 31st in the marathon, second from last. Leresae finished in 18th position out of 27 jumpers. As one report notes, 'they did not fare well'.[27]

[26] Role models have been found to increase the participation of women in sport. See M. Meier and M. Saavedra, 'Esther Phiri and the Moutawakel Effect in Zambia: An Analysis of the Use of Female Role Models in Sport-for-development', *Sport in Society*, Vol. 12, No. 9 (Nov 2009), pp. 1158 - 1176.

[27] P. Njenga, 'Celebrating Kenya's Golden Years in Athletics', *Daily Nation*, 23 January 2003, p. 29.

Eight years later, Wilson Kiprugut Chumo became Kenya's first Olympic medallist at the 1964 Tokyo Games, winning a bronze in the 880 yards. He went on to win a gold medal in the 880 yards at the 1966 British Empire and Commonwealth Games as well as two golds in the 1965 All-Africa Games for the 800 and 400 metres. Twelve years after their first Olympic appearance, Kenyan men returned to the Games in 1968 and won seven medals: three gold, three silver and one bronze. 'Heroes were created and previously invincible international stars like American Jim Ryun were vanquished by the Kenyan running machine'.[28] In contrast, twelve years after Kenyan women made their Olympics debut, a Kenyan woman had yet to win a medal, and Ruth Waithera's 8th place finish in the 400 metres at the 1984 Games ranked as the women's best-ever result.

This relative underperformance was not because of any lack of talent on the women's side. In the two decades after independence, Kenya's junior girls consistently recorded world-class performances. Examples of Kenyan schoolgirls' short-lived athletic precociousness abound. Esther Koech ran 56.5 seconds for the 400 metres at age thirteen, Jennifer Wanjononi completed the 1500 metres in 4 minutes and 26 seconds when she was fourteen years old and Salina Chirchir was thirteen when she ran 2:11 and 58 seconds in the 800 metres and 400 metres, respectively.[29] None enjoyed the success at the senior level that was expected of them.

When the Kenya Colleges and Schools Sports Council first allowed schoolgirls to compete directly against senior athletes and women from the teacher training colleges, the victories were shared almost entirely between the secondary and

[28] Njenga, 'Celebrating Kenya's Golden Years', p. 29.
[29] M. Boit, 'Why do Kenyan Girls Drop Out?', *The Weekly Review*, 19 August 1988, p. 45.

primary schools.[30] Moreover, primary schools were not expected to field any athletes for the women's 3000 metres, judged a 'gruelling event'. Yet here, primary schoolgirls 'ran their [older] opposition to the ground'.[31]

Newspapers often praised young girls' excellent results. Reporting on the 1977 Kenyan National Championships:

> Until last weekend, Magdalene Wangare, Penina Talam, Wayua Kiteti and Sally Chemesude were just ordinary schoolgirls, undistinguishable from the more than half a million Kenyans who go to school barefooted each morning. But after their performances during the Kenya championships, they will now be heroines among their teammates, and their jog to school will be more meaningful as it will be part of their daily training and a promise for greater things to come.[32]

Fourteen-year-old Wangare and 13-year-old Kiteti had finished first and second, respectively, in the 1500 metres. Talam, aged sixteen, clocked an impressive time of 2:11 for the 800 metres and Chemesude, also sixteen, had lost only to established runner and future Olympian Ruth Waithera in the 200 metres.[33] These and other girls' performances, usually materialising on dirt tracks, barefoot and at altitude, were world class for their age group yet none of them went on to senior athletics. As the *Daily*

[30] The exception was former Kenya international hurdler, Millie Bulungu, who won the 100-meter hurdles. P. Ndoo, 'Memorable Climax', *Daily Nation*, 11 August 1979, p. 20.
[31] Ibid.
[32] P. Ndoo, 'Athletics Talent on Parade: Girls Steal the Limelight in the Kenya Athletics Championships', *Daily Nation*, 12 November 1977, p. 20.
[33] Penina Talam, a primary school student from Nandi, was the daughter of Kiptalem Keter, the first Kenyan man to break the 1:50 second mark in the half-mile. Talam first drew the attention in June of 1976 when she ran the 1500 metres in 4:20 at a primary schools meeting in Eldoret, then the best time of the season from any runner in the country for that event. Her 2:18 in the 800 metres, recorded on the same day, was arguably more impressive as newspaper reports described how this was achieved 'under strenuous conditions, including a blinding downpour during the race, strong wind and of course, a muddy track'. Like Talam, Chemesude also followed her father, Richard Magut, who once held Kenyan sprint records of 10 seconds for the 100 yards and 22 seconds for the 220 yards. P. Ndoo, 'Athletics Talent on Parade: Girls Steal the Limelight in the Kenya Athletics Championships', *Daily Nation*, 12 November 1977, p. 20.

Nation lamented, 'Kenya is littered with numerous women athletes who have shown great potential at the tender ages, only to fade away when they should be maturing'.[34]

Gendered facets of the sport at the international and national levels have been discussed. What separated Kenyan girls and women, and women and men, in the development of their running talent throughout the first decades of the post-colonial period?

One place to start is by looking at the provision of education, given the extent to which talented runners were identified and developed through the school and university system, which for boys has been considered 'very strong, very dynamic and very well supported'.[35] As described in the previous chapter, particularly during the 1970s and early 1980s, most of Kenya's best male runners attended American universities on full athletic scholarships. For this to happen, their education and athletic talent first had to be nurtured locally. Although by the seventies, girls and boys were entering Kenya's primary school in roughly equal numbers, the same cannot be said of secondary school and beyond. After providing a brief history of education in Kenya and the Rift Valley, the next sections explore what underpinned the gendered nature of access to secondary education and the significance it held for girls' athletic futures.

[34] Ndoo, 'Onyambu Survives the Fading Bug'.
[35] C. O'Connell, Interview, 15 Jan 2010.

A Brief History of Education in Kenya

Prior to independence, few resources had been allocated to educating African children.[36] More resources and facilities were devoted to the teaching of non-African children, who represented at most three per cent of the population, than were used to educate the remaining 97 per cent of Kenya's youth.[37] The prevailing thought was that Africans, Europeans and Indians each needed the type of schools that would prepare its members for their 'appropriate' role in society. Like the education system, the sports that were taught in school were divided along racial lines. White children could engage in cricket, lawn tennis and polo while 'native' children were encouraged to pursue football, athletics, field hockey, basketball and boxing.[38]

Educational opportunities were also unevenly distributed within Kenya according to geography. Missionary schools, intended as a tool for evangelising and central to the expansion of education in Kenya, tended to be located in areas near European settlement. Ethnic groups living closest to areas of European settlement, such as the Kikuyu of Central Province and neighbouring Embu and Meru, were thus most exposed to western education. In comparison, formal education opportunities were sparse for the Kalenjin communities from which most of Kenya's runners hail but yet more than what was provided to the Maasai, for instance.[39] In Nandi, during

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[36] Histories of education in Kenya can be found in J. Anderson, *The Struggle for the School: The Interaction of Missionary, Colonial Government and Nationalist Enterprise in the Development of Formal Education in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1970) and J. Sheffield, *Education in Kenya: An Historical Study* (New York, 1973). See also D. Sifuna, 'Increasing Access and Participation of Pastoralist Communities in Primary Education in Kenya', *Review of Education*, Vol. 51 (2005), pp. 499-516.

[37] G. Eshiwani, 'Implementing Educational Policies in Kenya', *World Bank Discussion Papers: Africa Technical Department Series* (Washington, DC, 1990), p. 2.

[38] KNA/DC/KSM/1/1/225, 'Course in Sports Organization', 2 April 1960.

[39] For an account of education among the Maasai during the colonial period, see: D. Hodgson, *Once Intrepid Warriors: Gender, Ethnicity, and the Cultural Politics of Maasai Development* (Bloomington, IN, 2001), particularly pp. 126-134.

the first twenty-five years of colonialism, the African Inland Mission (AIM) administered the only school.[40] One alumnus, arap Tarno, was instrumental in promoting the establishment of a Government Agricultural School (GAS) at Kapsabet in 1926.[41]

Divergent patterns prevalent in education were not only the result of top-down state-led expansion. Local peoples adapted to and resisted the British educational structure in varying degrees.[42] Broadly speaking, during the colonial period, Kalenjin communities viewed British education as economically unhelpful and were wary of the cultural distancing it fostered. One official report from the thirties declared the Nandi 'extremely uninterested in education'.[43] Many of the students who did attend school prioritised sport over academics. In 1944, one official report moaned, 'one looks forward to the day when the Nandi will put as much energy and determination into their school work as they now put into their sports'.[44]

The Kipsigis, according to a blistering official report from 1943, were 'an appallingly backward tribe imbued with a sense of suspicion which is out of all proportion to their intelligence'.[45] The disconcerted officer writing this acknowledged that while the administration had no desire to 'produce masses of semi-educated natives', it did wish to produce 'a requisite number of intellectuals' and for the remaining majority, 'good citizenship', based on teaching basic reading, writing and arithmetic, 'with some attention to land and animals'.[46] Yet the Kipsigis themselves

[40] D. Ellis, 'The Nandi Protest of 1923 in the Context of African Resistance to Colonial Rule in Kenya', *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 17, Is. 4 (October 1976), p. 563.
[41] Ibid, p. 562.
[42] For discussion of the ways in which western education in colonial Kenya was accepted, negotiated and resisted, see T. Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya: 1900-1950* (Oxford, 2005), esp. chapter 7 'Girls are Frogs: Girls, Missions and Education'.
[43] in R. Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change* (Stanford, 1985), p. 174.
[44] KNA/DC/NDI/1/4, 'Nandi Annual Report 1944'.
[45] KNA/DC/KER/1/12, 'Kericho Annual Report 1943'.
[46] Ibid.

were not as receptive to these ideals as he had hoped and according to this officer remained 'in the slough of cattle thieving and other backward sports'.[47]

But by the mid-1950s, a degree of change was underway in the Rift Valley. In Elgeyo-Marakwet (Keiyo and Marakwet), it was noted in 1954 that the African District Council was 'taking an interest in education, especially that of girls'.[48] It proposed to set aside land near Iten for a girls' boarding school that would eventually become athletics powerhouse Sing'ore. The curriculum was still gender-segregated, however. Boys were to be educated in the 'three Rs' and taught 'manual work' while girls were to be introduced to the 'domestic sciences'.[49]

By that time, similar advances were taking place among the Kipsigis. According to the Kipsigis District Education Officer in 1954, 'the desire for education amongst the women of the tribe is steadily increasing' and on account of this, construction of the first Government Girls' Intermediate School in the District had been undertaken, reaching completion in October that year.[50] Located just outside Kericho, the school included a tuition block, offices, dormitory, dining hall and modern kitchen built to serve 140 pupils. Housing was provided for a European principal, his assistant and two or three African teachers. The District Education Officer admitted that finding Kipsigis women who were qualified to teach was 'a difficult problem, in light of how the Kipsigis had only recently begun to educate their daughters'.[51] At that time, only one, Hannah arap Kosko, had completed her Form IV education.[52]

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[47] KNA/DC/KER/1/12, 'Kericho Annual Report 1943'.
[48] KNA/DC/ELG/1/6, 'Elgeyo Annual Report 1954'.
[49] Ibid.
[50] KNA/DC/KER/1/27 'Kericho Annual Report 1954'.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.

By 1954, the same year in which the Kenyan men's team made its international debut at the Empire Games in Vancouver and Operation Anvil would deplete Nairobi of its Kikuyu population, in Nandi, the GAS school had begun to accept female students, the AIM ran a girls' intermediate boarding school and a Roman Catholic Girls' Intermediate Boarding School had been added at Chepterit.[53] In a national study undertaken in 1969 regarding the education of girls aged twelve and above that was stratified by ethnic group, 'the Nandi compared conspicuously unfavourably with only the Kikuyu, Embu and Luhya'.[54] Nandi girls may not have been the best educated but they were also far from the worst off in Kenya. Moreover, they would have witnessed the considerable efforts to encourage athletics being made in their community and of the return of the Kalenjin athletes who had competed in Canada. The emergence of the first generation of female runners from Nandi, Keiyo and other Rift Valley communities can be attributed to more opportunities that were opening up for girls to access formal education starting in this period.

In the 1970s, considerable investments were being allocated to education and the system expanded dramatically. The government provided free primary education, new school buildings and a school-feeding programme.[55] The curriculum was revised to emphasise technical and vocational skills that were in high demand.[56] As had been the case during the colonial period, overseas missions continued to establish schools in Kenya in order to spread Christianity. These schools positively impacted the

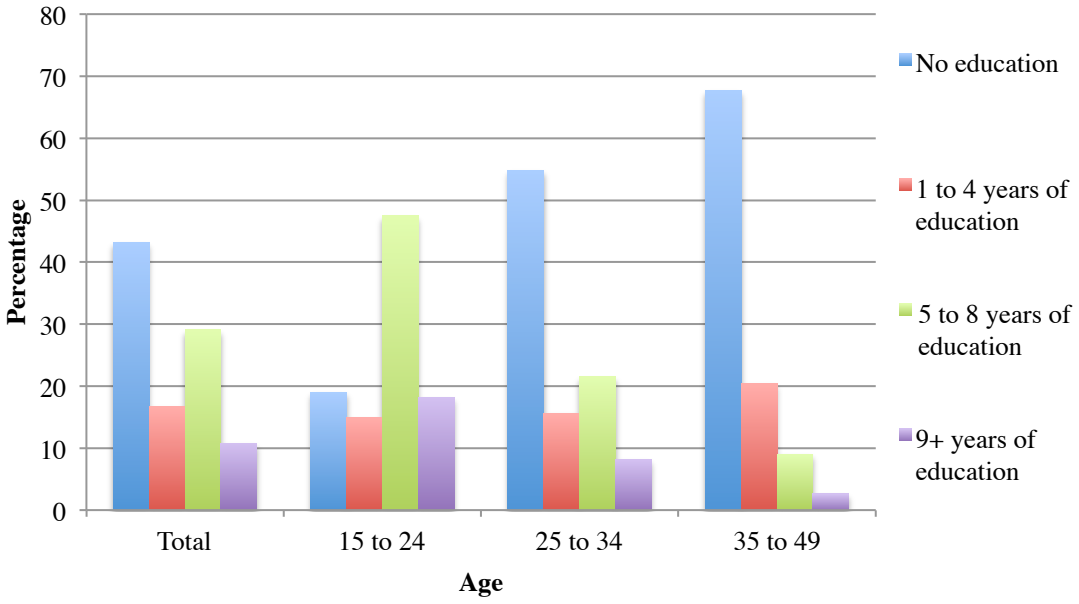
[53] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*, p. 175.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced in 1970s. In 1974, it covered children in Standards I to IV and in 1978, this was extended to Standards V to VII. See M. Nishimura, 'Emerging Private Education in Africa: Determinants of School Choice in Rural Kenya', *World Development*, Vol. 43 (March 2013), pp. 266-275. For a more critical perspective, see: M. Amutabi, 'Political Interference: Political Interference in the Running of Education in Post-independence Kenya: A Critical Retrospection', *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (March 2003), pp. 127-144.
[56] Eshiwani, 'Implementing Educational Policies', p. 16-19.

promotion of athletics, given European games-masters' general proclivity for encouraging their pupils in sport.[57]

The new policies widened access to primary school for both boys and girls during the first two decades after independence. In 1963, fewer than 900,000 Kenyan children had attended primary school, of whom 34 per cent were girls. Twenty-six years later, the gender disparity in primary school enrolment nationally had almost disappeared and some 4.8 million Kenyan children were enrolled.[58] In Rift Valley Province, girls by then accounted for 47.7 per cent of all schoolchildren matriculating at primary schools, with 90 per cent of the Province's children enrolled.[59] The figure below illustrates the tremendous expansion of educational opportunities available to women after independence, with uneducated Rift Valley women comprising 67 per cent of those aged 35 to 49 while only 19 per cent of women aged 15 to 24 had yet to receive any education.

[57] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 116.
[58] Eshiwani, 'Implementing Educational Policies', p. 22.
[59] World Bank, 'The Role of Women', p. 34.

Figure 6.2 Percent Distribution of Women of Aged 15-49 by Level of Education and Age for Rift Valley Province, 1984



Source: World Bank, 'Kenya: The Role of Women in Economic Development', *A World Bank Country Study* (Washington, D.C, 1989), p. 145.

The expansion of educational opportunities available to women matters for this history of athletics and gender because local schools in Kenya, like those in Britain, America and elsewhere, played a key role in identifying and developing boys' and girls' athletic talent. 'Many talented young runners find their way to the top in Kenya through the schools. At schools in Kenya, athletics has its nursery', according to one annual athletics report.[60] Another noted, 'the sources for finding talents are coming into existence by private initiative in some parts of the country, and foremost, school competitions'.[61]

Primary schools often provided a first taste of track or cross-country competitions along with some assistance for running. For Kipchoge Keino, 'school had awakened his interest in sports and while still a student, he and his companions

[60] W. Abmayr, *Track and Field Best Performances: Kenya 1987* (Nairobi, July 1988), p. 26.
[61] W. Abmayr, *Track and Field Best Performances: Kenya 1982* (Nairobi, July 1983), p. 23.

marked out a rude track on his father's land, on which they competed in such events as running, jumping, pole-vaulting and home-made javelin'.[62]

The daily commute consisting of running many miles between school and home each morning and afternoon built a strong endurance base for both boys and girls. World Cross-country Champion Lornah Kiplagat allegedly ran to class barefoot for 'six and a half kilometres there and as many kilometres back'.[63] According to a local news source, 'if frequent lunches at home are considered, then she often covered 25 kilometres a day'.[64] Kiplagat explains her rationale for running so many miles by stating that, 'in Kenya if you are late, the teacher will cane you. I was a bit lazy. I didn't see why I should wake up early and walk when I could run to school'.[65] Yet this 'endurance training' paid off and Kiplagat, who as a schoolgirl, once raced barefoot in the 3000 metres, 5000 metres and 10,000 metres in the same day.[66]

Above all, primary schools, secondary schools and training colleges afforded a framework of organised competition. Schools would become the obvious places to identify the next generation of talent and to promote both academic and athletic development. Olympian Catherine Ndereba represented her school in national competitions, which proved vital for her ability to secure a highly competitive job within one of Kenya's government institutions. Following her athletics success as a student-athlete, the Kenya Prisons recruited Catherine as a wardress, and after graduation, she entered the Kenya Prisons training college.[67] This was crucial to her becoming Kenya's greatest female marathoner of all time because like American

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[62] F. Noronha, *Kipchoge of Kenya* (Nakuru, 1970), p. 20.
[63] _____'Dutchwoman Kiplagat Seeks First New York Marathon', 5 Oct 2005, *Daily Nation*, p. 55.
[64] E. Makori, Elias, 'At Home in Iten and Holland', *Daily Nation*, 15 Aug 2004, p. 2.
[65] Makori, 'At Home in Iten and Holland', p. 2.
[66] _____'Dutchwoman Kiplagat Seeks First New York Marathon, 5 Oct 2005, *Daily Nation*, p. 55.
[67] J. Wokabi and M. Mutuota, 'Focus on Athletes - Catherine Ndereba', IAAF 'Focus on Athletes Project', 11 August 2008, http://www.iaaf.org/news/athletes/newsid=45812.html.

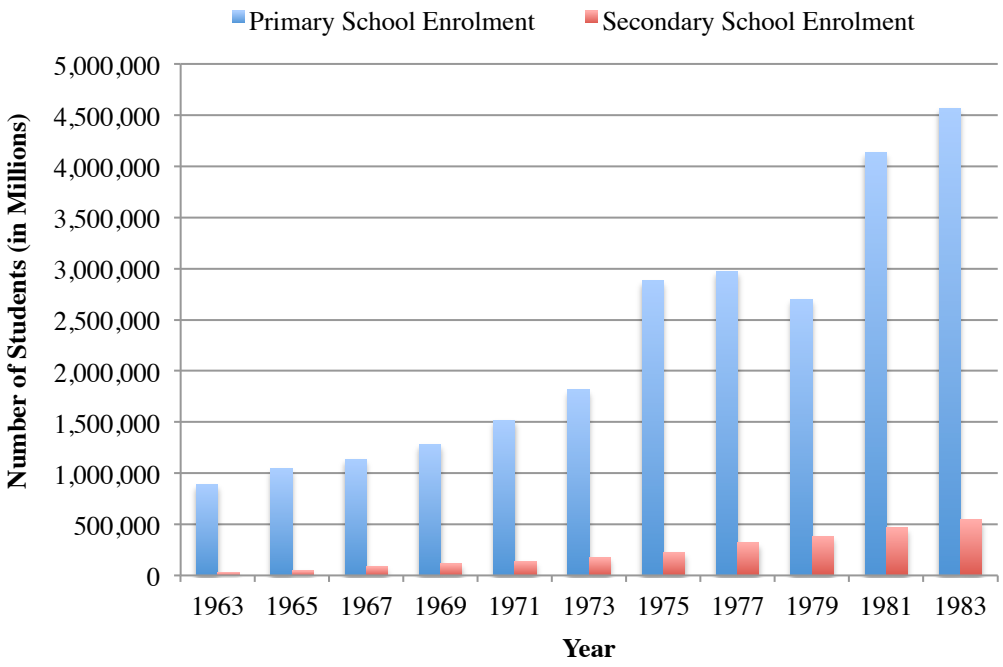
colleges, Kenya's institutions, the Armed Forces, the Post, the Prisons and the Police, sponsored elite athletes' training and in effect, provided a protected environment conducive to sport. Catherine would remain employed within the Prisons for the duration of her athletics career.

However, these are all cases of female runners who first excelled in primary and then completed the transition to secondary school. In this they are exceptional, as secondary school enrolment did not match that of primary school, which adversely affected the athletics futures of girls and boys alike. By the end of the 1980s, only in Central Province did at least half of the students who began primary school actually complete it.[68]

In the Rift Valley, percentages were lower still for both sexes; the proportion of enrolled children in 1986 who finished primary school were 37.6 for boys and 29.2 for girls.[69] The chart below, which Eshiwani compiled from the Kenyan Ministry of Education's Annual Reports, confirms that far fewer students were enrolling at the secondary level throughout this period.[70] The next section discusses the barriers and how economics and cultural norms intersected to impact running participation in school.

[68] World Bank, 'Kenya: The Role of Women', p. 35.
[69] Ibid., p. 37.
[70] The sharp increase in enrolment over a short period of time had put pressure on the education system, resulting in recruitment of untrained teachers and large class sizes.

Figure 6.3 Kenyan Students' Enrolment in Primary and Secondary Schools, 1963 to 1983



Source: G. Eshiwani, 'Implementing Educational Policies in Kenya', *World Bank Discussion Papers: Africa Technical Department Series* (Washington, DC, 1990), p. 21.

Blockades to Education

A major factor contributing to the drop-off in secondary school attendance for all students was its cost. After 1973, primary school tuition was free, though parents still had to provide their children with uniforms, books and other materials, as well as contribute to frequent school fundraising activities. Secondary school, however, was not. They were divided into two categories: 1) government-aided schools, generally of higher quality; and 2) assisted or unaided schools, which included *Harambee*, private and missionary schools.[71]

[71] *Harambee*, meaning pulling together or self-help, propelled development projects in Kenya, including the construction of schools. World Bank, 'Kenya: The Role of Women', p. 37.

Schools maintained by the government were less expensive but entry was competitive. Otherwise, tuition at the better schools, which were often boarding schools, could be very costly.[72] Girls were at a particular disadvantage as well. The World Bank evaluated girls' schools as generally less well equipped than boys' and a smaller proportion of girls gained entrance to the better government-aided schools. In 1985, only 35 per cent of students enrolled in these top schools were girls.[73]

A brief look at St. Patrick's, a government-aided boys' secondary school in Iten, and the co-educational Eldoret *Harambee* Secondary School, both located in the centre of Kenya's running 'nursery', exposes the divergence between the two types of secondary schools. It also provides insight into what confronted aspiring athletes and students from the local area. Four Catholic secondary boarding schools had been established in Keiyo-Marakwet District, of which three, St. Patrick's, Tambach, and Chebara, were for boys and one, Kapkenda, was for girls. Such boarding schools, as Bale and Sang suggest, offer an 'ideal situation for a favourable attitude towards sports' that cultivated an environment of 'Christian asceticism [and] boarding school ethos'.[74]

St. Patrick's was not originally a government-aided school but had converted into one by 1973. It remained associated with the Patrician brothers while the state assumed the role of fundamental financier. The Kenyan government, as opposed to the local community or families, appointed and paid schoolteachers at 700 Ksh per

[72] Annual school fees in 1989 were about KSh 6000 for boarding schools at the upper end and Ksh 4000 for lower cost ones. Maintained secondary day schools charged between Ksh 1700-3000. For assisted and unaided schools, fees could range between Ksh 1500 and 10,000. World Bank, 'Kenya: The Role of Women', p. 32.
[73] World Bank, 'Kenya: The Role of Women', p. 37.
[74] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 118.

month and was responsible for the school's development and maintenance. This assistance meant that fees to attend St. Patrick's could be kept low.[75]

The Eldoret *Harambee* Secondary School was officially opened in Uasin Gishu by future President Daniel arap Moi.[76] Its aim was to cater to children who were unable to gain entry into the Government sponsored schools. Forty-two students made up the first class: 33 boys and nine girls. Of these, twenty-four were Kikuyu, eight Luo, six Luhya, two Kisii and two Nandi.

The following year, the school population more than doubled, with ninety students enrolling. Students came come from Eldoret and the surrounding area, with a nearby shed rented to accommodate students from rural areas. School fees at this *Harambee* secondary were Ksh. 700, covering tuition and books. The American Catholic Relief Organization provided 'a glass of powdered milk every day' but otherwise students were also asked to supply their own food, uniforms and accommodation.[77]

Although the Kenyan government's investment in education had increased dramatically since independence, substantial differences in opportunities and scarcity of resources remained an issue for all students. Most parents relied upon contributions from a wide circle of family, neighbours and friends to meet the tuition costs.

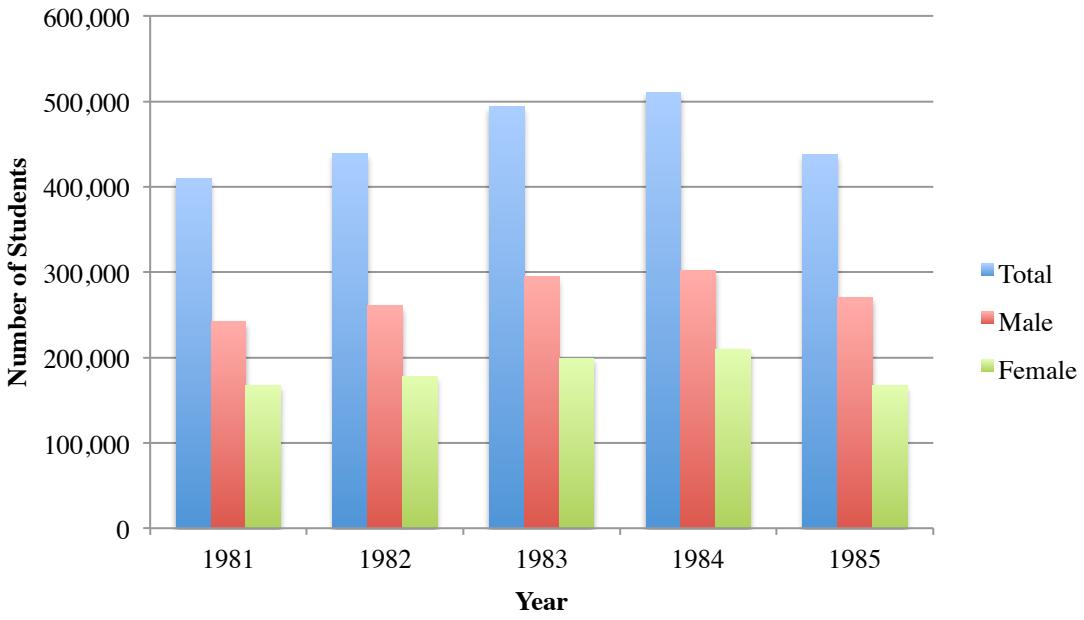
Dropping out of school not only denied young people the opportunity to learn and earn a degree but they lost the forum of athletic participation and for developing their talent as well. Since the majority of students did not continue their schooling

[75] C. O'Connell, *Like a Tree: Planted near a Stream* (Nairobi, 2008), p. 35.
[76] Ibid, p. 45. The official opening took place on 23 February 1967.
[77] Ibid, p. 48.

past the primary level, many boys and girls alike missed the means to develop their full potential as runners.

Boys, however, were more likely than girls to progress further with their education. The masculine bias that had characterised education under British administration continued during the post-colonial period. The chart below illustrates Kenyan students' secondary school enrolment, where the percentage of girls enrolled was lower than boys, hovering at around forty per cent by the early 1980s:

Figure 6.4 Kenyan Students' Secondary School Enrollment



Source: World Bank, 'Kenya: The Role of Women in Economic Development', *A World Bank Country Study* (Washington, D.C, 1989), p. 38.

The difference in boys' and girls' secondary enrolment can be partially attributed to the fewer number of secondary schools for girls. Secondary schools were generally not coeducational and a smaller number of girls' schools existed in the first decade after independence. By 1975, there were 235 secondary schools for boys but only 82 for girls and 47 that were coeducational.[78] Between 1975 and 1989, however,

[78] World Bank, 'Kenya: The Role of Women in Economic Development', *A World Bank Country Study* (Washington, D.C, 1989), p. 37.

more than 2000 secondary schools were built around the country, the majority of which were co-educational. This prodigious increase in the sheer number of schools by the end of this period meant that the gender gap in enrolment minimised.[79]

Physical space was not the only issue. According to Kanogo, during the colonial period, the most common reason for refusing to send girls to school was the fear that educated women would somehow take to prostitution.[80] That attitude changed to the extent that after independence, education for all was increasingly recognised and valued.

Yet throughout the seventies, Kenyan girls quit school prematurely because their families could not afford to pay for it. One survey of 600 primary school children found that the most common reason for a girl to drop out was the inability to pay fees.[81] Investment calculations could persuade a family or community to unequally support the education of their sons and daughters. Investment in a daughter's education was often viewed as a poor allocation of scarce family resources since 'inevitably' she would marry and transfer her earnings to her husband's family. Continued schooling (secondary and college) would delay marriage and consequently impede the transfer of bridewealth.[82] Not only would this impinge on the fathers of girls who upon their daughters' marriage became recipients of cattle, but younger sisters too had something to lose, since customarily a younger sister could not marry

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[79] World Bank, 'Kenya: The Role of Women', p. 32.
[80] Kanogo, *African Womanhood,* p. 209.
[81] B. Mensch et al, 'Premarital Sex, Schoolgirl Pregnancy, and School Quality in Rural Kenya', *Studies in Family Planning*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (December, 2001), p. 297. Only five per cent of the girls in the sample who had stopped attending school did so to support children. Another evaluation, undertaken in 1997, also reported that only five per cent of the girls surveyed left school because of pregnancy. See: P. Kimalu et al, 'Education Indicators in Kenya', *KIPPRA Working Paper No. 4* (May, 2001), p. 92.
[82] World Bank, 'Kenya: The Role of Women', p. 64. In this study, over half of the women aged 20 to 24 with nine years or more of education were unmarried while only ten per cent of those with one to four years of education remained unmarried.

until her older sister had done so.[83] Oboler's fieldwork in Nandi convinced her that, still during the late 1970s, 'education…is a path still far more available to men than to women'.[84]

Systematic discrimination against girls' secondary education had ramifications for the gendered development of athletics in the post-colonial period. If a runner left school prematurely, her sports ambitions were unlikely to flourish and certainly, any chance to pursue an athletic scholarship at an American university would close. Girls' earlier departure from education thus played a significant role in the gender gap in participation and level of athletic performance. The next section of this chapter looks at two more roadblocks girls confronted.

Thwarting Schoolgirls' Pursuit of Athletics

The strong connection that existed between school and sports development could occasionally break down and in those instances simply enrolling in and pursuing education did not automatically guarantee a more supportive environment for athletics development.

As a 12-year-old, Elizabeth Onyambu burst upon the Kenyan racing scene in 1979 at the National Championships held in Nairobi City Stadium, winning the 1500 metres in front of one of the biggest crowds ever to witness an athletics meeting in Kenya. According to one report, no one had heard of Elizabeth Onyambu, while the favourite to win was well-known Rose Thomson, who held the African record in the 3000 metres.[85] The *Daily Nation* narrated the race:

[83] For opposition to the education of girls, see Kanogo, *African Womanhood,* pp. 208-211.
[84] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change,* p. 175.
[85] P. Ndoo, 'Onyambu Survives the Fading Bug', *Daily Nation*, 15 June 1982, p. 29.

> Few noticed the skinny 12-year-old barefoot schoolgirl sprinting behind the powerful and determined Rose Thomson, who used her usual front-running style. After the first two laps, one began to notice something strange. The diminutive schoolgirl had stuck on the shoulder of Mrs. Thomson and she still looked fresh. In the third lap, the scene changed from that of anticipation to excitement. When the bell went for the final lap, everybody was on their feet, cheering the 'never heard of' underdog, for other than her coach, nobody else knew Onyambu's name. On the final stretch, Thompson gave everything she had, engaging the top gear in an effort to put off the little challenger. But Onyambu responded strongly, floating past the now struggling Thompson to win by a whisker. Her time 4:23 seconds was a personal best. The crowd went wild. So excited was everybody that few noticed Mike Boit winning the men's 1500 metres, which was originally billed as one of the feature events of the meeting.[86]

Elizabeth Onyambu was the celebrity of the season. In the following months her accomplishments featured regularly in the Kenyan press. During the first two weeks of September, she was among a team of Kenyan students selected to travel to the tenth World University Students' Games in Mexico City. She was not travelling as an official competitor because as a twelve-year-old, she was too young to race. Rather, she went as a spectator because the authorities provided an expenses paid trip in the hope that early exposure to the atmosphere of international competition would encourage her to further develop her running. One official summed up the expectations of many when he pronounced, 'This young girl is no doubt going to compete in the next Olympics'.[87]

Yet subsequent years saw Onyambu win only local competitions. Other girls of her age, Justina Chepchirchir, Helen Kimaiyo, Selina Chirchir and Joyce Odhiambo emerged ahead of her, the latter three claiming the coveted Kenya Sportswoman of the Year award and becoming Olympians at the 1984 Los Angeles Games.

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[86] Ndoo, 'Onyambu Survives', p. 29.
[87] Nation Sports Reporter, 'Kenya Squad to Mexico', *Daily Nation*, 24 August 1979, p. 34.

What happened to Onyambu? An athlete who runs 4:23 seconds for the 1500 metres on a dirt track at altitude as a 12-year-old has the talent to run internationally. Even without the benefit of international competitions, her best times were outstanding: 100 metres in 12.0 seconds; 200 metres in 24.8 seconds; 400 metres in 56.6 seconds; 800 metres in 2 minutes and 13 seconds; 1500 metres in 4 minutes and 18.9 seconds; and 3000 metres in 9 minutes and 21 seconds. She was the only Kenyan, man or woman, to have won both the shortest race (100 metres) and the longest (3000 metres) during schools national championships.[88]

Her failure to race at the senior level had everything to do with the secondary school at which she was educated. After completing her primary school in Kisii, Onyambu was admitted into the selective government-run Nairobi Moi Girls School. As one newspaper article stressed, this was 'no Sing'ore High, when it comes to athletics, or Lugulu or Mukumu Girls in volleyball'.[89] Sing'ore, the sister Catholic High School of St. Patrick's in Iten, was renowned for the achievements of its runners while the same was true for Lugulu's and Mukumu's volleyball record. At Moi Girls, however, sport was a clear second to academics.

During her five years at Moi, Onyambu continued to appear on the national scene only sporadically during the spring season of schools' competitions, which meant she ran between May and July. 'I do not train as hard as I used to', admitted Onyambu as a Fifth Form student at Moi Girls. The *Daily Nation* agreed, noting 'she looked a bit heavy during the Meru outing'. Onyambu's best time for 1500 metres while in secondary school in 1982 was 4:47 – a full 23 seconds slower than the time she had run while in primary school.[90]

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[88] Ndoo, 'Onyambu Survives', p. 29.
[89] Ibid.
[90] W. Abmayr, *Track and Field Best Performances: Kenya 1982* (Nairobi, 1983), p. 59.

Onyambu was not alone in deemphasising athletics when she graduated into an academic setting that did not glorify sport. 'Keiyo Wonder Girl' Rose Tata-Muya, who won a silver medal at the Commonwealth Games and enjoyed a twenty-five year career as an outstanding runner, disclosed:

> My sisters, they were runners but they went up to national schools. They were running up to Primary school and then they stopped. It depends on which secondary you go. Some schools, they are not very keen in [sic] running.[91]

The emphasis on sport within an educational setting could be as significant to a young runner's development as actually making the transition from primary to secondary school. If a runner went to a school that placed little value on sport, even those arriving with highly touted running talent could be discouraged. Sport was not yet a potential source of income so focusing on gaining academic skills from a reputable institution provided the greatest hope for upward social mobility. Running was a rival to academics in terms of time, a precious commodity for ambitious students.

To have the best chance to develop their athletic potential, runners not only needed to gain entrance to a secondary school but had to find one in which sport was encouraged, with time set aside each day for training, ideally under the supervision of a qualified coach. Attending a school that was 'not very keen in running' could end a running career as effectively as not enrolling at all.

Boys' schools were more conducive to encouraging sports than girls', which was highlighted by the fact that the first-ever secondary schools cross-country championships for girls in the Rift Valley Province, won emphatically by Sing'ore Girls' Secondary School, did not take place until 1972 while boys' championships

[91] R. Tata-Muya, Interview, 19 February 2011.

had been held prior to independence.[92] The school curriculum also reflected this, as it was divided between the sexes, with boys gaining greater exposure to sport.

In Nandi, Kapsabet's GAS played a significant role in the development of boys' athletics. During the colonial period, headmaster Arthur Selwood Walford had worked closely with African teachers and District Education Officers to establish a tradition of discovering and nurturing talented male runners in the area.[93] Carrying on the tradition, Brothers Simion and later Colm O'Connell at St. Patrick's High School in Iten developed the boys who enrolled in their school into champions.[94] No equivalent training-ground (nor trainers) could be found for the benefit of girls until Sing'ore emerged in the seventies.

In the mid-seventies Philip Ndoo, an international runner who travelled to the United States on an athletics scholarship, observed, 'It is to British track and field coaches that much of the credit for Kenya's success must go'.[95] According to one Kenyan Athletics annual report, 'credit must be given to the many school teachers who take their time to help young athletes'.[96] European expatriate coaches indeed continued to be a major force in this endeavour and most of them were male and based in all-boys schools.

Returning to the case of John Kipkemoi Ng'eno discussed in the previous chaper, before becoming one of the initial Kenyans recruited to an American university, his reputation as a runner had been established as a secondary school student in the Rift Valley. Enrolled at Kabianga High School in Nandi, in his final

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[92] ____, 'Singore in Rift Victory', *Daily Nation*,15 March 1972, p. 35.
[93] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running,* p. 83.
[94] For discussion of the impact of Alliance High School, and its Headmaster from 1940-62, Carey Francis, on the history of Kenyan Athletics, see Anderson, 'The Development of Athletics'.
[95] P. Ndoo, 'The Kenyan Success', in D. Prokop, *The African Running Revolution* (Mountain View CA, 1975), p. 55.
[96] Abmayr, *Track and Field Best Performances: Kenya 1987* (Nairobi, 1988), p. 26.

year, he won the inaugural edition of a competitive cross-country race organised by European expatriate coaches.[97] Had he not attended secondary school or if he had attended an institution unsupportive of running, it is extremely unlikely he would have developed into one of the world's fastest 10,000 metre runners while at Washington State University.

In addition to the cultural emphasis placed on sport in schools, girls were sometimes forced to leave school prematurely for reasons not shared by their male counterparts. Early in 1973, at a major Brooke Bond-sponsored meet in Kericho, primary schoolgirl Sabina Chebichi won her first-ever race running barefoot and wearing her school uniform. Dubbed the 'Petticoat Princess' for the skirt in which she raced, the 14-year-old from Mlimani Primary School near Kitali was awarded her first pair of spikes, shorts and vest after the race. Chebichi also won the May Guinness Stout Effort Award for her 1500 metres time. In place of the crate of Guinness, which was the traditional monthly award, she was presented with a tracksuit.[98]

Second oldest of a family of nine children, Chebichi had grown up in circumstances typical of many schoolchildren from the Rift Valley. Her home was a thatched hut some 25 miles from her primary school. During the school holidays, she 'help[ed] to weed crops at her father's farm and performed the usual household chores'.[99]

In her running achievements, Chebichi was anything but ordinary. As the season progressed, it was not just her victories that captured media attention; her wins were record-breaking. That year she recorded the fastest times on African soil for 800

[97] Bale and Sang, *Kenyan Running*, p. 117.
[98] Nation Sports Reporter, 'Guinness Award', *Daily Nation*, 10 July 1973, p. 27.
[99] Nation Sports Reporter, 'Kenya's Latest Track Wonder…Sabina', *Daily Nation,* 8 February 1974, p. 30.

metres and 1500 metres. She went on to win a bronze medal in the 800 metres at the 1974 Commonwealth Games in Christchurch, New Zealand, making her the first East African female to win a medal there.

The media touted her performances and had high expectations of her future distinction in international competition. One report suggested that 'if Sabina can continue training hard, there is no reason why she should not win a medal in the Olympic Games and become the first-ever woman from Africa to do so'.[100] Described as 'precocious' and dubbed 'Kenya's latest track wonder', she routinely defeated more experienced opponents.[101]

Yet two years later, Pekka Rinne, a well-known Finnish sports journalist, wrote in an editorial:

> Sabina Chebichi ran a world-class time in Christchurch in 1974. She could have broken the world record in both the 800m and 1500m events the following year. But where was she? She was pregnant. Another unwed mother. It is possible to have children at the age of 40 but one cannot set world records at this age. These girls need advice.[102]

Chebichi's story of high-level training and success in competition too soon giving way to pregnancy was not uncommon among young female runners. As a fifteen-year old, Cherono Maiyo set an African record in the 1500 metres in 1971 at the Kenyan National Championships before going on to represent Kenya at the 1972 Olympic Games.[103] As one article published that year pointed out:

> It is staggering to think of the potential of this young girl. More seasoned athletes turning in comparable times elsewhere in the world are hammering away at weights fartlek, parlaaf, cross-country and interval training under the watchful eyes of their coaches. Yet Maiyo, on her four-mile a day run to

[100] Nation Sports Reporter, 'Kenya's Latest Track Wonder…Sabina'.
[101] Ibid.
[102] P. Rinne, 'The Ills Plaguing Kenya Athletics', *Daily Nation*, 7 April 1976, p. 20.
[103] P. Ndoo, 'Two Break Africa 1500m Record', *Daily Nation*, 15 August 1971, p. 21.

> school, without any advice from a coach can casually catch a bus down to Nairobi and win two gruelling races within an hour'.[104]

But her full potential went unrealised when she did not complete school and chose instead to marry Olympic steeple-chaser Amos Biwott the following year. Not long after, Maiyo gave birth to the first of their five children.[105]

Many considered premarital sex and childbirth as the main reasons that girls left school early.[106] Research supports this, to the extent that studies from the early 1990s on the sexual behaviour of youth in Kenya indicated that it was becoming more common for girls to have sex and give birth prior to formal marriage.[107] Kenya's pioneer generation of female Olympians also contended that early pregnancy had pushed talented peers out of the sport. In an interview with the *Daily Nation* in 1992, Olympian Ruth Waithera blamed pregnancy for curtailing Kenya's female runners. 'Girls who start rising in athletics and are then interrupted by pregnancy never seem to recover'.[108]

Certainly, choices were limited for any girl who conceived a child while in school, whether or not she was an athlete. However, having a child does not inevitably signal the end of a woman's athletic career. Ingrid Christiansen, Mary Decker-Slaney, Trine Hattestade, Heike Henkel, Stefka Kostadinova, Paula Radcliffe, and Kenyan Olympian Catherine Ndereba are just a few examples of distinguished runners of different nationalities whose running career thrived after having children.

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[104] Nation Reporter, 'Fabulous Maiyo'.
[105] ____, 'Kenyan Steeplechase Pioneer Lives Life of Squalor', *Reuters*, 28 Feb 2004, p. 19.
[106] Mensch, 'Premarital Sex', p. 284.
[107] D. Meekers, 'The Process of Marriage in African Societies: A Multiple Indicator Approach', *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 18, Is. 1 (1992), pp. 61-78; K. Kiragu and L. Zabin, 'The Correlates of Premarital Sexual Activity Among School-age Adolescents in Kenya', *International Family Planning Perspectives*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (1993), pp. 84-97. For perceptions and use of contraceptive methods, see A. Ajayi, L. Marangu, J. Miller and J. Paxman, 'Adolescent Sexuality and Fertility in Kenya: A Survey of Knowledge, Perception and Practice', *Studies of Family Planning*, Vol. 22, Is. 4 (1991), pp. 205-216.
[108] Nation Sports Reporter, 'A True Heroine on Track and Off', *Daily Nation*, 21 March 1992, p. 15.

Tecla Chemabwai noted that the situation was compounded by other factors: namely, community expectations of women and unemployment. In Tecla's own words:

> You see, for all athletes, with the lack of education, you will never be able to plan…then women have one weakness. They get pregnant. So you get married and you don't have a job, when will you be able to train? That is one problem that women run into. There are so many of our former athletes who apparently can still run well who are still out there. And even if that man was an athlete and he has told you that he will make you run, it will not work because of the community. We are losing so many girls, athletes because of these problems.[109]

Even with a job, education or a supportive partner, if an aspiring runner was caring for a child, pursuit of other options, including athletics, was apt to cease.

Former athlete Vicky Okoth addressed this theme while speaking in Nairobi in 1989 at the first Women's Athletics seminar in Africa, which was designed to identify problems confronting female African athletes. She cited early pregnancy as one factor leading to women's premature retirement from running. Okoth added that women athletes should not neglect their education even in the event that they establish themselves on the track. 'Past women athletes', said Okoth, referring to women like Chemabwai and Waithera (discussed in the next chapter), 'took athletics and education as parallel issues'.[110]

This oft repeated link between school and sport is further evidence of how deeply the two were intertwined in the development of Kenya's runners. Pregnancy could result in curtailed training and discontinued education, though it was not the only factor affecting boys and girls' school enrolment. The value placed on sport in girls' schools and the scarcity of role models were also part of the problem. However

[109] T. Chemabwai, Interview, 20 January 2010.
[110] _____, 'Looking at Women's Problems', *The Weekly Review*, 29 May 1987, p. 71.

these factors only partly explains the disparity between the genders. The last section of this chapter explores the predominant limitation on women's running in Kenya.

'Marriage is Essentially Inegalitarian'

In an editorial published in 1988 in *The Weekly Standard*, Olympian Mike Boit blamed the paucity of female athletes on the fact that 'society expects women to be homemakers', pointing out that, 'child bearing, cooking, cleaning and washing are exclusively the responsibilities of women, and in the rural area, this is accomplished without running tap water'.[111] Such work traditionally performed by women had remained a common arrangement within families. Little had changed since the end of the colonial period in terms of what constituted 'women's work'.

The contribution of women and children to Kalenjin homesteads and farms after independence has been well documented in anthropological studies, notably those conducted by Oboler of the Nandi, Moore of the Marakwet, Roberts of the Keiyo and Dietz of the Pokot.[112] Oboler in the late 1970s found that among women, domestic labour accounted for a larger proportion of time than any single activity yet they had less control over the product of their work.[113] Moreover, housework and child care were definitely '*not*' the province of adult men (italics hers); only 1.3 per cent of men's time was spent in this way.[114] Henrietta Moore, who lived among the

[111] Boit, 'Kenyan Girls Drop Out?', p. 45.
[112] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*, pp. 191-236; H. Moore, *Space, Text and Gender: An Anthropological Study of the Marakwet of Kenya* (Cambridge, 1985); B. Roberts, 'Livestock Production, Age and Gender Among the Keiyo of Kenya', *Human Ecology*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (1996), pp. 215-230; T. Dietz, A. Nunow, A. Roba and F. Zaal, 'Conceptualising Economic Change in Pastoral Societies under Pressure', Paper for the Drylands Conference in Narok, organised by Moi University School of Environmental Studies and AGIDS University of Amsterdam, August 18-20, 2003 and with S. Chebet, *Climbing the Cliff*: *A History of the Keiyo* (Nairobi, 2000).
[113] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*, p. 235.
[114] Ibid, p. 210.

Marakwet in the early 1980s, provided the first major ethnography of the Marakwet and revealed a distinct division between men and women yet persisting at that time.

The World Bank, in a 1989 study on rural women in Kenya, ascertained that 75 per cent of the country's agricultural production derived from small farms and that women provided up to three-fourths of that labour.[115] Such work undoubtedly takes significant time and energy, and the study estimated that young women living in the rural areas spent at least twelve hours per day working at home or in the fields.[116]

Oboler observed that 'there is no doubt that Nandi marriage is essentially inegalitarian'.[117] The bride moved from her birth home to the homestead of her in-laws and a woman's early years of marriage were physically demanding.[118] She was expected to gain her husband's permission to travel far from home or to leave for an extended period of time. The husband ultimately controlled the family property, a function that had been consolidated during colonialism.

Although as noted with respect to the writing of the early anthropologists, these gendered codes of behaviour would have concealed a range of contingent outcomes, twenty years on, men's and women's roles were still discretely differentiated as they had been during colonialism, with women dependent on men for agricultural land and responsible for raising both their children and crops grown on that land. This body of evidence suggests that as Kenya emerged as a sovereign nation, Kalenjin society continued to accommodate a marked division of labour by gender.

[115] World Bank, 'Kenya: The Role of Women', p. xiv.
[116] Ibid, p. xiii.
[117] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*, p. 98.
[118] Ibid, p. 197.

These differentiated gender norms and expectations extended to athletics, where they were made strikingly apparent. Running was an activity acceptable for girls but not married women. In the words of Tecla Chemabwai:

> That is one problem that women run into. When I was a small girl and running, that was OK; but after you are married, it is different. There are so many of our former athletes who apparently can still run well who are still out there. The moment they get married and they don't have a job, they don't have the education, they drop out [of sport]. They didn't finish. Ask a married woman where are you going to train if you are anywhere and you are not working. Where? In the countryside? Somebody's wife? What is going to happen?[119]

Running by wives disrupted the social construction of gender and the norms of masculinity and femininity that existed in this part of the Rift Valley. If women were to race like men, they would need to train like men, travel and at times, leave behind their children. Yet many men of the 1970s and 1980s categorically refused to participate in childcare, on the grounds that it was beneath the 'dignity of a man'.[120] Ideas and patterns of gender had continued as that a man still stood to lose 'social status' if he were to cook for himself, care for young children or engage in other aspects of 'women's work'. On this dimension alone, the concept of adult women as runners provoked significant resistance.

While successful female athletes received public admiration in the Kenyan press, in the privacy of the home it was a fraught issue which engendered consternation, debate and an altogether different dialogue from that in the national papers. According to Chembawai:

> Also, there is influence from the man's side. How can you let your wife go? You have a small baby and then suddenly you are leaving the baby and you are running in the morning. The same husband who understood about training

[119] T. Chemabwai, Interview, 20 January 2010.
[120] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*, p. 199.

> will turn around and say, "Where are you? Where are you coming from? Where are you going at this time? Why are you leaving? Maybe you had gone to see another man". Those kinds of accusations. So it becomes a bit difficult.[121]

A wife who left the *shamba* to train could cause her husband intolerable public embarrassment. Reconfiguring longstanding gender roles and expectations about running, not only between husband and wife but also within the community as a whole, would be required for a woman with children to be allowed to leave her home to run. Women, then, remained integrally involved with the production of Kalenjin masculinities.

Rather than challenge powerfully embedded and long-held social norms, when a woman reached marriageable age, she was far more likely to find a husband and then stop competing in the sport. This point is made in an article from the *Weekly Review*:

> To an African woman, marriage spells an end to a sporting career as few husbands have the tolerance to allow their wives to continue with sports. Yet to prepare an athlete to achieve his or her highest potential is a long-term project which requires years of participation after high school. Most Kenyan girls get married soon after high school…most will follow the way of early pregnancy, marriage and an end to athletics.[122]

Similar descriptions in the Kenyan press can be showed to prove that a relationship with an unsupportive partner was inimical to a woman's running career. *The Standard* reported that:

> Women athletes interviewed here state that demoralization in their performance as they approach maturity comes from their boyfriends. Some

[121] Chemabwai, Interview, 20 January 2010.
[122] Boit, 'Kenyan Girls Drop Out?', p. 45.

> say that [being with] a man who has little or no interest in the sport is the biggest hardship in a track career.[123]

A partner's disapproval significantly hindered a woman's athletic development. In a different article, *The Standard* noted that 'some athletes said boyfriends ruin a career' and quoted a sprinter:

> When you love a man with no interest to the sport, you end up declining. The man will tell you to choose between him and the sports. Of course I will choose him.[124]

A Kalenjin woman's status was secured through her progression into marriage and motherhood and the social pressures to 'choose him' were thus immense, with continuities stretching back to before the arrival of British colonials and prior to the introduction of modern athletics.

Rose Chepyator-Thomson's story illustrates what could happen when the boundaries of gender roles were challenged. She was raised near the village of Iten in Keiyo and held Kenyan records in the 800 and 1500 metres. In 1974, Chepyator-Thomson retired from the sport at age twenty, as would have been expected, to marry and have children. Her case was exceptional, however, in that she chose to marry an American, Peace Corps worker Norman Thomson. Three years later, she returned to the sport and set an African record for 3000 metres. With sprinter Alice Adala, Rose was one of the first two married women to represent Kenya internationally.

This was met with public outrage and she was pilloried by some members of the Kenyan press. 'Running is for children, not for married women with children', declared one major daily in 1977. 'She should have retired the day she got her wedding ring. And she should now devote her time to looking after her children, not

[123] C. Kariuki, 'Veteran American Coach Tells it All', *East African Standard*, 22 April 1989, p. 12.
[124] C. Kariuki, 'Women Athletes', *East African Standard*, 29 April 1989, p. 13.

running'.[125] Such statements would have been unimaginable if made in reference to a male athlete about his choices. At the same time, long-held social norms rendered nil any chance for a man to devote himself to domestic responsibilities.

Chepyator-Thomson was undeterred. She enrolled at the University of Wisconsin, where she became an 11-time All-American who 'could run well at any distance from 800 metres through cross-country'.[126] She ultimately made the Kenyan Olympic team in two events in 1980, only to be denied the chance to race when Kenya, like the United States, boycotted the Moscow Games. In the ensuing years, she earned two master's degrees and a PhD from American institutions.

Renowned coach Brother Colm O'Connell, based in Kenya since the mid-1970s, also recalled hearing about a track meet that shed light on the challenges confronting married women who sought to race. The meet was held at Kamariny Stadium near Iten in the early 1970s. An official supposedly went to the line before one of the women's races, asking each entrant if she were married. When one responded affirmatively, she was disqualified and told to return home to her husband. 'This race is for girls, not women', she was told.[127]

O'Connell admitted that he was not an eyewitness to these proceedings and second-hand information is susceptible to distortion. However, his words were reported as news in the Kenyan press. As a white, male, Irish-born missionary and track coach who had spent the last thirty-five years living in Iten, O'Connell's position is also unique. His perspective as an 'insider-outsider' and the fact that he

[125] Quoted in J. Entine, *Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports and Why We're Afraid to Talk About It* (New York, 2000), p. 81.
[126] F. Murphy, *The Silence of Great Distance* (Kansas City, 2000), p. 225.
[127] Quoted in D. Doxsie, 'Women Emerge from Shadow of Oppression', *Quad-city Times*, 13 July 2000.

has hardly inflated the story positively to reflect the 'good old days' suggest that it carries substance.

During this fragile period, disapproval if not outright verbal attacks and exclusion could be expected by those venturing into spaces long identified as off-limits to married women. At the international level, attitudes about women in sport were changing and opportunities were widening, as described in the previous chapter. At the local level, however, gender roles and expectations revolving around the division of labour in the Rift Valley made most wives' running unsustainable and placed women like Chepyator-Thomson at the centre of conflict. The ideals of womanhood and the gendered construction of running rooted in a convergent African and colonial past continued to impose boundaries long after Kenya's independence.

Conclusion

The phrase 'fragile project' has been used to describe this earliest stage of women's running. From independence until the professionalisation of athletics, international competitive success eluded the vast majority of Kenyan females, many of whom who had been successful junior athletes with talent equal to their male counterparts. By the mid-1980s, the situation of these runners had improved only relative to the colonial period, during which time women did not compete abroad at all. Their participation and results at the international level remained miniscule, constant and tenuous, while male runners' participation increased and their performances improved.

Education in Kenya and the Rift Valley widened during this period, with more primary and secondary schools built and enrolment rates rising. Yet girls were more likely than boys to leave primary school prematurely and far fewer transitioned to secondary school. This meant that pursuing university education and sport abroad was

an option available to few female runners. Pregnancy caused some girls to drop out of school and sport, though most girls who left education early did so for other reasons, including the financial burden that it imposed. Ultimately, the differential achievement in education between boys and girls was an expression of historical patterns of masculinity and femininity.

The social construction of gender identities within the Rift Valley continued to constrain women's success in running, and not only through limiting girls' education relative to boys. If they continued to race after marriage, female runners faced derision and exclusion from unsupportive husbands and others in the community. Wives' running was a source of conflict and often led to their abandonment of it.

Cultural ideals of womanhood and gendered construction of running rooted in the pre-colonial past continued to impose boundaries on what was acceptable in the realm of athletics. A woman was expected to behave in ways that did not challenge masculinities. Training and travelling to compete, particularly once children were born, threatened established gender identities and risked imposing domestication and loss of social status on men.

Because change in gender expectations was missing at the village level, particularly with regard to acceptance of wives as competitive athletes, women's running remained tenuous and stunted in the twenty years following independence as they awaited the coming professionalisation of the sport that would set them on course to dominate world distance running.

Chapter Seven: Role Reversals: Female Options in Masculine Domains

Introduction

After Kenya became an independent nation, running remained dominated by men with only a smattering of women in the highest ranks. Previous chapters of this thesis have analysed the historical and structural challenges at the international, national and local levels that stymied advancement by Kenyan women. In spite of this fact, individual runners did emerge as internationally competitive athletes.

Through an in-depth study of Kenya's pioneering sportswomen, the chapter explores the ethno-cultural construction of gender. Very little has been published about the detailed personal lives and social networks of individual female runners who represented Kenya during the post-colonial period and the strategies they employed to compete at the highest levels of athletics. As Hunt suggests, seeking the 'extraordinary' can help to unravel layers of meanings. Studying the lives of Kenya's female Olympians redresses her contention that 'in African history, we still lack adequate biographies of … the "great African women"'.[1] Qualitative explorations of how female runners negotiated the social construction of gender and ethnicity enable the complexities of both to be understood.

The argument presented here is that successful female Kenyan runners were able to achieve in sport by replicating the prototype of 'masculine runners' that had already been established. After the professionalisation of running allowed them to

[1] N. Hunt, 'Placing African Women's History and Locating Gender', *Social History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1989), p. 371. For other work on women who 'push the boundaries of "acceptable" behavior', see for instance: D. Hodgson and S. McCurdy (eds.), *'"Wicked"' Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa* (Portsmouth NH, 2001).

become wealthy, female patrons – 'Big (Wo)men' – took this a step further by providing resources to those in their community in need.

It is important to note that although there may be multiple ways to exert male and female identities in society, not all will be socially accepted. Some will be much more valued than others. Hegemonic masculinity is the most valued form of being a man.[2] In any society, there is one socially most valued method of being a man and all are expected to conform to this type of masculinity. Those men who cannot, or refuse to, are distinctly disadvantaged, though they nevertheless benefit from the privileges accorded to gendered hierarchies.

Lonsdale's theory of moral ethnicity complements this, in that what gives 'critical life to [moral] ethnicity' is civic virtue, the ultimate arbiter of social status.[3] As discussed in Chapter Two, the attainment of 'civic virtue' rests on the continuous repayment of wealth to family and community in order to make reputable lives possible for others.[4] Rooted in an older notion of 'moral economies' that were disrupted by the intrusion of colonial capitalism, moral ethnicity has provided local

[2] For her seminal work that created avenues of research in the ambit of gender studies in general and masculinity study in particular, see: R. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley, 1994) and in an African context, L. Ouzgane and R. Morrell (eds.), *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (New York, 2005). For further review of these ideas, see Chapter One of this thesis, particularly the sub-section titled 'Concepts of Gender and Masculinity in African History'.

[3] The quote is taken from J. Lonsdale, 'Ethnic Patriotism and Markets in African History', *JICA-RI Working Paper, Ethnic Diversity and Economic Instability in Africa: Policies for Harmonious Development*, No. 20 (September, 2010, p. 15. For the key text on moral ethnicity, see: J. Lonsdale, 'The Moral Economy of Mau Mau: Wealth, Poverty and Civic Political Kikuyu Thought', in B. Berman and J. Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa,* Book Two (Oxford, 1992), pp. 315-504. For a condensed version, see: J. Lonsdale, 'Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism' in P. Kaarsholm and J. Hultin (eds.), *Inventions and Boundaries: Historical and Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism*, IDS Occasional Paper No. 1 (Roskilde, 1994), pp. 131-150. For further review of these ideas, see Chapter Two of this thesis, particularly the sub-section titled 'The Ethnic Identities of Kenya's "Running Tribe"'.

[4] For extensions of the concept to other communities and geographies, see: J. Lonsdale, 'Authority, Gender and Violence', in E.S. Atieno Odhiambo and J. Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms Authority and Narrative* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 46-75; and J. Lonsdale, 'Anti-colonial Nationalism and Patriotism in sub-Saharan Africa', in J. Breuilly (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook on the History of Nationalism* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 318-337.

African communities with a public sphere for debate over what it means to be a responsible member of the community. The outcomes of such debates evolve over time, and should not therefore be understood as a constant. In unequal societies, patronage is a form of authority, legitimised here by moral ethnicity and allowing both patrons and obedient clients to fulfil virtuous roles within the community over time. Intimately linked with this was the ideal of a 'good wife' upon whose disciplined sexuality the realisation of a productive household – and the arguments that sustained moral ethnicity - depended.[5]

Ethnic constructivists have done much to show that 'tribes', once thought to have timeless, unchanging pasts and to be organic to African politics, were in fact socially constructed and continually evolving.[6] But less attention has been paid to women as active agents in the making and transformation of ethnicity, despite the fact that, as Richard Waller writes, 'without women, ethnicity was unsustainable'.[7] Incorporating theories of both gender and ethnicity in the exploration of sport reveals

[5] A concise discussion from which this argument derives can be found in D. Peterson, 'Writing in Revolution: Independent Schooling and Mau Mau in Central Kenya', in A. Odhiambo and J. Lonsdale (eds.), *Mau Mau and Nationhood: Arms, Authority, and Narration* (London, 2003), pp. 76-96, but especially 83-88.

[6] For a seminal account in this regard, see L. Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley, CA, 1989). For successive surveys of the Africanist literature on ethnicity, see: C. Young, 'Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Class in Africa: A Retrospective (Nationalisme, ethnicité et classe en Afrique: une rétrospective)', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, Vol. 26, No. 103, (1986), pp. 421-495; Bruce Berman, 'Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism', *African Affairs*, Vol. 97 (1998), pp. 305-41; C. Young, 'Nation, Ethnicity, and Citizenship: Dilemmas of Democracy and Civil Order in Africa', in P. Nugent, D. Hammett, and S. Dorman (eds.), *Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and Citizenship in Africa* (Boston, 2007), pp. 242-280; R. Bates, 'Ethnicity', in D. Clarke (ed.), *The Elgar Companion to Development Studies* (Cheltenham, 2006), pp. 167-173; and R. Waller, 'Ethnicity and Identity', in R. Reid and J. Parker (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern African History* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 94-113.

[7] Waller, 'Ethnicity', p. 100. Histories of ethnicity that given equal weight to the social construction of gender include: S. Marks, 'Patriotism, Patriarchy and Purity: Natal and the Politics of Zulu Ethnic Consciousness', in L. Vail, *Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (London, 1989), pp. 216-34; S. Greene, *Gender, Ethnicity and Social Change on the Upper Slave Coast* (Portsmouth, NH, 1996); and H. Gegenbach, *Women as Makers and Tellers of History in Magude, Mozambique* (New York, 2005). For work that makes central the role of women in the construction of national identities, see: S. Geiger, *TANU Women: Gender and Culture in the Making of Tanganyikan Nationalism, 1955-1965* (Portsmouth, NH, 1997).

social processes that cannot be captured wholly by looking at either dimension separately.[8] This chapter will demonstrate that women were constrained by the norms within moral ethnicity, but could under certain circumstances use these norms to advance their own positions.

Ruth Waithera and Tegla Loroupe are used here as case studies taken from the group of pioneering female athletes who took advantage of the social means available – namely, adapting to masculine constructs - to then maximise their benefits. Each woman faced a different set of obstacles familiar to Kenyan women and detailed in previous chapters. Waithera competed during the pre-professional era; Loroupe raced during the early years of athletics' professionalisation.

Waithera, as an unmarried woman who left home to race for the Armed Forces, upset long-held traditions. People worried that such unconventional choices could discredit them in front of men and people of other communities. Her refusal of marriage also occurred in the context of long-standing debates about civic virtue and the threat that women's unorthodox choices could pose to its attainment. Loroupe also generated controversy by pursuing a career in running; however, her ability to share the fruits of her considerable success allowed her to overcome the hostility she faced. Not unlike the first generation of literates during the colonial period, Loroupe sought to make her choices and skills respectable by putting them at the service of the community.[9]

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[8] For recent literature that critiques the constructivist literature, see: T. Spear, 'Neo-Traditionalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa', *Journal of African History*, Vol. 44 (2003), pp. 3-27; and D. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A History of Dissent, c. 1935–1972* (Cambridge, 2012).

[9] For the inspiration for this idea, see: Lonsdale, Moral Ethnicity and Political Tribalism', pp. 139-140, where he writes: 'Both the social-climbing African bourgeoisie and the poor who struggled to keep up appearances fought to retain their honour, to be judged as neither hard-face exploiters on the one hand nor idle wasters on the other'.

Ultimately, both women were able to attain status in a competitive sphere dominated by men, though a tension remained between the need for disciplined female sexuality and for patronage that could be bridged only by success – thereby leaving unaltered a more general model of gender relations. The tiny subset of women at the top who found ways to circumvent structural roadblocks by adopting hegemonic masculinities did not bring acceptance for the vast majority of current and subsequent runners. Particularly in the early years of the professional era, 'Big (Wo)men' were acclaimed *because* they were able to perform a patronage role, thereby reinforcing an existing moral economy *and* existing gender roles that were previously the domain of successful men. Women without economic independence had few options and most remained stymied in their ascent as athletes. Though writing in a different context, as Crenshaw observed, 'the political demands of thousands speak more powerfully than the examples of a few isolated voices'.[10]

Masculinity in sport was non-negotiable – women could compete, but only by emulating existing male models of success. Wealth gained through sport could allow a female runner to perform credibly within the male arena in which patron-recipient relations exist. If a woman could successfully fulfil the obligations of patron despite her choices of an unsanctioned lifestyle, then ideas of redistribution of wealth embedded in moral ethnicity could socialise her success.

[10] K. Crenshaw, 'Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color', *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (1991), p. 1241. Though it will be discussed in the concluding chapter of this thesis, change is underway. Enough women have come to occupy these positions of power that they are changing ideas about gender roles, and therefore the attainment of (male) civic virtue is no longer the exclusively masculine domain it once was.

'The Most Decorated Athlete (or Soldier?)'

In 1977, Ruth Waithera was stationed at the Kenya Air Force Eastleigh base, serving as a corporal in the Women Service Corps (WSC) of the Kenyan Army. By then, she was not only the fastest woman in Africa over 400 metres but as one newspaper reported:

> Her times in the 100m, 200m and 400m can only be beaten by competitive men athletes, and the rest of us male chauvinists boasting physical superiority over women have just to swallow our pride as a direct challenge would turn out to be too humiliating.[11]

This report was one of many that celebrated her achievements. The media regularly applauded her with headlines like 'Waithera and Tata Set Track Records', describing her racing as 'magnificent' and referring to her as a 'star'.[12]

As a girl, Waithera had also distinguished herself as an exceptional runner. Born in August 1957 in Murang'a, the second youngest of five girls, Waithera and her family moved to Nyahururu when she was still a child. She was the fastest girl in Kahero Primary, a day school in Nyahururu, and always joined the boys in competitions, seeing in them an opportunity to excel. She recalled: 'I started when I was young. I was running all the time – quick, quick, quick, quick!'[13] After she was introduced to formal running competitions during Physical Education classes, she started to race officially, and first qualified to compete at the provincial level as a thirteen-year-old.

Waithera's father worked as a shopkeeper and a farmer. He supported her running, providing the bus fare she needed to travel to races though they were not a

[11] D. Agudah, 'Corporal Ruth Waithera', *Daily Nation*, 3 December 1977, p. 28.
[12] ____, 'Waithera and Tata Set Track Records', *Daily Nation,* 22 April 1979, p. 30.
[13] R. Waithera, Interview, 18 February 2011.

wealthy family. As Waithera put it, 'me, I have slept with hunger. I have walked without shoes'.[14] When she was still young, he passed away. After this, her participation in sport became 'a big problem' to those around her. As she narrates: 'My mom, she didn't want me to run. Other women told my mother, "Your girl, if she starts running, she will never get a baby! Her body is going to be destroyed"'.[15]

Undeterred, Waithera continued to race despite the fact that she now had 'to hide to go compete'. She was also punished when her mother discovered her disobedience. 'When I came back home, my mom used to beat me'.[16] Yet she persisted in entering more competitions and this paid off in the form of prizes ranging from household goods, such as buckets and blankets, to cash allowances. She presented these rewards to her mother who used them to pay her school fees. The beatings stopped, and 'from there', according to Waithera, 'we became good friends!'[17]

The peace proved short-lived, however. Waithera was reaching marriageable age and women in her community began to intervene with questions about her behaviour, intentions and marriage interests and to exert influence on her mother. 'Other women, they were telling [my mom], "Oh, my son can marry your daughter". The friend of my mom wanted me to get married to her son'.[18] With a husband identified, efforts to solidify the union escalated.[19] The suitor's father brought cows to Waithera's mother. If Waithera accepted the marriage proposal, her mother would

[14] Waithera, Interview, 18 February 2011
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] For discussion of the Nandi courtship process, see R. Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change: The Nandi of Kenya* (Stanford, 1985), p. 98. It was often the mothers of the bride and groom who usually took the first informal steps in marriage negotiations.

have kept the cows, a persuasive proposition for a widow without sons. Pressure to acquiesce to a marriage proposal was also brought to bear from the wider community.

Yet she refused the offer, a choice that provoked beatings from her mother and she ran away to stay with her sister while worries within the community persisted. Waithera claims she declined the proposal for three reasons. Firstly, she wanted to protect her running. She had watched as her older sisters, runners as girls, were forced to quit the sport once they married. 'They were not going far [in their running]. They were getting married so quickly. That was the problem'.[20] Secondly, she felt no desire to marry the suitor. 'No, no, no, I didn't like the guy at all'.[21] And finally, although her mother welcomed the cattle as bridewealth and sought the social approbation that her daughter's marriage would have generated, Waithera herself believed that remaining at home would buttress her mother's precarious situation. In her words:

> Then I said, Well, I don't care! They can talk what they want. But I know what I am doing. My mom, she doesn't have anybody to help her. My dad is dead; my sisters, they are all married. So she doesn't have anybody to help her. You know, in Africa, if you have a son, you are welcome into his home. But we were five sisters – no brothers.[22]

Conventionally, after her husband's death, a widow moved in with her son and his family. With four daughters married and absent a son to provide his mother with a home, Waithera's mother had to rely on herself. Compounding the situation, Ruth's father's family had refused to provide the support, which according to custom, also was owed to her. She saw only one option: live with her mother while continuing to compete in sport.

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[20] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*, p. 98.
[21] Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[22] Ibid.

Waithera then proved that her involvement in athletics had not led to infertility, and at the age of sixteen, she gave birth to a son. Not long after, one of her sisters introduced her to the pill, explaining that modern contraception was freely available from the hospital nearby. Her sister said, 'because you are a good runner and you know these men, somebody can cheat you. So get this medicine – protect yourself'. As Ruth put it, 'I went to Family Planning to get the medicine so to be able to concentrate on my running'.[23] The fact that contraception was available gives some indication of the broader social change that was taking place in Kenya at this time. Women were, for instance, making measurable strides in the direction of achieving greater representation in the political realm, particularly through the political organising that would take place during the 1990s after multi-party elections were re-introduced.[24] For women, their new electoral participation represented a significant break from other colonial and post-independence experiences. At the same time, escalating gender conflicts and lack of domestic harmony across a number of contexts have also been portrayed as reflecting the deepening contradictions provoked by population pressure, increasingly tiny land plots and rising unemployment.[25]

Nonetheless, in the eyes of her community, Waithera was a non-conformist. She was unattached and uncommitted to men, ignoring the lessons that she had been taught about respectability and discipline. The community sought to confine women to the home while the life of a female runner required unfettered movement. And in the context of the sexually disciplined relationships between men and women upon

[23] Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[24] M. Nzomo, 'Kenyan Women in Politics and Public Decision Making', in G. Mikell, *African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Philadelphia, 1997), pp. 232-256.
[25] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*; M. Hay and S. Stichter, *African Women South of the Sahara* (London, 1984); M. Silberschmidt, *Women Forget that Men are the Masters: Gender Antagonism and Socio-economic Change in Kisii District, Kenya* (Uppsala, 1999).

which civic virtue depended, Waithera's rejection of marriage caused significant consternation for its challenge to the existing social order.

If choosing to stay single had caused conflict, Waithera's decision to take the pill was even more astounding. In her words, it provoked 'a very big drama in the home, to the villagers, to my mom'.[26] Very few women in Kenya were taking the pill at that time. According to a survey conducted in 1979, eight per cent of women in Kenya were using modern birth control methods.[27] Based on research in western Kenya in 1976 and 1977, Oboler notes that despite the fact that advice on methods and a range of devices, such as IUDs, pills, condoms, were available at a government family planning agency in the district administrative centre at very little cost, birth control was not much practiced.[28]

Like marriage declined, illegitimate childbirth, and continued participation as in sport as an adult, Waithera's decision to take the pill deviated from normative gender roles and expectations. Unmarried women who sought to avoid having children were unable to attain the vaunted status of being a 'good wife' who was faithful to and dependent on her husband, and nurturing to her children. Her choices provided opportunities for people to deride her, which they seized. Gossip was endless, ostracism a threat and corporeal punishment a reality. But guided by her single-minded focus on running, Waithera took advantage of the unusual circumstance of reaching maturity detached from the authority of male kin – e.g. fathers, brothers and husbands - to defy expectations of conformity to accepted behaviour. Within a system of constraint on female freedoms, runners like Waithera

[26] Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[27] B. Maggwa, *et al*, 'Validity of Contraceptive Histories in a Rural Community in Kenya', *International Journal of Epidemiology,* Vol. 22, Is. 4 (1993), pp. 692.
[28] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*, p. 71.

were subversive, wilfully fashioning new lives for themselves and introducing conflict by disregarding the traditional expectations of femininity.

Peoples' worries about women's deviant behaviour always existed in a wider comparative field, however.[29] The social stigma attached to being single was shared by relatives, which further heightened the pressure that unmarried women encountered. Men worried about what women's comportment said about them. Parents worried that they would be shamed by the actions of daughters in public and in front of men of other groups. In this way, disciplined female sexuality was about community honour as much as it was about reproduction.[30]

Finally, her unorthodox choices around marriage and contraception cut to the beating heart of the arguments that sustained moral ethnicity. In short, the ability of men to achieve civic virtue could be impacted by the actions of women. The relationship between men and women, and the need for obedient wives and mothers, fundamentally underpinned men's capacity to develop productive households and thereby contribute in full to the community. The outrage provoked in this instance by the women of her community who sought to police Waithera's choices also permits one to consider on what women's reputation depended, who regulates it and of what female civic virtue might have consisted. At a minimum, it makes it clear that a reputable life precluded contraceptives, athletics and remaining unwed.

Not a wealthy woman, Waithera's beginning circumstances were little different from the mass of girls in Kenya. In spite of this, the bold decisions she made as a young woman set up her ability to replicate those made by men and ultimately

[29] For other studies of women who chose to not to marry: see J. Allman, 'Rounding up Spinsters: Gender Chaos and Unmarried Women in Colonial Asante', in D. Hodgson and McCurdy (eds.), *"Wicked" Women and the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa* (Portsmouth, NH, 2001), pp. 130-48; and J. Allman and Tashjian, '*I Will Not Eat Stone': A Women's History of Colonial Asante* (Portsmouth, NH, 2000), especially chapter 4.

[30] For further exploration of these ideas, see the introduction to: D. Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism*, pp. 1-36.

helped to free her from the constraints tradition intended for her and all females in sport. The chapter now turns to the next phases of her life, where Ruth's path even more clearly replicates the patterns of the careers of men who made it to the highest echelon of sport.

'Like the Bullets She Triggers … Ruth Shot Suddenly to the Top'

In 1975, Waithera signed her first three-year contract with the Armed Forces. As a soldier representing the Forces in running competitions, she was following a script long familiar to Kenyan men. Scholars of Kenyan running have widely recognised the Kenyan military's importance in developing the nation's (male) sports talent.[31] Typically, a boy began to race competitively while in primary or secondary school. He might then prove his athletic ability while representing his school or village and even qualify for the National Championships. Top runners were then recruited into the various government institutions, particularly the military and protective forces, and the best of this group went on to attend university in America on athletic scholarships.

By the time Waithera joined the army, almost all of Kenya's best male athletes were affiliated with either the Army, Police, Prisons or General Service Unit (GSU).[32] As discussed in Chapters Four and Five, the Kalenjin have been particularly well represented in both the Army and the Police since the colonial period. As a Kikuyu, and the first woman to join the Army as a runner, her path diverged from those around

[31] J. Manners, 'In Search of an Explanation', in D. Prokop (ed.), *The African Running Revolution* (Mountain View, CA, 1975), pp. 26-40; J. Bale and J. Sang, *Kenyan Running: Movement Culture, Geography and Global Change* (London, 1996); T. Tanser, *More Fire* (Yardley, PA, 2008).
[32] Manners, 'Explanation', p. 36.

her along lines of both ethnicity and gender. For Waithera, the latter particularly stood out since:

> I was the first female to run in the army and was in the running team for eight years. I was the only female on the team with fifty male teammates and they were all respectful towards me.[33]

Other women had worked in and represented different branches of Kenyan government as runners, but until Ruth Waithera, no woman had yet entered the male sanctuary of the army. Her participation in army athletics spawned infrastructure changes to that previously all-male institution. While based in the Army's permanent training camp in Nyahururu, Waithera was given a private tent of her own.[34] At the Army Championships, where she won the 400 metres in 56.0 seconds, she 'had to call on her friend Miss Sabina Chebichi of the Prisons to give her company since she [was] the only woman athlete in the armed forces'.[35]

Both male and female sports recruits of all backgrounds could take advantage of the coaching, resources and time necessary for running at the highest level. As a soldier, she describes herself as 'able to concentrate' on her running for the first time.

> At the Women's Service Corps, I had all the time. I had quit school when I got pregnant and stayed idle for a year. With that dreaded first pregnancy for schoolgirls behind me, when I started running in the army, it was like I had already completed part of my life. There was nothing to interrupt me.[36]

She emphasised that she thought only about her competitive career at this time: 'I have to run. And after turning 21, I was still running'.[37] Given the extent to

[33] Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Agudah, 'Corporal Ruth Waithera'.
[36] Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[37] Ibid.

which mature women's running was constrained during this period, it was indeed an achievement to have crossed the threshold from the junior to senior levels of running.

In her first year as a soldier, she delivered to her employers a fourth place finish in the 100 metres at the National Championships, which granted her a spot on Kenya's 4x100 metres relay team at the East and Central African Championships. Held that year in Kampala, the race provided Waithera with her first trip outside of Kenya. The following year she improved, becoming the runner-up in the 200 metres at the National Championships behind Alice Adala, and placing third in that event at the East African Championships in Zanzibar.

From there, as the *Daily Nation* reported in 1977, 'like the bullets she triggers off at shooting ranges during army manoeuvres, Ruth suddenly shot to the top'.[38] She won both the 100 metres and 200 metres at the National Championships and at all of the major meets held in Kenya that season. At the East and Central Africa Championships in Mogadishu, in which six nations were represented, Waithera 'stole the limelight, outshining even her male colleagues when she won an unprecedented five medals'.[39] She won the 100 metres, 200 metres and the 400 metres and anchored Kenya to victory in the 4x400 metres relay for her fourth gold medal of the competition. She also anchored the 4x100 metres relay team, which finished second to Uganda. The *Daily Nation* reported 'Cpl. Ruth Waithera being the most decorated athlete (or soldier?) during the East and Central African Athletics Championships held in Mogadishu'.[40]

Waithera was now running well enough to race outside of Africa. Her first opportunity was a trip to Russia for the Friendship Games where she 'ran with

[38] Agudah, 'Corporal Ruth Waithera'.
[39] Ibid.
[40] H. Silas, 'The Year of Farce and Fuss', *Daily Nation*, 24 Dec 1977, p. 29.

wazungus [white people] for the first time'.[41] She was the only woman from Kenya who travelled to Moscow alongside three male representatives.[42] By then, she was familiar with the routine of being surrounded by male runners. All her training partners were men, some of the fastest in Kenya. Two of the men she ran with daily, John Mwebi and Peter Kipkorong, finished first and second, respectively, in the 100 metres at the Mogadishu East African Championships of 1977 in which Ruth herself had won five medals.[43]

Later that year, at the World Cup trials in Tunis, Waithera won the 400 metres in 54.4 seconds, which qualified her to represent the African continent at the inaugural World Cup held in Dusseldorf, Germany. At that meet, Waithera's time of 53.48 seconds for the one-lap race was the fastest by an African woman that year. She was recognised as the Sportswoman of the Year in 1977, Kenya's most prestigious sports honour.[44]

Yet even as Waithera describes the experience of running in the Army as 'very good', she is quick to point out 'but it wasn't good at the other side, at my mom's home. There was [sic] a lot of dramas. "Oh that girl, she is lost! She has gone to the Army, with men. She is on her own, she is lost!"'.[45] The outcry in Nyahururu over her decision to become a runner/soldier implied at its base the assumption that she was sexually promiscuous. According to Waithera, 'some of them, they talked bad

[41] Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[42] The Russians had organised the Friendship Games in 1977 to mark the 60th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. It was held at Sachy, a town 100 kilometres south of Moscow with 20 countries taking part. The three male athletes who joined Ruth for the week-long tour of Russia were long distance runners Richard Juma and John Kirimiti and shot putter Michael Obange. 1972 Olympian Robert Ouko also accompanied them as team manager. Waithera finished 16th in the 100 metres in 12.2 seconds and ran the 200 metres in 24.8, placing 11th out of 26 athletes. P. Ndoo, '10 Olympians on parade at Nyeri meet today', *Daily Nation,* 1976; ___'Ng'eno Free to Run on One Condition', *Daily Nation*, 3 June 1977, p. 31.
[43] Agudah, 'Corporal Ruth Waithera'.
[44] J. Mucheru, 'Mucheru Wins Top Award', *EAS*, 10 Dec 1978, p. 21.
[45] Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.

about me when I was gone. Like I'm going to be a prostitute or something like that'.[46] Compounding this was the fact that she had still not married. People feared she might never achieve the status of a 'proper' wife.

In this regard, Waithera faced the same difficulties and barriers as female traders and women who wanted an education in an earlier period.[47] Little had changed from an earlier era when ethnic unions and Local Nation Councils spent considerable energy strategising how to curb prostitution. The accusations levied and the fears were not new. The fear was that disobedient women would deprive men of the possibility of establishing productive households and hence of a respectable adulthood. Moreover, when women proved publically deviant, it did not reflect well on the masculinity of the men in their communities since they had proved unable to create disciplined households. The accusation of prostitution is thus an enormously evocative one that connects Waithera's experience to long-standing disputes stretching back to the colonial period over the relationship between men and women.

Unbowed by the criticism, Waithera refused to live circumscribed by other's expectations and she remained single and a soldier. In an interview she gave to the *Daily Nation* in 1977, the question of marriage arose. According to the *Daily Nation*'s portrayal of the conversation, 'Ruth refused to discuss it'.[48] The article concluded by suggesting, 'If there are any men who have been attempting to catch-up with the "Flying Soldier", they have some running to do as there is no stopping

[46] Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[47] For studies of female traders, see for instance: B. Frederiksen, 'African Women and their Colonisation of Nairobi: Representations and Realities', *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, Vol. 36-37, Is. 1 (2001), pp. 223-34; C. Robertson, *Trouble Showed the Way: Women, Men, and Trade in the Nairobi Area, 1890 to 1990* (Bloomington, IN, 1997). For an examination of women who wanted an education, see: T. Kanogo, *African Womanhood in Colonial Kenya: 1900-1950* (Oxford, 2005). For studies that look specifically at female prostitution, see: L. White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (Chicago, 1990) and J. Bujra, 'Women "Entrepreneurs" of Early Nairobi', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 9, Is. 2 (1975), pp. 213-34.
[48] Agudah, 'Corporal Ruth Waithera'.

Kenya's sprint heir-apparent'.[49] In interviews more than thirty years later, Ruth is more candid about marriage and its compatibility with being a female runner:

> We [the first generation of female Kenyan runners] succeeded because we didn't get married as a second wife or third wife. And we didn't get married at 22 years old – you are still running! Even today girls should run until you come to 25 or 28. And then if you want to get married, get married by somebody who can run or somebody who does not have another wife or somebody who understands what you are doing.[50]

Waithera actively avoided putting herself in a position in which an unsympathetic husband would jeopardise her participation in sport. She also refused to allow the rumours about her sexuality and the media's interest in her personal life to deter her from competing, and continued army life in order to achieve her athletic ambitions. As the *Daily Nation* reported in 1977, Waithera declared that when her contract with the army ended the following year, she intended 'definitely to renew it' because she 'want[ed] to keep in trim shape and keep on winning more medals'.[51]

Waithera ultimately worked for six years with the Army and only left in 1981 when she was offered and accepted an athletic scholarship to study and race at the University of Arizona in the United States. Though beset with injuries during much of her time as a student-athlete, her final year was exceptional. She won the National NCAA Division I Indoor Track Championships in the 400 metres. Later that year, at the Outdoor National Championships, she finished sixth in the 400 metres and anchored her relay team time to fifth place. That summer, she represented Kenya in both the 200 metres and the 400 metres at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles, becoming the first Kenyan woman to reach the finals of any track or field event at the

[49] Agudah, 'Corporal Ruth Waithera'.
[50] Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[51] Agudah, 'Corporal Ruth Waithera'.

Olympics. In 1990, the University of Arizona inducted her into its Hall of Fame for her many achievements.[52]

In the single-minded pursuit of her sports ambitions, she achieved economic independence. As a runner in the army, Waithera was consistently earning three hundred shillings a month. As a student-athlete, she not only received free tuition, room and board, but also extensive travel and training at high quality facilities under the direction of expert coaching. Kenyan athletes were given allowances for food and miscellaneous expenses while away on trips and training camps. Finally, after becoming Kenya's Sportswoman of the Year, President Jomo Kenyatta made it possible for her to buy a house. Waithera narrates:

> [Kenyatta] said, 'I want to give the good runners something'. So Kipchoge Keino was given a big ranch. That was 1977. I went to the office of the Minister of Land. He said, 'Ruth, you know that the President said that you should get a house. You can get three thousand shillings?' Three thousand shillings as a deposit. At that time, I was getting three hundred shillings a month. So I told them, 'that money, I can get'.[53]

The new four-bedroom house built in Nyharururu was the latest surprise to the people of her community. 'They were asking, 'How did Ruth do it? How did she get that house?' Nobody would believe. How did I manoeuvre it?'[54] Waithera had risen from 'sleep[ing] with hunger' and 'walk[ing] without shoes' to owning her own home.[55]

In answer to the question poased by her community – 'how did Waithera manoeuvre this' - a factor in her favour may have been that she shared ties of ethnicity with the President. Waithera acknowledged the connection:

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[52] 'The University of Arizona Sports Hall of Fame by Induction Year', [Accessed 20 May 2014], https://www.nmnathletics.com/pdf9/2561007.pdf?DB_OEM_ID=30700.
[53] Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.

> But me I am from Central Province. And from there, I was so happy because I was number one in Kenya, from my tribe, to get the name. And the President gave me the house because of that. Kenyatta.[56]

While bonds of ethnicity may have been salient, to bestow gifts in recognition of national honour was not unprecedented for President Kenyatta and Kalenjin runners also received this kind of support. Kipchoge Keino, for instance, received a ranch from the President following his achievements at the 1972 Olympics.[57] A greater degree of ambiguity, however, surfaces around his act with respect to Waithera because she was a woman.

In Kenya, men and women's unequal access to land has a long history, augmented by how far land and property operate as more than a material resource that sustains farming. Land was bound up in and influenced by social factors, and deeply tied to people's sense of status, identity and belonging. As Moore put it, 'struggles over land are embedded in ideas about morality and patriarchy'.[58]

Before independence, the Swynnerton Plan in the mid to late 1950s had restricted land ownership to men with far-reaching consequences for gender roles.[59] The plan's allocation of individual tenure and holding of land as private property exclusively to men allowed an unequal system of rules for determining rights in and

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[56] Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[57] F. Noronha, *Kipchoge of Kenya* (Nakuru, 1970), p. 48. However, 1968 Olympian Amos Biwott has called attention to the fact that to be given land was the exception not the rule: 'There were no incentives. Very few of us, maybe two or three, were given land by the government but that was all'. See: ____, 'Kenyan Steeplechase Pioneer Lives Life of Squalor', *Reuters*, 28 Feb 2004, p. 19.
[58] H. Moore, *Space, Text, and Gender: An Anthropological Study of the Marakwet of Kenya* (New York, 1995), p. 193.
[59] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*; M. Hay, 'Luo Women and Economic Change During the Colonial Period', in N. Hafkin and E. Bay (eds.), *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change* (Stanford, CA, 1976), pp. 87-110; A. Okeyo, 'Daughters of the Lakes and Rivers: Colonization and the Land Rights of Luo Women', in M. Etienne and E. Leacock (eds.), *Women and Colonization Anthropological Perspectives* (New York, 1980), pp. 186-213.

access to land to take root. At a time when land, as opposed to labour, was becoming increasingly essential to economic success, men emerged into the post-colonial period owning the vast majority of it.

Nonetheless, what emerges is that Waithera's unconventional choices had not led to shame and prostitution but rather to international recognition, and this proved sufficient for President Kenyatta to bestow largesse on her. Athletics success rendered her actions honourable by bringing prestige to Kenya. Property ownership then facilitated Waithera's ability to support herself and made her a relatively wealthy woman, which in turn did much to restore her status in the community.

For some women with great determination, the benefits conferred by masculinity could be attained, particularly when one comprehends the power dynamics of ethnicity in conjunction with those of gender. Ruth Waithera's life can be read as following the same path as most of Kenya's successful male runners: embracing sport while growing up in the rural highlands, joining the military in order to run competitively, accepting a sport scholarship in the United States, owning property and culminating her track career with an Olympic Games Final. Her running, economic independence and mobility were outcomes typical for men, but extremely rare among women. She was assisted by President Kenyatta's munificence and by the unusual situation of reaching maturity unfettered by familial obligations to other males, whether father, husband or brothers.

Despite the angst and outrage her behaviour often provoked, Waithera lived her life as if she were a man and behaved in ways that people identified as male. Other examples can be found of African women in different contexts emulating masculinities to pursue their ambitions and agendas. Joshua Grace used the memoirs of Dar es Salaam's first female bus driver Hawa Ramadhani to examine the gendered

structures of mobility in post-colonial Tanzania.[60] As she shuttled passengers around Tanzania's capital from 1977 to 1984, during almost exactly the same period when Ruth Waithera became one of the fastest female Kenyan runners, Ramadhani attracted panicked questions about her moral behaviour. Like Waithera, some accused Ramadhani of being a prostitute. Yet Ramadhani extricated herself from a lifetime of domesticity by using her automotive skills to gain entry into waged work and become known as a capable professional, similar to the ways in which female Kenyan runners leveraged their running talent.

Dorothy Hodgson, in her study of Maasai gender and the Catholic Church, also describes a wealthy, educated woman, calling her a 'notable exception' to Maasai gender patterns in that she arrived late to church, sat with the men and was one of the first to receive communion. To Hodgson, she was 'a man in many ways'.[61] Oboler too has noted how 'stories abound of widows who took over the management of their property "as if they were men" and even became rich in their own right'.[62]

As such, it emerges that women can navigate gender norms to gain the opportunities available to men by invoking male norms. The struggle over which differences matter and which do not is an important one since it raises critical issues of power.

[60] J. Grace, 'Heroes of the Road: Race, Gender and the Politics of Mobility in Twentieth Century Tanzania', *Africa*, Vol. 83, Is. 3 (August, 2013), pp. 403-25.
[61] D. Hodgson, *Church of Women: Gendered Encounters Between Maasai and Missionaries* (Bloomington, IN, 2005), p. 196.
[62] Oboler, *Women, Power and Economic Change*, p. 270.

'Half Man, Half Woman': All Pokot

The final example of this chapter focuses on one of the first female athletes to achieve a level of material success that not only allowed her to overcome worries about female sexual deviance but to become generally accepted by her community, the consequences of which the *Daily Nation* called 'li[ghting] a torch in the cavernous dark interior of human value creation'.[63]

Born on 9 May 1973 in Kapsait, West Pokot, about 200 miles northwest of Nairobi, Tegla Chepkite Loroupe became one the first female runners from Kenya to emerge as a professional athlete and female patron.[64] A two-time world marathon record holder, Loroupe also held world records over distances of twenty-five and thirty kilometres and she was named the World's Best Performer in the marathon in 1998 and 1999.[65]

Loroupe's astounding success included victories in ten out of the twenty-two international marathon races she entered between 1994 and 2003. She recorded personal best times in races around the world, 'from Monaco to Sydney, Athens, Georgia to Tokyo, St Petersburg to Sheffield'.[66] During her fifteen-year career, Loroupe competed in three Olympics, five World Athletics Championships, twice winning a bronze medal, and four World Half-Marathon Championships, winning the race three times.[67] Subsequent World Champions and Olympians including Lornah Kiplagat and Catherine Ndereba recall that she inspired them at the start of their

[63] S. Tuva, 'Star-studded Team Stands Chance of a Great Performance', *Saturday Nation,* 14 August 2004, p. 3.
[64] A. Kimutai, 'Loroupe a Relentless Fighter for Kenya', Iaaf.org, 10 Aug 2000, https://www.iaaf.org/news/news/loroupe-a-relentless-fighter-for-kenya.
[65] 'Athlete Profile: Tegla Loroupe', www.iaaf.org (Accessed 22 May 2014).
[66] P. Kosice, 'Loroupe (KEN) Victorious in IAAF/VSZ World Half Marathon Championships, Whilst Romania Takes Team Title', www.iaaf.org (Accessed 22 May 2014), https://www.iaaf.org/news/news/loroupe-ken-victorious-in-iaafvsz-world-half
[67] Loroupe took part in 1992 (Barcelona), 1996 (Atlanta) and 2000 (Sydney) Olympic games.

careers.[68] 'She has been very important to me', said twice Olympian and former world record holder Catherine Ndereba. 'When I started running in 1994, I learned about her in magazines. I knew she was a star in our country and I was copying her'.[69]

Loroupe's father had four wives, and she grew up with twenty-four siblings in the hills of West Pokot. Her early childhood was spent working in the fields and looking after younger brothers and sisters.[70] One account described the closest town of Kapenguria as:

> A small town, a collection of rudimentary shacks and the occasional brick built house, with a population that is almost entirely dependent on agriculture and more especially on cattle raising and vegetable growing, with pasture land interspersed with maize fields and vegetable plots. Signs of poverty are everywhere, with potholed roads, when they are not simple dirt tracks and a lack of basic medical facilities.[71]

To scholars Fred Zaal and Ton Dietz, as recently as 1999, 'it is clear that the Pokot in West Pokot District have indeed been at the margin of Kenyan society, economy and the Kenyan political fora for some time now'.[72]

Loroupe was six years old when she began to run, barefoot, the four miles along a dirt road to and from Kapsait Primary School each day.[73] 'Those teachers would beat you if you were late', she said.[74] '[Running this distance] was quite traumatising but then, you had to get used to it'.[75] She ran for other reasons too;

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[68] J. Longman, 'Olympics: 82 Pounds of Steel; Girded by Past Struggles, Loroupe Runs for Kenyan Gold', *New York Times*, 13 Aug 2000, p. 11.
[69] Ibid.
[70] T. Loroupe, Interview, 19 Jan 2010.
[71] D. Macharia, 'Tegla Loroupe – Bundle of Energy and Driving Force for Peace', iaaf.org, 22 Nov 2005, See: http://www.iaaf.org/news/news/tegla-loroupe-bundle-of-energy-and-driving
[72] F. Zaal and T. Dietz, 'Of Markets, Meat, Maize and Milk: Pastoral Commoditization in Kenya', in D. Anderson and V. Broche-Due (eds.), *In The Poor Are Not Us* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 163–98 [p. 163].
[73] L. Gitonga, 'On the Mark for Community', *Sunday Nation*, 18 July 2004, p. 3.
[74] J. Gettleman, 'A Kenyan Runner Seeks Peace for her Corner of the World', *New York Times*, 18 November 2006, p. A4.
[75] Gitonga, 'On the Mark', p. 2.

whenever she beat her brother in a race, she was exempt from having to carry water from the river.[76] When she was nine, she competed for the first time at a school sports day, winning the 1500 metres, 5000 metres and 10,000 metres against boys and girls, all in one day.[77] Loroupe's success in primary school first raised her awareness of her potential as an athlete.

From the start, her father, Loroupe Losiwa, opposed her participation in sport. In primary school, she persuaded him to let her run if she earned higher math grades than her brother, Philip, which she duly achieved.[78] When at age twelve, she began boarding school at Nasakol Girls Secondary School in nearby Kapenguria, her father again demanded that she stop running since 'it was not very ladylike'.[79]

Loroupe, who had no running clothes, no running shoes, just her blouse and skirt, continued to run anyway, even though she disobeyed her father's wishes.[80] In her words, fellow pupils often wondered what 'sort of woman I wanted to be in the future'.[81] Loroupe credits the hostility she encountered with hardening her resolve, describing herself at that time as having 'a wooden head'.[82] She thought, 'I have two arms and legs and I came out of the same stomach as my brothers. Why can't we do the same things?'[83]

Fortunately, she had allies in her mother, Mary Lotuma, and her elder sister, Albina.[84] They supported her running and ensured that she attended school, where she

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[76] P. Njenga, 'Among the Top in Kenya's Roll of World Conquerors', *Sunday Nation*, 18 July 2004, p. 3.
[77] Gitonga, 'On the Mark', p. 2.
[78] Longman, 'Olympics: 82 Pounds of Steel', p. 11.
[79] Gettleman, 'A Kenyan Runner'.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Gitonga, 'On the Mark', p. 2.
[82] Ibid.
[83] P. Butcher, 'The Daintiest Record Breaker: Athletics: Kenya's Tegla Loroupe has Overcome Heavy Odds on Her Way to Becoming a World-beater', *Financial Times*, 9 Oct. 1999, p. 22.
[84] Ibid.

was able to develop as an athlete. Mary Lotuma had been orphaned and Loroupe credits her mother with teaching her the value of independence, not least by disagreeing with her husband about their daughter's commitment to running.[85] By 1989, she had matured and entered the national cross-country championships at Kabarak, near Nakuru. Despite suffering from stepping on a sharp piece of wood while racing, she went on to win and joined the Kenyan team for the World Cross-country Championships, finishing 28th at the junior level.[86]

As her running career progressed, Loroupe's father relented but most of her Pokot community did not. She publicly had to dismiss allegations that she was not a woman. Loroupe is quoted as saying, 'I am pleased to show I am all woman. Some people have been suggesting otherwise, things like I am half man and half woman'.[87] The report described how she was 'speaking out after cruel gossips questioned her gender after her impressive times in races against men'.[88] By pursing a career in running, Loroupe was making unconventional choices that, despite her struggle to keep up appearances, put her reputation (as a woman) fundamentally at risk.

In her village of Kapsait, young women were expected to get married and have children. In order to pursue her running career, Loroupe told her father she did not want to get married. 'At this point, I was so fed up with men', Loroupe said, 'I thought of becoming a nun'.[89] In interviews, she used humour to defuse questions about her unmarried status, saying 'perhaps I run too fast for any man to catch up with

[85] Longman, 'Olympics: 82 Pounds of Steel', p. 11.
[86] Njenga, 'Among the Top'.
[87] Ibid.
[88] D. Lewis, 'Tegla – I am All Woman', *Mirror*, 17 April 2000, p. 41.
[89] Gettleman, 'A Kenyan Runner'.

me', to which she added, 'but, of course I hope to get married some day'.[90] She then qualified this position, saying:

> You know when you age, you might not be able to run. For now I want to concentrate on that. One can join university at any age to study for a degree course of choice or settle down in marriage any time but it is not the case with athletics. I will wait until my legs refuse to run.[91]

Again, marriage and running were positioned as mutually exclusive. While women Mary Chemweno and Ruth Chepyator-Thomson proved otherwise, Loroupe believed that if she were to marry, normative expectations of wives would impinge on her participation in sport.[92] Rather than violate those conventions outright, like Waithera, Loroupe chose to avoid their constraints by staying single. Responding to questions about her single status, she once said, '"A man? I can't seem to find one'.[93]

Staying single facilitated Loroupe's ability to run and to manipulate her gender and embrace masculinity in various ways. In addition to running, training and flying to races alongside men, Loroupe also became one of the first female athletes to occupy a role in her Pokot community as a 'Big (Wo)man'. Loroupe purchased not only her own properties, with homes in Nakuru and Kitali, but also to financially provided for others:

> I have a whole battalion that depends on me. 1 come from a family of 22, who virtually depend on me for many things. A good number of my community members, too, look up to me for economic support.[94]

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[90] Gitonga, 'On the Mark', p. 2.
[91] Ibid.
[92] It should be noted that their husbands were atypical. Thompson married an American and Chemweno married a Keiyo man who had studied for four years on an athletic scholarship the United States and competed twice at the Olympic Games.
[93] Gettleman, 'A Kenyan Runner'.
[94] S. Tuva, 'Star-studded Team Stands Real Chance of a Great Performance', *Saturday Nation*, 14 August 2004, p. 3; Also L. Gitonga, 'Star Athlete's Stunning Dress for Special Occasions', *Sunday Nation*, 18 July 2004, p. 3.

Loroupe paid for her siblings' education in Kenya. In addition, she financed two of her sisters to enable them to study in the United States. Emily Chebet pursued a Master's degree course in Community Health, while Gladys Loroupe completed a degree in medicine.[95] She also provided scholarships for two boys and one girl from her community to study medicine in the US.[96]

From 'her itinerant life, running, training, flying off to races and now click-clacking down the corridors of power in power suits and heels', Loroupe's career followed the pattern common to most male patrons, including the extent to which kinship ties constitute the key relationships of support.[97] Dispersing their newfound wealth amongst relatives and villagers allowed them to assert their status as 'Big Men'.

Because Loroupe was uninterested in national politics and concentrated her patronage entirely on the transfer of wealth collected at the international level to her local Pokot community, it is possible to analyse the interaction of gender and ethnicity premised on local understandings of the appropriate roles of a 'good patron' and a 'good woman'. Loroupe, by choosing to 'pour hundreds of thousands of dollars of her prize money' into her community and sponsor the Kabrech training camp for young athletes, was able to live up to the patron-client contract demanded of her. Acquiring dependents was not only one of the preeminent forms of gaining prestige but as a woman, it protected her. By understanding the significance of membership in an ethnic context, Loroupe recognised the fact that as a woman of means, she could be held accountable to those in her community who needed assistance. She chose to adhere to what makes a 'good Pokot' but not what makes a 'good woman'. She made

[95] Gitonga, 'On the Mark', p. 2.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Gettleman, 'A Kenyan Runner'.

a conscious effort to challenge effort to challenge gender limitations in order to run and advantage her community through the success of athletic achievements.

As running became a lucrative profession in the late 1980s and early 1990s, many successful male runners, and some women, served as patrons to aspiring young runners and, like Loroupe, fulfilled wider kinship obligations, even creating jobs. Loroupe was important, however, in becoming one of the first females to replicate the patterns of hegemonic masculinity by providing dependents with the resources to become productive members of their community.

She was also exceptional for organising local athletic competitions to catalyse change in her local area. In 2003, she organised the first Race for Peace in Kapenguria, West Pokot District. Her inspiration for founding the race was the experience in Indonesia in 2002, where she was invited as an ambassador for peace. She said, 'I told myself that if I could fly for thousands of kilometres to help restore confidence in a country hit by terrorists, why can't I do it at home?'[98] The Race for Peace brought together people from Pokot, Marakwet, Turkana, Southern Sudan and the Karimojong of Uganda.[99] Dave Eaton recently described the heavy armament of the Pokot, Turkana and various Karimojong territorial sections in contrast to those ethnic groups who were 'unfortunate enough' not to obtain a steady source of weapons and ammunition and thus reliant on the 'feeble strength' of the government to protect them.[100] Conflicts among these groups, to Loroupe, 'have continued claiming innocent

[98] F. Awori, 'Running for Peace in West Pokot', *Daily Nation*, 23 Dec 2005, p. 12.
[99] For recent writing on Pokot, Turkana and Karimojong raiders and the history of the conflict in the North Rift focused on West Pokot District, see: D. Eaton, 'The Business of Peace: Raiding and Peace Work Along the Kenya-Uganda Border (Part I)', *African Affairs*, Vol. 107, No. 426 (2008), pp. 89-110; and D. Eaton, 'The Business of Peace: Raiding and Peace Work Along the Kenya-Uganda Border (Part II)', *African Affairs*, Vol. 107, No. 427 (2008), pp. 243-259.
[100] Eaton, 'Business of Peace – I', p. 91.

lives, ravaged the poor people's fragile livelihoods, disrupted learning and ruined health facilities'.[101]

One newspaper report likened the struggle to overcome her friends' and father's disapproval of her running with her later efforts to fuse together the warring communities within her home area. 'An uphill task it may seem to many but Tegla is her usual self - obstinate and focused', stated one observer.[102] Loroupe describes her motivation:

> It is not an easy task but I have vowed to use my track and field achievements, skills and friends to promote peaceful co-existence and development of poor and marginalised pastoralists in my community of West Pokot and Africa at large.[103]

According to the *Daily Nation*, the Race for Peace received approbation because '[Tegla's] sporting achievements had earned her respect and gave her clout even among men with traditional mindsets'. Loroupe's interpretation was:

> They considered me their successful daughter who has brought glory and pride to the local communities, and my initiative was not met with any hostility.[104]

Loroupe's Pokot community that had previously disapproved of her training and racing changed its perception after she found prominence on the world scene and returned to West Pokot with the wealth that accompanied her many victories. The *Daily Nation* confirmed, 'There is no doubt that Tegla enjoys the respect and admiration of her people'.[105] Ottavio Castellini of *IAAF magazine* wrote about the 'welcome home' parade she was given after she won the New York City Marathon for

[101] Gitonga, 'On the Mark', p. 2.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid.
[104] Awori, 'Running for Peace', p. 12.
[105] Gitonga, 'On the Mark', p. 2.

the second time in a row, and he declared, 'one of the main aspects I recall during the event is the unbelievably strong admiration for Tegla that one could sense flowing from all the women present'.[106]

These accolades reflected the enormous increase in the level of acceptance of Tegla Loroupe's identity as a runner compared to the resistance that she encountered at the start of her career. Castellini reported the words of Rodda Rotino, a head teacher of a girl's secondary school in the area who said:

> Thanks to Tegla, today is an important day for the women of Kapenguria. They will not be spending their whole day cooking, cleaning and clearing up after their children.[107]

Although the celebrations only lasted one day, and the normal routine would resume the following morning, Loroupe's running had inspired on that day 'a seemingly never-ending succession of music, dancing, speeches, prizes and emotional outbursts', all of which was a very different reaction to the teasing and suspicion that her commitment to sport initially produced.[108] Her efforts to promote change within her local community by organising peace races, among other community development projects, won people over. In her own words:

> . . . after I won, the women came to me and said 'You were wise to resist our words. We are proud of you.' . . . It gave a lot of motivation to many people,'' she said, adding that her village ''gave me an ostrich feather. They usually give the feather to the warriors who come home victorious''.[109]

For a woman to receive an ostrich feather symbolising a victorious warrior was unprecedented. This extraordinary act made clear the extent to which Loroupe

[106] O. Castellini, 'Tegla Loroupe Race for Peace', Is. 1, *IAAF Magazine*, April 2004.
[107] Castellini, 'Tegla Loroupe'.
[108] Castellini, 'Tegla Loroupe'.
[109] S. Lorge, 'She can Make it Three; Loroupe Eyes Third Victory', *Reuters News,* 2 November 1996.

was viewed in people's eyes as a 'Big (Wo)man'. While organising the Peace Race may have been motivated by a strong sense of altruism, it was also another way in which Loroupe presided over a moral endeavour that increased her status in her community and justified her position as a female runner and patron. A person who brought back resources to his – or her – community, while seeking to diffuse conflict, was someone to be respected.

Loroupe's efforts at patronage can also be seen as a direct rejoinder to the resistance she had faced by pursuing a running career, such as the accusation of being 'half male, half female'. Her example resonates with Lonsdale's description of 'both the social-climbing African bourgeoisie and the poor', who struggle to keep up appearances and 'fought to retain their honour, to be judged as neither hard-faced exploiters on the one hand nor idle wasters on the other'.[110] Loroupe sought to make her choices and skills respectable by putting them at the service of the community and to refute the idea that she was 'idle', 'exploitative' or otherwise anti-social. Her success and her patronage allow her to make this effort, in a way that previous generations of female athletes could not. Making reputable lives possible for others, she was also aided by the prestige her running success brought – a further rejoinder to the idea that her undisciplined sexuality and unconventional lifestyle could be a threat to the reputation of the community.

As Nic Cheeseman writes, patrons are evaluated on their ability to use their wealth for the community's benefit.[111] By attending to local needs as if she were male, Loroupe embraced the notion that the wealthy had a duty to use their success to benefit the poor of the community. Wealth was both a virtuous reward for hard work

[110] J. Lonsdale, 'Moral Ethnicity', pp. 139-40.
[111] N. Cheeseman, 'Kenya Since 2002: The More Things Change the More They Stay the Same', in L. Whitfield and R. Mustapha (eds.), *Turning Points in African Democracy* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 94-113.

and one that came with obligations. What mattered was not so much how her assets were acquired but rather how far she shared them because this – the provision of the community at large - was the basis of the civic virtue and honour that Loroupe sought. In this way, she exemplifies Lonsdale's conception of a patron living up to the obligations imposed by moral ethnicity, however subversive this was to gender norms.[112]

Notably, Loroupe did not blindly give to anyone in need; rather, she focused on her family and the wider Pokot community, in accordance with Lonsdale's recognition that the well off look after 'the poor to whom one is related or whose services one needs'.[113] In this regard, ties of kinship and ethnicity determined who would be the beneficiaries of her civic responsibility. Meeting, indeed exceeding, the expectations that came with the role of patron allowed Loroupe to occupy a man's role within her particular Kalenjin community. In this way, ethnicity and wealth reinforced one another while traditional gender roles were subverted. Her running success allowed her to fulfil a patron's role within her community, thereby transforming the limitations imposed by gender.

From Cooking Pots to Jackpots: Opportunity for All, Opulence for Some

The next part of this chapter provides a broader analysis of the impact of the change in the economic structure of athletics that transformed a decision to run into a quest for wealth. While this topic demands further consideration and research, this account will give an indication of what has unfolded for women in Kenya as running became a lucrative career path. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, women have entered the sport in increasing numbers. In doing so, a tipping point has been reached in

[112] Lonsdale, 'Moral Economy of Mau Mau'.
[113] Quoted in Cheeseman, 'The More Things Change', p. 101.

female adaptation of male practices in athletics. While antagonism to female participation in athletics has not yet been fully silenced and new debates are emerging, women's running in parts of the Rift Valley has crossed into relative sustainability and success at the world level.

Until the early 1980s, racing for payment was proscribed. Competing for a profit rendered an athlete ineligible for national and international championships.[114] Eventually, under strong pressure from athletes, the international governing body of athletics softened its stance and allowed individuals legally to receive remuneration based on athletic performance. A decade of transition ensued, and the notion that races should be reserved for amateur athletes was discarded and running became a fully professional pursuit that rewarded its most talented performers.

From the early 1990s, some Kenyan women began to earn considerable wealth through competing in the newly established professional running circuit, as the career of Tegla Loroupe demonstrated. As soon as remuneration for athletes gained formal acceptance, statisticians began to record the dollar amount of prize money being awarded. According to the Association of Road Racing Statisticians, Kenyan women have together won a total of $31,502,191 in prize money since the sport became professional, most of it since 1991.[115] The first year in which a woman from Kenya achieved a top-ten world ranking in a distance event was 1991, and that was also the first year in which Kenya featured internationally as one of the top eight countries in terms of total prize money from women's running.[116] By 1994, Kenyan women were

[114] M. Polley, 'The Amateur Rules: Amateurism and Professionalism in Post-war British Athletics', *Contemporary British History*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (2000), pp. 81–114.
[115] Association of Road Racing Statisticians, 'Prize Money Distributions by Nationality of Runner (Women)', [Accessed 9 September 2014], http://www.arrs.net/PM_ByYr.htm.
[116] Ibid; Track and Field News, 'Track & Field News Rankings', [Accessed 9 September 2014], www.trackandfieldnews.com/rankings.

third in the world in winnings and by 2013 they were first, with total annual recorded earnings of $3,593,275.[117]

Kenyan women have increasingly matched Kenyan men in winning races and prize money. Female runners joined male athletes in redefining running in Kenya as a profitable source of employment. As one commentator from the *Daily Nation* wrote in 2004:

> In a nation that especially reveres long-distance runners, the rise of Kenya's women into the global running elite has enormous potential to open doors for women and improve economic conditions for everyone.[118]

Young women like Tegla Loroupe were racing at a time when the sport became professionalised and could themselves take advantage of the new economic opportunities being offered. Their international success and substantial wealth were driving a new understanding of running, inspiring Kenyans, male and female, to take up the sport in order to gain greater socio-economic mobility. The legacy left by the pioneer generation of elite female runners as women navigating a masculine world laid the foundation for Kenyan women in the twenty-first century to take advantage of these opportunities for enrichment.

Among female runners in Kenya, the rise of Pamela Jelimo is perhaps the most prominent recent example of the impact global professional sport has had. In September of 2008, Jelimo returned to her Rift Valley home of Kaptamok as Kenya's first female Olympic gold medal winner.[119] However, unlike many of the men and women who excelled before the era of professional sport, Jelimo combined her

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[117] Association of Road Racing Statisticians, 'Prize Money Distributions by Year (2013)' [Accessed 9 September 2014], http://www.arrs.net/PM_ByYr.htm.
[118] Tuva, 'Star-studded Team', p. 3.
[119] E. Makori, 'Kenya Comes Together to Celebrate Jelimo's Triumphant Homecoming', Iaaf.org, 18 September 2008 [Accessed 5 November 2012], http://www.iaaf.org/news/kind=100/newsid=47756.html.

breakthrough in Beijing with significant pecuniary success on the international athletics circuit.

During her widely publicised four-month streak of victories in Golden League competitions across three continents, she earned over $1,000,000 in prize money. This transformed the 18-year-old middle-distance athlete into one of Kenya's running celebrities in only her first season of racing at the international level. Men greeted her return brandishing 'Pamela Marry Me' placards, President Mwai Kibaki granted her a private audience, and now Pamela Jelimo Road connects her village with the 'Kipchoge Keino' athletics stadium in Eldoret, in a salute to both ground-breaking Olympic champions.[120]

The major World Championship and city marathons also began to offer attractive compensation schemes. When Catherine Ndereba broke the world record in the Chicago marathon in October 2001, in addition to a significant appearance fee, she received a $75,000 prize purse, $100,000 for breaking the world record and a Volkswagen Jetta worth $26,125.[121] The gold medal that Ndereba won for her victory in the marathon at the 2003 World Athletics Championships was worth $60,000 and it opened up other lucrative avenues in terms of appearance fees and above all, professional sponsorship through a contract with a major shoe company.[122]

Even winning minor races could bring relatively significant financial rewards. One of a family of ten, Linet Masai was raised at an altitude of 9,000 feet near the border of Kenya and Uganda, and is now one of the most successful female runners in

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[120] International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), 'Pamela Jelimo is the 2008 Golden Girl of Athletics', *IAAF 2008 Yearbook* [Accessed 9 February 2011], http://www.iaaf.org/news/magazine/newsid=49201.html.
[121] L. Schontz, 'Fast Forward: The Rise of Kenya's Women Runners', *Post-gazette.com Sports*, 22 Oct 2002 [Accessed 21 May 2012], http://www.post-gazette.com/World/20020508kenya0508p2.asp
[122] Sports Correspondent, 'Athletics: Kenya Still has the Best Record from Africa', *The Nation,* 23 August 2003, pp. 2-3.

the world. When she won a recent Glasgow half marathon, she earned $2,200 for the victory – more than twice what her father would expect to make in a year.[123]

The pecuniary rewards on offer through running have had the effect of greatly increasing the number of athletes now competing, male and female. Over the years since the sport professionalised, hundreds of Kenyan athletes have taken up running, some of whom have earned substantial income and with it, transformed the urban landscape of some Rift Valley towns. Kenyan newspapers attest to the significance of runners' earnings and offer insight into the economic changes that have been wrought, particularly on Eldoret and its satellite villages. According to *The Standard*:

> Rental houses have sprung up all around the area, shops are stocking goods that the best money can buy while new schools and hospitals are gradually being put up. It's all a result of the millions of shillings pumped into the zone by the talented athletes that have emerged from the area.[124]

The *Daily Nation* conducted a survey to consider runners' impact on Eldoret, Kenya's fifth largest city, which revealed:

> The money in prizes is fast turning the region from an agricultural zone into a massive investment destination. Eldoret town and the surrounding areas are witnessing a property boom as the sportsmen and women, many of them from the area, set the pace in investing their earnings at home.[125]

Government and sports officials in these areas also confirm the impact of runners. According to Keiyo North Sports Officer George Obumba, 'the heavy presence of the multi-millionaire athletes has changed the socio-economic landscape'.[126] Owner of a thriving sports store in Eldoret, former professional athlete

[123] D. Gillon, It's a Stroll in the Park for Masai', *The Herald*, 11 May 2009, p. 25.
[124] Standard Correspondent, 'Tegla Loroupe - Princess of Perkau', *The Standard*, 20 November 2005, p. 27.
[125] D. Macharia, 'Kenyan Athletics Starts Now', *Daily Nation*, 21 April 2007, p. 24.
[126] Quoted in E. Cheserek, 'Why Iten Camps are Loved by Many Athletes', *The Standard*, 5 Jan 2011, p. 19.

and Director of the Youth Enterprise Fund, Martin Keino gave his estimate of the contribution that runners have made:

> I would say they make a pretty big contribution to this town [Eldoret]. They are the ones who drive the demand for housing, office space in town, new construction. They are really driving the boom in this town.[127]

Changes are underway and not only in the urban geography.[128] The possibility that running will open up opportunities to exchange a precarious life for one that would empower them to secure their own positions as well as that of their families and communities has catalysed recent waves of female athletes to take up professional running and changed the motivation to run. The situation is radically different from the amateur era, to the extent that 'if you remove the money, you will not have sports'.[129] According to Waithera, 'Nowadays, running is like a business. Because you can see it is how they are getting money. It is like a business because they are making a lot of money'.[130] Susan Sirma, the first woman in Kenya to win a medal at the World Athletics Championships, notes that 'athletes from 2000 until now are different from the ones before. Nowadays everyone is training for that jackpot'.[131]

Margaret Muret brings to this topic the perspective of a female runner from an earlier generation whose talent was never fully realised. Her niece is Sally Barsosio, Kenya's first female World Athletics Championship gold medallist, and Muret has long been a strong advocate of Barsosio's running career. Although she did not advance into the elite levels of athletics, in her youth, Muret was also a runner and

[127] M. Keino, Interview, 18 Jan 2011.
[128] Sikes, M. and G. Jarvie, 'Women's Running as Freedom: Development and Choice', *Sport in Society*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (2014), pp. 507-522.
[129] T. Chemabwai, Interview, 12 Jan 2010.
[130] Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[131] S. Sirma, Interview, 14 Jan 2010.

high jumper and she has maintained a lifelong interest in the sport. Her perspective on the changes wrought by prize money is that:

> Of course, it has changed a lot, trust me. You know, money has changed everything. Because I do see now our beautiful friends here … they run because they have seen the athletes owning property, vehicles, everything. Because of money. But during my time, it was because of interest. We were few but these days, so many of them! Because they see their fellow friends, who have run and who have come out rich.[132]

Although for many years runners received basic remuneration for their efforts, the increased scale of the rewards, and the change in lifestyle realised from lavish prize money, mean that the material benefits to be gained through running are the central motivation of those now competing. Female athletes embarking on a running career today declare that they concentrate wholly on the materially transformative power that athletics success would confer on their young children and extended families. Monica Cheruiyot, mother of two small boys and aspiring 10K runner, describes her motivation:

> I run to change my life. I run for my children, not only these two but also for the brother. He is nine years old, still in Class Eight [Primary School]. I want to have a *shamba* someday, for these children. I do not want a man, never again. I want my own *shamba* and I want to have enough to send my children, or the brother, to college someday.[133]

Fellow aspirant Eunice Jelimo trains so that someday, she can earn enough to purchase a plot of land:

> A piece of land. And then I build a very good house [sic]. And then after, after I would build rental houses in town. Money is everything. With money, you can do anything. Without money, you cannot.[134]

[132] M. Muret, Interview, 1 April 2011.
[133] M. Cheruiyot, Interview, 9 April 2011.
[134] E. Jelimo, Interview, 16 April 2011.

Since a woman could transform her family's standard of living as well as her own opportunities through running, the windfalls that could be earned through racing became increasingly central as to why women, and men, in Kenya choose to run. In turn, these new cohorts themselves create further transformations. As a result, people have come increasingly to regard women as athletes in their own right. The prospect of becoming wealthy through running continues to intersect with and reshape objections to women's participation, accelerating change in the social construction of athletics as the domain of men. Enough women have come to occupy these positions of power to suggest that ideas about gender roles and running are changing.

However, this is not to say gender equality has been achieved or deep historical memories of gender erased; rather, the issue remains a contested and dynamic area of debate. Some women still do not race because their husbands will not allow it. The case of Ann Jepkosgei offers a glimpse of the on-going challenges. When asked in 2011 why she had ceased to run, she replied:

> I ask [my husband]…I pray for him to tell me yes. I like running! I love to join them – women runners! But if he says no, I stay. I will not force him because I am in the house. I am married. But if I am free, I will run![135]

Women runners have made considerable progress. But their participation remains contested, governed by expectations of femininity and power dynamics that demand adherence to gender roles. Evidence also lies in the fact that significantly more Kenyan men than women train in the Rift Valley and compete around the world. Despite the tremendous economic incentives that the global sports industry provides to both men and women, full parity between Kenyan men and Kenyan women in athletics has yet to be reached.

[135] A. Jepkosgei, Interview, 9 Feb 2011.

'Big (Wo)men'

From the 1970s, some female Kenyan runners were successful in entering the highest levels of athletics and society. They were exceptional, particularly in their ability to escape from and redefine the confines of marriage that limited the vast majority of women in sport. The women considered here were remarkably talented runners who achieved international standing in sport and became self-confident citizens of the world. Many others whose lives followed a similar trajectory also attained educational qualifications beyond the norm for Kenyan women, and almost all came from backgrounds in which at least one parent was solidly supportive of their athletic ambitions.

Although few in number, the pioneer generation of successful female runners in Kenya circumvented unequal social formations by making use of ethno-cultural constructs traditionally associated with masculinity and forging a conventionally 'masculine' career path that prioritised athletics and education. These early female runners succeeded in gaining social and economic independence and status on their own.

The career choices made by the first generation of women runners discussed did not typify a 'female' path. Rather, their pursuit of excellence in the masculine domain of sport dictated their decisions to delay, refuse or subvert marriage. Ultimately, for each, success accorded an unusual amount of authority, prestige and material security. Their struggles to participate in the traditionally masculine domain of sport led to personal empowerment and to material well-being for themselves and their communities. They showed that women who enter male-dominated fields could

benefit from an enhanced sense of self-worth and the development of new identities, which agrees with studies undertaken on this occurrence in other contexts.[136]

These female athletes and others like them were proclaimed in the media and younger girls were certainly aware of their achievements. But any wider social change that occurred was the consequence of the efforts of individual actors combined with the changing economics of the sport rather than collective resistance. Female runners did not organise to advance their interests, to bring about change deliberately or to make collective decisions. Nor were they portrayed in the media as rebels against community gender norms. Rather, each female runner who emerged into the senior ranks of athletes did so by navigating the opportunities and constraints before her as an individual. Participation was much more a conscious choice to compete for its own sake than it was a deliberate attempt to influence broader discourses about gender.[137]

As a result, runners like Waithera and Loroupe were pioneers with few immediate followers because becoming an 'honorary man' or even a 'Big (Wo)man' was not a feasible strategy for women as a group. The tension between the need for disciplined female choices and patronage that could make reputable lives possible for others could only be bridged by success. Without establishing more sustainable pathways for a critical mass of female runners to emerge, the existing social order persisted. Though these scant few women challenged the status quo successfully and added an ingredient that facilitated subsequent change, throughout the twentieth century, this was an individual transformation, not a societal one.

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[136] M. Bialeschki and S. Michener, 'Re-entering Leisure: Transition within the Role of Motherhood', *Journal of Leisure Research*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (1994), pp. 57-74; K. Lyness, 'Finding the Key to the Executive Suite: Challenges for Women and People of Color', in R. Silzer (ed.), *The 21st century Executive: Innovative Practices for Building Leadership at the Top* (San Francisco, CA, 2002), pp. 229–73.

[137] G. Jarvie and M. Sikes, 'Running as a Resource of Hope? Voices from Eldoret', *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 39, No. 134 (2012), pp. 629-644.

Conclusion

Sport unequivocally came with assumptions about the appropriate gender of its participants. Examining the choices made by female sport pioneers, this chapter explored how some women created new spaces for themselves in athletics and also society. In explaining the phenomenon of successful female runners, this discussion has engaged with concepts of gender and ethnicity, rather than relying on frameworks that treat the two as separate categories.

The novelty of the chapter thus lies in analysing how women, via their success as athletes, emulated successful male strategies of conducting their lives. Facilitating this was the common human proclivity to advantage one's family, friends and community members, which women chose to do according to male models of behaviours. Loroupe bestowed the fruits of her success on her own West Pokot sub-group, positioning herself as a local 'Big (Wo)man" while Waithera was advantaged by the propensity of Presidents to give rewards to successful sports stars.

The lives of women like Loroupe and Waithera illustrate the persistence of gender inequalities in sport and society and the strategies that some female athletes used to dispute expectations imposed by their gender in post-colonial Kenya. Female runners left their rural homes, took up waged employment and established alternative ways of life. As runners, as soldiers and as global travellers, they demonstrated that it was possible to compete as adult women and to make a living through sport by constructing their own identity within masculine domains. Choices around marriage were also pivotal in female runners' ascent. In order to continue running, some female runners chose to stay single, putting involvement in sport above the normative expectations for their gender.

By taking advantage of new opportunities at the global level and mimicking the practices of male runners, individual female runners were able to succeed. Absent a critical mass of successful runners, however, serious challenges to ingrained attitudes about women and gendered boundaries did not materialise and cultural antipathy towards female runners persisted. Colonial and indigenous histories that converged in sport constructed runners as men while women's subsequent adoption of masculine gender roles, to the extent that some became 'Big (Wo)men', reinforced the existing social order. Nonetheless, the lives of Waithera and Loroupe highlight the many positive possibilities that athletics afforded, including individual empowerment and improvement of communities. They not only pioneered running, they began to challenge societal views of what women could accomplish.

Conclusion

This dissertation has peered down a kaleidoscope onto multifaceted bits of evidence drawn from disparate archives, official documents, newspaper stories, and other sources. Piece by piece they have been arranged and rearranged, given meaning, and ultimately glued together with that most potent of adhesives, the oral testimony of the protagonists of this most intriguing story. It is their words that afford key insights, working a type of alchemy that turns fragments of paint into a picture. I have gone diving for pearls, and found a necklace. This is the story of Kalenjin women runners.

This conclusion reviews the core arguments of the thesis and their contribution to gender history, sports history and African history. It also includes discussion of the impact that the professionalisation of running in the twenty-first century has had on the themes identified throughout the dissertation. Progress continues to be made via enhanced economic opportunities available to female runners. Although the challenges for families trying to assimilate this development remain salient and antagonism to female participation in athletics has not yet been fully quelled, women's running in parts of the Rift Valley has crossed into relative sustainability and female Kenyan athletes are now enjoying unprecedented success at the world level.

The thesis began by demonstrating that during the first half of the twentieth century, Kenyan men benefitted disproportionately from a gamut of British imperial institutions, from waged work to land registration and new political appointed positions. Athletics was no exception. Under British rule in Kenya, an exclusive male culture consolidated. The exclusion of adult women from sport began when western

forms of running were first introduced to the colony. By the end of the 1950s, men had emerged as internationally successful runners in the absence of Kenyan women.

Conceptions about sport and masculinity that had developed in nineteenth century Britain assumed the marginalisation of women. The imperatives of Victorian society and imperialism celebrated manliness in competitive sport that constrained the possibilities and expectations of women as athletes. The very possibility of participation by Kenyan women at any significant level of athletics did not reach realisation until the eve of independence in the decade of the 1960's.

Women were largely excluded from the increasingly organised world of British sport and at major international competitions like the Olympic Games. Drawn mainly from the middle and upper classes, some women found niches for themselves in socially acceptable sports like tennis and equestrian pursuits. However, they were still more often spectators than competitors during this period, for as Holt pointed out, 'while it was nice for a girl to be able to play tennis, she was not supposed to be good at it'.[1]

No such equivocation surrounded men's sports. Western women's limited participation had significant implications for other parts of the world that looked to Europe for the template upon which to model sport. Colonial administrators mandated to establish sport in Kenya had little experience with women's involvement in physical games when they set about building athletic competitions in the colony.

The nineteenth and early twentieth century 'games revolution' offered a strong fit for imperialists in their search for moral authority in the colonies. To encourage Kenyans to run, jump and throw according to western movement cultures was to justify the righteousness of colonial rule. In the imperial imagination, the principles of

[1] R. Holt, *Sport and The British: A Modern History* (Oxford, 1989), p. 127.

sport presented an opportunity to instil western ideals in colonised peoples. Legions of colonial administrators and missionaries brought with them to Africa a deep commitment to the 'games ethic', the belief that sport forged physically strong, well-rounded men of sound moral character.

As boys in public schools and universities in Britain, the officials responsible for governing during the colonial period had themselves been taught to value athletics for its production of disciplined and healthy men. They shaped the culture of Kenyan sport according to these codes of behaviour and ethics and according to a gender regime apparent at the highest levels of international sport. These men, who held in common a belief in the intrinsic morality of sport, created policies and nurtured institutions embedded with gender inequalities.

In Kenya, these customs were first institutionalised in the 1920s and subsequent decision-makers closely adhered to them throughout the colonial period. There was a high degree of continuity among the men in charge of Kenyan athletics, which perpetuated the status quo. Policies they instituted re-created the system of social exclusion that characterised British athletics, though in the colonies it became predominately race rather than class that stratified male runners.

This longstanding organisation of competition along racial lines was finally challenged when the Kenyan men's team debuted at the 1954 Empire and Commonwealth Games amidst the Mau Mau Emergency at home. Kenya's participation at the Games followed the landmark decision by the leaders of Kenyan athletics to enact policies of racial equality among male runners. These decision-makers shared a vision for international success by Kenyan athletes and, in order to facilitate this, they agreed it was necessary to provide equal opportunities for African

men to compete with those of European descent. These events advanced the integration of men but did nothing to introduce women into sport.

Throughout the colonial period, the need to assimilate values and negotiate the practices of subject peoples was imperative for colonial success and British colonisers left many customs and institutions intact. Yet British policies outlawing historical gender norms and social institutions, such as clitoridectomy and cattle raiding, generated immediate and wide-scale resistance among Kenyans. Conversely, the notion of athletics as a singularly masculine domain was widely supported by Kenyans during the colonial period.

Prior to colonialism, occupations in Rift Valley pastoralist societies had been created through a range of practices to conform to gender attributes. The construction of masculine and feminine identities was distinct and socially embedded, to the extent that women could stand as 'female husbands' without issue. This division of labour was one in which men were runners via gender-specific tasks and responsibilities. From cattle raiding to message delivery, and from military affairs to days of marching, men undertook endurance-based activities; women did not. Any activity or occupation that involved running was understood to be a male-only function long before the introduction of western forms of athletics.

The male-centred model of British sport found complete compatibility among the pastoralist societies of the Rift Valley. Participation by women in athletics would have violated established gender norms. The construction of gender identities embedded in both African and European social fabric meant that Kenyan women did not participate as athletes during most of the colonial period. Athletics thus developed into a cultural institution shared by colonisers and colonised, from which women were excluded.

The second part of the thesis analysed the strategies that women employed to build careers as successful runners. The phrase 'fragile project' captures the earliest stage of Kenyan women's running during the period of post-colonial, pre-professional sport. For the first time, a handful of Kenyan women competed internationally. Yet throughout this period, international competitive success eluded the vast majority of Kenyan females, many of whom had been successful junior athletes. By the mid-1980s, the situation of these runners had improved only relative to the colonial period, during which time women did not compete abroad at all. Their participation and results at the international level remained limited and tenuous, while male runners' participation increased and their performances vastly improved.

Internationally, the 1950s was a decade characterised by a resurgence of female domesticity. The policies of the post-World War II period continued to exclude female athletes. Global governing bodies limited competitions based on the belief that women were not strong enough to endure distances beyond 800 metres and upheld the pre-war ruling that restricted women to the traditionally accepted, 'feminine appropriate' sprints and middle distances.

From the early 1960s until the Los Angeles Games of 1984, at the global level, women's athletics emerged from the 'wilderness' of sport. Assisted by top-down legislation as well as by the efforts of individual female athletes like Boston Marathon pioneer Katherine Switzer, women's participation in track and field incrementally expanded, culminating in their participation in the full panoply of events long enjoyed by men.

Two changes accelerated international women's running during this period. These were the expansion of middle and long-distance races including the marathon for women at major meets and the passage of Title IX legislation in the US mandating

equal funding for men's and women's athletics at all federally funded American schools and universities. Standards within women's athletics were improving significantly and it became official policy that a female athlete could compete at even the longest distances.

The expanded international women's programme had a trickle-down effect on national competitions and institutions within Kenya, which became more receptive to women's participation at all distances. National championships gradually reached parity between men and women in the wake of changes at the international level. Women-only running camps and meets also opened new opportunities for women to train and to compete.

American athletics scholarships increased Kenyan runners' opportunities to compete abroad. A crucial legal decision in 1973 meant that age was no longer a constraint on the scope of foreign athletes' tenure as student-athletes in the United States. The removal of the age constraint combined with passage of Title IX in 1972 in theory should have allowed Kenyan women to immediately benefit from the same range of opportunities as men at the collegiate level. However, in practice, years of women's athletic participation were lost, caused by delays in the enforcement of Title IX. From the early 1970s, it was not Kenyan women but Kenyan men who were the main beneficiaries of athletic scholarship opportunities.

These events, though valuable to many, affected Kenyan male and female runners differently, particularly in the context of Kenya's scarce resources. Although at the international level of sport, women were making some progress, in general they lagged behind men. Taken together, women had far fewer race opportunities and chances to compete both inside and outside of Kenya. These combined with economic factors to fundamentally inhibit the development of their talent.

Females also faced a set of very staid and seemingly intractable cultural views about gender value. According to one report in the Kenyan press in the early 2000s:

> In some Kenyan communities, until very recently, if you killed a man, you owed his family 100 sheep or goats and if you killed a woman, 30 would do. The custom has disappeared but we are still struggling with the mind-set.[2]

This 'mind-set' that valued men and women disparately was the single largest determinant of the gender gap in athletics. Education in Kenya and the Rift Valley widened after independence with thousands more primary and secondary schools being built, resulting in rising enrolment rates. Yet girls were more likely than boys to leave primary school prematurely and far fewer transitioned to secondary school. This meant that pursuing university education and sport abroad, an opportunity that many of Kenya's best male athletes accepted, was an option available to few female runners. Pregnancy also caused some girls to drop out of school and sport, though most girls who left education early did so for other reasons, including financial constraints.

The social construction of gender identities within the Rift Valley continued to constrain women's success in running, and not only through limiting girls' education relative to boys. Women who sought to race after marriage faced unsupportive husbands and widespread derision from others in the community. Wives' running was a source of conflict and often led to them abandoning it.

A woman was expected to behave in ways that did not challenge masculinities. Training and travelling to compete, particularly once children were born, challenged established gender identities and risked imposing domestication and loss of social

[2] S. Tuva, 'Star-studded Team Stands Real Chance of a Great Performance', *Saturday Nation*, 14 August 2004, p. 3.

status on men. The persistence of these gender norms continued to negatively impact Kenyan women's potential.

Despite these many obstacles, some female Kenyan runners were able to achieve success in sport during this period. These pioneer women resisted dominant ideologies of gender and created new spaces for themselves by emulating male behaviours and by taking advantage of the changing economics of the sport. These women left their rural homes, took up waged employment and established alternative ways of life. On the track, at military bases, in urban centres and abroad, they demonstrated that it was possible to compete as adult women and to make a living through sport by constructing their own identity within masculine domains. In doing so, this group of successful female Kenyan runners gained power, wealth, mobility and status.

Choices around marriage were pivotal in female runners' ascent in the competitive arena. In order to continue running, some female runners chose to stay single, others delayed marriage until retiring from athletics and some only committed to a marriage in which a husband wholly supported his wife's desire to run. Such unions almost always consisted of women who married talented male runners who had previously studied and competed abroad.

By replicating the prototype of 'masculine runners' that had been established during the previous fifty years, these women's lives reveal the structure of gender relations within post-colonial communities in Kenya's Rift Valley. Their experiences demonstrate that despite the negative social consequences involved, some women were able to use sport and moral ethnicity as vehicles to expand the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

Rejecting, delaying or subverting marriage and complying with preconceived notions of masculinity also meant that significant gender inequalities between men and women in sport persisted, however. Particularly in the early years of the professional era, 'Big (Wo)men' were acclaimed because they were able to perform a patronage role, thereby reinforcing an existing moral economy and set of gender expectations that advantaged men. Even by the late 1980s, only a fraction of Kenyan women were competing in the senior ranks. While participation in sport fostered new opportunities and even independence for a few individuals, the constraints that being born a female imposed, particularly around marriage, continued to limit the ambitions and achievements, athletic or otherwise, of most girls. A tiny subset of women at the top who found ways to circumvent structural inequalities did not immediately bring liberation for the vast majority. Though the exploration of new forms of conjugal relations and female runners' wealth were ingredients of change, throughout the twentieth century, Kenyan running remained principally a masculine phenomenon.

What emerges from this study of the first generations of female runners in Kenya is that masculinity in sport was non-negotiable – women could compete, but only by drawing on preconceived notions of masculinity. Though a small group of female runners were able to construct niches in the gendered domain of sport and elsewhere, people interpreted their success in ways congruent with established templates of masculinity. Without a critical mass of female competitors, Kenyan society faced little real challenge to engrained attitudes about women and gendered boundaries and categories were left largely intact.

A strong female presence was needed to undermine the masculinity of athletics and though it took time, such a reality has begun to emerge after the turn of the twenty-first century. Thus women's running remained tenuous and stunted in the

years following independence until the opportunities of professional sport toppled barriers to their success. Today, Kenyan women are world champions in track, cross-country and marathons. World records set in victories in races across Europe, Asia, and the United States has gained Kenyan women international respect, recognition and a top ranking among the fastest female athletes in the world.

The rise of women's running raises new challenges and implications, however. The substantial wealth that runners can now gain quickly through racing is of concern to some, including many of the women from the pioneer generation of women's athletics in Kenya. Ruth Waithera has noted that among the current generation of female athletes competing for Kenya, many emerge as champions – only to disappear as swiftly as they rose in the international ranks. In her words:

> And a person who is in this business, it is quick money – like that [snaps her fingers]. Lot of money. But they don't go many years. They get the money so quick, and the money then get finished so quick.[3]

Leah Malot, veteran World Cross-Country Team Champion and winner of three major marathons, attributes the negative consequences that professional sport has wrought, in part, to youth and the concomitant stubborn inability to take financial advice:

> The problem with the girls at this age, they do not want to listen. If you tell her something, she says 'I know it'. She doesn't want to listen to somebody like me. She wants to do everything for herself. There are so many girls who run together who are younger than me. And when they run in Europe and when you tell her, 'When you get money, you do this, A, B, C, D' and then later on, you will hear that she has failed. Because she has issues with the money, because she will not listen to your advice.[4]

Female athletes who were in the vanguard of women's running in Kenya bring out a 'darker side' to narratives about women hitting 'jackpots'. They worry about the

[3] R. Waithera, Interview, 18 Feb 2011.
[4] L. Malot, Interview, 24 January 2011.

dangers posed by the enormity, and the suddenness, of the wealth that athletes now can earn by racing well and feel frustrated by their inability to pass on wisdom gained from experience. Articulating different concerns, editorialist Sulubu Tuva's evocative column is worth repeating in full:

> Peasant farmers and other villagers in the Rift Valley are seeing grand villas mushrooming in their neighbourhoods and limousines ploughing through village lanes and the streets of Eldoret. Responsible for these architectural and vehicular testaments to the newly acquired class are athletes, wisened by poverty and who have honed their business management skills at universities abroad. Should we then wonder why our villagers choose to push their children in the direction of athletics? Exploited or not, the little that these athletes earn and bring home is still substantial by local standards.[5]

While shedding light on the various forms of athletes' conspicuous consumption, Tuva raises anxieties about new class formations and power relations among unequal groups. He also hints at a problematic issue: whether for some families, the allure of wealth through running has caused youth to turn away from education in favour of full-time training.

As these transformations indicate, the subject matter of this thesis connects directly to wider themes, challenges and gaps in sports, African and gender history. Historical studies of Kenya have failed to learn from sport and the literature on sport history has paid little attention to the contribution of female runners. Kalenjin men and their involvement in athletics have been studied but not in a holistic gendered fashion, leaving unexamined the global, national and local interconnections that underpinned the early development of a singularly male athletics landscape. Within the field of East African running, the generalised experience of male athletes often serves as the normative reference point and the literature thus far has not provided a significant historical evaluation of the emergence of Kenya's female runners during

[5] S. Tuva, 'Gold Holds No More Allure', *Saturday Nation*, 29 May 2004, p. 32.

the post-colonial period. This has left unanswered even the basic question of why did women run and what obstacles did they face and overcome as athletes?

This dissertation addresses these shortcomings in four ways. First, it attempts to retrieve the gendered history of Kenyan athletics from the margins of sport, gender and Africanist historiographies. The goal throughout was not simply to explore a rich history but also to understand the ways that gender roles have been constructed, understood and changed over time in Kenya's Rift Valley and by doing so, make a case for the significant contribution that studies of sport can make to African history. Such a study should be neither secondary nor subordinate to other important sets of questions. Rather, the relationship between gender and sport within the Kalenjin community provides a basis for understanding the history of Rift Valley societies more broadly.

Secondly, a primary impetus for this project, and a long-overlooked component of the subject in general, was the perspective of the ground-breaking women themselves. Through interviews these women offered a range of reasons why they pursued athletics despite the challenges. Conducting oral histories in a timely manner was essential since memories fade with time. Focusing on individuals provided the opportunity to integrate personal motivations and experiences within the larger narratives of global institutions, post-colonial histories and economic processes.

Many of those in the first generation ran for the personal satisfaction it provided as well as for prestige and the opportunity for travel. Today, it has become clear that a woman can transform her family's standard of living as well as her own position through running and the primacy of what can be earned through racing has become increasingly central to why women from the Rift Valley choose to run.

Thirdly, this study adds to the literature by engaging with John Lonsdale's ideas of moral ethnicity, in this case among the Kalenjin, and argues that scholars interested in the social construction of ethnicity should give equal attention to the social construction of gender among those peoples. Choices made by successful female runners in the 1970s and 1980s generated heated moral debate. As a consequence, when researching ethnicity and considering what it means to 'be Kalenjin', and how this changes over time, it is important to note the 'bottom-up' pressure to attain productive and worthy households, and the extent to which this fundamentally depended on faithful wives within traditional marriages.

Finally, this thesis demonstrates the value of assessing together the divergences, continuities, connections and changes that mediated opportunities for women at the local, national and global levels. Currents and tensions within and between each level were interlinked. The world mattered, but so did the neighbourhood and nation-state. Favourable social environments, prevailing concurrently, were necessary for athletics to transition from exclusion to inclusion. For most of the twentieth century, social conditions within one (or more) levels proved inimical to the emergence of Kenyan female runners.

Beginning in the 1960s, the social context in places like the United States and Europe created a fertile environment for a shift in thinking about women's participation in athletics, which influenced opportunities for female runners in Kenya. Increasingly broad international support for women in sport led ultimately to a small contingent of Kalenjin women able to compete at an elite level of running. Today, local support for women's running as a suitable female occupation has reached unprecedented levels and Kenyan women are emerging as World and Olympic champions with the same frequency as Kenyan men. By explaining the emergence of

female runners from the Rift Valley, a major contribution of this thesis has been to address how society can change.

These findings complement what has emerged from other fields of research. Throughout this period and into the twenty-first century, Kenyan women have increasingly entered male domains, including politics, business and education. Women have demonstrated economic leadership, particularly in creating women's organisations, in the micro-enterprise sector and in agriculture.[6] The role of women has received increased attention from researchers and policy analysts alike as female involvement in national politics has increased compared to the decades immediately following independence, particularly through their presence in voluntary associations, since the early 1990s.[7]

With the onset of multiparty politics, many changes occurred that were to some degree attributable to women: new organisations formed with the aim to mobilise women and articulate their concerns while formerly apolitical groups of women were galvanised to offer support in broader debates. Although their penetration into formal political realms and their opportunity to exercise power over policy remains marginal, some women have been elected or appointed to serve in political institutions at local and national levels of politics. In particular, the most recent constitution created a gender quota. This could not be implemented in time for

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[6] E. Francis, *Making a Living: Changing Livelihoods in Rural Africa* (London, 2002); K. Smith, *Ethical trade, Gender, and Sustainable Livelihoods: Women Smallholders and Ethicality in Kenya* (London, 2014); B. Mutoro, *Women Working Wonders: Small-scale Farming and the Role of Women in Vihiga District, Kenya: A Case study of North Maragoli* (Amsterdam, 1997).

[7] M. Udvardy, 'Theorizing Past and Present Women's Organizations in Kenya', *World Development*, Vol. 26, No. 9 (1998), pp. 1749-1761; M. Nzomo, 'Kenyan Women in Politics and Public Decision Making', in G. Mikeli, *African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in sub-Saharan Africa* (Philadelphia, 1997), pp. 232-256; N. Kamau, *Women and Political Leadership in Kenya: Ten Case Studies* (Nairobi, 2010); B. House-Midamba, 'Gender, Democratization, and Associational Life in Kenya', *Africa Today*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (1996), pp. 289-305.

the 2013 elections, but female representatives were nonetheless elected from each county. In total 47 were elected, and although women performed poorly at other levels, this was significant.

Evidence of improvement in gender equality in education can be found in the changing gender composition of Kenyan universities.[8] An increase in the proportion of women in the overall university student body, from single-digit percentages in the 1970s, to 30.5 per cent according to the most recent statistics, signifies impressive advancement.[9] Challenges remain, such as staff recruitment and promotion that lags behind female student enrolment percentages, with only 18 per cent female academic staff at the University of Nairobi in 2006.[10] The choice of academic discipline also remains gendered, with relatively few women enrolled in science and engineering courses.[11] Female students have been shown to encounter more difficulties than males in other ways, such as inadequate accommodation, poor sanitary facilities, inadequate security and sexual harassment. Nonetheless, it is clear that progress has been made over the last fifty years.

According to the Gender Gap Index, Kenya has gone from being the 99th best country in the world in terms of gender equality in 2012 to the 72nd best country in the world in 2013.[12] This is a reasonably high score – above states such as Japan – and reflects the fact that Kenya has a strong female-male ratio of 0.88 when it comes to

[8] For other aspects of gender and education, see: M. Barng'etuny, *Women's Education and Career Opportunities in Kenya* (Nairobi, 1999); C. Lesorogol, 'Setting Themselves Apart: Education, Capabilities, and Sexuality among Samburu Women in Kenya', *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (2008), pp. 551-577; M. Schafer, 'Household Change and Rural School Enrollment in Malawi and Kenya', *The Sociological Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (2006), pp. 656-691.
[9] J. Onsongo, 'Gender Inequalities in Universities in Kenya', in C. Creighton and F. Yieke (eds.), *Gender Inequalities in Kenya* (2006), pp. 31-48.
[10] Ibid.
[11] C. Chesaina, The Development of Women's Studies in Kenya', *Women's Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 3/4 (1994), pp. 180-196.
[12] R. Hausmann, L. Tyson and S. Zahidi, 'The Global Gender Gap Report 2012', *World Economic Forum* (2012).

labour force participation – ranking 30 out of 134 countries. Kenya also performs reasonably well when it comes to the female-male pay ratio, which stands at 0.68. Although this is of course disappointing, it is comparatively good, ranking Kenya 56 out of 129 countries when it comes to wage equality.

The gradual emergence of women into masculine realms, while encouraging, has not been without debate. Margarthe Silberschmidt's research among the Kisii revealed men who perceived increased female economic and professional activity as a direct challenge to their honour and position within the family.[13] She puts forward the case that in the wake of this loss of identity and diminished self-esteem, Kisii male identity seemed increasingly linked to sexuality, to men's control of women's sexuality and to alcohol abuse, violence and rape.[14] While similar anthropological findings have yet to be shown among the Kalenjin, on the basis on this evidence, the evolving material conditions of contemporary Kenya can provoke conflict as well as change within the existing gender order, transformations in which female runners are increasingly playing a part.

The problems women face in pursuing 'masculine' careers fall squarely within the long-standing and on-going debates that have been a major theme of this thesis. A woman who enters politics, business, higher education and sport may well provide her community with material rewards and prestige. Yet to some, she also poses a threat. These issues continue to be argued about and the solutions through which this is negotiated are likely to continue, in different social spheres, from running to politics

[13] M. Silberschmidt, *"Women Forget that Men are the Masters": Gender Antagonism and Socio-economic Change in Kisii District, Kenya* (Copenhagen, 1999).
[14] For a comparison between Kenya and Tanzania: M. Silberschmidt, 'Poverty, Male Disempowerment and Male Sexuality: Rethinking Men and Masculinities in Rural and Urban East Africa', in L. Ouzgane and R. Morell (eds.), *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Scottsville, SA, 2005), pp. 172-189.

to entrepreneurship, as women increasingly demonstrate the capacity for success in 'unconventional' paths.

The interaction between global and local configurations of gender will also remain salient. Kenyan athletics continues to develop as an essential part of a global sports economy and equal opportunities to earn money through racing have mattered to all Kenyans. For women in particular, the professionalisation of sport and the opportunity to earn prize money has mitigated the escalating set of circumstances that otherwise hindered their progression into the senior ranks of international athletics.

Yet for all Kenyan runners to discover their full potential, women's changing roles in sport, and other fields, must be balanced by a revised role for men at home. Progress continues to be made via enhanced economic opportunities available to female runners but the challenges for families trying to assimilate this development are also considerable, and a 'flexible running utopia' has yet to emerge. Gender norms are persistent and difficult to change and thus far, even the substantial economic rewards of running have failed to fully close the Kenyan athletics' 'gender gap'.

The findings of this thesis with regards to the opportunities and constraints on Kenya's female runners have implications for policy-makers. The contrast between the sweeping changes in women's sport wrought in America following the enforcement of Title IX and the slower, incremental progress of female athletes in Kenya in the wake of the professionalisation of sport suggests the need for policy that mandates gender equality in athletics. Further comparative research is needed to document the way that local factors shaped the impact of the introduction of colonial sports, and to illuminate the locally defined norms of masculine behaviour to which

women had to respond. How women do this is likely to be vary from case to case, with important implications for contemporary gender relations.

This thesis set out to answer a question posed by Eric Hobsbawm in 1989, when he asked 'How could women compete as women in a public sphere formed by and in terms suited to a differently designed sex?'[15] Positing that there is no single answer to this question, he suggested that it would be faced in different ways by every generation, dependent on its own historical contingencies. This thesis has offered empirical evidence in support of this conclusion in the Kenyan context. The tensions and pathways through which gender relations have evolved are likely to be very different, but just as interesting, in other contexts.

However, they are also likely to certain common concerns. In the African context, the influence of the gendered hierarchies produced by the empire on its colonies has been long lasting and substantial. This thesis has sought to examine the social construction of gender identities among the Kalenjin, and the extent to which these fundamentally constrained women's running, by reading the local environment against the backdrop of this global process and their athletics success. It is only by considering the interaction between the local and the global that one can start to understand gender dynamics, and how they evolve over time.

Today, although running is not yet a part of 'ideal womanhood', athletics in Kenya is no longer as profoundly masculine as it once was and the changing economics of the sport continues to contribute to this transformation. The successes of female runners have enabled women to introduce female perspectives and attitudes into Kenyan athletics, culture and life in general. There is the possibility that the less male dominated sport - and society - becomes, the less need there will be to adapt to

[15] E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire: 1875 – 1914* (New York, 1989), p. 216.

male norms. One hopes that someday, regardless of gender, public esteem, reputation and honour will be accorded solely for engaging in conscientious and productive labour, whether that is directed towards holding political office, child-raising or athletics.

Appendix

Discussion of Fieldwork in Kenya

In this Appendix, I will reflect further on the fieldwork that was necessary for writing this thesis. The method, as discussed in Chapter Two, was to combine evidence gleaned from archival study with the oral testimonies of Kenyan men and women, most of whom are Kalenjin.

British colonialists created an extensive and detailed trail of progress reports and correspondence, many of which can now be found in archives across Kenya. Yet within all these historical records there is no coherent archive of African sport, particularly pertaining to African women. Books and memoirs of women's activities were rarely published and official discourse paid them scant attention.

The challenge for the historian interested in studying African women's sport history is to tease significant facts out of documents that were intended for other purposes. For example, *The Nation* or *The Standard* sports articles shed some light on female athletes' experiences when the main thrust of the reporting concerned male athletes. In addition I located and spoke with female athletes whose memories have not been recorded elsewhere. They provided information and insights without which this could not have been written.

Within the dissertation, I sought to render myself an invisible narrator, adopting a third-person voice in deference to Oxford History thesis conventions and so as not to distract from the academic material I sought to present. In this Appendix, however, I take a first-person voice in order to describe freely, using verbs, the challenges of conducting fieldwork in Kenya for the first time.

Finding Kenya's Female Runners: Documentary Discoveries

After disembarking from the plane at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport and clearing customs, my first stop was the 'Athletics Kenya Museum' in Riadha House and Nyayo Stadium on the busy main road from the airport to Nairobi. I enthusiastically set about photographing everything that the Museum contained. This proved disappointingly limited.

I had imagined a trove of extensive histories of both the men and women who shaped the country's storied athletics history. After all, this was the country's only repository dedicated officially and solely to Kenyan Athletics. However, the Museum boasted only a single room. Runners' blurry pictures were arrayed in rows behind glass frames that hung along the walls, each shot accompanied by a short blurb detailing the individual's awards and accomplishments. About the social context, challenges, decisions and historical narratives on which such successes were predicated, I found little.

The next target for investigation was the National Archives located on Moi Avenue in chaotic downtown Nairobi. The Kenya National Archives (KNA) was established in 1965 and over 40,000 files are housed in an impressive colonial-era building that was constructed by the National & Grindlays Bank in 1931. Public records can be studied in the library and search room. As the latest arrival in a long line of researchers keen to pour over texts in the upstairs reading room of the KNA, I was following an established trail. The head archivist and many of the KNA's interns were essential for my research.

Taking the available KNA's reports on Uasin Gishu District as one example of the array of documentary sources through which I searched for pearls of athletics history, I requested and read through 35 files pertaining to Uasin Gishu alone, namely

PC/RVP/2/8/17 from 1942-1945; DC/UG/1/2 from 1949-1959; and the Uasin Gishu Annual Reports from 1960-1963, 1965-1974, 1976-1979, 1981 and 1988. In similar fashion, I searched for any mention of women's sport in all available annual reports for sixteen districts across Nyanza and Rift Valley Provinces that had been published during the colonial and post-colonial periods. In total I read over three hundred reports each of which typically ranged from 50 to 100 pages.

But despite sifting through the KNA's labyrinthine database and scouring the official reports from Districts across western Kenya for mention of 'women's sport', 'sport', 'athletics', 'education' or 'community development', I eventually exhausted this resource without coming close to fulfilling my research goals. Only a few paragraphs in each report gave clues to the development of sport. Most of the meagre information available pertained to football (soccer) and almost nothing emerged on women's athletics. Somewhat disheartened, I nonetheless photographed each District's social, economic and political end-of-year reports for context along with whatever I could find that related to sport.

I inquired about accessing army reports and was told that a confidential archive exists open only to those with clearance from the Kenyan Department of Defense. Additionally, I attempted to locate previous masters and doctoral theses on this topic. This meant enlisting the assistance of a student at Nairobi's Catholic University of East Africa, who searched the archives on my behalf. I also spent the better part of a day at Nairobi University, waiting outside the Vice Chancellor's office to gain permission to peruse their sources. Both forays revealed only that the Kenyan students from these two universities have written very little on this topic.

More research would have to be done elsewhere. Information from other sites and sources were needed to supplement what had been gleaned from the National

archives, which consisted mainly of material describing British colonial officers' exclusive focus on men's athletics.

One KNA research attendant suggested that the Provincial archives in Nakuru would be helpful for further inquiries as it housed reports that had not been passed on to the national archives. It was also not possible to transfer physical files from one location to another and I had to travel to Nakuru and read the documents in-person. Future researchers may find that valuable help in the Kenyan archives sometimes required active solicitation.

The Nakuru trip proved the most successful venture to that point, though it presented new challenges foremost of which was actually getting there. I did not feel comfortable travelling by *matatu* (public transport vehicle) nor driving myself. The best roads in Kenya are thin strips of asphalt barely wide enough for two vehicles. On either side, the pavement often drops off precipitously, giving way to worn footpaths. Rarely does one find guardrails or medians and even the middle line often disappears altogether. If you have elected to take a *matatu* but it is already full upon arrival, simply stand on the bumper and hold on! As one of my interviewees once said: 'It's easy to tell if someone is driving drunk in Kenya. If they are driving in a straight line, they must be drunk'. The roads can also be lawless.

Therefore, I chose to relocate from Nairobi to the Eldoret area and enlist the help of my friend and guide Godfrey Kiprotich to assist with this adventure. Introduced in Chapter Two, Godfrey, ever the skillful diplomat, managed to wrangle a truck for a week from his friend Ben Maiyo. We left Iten in darkness, making the circuitous descent onto the arid floor of the Rift Valley. Rising up in the distance, we could see the next set of peaks beckoning as the sun rose. 'Home of Moi', 'Paul Tergat's home' - Godfrey's narration provided extra gloss to the mesmerisingly

beautiful scenery that we encountered during the journey over the mountains to Nakuru.

The days passed either searching the archives or collecting interviews with runners based in the area. Unlike the KNA, where reports are compiled into booklets, in Nakuru one must sift through boxes to uncover Kenyan athletics gems. The boxes from the Departments of Sport, of Social Services and of Education, respectively, contained the most useful material, such as minutes taken during KAAA meetings that shed light on the details and decisions that underpinned Kenya's debut at the 1954 Empire Games.

In Nakuru, I was also able to speak with two pioneering female athletes: Pauline Konga and Jackline M'ranga. Both now employed by Kenya's Prison services, Konga was the first Kenyan woman to win a medal at the Olympics when she finished second in the 5000 metres in Atlanta while M'ranga was a repeat World Cross-Country Championships qualifier.

The Challenges of Oral History

Direct oral material offered a method to correct the side-lining of women from histories of Kenyan athletics. Interviews with women in several locations in Kenya proved a core source material of this dissertation. As discussed in Chapter Two, I chose the topic of Kenyan women's running history through my previous experience as an internationally competitive athlete. My sports past also facilitated oral interviews and contributed to conversations with high-profile athletes.

Yet oral interviews presented a different set of challenges. Collecting oral histories was predicated on often immense logistical efforts necessary to locate and to travel to meet with interviewees. My interview with Salina Kosgei was typical of

what was required to meet with Kenya's top female runners. A Commonwealth Games gold medallist, Kosgei competed at the Olympics and has won various marathons, including the 2009 Boston Marathon. At the time of my fieldwork, she was living with her husband, hurdler Barnabas Kinyor, in a remote homestead outside of Eldoret on the opposite side of the city from Iten.

The journey to meet Kosgei began with a 45-minute *matatu* ride from Iten into Eldoret. A standard *matatu* declares itself at capacity with '11 passengers' though that number commonly morphs to 15 or 20. As I wrote in my field notes at the time, this was 'stunt-your-growth tight'.

I found myself seated next to a large woman of indeterminate age. During the ride, her purse started wiggling. My first thought – 'I must be hallucinating from the heat of so many bodies pressed into such a small space'. The head of a chicken soon popped out of her purse! No one else paid attention to its appearance so I too tried to appear unfazed, even when this chicken started to squawk raucously.

After reaching Eldoret I caught another *matatu* that dropped me off at a small junction about 15 minutes outside the city limits. From there, I paid a motorcycle taxi 100 shillings (about a dollar) to take me to Salina's compound deep in the verdant hills of Uasin Gishu. I thought the chicken would remain the high point of the journey but I had never ridden a motorcycle before. I gingerly climbed aboard the bike, sandwiched between Godfrey and our driver. Though I wrote afterwards how much I 'really enjoyed the ride!', I also acknowledged clutching onto the seat 'for dear life'.

This is a 'standard' travel itinerary of the kind necessary to collect the pearls of Kenyan athletics history from older generations of athletes now living in various parts of the Rift Valley. Finding the actual home of the athlete often necessitated asking multiple people for directions. Other trips involved serious setbacks, such as

the day our beloved white truck refused to start after a long afternoon of interviewing in the Eldoret District Offices. Occasionally, I would travel great lengths for an interview, only to be told upon arrival that the person I sought had just left for, say, Kericho (200 kilometres away) on account of a family emergency. Young, female runners' timidity and shyness around me sometimes made it difficult to converse meaningfully with them.

The latter touches on some of the issues about positionality raised in Chapter Two, in which I described my position with regard to Kalenjin society as constructed by many factors, including the facts that I am a white, American student from Oxford University who has competed as a long-distance runner at the World Athletics Championships. All of this together secured a privileged welcome in Kalenjin society, yet it also raised certain challenges that I had not expected when I first arrived in rural Kenya.

As the unfamiliar and strange became 'everyday', and the ordinary and exotic coalesced, I became increasingly aware of what being a white person in this society entailed. Anonymity was a relic; losing oneself in a crowd an impossibility. Contributing to this, on my first day in Kenya I had acquired an impressive sunburn which peeled long afterwards. People were interested, confused or amused by my reddening, white skin as well as by my blond hair, which they loved to touch.

As I descended each day into the village centre to run, interview or peruse the local Iten archives, I was always cognizant that the social fabric had changed before I uttered a word. Impersonality, the hallmark of oral history interviews that Vansina championed, simply could not exist. To appear and navigate a social milieu unnoticed, like the most talented football referees during a well-officiated match, requires not

only that one remain detached personally but also that other people accept and allow this. In Iten, if one is white, it is very difficult to escape attention.

It is tiring to always feel different. Sense of humour, personality, preferences and talents were subsumed by and secondary to being white and foreign, at least upon first impression. That fact of whiteness was what registered as primary and forceful. Other aspects of who I am could only emerge over time, through conversation and with repeated interactions. Once it became known, my occupation as a professional runner could justify my curiousity and create a layer of shared social space to some extent. The common experience of our athletic backgrounds and our gender allowed for discussions on a number of important issues and provided an interesting angle to explore a portion of Kenyan life few researchers have an opportunity to examine. My background and history with running ultimately rendered me a fellow athletics 'insider' but a cultural 'outsider'.

I found the latter experience deepened my empathy towards people of colour in America and other places riven with the disparities of a multicultural society. As I suddenly found myself part of the minority, I discovered that appearance absolutely mattered in ways I had not understood previously. Before coming to Kenya, I never questioned my 'understanding' of racism - I assumed I was not racist and that I judged people for who they are or for what they stand for or for how they treat others.

Being white in rural Kenya made me realise that I had not understood anything. I had no awareness of how it felt to be constantly wondering whether people's actions and words were produced because of the colour of my skin. What's more, unlike minority groups in other societies, the worst I suffered was the isolation of difference and the stereotype that whiteness was indivisibly twinned with wealth.

This certainly influenced the reception that I received. I was frequently taken aback by the level of respect I was afforded. For instance, on the day that I visited the farm owned by Mary Chemweno, who during the early 1980s emerged as the fastest African woman over the half-mile, she spent several hours preparing an enormous meal, going so far as to slaughter chickens and a goat for the occasion. Primary school children from nearby farms, some twenty-five boys and girls, presented themselves, eager to lay eyes on the *mzungu* who had mysteriously turned up in their midst. At events, I was immediately given VIP status and could converse with the Eldoret elite in a way that another female Kenyan of a similar age to me could not. At the same time, I felt people's unspoken yet somehow clamouring request for basic resources. My hardest moments were when friends asked obliquely (or rarely, directly) for money or for resources.

I made mistakes. I had two phones and gave one to a girl a few years younger than me who worked at a 'hotel' close to where I was staying. We had chatted often over mangoes during slow, steamy afternoons. She invited me to her mother's home, where I was given mursik and introduced to her family, and to another friend's wedding, a party at which it seemed like the entire village attended. While I gave her the phone to express my gratitude, I struggled with the fact that I did not have phones for the others who subsequently asked me for one. I then became concerned that my gift had unwittingly made her life more difficult because possessing a new phone from a *muzungu* friend may have sparked envy. Whether by bestowing phones or refusing to provide them, a white person can all too easily interfere with the social universe of a small village without realising it.

Finally, one must recognize that there are ethics surrounding soliciting, collecting and using orally communicated materials. At the conclusion of this

Appendix can be found a copy of the agreement I requested each respondent to sign, declaring their support for the project and affirmation that any words said during the interview could be used in the presentation of the research. I asked for this declaration in order to be fully transparent about my intentions and for each person to have the freedom to decline. I also obtained approval to conduct this research from the University of Oxford's Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) for the Social Sciences and Humanities, proof of which can also be found in this Appendix.

Perusing the Kenyan Press

The final, Kenya-based source central to this dissertation was articles from *The Nation*. With offices in the Nation Centre on Kimathi Street in Nairobi, the Nation Media Group has scanned and digitisied all of the newspapers that it has published daily since 1960. PDFs of each page are accessible through a search system in which a phrase or name may be typed into the search box - i.e. 'Mary Chemweno' – and all articles mentioning the phrase will appear.

Accessing this source evolved through a series of steps. It began when I paid an annual fee to subscribe to AllAfrica.com and receive daily emails containing news alerts with online links to articles published that day on 'Kenya', 'Athletics', 'Women and Gender' and 'Sustainable Development', often featuring articles from *The Nation*. As I became familiar with the topics and various papers, I noted the email address of Anniel Njoka, a Librarian for the Nation Media Group.

I wrote to Anniel in advance of my trip to Kenya, asking whether I might be able to search the NMG's archives for past articles on women's athletics during my visit. Through a series of emails and Skype calls, we agreed that he would undertake

this work on my behalf. I provided the names of a range of female athletes that he agreed to search within the database, save into folders, such as the 'Mary Chemweno' folder, burn onto CDs and mail to my Lincoln College address.

Accessing *The Nation*'s archives was not free. Each article normally costs researchers between 30 and 60 KSh per page. As his searches eventually revealed some 2000 pages, I was allowed a reduced bulk price of between 15 and 20 KSh per page. Even with the discount, this research ultimately cost more than £500.

Transportation within Kenya was another expense. Although I was usually able to borrow a car, there were times during the course of interviewing in Eldoret when I had to rent a car at £30 per day. Even at this price, rental car availability was at times uncertain. For instance, one occasion that I needed a car coincided with a visit from the Nairobi-based President of Kenya, Mwai Kabacki along with some 100 MPs. Because of their unexpected appearance, all of Eldoret's rental cars were suddenly booked for the weekend. I had to postpone and reschedule my interviews as I waited until Sunday afternoon for a car to become available.

Finding the Fragments to Create the Story

A picture of the Rift Valley may be worth a thousand words but it will fall short of standing on the edge of the escarpment, the sun shining on your skin and the wind blowing across your body. Similarly, even the most elegant, precise sentences will omit much from a description of seven months' fieldwork in Kenya. Nonetheless, with this Appendix, I have tried to share some of the significant decisions, feelings, mistakes and discoveries from my time in Kenya.

Locating and bringing to light the formidable accomplishments of Kenya's female athletes was an endeavour that involved the expenditure of time, energy and

money. It was not enough to sift through papers buried in the archives. I needed to speak with the women who pioneered running in Kenya. Retrieving material across Kenyan newspapers, annual district reports, colonial correspondence, and oral histories together enabled this dissertation. Most of all, I am truly grateful to the many athletes who shared a part of their history with me.

Interview Guide/Questions

Motivations/Gendered Experiences as a Runner*:*
What were your early days of running like?
At what age did you begin to train? To compete?
How did you feel when you won your first major race?
What motivated you to run? Did the Olympics motivate you? Potential income gain or the possibility of receiving useful household items? Representing Kenya/your community? Enjoyment of sport? Or something else? Which was most important?
Did people try to stop you from running? Were there any who particularly supported your running? How did your father/mother/siblings/extended family feel about your running?
Were people in the community dismayed or surprised when you continued running as you grew up? How did your husband react to your running?
Can you describe what it was like if/when you were confronted by challenges or had a difficult time? (Try to tease out gendered experiences)
How did you manage the practical challenges of racing? Did you have transport to the race? Did you have a place to stay? Were you alone?

The Value of Running, What has it Meant to You and Others?
What do you think about when racing? Do you think about family or your competitors?
What do you think your example has meant to younger girls who aspire to become professional runners? Did you have any role models/if so, who?
Has being an athlete helped you in ways besides earning a living? In what ways?

The Interaction between Gender/Running in Rift Valley Communities:
In your opinion, has there been any change between the international successes of Kenyan women runners and the social environment at home?
How (if at all) has running locally changed people's thinking about women in Rift Valley communities?
To what extent do husbands support their wives' running? Has this changed over time?
As female runners increasingly win race prize money and return home, have people's attitudes about the roles of men and women changed more broadly?
To what extent is the exchange of bridewealth still practiced?

The Local Economic Impact of Athletics:
What happens to runners' prize money? Is it distributed among an entire family? Invested in businesses ventures? Given to the community? Has it changed the landscape of Iten/Eldoret?
How far is running viewed as an employment opportunity? Is this different for men and women?
What happens to female runners who do not return from racing with prize money? Male runners?

Running and Ethnicity/Nationalism:
How far do you think that sport has helped/hurt how people think about being a Kenyan?
Running has been a viewed 'Kalenjin' endeavour. In your experience, was this the case? Did this matter? How far has that affected its ability of athletics to foster inter-ethnic harmony?

The role of agents:
What was the role of your agent (if you had one) in your running?
What was his name? What did he do for you? Are you still in contact?

Figure A.1 Consent Form



The Director of Graduate Studies

Faculty of Modern History
University of Oxford
Broad Street
Oxford OX1 3BD

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:

Name of Researcher:

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated (insert date) for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason. ☐
3. I agree that any words I may say during the interview can be used, anonymously, in the presentation of the research. ☐
4. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

Name of Interviewee	Date	Signature
Researcher	Date	Signature

1 copy for interviewee; 1 copy for researcher;

Telephone: 01865 277 257 Fax: 01865 250 704
Email: director.graduate.studies@history.ox.ac.uk

*On each form, I wrote by hand the title of my project and my name, before asking each interview to sign and date the form and then signing it myself.

Figure A.2 Ethics Application Approval

SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES
INTER-DIVISIONAL RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Hayes House, 75 George Street, Oxford. OX1 2BQ
Tel: +44(0)1865 614871 Fax: +44(0)1865 614855
ethics@socsci.ox.ac.uk www.socsci.ox.ac.uk

Co-ordinator of the IDREC
Social Sciences Divisional Office

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Ref. SSD/2/3/IDREC

9th December, 2010

Michelle Sikes,
Lincoln College

Dear Michelle Sikes,

Application Approval

Ref No.: SSD/CUREC1A/10-110

Title: Absence, Emergence, Permanence: A History of Women's Running in Kenya

The above application has been considered on behalf of the Social Sciences and Humanities Inter-divisional Research Ethics Committee (IDREC) in accordance with the procedures laid down by the University for ethical approval of all research involving human participants.

I am pleased to inform you that, on the basis of the information provided to the IDREC, the proposed research has been judged as meeting appropriate ethical standards, and accordingly approval has been granted.

Should there be any subsequent changes to the project, which raise ethical issues not covered in the original application, you should submit details to the IDREC for consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Chris. Ballinger

Dr Chris. Ballinger

Cc. Dr Jan-Georg Deutsch, Faculty of History, Old Boys High School, George Street
Dr. Nic Cheeseman, Department of Politics and International Relations, Manor Road

HBP / CAJB

Biographies

The following section contains the list of the interviews conducted with people involved with athletics or who dealt with runners in a particular capacity, along with a short bio-sketch of each participant.

Beauttah, Jimmy, Kapsabet, 25 Jan 2011.

Beauttah has been coaching in Kenya for over 30 years. He is the chief trainer at the IAAF Kip Keino High Performance Training Centre in Eldoret. He has coached athletes to eight World Championship medals, three Olympic medals and two Commonwealth Games medals. Among his most successful athletes are Beijing Olympic 1500 metres champion and 2011 World Champion Abel Kiprop, Moses Kiptanui, who won three world 3000 metres steeplechase titles and an Olympic silver medal, and Daniel Komen, the 1997 World Champion over 5000 metres.

Bicourt, John, London, 7 Jan 2010.

Bicourt is a former national record holder in the 3000-metres steeplechase and represented Britain in this event at the 1972 and 1976 Olympics. He has coached, advised and managed Olympic and World Championship athletes from Britain, Australia, South African, Kenya and the United States.

Cheboiboch, Christopher, Iten, 19 Jan 2011.

First a steeple-chaser, Cheboiboch has won the Leipzig Marathon and the San Diego Marathon and has been the runner-up at both Boston and the New York City Marathons. He competed in the 2003 World Athletics Championships Marathon. With the prize money from these major marathons, Cheboiboch founded the fee-paying boarding school Salaba Academy in Iten, to which he now devotes his time as Director.

Chemabwai, Tecla, Eldoret, 12 Jan 2010; and Eldoret, 31 Jan 2011.

Two-time Olympian Tecla Chemabwai was a member of the 1968 Kenyan squad sent to the Mexico City Games, the first with female athletes. At age 18, she was the youngest member of the team. Nine months after giving birth, Chemabwai reached the quarterfinals in the 400 metres in the 1972 Summer Olympics. She also became the first woman to win a gold medal in international competition – the 400 metres at the All-Africa Games Championships in 1973. Chemabwai again won an All-Africa Games title in 1978, this time over 800 metres, and finished second over that distance in the 1978 Commonwealth Games. The latter was only the second Commonwealth Games medal won by a female Kenyan athlete. The widow of Olympic runner Julius Sang and a mother of five, Chemabwai now teaches and coaches at Moi University in Eldoret.

Chemweno, Mary, Eldoret, 12 Jan 2010; Nairobi, 19 Feb 2011; and Eldoret, 30 Jan 2011.

Three-time victor over 800 metres at the East African Championships (1977, 1979 and 1981), Chemweno's career was short-changed by Kenya's 1980 Olympic boycott. The first woman from Africa to break the 2:00 barrier for the 800 metres, she placed second in the 800 metres and won the 1500 metres at the 1980 Commonwealth Games. Chemweno also qualified for the Commonwealth Games team in the mid-1980s when four months pregnant. In 1987, Chemweno won the bronze at the All-Africa Games in Nairobi. Now a widowed mother of five children, Chemweno remains affiliated with the

Prisons team as a coach. Her husband was Nandi Kipsubai Kosgei, who won gold in the 10,000 metres and bronze in the 5000 metres at the 1984 African Championships. At age 42, Kosgei took the bronze in the 1988 World Cross Country Championships. Kosgei began running in 1962 and was a pioneer among Kenyan men in supporting his wife's athletics career.

Chepkurui, Judith, Eldoret, 14 Feb 2011.

Chepkurui is an aspiring runner who lives and trains in Iten.

Cheruiyot, Rose, Eldoret, 14 Jan 2010.

The 15:05 she ran at Carlsbad, CA in 1995 was at the time the fastest unaided women's 5K ever run on US roads. In 1996, Cheruiyot broke the Kenyan record for 5000 metres, recording a 14:46.41. She is married to international runner Ismael Kirui. The couple completed a rare double when they both won the senior races at the Belfast International Cross Country in 1995.

Cheruiyot, Anna, Interview, 9 April 2011.

At the time of this interview, Anna was an aspiring runner, living and training in Iten.

Chesire, Joseph, Nairobi, 19 Feb 2011.

A middle-distance runner who represented Kenya in the 1984, 1988 and 1992 Summer Olympics (placing fourth), Chesire was one of Kenya's best 1500 metre runners in the 1980s. He won the 1500 metres at the London Grand Prix in 1992. His greatest indoor achievement was the bronze medal at the 1985 IAAF World Indoor Games. Chesire is the cousin of Godfrey Kiprotich and is currently a coach.

Jebet, Winnie, Eldoret, 18 Jan 2011; and Iten, 14 Feb 2011.

Born just outside Iten, Jebet was a student at the University of Nairobi and served as a research assistant for this project.

Jepkosgei, Gladys, Iten, 16 April 2011.

Jepkosgei is an aspiring runner living in Iten who began running as a student in 2006.

Keino, Martin, Eldoret, 18 Jan 2011.

Keino won the NCAA Cross Country Championship in 1994 and NCAA 5000 metres Championships in 1995 as a student at the University of Arizona. The son of Olympic gold medallist Kip Keino, he forged a professional career as a pacesetter. Keino served as the 'rabbit' for three successful world record attempts in the summer of 1997, two in the 5000 and one in the two-mile. Keino now works as a businessman in Eldoret and as a partner with a sports marketing and management firm in Nairobi.

Kigen, Joseph, Iten. 10 Feb 2011; and Iten, 21 Feb 2011.

Born in Kericho, Kigen was an aspiring runner at the time of the interview who had relocated to Iten to train with the 'Run Fast' training group based there. Since then, Kigen has travelled to Australia and South Korea to compete.

Kiplagat, Ester, Eldoret, 12 Jan 2010.

An Olympian, Kiplagat competed at the 1992 Barcelona Games in the 3000 metres. She then finished fourth at the 1993 World Athletics Championships in Stuttgart. Prior to that, she became one of the first Kenyan women to accept a scholarship to the United States, leaving the Rift Valley to attend Jackson State University in 1985 after winning the National Championship in Nairobi in the 5000 metres. Other successes at the longer distances include winning the 1999 Edinburgh Marathon, the 1999 Dublin Marathon and the

2001 Stockholm Marathon. Kiplagat then had a breakthrough year in 2002 with third-place finishes at the Paris Marathon (2:25:32) in April and at the New York City Marathon (2:27:00) in November.

Kiplagat, Lornah, Iten, 14 Jan 2010; and 27 Feb 2011.

Originally a Keiyo, Lornah gained Dutch citizenship in 2003 through her marriage to Pieter Langerhorst. She represented The Netherlands at the 2004, 2008 and 2012 Summer Olympics. She won the 2007 IAAF World Cross Country Championships in Mombasa and collected World Road Running Championship titles from 2006 to 2008. She holds the world road record over 5 kilometres and 10 miles. In the marathon, her fastest time is 2:22:22. Her best times over 20 km and the half-marathon distance were world records from 2007 to 2011 and remain the second fastest times ever.

Kiprop, Meshack, Iten, 23 Feb 2011.

Originally from Metkei, Meshack was working as a barber in Iten at the time of the interview.

Kiprotich, Godfrey, Nairobi, 8 Jan 2010; Iten, 9 Jan 2010; Iten, 14 Jan 2010; Iten, 17 Jan 2011; Iten, 24 Jan 2011; and Iten, 21 Feb 2011.

Once the tenth fastest runner in the world for the Half Marathon, Kiprotich now works as a talent scout in the Eldoret area for the athletics management company KIMbia. He graduated from St Patrick's High School in Iten before joining the Kenyan Armed Forces. He was once the world's premier marathon pacemaker, having served in this capacity at the New York City, Chicago, Fukuoka and Berlin Marathons. He also competed successfully on the road racing circuit across the United States. In 1994, Kiprotich finished fourth, ahead of both Paul Tergat and Moses Tanui, in the World Half-Marathon Championships.

Koech, Francis, Iten, 21 Jan 2011.

Koech was working as the Keiyo District Statistics Officer at the time of this interview.

Konga, Pauline, Nakuru, 2 Feb 2011.

Konga's first Olympics Games was in 1992, when she raced the 3000 metres. Four years later, she became the first Kenyan woman to win an Olympic medal when she earned the silver in the 5000 meters race behind Wang Junxia of China. Konga also finished third that year at the Grand Prix Finals. Her personal best for the 3000 metres was 8:37, achieved in August 1996 in Monaco. Currently employed by the Kenya Prisons in Nakuru, Konga is married to Paul Bitok, who won two silver medals at the Olympics over 5000 meters (1992 and 1996).

Korir, Wilson, Eldoret, 28 Jan 2011.

At the time of this interview, Korir was working for the Eldoret branch of Barclays Bank.

Kosgei, Salina, Turbo, 19 Jan 2010.

A Commonwealth Games gold medalist, Kosgei competed at the Olympics and has won numerous marathons, including Boston in 2009. At the time of this fieldwork, she was living and training with her husband, hurdler Barnabas Kinyor, in a homestead outside of Eldoret.

Kurei, Henry, Iten, 23 Feb 2011.

Originally from Baringo, Kurei oversees M-Pesa transactions in Iten's pharmacy.

Langerhorst, Pieter, Iten, 11 Jan 2010.

Lornah Kiplagat's husband and coach, Langerhorst co-manages the High Altitude Training Centre in Iten, which the couple founded in 2000

Limo, Felix, Eldoret, 24 Jan 2011.

Two-time London Marathon Champion Limo also held the world record over 15 kilometres from 2001 to 2010. Coached by Patrick Sang, his other victories in major marathons include the 2005 Chicago Marathon as well as Berlin and Rotterdam in 2004. His personal best over 26.2 miles is 2:06:14.

Loroupe, Tegla, Interview, 19 Jan 2010.

One of the most successful runners in Kenyan athletics history, two-time New York City Marathon Champion Loroupe made an immense impact on marathon running, re-setting the world record twice in 1998 and 1999. She competed in two Olympics Games (1996 and 2000) and three World Championships (1993, 1995 and 1999). She won the London Marathon in 2000.

Malot, Leah, Eldoret, 12 Jan 2010; and Eldoret, 24 Jan 2011.

Known for the length of her career, Malot won her first international championship gold medal at the All-Africa Games in 1987, aged 15. She represented Kenya in the 10,000 metres at both the 1987 and 1999 World Athletics Championships. In 2000, Malot set an African record for 5000 metres, completing the distance in 14 minutes, 39 seconds. In 2002, she won the 3000 metres at the Super Grand Prix event in Qatar and the following year the Grand Prix 5000 metres at Osaka. At the Lisbon Half Marathon, Malot finished second in 2003 and 2004. As of 2011, Malot was still actively competing.

Maranga, Jackline, Nakuru, 1 Feb 2011.

Maranga's athletics career began with three silver medals at the World Junior Championships, one in the 800 metres and two in the 1500 metres. She went on to win two 1500 metres golds in 1998 at the Commonwealth Games and the African Championships. She is also a World Champion in cross-country as the winner of the women's short course at the 1999 World 4-Kilometre Cross Country Championships, held in Belfast. In 2002, she won a final gold medal at the African Championships 1500 metres before retiring to give birth to the first of two daughters. She is married to World Athletics Championship bronze medallist (5000 metres) Tom Nyariki.

Meynink, Doreen and Ray, Nairobi, 8 Jan 2010.

British expatriates who have lived in Kenya since 1962, the Meyninks are well known within the Kenyan athletics community for the hospitality that they have provided to the many athletes who have stayed in their 'Flea House' in Karen. Doreen Meynick is now the headmistress of an international school in Nairobi and Ray Meynick has worked for the IAAF as a drugs tester.

Muret, Margaret, Iten, 1 April 2011.

A Keiyo, Muret is the aunt of Sally Barsosio. In 1997, her niece became the first Kenyan woman to win a track title at the World Athletics Championships.

Ndereba, Catherine, Nairobi, 19 Feb 2011.

Ndereba has won a medal in every Olympic and World Championship event she has entered. These include two silver medals at the Olympic Games Marathon (2004 and 2008) and two World Championship gold medals (2003 and 2007). A Kikuyu, Ndereba has finished 3rd at the 1999 World Half-Marathon Championships, 2nd in the 1999 New York Marathon, won the

Boston Marathon four times (2000, 2001, 2004 and 2005) and won the Chicago Marathon twice (2000 and 2001).

Ngure, Joseph, Eldoret, 14 Jan 2010.

Ngure coaches elite athletes at the IOC/IAAF High Performance Training Centre in Eldoret.

O'Connell, Colm, Iten, 15 Jan 2010.

Irishman O'Connell arrived in Kenya in 1976 to teach geography at Iten's Catholic boarding school, St Patrick's High School. O'Connell has coached generations of champions, including world and Olympic gold medallists Peter Rono, Matthew Birir, Reuben Kosgei, David Rudisha, Sammy Tirop, Michael Kipyego and Augustine Choge. He started the first running camp in Kenya in 1989, initially just for girls. Now retired from teaching, O'Connell continues to coach world-class and aspiring athletes in Iten.

Oluks, Moses, Eldoret, 30 Jan 2011.

Oluks worked at KASS FM, one of the leading radio stations in the Rift Valley that broadcasts in Kalenjin.

Ratcliffe, Tom, Nairobi, 18 Feb 2011; and Boston, 25 July 2012.

With a personal best in the marathon of 2:14, Ratcliffe logged more than 120 miles per week while training around Nyhururu in the 1990s. Currently the Director of KIMbia Athletics, Ratcliffe manages world-class American and Kenyan middle and long-distance runners. He also directed 'Bannister: Everest on the Track', a documentary about Roger Bannister's historic running of the first sub-4:00 mile, which debuted in London's Hyde Park in the summer of 2014.

Sang, Meshack, Eldoret, 18 Jan 2011.

A sub-four minute miler with a personal best of 7:46 for 3000 metres, Meshack Sang co-founded Complete Sports Training Centre in Kaptagat. He has worked as a journalist and assisted with a range of running-related research projects in the Eldoret area.

Sang, Patrick, Eldoret, 24 Jan 2011.

Sang won the steeple-chase in the All-African Games in 1987 and later that year, reached the finals of the Rome World Championships, finishing eighth. At the 1988 Seoul Olympics, Sang placed seventh. As Team Captain, he collected silver medals at both the Tokyo World Championships of 1991 and the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games. In 1993, Sang won the IAAF Grand Prix Steeplechase title and a silver medal at the Stuttgart World Championships. Today, he is a businessman who coaches and manages runners in the Eldoret area.

Sirma, Susan, Eldoret, 14 Jan 2010; and Iten, 23 Jan 2011.

An alumna of Sing'ore Girls Secondary School in Iten, Sirma was the first Kenyan woman to win a medal at the World Athletics Championships, finishing third at 3000 metres in 1991. Cousin of Lornah Kiplagat, Sirma also won two gold medals over 3000 metres at the All-Africa Games. She became the inaugural IAAF World Cross Country Series winner for the 1990-1991 season. Her time over 12 kilometres still stands as the second-fastest ever recorded at that distance.

Songok, Willy, Iten, 11 Jan 2010; and 16 Jan 2011.

Formerly a long-distance runner employed by the Kenyan Army during the 1990s, Songok now handles guest relations and day-to-day operations for Lornah Kiplagat's High Altitude Training Centre.

Tanser, Toby, Iten, 13 Jan 2010.

Author of two books on Kenyan training approaches (*More Fire* and *Train Hard, Win Easy*) and with an encyclopaedic knowledge of Kenyan running, Tanser leads a charity, Shoe4Africa, which is building a children's hospital near Iten.

Tata-Muya, Rose, Nairobi, 19 Feb 2011.

Tata-Muya competed in the 400 metres hurdles at the inaugural World Championships of 1983, becoming the first Kenyan woman to represent Kenya at the IAAF World Athletics Championships. The following year, as a 13-year-old, she was the youngest athlete to race at the 1974 Commonwealth Games, finishing 8th in the finals of the 800 metres and competing as part of Kenya's 4 x 400 metres relay team. Her international career continued until 1996, when she became an athletics coach.

Tuitoek, Raymond, Eldoret, 28 Jan 2011.

Tuitoek is a banker in the Eldoret branch of Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB).

Velzian, John, Nairobi, 8 Jan 2010; and Nairobi, 18 Feb 2011.

Velzian came to Nairobi in 1959 and remains a driving force in athletics more than fifty years later. He has been the director of the IAAF Regional Development Centre in Nairobi and the race director of the Nairobi Marathon. In 1965, as a coach, he took Kenyan athletes to the first-ever African Championships in Congo-Brazzaville. Velzian also coordinated the Kenyan team's trip to Jamaica for the 1966 Commonwealth Games. He has helped in the construction of stadiums and organised courses for coaches. His work was central to founding the Kenyan Schools Athletics Association and to Kenya's successful bid to host the 2007 World Cross Country Championships in Mombasa.

Waithera, Ruth, Nairobi, 18 Feb 2011.

Representing the Kenyan Army, Waithera twice won three sprint events (100, 200 and 400 meters) at the East and Central African Championships in 1977 and 1979. She competed at the 1984 Summer Olympics, reaching 200 metres semi-finals and becoming the first Kenyan woman to make an Olympic Games final, finishing 8th in the 400 metres. At the time, she was studying at the University Of Arizona where she won the NCAA Division I Women's Indoor Championship for 400 metres. Formerly the African record holder over 400 metres, Waithera still holds the Kenyan record for 400 metres with a time of 51.56, set in 1984. In 1990, she was awarded membership in the University of Arizona's Sports Hall of Fame. In 1998, she established the Avenue Sports Club to provide orphaned children opportunities to pursue athletic careers.

Interviews with women in the local community;

Bungei, Sharon. Iten, 11 Feb 2011.
Chebii, Mary. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Cheboi, Regina Jelagat. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Chemjor, Rhoda. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Chemutai, Charity. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Cherotich, Agnes. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Cheruiyot, Anna. Iten, 15 Feb 2011.
Cheruiyot, Monica. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Chesergon, Janet. Iten, 11 Feb 2011.
Chesire, Salina Jepchirchir. Iten, 15 Feb 2011.
Chepchumba, Grace. Iten, 15 Feb 2011.
Chepchumba, Mary. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Chepkok, Selina Jemeli. Iten, 15 Feb 2011.
Chepkurui, Kathleen. Iten, 15 Feb 2011.
Chepkurui, Nancy. Iten, 11 Feb 2011.
Choge, Charity. Iten, 15 Feb 2011.
Davis, Jane. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Eluid, Jane. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Jebet, Faith. Iten, 15 Feb 2011.
Jebiwott, Caroline. Iten, 11 Feb 2011.
Jebiwott, Constantine. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Jebiwott, Sabina. Iten, 15 Feb 2011.
Jelagat, Edna. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Jelimo, Eunice. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Jelimo, Gladys. Iten, 16 Feb 2011.
Jepchumba, Milka. Iten, 15 Feb 2011.
Jepkoech, Flomena. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Jepkosgei, Viola. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Jerono, Zenah. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Jesang, Penina. Iten, 15 Feb 2011.
Kabon, Grace. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Kanda, Lina. Iten, 15 Feb 2011.
Keino, Charity. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Koech, Josephine. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Kiplagat, Elizabeth. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Kiprono, Joyce. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Kiptoo, Naomi. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Koech, Susan. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Korir, Judith. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Korir, Margaret. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Kosgei, Monica. Iten, 11 Feb 2011.
Maiyo, Lina. Iten, 9 Feb 2011.
Rono, Rhoda. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.
Ruto, Gladys. Iten, 15 Feb 2011.
Serem, Belishana. Iten, 8 Feb 2011.

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Kenya National Archives, Nairobi

The following categories of files were consulted in Nairobi:

CD	Community Development
DC/BAR	District Commissioner, Baringo
DC/ELG	District Commissioner, Elgeyo-Marakwet
DC/NDI	District Commissioner, Nandi
DC/NKU	District Commissioner, Nakuru
DC/KER	District Commissioner, Kericho
DC/KPNRIA	District Commissioner, Kapenguria
DC/KSI	District Commissioner, Kisii
DC/KSM	District Commissioner, Kisumu
DC/UG	District Commissioner, Uasin Gishu
DO/ER	District Officer, Eldama Ravine
JZ	Prison Department
PC/GRSSA	Provincial Commissioner, Northern
PC/NKU	Provincial Commissioner, Nakuru
PC/NZA	Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza
PC/RVP	Provincial Commissioner, Rift Valley

Annual Reports (ARs) were consulted related to the following districts:

ELGM	Elgeyo Marakwet
BAR	Baringo
NDI	Nandi Annual Report
KSI	Kisii Annual Report
KER	Kericho Annual Report
UG	Uasin Gishu

Rift Valley Provincial Archives, Nakuru

The following categories of records related to the Baringo, Elgeyo-Marakwet, Kericho, Nandi and Uasin Gishu Districts were consulted at the Rift Valley Provincial Archive in Nakuru.

DOS	Department of Sports
DOSS	Department of Social Services
DOE	Department of Education
DOC	Department of Culture

Keiyo (Elgeyo) District Archives, Iten

In Iten, the Keiyo (Elgeyo) District Archives were also visited; however, what materials housed therein proved to have not been organised into categories of files. Reports were consulted on matters pertaining to education and district development plans.

Rhodes House Library, Oxford

The following files were consulted in Oxford:

T.G Askwith	Mss.Afr.s. 1770, 2100
M.W. Dobbs	Mss.Afr.s.504.A162

Online Resources

Allafrica.com: www.allafrica.com
Association of Road Racing Statisticians: www.arrs.net
International Association of Athletics Federations: www.iaaf.org
Letsrun.com: www.letsrun.com
Sports Reference: www.sports-reference.com
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